

# 2025 ANNUAL REPORT



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# MESSAGE FROM OUR DIRECTOR

On 30 April 2025, the Sint Antonius School in Galibi, Suriname, turned one hundred years. For most of that century, Kari'na children were not allowed to use their own language at the school. At the centenary celebration of the school, however, they paraded through the village singing in Kari'na.

2025 saw significant steps forward in statewide policies but also some steps back. In Fife, Kirkcaldy North became Scotland's first Language Friendly School, and members of the Scottish Parliament lodged a motion to congratulate the school. Meanwhile, in Nigeria, the national mother-tongue policy was abolished after decades of existing on paper. The training of teachers or materials teachers needed to make it work were absent. As our new colleague, Dr Aisha Umar Adamu puts it in this report, a policy without structure is an instruction nobody can follow.

Building that structure, so teachers everywhere can use children's languages in education is what we do. By the end of the year, 66 Language Friendly Schools in 13 countries were teaching more than 32,000 students. We also designed and tested the first certification pathway for Language Friendly childcare settings. With European partners we launched ASTRA, our new Erasmus+ project, which puts students' own perspectives at the heart of school change.

Through the ILED Network, we re-granted €190,000 to Indigenous-led initiatives in tropical rainforest regions.

In the Peruvian Amazon, forty women documented their own knowledge of birth and postpartum care as researchers in their own right. They packed this in an educational backpack of objects and materials, so the knowledge can be shared at home with the whole community, adults and children alike.

Every child carries a backpack to school: filled with the languages, songs and stories of home. In 2026, Rutu celebrates its 15<sup>th</sup> anniversary. The question that started it all remains the same: what happens when schools invite children to open their backpacks? For a hundred years, children in Galibi were asked to leave theirs at the classroom door. Our work is to ensure that every child can bring it inside.

I want to thank the remarkable people who power Rutu Foundation from within: our staff, consultants, interns and volunteers. Special thanks go to Sara Barberà Romero and Hilda Heyde, who carried the ILED secretariat and the LFS network for years and moved on to new chapters in 2025. The expertise, commitment and passion of the Rutu team are what transform plans into real impact. I am honoured to work alongside each of you.



# OUR IMPACT IN 2025

**32,376**

students learning in Language Friendly Schools  
(+12% from 2024)

LANGUAGE FRIENDLY  
**SCHOOL**

**66**

Language Friendly Schools in 11 countries  
(+7 schools from 2024)

**3,628**

teachers engaged across the network  
(+17% from 2024)



**9**

indigenous youth fellows supported in Thailand, India, Philippines, Kenya, Costa Rica and Panama

**22**

ILED Network Member Organisations



**1,400**

indigenous women and men exchanged traditional knowledge in Peru, Uganda, Kenya, Cameroon and the Republic of Congo

**€190,000**

re-granted to Indigenous-Led Small Grants, Youth Fellowships, Women's Awards and Exchanges

# Thank you for your support!

***Your partnership, dedication, and trust made the year's progress possible.***

We warmly acknowledge our partners, collaborators, and the communities at the heart of our mission, including:

Schools, educators, and researchers within the Language Friendly School network;  
The European Commission (Erasmus+) and the City Council of Amsterdam for the financial support of the Language Friendly Education programme;  
Our valued Indigenous-led Education Network partners, Both ENDS, Forest Peoples Programme, Elzemarieke van Zanten Legacy, Global Alliance for Green and Gender Action (GAGGA), Global Affairs Canada, the International Tree Fund, the Koningschool, UNIDO/GEF, who supported the Indigenous-Led Education Programme in 2025;  
Vereniging van Inheemse Dorpshoofden in Suriname (VIDS), the teachers and community of Galibi, Suriname, Villa Zapakara, and the Ministry of Education of the Netherlands and Suriname for supporting our work in Suriname;  
Academic and conference partners across Europe, Africa, and North America.

We also extend our heartfelt thanks to all (anonymous) donors and advisory partners, whose continued investment in our vision enables us to advance equitable, multilingual education across the world.



Photo: Galibi, Suriname

***Children should be educated in a way that allows them to grow and flourish well-rooted in their own languages and cultures***

**RUTU**  
Foundation

## ABOUT US

The Rutu Foundation works at the intersection of equity, inclusion, and learning to address a growing global challenge: increasingly diverse classrooms where many learners are taught in languages they do not fully understand. For these learners, the language of instruction often becomes a barrier rather than a bridge, thereby limiting comprehension, participation, and confidence, and contributing to early learning gaps that can persist throughout their education.

### **Mission**

To make linguistic and cultural diversity the norm in education, ensuring that all children—especially Indigenous children and children from migrant and minority backgrounds—can learn in and through their home languages.

### **Our name**

‘Rutu’ means roots in Sranan Tongo (Suriname). Strong roots enable growth, resilience, and flourishing.

***We are the pioneers  
in building  
multilingual  
inclusive learning  
environments***



Photo: Silver Creek School – Ontario Canada

## WHAT WE DO

### **Language Friendly School (LFS) Network**

Rutu Foundation advances Language Friendly Education (LFE) as a practical and scalable response. Through the development of Language Friendly School (LFS) networks and supportive toolkits, the foundation supports schools to recognise and use learners' home languages as assets for learning. This enables more inclusive classrooms where all learners can engage meaningfully, while also fostering collaboration across schools so educators do not work in silos but benefit from shared learning and collective problem-solving.

### **Indigenous-Led Education Network (ILED)**

Rutu serves as the secretariat for the Indigenous-Led Education (ILED) Network, a global platform that centres locally driven, contextually relevant education solutions led by indigenous communities in tropical rainforest regions. Through this role, Rutu supports knowledge sharing, partnership building, and the amplification of indigenous and community-led practices that promote inclusion and equity. The ILED Network reinforces the importance of designing education approaches that are rooted in local languages, cultures, and realities.

## Training & Multilingual Materials

Rutu strengthens both system-level coordination and classroom-level practice aimed at enhancing teacher confidence, promoting learner belonging, including families and communities and advancing more equitable and inclusive education systems where diversity is recognised as a strength and every child has the opportunity to thrive.

## Research, Advocacy & Community Building

Rutu advocates for the full implementation of children's linguistic rights and contributes to international debates on equitable education (SDG 4 & SDG 10), while building cross-sector alliances of educators, researchers, communities, and policymakers.



## Language Friendly Schools



# THE LANGUAGE FRIENDLY SCHOOL

LANGUAGE FRIENDLY  
**SCHOOL**

By the end of 2025, the Language Friendly School network had grown to 66 certified schools, with seven new schools from the UK (including Scotland) and the Netherlands, reaching 32,376 students and 3,628 teachers across the network, a 12% and 17% increase respectively. Behind these numbers is a simple idea: that children learn best when they feel safe and comfortable to use their home languages and when their languages are treated as assets, not obstacles.

## 2025 in review

**66**

**total LFS  
schools**

**7**

**new LFS  
schools**

**32K+**

**learners**



## ***“A Policy Without Structure Is Just an Instruction Nobody Can Follow”***

Aisha opens with a fact that surprises most people outside the sector. Nigeria's national language of instruction policy, which promoted mother tongue teaching for years, has now been abolished. Not because it was wrong, she says, but because it was never given the structure to succeed. The policy existed on paper for decades while classrooms had no real system behind it. This isn't a new observation for her. During her PhD research, Aisha interviewed teachers across Northern Nigeria about how they experienced the policy on the ground. Most agreed with the idea behind it. They believed in teaching children in a language they understood. But they told her plainly that they had no real support to put it into practice. Training in multilingual pedagogy was thin or absent, so teachers were left to improvise a policy nobody had shown them how to implement. Aisha sees the LFS Network as a direct answer to that gap. It breaks language friendly, inclusive pedagogy into small, manageable steps that teachers can build into their practice gradually, without feeling overwhelmed. The approach is designed and owned by teachers and schools themselves, with guidance from the LFS team, which is part of why it holds up where top-down policy didn't.



**Dr Aisha Umar Adamu** is an educationist with over two decades of work experience, including managing large scale education programmes in Nigeria. She holds a PhD in curriculum development and has previously served as the School Head of a primary school. She joins the Rutu Foundation in 2026, supporting inclusive and context responsive education. In this interview, she shares her views on the value of joining the Language Friendly School (LFS) Network.

Being part of the network also connects teachers to peers and shared resources, reducing the isolation that often comes with trying to change practice alone. For Aisha, the lesson from Nigeria's experience is clear. A good policy without structure is just an instruction nobody can follow. She sees the LFS Network as the structure that was missing, a practical pathway that lets teachers actually do what the policy always asked of them.

# Scotland joins the Network

## Kirkcaldy North Primary School

in Fife became Scotland's first Language Friendly School in 2025. Among its 176 pupils, 21 nationalities and 21 languages are represented across the school and nursery. Led by EAL teacher Beverley Clunie, Kirkcaldy North built a Language Friendly School action plan, established a pupil group of "language ambassadors" – children who speak a range of languages, including English – to drive the work forward. The school also runs a weekly lunchtime language club alongside a parent-and-child ESOL group.

The milestone attracted press coverage in the local and national media, including a feature in *Fife Today* on the school "celebrating a Scottish first," and was marked by a motion of congratulation lodged in the Scottish Parliament in February 2025 by David Torrance MSP and co-signed by members from across the parties.

For the school's team, welcoming and valuing every language its children and families bring is precisely what makes the recognition "something really quite special."



# News from the Netherlands' Network

## New schools in the Netherlands

The network's Dutch base continued to expand and mature. The Admiraal de Ruyterschool and Basisschool De Leertuin in Amsterdam earned their certification in early 2025, marking International Mother Language Day by welcoming pupils in more than 30 languages.

## Deepening roots in Amsterdam

With continued support from the municipality of Amsterdam, Rutu ran a **policy session** at DENISE school for school leaders, board members, and education policymakers, and launched a three-module **Language Friendly Literacy course** with Dieneke Blikslager (LFS Ambassador, St. Janschool) and Joan Windzak (EduCulture). Together, these efforts reached both classroom teachers and the decision-makers who shape school policy across the city.



Photo: Multilingual Reading in St Janschool, Amsterdam West

# LFS Network Meetings

As part of standard practice, the Language Friendly School network held three regular online Network Meetings in 2025. The meetings provide an avenue for teachers to collectively reflect on and share language friendly practices.

In January, the Network meetings in 2025 started off with an “Ask Jim Anything” session. Jim referring of course to Prof Jim Cummins, the ‘grandfather’ of multilingualism in education and our distinguished Language Friendly Ambassador. Jim answered questions relating to assessment, school language development and language support strategies.

For our second session, we had another very special guest. **Francisca Sánchez** from California reminded us of the emotional, cognitive and even planetary impact when languages are silenced.

The final session for 2025 was all about secondary schools. Three Language Friendly Secondary Schools – the **Marnix College** from Curaçao, the **International School Eindhoven** from the Netherlands, and **Dulwich College** from Suzhou, China shared their school wide strategies and classroom practices.

## Ask Jim Anything!



## Network Meeting

13 May



LANGUAGE FRIENDLY  
**SCHOOL**

Francisca Sánchez  
on  
**Unsilencing  
Language**

Creating Language Friendly  
Classrooms that maximize  
student success



## Network Meeting

23 Sept. 2025

# ASTRA: New Erasmus+ project

2025 marks the start of the Erasmus+ (EU) project **ASTRA** – the 5th Erasmus+ EU-funded project that Rutu Foundation is part of. It builds on previous collaborations (AVIOR, ALCOR, LERI and ISH) as well as our Language Friendly School network to strengthen multilingualism in classrooms and in the whole school.

ASTRA (Aiming for Sustainable Teaching and Recognition of All Languages) unites school leaders and teachers from Croatia, France and the Netherlands, to help them embed sustainable language-friendly policies in their schools.

At the heart of ASTRA are student perspectives to create authentic, bottom-up change towards language inclusive learning environments.

Through teacher training and the collaboration of school leaders, best practices will be exchanged to strengthen teacher capacity and support inclusive practices in diverse contexts.



Photo: the ASTRA team, 1st Partner Meeting, Haarlem, Netherlands

## ASTRA partners:

- RISBO, Erasmus University, Netherlands (project lead)
- Rutu Foundation, Netherlands
- Network of Education Policy Centers, Croatia
- University of Montpellier Paul-Valéry, France
- Sirius Policy Network on Migrant Education, Belgium

# PILOTING LANGUAGE FRIENDLY CHILDCARE

In 2025, the Language Friendly School programme extended its work beyond schools for the first time, piloting Taalvriendelijke Kinderopvang (TVKO), or Language Friendly Childcare, with Unikidz in the greater Amsterdam area. The rationale: children's earliest experiences of language happen before formal schooling begins, and childcare settings are often where a child first learns whether their home language is welcomed.

The pilot tested whether the Language Friendly School model could be adapted to this earlier stage, both to support children's language development, wellbeing and safety, and to help locations position themselves to parents, staff and municipalities as frontrunners in multilingualism.

We shaped a certification pathway across four domains: policy, team, group, and parents, covering everything from multilingual welcome materials and staff training to language friendly interaction with children and genuine partnership with families.



Staff reflection was supported by PEPELINO, a European self assessment portfolio for childcare professionals, which pilot teams tested and adapted for team meetings and professional development.

By the pilot's third working session, held in Hoofddorp on 25 November 2025, the year's work had moved from exploration to a concrete model: teams agreed a self evaluation and certification process. This tested, four-domain pathway, the first of its kind within the Language Friendly network, is 2025's key achievement.

In 2026, the focus shifts to formalising certification for Unikidz's locations and rolling the model out to additional childcare organisations, supported by clinics, coaching visits and the online Toolkit.

# Language Friendly Ambassadors



Language Friendly School Ambassadors are schools and individuals whose leadership, innovation, and advocacy are helping to shape the global movement for multilingual and inclusive education.

In 2025 we have twelve pioneering schools across the world recognized as Ambassador Schools. They are public and private schools, secondary and primary schools, refugee schools and regular neighbourhood schools. Yet each school demonstrates how multilingualism can be embedded in daily practice and used to inspire others.

## The Netherlands:

**St. Janschool** – Amsterdam

**DENISE** – Amsterdam

**Optimist International School** – Hoofddorp

**Salto RISE** – Eindhoven

**International School Breda** – Breda

**International School Amstelland** – Amstelveen

**OBS Prinsenbos** – Gilze Rijen

**I-Start International** – Eindhoven (new!)

## Canada:

**Silver Creek School** – Mississauga, ON

**Glendale Secondary School** – Hamilton, ON

## China:

**Dulwich College** – Suzhou

## Spain:

**Puig Campana** – Benidorm

Alongside schools, we also recognized individual educators and researchers who have inspired us and made outstanding contributions to multilingual education and to the Language Friendly School movement.

In 2025, we recognized **META** as our Language Friendly Ambassador in California, USA, as represented by **Franzisca Sánchez**. We are also grateful to welcome **Jacob Huckle** and **Reshara Alviarez** as LFS Ambassadors. Jacob has brought the first LFS in China into the network and works tirelessly to promote multilingual education in international education. Reshara completed the first PhD research on the Language Friendly School, focusing on Trinidad and Tobago.

- **Prof. Jim Cummins** – University of Toronto, Canada
- **Dr. Eowyn Crisfield** – Crisfield Educational Consulting, UK
- **Prof. Dr. Joana Duarte** – University of Groningen, the Netherlands
- **Dieneke Blikslager** – St. Janschool, Amsterdam, the Netherlands
- **Prof. Antoinette Gagné** – University of Toronto, Canada
- **Franzisca Sanchez** – META, U.S.A.

# Publications

In 2025, the Language Friendly School continued to be taken up in the academic literature and covered in the education press, both in the Netherlands and internationally. Here are a few examples.

A year-long ethnographic study at a primary school in Trinidad and Tobago, by Reshara Alviarez, published in *Handbook of Anti-Discriminatory Education* (2025), drew directly on the Language Friendly School to document teachers designing and implementing a language-friendly plan, underlining the value of bottom-up, whole-school approaches to language-inclusive education.



Photo: Reshara Alviarez during her ethnographic research in Trinidad



Photo: Dienneke Blikslager at the St Janschool in Amsterdam

*Onderwijsblad* (AOB), "Benut de kracht van meertaligheid" (25 August 2025), profiled the Language-Friendly approach through the St. Janschool in Amsterdam — the first Language-Friendly School in the Netherlands — with assistant principal and LFS ambassador Dienneke Blikslager, alongside University of Toronto emeritus professor Jim Cummins.

A study of the language friendly approach in Language Friendly Schools in Ontario, Canada — co-authored by our co-founder Dr **Emmanuelle Le Pichon** (OISE, University of Toronto) — was published in *Language and Education* (Taylor & Francis, 30 July 2025). It is the first study to examine community responses to the language-friendly approach specifically, and found that resistance among school communities was minimal and confined to teachers during the initial transition period.



# Give a Forest Story

Between 21 February and 21 March 2025, the Rutu Foundation invited children, teachers and families around the world to "Give a Forest Story" — sharing, in any language, what forests and nature mean to them. The campaign was deliberately bracketed by two symbolic dates: International Mother Language Day on 21 February and the International Day of Forests (also the International Day for the Elimination of Racial Discrimination) on 21 March, linking linguistic diversity and the natural world in a single gesture.



The response spanned near and far: more than 50 creative stories in 25 different languages, contributed by children, teachers, parents, and others. A selection of 25 of these stories, together with accompanying classroom and home activities, was published as a multilingual, intercultural Forest Story Booklet added to the Language Friendly Toolkit — a free resource that teachers and parents can use to help children reflect on forests and nature through storytelling. More than a seasonal activity, the campaign captured something central to Rutu's work across both its programmes: that forests, like languages, matter differently across cultures and ways of seeing the world, and that storytelling in a child's own language is a powerful way to make those connections visible.



## INDIGENOUS-LED EDUCATION NETWORK (ILED)

The Indigenous-Led Education Network entered 2025 with continued growth and a deepening focus on knowledge that lives in bodies, land, and language rather than in classrooms alone.

The network welcomed five new members, bringing new regions and perspectives into the ILED family:

- Asociación Roga (Costa Rica);
- KESAN (Myanmar);
- Kalahan Educational Foundation (Philippines);
- Salumayag Youth Collective for Forests (Philippines), and
- The Language & Culture Initiative (Kenya);

The Annual ILED Members' Online Meeting in November drew 27 participants from 13 countries.

# Women Weaving Paths and Roots – exchange in Peru

In August, forty women from eight nationalities gathered in Santa Clara de Yarinacocha, in the Peruvian Amazon, for the ILED Network's third women's knowledge exchange, hosted by FECONAU. Delegations came from Mexico, Costa Rica, Panama, Colombia, and across Peru to share ancestral knowledge on pregnancy, birth, and postpartum care. At the heart of the exchange was a simple but radical idea: that Indigenous women are themselves researchers, capable of documenting and systematizing their own knowledge without deferring to outside experts.



## Maleta Didáctica: Educational Backpack

The gathering produced a "maleta didáctica" — a portable educational backpack with objects and materials designed to carry this knowledge back into communities long after the exchange ended.



# ILED Small Grant Funds

Across the world, **ILED's Small Grant Fund** supported initiatives including Guna youth science clubs monitoring coral reefs in **Panama**, a Shipibo medicinal plant garden in **Peru** that has catalogued over 50 plant species, and language revitalization work with displaced Wiwa communities in **Colombia**, rebuilding fluency in the Dumuna language. In Chiapas, **Mexico**, women and grandmothers began cultivating community gardens to restore traditional herbal knowledge lost to decades of industrial agriculture. In the **Philippines, Thailand and Myanmar**, children and youth are learning from primary schools up to university level about traditional ways to sustainably care for the environment.



In 2025, the ILED Network was able to provide financial support for 11 indigenous-led education initiatives in India, Thailand, Myanmar, Indonesia, Panama, Peru, the Philippines, Colombia, Mexico, Uganda and Kenya, totalling 46,516 euros.

# East-Africa Exchanges

An **East African exchange** brought Sengwer and Ogiek communities from Kenya together in **Uganda** to share knowledge of medicinal plants, with a strong focus on engaging youth in conservation.

A second in-person exchange was held in **Kenya**. Hosted by the Sengwer Berur Women's Group and the Ogiek Peoples' Development Programme (OPDP) at the Ogiek Cultural Centre in Narok County, the exchange welcomed ILED partner Friends with Environment in Development Programme (FED) from Uganda.

The first day of activities brought together 102 participants, culminating in the annual Ogiek Cultural Festival, which drew over 1,000 community members.

[Read more.](#)



The exchange in Uganda was featured in the local news.



# ILED Responding to crisis

When Typhoon Uwan struck the Philippines in November, it devastated the community around new member **Kalahan Academy**, flooding classrooms and cutting off power and communication.

With the help of the International Tree Fund, ILED contributed €2,500 to the community's recovery effort. The experience prompted the network to begin developing a dedicated **ILED Resilience Fund** for future emergencies.

As ILED approaches its fifth anniversary in 2026, the network continues to prove a simple point:

***The most important research on how children should be raised and taught is already being done by grandmothers, midwives, and knowledge-keepers who have been doing it for generations.***



## INDIGENOUS YOUTH FELLOWSHIP: KAVYA ANJALI – INDIA

For Kavya Anjali, a young Kurichya woman working with the Keystone Foundation in the Nilgiri hills of India, the ILED Youth Fellowship began as a language project and became something closer to a bridge-building exercise between communities.

Her fellowship focused on the Paniya language, spoken by a neighboring Indigenous community. Kavya organized a Mother Language Day celebration at the Gothradeepam Tribal Library, led forest walks that helped children see the forest as heritage rather than threat, and recorded traditional stories in Paniya as part of the global "Give a Forest Story" campaign. Alongside this, she began building a Paniya–Malayalam–English glossary — slow, patient work that continues to grow with every village visit.

What made the fellowship remarkable wasn't only the documentation, but what it asked of Kavya personally. Kurichya and Paniya communities carry old social hierarchies, and Kavya found herself crossing lines that don't often get crossed.

By the end of her fellowship, Kavya had directly engaged 41 people — 23 of them children and youth, 22 women — across multiple Paniya villages.

*"One day, while visiting a Paniya hamlet, an elder woman asked me which community I belonged to. I said, "Kurichiya." She paused and gently shared how, in the old days, Kurichiya people never stepped into a Paniya home — they were seen as "impure." But that day, I sat in her home, served her water, and shared a meal prepared with their traditional food. It felt natural to me, but for her, it was something deeply new. She held my hand and said, "This is good... this is different." That simple act — eating together — became a powerful moment of trust and healing. My fellowship wasn't just about language or farming. It was about breaking silences and building something honest, together."*



# Galibi, Suriname: Rooting Education in Language, Culture, and Identity

*A Century of Schooling, A New Chapter in Multilingual Education*

One of the most significant milestones of 2025 emerged from a remote Indigenous community on the banks of the Marowijne River, the border between Suriname and French Guiana. On 30 April 2025, the Sint Antonius School in Galibi, serving the Indigenous Kari'na villages of Christiaankondre and Langamankondre in Suriname, celebrated its 100th anniversary. More than a commemoration, this centenary marked a deepening of the school's commitment to multilingual, culturally grounded education and a strengthening of its partnership with the Rutu Foundation.

In 2023, the Sint Antonius School became the very first Indigenous school to receive **honorary membership in the international Language Friendly School (LFS) network**, recognition of its longstanding commitment to the languages and cultural knowledge of the Kari'na people. In 2025, in partnership with the Vereniging van Inheemse Dorpshoofden in Suriname (VIDS), and with financial support from the Dutch Ministry of Education, Rutu Foundation continued to support the school's transformation as the first Indigenous Language Friendly School globally.



At the heart of this work is a simple but powerful shift: education grounded in the language, culture, and identity of the community it serves. This was vividly reflected during the celebration of International Mother Language Day, when students and teachers paraded through the village singing in Kari'na – an endangered language now reclaiming its place in both school and community life. Rather than isolated activities, multilingual education in Galibi is being embedded across the whole school. Students contributed to a growing Kari'na-Dutch dictionary, created bilingual storybooks, and engaged in learning that reflects their lived experiences and cultural heritage. Teachers reintroduced bilingual approaches in mathematics, adopted multilingual classroom strategies, and despite significant infrastructure constraints including limited electricity and unreliable internet – are using AI tools to strengthen lesson preparation in a low-connectivity context.



### Key Activities in 2025

- Centenary celebration uniting village leaders, students, alumni, elders, and community partners in recognising the school's pivotal role in local and global education.
- Teacher workshops on multilingual mind maps for vocabulary development, integrating AI tools and bilingual illustrated stories in Kari'na and Dutch.
- Launch of bilingual resources: a Kari'na-Dutch children's dictionary, storybooks grounded in Kari'na traditions, and a relaunch of a bilingual mathematics method originally developed in partnership with Rutu Foundation in 2011.
- Community storytelling sessions with elders, with students recording stories for use as classroom materials.
- Deepened collaboration with VIDS, embedding community leadership at the centre of education planning and delivery.

# The Rutu Foundation Team

**Ellen-Rose Kambel:** the founder and driving force behind the Rutu Foundation, Ellen-Rose is an experienced trainer, author, and consultant who holds a law degree and a PhD in social sciences. As executive director, Ellen-Rose is responsible for programming, fundraising and external contacts.



**Saskia Bosch:** Saskia is the financial manager of the Rutu Foundation with many years of experience working as a bookkeeper in the commercial sector.

**Sara Barberà Romero:**

Sara joined Rutu in August 2023 and supported the **ILED secretariat** until September 2025 from Santiago de Chile.



**Hilda Heyde:**

Hilda joined the Rutu Foundation in 2018 and supported the **Language Friendly School** from its inception. In December 2025, Hilda moved to warmer regions where she continues to support schools in their multilingual journey. She also continues to be involved in the Language Friendly Childcare



**THANK YOU TO ALL  
THE STUDENTS AND  
VOLUNTEERS! WE  
COULD NOT HAVE  
DONE IT WITHOUT  
YOU!**

**LFS Support from the University of Toronto:**

- Victoria Jung
- Zhe Chen

**Rutu student interns in 2025:**

- Alexandra Jung (LFS Programme)
- Amaris Titareno (ILED)
- Emmi Peltonen (LFS)
- Franziska Söbbing (LFS)
- Guo Fei (ILED)
- Merijn Benning (LFS)

**Volunteers:**

- Albert Bosch (Finance)
- Martina Lipp (MarCom)
- Marlot Wolvekamp (MarCom)

# ILED Team

Behind ILED's network of partners, exchanges, and grants, a small secretariat keeps the network running day to day. Its work spans preparing partner contracts, organizing member meetings, and reporting to funders, alongside writing new funding proposals to sustain and grow the network.



**Sara Barbera**

ILED Coordinator  
(until September 2025)



**Caroline de Jong**



**Paul Wolvekamp**

## Regional facilitators

The ILED Team also includes the ILED Regional Facilitators, who act as ambassadors and direct points of contact for members in their region. They stay close to members' plans, support them with proposal writing, and review their reports. The regional facilitators also play an important role in identifying new members in their respective regions.



**Norma Zamora**

Latin-America and  
the Caribbean

**Tanya Conlu**

Southeast Asia



**Faisal Rehman and Ranjani Prasad**

India



**Milka Chepkorir**

Africa

# Governance

## Supervisory Board

The Rutu Foundation is governed by a **Supervisory Board (Raad van Toezicht)** which appoints the board/executive director.

The **board/executive director** (Ellen-Rose Kambel) is responsible for the overall management of the organization. The salary of the executive director is in line with the Good Governance Code for Charities (Commissie Wijffels).

The members of the Supervisory Board are appointed for four years and can be reappointed twice. Members of the Supervisory Board are not employed by the foundation and receive no remuneration. In 2025, the Board met three times. In between meetings, there is regular contact between the executive director and the supervisory board members.

There is an open position for a Supervisory Board member which will be filled after completion of the new 5 year Strategic Plan (2026).



**Mercedes de Miranda**  
Chair Supervisory Board



**Maayke Botman**  
Member Supervisory Board

## International Advisory Board

Rutu's international advisory board serves as a sounding board for the executive director and supervisory board and is composed of internationally recognized experts in the fields of education, linguistics, human rights and indigenous rights:

- **Jenne de Beer**
- **Prof. Carol Anne M. Spreen**
- **Dr. Martha Many Grey Horses**
- **Dr. Carol Benson**
- **Deena Hurwitz**
- **Prof. Salim Vally**
- **Prof. Sabine Severiens**
- **Paul Wolvekamp**



**Emmanuelle Le Pichon**

Dr. Emmanuelle Le Pichon is associate professor of Languages and Literacies Education at OISE, the University of Toronto and co-founder of the Language Friendly School

See our [website](#) to read more about our International Advisory Board Members.

# Financial Summary

In 2025 the foundation shifted from building up its project portfolio to carrying it out. Funds received in 2024 for the Indigenous-Led Education (ILED) programme and for language friendly teaching in Amsterdam and Suriname were used for implementation. The new Erasmus+ project ASTRA added funding for teacher training in the Netherlands, France and Croatia for the period 2025–2028.

As of 31 December 2025, a total of €323,217 was available for projects (2024: €348,032). Of this, €224,684 is for ILED and €98,533 comes from subsidies from the City of Amsterdam, the Dutch Ministry of Education and the European Commission Erasmus+. These funds are earmarked for activities in 2026 and later years. Because they are committed to specific projects and programmes, they are not part of the foundation's general reserve. Funding for ILED in 2025 came from GEF/UNIDO, Elzemarieke van Zanten Bequest, Global Alliance for Green and Gender Action (GAGGA), Global Affairs Canada, the International Tree Fund, and the Koningschool.

Where project funding did not fully cover implementation costs, the foundation contributed €12,902 from its own resources, so that activities could go ahead as agreed with partners and communities.

The year closed with a positive result of €17,834 (2024: €7,702), helped in part by interest income on funds held. The result was added to the general reserve. This strengthens the foundation's financial stability and its ability to respond flexibly to future opportunities and societal needs. The full Annual Statement 2025 is available on our website.



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GLOBAL ALLIANCE  
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# Looking ahead: 2026

## A new label for early childhood

Building on a six-month pilot in 2025, Rutu will launch the Language Friendly Childcare label in 2026 — extending the whole-school approach that has driven the LFS network into early years settings, where language habits and confidence take root earliest.

## Bringing the network together in Amsterdam

In September 2026, Rutu will host the Language Friendly School Conference in Amsterdam, bringing together educators, researchers, and policymakers from across the network to share practice and deepen the movement's reach.

## Toward a certified teacher training

Rutu is laying the groundwork for a certified Language Friendly teacher training, developed together with an academic partner. The plan is to pilot the course in 2027 and welcome its first full cohort in 2028 — a long-term investment in giving teachers a recognized, structured pathway into multilingual pedagogy, rather than leaving them to improvise it alone.

## Suriname: continuing the AI pilot

In Galibi, Rutu hopes to continue supporting teachers' use of safe offline AI tools for lesson preparation and documentation — a practical response to the community's limited electricity and connectivity, and a model for what low-resource multilingual innovation can look like.

## Two milestones

2026 marks 15 years since Rutu's founding, and the 5th anniversary of the ILED Network.

As ILED enters its fifth year, 2026 plans include a donor webinar celebrating the milestone, onboarding three to four **new members** currently in exploration (including partners in Peru and South Africa), and the early design of two new support mechanisms: an **ILED Resilience Fund** for members facing climate or other emergencies, and an **ILED Traditional Health Education Fund**. The network is also exploring how to make its own meetings more language-friendly, including budgeting for interpretation support for youth participants.

# Partners

*The Rutu Foundation relies on an extensive network of partners from around the globe. We are proud and grateful to be working with:*

Association of Indigenous Village Leaders in Suriname (VIDS), Suriname

Aso Roga, Costa Rica

Both ENDS, the Netherlands

Federación de Comunidades Nativas de Ucayali y Afluentes (FECONAU), Peru

Federation of Negrito Tribes (SPNKK), the Philippines

Forest Peoples Programme (FPP), UK

Friends with Environment in Development (FED), Uganda

Fundación para la Promoción del Conocimiento Indígena (FPCI), Panama

GAGGA Global Alliance for Green and Gender Action Network

IMPECT Association, Thailand

Karen Environmental and Social Action Network (KESAN), Myanmar/Thailand

Keystone Foundation, India

Kalahan Foundation, the Philippines

La Lengua Bribri/Alí García Segura and the Bribri community, Costa Rica

LekiLum, Mexico

Network of Education Policy Centers (NEPC), Croatia

Non-Timber Forest Products - Exchange Programme (NTFP-EP), the Philippines

Ogiek Peoples' Development Program (OPDP), Kenya

OISE, University of Toronto, Canada

Open Academy Step by Step, Croatia

Paul-Valéry University Montpellier, France

Praxis, Estonia

Riak Bumi, Indonesia

RISBO Research Institute, the Netherlands

Sengwer of Embobut Community Organisation, Kenya

SIRIUS Network, Belgium

Skills Up Training, the Netherlands

Terremondo, Italy

University College of Teacher Education in Vienna (PH Wien), Austria

Wampis Nation, Peru

Wiwa, Colombia

Yaaku Culture and Language Initiative (CLI), Kenya

# Certified Language Friendly Schools



Per 31 December 2025, in alphabetical order

\*) Language Friendly Ambassador Schools

1. Admiraal de Ruyterschool – Amsterdam, the Netherlands
2. Amstelland International School – the Netherlands\*
3. Annunciation of Our Lord – Hamilton, Canada
4. Basisschool De Vlieger – Dronten, the Netherlands
5. Basisschool De Wielewaal – Schagen, the Netherlands
6. Basisschool GO! Brugge Centrum – Brugge, Belgium
7. Berlin Metropolitan School – Berlin, Germany
8. Central Foundation Girls' School – London, UK
9. Christina Gordon Public School – Fort McMurray, Canada
10. Coop Academy Leeds – UK
11. De Dorpsbeuk – Scherpenzeel, the Netherlands
12. De Fontein Nieuwkomersschool – Breda, the Netherlands
13. De Troubadour – Eindhoven, the Netherlands
14. DENISE – Amsterdam, the Netherlands\*
15. Dr. Albert Schweitzer FO – Willemstad, Curaçao
16. Dulwich College Suzhou – Suzhou, China\*
17. Elckerlyc International School Leiderdorp – the Netherlands
18. Expertisecentrum voor Anderstaligen Emmen – the Netherlands
19. Glendale Secondary School – Hamilton, Canada\*
20. GO! Basisschool Pacheco – Brussel, Belgium
21. IKC Eestroom – Leeuwarden, the Netherlands
22. Impulse Leeuwarden – Leeuwarden, the Netherlands
23. International School Almere – the Netherlands
24. International School Breda – the Netherlands\*
25. International School Eindhoven – the Netherlands
26. International School Haarlem – the Netherlands
27. International School Leiden – the Netherlands
28. International School of Monaco – Monaco
29. International School Utrecht – the Netherlands
30. Janvrin School – Jersey, UK
31. KC De Leertuin – Amsterdam, the Netherlands
32. Kensington Primary School – London, UK
33. Kindcentrum de Vindplaats – Amsterdam, the Netherlands
34. Kindcentrum Rijpelberg – Helmond, the Netherlands
35. Kirkcaldy North Primary School – Kirkcaldy, Scotland, UK
36. Marnix College – Willemstad, Curaçao
37. Monseigneur Bekkersschool – Delft, the Netherlands
38. Nieuwkomersschool het Pyriet – Winterswijk, the Netherlands
39. OBS Bijlmerhorst – Amsterdam, the Netherlands
40. OBS De Bosrank – Hoofddorp, the Netherlands
41. OBS Hesselanden – Emmen, the Netherlands
42. OBS Multatuli – Amsterdam, the Netherlands
43. OBS Prinsenbos – Gilze, the Netherlands\*
44. Optimist International School – Hoofddorp, the Netherlands\*
45. PCB het Baken – Capelle aan den IJssel, the Netherlands
46. Plat Douet – Jersey, UK
47. Puig Campana – Benidorm, Spain\*
48. Resurrection C.S.S. – Kitchener, Canada
49. Saba Comprehensive School – Saba, the Netherlands
50. Salto De Ontmoeting – Eindhoven, the Netherlands
51. Salto De Startbaan – Eindhoven, the Netherlands
52. Salto International School I-Start – Eindhoven, the Netherlands\*
53. Salto RISE – Eindhoven, the Netherlands\*
54. Saltoschool Philipsdorp – Eindhoven, the Netherlands
55. Silver Creek – Mississauga, Canada\*
56. Skovvangskolen – Aarhus, Denmark
57. Springfield Primary – Jersey, UK
58. St Antoniusschool – Galibi, Suriname
59. St. Benedict C.S.S. – Cambridge, Canada
60. St. Janschool – Amsterdam, the Netherlands\*
61. Stedelijk College Eindhoven – the Netherlands
62. Sterrenschool de Globetrotter – Rotterdam, the Netherlands
63. Taalschool Lelystad – the Netherlands
64. Taalschool Westland – Monster, the Netherlands
65. Theresialyceum – Tilburg, the Netherlands
66. Trinity School – Jersey, UK

# CONTACT

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The Rutu Foundation is registered at the Dutch Chamber of  
Commerce registration nr: 52345084.

For tax purposes the Rutu Foundation is recognized as an  
organization for the general benefit (Algemeen Nut Beogende  
Instelling – ANBI).

Bank Account: IBAN NL81 INGB 0006043020.

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