

# The Sharing Circle

## Conference Links In Ever Wider Circles

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**B**uilding effective grantmaking and support for indigenous communities requires a long-term partnership with donors. That was the main theme of the 5<sup>th</sup> IFIP 'Linking Circles' conference. This increasingly large gathering of international donors explores ways to form and strengthen lasting partnerships between funders and indigenous peoples and serves as a forum for donors to discuss how institutions are learning and transforming themselves to have genuine relationships with Indigenous communities. It also provides a rare opportunity for donors to meet directly with Indigenous people.

Another principal objective of the conference is to help

this strong network of international funders to understand the complex and sometimes unique problems facing Indigenous communities and to stay informed of the constantly changing international political framework of Indigenous rights, including the wide range of national social movements in countries around the world in which Indigenous communities are working towards a sustainable future.

Tommer Peterson, Director of Programs for Grantmakers in the Arts, remarked on the air of excitement and optimism at the conference, the result of a willingness to form equitable partnerships with Indigenous communities that share the control of resources in ways that many are not used to.

'As donors, if you want to work effectively with



Photo: Courtesy of Jose Calarco

*The Descendance Aboriginal & Torres Strait Islander Dance Theatre, an internationally known aboriginal dance company based in Australia, performed for the opening of the United Nations Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues and at the IFIP Annual Conference held in New York City, New York.*

Indigenous peoples you need to learn new concepts,' said Ken Wilson, Vice-President of the IFIP Board and Executive Director of the Christensen Fund. 'One of these concepts is the "circle" that goes around and links, renews, and transforms.'

This message became something of a mantra at this year's conference, held at the Ford Foundation and at the UN Headquarters in

New York City on 16-17 May, which brought together 85 donors and 45 Indigenous and NGO representatives from around the world.

### Funders-only meeting

Past conferences have revealed the importance of strengthening relationships among funders, which is why, for the first time, the

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# Empowering Communities Through Participatory Video

Photos: Courtesy of Indigenous Filmmakers

*The Sharing Circle* is a newsletter for members of International Funders for Indigenous Peoples. IFIP is an association of grantmakers who support, or are interested in supporting projects involving Indigenous Peoples worldwide.

We strive to:

**Increase knowledge and understanding** of the unique issues related to funding projects that involve Indigenous Peoples by providing a baseline of information on issues relevant to the Indigenous context.

**Encourage innovation and increase effectiveness** within the grantmaking community by facilitating networking opportunities.

**Foster a cross-disciplinary understanding** of Indigenous Peoples and the holistic contexts in which they live and work.

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*The following interview was conducted by Catherine Setchell with Nick Lunch, Director of Insight, UK/France-based pioneers of Participatory Video (PV) after attending the IFIP Annual Conference and the 5th UN Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues.*

**O**n May 25<sup>th</sup>, Insight launched a handbook on Participatory Video (PV) at the UN Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues (UNPFII) to an audience of over 100 indigenous delegates, NGOs, agencies and government representatives. As part of the Forum's side-event, Nick Lunch facilitated an introductory training in PV to 15 indigenous delegates. Video messages were made by the indigenous delegates on their hopes, challenges and concerns faced at the UNPFII, which were then aired to the Forum.

## *What is PV?*

Participatory Video (PV) is a powerful means of documenting local people's experiences, wants and hopes from their own perspectives. Participants (men, women and youth) rapidly learn how to use video equipment through games and exercises. Then they direct, film and edit short video messages on issues important to them. PV can initiate a process of analysis and change that celebrates local knowledge

and practice, while stimulating creativity both within and beyond the community. Perhaps most significantly, PV is a process that empowers and develops self-esteem. When done well, PV presents the "inside view" in a lively way and is accessible for people at all levels.

At Insight, we have successfully applied PV as a powerful research and development tool and as an important means of influencing policy and decision makers. Insight brings the needs and concerns of the marginalised to the fore. It seeks to build bridges between office-based decision makers and the people on the ground.

## *Why was it important for Insight to attend the IFIP Annual Conference?*

IFIP's Annual Conference is all about exploring new ways to form and strengthen partnerships between funders and indigenous peoples. It was important for us to attend the IFIP conference so we can form new partnerships and learn from people working with indigenous communities. The conference gave us the opportunity to make contact with many foundations that are working all over the world. We made great connections with certain organisations which led to us hatching some exciting plans to work together.

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## **Strengthening Partnerships in Philanthropy**

**Linking Circles V Conference Keynote Address by Phrang Roy,  
International Fund for Agricultural Development**

I am very much honoured and pleased to have been invited by the International Funders for Indigenous Peoples (IFIP) to participate in this Conference on the theme of *Strengthening Partnerships in Philanthropy*.

I had worked with the Government of India for 10 years before I joined IFAD in 1981 and during this period I spent a great deal of my time in far flung rural areas listening and talking to the very poor and the most marginalized. This has been my most precious experience. It was in these remote areas that I encountered indigenous peoples and their efforts to keep control of their lands and their institutions, to have their own worldview honoured and respected and to be active participants in the creation of their own development visions and plans.

We have supported them with development projects for their ancestral lands and territories. However, as we gained experience we started to realize that our technical solutions and approaches were sadly very much guided mainly by the knowledge, attitudes and concerns of mainstream and dominant societies. Today we have come to acknowledge that if our development efforts are to be meaningful to Indigenous Peoples then we must accept their guiding principle that development initiatives in the ancestral lands and terri-

tories must have their free, prior and informed consent.

I have no doubt that the foundation of any solid partnership with Indigenous Peoples must be based on our courage and humility to listen to this call of the Indigenous Peoples. It is therefore very important that at all times, the issues of the poor and the marginalized amongst the



*Phrang Roy*

Indigenous Peoples must be the rallying points of our enhanced partnership. "Nothing for Indigenous Peoples, without Indigenous Peoples".

But some people and institutions do feel uncomfortable with a partnership with Indigenous Peoples that is based on the principle of their free, prior and informed consent. I hope that the sharing of ideas through this Conference will help us to find pragmatic ways how the principle of free, prior and informed consent could become a driving value for all

of us, not only for the believers in the cause of Indigenous Peoples but for all those who interact with them.

Our experience in the field has also taught us that indigenous peoples do not see marginalization only as a lack of income. They are concerned with a trampling of their dignity, with humiliation and with powerlessness. The displacement of their communities from their traditional lands, the marginalization of their traditional institutions and the militarization of the territories are some of the realities of their poverty and their powerlessness. To indigenous peoples, their marginalization is very much entwined with the lack of respect for their political, cultural and economic rights.

When we speak about the rights of Indigenous Peoples, let us not forget that Indigenous Peoples are constantly looking for partnership with local or global collaborators who would empower them with a development approach that is based on Dignity and Identity, an approach that builds on social solidarity and the ethos of sharing and harmony, that upholds the preciousness of traditional lands and territories to Indigenous Communities, that promotes a strong gender focus, that respects tra-

ditional experiences and yet that has no fear of modern challenges.

They are looking for an approach that has a holistic vision that includes economic growth, sustainable development of the environment and that con-

*Today we have come to acknowledge that if our development efforts are to be meaningful to Indigenous Peoples then we must accept their guiding principle that development initiatives in the ancestral lands and territories must have their free, prior and informed consent.*

stantly affirms the social, economic and cultural rights of Indigenous Peoples. Despite the many historical injustices, Indigenous Peoples are eager to work together with governments and philanthropic organiza-

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**Conference ...**  
*Continued from Page 1*

IFIP conference included a special funders-only meeting, notable for its plea to funders to take their commitment to building partnerships with Indigenous communities into foundation boardrooms. Diane Christensen, President of the Board of the Christensen Fund, also called for increased representation of Indigenous peoples as trustees.

**Follow-up projects**

Conference participants suggested an array of potential follow-up projects to build and strengthen partnerships that support indigenous communities. One important idea was creating working groups because, for some members, meeting once a year is not enough. Lori Udall of Sacharuna Foundation suggested a funders' land rights working group that would identify significant land rights claims that could set precedents internationally and regionally. Coordinating several Linking Circle conferences around the world was also encouraged, as well as producing specific tools for donors. These might include information on existing funding for Indigenous projects, research materials for foundation trustees and staff, and even a list of projects in need of support.

These suggestions are very likely to be realized as IFIP has proved adept in the past at responding to the concerns of its members. Some improvements made

from last year's conference are a 25 per cent increase in donor representation, a funders-only meeting to discuss collaborative work and strategies, and a greater range of Indigenous leaders, including people from Russia, New Zealand, Uganda, Australia, Tanzania, Guyana, Brazil and Nunavet.

It is clear that Indigenous communities around the world need to form partnerships in their struggle to sustain their lands and cultures. IFIP has quickly become one of the most

important instruments in those efforts and provides the ideal venue for the creation of partnerships with donors.

**UN Permanent Forum**

IFIP also held its third session at the United Nations Permanent Forum and brought its first delegation of nearly 70 donors to the international event. The session introduced the work of leading foundations, such as the Ford Foundation, the Christensen Fund and

the Kalliopeia Foundation, as well as examples of successful partnerships with Indigenous peoples. IFIP also distributed 200 copies of the *Indigenous Peoples Funding and Resource Guide* in Spanish and English.

To view IFIP's conference report and pictures from the event see the IFIP website at: [www.internationalfunders.org](http://www.internationalfunders.org)



## Kalliopeia Foundation Honored

**T**he Kalliopeia Foundation was named this year's recipient of the second annual IFIP Award.

The Award was presented at a special reception held during the IFIP Annual Conference hosted at the Ford Foundation in New York City, New York earlier this year.

In accepting the award, Barbara Sargent, Kalliopeia Executive

Director, stated, "This is a lovely acknowledgement of our mission and what we believe to be its importance for this day and time when so many of the world's peoples, and the Earth itself, are suffering desperately."

Kalliopeia's mission is to seek support of projects that are attuned to what sustains life and nourishes the human spirit. They firmly believe that the sustainability of

life is rested upon achieving a harmonious relationship between humans, the Earth, and the spirit.

Indigenous cultures offer humanity lifeways that are built upon a holistic worldview. Kalliopeia has adopted this principle and based its programming on the vision that all human beings are interconnected.

"The projects we support are resonant with this vision," noted Ms. Sargent, "Through the limited financial support we are able to offer, Kalliopeia honors and works for the well-being of Indigenous cultures."

Kalliopeia is leading the way in supporting the preservation of Indigenous cultures and their worldviews that are essential for a just and balanced global civilization.

Photo: Courtesy of Polly Withers



Kalliopeia Foundation was presented at the Second Annual IFIP Award. (l to r): Emmanuel Vaughan-Lee, Evelyn Arce-White, Barbara Sargent, Barbara Cushing, Rebecca Adamson, and Lisa Kleger.

## Strengthening ...

*Continued from Page 2*

tions as long as there is a spirit of peaceful co-existence and mutual benefit. But they expect the State and international organizations to take action to protect and fulfil their obligations to them. As we ponder on strengthening our partnership in philanthropy, let us also think of how we could create opportunities and mechanisms for grassroots actors to periodically assess the implementation of development initiatives and how we could empower such grassroots organizations to oblige national and global authorities to sit up and officially listen.

One of our most fulfilling experiences is to witness the transformational role of women in community affairs when given a decision-making role. For example, in North East India, an IFAD funded project is helping women to organize themselves into Self-Help Groups. After some years of exchanged ideas and training, these groups are gradually transforming their rural communities by their discipline of weekly meetings, weekly savings and by confronting issues that they themselves define as crucial.

For example, in some areas Self-Help Groups are also playing an important role in peace-making in communities affected by armed conflict and insecurity. Indeed, through their involvement in self help groups, some women are becoming leaders, instigating change in

social practices and relationships and mobilizing social action for social justice. I hope that this Conference will explore the role of Indigenous women to improve the well being of indigenous communities.

I come from North East India, a region that is identified as one of the world's biodiversity hot spots where some of the communities follow a matrilineal system

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and where literacy is quite high because of the work of Christian Missions. Yet this is an isolated area where there are very few partnerships with international organizations until recently. There are many more isolated areas of this nature around the world that could benefit from a culturally sensitive local-global collaboration. My wife and I have had some very exciting experiences of trying to build such bridges between our friends and local communities.

I sincerely hope that in your discussions, you will take time to also explore new op-

portunities for partnership with local communities who live in such isolated areas of the world. Your partnership with such communities will bring hope to them and in return you will be inspired to do more for human development.

In my community, we have a traditional system of community philanthropy. Every time the mother of the house sits down to prepare a meal. She would set aside a fistful of rice for unexpected guest or for local charity. It was this form of local capital formation that many Churches used to build their church buildings.

A few weeks ago, I took part in a Church Centenary Service in a remote village in my home state, Meghalaya. There was a congregation of 200,000 people and the villagers had used the traditional system of fistful of rice to save for over a year to feed this huge congregation. It was a humbling experience to see what community philanthropy in a poor and isolated area could provide. I think community philanthropy could be an exciting partnership program for members of IFIP.

Within the international organizations and our partners in development, there is today an increased focus on harmonisation of processes in activities such as procurement and even in development approaches. Indeed, the focus on harmonization is because of our earlier failures to coordinate effectively amongst ourselves at a country or local

level. This is a valid initiative. However, when dealing with Indigenous Peoples we must remind ourselves that in our newfound zeal to harmonize, we must not undermine the value of diversity.

There are of course new areas of coordination that we must also dare to tread. For example, one of the challenges of small grants is the cost of supervision. This is perhaps one of the areas where members of IFIP could develop a coordinated programme of supervision, monitoring and fiduciary oversight.

Philanthropic organizations are being increasingly professionalized as their contribution to development has increased significantly. However as you enhance your skills and coverage, I hope you will not lose sight of the value of flexibility and the space that you have always given to others to be creative and to think out of the box. These are your hallmarks.

I wish you all the best as you try to make the world listen to the silence of the Indigenous Peoples and as you try to open its eyes to their invisibility.

**Read Roy's speech at the UN Permanent Forum at the IFIP website, [www.internationalfund.org](http://www.internationalfund.org)**

*Phrang Roy is the Assistant President on Special Assignment for Indigenous and Tribal Issues of the International Fund for Agricultural Development.*



# Networks and Collaborations

### World Water Forum (Mexico) March 2006

Ecologic Development Fund and IFIP brought together a panel of Indigenous leaders from Mesoamerica to discuss successful experiences with Integrated Water Resource Management at the community level.

### 5th Global Annual Philanthropy Forum (Washington, D.C.) April 3-5, 2006

IFIP attended the GPF, a forum that looked at ways that philanthropists can leverage and inform policy. The event featured partnerships with governments, international organizations, and the private sector. It explored the power of individual social entrepreneurs in bringing about positive change and how philanthropy can achieve societal goals.

### Council on Foundation's Annual Conference (Pittsburgh, PA) May 7-9, 2006

IFIP held a session called, "Effective and Innovative Strategies for Increasing Indigenous Grantmaking." The session explored grantmaking practices,

reviewed successful cases and provided tools to enhance collaborative efforts between donors and indigenous grantees.

### Linking Circle V Annual Conference Ford Foundation and UN Headquarters (New York City, NY) May 16-17, 2006

The IFIP Annual Conference coincided with the convening of the UN Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues and was held at the Ford Foundation. A session was also held at the UN and served as the ideal venue for this year's theme, "Strengthening Partnerships in Philanthropy: Building Effective Grantmaking in Indigenous Communities."

The Conference reported on IFIP's efforts to improve funding opportunities for Indigenous projects and featured examples of partnerships that support locally driven community sustainability. It discussed the need to strengthen grantmaker networks, as well as form partnerships with international organizations and Indigenous communities. It was the largest gathering of donors that support international Indigenous Peoples in history.



IFIP Executive Director Evelyn Arce-White with President Bill Clinton at the 5th Annual Global Philanthropy Forum themed, "Policy, Philanthropy, and Social Entrepreneurship: Advancing Social Change," held in Washington, D.C. in April 2006.

### Empowering ...

*Continued from Page 2*

#### What did you learn from the IFIP Annual Conference?

The conference made it clear to me how useful PV methodology can be in linking indigenous peoples with funders. There is a great lack of participatory forms of communication, by that I mean handing over control to the people on the ground and allowing them to tell their own stories on their own terms. A lot of indigenous communities are hard to reach because of their geographical location, isolation, or they do not have the local support or capacity to set up their own organisations to communicate with funders. Indigenous communities have high rates of illiteracy so there is a need to find alternatives to the written application. PV provides us

with a means of including the views of the wider community, including the women and children.

With video, you can reach marginalised groups more easily and work with them in familiar surroundings where they feel comfortable. Their ability to communicate their needs in this way is more empowering because they remain in control of the process.

#### What has happened since the IFIP Annual Conference and the UNPFII?

A subsequent outcome of this then has been the creation of a new partnership with the Global Human Rights Strengthening Programme (formerly HURIST Division for Human Rights) of the United Nation's Development Programme (UNDP), and strengthening the existing

## Upcoming IFIP Conference Sessions

### **Environmental Grantmakers Association (Pacific Grove, CA)**

**October 7-11, 2006**

IFIP submitted a session proposal titled, "Indigenous Approaches to Conservation and Territorial Defense," that includes a cross-cultural panel of Indigenous leaders to discuss approaches to conservation and provides a better understand of environmental goals for traditional territories. For details, visit [www.ega.org](http://www.ega.org).

Tentative speakers include: Amilcar Castañeda (Quechua), consultant in Indigenous Rights for the InterAmerican Institute for Human Rights; Tony James, President of the Amerindian Peoples Association and Chief of the Wapishana and Macushi communities in Guyana; Enrique Salmón, IFIP Sustaining Member and Program Officer for The Christensen Fund.

### **Worldwide Initiatives for Grantmaker Support-WINGS**

**c/o European Foundation Centre (Bangkok, Thailand)**

**November 16-18, 2006**

IFIP submitted a session proposal titled, "Bridging and Building Indigenous Focused Philanthropy," to provide an overview of the contemporary issues facing Indigenous communities and present donor experiences in building the capacity of traditional communities. For details, see [www.wingsweb.org](http://www.wingsweb.org).

Tentative speakers will include: Catherine Brown, consultant for Foundation for Rural and Regional Renewal (FRRR) of Australia; Evelyn Arce-White, IFIP Executive Director; and Ujjwal Pradhan, Program Officer for the Ford Foundation.

*The IFIP Annual Conference was a wonderful springboard for what happened later at the UNFP II. It was significant for creating links and networks for our future work with indigenous people and communities.*

partnership with Global Environment Facility Small Grants Programme (GEF SGP); with a plan to incorporate PV methods across their 98 country offices. PV will now be used as a means of building local capacity and self esteem in poor and marginalised communities, improving communication links between UNDP staff and their local partners and local communities, and further developing participatory approaches in their programmes. One exciting output from the point of view of funders has been an increase in video proposals by indigenous communities thus enabling indigenous

groups to develop better access to donors through the method of PV grant applications.

*What are some other benefits of PV?*

There is also scope for using PV in the evaluation and monitoring of projects that have already received funding. Visual and anecdotal methods of evaluation by the communities themselves can enable people to have a say in how the project has benefited them. This enables them to share the projects' mistakes and the lessons learnt, in order to inform funders more directly and to help develop new and better projects. It is powerful when funders make a

human connection with communities they are donating to. They are inspired by being able to see what difference their support is making, and thus continue to support worthwhile initiatives.

*How can IFIP members support your work?*

The IFIP Annual Conference was a wonderful springboard for what happened later at the UNFP II. It was significant for creating links and networks for our future work with indigenous people and communities. Insight is a small organisation with extraordinary opportunities to make an impact but we need to grow as an organisation now. We've been working hard with very few resources to pioneer and promote PV. We've now built up a good track record and raised our profile, so we're in a good position to maximise the impact of PV and spread our experience and learning. We want to develop local capacity for PV in the South and help set up a network of participatory community media centres. So right now, we're looking for development funding to cover core costs so we can expand our operations.

*How can someone obtain more information?*

If you are interested in *Insights into Participatory Video: A Handbook for the Field*, email Nick Lunch for more information at [nlunch@insightshare.org](mailto:nlunch@insightshare.org), or visit [www.insightshare.org](http://www.insightshare.org).



*Catherine Setchell is an intern at Insight with a MPhil from the Institute of Development Studies in Brighton, United Kingdom.*

# IFIP Membership

International Funders for Indigenous Peoples is a philanthropic affinity group of the Council on Foundations whose members are dedicated to expanding and enriching their grantmaking programs for international Indigenous sustainability.

Join our network of supporters today and start to receive the many benefits of being an IFIP member. Be apart of strengthening our Indigenous Philanthropy network. Benefits include: being part of an unparalleled vehicle that exchanges ideas and guidance with funders and experts, receiving *The Sharing Circle*, our bi-annual newsletter that offers insight into the international arena, having access to highly provocative research reports and books, invitation to become a planning committee member for our Annual Conference and receiving discounts for registration and the Indigenous Peoples Funders and Resource Guide, , being added to our monthly e- newsletter *The Sharing Network* and much more. If you are interested in becoming a member, complete the form at [www.internationalfunders.org](http://www.internationalfunders.org) or request a form at [ifip@internationalfunders.org](mailto:ifip@internationalfunders.org), or call (315) 842-0792

## Levels of Support

### Sustain Members: (\$7,500 or more)

Levi Strauss Foundation, The Christensen Fund, Kalliopeia Foundation, W.K. Kellogg Foundation, Aveda Corporation, Ford Foundation, Mistubishi International Corporation Foundation, The Mailman Foundation.

### Esteem Members: (\$500 to \$5,000)

Walter & Duncan Gordon Foundation, Seeds for Communities, Solidago Foundation, Harry and Frank Guggenheim Foundation, New England Biolabs, Otto Bremer Foundation, Global Greengrants Fund, Tides Canada Foundation, Garfield Foundation, Mary's Pence, American Jewish Funders Network, The Jacob and Hilda Blaustein Foundation, The Grotto Foundation, Myer Foundation, National Network of Grantmakers, Environmentally and Socially Sustainable Development at WB, Native Americans in Philanthropy, Environmental Grantmakers Association, Grantmakers Without Borders and Channel Foundation.

Combining the global links of international grantmaking with the professional development of affinity groups

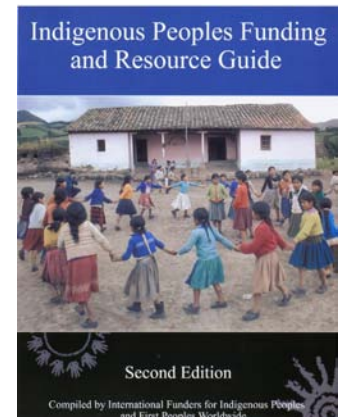


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