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TENTH ANNUAL

IFIP

CONFERENCE

REPORT

Ivan Torafing, an Igorot from the Philippines, shares a traditional song.





IFIP Board Members

Friends,

We begin with this heartfelt greeting because that's how the conference left us—as friends.

After all the organizing, all the travel, all the workshops, all that make an IFIP conference, we are all left with memories looking back and friendships going forward.

As the conference itself and all of IFIP's work, this Conference Report is organized around *The Giving Principles of Indigenous Philanthropy: **Reciprocity, Respect, Responsibility** and **Relationships***.

Reciprocity because we all came to give and receive from each other. **Respect** because meeting in person, eating together, sharing songs, dances, stories and strategies cultivate deep understanding. **Responsibility** because where we stand at this moment, in history, on this earth will guide the future. And **Relationships** because they are the roots from which all else grows.

This Report is more than a simple record. It is a gift of gratitude for the unique experience that is an IFIP Conference, for the rare opportunity to meet as friends.

We thank everyone who was part of this moment, and look forward to seeing you next year.

Respectfully,

IFIP Board Members





Conference participants

Reciprocity

The Indigenous Culture of Reciprocity recognizes that:



Giving and receiving is interconnected and organic.

We are a world family—the north and south hemispheres are connected.

We are a holistic family that honors and connects with elders and spirituality.





Martin vonHildebrand, Executive Director of the Gaia Amazon Foundation; Sonja Swift, trustee of the Swift Foundation; and Roberto Marin, Barasano leader in Colombia, share the success of their collaboration.

Reciprocity

“It is a great sight and feeling that you came here. When you see your family again, hug them and say, “The Haudenosaunee people welcome you here.”

—Opening Keynote, Tom Porter





Jobe Morris, San from Botswana; Tihau Bishop, Cook Island Maori; and Tom Porter, Mohawk Elder share a moment.

Reciprocity

Following the United Nations Permanent Forum for Indigenous Issues, the Tenth IFIP Conference gathered global leaders from both Indigenous and philanthropic communities. IFIP brought many up from New York City in shuttle buses. Others traveled across the globe in plan. They all met on Haudenosaunee territory in upstate New York.

On the first morning, Mohawk Elder Tom Porter opened his welcome with a story, first about his grandfather, and then his grandmother. His grandfather was taken from his family and interred at the Carlisle Indian Industrial School for 'cultural assimilation.'

Since his family couldn't afford transportation, he didn't go home for years. By the time he did, "he had become a Yankee-Doodle-came-to-town" person.

Years later, after the community bought ancestral land taken from them, Tom started to have visions of his deceased grandmother. "You will make a Carlisle Indian School in reverse," she said. And then she told him that the young people "have no direction in what it means to be a human being, so write a book, and call it *And Grandma Said.*" And that's what he did. The story was complete: something was taken away, then given back.

The concept of reciprocity provoked lively discussion in the first plenary session, *Traditional Native Philan-*



thropy and Tribal Government Philanthropy. Panelist Wolde Tadesse, Program Officer for the African Rift Valley

at The Christensen Fund pointed out that money is simply not part of reciprocal exchanges in Indigenous communities around the world.

“Life is not monetarized everywhere,” said Dr. Tedesse. “We (Indigenous peoples) live in realities where cash and market are not central.” Instead, Indigenous peoples constantly engage in ‘reciprocal exchanges.’ Climate change is fostering even more reciprocity: For instance, in his native Gamo Highlands of Ethiopia, if one community suffers from an unseasonal drought, another community offers cattle and seeds.

Climate change also forces donors to deeply understand their role. For example, while emergency disaster relief looks good on paper, in practice it can disrupt traditional reciprocal relationships among neighbors.

“As rainfall becomes erratic in Africa,” noted Ken Wilson, IFIP Chair and Executive Director of the Christensen Fund, “communities are affected by seasonal floods, and external relief can break community reciprocal relationships of support

mechanisms. The Indigenous peoples grow dependent on the government; as relationships broke down, conflicts increased.”

Instead donors can be guided by Indigenous practices of reciprocity. In Ethiopia, The Christensen Fund switched its investment strategy from disaster relief to community support. By giving to one tribe to help a neighbor after an unseasonal flood—increasingly common due to climate change—broken relationships were mended, complete with village feasts.

Later in the session, *Indigenous Peoples, Traditional Knowledge and Community-based Adaptation to Climate Change*, Alejandro Argumedo, Director of the Association for Nature and Sustainable Development (ANDES), spoke of sacred reciprocity, or ayni, the give-and-take harmony among all forms of life, great and small.

“A mountain is an authority,” said Argumedo, “but if it doesn’t fulfill its commitments, that can be changed.”





The group learns a traditional Itelmen dance from the Kamchatka Peninsula of the Russian Far East.

Respect

True collaboration is based on:



Empowerment and courage;

Transparency, access and open processes;

Risk taking, flexibility and adaptability; and

Investing more than money.





Christiana Louwa of Kenya and Peter Kostishack, Director of Programs for Global Greengrants Fund, share thoughts.

Respect

Where but an IFIP conference, can a Lakota congressman from South Dakota share breakfast and tradition with an Elder from the highlands of Ethiopia?





Gregory Ch'oc, Q'eqchi Maya and Executive Director of the Sarstoon Temash Institute for Indigenous Management in Belize shares strategy.

Respect runs deeper than tolerance. In the session, *Who are the Deciders? Implementing the Right to Free, Prior and Informed Consent*, the consensus was that Indigenous peoples are *rightsholders*, not just *stakeholders*. To Andrea Carmen, Yaqui native and Executive Director of the International Indian Treaty Council, respect means recognizing that Indigenous rights are inalienable; no law can take them away. As Gregory Ch'oc, Q'eqchi Maya and Executive Director of the Sarstoon Temash Institute for Indigenous Management (SATIIM) noted, respect is not simply given, it is demanded. Ch'oc's organization waged a fearless legal battle in Belize to win national respect for international agreements, notably the UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples. SATIIM's legal victory reinforced the efforts of Mayans in southern Belize to stop or at least severely reduce environmental devastation from oil drilling and other mega-projects in the region. Ch'oc's pioneering work is building respect for Indigenous rights around the world.

Respect also comes from deep understanding of another person. At breakfast one morning, Edward Iron Cloud, manager of the Knife Chief Buffalo Nation Organization's herd, paid his respects to Elle Ellecho Essa, a venerated healer from Ethiopia.

"I respect that you left your home to be here," said Iron Cloud. Since someone in his Lakota family is also a healer, he understood how unusual it was for a healer of Ellecho's stature to travel away from his community.

The two started to talk about healing rituals. The smoke from a sacred fire leads the Lakota shaman. Elle uses touch. Lakota healing often occurs in a teepee. Elle receives pilgrims from far and wide on a bench in his garden.





Jeffrey Campbell, Director Grantmaking at the Christensen Fund, shares a laugh with Ethiopian Elder Elle Ellecho Essa

Responsibility

**Working together
takes commitment,
passion and
courage.**





Gloria Ushigua, president of the Sapara Women's Association of Ecuador, and Tim Dykman of Ocean Revolution, share ideas.

What is actually on the table is *extinction*.

Responsibility

At a lunch table discussion on climate change, Tihau Bishop, a Maori from the Cook Islands, showed how climate change is not just a scientific concept to Indigenous peoples. At first he describe the usual climate change tactics—monitor rainfall, check rising water levels—until what he was saying started to sink in. His ancestral homeland is going to be submerged. In less than two generations, his entire culture will face death by climate change—unless they figure out logistics fast.

“I guess we can relocate to New Zealand, but the coconuts that grow on our islands, which are so central to our culture, don’t grow there,” he said.

Bishop told a story about talking to elders to find all the sacred burial grounds. “We’ve got to bring the bones of our ancestors with us.”

In so little time, there were so many details: Would they be able to stay together? Would they be able to maintain their language? What would happen to their culture without their land?

Here was the human face of climate change, no need for graphs, tables and calculations. The Cook Island Maori don’t have time for theoretical discussions or politics. They are looking for high ground, looking the future straight in the eye without delusion.

That kind of lunch discussion brought a palpable urgency to the rest of the conference. After all, next to dessert, what was actually on the table was *extinction*.





IFIP Board member Liz Hosken of Gaia Foundation and Chair Ken Wilson of The Christensen Fund share perspectives.

Responsibility

In a sense, everyone is looking for higher ground. And many strategies were put on the table. In one session, participants wondered if REDD could actually bolster recognition of Indigenous forest management or end up as “the new structural adjustment.”

“Let’s use the UNDRIP as a unifying factor,” suggested Shaun Paul, IFIP Board Member and Executive Director of EcoLogic Development Fund. “Some say, ‘yes, REDD will help with land rights.’ Others say, ‘NO!’ But use the UNDRIP as the common cloth.”

In another, donors and Indigenous peoples reviewed case studies of shareholder activism and socially responsible investment (and divestment.)

For Roberto Marin, a Barasano leader in the Colombian Amazon, Indigenous models of economic development and governance are key to both natural resource protection and cultural survival. The Barasano people undertook a six-year participatory research project to archive everything in their culture and environment, from their language and farming methods to the location of their sacred sites. His people presented the findings to both the Colombian government and UNESCO—for recognition of their traditional knowledge as a ‘world heritage.’

“They have recognized dance, but this is the first request for a holistic approach,” he said.

Calls for holistic approaches to philanthropy sounded throughout the conference. As Jeniffer Kionante, Vice President of Indigenous Peoples of Africa Coordinating Committee in Kenya, said, “We need to come up with a common strategy.”





Joyce Omenai, Onibokun and Iyabo Eunice of Nigeria, share advice with keynote speaker Jeniffer Kionante of Kenya.

Relationships

Long-term engagements are learning relationships. They seek:



The meeting points of the 'conversation' on livelihood, security, empowerment and rights;

Organizational Indigenous representation; and

Shared relationships based on cultural respect, not power.





Ivan Torafing and Nina Zaporotskaya of Siberia share homelands.

Relationships

IFIP conferences are about *Relationship Philanthropy*.

–Evelyn Arce, executive director of IFIP





Shuar healer Anank Nunkai of Ecuador and IFIP Executive Director Evelyn Arce share perspectives.

Relationships

Speaking in the session *Indigenous Approaches to Natural Resource Conservation and Territorial Protection*, Peter Kostishack, Director of Programs for Global Greengrants Fund, described how as an idealistic high school student, he organized other students to “buy” forest land in Paraguay for \$14 an acre. When they displayed the certificate from the US environmental group in a glass case, they “didn’t know that it was the land of the Aché people, who were now living in a private park.”

“We were a bit naïve,” said Kostishack.

Nowadays, Kostishack works for a foundation with a network of local advisors that intimately understand the situation on the ground.

Ultimately, Indigenous philanthropy is about relationships. There is even a new form of scientific inquiry based on the “systemic perception of partners and relationships,” known as *Resilience Science*. As Penny Elys Droz, Director of the Sustainable Nations Development Project, explained Resilience Science is “thinking about life as whole systems of integrated life.” - Which is exactly what Indigenous peoples have been doing since the beginning of time, she said.





Pennelys Droz, Annishinaabe and Director of the Sustainable Nations Development Project, shares beading techniques.

Relationships

Droz was speaking as a panelist in the session on *Indigenous Local Governance and Climate Change in the Colombian Amazon and Mexico*.

"Indigenous knowledge is a lived relationship," she said. "If Indigenous peoples don't live in a relationship to their land, their knowledge is less meaningful."

In terms of climate change and the upcoming threshold, said Droz, ""We have stories about how to go over the threshold."

According to Droz, future relationships will involve Indigenous paths of development, such as alternative energy (micro-hydro, solar, wind) traditional green building, natural water treatment, sanitation, and rainwater catchment.

Martin von Hildebrand, who has worked with Indigenous peoples of Colombia for more than 30 years, pointed out that 'development' needs to part of Indigenous life plans, which incorporate more than economic aspirations.

As the conference closed, von Hildebrand offered a summary of all he had heard, and what he thought going forward: "In the end, it's about our all needs, and what can we all give."





Relationships

Bolivians Elizabeth Lopez of the Latin American Network of Women Defenders of Socio-Environmental Rights in Resistance to Mining, and Justa Cabrera Flores, president of the Confederation of Indigenous Women, share smiles.



All photos provided by Cultural Survival.
To see all conference photos, please go to:

www.internationalfunders.org





In recognition of its work for Indigenous environmental and social justice in South East Asia, The Samdhana Institute was this year's recipient of the 2011 IFIP Award. The Institute's Indigenous Peoples' Support Fund exemplifies how a small grants program can work with grassroots activists for high impact among local Indigenous environmental and social justice movements. Edtami Mansayagan accepted the award on behalf of the Institute and Amy Fredeen, IFIP board member, presented it.

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