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# News

Issue 8  
Fall 2022

CENTRE FOR INDIGENOUS CONSERVATION AND DEVELOPMENT ALTERNATIVES

## International Exchange Program

### Members of a First Nation Community from Canada Share a Message of Hope to the Maasai of Tanzania

By The Kesho Trust (Tanzania)

**T**he success we have achieved as Indigenous people in Canada on land rights and social and cultural issues did not come overnight. It was a long-time process that involved lobbying and advocacy by a united community of Indigenous peoples, with a cost of life and resources. As the Maasai of Tanzania you should not give up but rather stand up for your rights and way of life because the future remains bright. — Sean McDougall, Heritage Manager, Carcross/Tagish First Nation.

In early August 2022, a group of Indigenous community members of the Carcross / Tagish First Nation from Yukon, Canada visited the Maasai of Ngorongoro and Elerai in Tanzania. The visit came about as part of a project led by the University of Victoria in Canada in collaboration with Kesho Trust. Indigenous partner organizations in the project are: Carcross / Tagish First Nation (Canada), Ereto Maasai Youth



Maasai elders (centre) in Elerai, Tanzania sharing their traditional knowledge with Sean McDougall (Carcross / Tagish First Nation, Canada – far right) through a young community interpreter (Robert Sakinoi – far left). Courtesy: The Kesho Trust

(Tanzania) and Enguserosambu Forest Trust (Tanzania). The project is funded by the Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council of Canada.

The exchange began with a three-day visit to the Maasai people in Engaresero village at Lake Natron. The project

team was introduced to the Maasai culture through visiting the homesteads (bomas) of the local people, attending various family and community events, learning about the use of local and traditional medicines at a meat re-

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treat camp (orpul) and visiting the Maasai spiritual leader (Oloiboni).

From Lake Natron their travel route took them through Serengeti National Park and Ngorongoro Conservation Area. Experiencing the endless plains of the Serengeti, the plentiful and diverse wildlife and the magnificent Ngorongoro caldera, they were also constantly reminded that all of these landscapes were once Maasai homeland, taken away in the name of formal conservation and now reaping huge benefits for government and the private sector while the Maasai struggle.

A final destination of the tour was the Maasai community of Elerai, in Kilindi District. The three-day visit focused on sharing the culture and traditions. Small groups provided in-depth opportunities to focus on specific areas of knowledge and tradition – topics including land and water use and governance, culture, youth, and women's issues.

It became clear in the discussions that their cultures are strikingly similar in the concepts, beliefs, and practices that

underpin their traditions. Similarly, both groups share much experience in the struggles to safeguard their ways of life.

However, the Maasai have continued to practice their culture strongly (i.e., language, clothing, community events, and ceremonies), while the First Nations in Canada are working hard to bring their culture back, having lost their native languages and traditions under the pressure of colonial powers. A further difference was that while the Canadian government has started to recognize and compensate for the rights of the Indigenous people of Canada that were lost in the past, the Tanzanian government remains blind to the Maasai way of life, treating them as people living an outdated life that must change. Hence, their rights to land and livelihoods are being actively undermined.

Generally, the visitors brought a message of hope. The road to success being followed by Indigenous people in Canada is an example for the Maasai of Tanzania who should not give up, but rather stand up for their rights and way of life. ●

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# International Colloquium

## ASEI Project Weaving Ties Between Indigenous Peoples and Territories

*By Rolando Ivan Magana Canul (UQAT) and Benoit Éthier (UQAT)*

From June 15 to 17, 2022, the School of Indigenous Studies of the University of Quebec in Abitibi-Témiscamingue was the main venue for the International Colloquium, "Weaving ties between Indigenous peoples and territories," organized within the framework of the Alliance Knowledge and Indigenous Education project (Alianza Saberes y Educación Indígenas/ASEI). The objective of this event was to bring together educational authorities, university professors, primary and secondary school teachers, traditional educators, researchers and

Indigenous and non-Indigenous students from Chile, Brazil, Guatemala, Mexico, and Canada to create cooperation ties and exchange experiences and knowledge oriented to the development of methodologies, protocols and education strategies in Indigenous contexts.

The opening ceremony of this colloquium was very significant, as it was led by Gloria Penosway, a peacekeeper from the Anicinape community of Kitcisakik, who highlighted the ability of youth and women from Indigenous



Gloria Penosway with a sacred *teweikan* belonging to her family. *Courtesy: Benoit Éthier*

nations to overcome the legacies of colonialism and to continue meeting along the way while advancing their

own stories and traditions. The activities carried out over three consecutive days were varied and enriching. The first day focused on the presentation of the work teams formed in each country and the general description of the historical, demographic, territorial and educational situation of the seven Indigenous nations present: Mapuche, Maya, Purépecha, Nahuatl, Atikamekw, Nehirowisiw, Anicinape, and Inuit.

On the second day of activities, scientific conferences were given on intercultural education and strategies aimed at providing relevance to educational content in Indigenous regions. This day was also dedicated to the presentation of educational initiatives and tools developed by and for Indigenous nations. Some of these in-



Mapuche students at the Enzo Ferrari School, Chile. *Courtesy: Benoit Éthier*

novations referred to the inclusion of Indigenous perspectives in official history programs, the hiring of traditional educators in schools in order to promote Indigenous languages and worldviews, and the creation of websites in which they are stored. They also shared photos and videos about different daily scenarios wherein Indigenous knowledge is being transmitted.



Marie-Carole Qinuajuak and Sarah Angiyou performing Inuit throat singing. *Courtesy: Benoit Éthier*

During the third and final day of work, the teams presented and exchanged their reflections on learning, expectations, challenges and commitments regarding the decolonization of official education. To the extent that this colloquium was organized with the contributions of members of the Indigenous nations, different cultural expressions were also included, such as ceremonies, dances, songs and poetry in their own languages.

In this sense, a traditional Mapuche educator shared his desire to see one day that schools allow for the spaces and times that are necessary for the de-



Gabriel Marcotte, Benoit Éthier, Lisette Petiquay, Sylvie Poirier, Christian Coocoo and Rolando Magaña on the first day of the colloquium, Val-d'Or Campus, UQAT. *Courtesy: Benoit Éthier*

velopment of socio-cultural activities that are so important in the process of recovering the values and languages of Indigenous peoples (Proceedings of Colloquium, 2022).

One aspect in which the participants agreed was that this colloquium contributed not only to generating knowledge about educational strategies, but also to fostering understanding and solidarity among the Indigenous peoples themselves, since colonization caused their disconnection and isolation in certain regions of the world. ●

*This event was financed by the program for the development of alliances (Développement partenariat) of the Conseil de recherches en sciences humaines (CRSH).*

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# Beyond Two States

## Taiwan-Canada Indigenous Dialogues

By Scott Simon (University of Ottawa)

Summer has traditionally been a season of meetings of all nations, and the summer of 2022 brought even Indigenous visitors from Taiwan to the shores of the Kichi-Sibi (Ottawa River). On June 23, an endorsement ceremony was held at the Museum of History for the Indigenous Peoples Economic and Trade Cooperation Arrangement (IPETCA) signed between Canada, “New Zealand” (Aotearoa), Australia, and “Chinese Taipei” (Taiwan). Algonquin Anishinabeg Elder Shirley Tolley from Kitigan Zibi, among many speakers, reminded participants that Indigenous economies have existed since time immemorial, but that Indigenous peoples have been excluded from trade. She called on IPETCA states to promote economic reconciliation and close gaps of inequality, but to proceed with caution. Canadian Trade Minister Honourable Mary Ng promised that IPETCA is the “new way in Canadian trade policy.”

The ceremony was preceded by a symposium, in which negotiators and other participants presented their views. IPETCA is intended to provide Indigenous peoples and entrepreneurs with greater access to international markets in ways respectful of Indigenous worldviews and environmental concerns. One salient feature will be the creation of an IPETCA Partnership Council to share knowledge and best practices in a new, inclusive, and Indigenous-centred governing framework that permits states and Indigenous representatives to make decisions together.

The member economies are all part of the Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation (APEC) forum, which explains the awkward diplomatic protocol of calling Taiwan “Chinese Taipei.” Of 21 APEC economies, 16 have important Indigenous populations. The People’s Republic of China, although officially recognizing 55 ethnic minority groups, maintains that the legal



CICADA members Scott Simon (University of Ottawa) and Awi Mona (National Dong Hwa University, Taiwan) meet at the Taiwan-Canada Indigenous Policy Dialogue, National Arts Centre, Ottawa, July 5, 2022. *Courtesy: Scott Simon*

concept of Indigenous peoples is inapplicable in China (which, in their view, includes Taiwan). There is thus opportunity for IPETCA to grow, but also possibilities of political friction.

Less than two weeks after this event, Minister Icyang Parod of Taiwan’s Council of Indigenous Peoples came to

Ottawa with a delegation for a Taiwan-Canada Indigenous Policy Dialogue. The focus of the event was Indigenous language revitalization, but Minister Icyang also met with Canadian ministers and officials to deepen bilateral cooperation on Indigenous issues. Earlier this year, the Austronesian Forum of Taiwan and the First Nations Tax Commission signed a Memorandum of Understanding on Indigenous affairs.

Indigenous diplomacy responds to the 94 Calls of Canada’s Truth and Reconciliation Commission and Canadian legislation to implement the United Nations Declaration of the Rights of Indigenous Peoples (UNDRIP). Article 36 of UNDRIP guarantees Indigenous peoples the right to maintain and develop “contacts, relations and cooperation” with other peoples across borders and requires states to facilitate the implementation of this right in consultation and cooperation with Indigenous peoples.

Relations between Canada and Taiwan are often awkward because the People’s Republic of China claims Taiwan and tends to oppose all official contact between Taiwan and third countries. Just this month, the Chinese Embassy in Ottawa protested the visit of five Canadian members of Parliament to Taiwan. UNDRIP provides new thinking. Maybe in the future, Indigenous nations from the two sides can meet and negotiate agreements that are autonomous of state actors. ●

# Xatastujut Tekit – Work Time

## Screening and collective discussion at *Présence Autochtone* film festival

By Iván Zamora, David Donner, Plácido Julián and Mariana Hernández

In 2021, CICADA supported our Totonac partners in the Puebla region of Mexico to create a documentary about Indigenous methods of beekeeping in the region. They produced a beautiful 20-minute short film called *Xatastujut Tekit* (Work Time), which documents the traditional practices of tending to the *Melipona* bees that are native to the region. In August of 2022, the film screened at the *Présence Autochtone* film festival in Montreal. One of the filmmakers, Mariana Hernández, was able to attend the screening, where she presented the film and engaged in lively discussion with the audience.

The *Présence Autochtone* film festival in Montreal was a space where Indigenous people were able to make their thoughts, feelings and desires known. How rare it is to encounter a space like this, where alternate ways of thinking, feeling and dreaming can be accommodated. We feel that it is necessary to reclaim more of such spaces for our communities and peoples, where the various experiences and feelings of those who live and are part of Indigenous communities and peoples can be expressed. There is an urgency to communicate all that we carry inside, through the arts.



In this regard, we propose a cinema that is built from communities of knowing, learning and doing from the people—a cinema with its feet on the ground and a heart full with the emotion of hearing, seeing and narrating the light that is born from the shadows. We propose a cinema that builds,



participates, and shares the utopias of the world. This is the spirit that animates our short documentary film, *Xatastujut Tekit* (Work Time).



The Tosepan Titataniske Cooperative Union of Cuetzalan Puebla brings together more than 40,000 Indigenous partners, including characters and filmmakers of our documentary, with the aim of sharing the work of caring for the *Melipona* bee—an endemic species of the Masehual and Totonaku region.

We were able to carry out this artistic and research work thanks to the support and financing of CICADA, who accompanied the process and invited us to narrate ourselves and share our knowledge through creation from within. It

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Why wait?

# Indigenous Peoples of the Americas Autonomy and Indigenous

By Héctor Jaime Vinasco (Resguardo de Origen Colonial Cañamomo Lomaprieta, Colombia) and Viviane Weitzner (McGill University)

CICADA member Héctor Jaime Vinasco of the Resguardo de Origen Colonial Cañamomo Lomaprieta (Colombia) and Viviane Weitzner, CICADA/L4E Research Fellow and Adjunct Professor of Anthropology at McGill, participated in a high-level regional seminar on Rights to Autonomy and Indigenous Justice in Santa Cruz, Bolivia, from October 5-7, 2022.

Co-organized by the International Working Group for Indigenous Affairs (IWGIA), the Organization for Social and Legal Support (ORE) and the Confederation of Indigenous Peoples of Bolivia (CIDOB), the seminar brought together Indigenous leaders from Peru, Bolivia, Ecuador, Chile, and Colombia to exchange first-hand experiences and knowledge. The UN Special Rapporteur on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples, President of the UN Permanent Forum, and Commissioner for Human Rights of the Inter-American Commission on Human Rights shared the possibilities and limitations for furthering Indigenous Autonomy and Justice within these international



Héctor Jaime Vinasco (left), from CICADA partner Resguardo de Origen Colonial Cañamomo Lomaprieta, together with other Colombian Indigenous participants, addressing the people of the Autonomous Region of Charagua, Bolivia. Courtesy: Viviane Weitzner

mechanisms.

While the right to self-determination and autonomy – along with Indigenous Justice – have been constitutionally recognized by several countries in South America, participants highlighted that processes to establish autonomous self-government have been extremely bureaucratic and slow. A case in point is Bolivia. Despite its 2009 constitution declaring it a plurinational state and establishing a framework of legal plurality that weaves together environmental justice, Indigenous justice, and state justice, the challenges in translating this into action have been immense. The

complex legislation regulating the establishment of autonomies has proven glacial in practice, riddled with regressive interpretations. The contradiction of the Morales government's support for extractivism in this context was also underscored as a major challenge.

*“Our territories are threatened by extractivism,”* said Toribia Lero, Quechua leader and member of Bolivia's plurinational legislative assembly. *“If there is no territory, there is no self-determination,”* she said, adding: *“These realities like illegal mining, agroindustry... lead to contamination, also of our women... How can we dream of the right to self-determination in these conditions?”* The intense divisions among Indigenous organizations and with the government of Bolivia was underscored, with a proposal for an Indigenous Parliament articulated by one leader representing 34 Nations in Bolivia's lowlands.

Ecuadorian participants highlighted similar challenges to Bolivia, where their autonomy and self-determination are affected by both extractive and conservation initiatives alike, despite the progressive Constitution. Mapuche

# for the State?

## Americas share experiences on Justice in Santa Cruz, Bolivia

participants from Chile described their situation as 30 years behind that of other countries such as Bolivia, set back even further now with the September 2022 plebiscite that voted down the promising Constitutional Reform that would have set precedent.

Meanwhile in Peru, the Wampis Nation has taken a different approach: *“In Peru there isn’t a norm that talks about collective autonomy. We are taking on the reconstruction of autonomy in practice. I have to sweat, to work and to exercise my right – and on the way the State will recognize us,”* said Shapiom Noningo. *“Waiting for the State is a waste of time,”* he underscored, referring to those peoples pushing for State recognition first.

And Noningo added: *“The Wampis Nation...we have come along heads down... we have not insisted with the State around Autonomy. But we have delivered to the State our [Autonomous] Statutes and research. The answer – neither good nor bad. We are working in a friendly manner with some state representatives. We are not talking about National Sovereignty or about fragmentation.”*

Colombian Indigenous participants highlighted the hope that Colombia’s new government is generating in terms

of the potential to uphold Indigenous and Afro-Descendant rights, particularly since several high-level positions – including the Vice-Presidency – are now filled by Indigenous and Afro-Descendant representatives. Yet it is a challenge to move from being representatives in social movements, to taking on roles in the state towards transformations that can lead to self-determination.

The realities of autonomy came to life for participants with a visit to Charagua Iyambae, one of Bolivia’s first experiences of Autonomous Government, established by the Guarani Indigenous people that live in southern Bolivia. Essentially, this process entailed the transformation of a state-run municipality into a self-governed autonomy. “Iyambae” means to be free, to no longer be enslaved, in the words of Guarani Authority Ronal Andrés Cairaica. The establishment of this autonomous region was a dream come true, he said, a result of the struggle to uphold self-determination, even if the process was extremely slow. And he explained Charagua’s concept of autonomy: *“Autonomy is las bases, the people, on top, and the capitancias, the authorities on the bottom – we serve the people.”*



Guarani students and professor outside the School of Indigenous Journalism in Charagua, Bolivia. Courtesy: Viviane Weitzner

Rich exchanges took place around Indigenous Justice with participants underscoring challenges such as the lack of intercultural mechanisms, misinterpretations of Indigenous Justice, the asymmetrical financing available for exercising justice compared to the state system, and the need to depatriarchalize and decolonize Indigenous systems.

We also visited Charagua’s leading edge Indigenous Journalism school, where young journalists showcased samples of their documentary videos and presented the school’s inspiring programme. The school plays a critical

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(From left to right) Viviane Weitzner, CICADA/L4E Research Fellow and Adjunct Prof. of Anthropology; Francisco Cali Tzay, UN Special Rapporteur on Indigenous Peoples' Rights; Mariana Yumbay, Kichwa/Warana Leader, Ecuador; Toribio Lero, Quechua member of Bolivia's Plurinational Legislative Assembly. Courtesy: Viviane Weitzner

role in exercising autonomy, ensuring that news important to Indigenous Peoples flows to the grassroots in their own languages.

The seminar concluded with a series of recommendations, including the need to generate an Indigenous platform on autonomy. This has already started with the creation of a WhatsApp group to connect participants and continue developing strategies towards exercising autonomy, self-determination, and Indigenous justice.

*"[This was] a seminar that allowed communities to learn about the development of justice and Indigenous autonomy in other countries of South America,"* said Héctor Jaime Vinasco, *"and to share what we are doing in the Cañamomo Lomapieta Indigenous Reserve in Colombia with a view to exercising self-government, strengthening alliances between peoples and in this way making progress in consolidating the rights of Indigenous peoples for a*

*life in harmony."*

IWGIA extended the invitation to attend the seminar following Viviane Weitzner's book chapter entitled "¡Guardia, Guardia!: Autonomies and territorial defense in the context of Colombia's post Peace-Accord" published (in Spanish) in a 2021 IWGIA-supported book forthcoming in English as "Indigenous Territorial Autonomy and Self-Government in the Diverse Americas" edited by M. González, A. Burguete Cal and Mayor, J. Mariman, P. Ortiz T. and R. Funaki, published by University of Calgary Press. ●

Cover photo, page 1: Francisco Cali Tzay, UN Special Rapporteur on Indigenous Peoples' Rights, Santa Cruz, Bolivia. Courtesy: Viviane Weitzner

## Indigenous Territorial Management Workshop in the Canaima National Park and UNESCO Natural Heritage Site

By Iokiñe Rodríguez (University of East Anglia), Vladimir Aguilar (Universidad de los Andes), and Domingo Castro (Captain General of Sector II of the Pemón People)

On August 18, 19 and 20, 2022, the Indigenous Territorial Management Workshop was held in the Pemón Kamarakoto community of the Canaima National Park and UNESCO World Natural Heritage Site, Venezuela.

This workshop was facilitated by Dr. Vladimir Aguilar of the GTAI (Working Group on Indigenous Affairs) of the Universidad de los Andes in Venezuela and Dr. Iokiñe Rodríguez of the GEJ (Global Environmental Justice Group) of the University of East Anglia,

England, together with the Captain General of Sector II of the Pemón People, Domingo Castro.

The Indigenous Territorial Management that is sustained in the life plans, is a fundamental tool to specify the territorial rights of the Indigenous populations. In addition, it constitutes an intercultural policy to mitigate the effects of extractivist activity. The objective of this workshop was to guide and accompany the Pemón-Kamarakoto People in defining their priorities based on the protection and use of the re-



Kerepakupai Wena (Salta Angel), Eastern Sector Canaima National Park. Courtesy: Iokiñe Rodríguez

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was not without its complications, but it had the respect, care, interest, and solidarity of the work that we do, and the commitment of this way of narrating and making movies.

The experience of presenting the film at the *Présence Autochtone* festival in Montreal was special, and was a great opportunity to share thoughts and dreams. It was an inspiration to continue telling and reflecting on the stories that unite us.

If we have the opportunity to live and weave ourselves into strong and supportive networks and cooperatives, we have the opportunity to create and rethink utopias that seek a *yeknemilis, sumac kawsay*—to live better and to live with dignity from *buen vivir*. ●



Filmmaker Mariana Hernández presents the documentary film, *Xatastujut Tekit* (Work Time), at the *Présence Autochtone* film festival in Montreal. August 12, 2022. All Images Courtesy: *Proyecto Xatastujut Tekit*

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sources of their territories. It included the participation of all the community captains (14 in total) of Sector II with the exception of the community-captains of Kanaimo. The Council of Elders, members of the Kamarakoto Special Indigenous Jurisdiction (JEIK) and the community in general, also participated.

The starting point of the Workshop was the understanding of the agreement signed between the Kanaimo community and the National Parks Institute (INPARQUES) last March, which highlights the importance of the co-administration of the Canaima National Park (PNC), to ensure the protection of the protected area and the protection of the rights of the Pemón Indigenous people of Sector II. The co-management of the protected area is presented as a necessary alternative in a context of growing socio-environmental conflict caused by the advance of mining activity within the boundaries of the National Park and the invasion of third parties who seek to arbitrarily and illegally take control of tourism in some sectors of the Pemón territory.

The workshop discussed the potential advantages and challenges of the

co-administration of the Pemón territory, taking as a starting point the double condition of the protected area as a National Park and an Indigenous Territory and the advances made by the Pemón people in the self-demarcation of their territory, as well as the outstanding debt of the Venezuelan government in the titling of the Pemón territory.

In addition to discussing the advantages and challenges of the co-administration of the Pemón territory, working groups were developed to address the following question – What things should we do as the Pemón Kamarakoto Indigenous people to ensure the protection of our territory? – using three working horizons:

#### **Horizon 1 (current moment):**

- What difficulties do we have in managing the Kamarakoto territory?
- What is the novelty that we have achieved (seeds that have been sown)?

#### **Horizon 2 (where do we want to go):**

- What would be an ideal management vision for the Kamarakoto territory?
- What potential do we have to achieve it?

#### **Horizon 3 (the transition):**

- What do we have to do to achieve it?
- What do we have to stop doing?

In the coming months, the workshop will be replicated in other sectors to continue consolidating the collective management of the Pemón Territory and Canaima National Park. ●

## Recent publications by CICADA partners

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Special thanks to Lucía Justo, Ségolène Guinard, Katrina Joosten, Steven Schnoor, and Iván Vargas for their support in the design, translation, and final edition of this new issue of the CICADA newsletter.