

Activity Report



2025

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A message from Carlos Álvarez Pereira,

Secretary General of the Club of Rome

For *The Fifth Element*, 2025 marked a decisive shift. After three years of sense-making, exploration and shaping the questions, this was the year we began to more clearly embody what we had been speaking about, and to work towards creating real impact.

The Fifth Element was born from a concern that remains as urgent today as it was in *No Limits to Learning*, a report to The Club of Rome published in 1979: the “human gap”, the distance between our immense capacity to act and transform the world around us, and our limited practice in understanding and dealing responsibly with the consequences of our actions.

Bridging that gap is a learning journey. In many ways, it means catalysing a human revolution, a shift in our mindsets.

By this, I do not mean an upheaval of institutions. I mean a transformation in meaning. A shift from separation to interdependence, from extraction to regeneration, from the illusion of control to the practice of participation. A redefinition of wellbeing, not as ever-increasing consumption, but as the quality of our relationships with one another and with the web of life.

In 2025, we deepened partnerships and worked more intentionally across the chasms that fragment our societies. Rather than promoting predefined solutions, we focused on creating the conditions for resonance and pollination, connecting initiatives that are already alive but too often isolated. The result: clearer questions, stronger alliances, a deeper coherence between vision and practice, and, importantly, new learnings and the co-creation of responses to our existential challenges.

I invite you to explore our work in this activity report and discover the progress we have made along the way, hoping it resonates with you.

Warm regards,



Carlos Álvarez Pereira
Secretary General of the Club of Rome



Voices of our ecosystem

Cooperating with The Fifth Element programme of the Club of Rome continues to be a pleasure and a privilege for the members of our international network of global citizens empowered by Buddhism. This partnership traces its roots to the friendship between the Club of Rome co-founder Aurelio Peccei and Soka Gakkai International President Daisaku Ikeda. Both shared the conviction that what they called “human revolution” – inner transformation – is the essential foundation for building a sustainable and peaceful human culture that treasures life.

Through joint events held in the UK and Italy, and with upcoming gatherings in Brazil later in 2026, we are deepening our understanding of how human revolution can be applied to creatively address the challenges of today’s world. We greatly value this collaboration, which brings profound learning, and look forward to continuing and strengthening our partnership in the years ahead.

Joan Anderson

Soka Gakkai International

The world is increasingly marked by fragmentation and accelerated change. Thus, the need to create platforms that bring diverse voices together around a common purpose also rises. This is what our collaboration with The Fifth Element and the Club of Rome centred on.

We built on our shared body of work on systemic redesign to explore inconvenient truths about our economic, governance and societal systems. Our joint ‘Touchstone Webinar’ series brought together leading minds - Carlos Álvarez Pereira, Gaya Herrington and John Fullerton - to discuss ways forward and to present these ideas to the public.

At a time when speed, convenience and technological disruption risk crowding out deeper reflection, it is important to prioritise rigorous dialogue and a willingness to rethink entrenched assumptions. We will continue to work together in building momentum behind our shared purpose.

Chandran Nair

Founder and Chairperson, GIFT.ed



As partners, Globethics is proud to have been joining efforts with the Club of Rome and The Fifth Element initiative to ensure that the global transformation generated by artificial intelligence is aligned with our common vision of a just, inclusive and sustainable world.

As our joint statement following the 3rd UNESCO Global Forum on the Ethics of Artificial Intelligence in 2025 in Bangkok affirms: ‘The ethics of AI is not a set of rules, but a continuous, co-created process’, I do hope that we will continue this impactful journey of inclusive dialogue and engagement, leaving no one behind.

Fadi Daou

Executive Director, Globethics



At the centre of the UNESCO-MOST BRIDGES Coalition’s collaboration with the Club of Rome, The Fifth Element platform is undertaking refreshing and much-needed approaches to planetary regeneration and societal transformation, grounded in ecological wellbeing and intergenerational trust. From drawing on vital knowledge and human capacities essential to our future to valuing the integrity and power of youth as a shaping planetary force, The Fifth Element’s ambitions and purpose offer an inspiring vision that the BRIDGES community is proud to contribute to and help shape with so many inspiring international and community partners.

Steven Hartman

*Founding Executive Director
UNESCO-MOST BRIDGES Coalition*



True intergenerational leadership is a strategic imperative for navigating today’s complex global challenges. Our collaboration with the Club of Rome and The Fifth Element on the report ‘How Intergenerational Leadership Unlocks Innovation and Sustainability in Business’ proves that when we move beyond tokenism to empower young people as equal partners, we unlock the radical creativity and long-term thinking essential for a more sustainable future, where no one is left behind.

Matthew Hunter

Partnerships Lead, United Nations Youth Office

Manifesto

Catalysing a human revolution

Many efforts working towards wellbeing on a healthy planet fail to create lasting, deep transformation. While technological and economic progress continues, our collective ability to learn, adapt and heal lags behind. Recognising the need for discovering the hidden gaps in current approaches to human development, in 2022, we launched The Fifth Element as an initiative of the Club of Rome with the aim of providing space for people, initiatives and institutions to converge, learn and act together toward global equity on a healthy planet.

Rather than providing another blueprint, The Fifth Element cultivates new ways of seeing, sensing and relating. In an era of multiplying polycrises and breached planetary boundaries, it encourages humanity to reconnect mind and matter, spirit and system.

What we believe



Our vision

Catalysing the emergence of a human revolution.



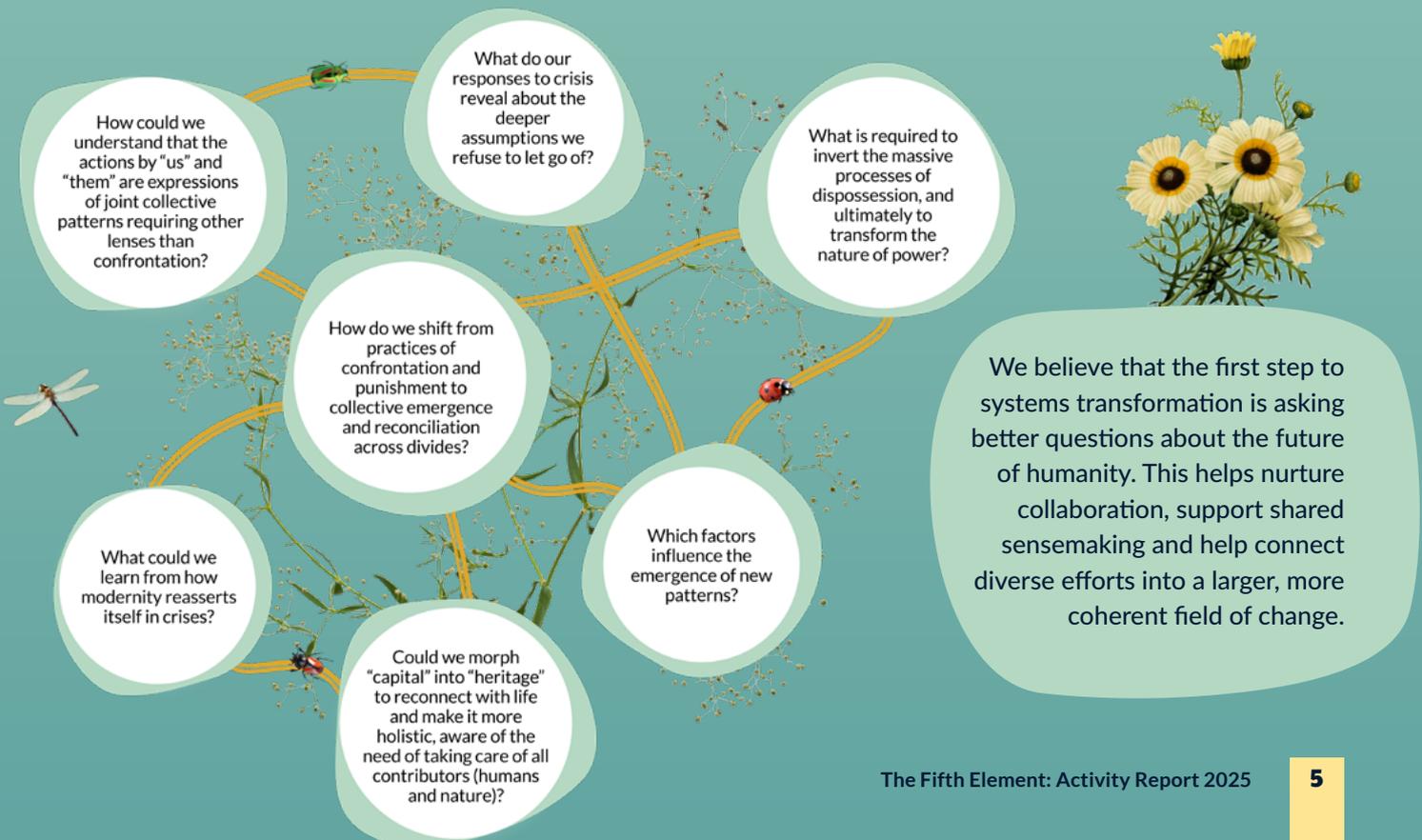
Our mission

Nurturing mindset shifts to reconcile people and the planet towards equitable wellbeing.



What is The Fifth Element?

The Fifth Element is a platform for systems transformation. We help people and initiatives find each other, learn together and reconnect their work to a larger field of change. This includes nurturing insight, collaboration and community across differences, geographies and generations.



We believe that the first step to systems transformation is asking better questions about the future of humanity. This helps nurture collaboration, support shared sensemaking and help connect diverse efforts into a larger, more coherent field of change.

What we do

We work with partners around the world on key initiatives that help shift mindsets and enable systems transformation.

1

We identify the tensions and barriers that prevent meaningful progress on issues like climate change, inequality and social breakdown.

2

We bring together diverse collaborators to develop fresh approaches to these challenges.

3

We work with partners to implement practical interventions that encourage new behaviours and ways of working together.



Our work is organised into threads, which include:

Emergence, resonance, pollination

Intergenerational collaboration

Reframing research

Reconciling worldviews

Regenerative enterprises

Art for social transformation

Within each thread, we focus on specific activities in collaboration with partners.

Read more about this in the next section.

Emergence, resonance, pollination

The emergence, resonance, pollination thread aims to connect people, initiatives and organisations to learn and act together. By highlighting local, place-based solutions rooted in living systems, we show how they work and spark wider change.



Our key activities

No Limits to Hope

[No Limits to Hope](#) is a global initiative launched by The Fifth Element and the World Environmental Education Congress Network. Its mission is to inspire educators, learners and citizens to pursue a fundamental shift in how we learn and engage with humanity's most pressing challenges. Drawing on the legacy of [No Limits to Learning](#), a report to the Club of Rome in 1979, the initiative seeks to bridge the "human gap" between our ability to act on global systems and our ability to understand the consequences of that action, and to reexamine our collective pursuit of meaning and a good life. Through publications, conferences, webinars and articles, No Limits to Hope aims to catalyse cultural change, facilitate transformative learning and generate new knowledge for a better world.

Highlights:

- > We called for abstracts for an upcoming publication: a collection of articles that will take readers through innovative and participatory learning approaches, personal retellings and community learning journeys, offering a growing archive of the ingenuity and potential of humanity.
- > The call attracted over 300 participants and over 100 high-quality contributions that were reviewed by a multidisciplinary board of researchers and practitioners.
- > From this rich response, 33 contributions were selected for the publication, which is set to launch during the World Environmental Education Congress in September 2026.

Learnings:

- > The response to No Limits to Hope exceeded expectations, revealing an abundance of hope and resilience in the face of challenge.
- > Listening carefully to feedback from contributors, we recognised that to truly bridge across communities, the articles collection needs to be complemented by a narrative publication, practical toolkits and guides for organisers. These are in development for 2026.
- > The movement has also made clear that accessibility and inspiration are essential to mobilising practitioners for change, and The Fifth Element is paying close attention to how this moment can be used to amplify and support the work that already exists in the world.



Education for Hope

Rooted in Ubuntu, I am because we are, [Education for Hope](#) reframes education as a communal act of healing and co-creation. It is not a programme or policy but a living social movement emerging from the majority of the world and speaking to humanity, that education must once again make us more human, not more competitive.

Highlights:

- > The movement was [launched](#) in October 2025 in Rome during the Jubilee Education Week. Guests from the Vatican, academia, civil society and the diplomatic community joined in a rich dialogue, exploring practical collaborations and commitments to support the movement's work across Africa and Latin America.
- > Education for Hope participated in the working session of the Scientific Committee reviewing the Global Compact on Education at the Dicastery for Culture and Education. The workshop focused on the integration of new commitments into the Compact, expanding its framework from seven to ten tenets.



The Alchemists

The Alchemists are a group of visionary leaders from around the world who share a commitment to planetary reconciliation and systemic transformation. Together, they explore how apparent resistance can reveal new pathways, renew our collective hope and discover fresh approaches to the complex challenges facing our world.

Highlights:

- > In September 2025, we convened the inaugural Alchemists Encounter in Marrakech, in partnership with the University Mohammed VI Polytechnic (UM6P), its Africa Business School and OCP Group.
- > The gathering of visionary cross-sector leaders marked the launch of an ambitious living network dedicated to systemic transformation, co-developing pioneering initiatives spanning regenerative enterprise, decolonial AI and immersive leadership programmes.
- > Rooted in Africa and oriented toward global impact, this partnership bridges the Club of Rome's legacy of global systems thinking with most of the world's frontier of innovation, positioning African institutions as pioneers of 21st-century systemic leadership.



Intergenerational collaboration

The intergenerational collaboration thread is working to bridge the gap between generations and bring together youth, academics and experts to create practical solutions for the world's biggest challenges.



Our key activities

New Generational Contract

The [New Generational Contract](#) is a platform hosted by The Fifth Element, the Club of Rome and the St. Gallen Symposium that seeks to bring together young leaders, academics and experts from different fields to develop innovative approaches for the world's most pressing challenges. By fostering cross-generational dialogue and collaboration, the initiative aims at facilitating regenerative futures for all.

Highlights:

- > In May 2025, in partnership with the UN Youth Office, the Club of Rome and the St. Gallen Symposium, we published the [Intergenerational Leadership for Sustainability and Innovation in Business](#) report, exploring how businesses can unlock long-term value by adopting intergenerational leadership models.
- > In November 2025, we partnered on research to develop case studies supporting UN member states in strengthening intergenerational leadership in government decision-making, with findings set to be released in 2026.
- > The Fifth Element initiated the Climate Impact Fellowship in partnership with the Talloires Network of Engaged Universities and Sparks Impact Fellowship. The fellowship fosters climate-positive development by engaging young people across Africa with thought leaders, and by strategically positioning them within major institutions to drive a global climate agenda. In 2025, ten fellows were hired as consultants to co-develop a four-month pilot.

Learnings:

- > We have learnt that global cooperation is most meaningful when paired with tangible opportunity. Through concrete impact projects, we have demonstrated the potential of intergenerational leadership by bringing young leaders into leadership roles and equipping them with the systems thinking needed to contribute to a regenerative economy.
- > We recognised that the diversity of youth experiences requires tailored approaches. As such, we initiated a sustainable business internship with graduates from Strathmore University and Sustainable Kenya.
- > Effective intergenerational leadership development calls for a unique combination of systems thinking and the practical skills to drive change within organisations. To deliver this meaningfully, The Fifth Element works closely with local partners and experts, prioritising depth over scale despite our global ambitions.



The 50 Percent

[The 50 Percent](#) is a youth-led platform to enable changemakers to tackle the world's most complex challenges through systems thinking and compelling storytelling. By fostering global solidarity and collaboration among young leaders and youth-focused organisations, we're building a worldwide community united in purpose.

Highlights:

- > In 2025, The 50 Percent deepened its role as the Club of Rome's flagship youth engagement initiative by shifting from awareness building toward practical systems transformation.
- > Expansion of its educational pathways: including the [Young Person's Guide to Systems Change](#) and the [Storytelling Fellowship](#) which trained ~100 changemakers.
- > Two publications: we published the [Young Person's Guide to Storytelling](#) and [Young Person's Guide to Systems Change Handbook](#).
- > We launched three regional hubs, and communities are starting to work in [Nairobi](#) (Kenya), Dhaka (Bangladesh) and [Manila](#) (Philippines). Meanwhile the [Argentinian hub](#) started a partnership with Radikal Ungdom, a Danish youth political organisation, sponsored by the Danish Youth Council.
- > The 50 Percent strengthened its global influence through the [Voices for Peace](#) dialogues, gathering 10 different youth-led organisations, such as Hiroshima University, Greenpeace Africa and the Desmond & Leah Tutu Legacy Foundation, to host a monthly conversation on how we should work together to build lasting, meaningful and planetary peace. The series had over 300 participants.

Learnings:

- > Listening to the experience of our alumni and fellows, we decided to embrace a culture of continuous learning and improving. We found it was of vital importance to include a monitoring, evaluation and learning process in all our work.
- > We learned about the vital role of learning from local communities to identify the areas of focus, and to facilitate creating groups that embody a sense of belonging and transformation potential.



Reframing research for the 21st century

The reframing research for the 21st century thread works to reframe the role of research and innovation in society and explore how transdisciplinary, community-driven approaches can transform academia.



Our key activities

Africa, climate and education

The '[Africa, climate and education](#)' webinar series is a two-year initiative organised by The Fifth Element in partnership with Environmental Humanities South, University of Cape Town. It aims to redefine environmentalism through African epistemologies, positioning African scholars and philosophies at the centre of global sustainability discourse.

Highlights:

- > The series was launched in November 2025 at the Jena Declaration Africa Conference. At the launch, we delved into the question of "[what does environmentalism look like through the lens of African higher education?](#)" This opening conversation set the intellectual and policy context for the series, highlighting the need for an African-led redefinition of environmental thought and practice.
- > The series includes three thematic clusters with dates announced soon, moving from philosophical foundations to scientific, ethical and cross-cultural applications.

Learnings:

- > We have recognised that environmentalism is about culture, memory, identity and the deep relationships people form with the places they inhabit.
- > The future of environmentalism depends on returning to local knowledge—not in a narrow or exclusionary sense, but in a grounded and relational one. Environmental action should be shaped by people who know the land, read its signs, remember its histories and carry responsibility for its future.
- > African cosmologies, with their emphasis on ancestry, land as a moral subject and pluriversality, offer relational wisdom to bridge the 'human gap': the distance between our power to change the world and our ability to understand those changes. They remind us that wellbeing emerges within the web of life and invite Earth–humanity reconciliation grounded in humility and imagination.



Regenerative enterprises

The regenerative enterprises thread is focused on reinventing organisations, especially businesses, which are currently constrained by outdated linear frameworks, to support more regenerative futures.



Our key activities

Touchstone webinar series with GIFT.ed

Highlights:

- > The Fifth Element and GIFT.ed, an EdTech endeavour by the Global Institute For Tomorrow (GIFT) launched a [webinar series](#) dedicated to empowering new generations of learners with insights and understanding to redesign society.
- > Over three webinars, we explored the future of regenerative organisations with ~200 participants, joining us from across 39 countries and 6 continents.
- > The series brought together a cross-section of senior leaders and rising decision-makers, exploring topics ranging from regenerative business, the age of AI, to growth and sustainable business models.



We have identified two additional threads of focus:

Reconciling worldviews across cultures

where we will be working to foster mutual understanding across North and South, and East and West, moving towards peaceful pluriversality;

Art for social transformation

where we will explore how artistic practices can unlock collective transformation through shared learning.



Publications

Young person's guide to systems change

March 2025

The [Young person's guide to systems change](#) is designed as a collaborative space that empowers young people to develop a deep understanding of systems thinking and apply it to transform the world around them. It challenges the misconception that systems thinking is too complex for young people, recognising their ability to navigate interconnected challenges.


~ 4,600
downloads

How intergenerational leadership unlocks innovation and sustainability in business

May 2025

This joint [report](#) by the UN Youth Office, the St. Gallen Symposium and the Club of Rome explores how businesses can unlock long-term value by adopting intergenerational leadership models. It highlights the growing demographic gap between corporate leaders and the global workforce and presents a strong business case for meaningfully involving younger generations in decision-making.


~ 5,982
downloads

Dancing with paradigms - could systemic wisdom emerge?

September 2025

In the [first of our discussion paper series](#), we explored how systemic transitions happen. Starting with key questions, the paper highlights how transformation requires embracing multiple perspectives, holding complexity without simplifying it and fostering dialogue across divides.


~ 5,000
views


~ 1,980
downloads

Young person's guide to storytelling

November 2025

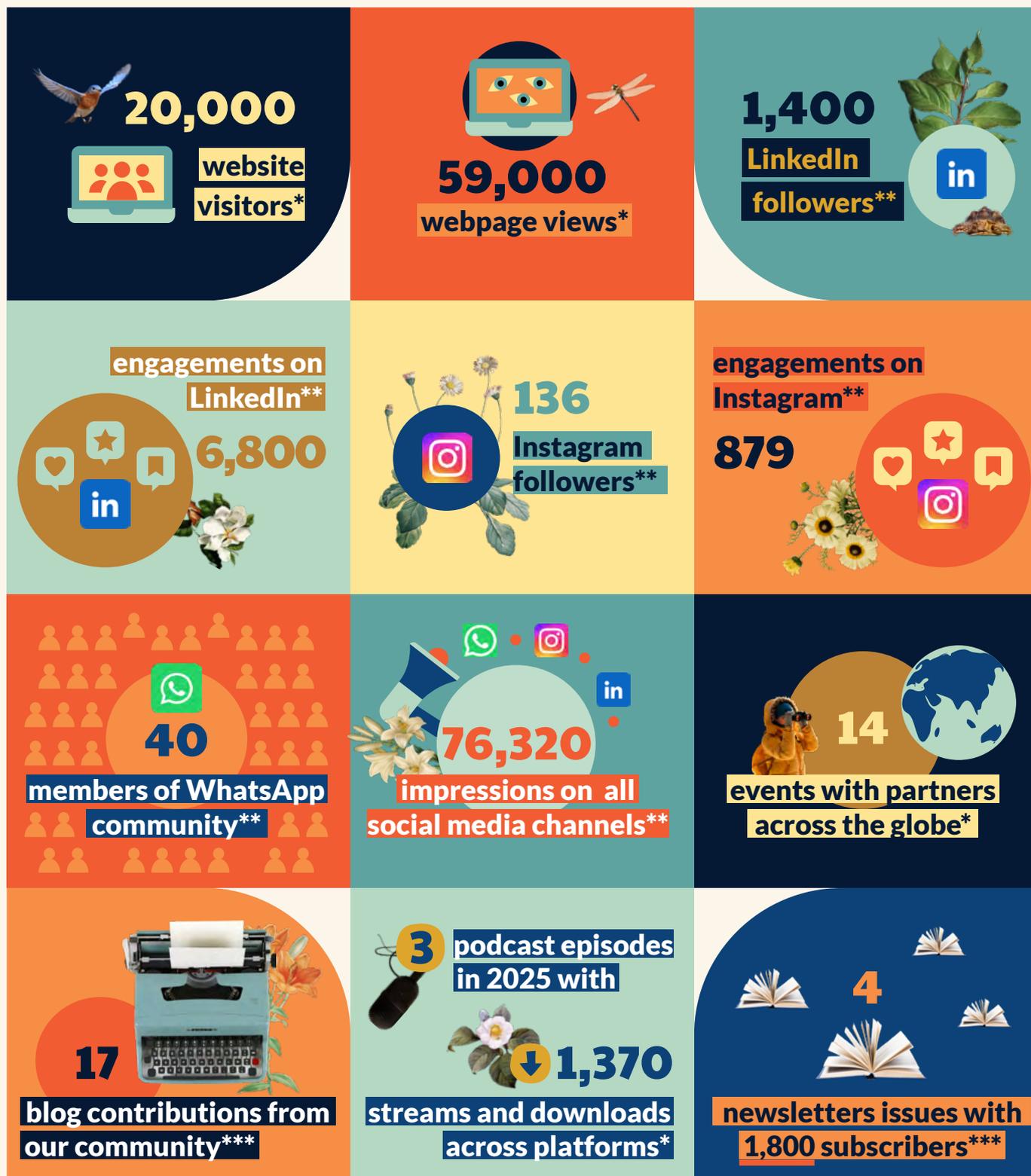
The [Young person's guide to storytelling](#) is a practical and accessible guide that helps young people understand the power of stories in a world shaped by polarisation, misinformation and rapid social change. Drawing on insights from research and the lived experience of young leaders, it shows how narratives grounded in shared values can reduce division, rebuild trust and support more constructive public dialogue.


~ 700
downloads

Outreach

In 2025 we continued our global outreach, with newsletters, podcasts and blogs from experts and members of our community. We organised and participated in events with our partners and expanded our international community through launching new social media channels for The Fifth Element on [LinkedIn](#), [Instagram](#) and [WhatsApp](#).

A few stats we are proud of:



*Jan 25 - Dec 25

**Sept 25 - Dec 25

***March 25 - Dec 25

The team



Carlos Álvarez Pereira

Secretary General of the Club of Rome



Philippa Baumgartner

Director Platform, Engagement and Communications at the Club of Rome



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Daniel Daruty de Grandpré

Programme Associate at the Club of Rome



Mamphela Ramphele

Honorary President of the Club of Rome

Partners

Collaborating with our [partners](#) is not only a way to facilitate cultivating our initiatives, but a core principle of how we work, involving co-creation and shared sensemaking. In 2025 we continued to nurture our existing partnerships as well as develop new ones. We are collaborating with organisations such as The Weidenfeld-Hoffmann Trust and InTent on creating the conditions for a regenerative economy; The Learning Planet Alliance on the Ubuntu learning circle; ReimagineSA and Leap on the project Education for Hope; The St. Gallen Symposium on the New Generational Contract initiative; The World Environmental Education Congress (WEEC) Network on the project No Limits to Hope; GIFT.ed on a series of webinars and learning programmes on regenerative organisations; Globethics on exploring the advancements in AI ethics policies and practice; The BRIDGES Coalition on exploring how research can align with societal and natural ways of life; The International Decade of Sciences for Sustainable Development as founding members of the Earth-Humanity Coalition, mobilising sciences for change; and the University Mohammed VI Polytechnic in Morocco, The Tamkeen Community Foundation, The Klosters Forum, Soka Gakkai and Global Changemakers on various projects focusing on creating lasting social transformation.



Get involved

Make your story part of a larger movement

We want to spotlight our community's insights, work and ideas that represent a unique understanding and diagnosis of issues related to our threads of work. You can get involved through:

Blogs

We welcome blog contributions on systems transformation that connect with our work. Whether you'd like to respond to our initiatives with a new piece or share something you've already published, we invite you to [submit your opinions](#).

Impact stories

We want to use our platform to showcase real-life examples of transformative change, demonstrating that impact is possible and highlighting initiatives driving it. [Submit your stories](#).

Discussion papers

Our discussion paper series emerges from a recognition that our current crises cannot be solved through conventional approaches alone. These papers are designed as explorations, inviting authors to engage with the difficult questions our interconnected world urgently needs us to address.

Find out more about how to get involved on our website: thefifthelement.earth/get-involved





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