Highlights 2020
hello, friends!

As we begin a new year, we at Sinal do Vale hope you and your loved ones have stayed healthy and safe.

This past year has been challenging for all of us as individuals and as a society, facing uncertainty and the new challenges of staying still. At the same time, we have also had an unprecedented opportunity to rediscover our interconnectedness as human beings, with other species, and as part of the larger living system.

For us, our role as a regeneration center offering alternative paths of being, relating and doing, has never felt more timely and appropriate. We too, had to make some adjustments this year, but have continued to expand and adapt to changes.

Here are some of our highlights of this year...
This year was especially transformational for us as a team. One of the most special developments of the year was our focus on the spiritual and psychological development of the group.

Gabriela Diamant, a council member of SINAL and the guardian of our inner regeneration curriculum, worked throughout the year with the team, facilitating self expression and collaboration exercises, focusing on our individual talents and passions, as well as our diversity and synergy.

We finished the year's work with her Hidden Clown workshop, one of the most rewarding experiences for all of us to share. This resonated throughout the year with self care being a priority as we faced the challenges of the pandemic.

We have had many changes, with some members moving on to new projects and new people joining.

We have many young new members from the community, aligning with our commitment to training youths in new professions related to regeneration of landscapes and communities!
It is our vision to become a reference for regenerative development in accordance with Agenda 2030’s Sustainable Development Goals and the UN’s Decade for Ecosystem Restoration, which has declared the need to regenerate 2 billion hectares of degraded land in the next decade. We believe these ambitious goals can only be achieved by activating decentralized land stewardship arrangements.

In this context, we have identified our bioregion as a 10,000 hectare area made up of the Serra da Estrela State Wildlife Refuge (directly adjacent to SINAL’s campus) and its buffer zone. Collaborating directly with the Refuge’s management, we are developing a strategy for scaling the prototypes created at SINAL and other local initiatives on the properties throughout the bioregion.

As such, our efforts for developing a strong social fabric that engages community members, policy makers, entrepreneurs and environmentalists has become a priority in our vision for the next decade.
Soil, food & forest

Although we had a setback in June when a human-caused forest fire broke out in our campus, we were humbled to see how our international community came together and, with your help, we have been planting trees every Friday to restore the area. We named it the Forest of Remembrance, as it has become a space to honor the leadership and spirit of other women and men who passed away this year during the pandemic. We closed out the year with 670 trees planted!

The team opened the planting sessions with a few volunteers from Rio and our local community, planting a native tree and nitrogen fixer seeds. This has become a wonderful opportunity for our neighbors to get to know our work and the importance of restoring the forest.

In addition, we are very excited to share that we have been chosen as one of the reforestation sites for the Rio de Janeiro State Government’s program “Florestas do Amanhã - Forests of Tomorrow.”

Beginning in 2021, we are launching a reforestation program for a total of 30 hectares in our campus. We are focusing on restoring the degraded lands on mountain tops to facilitate natural regeneration of lower ground.
Our Jackfruit social enterprise has also continued to grow. As our processing activities and sales have become stable, and our jackfruit management agroforest has continued to evolve, our brand was born too!

We present to you Madre Frutos. A brand that offers green jackfruit products to the market in Rio de Janeiro, sourcing from our own campus and, soon, other neighboring small landowners!

Through Madre Frutos, we want to provide an alternative model to manage jackfruit trees that offers a viable economic opportunity for small landowners. It will provide a case study of an integrated conservation and food security policy, and a viable model for protected areas in the Mata Atlântica!
Change Agents

The pandemic restrictions opened a new opportunity to continue sharing learning experiences based on the SINAL campus, online. Over the course of quarantine, SINAL hosted professors from the two American School of Rio de Janeiro campi, who created environmental science and sustainability materials for their classes, including an online platform for children to explore the campus virtually.

Based on that experience, the SINAL team got together to create its own platform, designed for third graders (10 year olds) of public schools across states of the Mata Atlântica region. The platform, built with the support of the BMW Foundation Herbert Quandt, is set to formally launch in March 2021. It is designed to aid teachers, providing environmental and sustainability education information and activities, based on the projects and practices within the SINAL campus. You can visit the platform here.
Infrastructure

Over the past six months, our Maintenance and Soil Food and Forest teams have been taking Ekôa Park’s online Ecological Architecture course, learning about sustainable use and treatment of water, renewable energy, and regenerative materials and techniques.

As new team members have come on board, it has been a thorough immersion in the concepts and practice of agroecological thinking - which we are sure in the coming years will be materialized in our ongoing infrastructure work for both SINAL, our neighborhood Santo Antônio and the Serra da Estrela Bioregion!

We have been putting our learning to use improving the water management practices at SINAL, creating a more efficient use of the natural flow of water in the canals, streams, and lakes on our property.
Hospitality

Our hospitality services had to change drastically to adapt to the health restrictions. Throughout the year, our houses were occupied for longer periods of time by families quarantining outside the city of Rio.

Even so, we had the wonderful opportunity of hosting the Rio +B strategic meeting and the Perifa Connection team - a network of Change Agents of the Baixada Fluminense - before lockdown. We also hosted a small sacred feminine retreat in November with our friends from Vivejar, a travel agency based in São Paulo.

The campus never stopped thriving with activity as our team members and their families took advantage of the space as a learning environment for their children, and a safe open air space.
SINAL has become a councilmember of the Regenerative Communities Network, the Serra da Estrela Wildlife Refuge, and the federally protected area APA Petropolis.

We are joining forces with Ionica, an innovation agency from Rio focused on socioecological solutions; HASTEN, an American-based design accelerator, with which we are working to stimulate eco entrepreneurship in our bioregion; and Vivejar, a travel agency that focuses on regenerative travel based in São Paulo.

This year, we held a big crowdfunding effort to reforest after the fire in June. With all your help through channels such as Global Giving, Benfeitoria, Paypal, and with the help of the Stiefel Benher Charitable Fund, we expanded our Forest of Remembrance! Additionally, together with Lata foundation, we worked distributing baskets to women artisans from our neighboring communities.
Partnerships ecosystem

We have been selected as an Ecosystem Restoration Camp and will begin creating learning journeys to involve international Change Agents in our regeneration work!

The humanize Institute supported SINAL for the expansion of our jackfruit project Madre Frutos, allowing us to purchase new equipment and machines for the processing area that will make our production more efficient.
Thank you!

We at SINAL hope this year has brought about, amidst the crisis, new beginnings, learning and prosperity. May next year be a year of successes for us all!