IFIP
International Funders for Indigenous Peoples

2014 IFIP World Summit on Indigenous Philanthropy
Brooklyn, New York - September 23-26, 2014
Report of Summit Feedback and Suggestions

IFIP’s conference, the World Summit on Indigenous Philanthropy took place in September 2014 following the United Nations World Conference on Indigenous Peoples. The Summit was positioned to bring together thought leaders, philanthropists, donor agencies, and Indigenous visionaries in a powerful and informative event, with the aim to formulate concrete actions to take Indigenous philanthropy to the next level.

The overarching theme of “Weaving a New Path in Indigenous Philanthropy: Challenges and Opportunities in Changing Times,” had three tracks:

1. Alternative Models for Social and Environmental Change
2. Using Rights-Based Approaches to Promote Self-Determination, Land Rights, and the Rights of Indigenous Peoples
3. Intergenerational Relations and Culture

There was also a half day session, Resource Mobilization Hub for Indigenous women.

The mission of the International Funders for Indigenous Peoples (IFIP) is to convene and educate donors to build capacity and enhance funding partnerships to improve the lives of Indigenous Peoples globally.

IFIP accomplishes its mission by increasing knowledge and understanding of the unique issues of Indigenous Peoples by facilitating dialogue both among its grant making members and between that membership and Indigenous communities.
This report is a summary of the feedback and suggestions, which will be used as inputs to improve IFIP’s gatherings. A separate report documents the proceedings.

**Survey Respondents**

The following provides the demographics of the respondents to the survey:

- 85 responses or 34% of the total attendees (252)
- Half of the respondents were from the USA, 16% from Latin America, and 11% from Asia
- 51% of the respondents’ geographic focus is Latin America, 42% is USA, 36% is Asia, and 33% is Africa
- There was the same number of respondents (26 or 31%) who described their organization as foundations or Indigenous Peoples Organizations. NGO was designated as the third highest response (24 or 29%). This breakdown is similar to the registration profiles.
  
  A typical IFIP conference draws a third of the participants from the philanthropic sector (foundation or individual donor), a third from Indigenous Peoples Organizations, and a third from the NGO sector.

- The largest number of respondents had the titles of Executive Director/President/CEO or Program staff.
- The 3 top priority areas supported by the organizations were: women (63%), human rights (60%), and environment (57%) with climate change (45%) being a strong fourth. Write-in comments showed a strong focus on traditional knowledge, wisdom, and culture.

- 55% of the respondents were IFIP members
- 24% of the respondents were panelists / speakers

“The IFIP conference reinforced the important and crucial work needed for philanthropy and Indigenous cultures and was an excellent opportunity to meet other Indigenous leaders doing great work in their communities.”
Objectives and Activities

Respondents rated “raised awareness of Indigenous Peoples issues” (87%) and “provided opportunities for networking” (78%) as excellent or very good. (The table below provides the ratings by number.) Feedback throughout the survey talked about the importance of networking as the most valuable aspect of the conference and requested more structured ways and more time to network. Participants appreciated learning about global issues from people who were working in regions different from their own and from Indigenous Peoples, themselves.

A Latin American participant commented, “Understood a lot about the world; strengthened relationships with organizations in Chiapas and learned about programs in Africa, land rights in Russia, and spiritualism in the United States.”

Other comments said that their participation led to an improvement in the way they work, enhanced connections for funding and potential collaborations, and solidified existing relationships.

There was a mix of comments about the interactions and participation — “It was great to see a real connection between funders and Indigenous Peoples, especially around the understanding of reciprocity.” Yet, another thought there was a gap, “there were not enough presentations by donors about [their work] with Indigenous Peoples.”

As for the activities, many wished for more time to attend the film festival and commented that the lack of promotion and timing at the...
end of the day was not conducive to attendance. Some of the respondents felt that the activities, such as the museum visit and dine arounds, lacked adequate coordination and description. Half the respondents did not take advantage of the “donor office hours,” and for those who did, the feedback was rated as fairly and very good. The performances and award ceremony were rated highly, although some commented it was too long.

The resource mobilization hub for Indigenous women had excellent (33%) and very good (35%) ratings, and the comments mentioned that it could have been more action oriented and better organized.

Logistics

The majority of the respondents rated the conference logistics as excellent or very good, with high marks for conference materials (60% excellent) and the hotel meeting venue (56% excellent), except that many did not like the cold rooms. Respondents recognized the large amount of work that was completed by a small staff of two and were appreciative of Evelyn Arce and Pei-Un Yee’s coordination, hard work, warmth, and caring. Although some respondents thought the sessions were “smooth and efficient,” others commented that they could have been better organized in terms of moderation, availability of interpretation, and timing.

Workshop Sessions

Among the panels that participants noted as “liking” the most and why were:

- Food Sovereignty - knowledgeable, relevant, focused, and clear speakers with great discussion, inspiring, educational, new topic, good visuals, awesome
- Translating Indigenous Values into Finance - knowledgeable speakers, expertise, good connections, relevancy of funder investments
- REDD - interesting content, perspectives of researcher vs. Indigenous Peoples
- Indigenous youth activism - passionate speakers, sharing of concrete experiences and challenges experienced in their home countries
- Roberta Jamieson’s keynote on reciprocity - set the tone
- Indigenous Leadership in the North - well represented, topic that is often ignored, inspiring

A strong message from the respondents was that though most liked the panels (“I liked everything”), not all the respondents liked the same
panels. Comments suggested that there is room for improvement that would provide more space for collaboration and learning. Respondents clearly appreciated knowledgeable and engaging speakers and a moderator who is adept at providing the contextual background, as well as controlling the session timing and audience participation. The table below provides a summary of what people liked and how the panels could be improved.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Strengths</th>
<th>Needs improvement</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>SPEAKERS</td>
<td>SPEAKERS</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Diversity of presenters</td>
<td>• Speakers speaking for a long time or general comments / not enough depth</td>
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<tr>
<td>• Touching the heart at the same time as providing information</td>
<td>• Speakers unprepared</td>
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<tr>
<td>• Speakers are succinct and articulate</td>
<td>• Speakers on the same panel should not be from the same country and / or same network</td>
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<td>• Knowledgeable speakers with expertise on the topic, which is relevant to the audience or may be a new topic of interest</td>
<td>MODERATOR / FACILITATION</td>
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<tr>
<td>• Moderator facilitates the panel discussion and questions</td>
<td>• Coordination between the moderator and panelist should be smooth</td>
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<tr>
<td>FORMAT</td>
<td>• Facilitator's role should be to effectively moderate the session</td>
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<tr>
<td>• Session starts and ends on time</td>
<td>FORMAT</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Session engages participants and has sufficient time for participation</td>
<td>• Participants dominating questions session and making mini-presentations</td>
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<tr>
<td>CONTENT</td>
<td>• Format did not allow for consistent dialogue and questions</td>
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<td>• Different stories and concrete experiences of Indigenous Peoples struggles and solutions at the grassroots level</td>
<td>• Participants were accusatory towards speaker, ineffective moderator</td>
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<td>• Clear overview regarding topic - defining the problem, examining current and potential donor involvement</td>
<td>• Better management of time for speakers and participation</td>
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<tr>
<td>• Focus on conference theme of philanthropy</td>
<td>• Panel format can be overload - look into different formats that go beyond speaker/audience</td>
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<tr>
<td>LOGISTICS</td>
<td>CONTENT</td>
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<tr>
<td>• Availability of translation</td>
<td>• More about grants or funding opportunities</td>
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<td></td>
<td>• Less about specific grants</td>
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<td></td>
<td>• Information overload</td>
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<td>• Need more opportunities for collaboration of people with similar interests</td>
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Topics for Future Sessions

The following were among the topics suggested for future session:

POPULATION

- Indigenous youth as the next generation
- Indigenous women
- Two-spirit people
- Indigenous men
- LGBT
- Indigenous persons with disabilities

TOPICS

- Free Prior Informed Consent (FPIC)
- Development with identity, cases on interventions in sustaining Indigenous rights and identity
- Traditional knowledge, language, and spiritual practices
- Climate change adaptation, environmental footprint, agro-ecology, sustainable food security, natural resources
- Economic development, social enterprise
- Use of media to raise awareness, advocacy
- Leadership capacity building
- Gender based violence

FUNDING / DONORS

- Impact — how funders and Indigenous communities can articulate impact and better “measure” their work; evaluation
- Donors only session to discuss what is working and what is not working; funding models aligned with Indigenous worldview
- Funding opportunities and strategies, successful proposals, fundraising beyond grants, how foundations make decisions
- Region specific discussions
- Indigenous intermediaries - how to work with them and help them be more effective, support emerging intermediaries
Role of regranting organizations

Regional Indigenous Peoples funds

Alternate types of funding instruments and investments, new paradigms - mission related investment, donor collaborations and collectives, impact investing

Format of Future Gatherings

Since the primary objective stated by the participants is networking, “you need face to face gatherings.” Respondents wanted more donor involvement and interactions. Most liked the global nature of the meetings for a “wide view” and suggested that regional meetings could be more thematic or include a side trip to a community.

Although most liked the convenience of the hotel venue in a large city, some preferred a more retreat like setting and smaller gatherings. A typical comment was to have more time for structured networking, “breathing time to nurture deep relationships where people can interact and participate.”

A mix of plenary and panels was good, and more smaller group discussions or mini-panels was suggested. Dine arounds could serve this purpose “to lead to a different quality of communications.”

Among the responses were specific offers from participants to co-organize the next conference in New Zealand, Alaska, and Hawaii. New York was seen as a convenient city to ensure participation. One mentioned that the further away the location is from the home office, the lesser chances there are for more than one person from an organization to attend.

Why do you value IFIP?

Respondents were grateful for the opportunity provided by IFIP and the hard work of the IFIP staff and volunteers.

One of IFIP’s board members said during the debrief that we need to remember that many of the participants who come from other countries feel a strong responsibility to represent AND voice the views of their peoples. The opportunity to speak and be acknowledged is not taken lightly. As one person said, “It is a great opportunity to participate in the World Conference to present the situation of our country.”

Views from other countries were appreciated by others, “how together we feel close even though we are very far away geographically!” The value to another was, “learning about work in geographies outside my area of interest.”
Another commented on the value of IFIP, “[IFIP summit] has gathered many people from various countries and the problems are similar throughout the world. I imagine that IFIP is a place to exchange problems and strategies for a collaborative solution by forming a network and continuing our communication.” The sentiment was echoed by another, “A powerful and utterly unique way to bring extremely diverse people with similar cares together in a very powerful and generative way.”

**Conclusion**

The 2014 IFIP summit, according to the feedback, strengthened the network and emphasized the core values of IFIP: **Reciprocity, Respect, Responsibility, and Relationships.**

The topics and speakers were for the most part informative and inspirational. To improve the workshop sessions and conference flow, moderators need stronger coaching and role descriptions to frame the topic and manage the participation of the speakers and audience as they are the ones who are responsible to ensure that the objective and audience needs are met. Where IFIP could improve is to ensure networking and facilitate collaborations in a more formal and structured way. For example, IFIP could place more emphasis on organizing the networking activities like the dine arounds, lunch round tables, and Indigenous Peoples presentations.

A challenge for any 3-day annual conference is to balance the need for participants to educate, with the desire for others to engage and learn from one another. The next programming committee should seek creative ways for this balance to happen.

The report concludes by using the words of one of the participants, “IFIP provides great support and encouragement to organizations in working together, and the conference is a prime way to meet with many organizations to forge new alliances.”

**Acknowledgments**

Thank you to participants who took the time to provide their feedback on the electronic survey. The report was written by IFIP board member Yumi Sera with support from Pei-Un Yee, Luminita Cuna, and Kristen Collins. The photo of the youth panel is by Toby McLeod, Sacred Land Film Project.

Visit [internationalfunders.org](http://internationalfunders.org) for more information.

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