Meet Our Founder

Inti Raymi Fund founder David McGrain, or Chimu as he is affectionately nicknamed, is a phenomenal American success story twice over. First, the All-American boy became a highly successful businessman. Then he became a highly successful human being. As he travelled, he witnessed the vast gulf between wealthy people visiting other countries and the native people they walked past without seeing, some of those people living on less than a dollar a day. Chimu realized how important it is to not only see, but to better understand the gulf that separates human from human. He gave up reservations at the Sheraton and Four Seasons in favor of staying in the homes of people who lived in the places he visited, people he met on the streets. As his world expanded, Chimu began to collect indigenous, tribal art. His collection grew, and he began to wonder – who made this art? Where did those people go? He began to travel to faraway countries, where he fell in love with people that had lived in the lands for hundreds, sometimes thousands of years.

The nickname Chimu came from a civilization that predates the Inca and thrived in northern Peru from the 7th through the 14th centuries. Determined to provide marginalized people with the respect, dignity, and opportunity, Chimu started the Inti Raymi Fund in late 2011. Through IRF, he began funding what he likes to call “Passion Projects” out of his own pocket. Finally developing a formula of giving that works for Indigenous Peoples and other oppressed people, he created a different way of giving for others to use – matching funds to support transparent projects that struggling communities have identified, planned, and carry out on their own. To date, IRF has funded projects in countries in every pocket of the planet, donating more than $2.6 million from the private fund to help communities and people progress in their own way. And we are not stopping now. We continue to travel the Earth, searching for marginalized and oppressed people fighting to survive. We strive to bring them respect, dignity and a level playing field. We work to bring them hope and a way forward.

“We’ve confused the pursuit of happiness with a pursuit of things. We’re taught to look upstream to see who has more things, better things. My hope is to help people to look downstream and pull others up.”

Chimu

Today, Chimu wears a large solid-gold nose ring on a necklace around his neck. Robbers stole the ring centuries ago from the grave of a man who wanted to impress those in the afterlife with his importance. The heavy nose ring thumps against Chimu’s chest as he walks, a constant reminder that you cannot take it with you when you go.
Our Philosophy
“The Difference Between Mercy and Pity is Respect”

The Inti Raymi Fund was created to change the way we all think about philanthropy. We believe it is time to provide people with a way to be more effective in how they give. Most importantly, we believe it is time to provide the people we help with Dignity and Respect in the process. It is time to be wiser about the way we help by asking the recipients… "What do you need?” and “How can we Help?”, then listen and respond accordingly. Giving people what they need to move forward on their own terms is a sustainable way which is respectful and builds self-esteem. At the IRF, we feel it is time to make sure that the money we give goes directly into the hands of the people who need it, not into the hands of corrupt governments, or certain ineffective NGO organizations. We feel the time has come to allow those who give, the opportunity to choose who they help and how they help. We believe people who give back to the world deserve to feel the emotional satisfaction and joy which helping people directly brings.

Changing the Paradigm

For centuries, the world has operated with a distinctly western philosophy on how we go about the business of helping those “less fortunate”. It is based on the idea that affluent people – successful members of the modern human race – know what is best for all people. This has led public and private aid organizations to develop programs that overly control the way other cultures receive and utilize aid. With the best of intentions, we have perpetuated generations of dependent communities attached to government and nonprofit programs for survival. This attitude has led to the disappearance of unique cultures and ideas globally. By continuing to project our western beliefs onto struggling communities, we are creating more harm than good by crippling the very people we seek to help. We rob them of the opportunity to build the problem-solving skills they need, and we damage their confidence and their own ability to thrive. By working with third parties instead of working directly with the communities in need, philanthropists have unintentionally created an enormous opportunity for corruption within the international aid industry. It is hard to exactly calculate how much money sent to foreign countries and domestic aid groups for philanthropic aid is lost. Our estimate, from our extensive field work in over 60 countries, is that between 50%-99% evaporates into the system. One thing is certain – corruption and skepticism are the major obstacles hindering international aid today.
Adrenaline Philosophy

It is time to change the way we change the world. IRF is a new model for 21st century philanthropy based on Human connection, self-determination, and **Respect and Dignity** in the process. We call it Adrenaline Philanthropy. It is about charging you directly with the power to decide which communities you help and what projects you fund. It is about empowering those in need with the power to move forward in ways they determine for themselves, free of strings attached or conditions. It is about putting cash directly into the hands of those who need it most! Isn't this what you would want if you were in need and were asked what you needed, or would you be happy with donated shoes or “other gifts” and enjoy listening about some new religion from some distant land? Keep in mind this entire process is administered by foreigners in your country. We travel the world and scour geopolitical news, seeking out and finding people that have been oppressed and marginalized by corrupt and abusive leadership. We offer people in these communities a one-time opportunity to level the playing field. We offer them a second chance to survive. We believe that diversity makes our global community stronger. We bring the faces and communities of the people we discover to you. We show you the projects they want us to fund. We hope to inspire you to understand the cultures and the issues they struggle to overcome. We hope to inspire you to take back the power to choose the projects which you wish to contribute, to find the people and the causes that resonate with you. We believe absolutely that you have the ability to change the world, one community at a time. The IRF philosophy was developed through annual attendance at the Annual United Nations Conferences on Indigenous Peoples Issues, where we listen to thousands of Indigenous peoples representing hundreds of ethnicities from all regions of the world discuss their issues and needs. We came to understand that, while all people share common human bonds, every community lives with a unique set of circumstances. We realized that “we” cannot know what is best for every community in every part of the world. We came to understand that if we don’t know what they actually need, we cannot possibly help them. Our Approach is simple. We address each project by treating the people we wish to assist with **Dignity and Respect** in the process.

We trust and believe in these people to know what they need and want to move forward. After listening to thousands of people discuss their issues at the United Nations over the years, we noticed they all resoundingly say the same thing over and over, they all want “Self-Determination” as described in Articles 3 & 4 of the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples. By asking our two significant questions… “What do you need?” and “How can we help?”, we believe we can address their concerns in the most respectful and effective manner.

Chaski Morales, Inti Raymi Fund director with an Indigenous Arhuacos community leader in Sierra Nevada de Santa Marta, Colombia.

Anas Talalqa, our Human Rights Advisor with group of Sámi people from Finland at the United Nations Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues in New York, USA.
Our Global Impact

170,264 helped in North America

97,039 helped in Africa

90,416 helped in South America

41,942 helped in Asia

35,343 helped in Europe

4,500 helped in Middle East

2,800 helped in Australia Oceania

2,435 helped in Central America
How our giving helps
Education is not a privilege Access to education is not a privilege, it's a right. And yet, nearly 60 million children are not in school, most of them girls. Education is more than just a fundamental right; it helps pave the way to a successful and productive future. Our Funds were used to build schools and provide access to early education in 21 countries around the world.

Empowering Women Not just victims, women are essential element of IRF projects around the world and powerful agents of change, women have been and can be central actors in pathways to sustainable development. In all of our projects, in every country, we insure the inclusion of women and young girls.

Empowering youth Today’s generation of youth is the largest the world has ever known, the number of youth between the ages of 15 and 24 is 1.1 billion; youth constitute 18% of the global population. Youth and children together, including all those aged 24 years and younger, account for nearly 40% of the world’s population. At Inti Raymi Fund we believe in the power of young people, their passion and desire to make the world better place for all inspire us to work directly more with them, in our funds. We make sure youth are not only included, but have a leadership role to play in achieving sustainable development in their communities.

Embrace your Roots & Grow

Embrace your Roots & Grow is an active citizenship and personal development educational training course funded by Inti Raymi Fund for young people in Armenia, age 18–30 years. In Partnership with Loesje Armenia, this course aims to educate youth about true values of active citizenship such as; human rights, rule of law and active participation. The program comprises 11 training courses, each over five continuous days, taking place in each of the 11 regions of Armenia with the aim of touching the lives of an estimated 5,000 Armenian young people.

IRF project in Lebanon helps refugee children who are not currently enrolled in the public school system due to challenges such as language barriers or stalled academic progress resulting from their geographic displacement.
Standing Up for Free Press  Undemocratic governments want to control the media – without the Free Press, officials find it easier to do what they want. They can squander national assets on mansions abroad, forcibly disappear opponents, and hide infectious disease outbreaks. In 2014, IRF started a partnership with the Maidan Press Center in Kiev, Ukraine to provide opportunities for civil society to influence political, economic and social processes, highlighting them in the information field in accordance with the requirements and spirit of democratic values and civil society. In 2018, IRF partnered with Amnesty International pursue the release of the Al Jazeera network journalist Mahmoud Hussein and 15 other jailed Egyptian journalists facing spurious charges. Our funds will be used for legal fees and other negotiation costs for the pursuit of the safe release of these detained journalists.

Access to Legal Assistance  The high costs of legal services is a great deterrent for those needing assistance, often individuals will avoid seeking legal advice, even when advice is paramount, due to their inability to afford such services. The truth is that “unless you are very wealthy, the cost of going to court to protect your rights is beyond you”. In a number of our projects, part of IRF funds were used to protect people who don’t have access to legal services enabling them to defend their rights.

Protecting Minorities  Minorities are particularly vulnerable to discrimination, poverty and unemployment. Minorities have suffered since the beginning of time, with sustained discrimination, intermittent violence and have experienced long-term marginalization. Since IRF was founded in 2011, our funds have been used to protect and promote the rights of minorities in Africa, Asia, Europe, South America, Central America, North America, Australia Oceania and the Middle East.

Land is Life  For the pastoralist Maasai, land is everything. In 2013, hundreds of Maasai homes were burned down illegally to drive the Maasai from their traditional pastures in order to make space for exotic wildlife hunters. Our Funds are being used for legal defense against the Tanzania governments’ illegal land grabs. As a direct and indirect result of the Inti Raymi Fund’s support along with others, the Prime Minister of Tanzania announced their rescission of their previous actions with various GCC member states on land leases within the Maasai Lands. This is a wonderful example how publicity, an open mind, and a good conscience on the part of elected officials can make a difference by doing the right thing in support of the Indigenous Peoples of the world.
**Hurricane Harvey** The Inti Raymi Fund provided financial support directly to the Hurricane Harvey victims of Texas temporarily housed in the Red Cross Center based in Austin, Texas. The vast majority of the storm shelter victims were people without a safety net of families residing in “away from the coast” safe areas to escape to. Victims were provided cash in hand and dignity to purchase their much-needed personal items which are important to each unique person in the shelters.

**Gorkha Earthquake** Chimu was at Everest Base Camp climbing Mt. Everest when this infamous 7.9 earthquake and subsequent avalanche killed 19 and injured over 50 at Basecamp. Chimu worked alongside fellow climbers to care for the critically injured in triage, then subsequently helped facilitate the evacuation of these injured and the dead. Subsequent to Chimu’s evacuation from Base Camp, the Inti Raymi Fund sent a team back to Nepal to help more. This regional quake killed 10,000 in Nepal and injured nearly 22,000 people. Our team spent most of their time in the tribal mountain village of Khalte-9, Kaula. Our funds were used to rebuild the village school after the community decided unanimously that their children “were the future of their village”.

**Haiyan Typhoon** Financial support was directly delivered on Sulu'an Island, Philippines to the survivors and families of victims of this horrific, record setting Typhoon. This natural disaster caused over 3,500 deaths, massive destruction and immense human suffering. This remote island of Sulu'an was roughly a two-hour boat ride east of the Philippines mainland. This desolate island location caused them to basically be “off the map” from almost all humanitarian support from the giant aid agencies and governmental naval ships which focused on the mainland but IRF leaves nobody behind.
Syria War  The Syrian war has created one of the biggest humanitarian crises in our modern history. More than 11 million Syrians are on the run, including some 5.3 million who have been forced to seek safety in neighboring countries. Inside Syria, more than 6.1 million people are displaced and 13.1 million are still in need of humanitarian assistance. Since the crisis started, IRF worked with Syrian refugees in Jordan, Lebanon and Turkey to empower them to survive through this crisis and build better lives.

Rohingya Crisis  For decades, there has been on and off ethnic and religious tensions along the border of Myanmar and Bangladesh. There have been numerous outbreaks of major conflict and violence including beatings, raping as an act of war, and burning of villages. The ethnic cleansing in Myanmar forced more than 750,000 men, women and children of the ethnic Muslim Rohingya minority to run for their lives seeking refuge in Bangladesh and elsewhere in the world. They fled with literally nothing but the clothes on their backs to travel an unimaginably dangerous two-week journey to safety abroad. Our funds were used for their basic survival and to help them start new lives.

Yemen Humanitarian Crisis  The Yemen war is currently the world’s worst humanitarian crisis. Since this armed conflict erupted in March 2015, more than 22 million people are now in need of humanitarian assistance among which 11.3 million are in acute need of immediate assistance to save or sustain life, mostly women and children. In partnership with CARE International, our funds specifically are being used to truck fresh water and food supplies into areas where water supplies are affected by Cholera. Funds also are being used to treat affected victims of Cholera.
**Equal Love** According to the UN, more than a third of the world’s countries criminalize consensual, loving same-sex relationships, entrenching prejudice and putting millions of people at risk of blackmail, arrest and imprisonment. Many countries force transgender people to undergo medical treatment, sterilization or meet other onerous preconditions before they can obtain legal recognition of their gender identity. 3% of IRF funds were used to promote equal rights and fair treatment for LGBTQ people.

**Building Peace** According to The Institute for Economics and Peace, every $1 spent on 'upstream' conflict prevention saves $16 on the 'downstream' costs of violent conflict. And yet, the biggest challenge remains funding for peace building. As achieving global peace is one of IRF goals we invested 100,000 USD supporting Generations for Peace, ranked #2 among peace building NGOs in the world to help achieving sustainable conflict transformation at the grassroots in communities in Jordan, Lebanon, Ghana and South Sudan.

**Getting Syria children back to School** Syria's civil war has trampled its children as much as it has killed its adults. 400,000 Syrian children refugees in Lebanon represent a lost generation without education. IRF funds were used towards children's education paying for all of the soft costs (books, pencils, pens, arts supplies, computer equipment etc.) to help with classes which boost children's literacy, mathematics and language skills so that they may eventually integrate into public schools in Lebanon or hopefully upon return to Syria someday.

The children from Nuer and Dinka communities in Mangateen and Hai Referendum in 107, the area much affected by the conflict in 2013 and 2016 are telling the leaders of South Sudan,

"Please make peace as your priority. We are tired of war, no more war"
Mitigating Harmful Industries  
In keeping with the IRF’s mission to support ancient and fragile societies, the IRF provided significant financing and sponsorship of the Indigenous Sami People’s Reindeer Cooperative of Northern Norway to the Indigenous Sami Peoples’ Reindeer Herding association. These funds were used for due diligence studies on the geological and environmental impacts for the proposed mining company’s purchase/lease offers to strip mining vast areas in the Sami Peoples Territories.

Nuclear Zero  
To create a just, peaceful world and protect our environment, the Inti Raymi Fund partnered with Nuclear Age Peace Foundation to educate and advocate for peace and for a world free of nuclear weapons. Our contribution was directed towards the Marshall Islands because it is the home of the United States’ massive nuclear testing, which caused irreparable harm and death by radiation poisoning to thousands of the Indigenous Bikini Islanders of the Marshall Islands. The largest of the nuclear bomb tests was infamously called “Castle Bravo”.

Recycled Orchestra  
In appreciation for turning garbage into beauty and inspiring dreams, the IRF provided financial support to the Landfill Harmonic Orchestra. Our funds are being used to provide logistical support for the elderly in this utterly impoverished landfill community as well as to provide well balanced meals for the extended families of the orchestra members.

Sierra Leone Mudslide  
This massive mudslide occurred after three days of torrential rain overran several houses which killed roughly 1,000 residents, many of whom were trapped inside their homes. No financial compensation can fix the surviving victims’ pain and suffering; however, we also know these people also have lost everything, from their homes to all their personal belongings so we supported each of them with the equivalent to one year’s income each, to help them in some small way.
2012-2018 At a Glance

76 projects

More than $2,600,000 donated

444,739 people helped

65 countries
Our Leadership

Chimu
Founder and Managing Director

Anas Talalqa
Human Rights Advisor

Chaski Morales
Director

Kristine Kiltz
Director

Richard Schaefer
Director

The Inti Raymi Fund is not a school builder, a water well driller, a preacher or a deliverer, what we are is an organization which Respectfully shares with People and provides them the working capital to fulfill their life’s needs and we provide them a “second chance in life to thrive”.
We believe that philanthropy is not about signing a check, it is about starting your sharing adventure! It's finding a new way of looking at the world, a chance to see people and cultures hidden from the mainstream. It is about making the kind of difference you want to make in the world. It is about receiving the emotional satisfaction and joy when you connect and help people directly. If you can experience this intense emotional connection and joy, you will continue your sharing journey on into perpetuity.

If our message resonates with you, let us help you realize your dreams of helping people too. If the Inti Raymi Fund can help you help people, then we've facilitated more good in the world.

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