INDIGENOUS PARTNERSHIP
FOR AGROBIODIVERSITY
AND FOOD SOVEREIGNTY

FROM THE
GROUND UP
**What is the Indigenous Partnership for Agrobiodiversity and Food Sovereignty?**

The Indigenous Partnership for Agrobiodiversity and Food Sovereignty (Indigenous Partnership) is a network of indigenous communities and organisations committed to defining their own food and agricultural practices that sustain agrobiodiversity, assisted by scientists and policy researchers who value participatory agricultural research approaches. Supported by the Christensen Fund and hosted by Bioversity International, we work in partnership with indigenous organisations and the Platform for Agrobiodiversity Research to safeguard agrobiodiversity.

The Partnership's founding members include:

- Three indigenous organisations (Tebtebba Foundation of the Philippines, Asociación ANDES of Peru, and Vanuatu Cultural Centre of Vanuatu);
- An international agricultural research body (Platform for Agrobiodiversity Research hosted by Bioversity International, Rome, Italy);
- An international policy research group (Sustainable Agriculture, Biodiversity and Livelihoods Programme of the International Institute for Environment and Development, London, UK); and
- A social movement organisation with interest in good, clean and fair food and biodiversity (Slow Food International, Bra, Italy).

**How did the Indigenous Partnership get its Start?**

In 2010, The Christensen Fund, in order to promote indigenous knowledge, innovations and practices of food and agriculture, provided a grant to Bioversity International to explore the establishment of an Indigenous Partnership for Agrobiodiversity and Food Sovereignty.

After consulting with various indigenous organisations, it was agreed that such a partnership could create a neutral – but influential – space for local communities to defend their foodways and demand policies to sustain their role as stewards of the diverse agrobiodiversity they have created and tended for generations.

Discussion continued among indigenous participants, policy makers and scientists at a Scoping Workshop, held in Cusco, Peru in 2010, and generated core ideas on the nature and work of the Partnership.
Why is an Indigenous Partnership important?

Indigenous peoples possess valuable knowledge of traditional food and agricultural practices but this knowledge is under threat of being lost due to the influences of globalisation, extractive industries and external aid.

The Indigenous Partnership offers support to assist indigenous peoples in protecting their food heritage through better access to relevant information and resources.

Likewise, we provide a forum to voice indigenous recommendations and solutions to pressing global issues by guiding research, advocacy, and policy-making related to agrobiodiversity and food systems. With these aims in mind, we work to ensure that indigenous peoples are recognised leaders in the field, and that they help to steer the future course of agrobiodiversity initiatives.
THE ROLE OF THE
INDIGENOUS PARTNERSHIP

The Indigenous Partnership enhances autonomous agricultural systems through a number of community-minded approaches.

One approach is to establish a framework for ethical collaboration among communities, agricultural researchers and others, around issues of agricultural systems, traditional food knowledge and genetic resources. Another is to create a media network for communities to share their wisdom and document their experiences through their own eyes, words and knowledge systems.

Public research should pay closer attention to the sustainable approaches of indigenous communities. The Indigenous Partnership will support research studies that promote a fuller understanding of indigenous worldviews, and will ensure that the results of these studies are presented at appropriate platforms.

We hope to serve as a bridge that links communities at the grassroots level with policy makers at the international level, and in doing so help to empower often marginalised peoples. More specifically, the Indigenous Partnership will:

- Build a strong alliance of grassroots organisations constituting the partnership;
- Bring evidence-based inputs to international fora, such as the United Nations Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues and the Convention on Biological Diversity;
- Strengthen links between scientific and indigenous communities and identify possibilities for relevant research opportunities (jointly with the Platform for Agrobiodiversity Research);
- Promote effective associations with other The Christensen Fund-supported initiatives and its regional programmes; and
- Develop a communications strategy to build an autonomous indigenous media network.
The Indigenous Partnership supports indigenous peoples and local communities at a grassroots level to determine their own development approaches to food and agriculture. We have found food festivals to be important entry points to empower indigenous communities to reclaim their foodways and food sovereignty.

At this formative stage, the priority activities for the Indigenous Partnership are:

- To create a Code of Ethics for the Indigenous Partnership based on respect and reciprocity;
- To build alliances between local communities to promote networking and cooperative learning;
- To promote agrobiodiversity and sustainable agricultural systems at international food events;
- To provide indigenous communities with the tools to communicate at local and global levels including regional and international meetings;
- To promote agrobiodiversity at the global level through dissemination and advocacy; and
- To develop an indigenous studies programme to bridge the gap between scientists and traditional knowledge holders.
The Indigenous Partnership for Agrobiodiversity and Food Sovereignty supports indigenous peoples, local communities and their representatives to celebrate, defend and revitalise their food systems and agricultural practices at local and global levels through research, participatory initiatives and associated advocacy activities.

For further information about the Indigenous Partnership for Agrobiodiversity and Food Sovereignty please contact:

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