



CALL FOR PROPOSALS

YOUTH ANNUAL COMPETITION IN SOUTH AMERICA (22 TO 35 YEARS OLD)

Reflections and Experiences on
Rurality from the Perspective of
Peasant, Indigenous, and
Afrodescendant Communities in
the age of Artificial Intelligence (AI)

2026
DEADLINE
20 JUNE

CATEGORIES
ESSAYS/POSTERS

FOR MORE INFORMATION
WWW.IPDRS.ORG
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CALL FOR PROPOSALS 2026

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YOUTH ANNUAL COMPETITION

The Institute for Rural Development in South America (IPDRS) is launching the Fifteenth Youth Annual Competition in South America, which aims to encourage, promote, and foster engaged research on rural issues. This year, the focus will be on *Reflections and Experiences on Rurality from the Perspective of Peasant, Indigenous, and Afrodescendant Communities in the age of Artificial Intelligence (AI)*.

OBJECTIVE

Promote analysis by young people on the relationship between Artificial Intelligence (AI) and rural areas, the potential, contributions or threats to territorial processes and social, economic, political and cultural projects of peasant, indigenous and afrodescendant subjects.

THEMATIC ORIENTATION

Artificial Intelligence (AI) organizes information and attempts to mimic human capabilities in analysis, solution derivation, and decision-making in certain processes involving digitized information. This is all based on the experience or configuration of algorithms, sets of instructions that systems use to process data for specific purposes. AI possesses a wealth of information regarding rural areas and can offer a unique perspective. In preparing this call for proposals, we asked an AI how it approaches the rural world. It presented four perspectives: precision agriculture and livestock for optimizing resource use; land management through monitoring, tracking, mapping, and other methods to address deforestation, for example; rural planning for public policies through improved information systems and the detection of irregularities in policy implementation; access to markets and financing by optimizing value chains through digital platforms and the use of data to evaluate credit; and, furthermore, it poses a critical question, stating emphatically: “AI is not neutral.”

In various fields of knowledge, mathematics, physics, chemistry, medicine, agronomy, biology, geography, sociology, politics, the value of AI is relative to the universality of knowledge and the availability and dissemination of related publications. However, its performance varies across different sciences, as do its applications and the social, political, and environmental consequences it entails.

Indeed, the AI background we used to develop this call for proposals stems from the algorithm we configured on our computers; that is from the research and work we conduct at IPDRS. Therefore, the risks and challenges it addresses are those highlighted by our own work, research, and investigations when we ask: Who controls rural socioeconomic statistics? Are rural communities data producers or merely data providers? Does AI reinforce the extractive agribusiness model or strengthen the economies of rural peasant and indigenous communities? Can AI be implemented with a human rights approach?

From the above, we could assume that if another computer, from a different kind of institution and with a different theoretical and political perspective, asks the same questions, the AI might have different answers and a different way of framing the problem. Therefore, this call for proposals should make it clear that we are interested in delving deeper into the perspectives of peasant, indigenous, and afrodescendant communities, the perspectives of living rural communities that exercise their rights and develop their own proposals for management, territorial autonomy, food sovereignty, and climate and social justice.

Regarding the issue aspects, the proposals could address and problematize the capacity of AI to manage content about the reality and culture of peasant, indigenous and afrodescendant territories, out of context and without the living territorial memory that has few opportunities to become visible and, eventually, through its dissemination achieve recognition and defend itself.

Regarding the materiality of AI, another aspect that problematizes its use is the consumption of large quantities of water to cool the data centers housing its servers, which generates a significant and growing water footprint. However, AI also offers opportunities for accessing information for agricultural and livestock production, education, culture, and also for data monitoring and other mechanisms that, in these times, could significantly contribute to territorial control. Therefore, AI requires people to position themselves as both senders/producers and receivers/consumers of information in increasingly rapid times and processes that are becoming increasingly urgent due to the climate, energy, and food crises.

If we return to the multidimensional crisis, we will see that it is precisely the natural resources, concentrated in indigenous, peasant, and afrodescendant territories, that generate the greatest geopolitical disputes, and also the greatest violations of territorial rights. In this context, the use of technology, and specifically information technology, is fundamental for the reproduction of traditional ways of life, reproductive systems, and the sustainability of life itself. And within this framework, AI is undoubtedly a tool for multiple interests.

In any case, what this version of the competition for young South Americans tries to explore is what reflections and experiences AI is generating in rural areas, whether these are inspiring, problematizing, complementary to local knowledge, functional to needs, threatening with regard to information or democratizing with regard to knowledge.

WHO CAN PARTICIPATE?

Young women and men, aged 22 to 35, who are students, leaders and members of social organizations, researchers, activists, and public policy managers focused on rural development initiatives for peasant, indigenous, and afrodescendant communities in South American countries. Proposals may be submitted by a person or a group of young people.

PARTICIPATION REQUIREMENTS

- People who have obtained first, second or third place in previous versions of this contest will not be able to participate.
- The works must be original and unpublished.
- In the case of referring to community experiences or processes, they must have been developed with the knowledge and consensus of the communities involved.
- Participants must provide truthful information.
- Applicants agree that, if they are selected as winners, their work may be published and shared by

- IPDRS and partner institutions in various formats.
- The winners must be willing to participate in the public awards ceremony.
- Each person and group may apply to only one category.
- People affiliated with IPDRS or institutions providing financial support to the Contest will not be eligible to participate.

CONTEST CATEGORIES

ESSAYS

- Narrative and basic structure (introduction, development and conclusions).
- Length of 20 pages (approximately 60,000 characters including spaces).
- They can be written in Spanish or Portuguese.
- Include bibliographic references.
- Individual or group authorship, with resume, photograph and contact information.
- Word format.

POSTERS

- Vertical format (45.72 x 60.96 cm).
- Visual techniques such as photography, illustration, among others.
- Technical data sheet with title, description, techniques applied and credits.
- High resolution and editable format.
- Individual or collective authors, with resume, photograph and contact information.

APPLICATION PROCESS

For an application to be valid, participants must send all required documents to concurso@ipdrs.org no later than 11:59 pm on June 20, 2026. The email must be sent personally or by a representative in the case of group applications. The email subject line must include the applicant's or representative's first and last name, followed by the words "IPDRS Competition" and the year of the competition. Example: Manuel Pérez / IPDRS Competition 2026.

REQUIRED DOCUMENTATION FOR APPLICATIONS

ESSAYS

Final Essay [Word]

Resume

Identity document(s)

Participating photograph(s)

Contact and location information

POSTERS

High-resolution poster in editable format

Technical specifications

Resume

Identity document(s)
Participating photograph(s)
Contact and location information

REVIEW COMMITTEE

The Judging Committee will be composed of representatives from the institutions sponsoring the Contest. In the case of posters, one-third of the score will be determined by public voting on IPDRS's social media channels.

REVIEW CRITERIA

The main elements that the Committee will take into account for the evaluation of the work include:

- Coherence of the essay or poster with the theme of the Contest
- Content of the essay or poster with a rights-based approach
- Relevance and verifiability of data and information
- Regional and rural perspective
- Innovation

The review committee will be made up of representatives from IPDRS institutional alliances, all with proven knowledge and creative capabilities, and a great empathy with the rural world.

AWARDS BY CATEGORY

ESSAYS

First place: USD 550
Second place: USD 400
Third place: USD 250

POSTERS

First place: USD 550
Second place: USD 400
Third place: USD 250

SCHEDULE

| ACTIVITY | Feb | Mar | Apr | May | Jun | Jul |
|--|------------|------------|------------|------------|------------|------------|
| Launch of the 2026 Call for Proposals | 23 | | | | | |
| Promotion and dissemination of the topic | | | | | | |
| Closing of the competition | | | | | 20 | |

| ACTIVITY | Feb | Mar | Apr | May | Jun | Jul |
|---|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|
| Delivery of results from the Review Committee | | | | | 30 | |
| Announcement of winners | | | | | | 3 |
| Awards | | | | | | 18 |
| Publication of essays and posters | | | | | | |

More information is available on the IPDRS website: www.ipdrs.org and inquiries can be sent to concurso@ipdrs.org.

The IPDRS and the Annual Competition for Young People of South America are supported by Brot für die Welt (Bread for the World), We Effect , Humundi and Oxfam in Bolivia.