

AI In 2025 – 2026 Impact Report

Inclusive AI Lab: Impact Report 2025-26



The 2025–2026 year welcomed a new cohort of Inclusive AI Fellows around the annual theme - *Reclaiming Techno-Optimism*. We spent the year reclaiming optimism from the hype, extraction, and inevitability narratives that too often surround AI. This commitment translated into public-facing and policy engagements, new partnerships, joint publications with collaborators and Fellows, and a growing network of people working to put inclusive AI into practice. We expanded our team and established dedicated working groups for Latin America, Africa, and Asia, deepening and decentering our work through stronger regional relationships. And we warmly welcome our 2026–2027 Fellows, who will take us into our new annual theme, *Building the Library of the Incalculable*, developed in partnership with the V2 Lab for the Unstable Media.

===== Year at a Glance =====

- **Presented our work in 25+ cities across Europe, Asia and Africa**, from Doha to Seoul, Kyoto to Pretoria, Lagos to New Delhi.
- **Convened the Data CARE Festival**, a 4-day gathering (June 9-12, 2026) across Utrecht, Amsterdam and The Hague, bringing together 80+ impact leaders from 21 countries under our Annual theme “Reclaiming Techno-Optimism.”
- **Welcomed our Fellows cohorts**, from academia, business and civic

sectors, from 16 countries working around the annual theme

- **Grew our team by 12+ new members** with expertise in AI policy, product design, AI literacies, and visual storytelling
- **Featured on 50+ stages worldwide**, at the India AI Impact Summit 2026, the World AI Summit Amsterdam, the UN Women Global Forum in Seoul, Unearthodox/Davos, and Zorg & ICT 2026.
- **In the global media 35+ times**, including Reuters, the BBC, Rest of World, Al Jazeera, and Le Monde.
- **Published 15+ resources**, including journal articles, special issues, book chapters, policy reports and toolkits, plus two completed PhD dissertations.
- **Launched our Inclusive AI Blog Series, "Reclaiming Techno-Optimism,"** publishing 15+ essays from team members, fellows and partners across the Majority World.
- **Launched Season 2 of our podcast, Responsible AI**, following on from Season 1's exploration of AI & Creativity with the Global South.
- **Partnered with Connected Power**, a 12-month global initiative led by Unfurl Futures, mapping the feminist digital ecosystem with 200+ stakeholders worldwide.
- **Contributed to national and multilateral policy**, including the Tony Blair Institute's AI leadership agenda and IT for Change's ReGenAI manifesto.

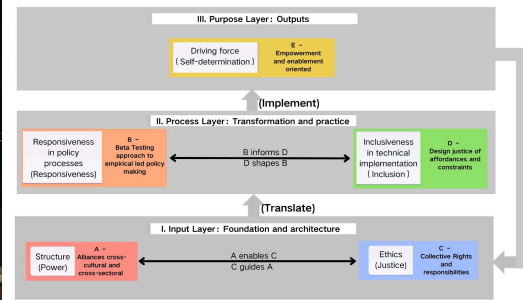
===== Impact Highlights =====

Blueprint from Connected Power for Alternative Tech



Led by our partner Unfurl Futures, with FAIR SHARE of Women Leaders and our team, [Connected Power is building a Blueprint](#) for a Global Feminist Digital Ecosystem with over 200 feminist activists.

Pioneered a Feminist Gender AI Framework



Concluding our Lab's Google-funded Gen(der) AI Safety project, we developed the [ABCDE Framework](#), an approach to AI safety grounded in the lived realities of the Global South.

India AI Policy Engagement

Our team is actively shaping AI policy in India, contributing to the Tony Blair Institute's "Delivering AI Impact" report, serving on the expert advisory group for the Global South AI Safety Network, IT for Change's ReGenAI manifesto, and building the Inclusive AI Leadership Seminar Series with IIM Bangalore.

Eye Spy AI: Digital Storytelling for Critical AI Literacy



[The Eye Spy AI toolkit](#) by our Design Director Siddhi Gupta allows people to find new metaphors for understanding AI, moving beyond the black box and digital binary.

Fair Futures: Grounding Inclusive AI in Southern Africa

Our Africa AI Director Wakanyi Macharia-Hoffman and Payal Arora partnered with the Fair Futures team in Pretoria, South Africa, engaging ministries and partners from Botswana, Ghana, Kenya, Malawi and South Africa. We continue this effort at the GDN Annual Meeting in Cape Town this October, alongside former fellow Nadia Starr, on standards and interoperability.



Pioneered a Slow Conferencing Format



Our annual Data CARE Festival (June 9-12, 2026) piloted new formats for 'Slow Conferencing,' via curated Field Visits, at the Dutch Data Protection Authority, IKEA, to Museum of Death, giving 80 leaders from 21

countries room for deep engagement. And "Collaboration for Good," PhD-led closing day piloted a novel training curriculum pairing early-career researchers with practitioners from Save the Children US, the Swedish Red Cross, helping PhDs translate their research into [material that translates insight into policy and practice.](#)



===== Awards & Recognition =====

Payal Arora was named one of the 8 Women with a New Vision for Earth 2026 by the Global Landscapes Forum.

Daniela Jaramillo-Dent received the Best Seminar Award at the University of Zurich.



Blog Series: Reclaiming Techno-Optimism

Launched in November 2025, our blog series has published essays from team members, fellows and partners across the Majority World throughout the year:

- [Making AI Culture Ready: How to Bring the Margins into the Mainstream](#), Lucie Chateau, PhD (November 2025, series opener)
- [AI for AI: Seeing Africa's Future Through Ubuntu Eyes](#), Wakanyi Macharia-Hoffman (November 2025)
- [A Cautiously Optimistic Reflection on AI for Recognition of Education in Southern Africa](#), Nadia Starr, (December 2025).
- [Why I Chose Culture Over Capital](#), Charles Hayes (January 2026)
- [What FabLabs Reveal About Building Inclusive AI Futures](#), Dr. Behnaz Norouzi (January 2026)
- [Life Needs Internet: An artist's exploration \(Series\)](#), Jeroen van Loon (February 2026)
- [AI for AI: Designing Artificial Intelligence for African Intelligence](#), Wakanyi Macharia-Hoffman (February 2026)
- [The Oldest Way to See Our Newest Problem](#), Charles Hayes (March 2026)
- [The Dream and the Vertigo](#), Vincenzo Scagliarini (March 2026)
- [When 'Good Enough' Data Shapes Policy: Synthetic data and the politics of representation](#), Shefali Mehra (April 2026)
- [Children's Visions for Hopeful Technology Futures](#), Sumita

Sharma (April 2026)

- [How do you get people to write a letter about the internet?](#), Jeroen van Loon (April 2026)
- [Always Online, Always Caring: The Hidden Cost of Staying Connected](#), Gaia Guatri (May 2026)
- [Launch of Series: An Ode to African Intelligence](#), Damilare Dosunmu (May 2026)
- [A Monk's Broom in an Optimized World](#), Shoukei Matsumoto (June 2026)
- [How to Make Sense of 1500 Handwritten Letters about the Internet](#), Jeroen van Loon (June 2026)
- [Are You Lost, Lofty, or Just Vibing?](#), Dasha Simons (July 2026)
- [Keeping AI Accurate Is Really About Keeping Ourselves Honest](#), Charles Hayes (July 2026)

==== Publications from our Team ====

- [Geography of Digital Hope: An Optimistic Perspective on Digital Labor and Infrastructure from the Global South](#)
- [Situating AI: Global Media Approaches to Artificial Intelligence \(Special Issue\)](#)
- [Global AI Cultures](#)
- [Geographies of Hope: Rethinking Deepfake Harms and Gender AI Safety in the Global South](#)
- [China Time Machines: The Temporal-Spatial Dynamics of China's Global Digital Platforms and Technocapitalist Expansions](#)
- [Representation of Vulnerable Groups in Dutch Climate Crisis News: An Analysis of Mainstream Narratives](#)
- [Exploring Content Creators' Belief Systems within their Social Media Ecosystems](#)
- [Enchanted Sensemaking Among Content Creators](#)
- [Surface Sustainability](#)
- [AI-Enabled Media Technology with African-Driven Indigenous Ubuntu Ethics and Principles](#)
- [Human Flourishing Across Cultures and Disciplines](#)
- [Inside the Black Box: How Algorithms Are Made and Why It Matters](#)
- [Decolonizing Privacy in the Age of AI \(Chapter\)](#)
- [Blooming in the Cracks: Women Migrant Workers and their Everyday Practices in China's Platform-mediated Gig Economy \(PhD dissertation\)](#)
- ["When everything is falling on you": Working carers' capabilities to reconcile care and employment \(PhD](#)

dissertation)

- Technology, Employment and Wellbeing

=== Team Members on the Global Stage ===



Our team delivered keynotes, panels and workshops across 23+ cities and four continents this year, including AI Impact Summit 2026, New Delhi, UN Women Global Forum, Seoul, Unearthodox, Davos, Sharjah International Book Fair, UAE, and Global Development Network, Paris.



===== What's Next =====

FELLOWS COHORT 2026-27



Summer School at Utrecht University alongside our Data CARE festival in June 2027. We look forward to deepening the Connected Power blueprint with our 200+ global collaborators, and expanding our partnerships.

We enter the new year with a 2026-27 Fellows Cohort already convened around the theme *Building the Library of the Incalculable*, in partnership with V2_Lab for the Unstable Media, Season 3 of our podcast and a new Blog Series around this theme. We're laying the groundwork for an Inclusive AI



Thank you to our 2025-26 Fellows Cohort, Board, Partners, and the broader Inclusive AI community for making this year a success.

- The Inclusive AI Team

