Volume 8, Special Issue, Summer/Winter 2019

Langscape MAGAZINE

Re-Storying Biocultural Diversity: Wisdom from Young Indigenous Leaders

Langscape Magazine is an extension of the voice of Terralingua.
It supports our mission by educating the minds and hearts
about the importance and value of biocultural diversity.

We aim to promote a paradigm shift by illustrating biocultural diversity
through scientific and traditional knowledge, within an appealing
sensory context of articles, stories, and art.

ABOUT THE COVER PHOTOS

Front: Drum-dancing is the heart of life in Siberia. D'ulus Mukhin, the youngest of the Siberian shamans, is trying to awaken his sleeping settlement from amnesia. Photo: Galya Morrell, 2014

Back: Junior Guajajara and Ranielly Guajajara (they are not siblings: all Guajajara people use the same last name) practice camera-use during a show-and-tell game. They were the youngest participants in the training, but that didn't stop them from unfolding their creativity and leaving aside shyness to fully engage in all participatory video activities. Photo: Thor Morales/ InsightShare, 2019

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Terralingua
Unity in Biocultural Diversity

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· nature · language · culture ·

Langscape MAGAZINE

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The stories in this special issue of *Langscape Magazine* have been largely drawn from those submitted to the Indigenous Youth Storytellers Circle, a Terralingua project developed as a contribution to the United Nations International Year of Indigenous Languages (IYIL 2019).

Terralingua
Unity in Biocultural Diversity

2019 | INTERNATIONAL YEAR OF
Indigenous Languages

EDITORIAL

Bringing the Past into the Future

Luisa Maffi and David Harmon

"We, the Indigenous Peoples, walk to the future in the footprints of our ancestors."

So begins the Kari-Oca Declaration and Indigenous Peoples' Earth Charter, a landmark Indigenous document drawn up nearly thirty years ago.

In 1992, shortly ahead of the historic UN Conference on Environment and Development (UNCED, informally known as the "Earth Summit" or "Rio Conference"), Indigenous Peoples from all over the world gathered at Kari-Oca, a sacred site near Rio de Janeiro, Brazil, for the World Conference of Indigenous Peoples on Territory, Environment and Development. In their Declaration, they not only laid out their demands for environmental, cultural, land, and human rights, which they later presented to the leaders of the world's countries at UNCED. They also expressed their collective vision and intentions for the future: a future of dignity, harmony, and respect, grounded in self-determination and the wisdom of their ancestors. That wisdom, the Declaration's opening words made clear, was the compass by which they could find their way toward the future while following the course charted by previous generations.

Rarely had the idea of intergenerational transmission of biocultural knowledge been expressed more poetically and poignantly than in those powerful opening words: transmission not as a static repeat of the past, but as a dynamic path laid out by the wisdom of the elders, along which younger generations can move forward with confidence and creativity, feeling strong and secure in their cultural identities, their spiritual values, and the continuity of their ways of life. And those words still resonate today.

Just ask Vova Yadne, a sixteen-year-old Nenets from northwestern Siberia, Russia, about his own path. "I want to keep the past and bring it into the future," says the gifted young artist without a hint of hesitation. Or ask We'e'ena Tikuna, a multi-talented young member of the Tikuna people of Brazil. In all her creative endeavors, she affirms, she works "with an eye to our ancestry, but also with an eye to our future." Or Skil Jaadee White, a young Haida "language warrior" from Canada: "I'm a chain link toward a stronger future," she proclaims. Ask Edna Kilusu, an eighteen-year-old Maasai student from Tanzania with a fondness for listening to her aunt's telling of traditional lore. She muses: "How do we move forward without forgetting our past?" The words of these bright Indigenous youth—all of them contributors to this issue of *Langscape Magazine*—uncannily echo those of the Kari-Oca Declaration.

And they're not alone. All around the world, young Indigenous people are leading the way toward harmonious and respectful living on Earth. Recognizing that their languages, cultures, and homelands bear the wisdom of generations of ancestors, these young Indigenous leaders are stepping up to carry that wisdom forward—and not just in their own communities, but for the benefit of people everywhere. Their experiences are priceless gifts full of much-needed inspiration for the rest of the world.

That's why last year, as we at Terralingua were thinking of a special project and a special issue of our magazine to celebrate the 2019 UN Year of Indigenous Languages (IYIL 2019), we quickly zeroed in on the younger generations of Indigenous Peoples as agents of both change and continuity. We also knew right away that we couldn't just focus on languages. In Indigenous worldviews, language, culture, and land are interconnected and inseparable—you can't think or talk of one without the others. That's the essence, too, of the idea of biocultural diversity that Terralingua stands for and that we seek to make alive through this magazine. Our focus had to be holistic: Indigenous youth and their efforts to affirm and revitalize not only their ancestral languages, but also their cultural and spiritual traditions, their ways of life, and their links to the land. And we would reach out to these courageous and creative young people not only as doers, but also as storytellers, engaged in both *restoring* and *re-storying* their diverse biocultural heritages.

Out of that brainstorm was born our Indigenous Youth Storytellers Circle Project (IYSC). Launched in early 2019, and soon officially recognized as an IYIL 2019 project, the IYSC began to gather stories by Indigenous youth worldwide, with the idea of publishing them online as they came along (https://terralingua.org/langscape-magazine/read-

langscape/ and https://medium.com/langscape-magazine/indigenous-youth-storytellers-circle/home). And along they did come, from around the globe, delivering an inspiring wealth of perspectives and insights on what it means to be young and Indigenous and proud of it today. Whether engaged in revitalizing their languages, reconnecting with and reasserting their cultural identities and traditions, or reclaiming traditional ecological knowledge and stewardship of their lands and marine environments, these young people are strong, determined, and have stories to tell!

We're now delighted to introduce them to you and share their stories in this special double issue of *Langscape Magazine.* Complementing the stories we assembled as a part of the IYSC is a small selection of other stories written or co-written by young Indigenous persons for past issues of the magazine. We felt that those earlier pieces would both enrich the mix and be enriched by being presented in the company of other Indigenous youth's stories. Based their main focus, we grouped the stories under three headings: Language, Culture, and Environment—that is, the three core components of biocultural diversity—even though that's largely an arbitrary classification: these three components are part of a single, complex whole, and to a greater or lesser extent each story touches on all three.

The **Language** section opens with a witty and refreshingly candid account by **Abraham Ofori-Henaku** (Akan) of growing up in Ghana without knowing his ancestral language—a situation many Indigenous youth find themselves in today. He honestly shares his regrets, but his infectious zest for learning Twi makes us think he will get there someday! No one doubts how difficult it is to learn a language, however. As an example, **Manju Maharjan and Yuvash Vaidya**, young members of the Newar people of Nepal, relate their challenging yet fulfilling experiences in trying to master *Ranjana*, a special script for their native language.

From the windswept reaches of Tierra del Fuego in southern Chile, **Cristina Zárraga** reminds us that "if a language can die, many times it can also be re-born in generations down the line." She and her grandmother, Cristina Calderón, widely known as the last fluent speaker of the Yagan language, are hard at work to make that happen, by documenting the language and the cultural knowledge it conveys. Coming to us from Kenya, **Hellen Losapicho and Magella Hassan Lenatiyama** introduce us to an even more challenging situation: their language, El Molo, has lost all of its fluent speakers. Undaunted, young El Molo people are using participatory video—a technique whereby community members shoot and produce their own visual accounts on topics that matter to them—to create a "video dictionary" of their language and their oral traditions.

Language revitalization and the role of the younger generations in it are the main focus of interviews with three exceptional First Nations youth from Canada: **Jordan Brant** (Mohawk), **Skil Jaadee White** (Haida), and **Gisèle Maria Martin** (Tla-o-qui-aht), whom we met at the HELISET TŦE SḴÁL "Let the Languages Live" conference in Victoria, British Columbia, Canada in June, 2019. After listening to them speak with passion and commitment about learning their ancestral languages, reconnecting to their cultural traditions, and becoming active in language and culture revitalization, and seeing how deeply they shared a sense of a mission that went well beyond their individual selves, we just had to follow up with them and conduct the interviews we present here!

Also at "Let the Languages Live," we caught up with **SX̱EDŦELISIYE** (Renee Sampson) (W̱SÁNEĆ, Canada), a former Language Apprentice turned Language Immersion Teacher. We had met her almost a decade ago when she was taking the first steps in learning her ancestral language. She had written about her experiences for *Langscape Magazine* back in 2012. Hearing her speak fluently in her language and knowing she's now passing the language on to younger W̱SÁNEĆ, we were compelled to ask her to write an update on her journey. We're publishing that update here next to her words from 2012, to show how far along she's come since then.

The stories in the **Culture** section variously illustrate the point that language, culture, and the environment intertwine in many Indigenous worldviews. The experience of **Edna Kilusu**, the young Maasai student from Tanzania, shows this on a very practical level: going to and from her aunt's home, where most nights she eagerly listens to tales of the ancestors, she must literally sprint in the dark across the boma, hoping that no potentially dangerous animals are out and about! Yet, even so she retains her sense of humor and her craving for stories. **Fauzi Bin Abdul Majid**, a young member of Indonesia's Palu'e people, is also eager: eager to understand the Pati Karapau ceremony that plays such an important role in communal thanksgiving and in maintaining balance with Mother Nature among the Palu'e. He goes to considerable effort to travel back to his people's home island to witness and document the ceremony.

Like many other young Indigenous leaders around the world, **Eusebia Flores**, a Yaqui from Mexico, is using modern technology to connect to her own and to other Indigenous communities. In her story, she speaks eloquently of how empowering and liberating participatory video can be to Indigenous Peoples whose voices have too often been muted or outright silenced by outsiders. Strengthening Indigenous cultures, protecting the land, and addressing language loss are recurring themes for the communities with which she works.

Dely Roy Nalo, a young woman of Vanuatu and Kiribati descent, focuses on revitalizing the manifold artistic expressions and "wisdom practices" of the linguistically (and culturally) mega-diverse Pacific island nation of Vanuatu. Her TEKS project, described in words co-written with **Thomas Dick** of Vanuatu's NGO Further Arts and richly illustrated with photos by Cristina Panicali, Sarah Doyle, and others, seeks to bridge Vanuatu's distinct cultural traditions as well as promote mutual understanding with foreign cultures through the arts. Artistry may be part of every young Indigenous person's being, but rarely does it come to the foreground so exuberantly as in the life of **We'e'ena Tikuna**. This remarkable young woman is a pioneering university graduate, successful fashion designer, singer, lecturer, and writer—and her Indigeneity is up front and center in all she does.

Sean Anthony Dagondon Rusiana of the Bagobo-Tagabawa people of Philippines shares his own journey to get a university education, with all the difficulties of the academic work itself and of adjusting to being away from home—common themes in the life of most young persons. The dream of getting a higher education is even more challenging when you come from an Indigenous group that is systematically disrespected by mainstream society. That is the challenge **Somnath Dadas** has risen to as a member of the nomadic Dhangar people of India: his journey (as told with **Kanna K. Siripurapu**) is one of overcoming cultural prejudice and material hardship to finally arrive at self-discovery. The story of **Marie Michelle Hirwa**, a Batwa from Rwanda, is also one of courage and perseverance in the face of prejudice and discrimination. The hardships she has endured will be familiar to many young Indigenous people—and so will her resilience and her determination to get an education and seek to make a better life for herself and her son.

In a moving dialogue between an Indigenous and a non-Indigenous person who meet on the metaphorical banks of a river in the Amazon forest of Colombia, **Walter Gabriel Estrada Ramírez**, a Siriano youth, and **Juan Manuel Rosso Londoño**, a young Colombian researcher, listen to each other—and see themselves and each other reflected in the "river-mirror." Their dialogue is a tribute to finding both their respective identities and their common humanity through a shared interest in "bee-cultural" diversity and the role of bees in Siriano culture.

This section concludes with a poignant and inspiring set of four short interview-stories of young Indigenous artists in the Russian Arctic: **Katrina Trofimova** (Even), **D'ulus Mukhin** (Even), **Khadri Okotetto** (Nenets), and **Vova Yadne** (Nenets). Their unvarnished stories, as told to Arctic explorer, artist, and photographer **Galya Morrell**, speak in different ways of a similar experience: the challenges they faced as members of Russia's minority groups—challenges they overcome by sheer courage and artistic vision. Their words ring with an eloquence that is authentic and immensely powerful.

The **Environment** section spotlights the Indigenous lands and seas that cradle these young authors and nourish their dreams for the future. The Western Lesser Caucasus mountains along the Georgia–Turkey border are one of the world's pre-eminent centers of biocultural diversity—a variety that **Ceren Kazancı** (Laz) and her partner **Soner Oruç** embrace and explore with infectious enthusiasm. Together, the pair roam this area, home to the Laz people and numerous other ethnolinguistic groups, with open minds and hearts, gathering and supporting the life stories and traditional environmental knowledge of its hardy inhabitants.

Lisba Yesudas and Johnson Jament, both hailing from the Trivandrum Mukkuvar community in Kerala, India, deliver an impassioned appeal for India and the world to recognize the ancestral wisdom of their forefathers in the fishing communities of Kerala's southern coast, who for generations have safeguarded the marine environment (Mother Sea to them) on which their lives, well-being, and happiness depend. They propose that biocultural diversity should become a basic feature of India's educational curriculum, with traditional knowledge at its core. **Joakim Boström**, **Anna-Märta Henriksson**, **and Marie Kvarnström** tell of their fight to preserve the traditional fishing practices of the remote Kalix communities of far northern Sweden—local communities that are culturally distinct and speak a divergent Swedish dialect. The obstacles they struggle with include new fishing regulations imposed by the Swedish government as well as significant adverse changes in the environment itself. In the state of Yucatán, Mexico, **Yolanda López-Maldonado**, a young Yucatec Maya, combines the Western science of her academic background with the Mayan science of her forefathers in her work to save the biologically unique and culturally significant *cenotes*: limestone sinkholes that deliver precious groundwater while providing cultural and spiritual connections to ancestors.

Like several others in this issue, the next two authors use video-based storytelling to convey their message. **Kewekhrozo (Peter) Thopi and Tshenyilou (Lele) Chirhah**, both Chakhesang Naga from India, are partnering with community members to film participatory videos that document Naga traditional foodways and the connections of food with their people's cultural and spiritual values and traditional knowledge. **Laissa Malih**, a young Laikipian Maasai filmmaker from Kenya, focuses on the Ewaso Ng'iro Camel Caravan, a yearly five-day journey organized by the region's Indigenous communities, with youth in leadership roles. The event seeks to promote climate change resilience and adaptation and peaceful co-existence among the troubled region's peoples.

Environmental activism, coupled with language activism, also fires up **Beñat Garaio Mendizabal**, a young Basque from the Spanish side of Basque Country. Reflecting on what's happening in his homeland today, he calls for environmental and language activists to join forces. Linking "green" struggles and language struggles, he argues, can help stave off the rapid changes that, in the name of "modernity," are threatening the biocultural uniqueness and integrity of his beloved home by both destroying the landscape and jeopardizing the continuity of the Basque language.

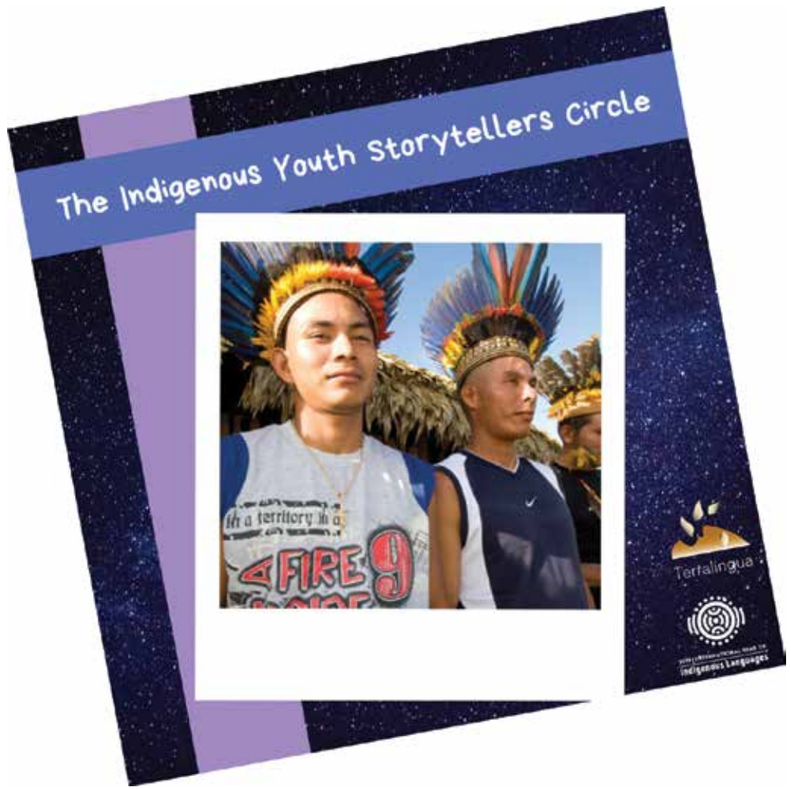
Hēmi Whaanga and Priscilla Wehi delve into their Māori oral traditions in search of gems of ecological and cultural wisdom in ancestral sayings, whose meaning had become lost to the younger generations. As it re-emerges, that meaning offers clues from the past to illuminate the future. The wisdom of their ancestors suggests that, at a time in which "humankind is at a cultural, linguistic, biological, and spiritual crossroads," we must resort to all forms of knowledge in all languages to address our real-life problems. "As Indigenous Peoples have realized," they argue, "all parts of the story matter."

We hope that the words of all these bright young Indigenous leaders will be inspiring to our readers, and especially to other Indigenous youth who may be interested in learning their languages, reconnecting to their cultures, and protecting their lands. We dedicate this issue of *Langscape Magazine* to Indigenous young people all around the world.

With this issue, we also wish to honor the life and work of Michael Krauss, pioneering champion of endangered languages, who passed away in 2019. A dedicated and respected fieldworker and teacher who focused on Alaskan Native languages—back when most of his linguist colleagues were enamored of abstract theory—Michael was convinced that small languages matter. He led the way in bringing language endangerment to the attention of both academic peers and the general public. And he knew that the future of Indigenous languages rests squarely with younger generations. By both documenting Indigenous languages and raising awareness about their importance, he helped foster the conditions that make it possible for Indigenous youth today to embrace and learn their ancestral languages and absorb the wealth of cultural knowledge those languages convey.

Like the two of us, Michael was present at the "birth" of Terralingua. Sitting with us at a dinner table in Albuquerque, New Mexico in 1995, during the "Shift Happens" symposium on language loss and public policy, he brainstormed with us on the need for an organization to research, educate on, and advocate for diversity in nature and culture. He helped us co-found Terralingua, and encouraged and supported us along the way. He didn't live to see this issue of *Langscape Magazine* in print, but we believe he would have enjoyed it immensely. Michael, we won't forget you. This one is for you.

Bioculturally yours,
Luisa Maffi and David Harmon, Co-editors



My Missing TONGUE

Abraham Ofori-Henaku
AKAN, GHANA

It's been quite a long journey growing up in a society that very much holds on to its rich way of life—something that I always took for granted. And now, it's all coming back to me in regret.

Oh! Pardon me! Where are my manners? Hi there! I'm Abraham Ofori-Henaku. A 21-year-old final-year student pursuing journalism at the Ghana Institute of Journalism in Ghana, West Africa. I was born and raised in a small township called Akuse, in a very peaceful and neighborly hood in the Eastern Region of Ghana. I am an Akan, a large cluster of related ethnic groups. My parents are both Akans, hailing from a town in the mountains. Having lived long enough with their own parents, who were also natives of their hometown, the Akan traditions and norms—particularly those of their group, the Akuapem—were the two things they could never do away with. My dad once told me that even if they were rich and had moved to the States while he was young, knowing his mum so well, there was no way she was going to raise him and his siblings according to any Western standards.

It's been quite a long journey growing up in a society that very much holds on to its rich way of life —something that I always took for granted.

For someone like me living in the 21st century, I would call that tough love, but my folks would say it's proper training. The funny turn to this whole story is that things actually did change when I was born. My mum and dad had built a comfortable life: okay jobs, traveling to other countries, affording their own accommodation and needs, moving to a

Above: That moment of struggling to pronounce a Twi word right. I'm not giving up on learning the language, though. Photo: Abotchiethephotographer, 2019

That's me. A bright-looking lad with marvelous abilities to dance, sing, write, and speak eloquently, but my regret stems from my inability to speak my local dialect and relate to my Akan culture. Photo: Abotchiethephotographer, 2019

hood that was safe, peaceful and neighborly—all part of the benefits they had reaped from education, discipline, and morals. Of course, these three things were passed on to my siblings and I (we're still working on them) but the one thing that escaped me is my native language, Twi.

Yes, I have been speaking the English language for as long as I can remember, and all the while, I never realized how lost I was until recently. What I can remember was, my parents never really brought me up with their native language. Sure, they did throw in a few Twi phrases in passing, but most of the time, we spoke English. Even at times when they spoke Twi to any of us kids, we'd respond in English—provided we understood what they were saying. I had gotten used to it so much, that I almost always engaged with the people I met in the Western dialect of Ghanaian English. Not that there was anything wrong with it; no. But now that I'm away from my family (in the university) and I happen to meet different people each day, I realize that I can't use the English language everywhere and speak it to everyone.

I have been speaking the English language for as long as I can remember, and all the while, I never realized how lost I was until recently.

What is even sadder is that I had opportunities at my basic level in school to polish up my broken Twi and get much more inclined to my culture, but as the cliché goes, "ignorance was bliss." People, even my own mates, did and still do laugh at me every time I attempt to speak Twi. Luckily, I do not land in the same pot when I engage with outsiders like market women or street vendors or, to some extent, the elderly. At least, they don't talk so much and I can confidently spew a few Twi words or greetings at them. Although, I've been told once that my Twi sounds like a white man speaking Twi.

Honestly speaking, I now do realize how bad this is. If only I had a good grip of my Akan language like I do with my English, it would be such a plus to me. I could find myself almost anywhere here in Ghana and feel very comfortable engaging with people because out of the numerous languages spoken here, Twi is the popular and basic one. Also, I would not have to lose my sense of belonging. By caring less about learning my language, I embraced the Western culture more. I didn't care to learn about my history, visiting my hometown, attending or witnessing festivals and, even more so, getting to know the family I have in my hometown.

If only I had a good grip of my Akan language like I do with my English, it would be such a plus to me. I could find myself almost anywhere here in Ghana and feel very comfortable engaging with people.

I really don't need to blame my parents for this. They did well for trying to teach us our native language and even better for teaching us English. I only wish I was enthused and curious to learn my language and all that there is about my Akan culture; maybe that interest would have pushed our parents to train us more in those things.

As at 21, I must say that it's rather a bit late to catch up on learning the Akuapem Twi as easily as I could if I was younger. Now, it's a bit tough, considering that I don't get any classes in Twi. I listen and try to learn on my own. I am not giving up though. Hopefully one day—though sometimes I am doubtful—my Twi will be at the same pace as my English language.

Hopefully one day—though sometimes I am doubtful—my Twi will be at the same pace as my English language.

A little lesson I'd like to share with you begins with the words of the American businessman Bert Lance, who is credited with the quote, "If it ain't broke, don't fix it." To a large extent, he's right. There was nothing wrong with my culture. There was no need to ignore it and ink myself with "whiteness." Again, culturally speaking, I am broken and I do need fixing. My regret right now plainly gives me a good reason to reconnect with traditional knowledge, practices, values, and ways of life of my Akuapem home.

Abraham Ofori-Henaku Asamani Yaw *is a young writer from Akuse in the Eastern Region of Ghana, West Africa. He's currently a final-year student at the Ghana Institute of Journalism, pursuing a bachelor's degree in communication. While in school, he invest his journalistic skills in Sway Africa—an African entertainment production firm where he writes stories for them.*

LEARNING TO WRITE OUR Native Language

Manju Maharjan
and Yuvash Vaidya
NEWAR, NEPAL

THE NEPALBHASA RANJANA SCRIPT OF NEPAL

We are Newars, the Indigenous people of the Kathmandu Valley in Nepal. We are worshippers in the Hindu and Buddhist traditions and belong to several different ethnic groups, but historically we all spoke a common language, Nepalbhasa. While the language is prevalent among the older folks, most of the youth are unable to read or write it, though those of us in the younger generation want to learn the language. One of the ways we are tackling the problem is by organizing a series of *Callijatra*, a combination workshop–festival where participants learn about and celebrate the beauty of *Ranjana*, one of the major scripts used to write Nepalbhasa.

During Newar festivals, the whole valley is decorated with mandalas and writings in Ranjana script.

The three major scripts of Nepalbhasa—*Nepal*, *Bhujimol*, and *Ranjana*—are believed to be derived from *Brahmi lipi* (or "script"). The *Ranjana* script is ornate as well as artistic and is visually pleasing. Its origin can be traced back to Buddhist texts of ancient times, inscriptions of *mantra* (an utterance of religious significance), and hymns.

Callijatra (*jatra* meaning festival) started as a workshop movement on social media that gained a lot of positive feedback. The online-promoted events were open to the public and attracted 4000+ participants with a total of twenty-two workshops conducted. We participated in a one-day workshop where we were introduced to the teaching materials and what we would learn. We learned the basics of the language in the following month. We were taught to relate the *Ranjana* script to human body parts (head, neck, body, mouth, hand) and how to reproduce the alphabet. The instructors had ingenious ways of making the brushes used in *Ranjana* calligraphy, where even such things as bamboo sticks cut at an angle or cut metal-tip pens were used to make do-it-yourself pens. The course included teaching us how to write a *Kutakshar* (monogram). This is a special form of *Ranjana* script used to hide secret information in ancient times. The letters are joined vertically, one after another, which makes it difficult to read. At the same time, it is a challenge to decipher the word itself as there are various overlapping interpretations of each individual letter. Mantras in the temples can be found written in *Kutakshar*, as can the names of occasions during festivals.

During Newar festivals, the whole valley is decorated with mandalas and writings in *Ranjana* script. During *Nhu Daya Bhintuna* (the Newah New Year) people participate in rallies wearing traditional costumes and shirts with symbols and phrases reflecting ethnic pride.

The classes we participated in took place in the *Thecho* community, where the government collaborated with a local school (Thecho Newa English School) to conduct the month-long class. The one-day workshops were organized by the Institute of Nepal Epigraphy in collaboration with local Newar communities. For their part, the local communities sponsored the materials by which people could learn to write the script, and the institute provided teachers who conducted the workshop. People from various walks of life came together in a month-long class. They were there to know more about their ancestral language, gain additional skills, and understand how to pass what they learned to the next generation. There were assignments to do every day and the course was engaging as well as rewarding. In the end, we did an assessment to see how well we had retained the skills we were taught.

We spoke about *Callijatra* to Shashank Shrestha, a man who has documented these workshops. He pointed out that Nepal became unified in the 1960s with a "one nation, one language" policy that was the beginning of decline for Nepalbhasa as well as other regional dialects. He believes *Ranjana* script should be taught to all cultures because it is appealing from a design perspective. This whole stream of information and skill sharing was initiated by a man named Ananda Maharjan. He is a graphic designer by profession. He realized that Newar youth have an information gap when it comes to their own language. Maharjan envisioned a space open to the general public as means of understanding

Above: Pavitra Kasaa, a member of the Institute of Nepal Epigraphy, and the author, Manju Maharjan, discussing *Kutakshar* (monogram). Photo: Sheetal Vaidya, 2019

Above: Youth participating in the *Ranjana and Nepal Lipi Art Festival.* Photo: Sheetal Vaidya, 2019

Recitation of *Prajnaparmita sutras* (*prajna* meaning "transcendent wisdom," *parmita* meaning "perfection," and *sutra* meaning "document") at Golden Temple, Patan. Photo: Sheetal Vaidya, 2019

A student being awarded a book in *Nepal Lipi* for her exceptional performance in the workshop. Photo: Shashank Shrestha, 2019

his own heritage as well as reaching as many people as possible. The classes would happen outdoors, with the idea that locals passing by would become curious about such a horde of people doing calligraphy.

There are many technical challenges in making accurate scripts of Indigenous languages available on the Internet.

Maharjan is a font developer himself and has collaborated with Google to make the *Ranjana* script accessible to anyone who wants to reproduce it digitally. There are many technical challenges in making accurate scripts of Indigenous languages available on the Internet. When we spoke to Maharjan at the *Ranjana and Nepal Lipi Art Festival* he displayed ten such scripts. He said that his team of 25 members have been working together to make a difference on such a big scale. Now there is a UNICODE font of *Nepal lipi*, which is the prevalent form of Nepalbhasa, available on Android 9.

It was uplifting to see participants come together to share their work in the Ranjana and Nepal Lipi Art Festival. There was a range of creative works on display made by participants of the workshop, friends and family. We could feel a sense of harmony and communal well-being among the people gathered there. Granted, there is pushback from some Newars who believe that learning the skills to write *Ranjana* script should be limited only to Newar families and not taught to the general public. But that is how languages die.

Today, there are a range of resources to study *Ranjana* script. For example, after the conclusion of our classes, we visited *Asa Safoo Kuthi* (the Asa Archives), where books, articles, and manuscripts in Nepalbhasa are found. There is a collection of around 9,000 manuscripts in Nepalbhasa, and we were astonished to see how well it has been preserved. The archives are open to those curious to learn about Nepalbhasa and the various scripts.

It is a matter of pride to see one's own name written in one's native language.

It is a matter of pride to see one's own name written in one's native language. We believe parents should take the initiative to educate themselves and the next generation on how to write the script. Newah heritage is one of rich arts, crafts, and architecture, as attested by visitors to the cities in the Kathmandu Valley. Yet in Nepal, people of other cultures ridicule us for our Newar accent. English is prioritized over all other languages in the majority of schools in Kathmandu, and children in schools are penalized for speaking their native language.

In this age of technology we should use it to its fullest potential to teach coming generations to preserve our heritage and identity.

Youth-driven movements such as *Callijatra* are necessary to give people a way to connect with their heritage. Working with others in the community with our hands and ink was a great way to understand our past. The future of Nepalbhasa is now in the hands of people who adapt old cultural values to new stories, art, music, and films. In this age of technology, we should use it to its fullest potential to teach coming generations to preserve our heritage and identity. Language is ultimately a vehicle to drive social change and the revival of such identity connects us with the deep traditions of our forbearers.

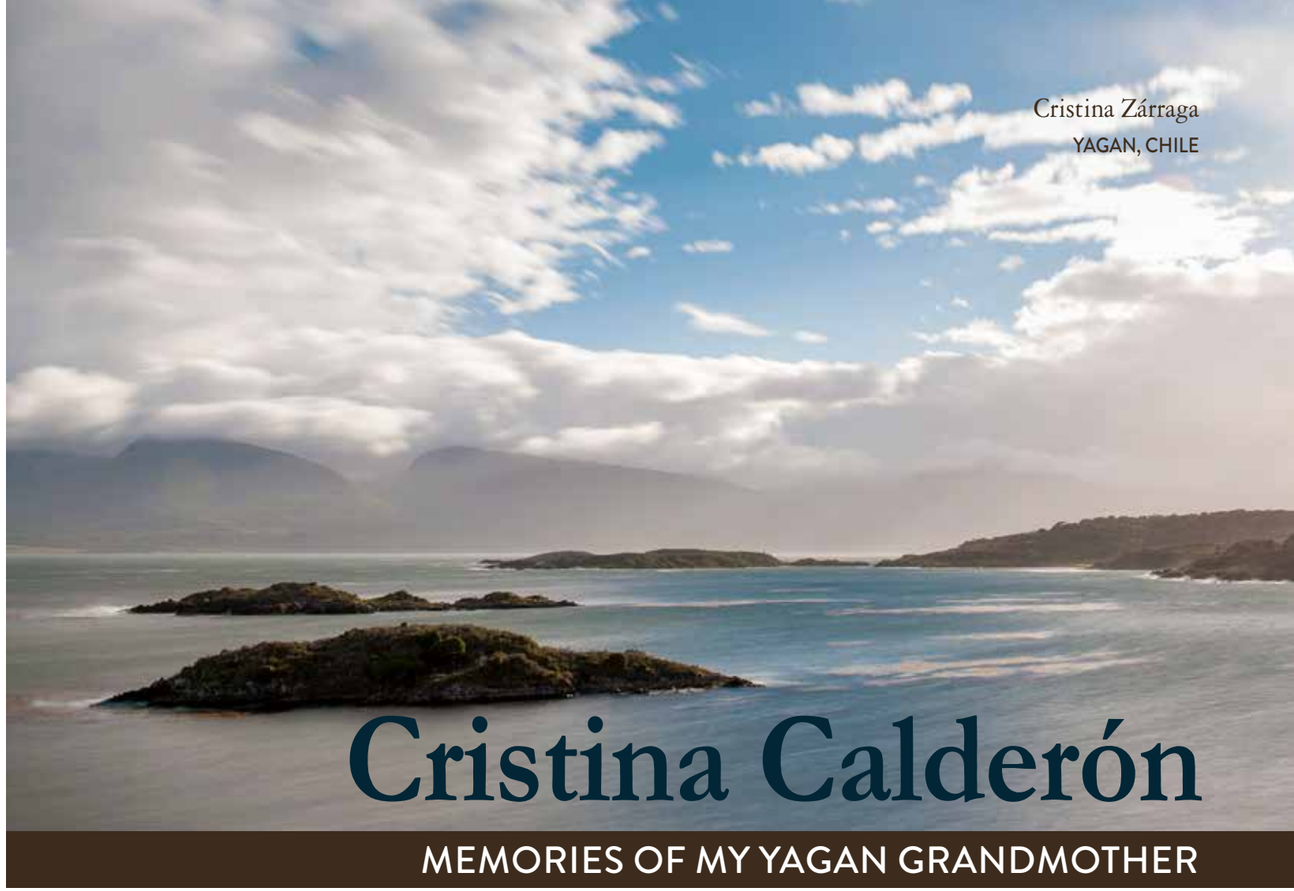
Right: Sunita Dangol (our workshop teacher) and a friend display the alphabet of the *Ranjana* script. Photo: Shashank Shrestha, 2019

Below: Ananda K. Maharjan, Sunita Dangol, and the participants in the *Callijatra* workshop display their work. Photo: Shashank Shrestha, 2019

Acknowledgments: *We appreciate the steps taken by Institute of Nepal Epigraphy to spread awareness about the importance of Ranjana script. We are grateful to the local government for organizing free classes, as well as for providing the materials required. Also, Ananda K. Maharjan, Sunita Dangol were integral in collecting information about the various scripts of Nepalbhasa. We are indebted to Shashank Shrestha and Dr. Sheetal Vaidya for photo documentation.*

Manju Maharjan *graduated from Tribhuvan University with an undergraduate degree in botany. She is a Newar from the Thecho community of Kathmandu Valley. She carried out research on the phytocultural knowledge of her home town during her undergraduate days. She previously co-authored a photo essay about Haku Chhoyala for Langscape. She took classes on the Ranjana script and finished on the top of her class. She is now taking part in various activities relating to Newah culture.*

Yuvash Vaidya *is a performing arts student doing the final year of his undergraduate degree in London, UK. He studied in KM Conservatory in Chennai, India, to complete his diploma in Western Classical performance. He won "Performer of the Year" in his first year there and was able to perform in various cities around India with different ensembles. He is a writer at heart and writes on the issues faced by Indigenous youth. He has taken classes on Ranjana script and is discovering the language.*



Cristina Zárraga
YAGAN, CHILE

Cristina Calderón

MEMORIES OF MY YAGAN GRANDMOTHER

"I Was Born In Róbalo, on the 24th of May. And they say, so tells me my aunt, that when I was born during the night, there was a storm from the south. And I was born in an akali. My dad built an akali, and my aunt attended my mom so I would come into the world. They say there was a big storm from the south, with snow, and that night I was born, on the 24th at night . . ."

On the 24th of May, 1928, during a night of *ilan tashata* (storm from the south), my grandmother Cristina Calderón came into the world in an *akali*, the traditional Yagan hut. She was delivered by Granny Gertie, the midwife of the old days, in Caleta Róbalo, on the north coast of Navarino Island in Tierra del Fuego, Chile.

Her parents were *Akačexaninčis* (Juan Calderón) and *Lanixweliskipa* (Carmen Harban). They belonged to the last generation that went through the *Čiaxaus*, the Yagan initiation ceremony—the generation that was documented by ethnologist Martin Gusinde between 1918 and 1923.

Her father Juan Calderón died in 1931 in Mejillones, Navarino Island, and her mother Carmen Harban passed away three years later, in 1934. That set the difficult life path that my grandmother would be bound to follow, orphaned at an early age, and witness to the cultural and material breakdown of our ancestral Yamana culture *[Ed.: Yamana is another name for the Yagan culture]*. The struggle to survive, first in the face of the overwhelming presence of alcohol, then under the thumb of the Chilean military authorities.

My grandmother would be bound to follow a difficult life path . . . witness to the cultural and material breakdown of our ancestral Yamana culture.

"When my mom died in Mejillones and I was left orphaned, I went to live with my grandfather and Granny Julia, Karpakolikipa . . ."

After losing her parents, my grandmother was left under the tutelage of her grandfather *Halnpensh*, but he died in a fight that same year, on the 18th of September 1934, having been hit in the stomach by a Spaniard. Following that event, she was taken in by her godmother, Granny Gertie. Living with Gertie's family, she was also cared for by her uncle Felipe and her cousin Clara.

Above: Landscape of Bahía Mejillones, Onaašáka (Beagle Channel). Photo: Oliver Vogel, 2014

House of the Sarmiento family in Bahía Mejillones, Navarino Island. Last remaining house from the times of Cristina Calderón's childhood in Bahía Mejillones. Photo: Oliver Vogel, 2014

Cristina Calderón collecting *mapi* (rushes) for traditional basketry in Caleta Douglas, Navarino Island. Photo: Oliver Vogel, 2015

"My godmother took me away, Granny Gertie did, she took me to her home, and I was crying . . . 'Stop crying,' she told me, 'your grandpa is just fine, Watauinéiwa [God] took him and has him in his presence . . .' He was a good man, my grandpa, he was never mean."

Up to the age of nine, by grandmother only spoke Yagan, the language of her parents. She was also learning words and phrases from other dialects, such as that spoken by Granny Julia, *Karpakolikipa*, who came from the Wollaston Islands (a group of small islands one of which forms Cape Horn, and which was home to one of the five groups of the Yagan people, with its own dialect). In addition, she picked up a little English from Granny Gertie, who, while staying at an Anglican Mission, along with learning to spin and weave, like many Yagan women, also learned English.

"When I was little, I spoke Yagan only. I learned to speak Spanish from a girl, Ema Lawrence, of the Lawrences who were owners of the Róbalo Ranch. I would get together with Ema to play. The first few days I didn't understand a word, but little by little I started learning the language with her. I would also listen to Chacón, Granny Gertie's husband, and that's how I learned Spanish."

In those days, many young Yagan died from lung disease, and each time fewer and fewer people spoke Yagan. And furthermore, because of discrimination, the mothers would no longer pass the language on to their children. That's how the language started shrinking rapidly, replaced by Spanish.

Because of discrimination the mothers would no longer pass the language on to their children. That's how the language started shrinking rapidly, replaced by Spanish.

My grandmother's life unfolded as that of a nomad, moving from place to place, traveling freely, as her ancestors had done on canoes—except that in her time one traveled by boats with ores and sails. But one could say that people still lived a nomadic life that granted them a certain degree of freedom.

Summertime, sheep-shearing time. Families would converge on the ranches where they could get sheep-shearing work, such as Remolino and Harberton on the Argentinean side, and Róbalo on Navarino Island, on the Chilean side. Wintertime, back in Mejillones, or off to hunt for otters. In the old days, there were no borders across *Onaašáka*, the Beagle Channel. My grandmother was able to live at the tail-end of this time of freedom. Today, *Onaašáka* is divided up between Chile and Argentina.

People still lived a nomadic life that granted them a certain degree of freedom.

"While I was living with my grandpa, we would get out on the water, we would go to Punta Lobo [in the east of Navarino Island] to eat guanaco meat [Ed.: guanaco: the wild ancestor of llamas and alpacas], we went island to island looking for birds' eggs, and that's what we ate. And so I went, along with my grandpa."

At age fifteen, her family situation forced her to get married—with a man much older than her, Felipe Garay, perhaps fifty years old. With no other options, Garay was her first partner. Together, they lived in Puerto Eugenia, in the east of Navarino Island. They had three boys, and when she was pregnant with the third one, Felipe became ill and died.

"I didn't like that, when they told me I had to get together with him. 'He's a good man, he'll take care of you, you'll have enough to eat, you'll have clothes, you'll have everything you need and will be in peace,' my aunt would tell me. 'You won't be going around like your sister and her mate, those two who go for the otters, who go around with no shoes and no clothes.' There I was, forced to say yes. I was maybe fifteen years old, and I was thinking, "It can't be!" because he was so much older. "It can't be!" I would say—but then I would start thinking . . ."

After Garay's death, it was disenfranchisement all over again, it was poverty—and now with her children in tow. In those days, a woman couldn't remain alone. That's when my grandfather Lucho Zárraga came into the picture. He was a Selknam, of the Indigenous group from the other side of the channel (now the Argentinean side). He worked at the Harberton Ranch and offered to take her with him to the other side and take care of her.

Cristina Zárraga and Cristina Calderón working in Ukika, Navarino Island. Photo: Oliver Vogel, 2014

"Well, when I got together with your grandpa Lucho, we lived in peace in Harberton—how long, how many years . . . I had to go with him, I told him: 'I have three children and you're not going to like that . . .' But he did take care of me, and of the children too, the three little ones, he was like a father to them . . . We stayed in Harberton from 1949 to 1959. Lucho was foreman of the shepherds, and I spent a happy time with him."

In 1962 Lucho Zárraga died. *"Lucho was always coughing and coughing, until he got lung disease . . . He died in hospital in Punta Arenas."*

After my grandfather Lucho's death, Teodosio Gonzales showed up. My grandmother had known him from the time of her youth. He came from the city of Ushuaia to work on Navarino.

"Which year it was I can't quite remember, but it had to be around 1964. He came, Teodosio did, he talked to me and, well, that's how it went . . ."

From then on they lived together until 2009—her last life companion, whom she somehow chose, for they had been attracted to each other from the days of their youth. But fate had separated them, forging different paths for them, until they finally met again as adults. From this union her only daughter was born.

* * *

This text is a short summary of the biography of my Yagan grandmother, with whom I lived more than ten years, reconnecting with my roots, in the land that my father left one day—and where I set off on a journey toward the past, delving into my ancient Yamana culture.

Today, Cristina Calderón is well known around the world as the last living member of the Yagan or Yamana people of Tierra del Fuego, the last fluent speaker of her native language.

Today, Cristina Calderón is well known around the world as the last living member of the Yagan or Yamana people of Tierra del Fuego, the last fluent speaker of her native language—she who embodies the direct link with our ancestors, those who experienced ceremonies such as the Čiaxaus, the puberty initiation ceremony, or the kina, a male ritual, or the loima yakamush, the shamanic school. Knowledge and heritage that were handed down from generation to generation until they came to my grandmother, and from her to us.

That's why she cannot be the last of the Yagan. The last of a generation, maybe. But the fact is that there is a vast progeny belonging to this people, which today lives mostly in Ukika, on Navarino Island.

In hearing the story of my grandmother, the story of her parents, in those days and farther back, we get a palpable sense of the cultural breakdown the Yagan underwent because of the arrival of white people—the gold prospectors, the sea lion hunters, the missionaries, and later the Chileans and Argentineans who appropriated and divided up those lands, which didn't even belong to them.

My grandmother cannot be the last of the Yagan. The last of a generation, maybe. But . . . there is a vast progeny belonging to this people.

Losing their cultural roots, their language, their cultural traditions, and their freedom, being invaded by epidemics and by customs that were utterly foreign to their nature, such as alcohol, all that brought forth the decline and collapse of their culture. Their spiritual strength, which had connected them with nature and with God, rapidly started to wane, and in that way they lost their identity.

Yet today Cristina Calderón, my Yagan grandmother, is the carrier of the ancestral voices that belong to the collective soul of this ancient

Grandmother, granddaughter, and great-granddaughter in Bahía Mejillones, Navarino Island. From left to right: Loimuška Vogel, Cristina Zárraga, and Cristina Calderón. Photo: Oliver Vogel, 2014

race. Her memory and her language infuse us with that original strength, from those remote times at this southernmost tip of the earth. Today, she transmits her knowledge, her wisdom, her memories, and her language to those who are closest to her, as well as to those others who are interested in this culture and seek her out.

We have compiled a great deal of existing material on this language, and for a number of years, we have been working with my grandmother, making audio recordings, giving language workshops in the community, and transcribing Yagan stories (with the help of linguist Yoram Meroz, a friend and collaborator in this endeavor). All this with the goal of one day attaining the revitalization of this language—bearing in mind that, if a language can die, many times it can also be re-born in generations down the line.

In recognizing our roots and recovering the language, we reclaim part of our identity, too.

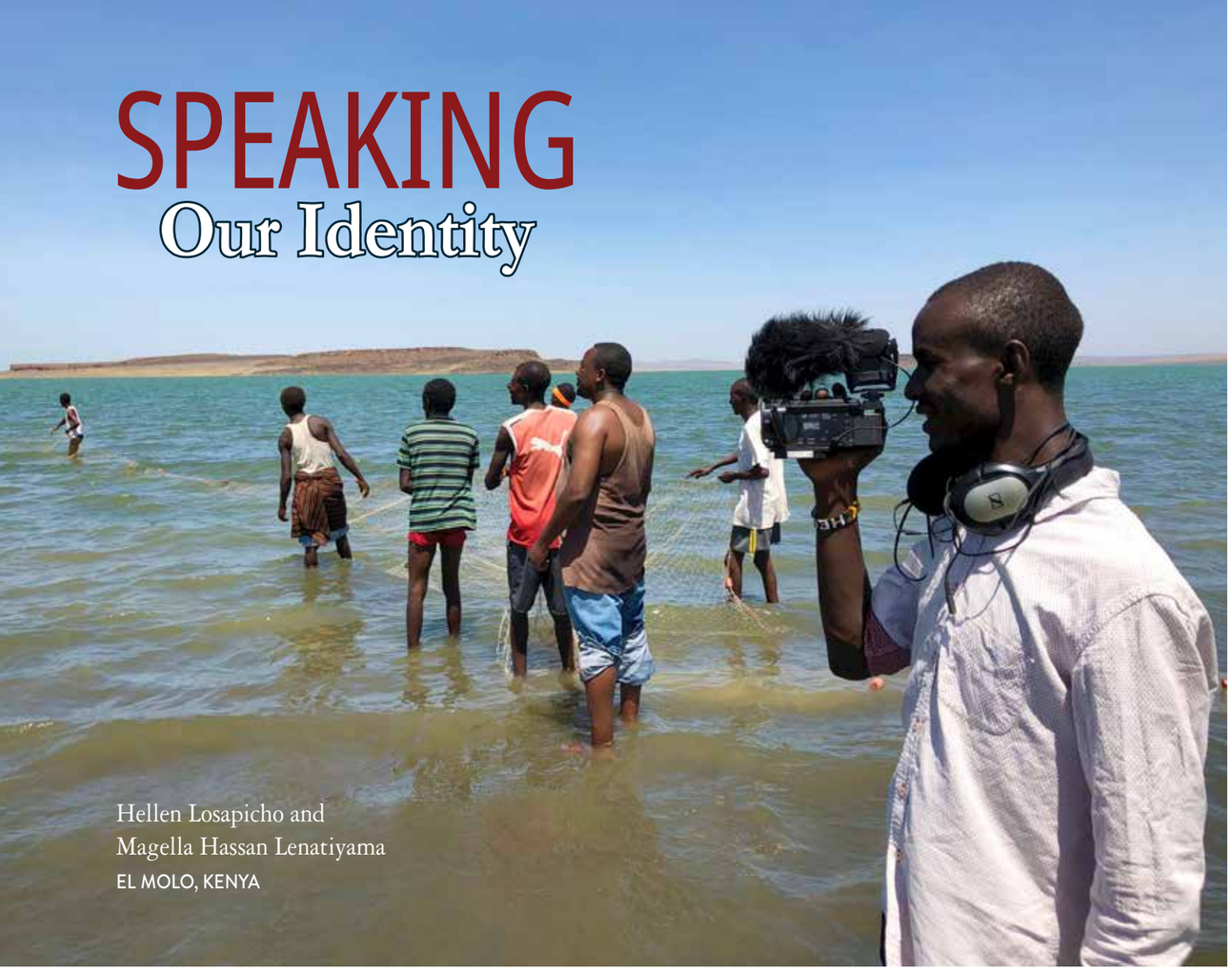
In recognizing our roots and recovering the language, we reclaim part of our identity, too. We won't be the same as in the old days, but with the new energy of hybridity, we will be able to recreate our history in the present and into the future.

A *Čiaxaus* initiation ceremony, Bahía Mejillones, 1922. The picture shows among others, Cristina Calderón's father Akačexaninčis (Juan Calderón), the man standing on the extreme right, and her godmother Gertie, sitting to the right of him. Photo: Martin Gusinde, 1922

This story first appeared in *Langscape Magazine* 5(1), Summer 2016, pp. 48–51. (*Translated from Spanish by Luisa Maffi*)

Cristina Zárraga *was born in Chile and lives in Germany. The granddaughter of Cristina Calderón, last native speaker of the Yagan language, she has been documenting her ancestral Yagan culture, mostly based on her grandmother's knowledge. In 2016, she published her grandmother's biography,* Cristina Calderón: Memorias de Mi Abuela Yagan.

SPEAKING
Our Identity



Hellen Losapicho and
Magella Hassan Lenatiyama
EL MOLO, KENYA

The last fluent speaker of our language, El Molo, died in 1999, and it is now one of the most endangered languages in the world. When the Samburu people moved into our territories after an outbreak of smallpox brought them to Lake Turkana to purify themselves, our language was gradually lost through assimilation.

Michael Basili, the chair of Gurapau El Molo community organization, said, "We need to have our language back as a matter of pride, because if we don't have our language, we are forever dependent on others; just like a slave, we are nobody. Language and culture makes you somebody." We knew this to be true.

"Language and culture makes you somebody."

In the past, we worked with linguists to trace and document our language, but these attempts were not entirely successful. Some of our elders didn't trust the educated outsiders; we found that our grandmothers were not comfortable sharing everything they knew.

Foreign linguists come and go; they do not care about our language enough to revive it because it does not belong to them. But now we are reviving it ourselves!

The El Molo language was never written down: it is based on oral traditions, ecological knowledge, and storytelling. We wanted to show our language as part of our living culture. So we learned how to use participatory video (PV), facilitated by the community development organization InsightShare, to film traditional activities like fishing, mending nets, and building our homes with local reeds. By doing this, we created an El Molo video dictionary!

We also created El Molo textbooks, and now teach our language to the next generation in our classrooms. We have also

Above: Documenting the traditional methods used by El Molo fishermen on Lake Turkana. Photo: Nick Lunch/InsightShare, 2019

Hellen (center) editing footage with members of the Konso tribal team. Photo: Neville Meyer/InsightShare, 2018

Tingatinga and Magella (left to right) review footage shot during their participatory video training. Photo: Thor Morales/InsightShare, 2018

Participatory video was used to capture fishing practices now endangered due to overfishing by outsiders. Photo: Nick Lunch/InsightShare, 2019

The remote El Molo village on the shore of Lake Turkana. Photo: Nick Lunch/InsightShare, 2019

gone on cultural exchanges across the border with Ethiopia to meet the Arbore people, whose language resembles ours. Some 200 years ago, our tribes were connected; we still share words and songs. We will continue to work with the Arbore people to discover more about our shared language and use PV to document our languages and our cultures.

We also plan to use film to document and raise awareness of other issues affecting our lives. One of the world's most profitable We also plan to use film to document and raise awareness of other issues affecting our lives. One of the world's most wind farms is situated near El Molo communities, and yet we do not benefit: our grazing lands are reduced and we enjoy none of the electricity generated on our lands. Fish populations are also dwindling due to outsiders practicing unsustainable methods, leaving us with little food.

Participatory video is the "eyes of our community": it captures our culture and keeps it alive. Most importantly, it allows us to do this for ourselves.

PV is the "eyes of our community": it captures our culture and keeps it alive. Most importantly, it allows us to do this for ourselves.

Magella, Hellen, and Tingatinga are part of a northern Kenyan video collective called NENO, meaning "the message." This unique collaboration brings together El Molo, Gabbra, Borana, and Konso tribes for peaceful coexistence. Photo: Nick Lunch/InsightShare, 2019

El Molo Traditional Fishing, Loiyangalani. Video: InsightShare, 2019 (http://bit.ly/2QskcfW)

Eyes of the Community. Video: InsightShare, 2016 (http://bit.ly/35cr4Ck)

Hellen Losapicho *works at the community health center as a health volunteer, and is trained as a participatory video facilitator.* ***Magella Hassan Lenatiyama*** *is a teacher at Loiyangalani Primary ECDE and is also a trained participatory video facilitator. Both Hellen and Magella use participatory video to document community issues. They both work closely with El Molo youth.*

LANGUAGE Revitalization

THE ROLE OF THE YOUNGER GENERATIONS

Three Interviews by Luisa Maffi

In June of 2019, I was very fortunate to attend a unique event: the *HELISET TŦE SḴÁL* "Let the Languages Live" conference in Victoria, British Columbia, Canada (June 24–26, 2019).

Organized by the First Peoples' Cultural Council and the First Peoples' Cultural Foundation, two prominent First Nations organizations in British Columbia, in partnership with the Canadian Commission for UNESCO, Let the Languages Live was an international gathering of Indigenous Peoples to celebrate the 2019 International Year of Indigenous Languages. The conference brought together over one thousand Indigenous language experts and advocates from around the world to celebrate Indigenous languages, share knowledge and experiences, and support one another in their language maintenance and revitalization efforts.

It was a rare opportunity for me to listen to and learn from an extraordinary group of Indigenous language champions, deeply committed to ensuring that the many voices of humanity—the world's diverse languages, most of which are Indigenous—continue to be heard. In particular, in the context of Terralingua's special 2019 project, the Indigenous Youth Storytellers Circle (http://bit.ly/33YxTqJ), I was especially interested in making contact with the younger generation of language champions—the Indigenous youth who have devoted themselves to keeping their languages alive and well for generations to come.

I wasn't disappointed. In a number of conference sessions, I heard extraordinary Indigenous youth speak with passion and commitment about learning their ancestral languages, reconnecting to their cultural traditions, and becoming active in language and culture revitalization. They spoke openly about the sometimes dauting challenges as well as the profound rewards of engaging in such efforts. It was clear that they all shared a deep sense of a mission that went well beyond their individual selves.

I was immediately convinced that these brave youth's experiences should be shared widely, and decided to follow up with several of them after the conference to propose interviews in the form of written Q&A exchanges. The three eloquent participants in the panel discussion "Youth Involvement in Language Revitalization"—Jordan Brant (Mohawk), Skil Jaadee White (Haida), and Gisèle Maria Martin (Tla-o-qui-aht)—agreed to be interviewed. I asked the same questions of all of them, except for one question that was specific to each of them.

In the following, you'll read my illuminating exchanges with these bright young Indigenous leaders. I do hope their words will be inspiring to other Indigenous youth and to anyone with an interest in language and culture revitalization!

Above: Participants in the "Youth Involvement in Language Revitalization" panel at the HELISET TŦE SḴÁL "Let the Languages Live" conference in Victoria, British Columbia, Canada (June 24–26, 2019): Sitting on stage, left to right: Gisèle Maria Martin (Tla-o-qui-aht), Skil Jaadee White (Haida), and Jordan Brant (Mohawk). Photo: Unknown, 2019

IT TAKES A COMMUNITY TO RAISE A SPEAKER

Interview with Jordan Brant

MOHAWK, CANADA

Luisa Maffi (LM): *Jordan, please introduce yourself: your Indigenous name, if you have one; your non-Indigenous name; your tribal affiliation, lineage, etc.; your age; where you were born and where you live now; a bit about how you grew up and your life experience and activities so far; anything else you'd like to say to identify/describe yourself!*

Jordan Brant (JB): *Wa'tkwanonhwerá:ton sewakwé:kon*. Rohahiyo Jordan Brant *yónkyats, Kenhtè:ke nitewaké:non táhnon Kanyen'kehá:ka niwakonhwentsyò:ten*. My name is Jordan Brant, and my Kanyen'kéha name is Rohahiyo. I'm 29 years old. I was born and raised in Kenhtè:ke (Tyendinaga Mohawk Territory, in what is now known as Ontario, Canada) and belong to the *Kanyen'kehá:ka* (Mohawk Nation). I currently reside in Ohsweken (Six Nations of the Grand River) with my fiancée and have been teaching *Kanyen'kéha* (Mohawk Language) at Onkwawenna Kentyohkwa, a full-time adult language immersion program, since 2015.

Jordan graduating from his two-year full-time immersion program at Onkwawenna Kentyohkwa where he studied *Kanyen'kéha* (Mohawk Language). Photo: Onkwawenna Kentyohkwa, 2015

LM: *Did you grow up speaking your language, or at least hearing it spoken around you? Or, if you didn't learn your language as a kid, when did you start learning it? What led/motivated you to start learning? Was anything or anyone particularly instrumental in your decision to learn? And how did you go about doing it (personal initiative, language apprentice program, etc.)?*

JB: I'm not a first-language speaker of my language, but was very fortunate to grow up around people who were passionate about the language. The last fluent speaker in my family passed away before I even began to learn the language or to take it seriously, so the majority of my learning was done at school. Luckily, growing up in Tyendinaga, the second language requirement was Kanyen'kéha. Back then, it was about 30 to 40 minutes per day of language instruction, which was all that was allotted in the school system. The teachers would do their best, but the time restriction and classroom sizes are really non-conducive to creating fluent speakers of the language.

> I'm not a first-language speaker of my language, but was very fortunate to grow up around people who were passionate about the language.

I took my classes in elementary school and then one class in high school. I had speakers and teachers along the way telling me about the importance of the language, and how I really needed to become a speaker. But I was young and didn't take it seriously at the time—and, to be honest, it didn't seem possible.

It wasn't until my last year of university that I really considered a future career in the language. I was preparing for my LSAT exam for Law School, and was doing everything I could to become a land claims negotiator. At the time, I was luckily taking a Kanyen'kéha class with Kanatawakhon Maracle, and he convinced me that where my people really needed young students was in the language. He also told me that I shouldn't waste time 'studying" the language, but that I needed to become a "speaker" of the language, and therefore I had to go to Brian Maracle's two-year full-time immersion program in Ohsweken. Instead of pursuing a master's degree or going to law school, I packed up and moved to Ohsweken in September of 2013.

> My teacher convinced me that where my people really needed young students was in the language.

LM: *What challenges and rewards have you encountered in following your language learning path? How did you cope with the stumbling blocks and frustrations that must undoubtedly have come along with it? And what has been the best thing about it for you?*

JB: I've noticed that the main challenge of any language learner is opportunity. Most prospective students cannot simply put their lives on hold for two years to go and become speakers of their language in an immersion environment, especially when the pay is less than minimum wage. This is especially evident when students have children to take care of and other essential responsibilities.

I was incredibly fortunate that I was offered a place to stay for free with the family of Dr. Susan Hill, one of my professors from university. They really took me in and took care of me. I also had to walk two hours to my first day of class since I didn't have a vehicle at the time, but was immediately taken care of by classmates (whom I had just met), who would give me rides. I was young, able-bodied, had a place to live, was well fed, had no external obligations, and had been given the opportunity to learn my language. I truly owe everything to my family, my fiancée's family, Dr. Hill's family, and my fellow students Kawennayenton Ken Montour, Ariwayens Artie Martin, Thohahokton Chuck Gamble, and Kahontiyoha Denise McQueen. Without them, I wouldn't have my language and I wouldn't be where I am today. It definitely takes a community to raise a speaker.

LM: *Was there any special moment or episode in this journey that you recall as a turning point, a transition—something that made you suddenly feel like "ah, I'm not turning back now"? If yes, can you please describe it?*

JB: I'd really like to pinpoint an exact "aha moment," but language has been such a long journey that it's difficult to highlight a single moment as a turning point. During the two years of the immersion program, we spend 1000 hours per semester in the language, hearing it, reading it, writing it, studying it, and, most importantly, speaking it. Over two years, that's 2000 hours in the classroom, plus frequent extra studying or socializing in the evenings and weekends. The reality of a language such as Kanyen'kéha is that a learner will need to spend thousands of hours to become proficient due to its linguistic difference from English, and students need to really change how their mind perceives the world. The program is fast-paced, but the transition to fluency is incredibly slow, long, and grueling. All of this is worth it.

> It definitely takes a community to raise a speaker.

In my own language journey, I've known kids their whole lives and have only ever spoken with them in Kanyen'kéha because it's their first language. I've taught students who have surpassed my own level of fluency and are dedicated to raising their kids as first-language speakers. I've spoken with older speakers and had the opportunity to listen to their crazy stories from the old days, and all of this makes the work worth it.

> I've spoken with older speakers and had the opportunity to listen to their crazy stories from the old days, and all of this makes the work worth it.

LM: *Do you feel that learning the language has been changing how you see yourself and your place in the world, how you relate to other community members (particularly the older generations), how you connect to your people's cultural and spiritual traditions and your traditional lands and lifeways? If yes, how so?*

JB: Absolutely. Kanyen'kéha is classified as a polysynthetic language, meaning that the language is primarily composed of verbs, and that one word in Kanyen'kéha can translate to an entire sentence in English. Sentence structure is incredibly different as well. For example, in English one would say "Bob put the book on the table," but in Kanyen'kéha that would be rendered as "On the table, he put the book, Bob." You"ll notice that "Bob" is first in the English sentence, but last in the Kanyen'kéha sentence. This often occurs in Kanyen'kéha, as it allows the listener to paint the scene in their head. Oftentimes the action of the person is much more important than who the person is, and therefore the most important information is delivered first in the sentence.

This aspect of the language alone really changed how I formulate words in my head. There are also a lot of possible variations of this sentence that would indicate specificity. It really makes one think about not only using the right words, but also using the right words in the right order to get across exactly what one wants to say. Forcing myself to think long and hard before I say something has definitely benefited me both as a speaker of Kanyen'kéha and as a person.

> In Kanyen'kéha, oftentimes the action of the person is much more important than who the person is.

As far as personal cultural connections, language has really allowed me to find my place. The more I learn in the language and about the language, the more I understand that it really is everything. Without our language, we have no ceremonies, and therefore the language is often associated exclusively with our ceremonies, and that is certainly understandable due to how intertwined they are. One thing that I've come to understand is that language should be everywhere, and not exclusively for our ceremonial usage. Whether we are out at a restaurant, out hunting, at a lacrosse game, at the mall with our friends, or wherever we may be, why shouldn't we be using our language if it's who we are? From the time we wake up to the time we go to bed, it's always the right time to speak Kanyen'kéha.

Jordan teaching Kanyen'kéha (Mohawk Language) at Onkwawenna Kentyohkwa language immersion school where he works as a full-time teacher. Photo: Onkwawenna Kentyohkwa, 2018

LM: *Jordan, you went from being a language learner all the way to being a language teacher. That's quite an accomplishment! Describe how it happened, and tell us something about the adult language immersion program you teach in and what your role in it is.*

JB: *Nyawen'kó:wa.* As I mentioned before, it took a community of people to get me to this point. I was fortunate to be able to finish my two years of study at Onkwawenna Kentyohkwa, and I was incredibly fortunate to be hired to teach here right after graduation. The program is over two years with 1000 hours per year in class, five days a week. The majority of students enter the program with very little to no background experience, and the objective is for them to graduate as Advanced Level speakers. There are tests throughout the year that students must pass, and these are all done orally. The goal of the program is to create speakers, and therefore all of the drills, testing, and the year-end exam (a videotaped ACTFL OPI*) is done orally.

The logo for Onkwawenna Kentyohkwa, a full-time adult language immersion program.

My job is to deliver the material to the students in the language, run drills in class to generate understanding of this material in the language, manage the classroom, and most importantly, do these things well enough to turn them into Advanced Level speakers after two years. I've never gone to teacher's college or anything like that, so the methods, teaching strategies, and curriculum are unique to Onkwawenna Kentyohkwa and a few other programs. Luckily for me, the program is now twenty years old, and the trial and error of twenty years has created some amazing resources and teaching methods. I basically teach how I was taught here when I was a student, and we continue to change and revise and grow every single year. I really attribute the success of Onkwawenna Kentyohkwa to never becoming complacent and always changing and evolving every single year.

***Editor's Note:** ACTFL OPI = American Council on the Teaching of Foreign Languages Oral Proficientcy Interview. The ACTFL describes the OPI as "a valid and reliable means of assessing how well a person speaks a language," based on "a 20- to 30-minute one-on-one interview between a certified ACTFL tester and an examinee." The interview is "interactive and continuously adapts to the interests and abilities of the speaker." Examples of the OPIs can be found on the* Onkwawenna Kentyohkwa YouTube Channel (http://bit.ly/32S0aOw).

Learning Mohawk—Before and After, Ryan DeCaire. Ryan DeCaire shows his proficiency in Mohawk after two years' study at Onkwawenna Kentyohkwa in a humorous conversation that deals with economic self-sufficiency and dog poop. Video: Onkwawenna Kentyohkwa, 2013 (http://bit.ly/32XNdCC)

LM: *What's next for you in your journey of language revitalization and cultural affirmation?*

JB: We're at a very critical time in the lifeline of Kanyen'kéha, meaning that we have to work fast, tenaciously, and smart if we want our grandchildren to speak the language. The majority of our remaining first-language speakers are elderly in age, which is a common and troubling statistic within almost all Indigenous communities. We are creating speakers, but I believe that we have to keep pushing and growing to create more speakers, stronger speakers, and do it faster without sacrificing quality. Long-term funding is nonexistent in many language programs, and that's a barrier we face constantly, as it prevents us from being able to make serious long-term plans to take speakers even further with their language.

> Language has really allowed me to find my place. The more I learn in the language and about the language, the more I understand that it really is everything.

As for next steps, I plan on continuing with this program for as long as possible, improving my own language skills to Superior Level, and becoming the best teacher that I can be. We are averaging about six Advanced Level speakers per year. I believe that we can do better. I want 100 Advanced Level speakers to come out of this program from 2020 to 2030.

LM: *Any advice for other Indigenous youth who may be thinking of learning their language?*

JB: There are four main points I would like to share with Indigenous youth thinking of learning their language:

1: *Find a program and get started.* If one doesn't exist, get a group together and start one. Don't wait.

2: *Immerse yourself but be kind to yourself.* Language will take your entire life to learn, so set a pace and stick to it. It's important to work as hard as you can, but it is equally important to relax and take it easy when you're stressing about it. Depression caused by the effort of learning your Indigenous language is real—take it seriously.

> We're at a very critical time in the lifeline of Kanyen'kéha, meaning that we have to work fast, tenaciously, and smart if we want our grandchildren to speak the language.

3: *Do what works for you.* I followed the old-fashioned study habits for a full year until I realized that it didn't work for me, meaning sitting in a quiet room with good lighting and "studying" flash cards and trying to learn words. It was basically a full year of minimal results because I tried to force on myself something that worked for most, but not for me. In my second year, I found what worked for me. I'm a 'metalhead" and would actually have metal music blaring and have a TV on mute with a show on, and would write short stories using the words that I was trying to study. I found all of the distractions actually kept me on task and inspired, and I could put in hours of work at a time almost effortlessly. Experts would probably say that's awful advice for retaining information, but that's what works for me, and I want new students to find what works for them.

4: *Show up.* Your teacher is like a fitness instructor: they"ll show you the weights, how to lift the weights, what kind of diet to follow, and push you to succeed and get results. If you don't show up and/or you don't follow the plan, you won't get results. It's the exact same for language learning. Respect your class, respect your teacher, and respect your language by showing up on time.

> Immerse yourself but be kind to yourself. Language will take your entire life to learn, so set a pace and stick to it.

LM: *Anything else you'd like to say that we haven't touched on?*

JB: Take care of yourselves and take care of one another. As a teacher, take care of your students, as they will be the ones taking care of your language. As a student, you're all in the trenches together: studying, stressing, working, and grinding towards the same goal. Remember that language teachers are in the grind as well, and their well-being is very often neglected, often leading to a very high turn-around rate for new teachers as well as stress-related health problems. Work hard, look out for yourselves, and look out for one another.

Rohahiyo Jordan Brant *is a Kanyen'kehá:ka man from Tyendinaga Mohawk Territory. He currently resides in Ohsweken, Ontario, where he is a full-time teacher at Onkwawenna Kentyohkwa Language Immersion School* (onkwawenna.info/). *Rohahiyo is a graduate of the school and has been teaching there since 2015.*

Skil Jaadee in regalia, after performing with her dance group at the Tluu Xaadaa Naay longhouse on Haida Gwaii. Photo: Ola Cholewa, 2018

ON BEING A CHAIN LINK TOWARD A STRONGER FUTURE

Interview with Skil Jaadee White

HAIDA, CANADA

Luisa Maffi (LM): *Please introduce yourself: your Indigenous name, if you have one; your non-Indigenous name; your tribal affiliation, lineage, etc.; your age; where you were born and where you live now; a bit about how you grew up and your life experience and activities so far; anything else you'd like to say to identify/describe yourself!*

Skil Jaadee White (SJW): My name is Skil Jaadee White. I'm from the yahgu janaas Raven Clan of the Haida Nation. I am 24 years old and was raised in Old Massett on Haida Gwaii, an island off the Pacific coast of what is now British Columbia, Canada. I grew up connected to my culture, as my dad is a Haida artist and my mother is a Xaad Kil (Haida language) teacher. Their influence pushed me to be involved in a lot of cultural practices and experiences. I went to

Skil Jaadee as a little girl, with her mother Candace Weir.
Photo: Unknown, 1999

university for a few years in Vancouver, and now am back home working as a language resource coordinator.

LM: *Did you grow up speaking your language, or at least hearing it spoken around you? Or, if you didn't learn your language as a kid, when did you start learning it? What led/motivated you to start learning? Was anything or anyone particularly instrumental in your decision to learn? And how did you go about doing it (personal initiative, language apprentice program, etc.)?*

SJW: I grew up learning and practicing my language. When I was a kid, we still had a lot of elders in our community who spoke Haida as a first language. My parents decided to start learning more seriously in the 1990s because they realized how important it was to spend as much time as possible with those elders. We had language dinners once a week. There must have been about fifteen to twenty elders who attended, as well as the learners who brought their families and kids like me along. It was such a normal thing for me to go there and listen to our Naaniis and Chinniis (grandmothers and grandfathers) speak Haida while we ate sea urchin or halibut or salmon.

It was such a normal thing for me to go there and listen to our Naaniis and Chinniis (grandmothers and grandfathers) speak Haida while we ate sea urchin or halibut or salmon.

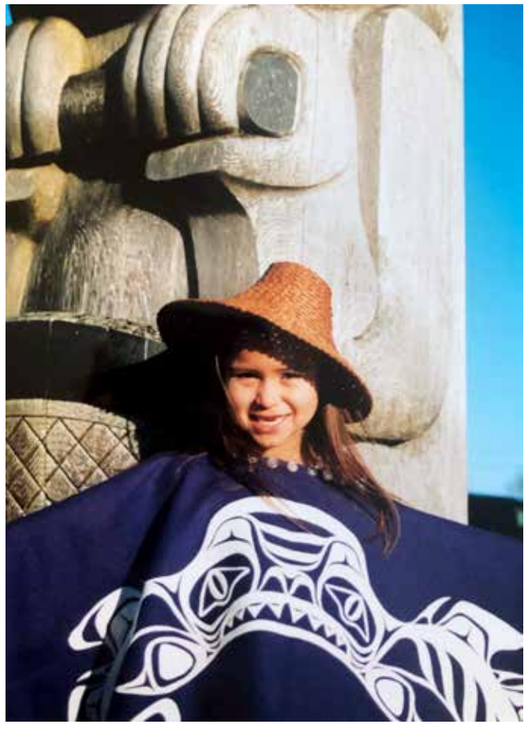
As I got older, more and more elders passed away, taking their wealth of knowledge with them. Spending time with them meant so much to me, even beyond learning language. I knew I had to do what I could in my capacity to really treasure what these elders were willing to generously offer. I learned Xaad Kil in school, in an immersion bootcamp, under a mentor-apprentice program, in an isolated camp immersion, and on my own with my family. The most effective methods have been the immersions and practicing at home.

LM: *What challenges and rewards have you encountered in following your language learning path? How did you cope with the stumbling blocks and frustrations that must undoubtedly have come along with it? And what has been the best thing about it for you?*

SJW: For me, a huge challenge is not being able to practice or speak with people my age. It's hard to think about, but someday we won't have fluent elders to speak with; we'll only have each other. I have a few friends who are learning, but with the colonized mindset that gives importance to post-secondary education and careers, people who can't afford the time or energy put learning our language on the back burner.

For me, a huge challenge is not being able to practice or speak with people my age.

It makes me really sad that this is a choice our people have to make. But we're all slowly learning how to navigate this foreign system to make it work for our Indigenous livelihoods. I am optimistic that these things will grow together more over time. On a positive note, I have seen great success in our recent language courses that were offered under the office I work at (Xaad Kil Nee), through



Skil Jaadee shortly after legally changing her name from Tamara to Skil Jaadee.
Photo: Unknown, 2003

Haida Elder Leona Clow "Naanii Lee" and Skil Jaadee at I.D.E.A.L. Woman gathering in Waglisla (Bella Bella), British Columbia. Photo: Skil Jaadee White, 2019

Simon Fraser University. It's really beautiful to see more and more people reaching out to learn our language. I find so much motivation in seeing us all face and overcome the same challenges.

LM: *Was there any special moment or episode in this journey that you recall as a turning point, a transition—something that made you suddenly feel like "ah, I'm not turning back now"? If yes, can you please describe it?*

SJW: There was never a "no turning back" moment because of how much this has been my life . . . Where would I turn back to? Whenever there are times that I practice less or stop completely, I don't feel full. Something that really motivated me to continue learning was being in my high school Xaad Kil class. We had an elder we called Tsinnii Stephen (Brown) who worked with the classes every day. He always said the language has become so much more simplified now and did his best to teach us the "old" Haida. Outside of the high school, he worked as a mentor with many learners including my mother. He had so much faith in us to hold on to the knowledge he shared. You could feel it in the way he spoke to you. I still hold on to that faith he gave us.

Whenever there are times that I practice less or stop completely, I don't feel full.

LM: *Do you feel that learning the language has been changing how you see yourself and your place in the world, how you relate to other community members (particularly the older generations), how you connect to your people's cultural and spiritual traditions and your traditional lands and lifeways? If yes, how so?*

SJW: Of course. Language naturally bridges lifeways. We say our language derives from our land. I think a lot of Indigenous languages have examples of words that align with what sounds the environment generates. I love learning about the supernatural beings that inhabit and surround Haida Gwaii. You can learn a lot from the humor and wisdom behind these stories. Both those things are found in our elders too, which is why I value spending time with them so much. As for my place in this world, what I know for sure is that I'm here to learn what I can from my culture and people. I'm a chain link toward a stronger future. I'm still understanding the repercussions of intergenerational trauma, but I'm also learning about intergenerational healing. All these things connect, and they all have healing qualities, in whatever capacity you're able to engage in them. That's what keeps me optimistic for our people.

LM: *Skil Jaadee, you are a talented emerging artist. What has your path been? Did you work in the Haida tradition from the beginning, or how did you come to choose to work in that tradition? Why is it important to you as a form of artistic expression?*

SJW: I've been practicing Haida art in and out of school since I was a child. We were really encouraged to make art by all the schools in my community. Outside of school, I would learn directly and indirectly from my family members who all practice different cultural art forms. As of right now, I'm not exclusive to any particular art form. I enjoy

Participants in a *Xaad Kil* language immersion camp, Kiusta village. Photo. Unknown, 2019

Skil Jaadee performing a Haida traditional dance at the Museum of Anthropology coastal dance festival in Vancouver, British Columbia. Photo: Unknown, 2018

Skil Jaadee (right) with aunt Lisa White on Haida Gwaii, blessing the *Hlyaalang* pole carved by Christian White. Photo: Unknown, 2017

painting, making regalia, and I want to learn how to weave more in depth. I think all art forms correlate with one another, and if my heart is saying to do something, then I'll do it. Listening to what my intuition says feels right is important to me. I make art because it feels good. It's a form of storytelling and it's a language in itself. Our people were oral historians: we didn't have written history, so we relied on our storytellers and our art to carry those narrations forward.

I think all art forms correlate with one another, and if my heart is saying to do something, then I'll do it. Listening to what my intuition says feels right is important to me. I make art because it feels good.

LM: *What's next for you in your journey of language revitalization and cultural affirmation?*

SJW: I think for now I will continue building connections with our Indigenous language communities who are all working towards the same goal. It's so important to connect with other learners to know that you are not alone in your journey, to share what works with one another, and to uplift one another. I'm focusing on how I can support people who want to learn. This autumn and winter, I'm preserving old audiotapes of our elders so that they can be archived. Hopefully, when I feel content with those things, I will go back to school for language revitalization programs, so I can offer more to my community.

It's so important to connect with other learners to know that you are not alone in your journey, to share what works with one another, and to uplift one another.

LM: *Any advice for other Indigenous youth who may be thinking of learning their language?*

SJW: I say take advantage of opportunities! There have been lots of times when I would doubt myself or even overlook an opportunity. But when I take the chance to go out there and do it, I am so grateful. Honestly, it was always my mom who pushed me to go beyond my comfort zone. I did it so much that now, when there's a chance to do something, I have an automatic voice saying to me: "It will be good for you, so just try." Your nation needs you. You have something incredible to offer even if you don't realize it yet. I truly believe that learning your language lights a fire inside of you that will always keep you warm.

Bentwood box drum made for the YVR art foundation youth scholarship. Photo: Skil Jaadee White, 2019

Your nation needs you. You have something incredible to offer even if you don't realize it yet.

LM: *Anything else you'd like to say that we haven't touched on?*

SJW: *Xaad kihl ga hl suu.u*

Skil Jaadee White *is a member of the* yahgu janaas *Raven Clan of the Haida Nation. Born and raised in Haida Gwaii, an island off the Pacific coast of what is now British Columbia, Canada, she is a talented emerging artist in the Haida tradition. After a few years of university in Vancouver, she's back home working as a language resource coordinator with the Xaad Kil Nee program, offering Haida language immersion courses.*

LEARNING OUR LANGUAGE IS LIKE LEARNING TO SEE IN FULL COLOR

Interview with Gisèle Maria Martin

TLA-O-QUI-AHT, CANADA

Luisa Maffi (LM): *Please introduce yourself: your Indigenous name, if you have one; your non-Indigenous name; your tribal affiliation, lineage, etc.; your age; where you were born and where you live now; a bit about how you grew up and your life experience and activities so far; anything else you'd like to say to identify/describe yourself!*

Gisèle Maria Martin (GMM): *ʔukɬaasiš ƛaʔuuk. histaqšiƛs ƛaʔuukʷiʔatḥ hiisaakʷisɬaa maḥtii ʔiiḥwasʔatḥ.* My name is Gisèle. I am a third of the way to 126 years old. I was born on Vancouver Island and raised at home in unceded ƛaʔuukʷiʔatḥ/Tla-o-qui-aht Territory, where I live now. My father is ƛaʔuukʷiʔatḥ/Tla-o-qui-aht. My mother is French and grew up in Quebec. I don't know whose territory in Quebec it was, come to think of it now!

I feel that the time outside in my formative years has shaped who I am and allowed me to better understand living with plants and animals beyond the colonial focus on names and uses.

There was no TV in my house growing up, but my mother always made sure I had good rain gear and spent many hours outdoors. I feel that the time outside in my formative years has shaped who I am and allowed me to better understand living with plants and animals beyond the colonial focus on names and uses. I am grateful to our Nation for declaring ƛaʔuukʷiʔatḥ/Tla-o-qui-aht Tribal Parks and for the ongoing work to protect the spirit of the land and all the living beings who belong to it and exemplify our cultural teachings.

Gisèle next to an ancient cedar tree. Cedar is of great importance for many aspects of the *ƛaʔuukʷiʔatḥ* (Tla-o-qui-aht) culture.
Photo: Gisèle Maria Martin, 2019

Left: Gisèle's texts with numbers before the FirstVoices Keyboard App, which includes every First Nations language in Canada, as well as Indigenous languages from Australia, New Zealand, and the USA. Right: Gisèle labels her home for her learning process. Photos: Gisèle Maria Martin, 2010 and 2014, respectively.

LM: *Did you grow up speaking your language, or at least hearing it spoken around you? Or, if you didn't learn your language as a kid, when did you start learning it? What led/motivated you to start learning? Was anything or anyone particularly instrumental in your decision to learn? And how did you go about doing it (personal initiative, language apprentice program, etc.)?*

GMM: I grew up speaking French and English and realized at a young age that English was neither of my parents' real language and that one language was missing. Thinking in a different language changes your worldview and self-understanding, so I was always curious and wanting to learn about the missing ƛaʔuukʷiʔatḥ/Tla-o-qui-aht Language.

I was working in preschools with children doing a speech therapy pilot project that included culture, and they gave me inspiration to learn to pronounce sounds that I had previously thought too difficult in our language. I learned the new IPA writing system from Levi Martin, my late grandfather's youngest brother—which makes him my other grandfather in our way, or my "great uncle" in the colonized way. And few years after labeling everything in ƛaʔuukʷiʔatḥ/Tla-o-qui-aht language, attending any language practice groups I could find (thank you to Yuułuuʔiłʔatḥ Nation and late Elder Barbara Touchie for always welcoming me in your classes!), and practicing many hours alone, I had the opportunity to participate in the First Peoples Cultural Council's Mentor Apprentice Language Program, with Levi Martin as my mentor.

You can study many hours but if you force it too far, your learning can regress. It's so important to sleep and eat well and also take time to play and enjoy life while intensely learning.

LM: *What challenges and rewards have you encountered in following your language learning path? How did you cope with the stumbling blocks and frustrations that must undoubtedly have come along with it? And what has been the best thing about it for you?*

GMM: Learning isn't a linear process. It rises and falls with our health and emotional well being. You can study many hours but if you force it too far, your learning can regress. It's so important to sleep and eat well and also take time to play and enjoy life while intensely learning.

Tla-o-qui-aht Tribal Parks. Photo: Gisèle Maria Martin, 2019

Left: This pole, named *tiičsʷiina* ("we survived") is located at Tinwis, within ƛaʔuukʷiʔatḥ (Tla-o-qui-aht) Tribal Park. It was put up for the Truth and Reconciliation Commission Recognition Celebration to remember the children who died in Indian residential schools and to honor the survivors. Right: Levi Martin (ƛaʔuukʷiʔatḥ Nation) and late Barbara Touchie (Yuułuuʔiłʔatḥ Nation), both treasured language mentors that Gisèle has felt blessed to learn from. Photos: Gisèle Maria Martin, 2014 and 2010, respectively.

Learning ƛaʔuukʷiʔatḥ/Tla-o-qui-aht is an ongoing process, and is one of the most meaningful things I've ever done in my life in terms of expanding my understanding of our identity and the universe. Whatever the challenges are, our languages are worth learning.

LM: *Was there any special moment or episode in this journey that you recall as a turning point, a transition–something that made you suddenly feel like "ah, I'm not turning back now"? If yes, can you please describe it?*

GMM: After just beginning to understand, I attended a potlatch. It was going on late into the early hours, 4am, 5am, when kids are sleeping under chairs and the dedicated witnesses are still watching quietly. Someone began speaking in our language and I was listening. I was so sleepy that I closed my eyes for a moment and drifted off, but continued listening to them in a sort of lucid dream.

> As I listened into the dream, my mind relaxed and suddenly I understood everything that was communicated so clearly.

As I listened into the dream, my mind relaxed and suddenly I understood everything that was communicated so clearly. It was such a beautiful cosmic and spiritual and gentle way of communicating . . . Suddenly the speaker switched to English, and I gasped awake in shock, as if someone had thrown a bucket of cold water on me. I was so thrilled at having just understood for the first time, and so shocked at the hard feeling English gave, I couldn't explain what I understood after, but it let me glimpse that fluency is possible and a very valuable endeavor.

LM: *Do you feel that learning the language has been changing how you see yourself and your place in the world, how you relate to other community members (particularly the older generations), how you connect to your people's cultural and spiritual traditions and your traditional lands and lifeways? If yes, how so?*

GMM: People used to tell me that you cannot learn a culture without its language, and I didn't want to hear it through the despair I felt at the time about ever really learning it. But I could also see the truth in the statement. Quebec wouldn't be the same without the French language. And now after beginning to learn our language, so much has come to light about our culture. I have said before that my previous existence feels like black and white, with a whole lot of grey areas. Learning our language is like learning to see in full color.

LM: *Gisèle, I know that you're also very much an environmental activist, following in the footsteps of the previous generation of your people, whose fight to protect your traditional territory in Clayoquot Sound made headlines around the world in the early 1990s. What environmental challenges are you working on these days? And do you see your environmental activism as linked to your language and culture activism? If so, how?*

Destruction of forests is further destruction of cultures. Photo: Gisèle Maria Martin, 2019

A Nuu-chah-nulth canoe. Artwork: Gisèle Maria Martin, 2011

GMM: The damages of resource extraction, deforestation, industrial fish farming, and mining are all connected to a use-centric mentality. Many things in English are named for their uses as things to us. In ẖaʔuukʷiʔath/Tla-o-qui-aht language, beings are named for what they do, what they exemplify in their life. The words we speak change how we observe, appreciate and treat the world around us. The vitality of our languages and cultures and the health of our home territories are interconnected. Whatever we can do to help or protect one will help the other as they are interconnected.

The vitality of our languages and cultures and the health of our home territories are interconnected. Whatever we can do to help or protect one will help the other.

LM: *What's next for you in your journey of language revitalization and cultural affirmation?*

GMM: It's so exciting to see more learners and speakers emerging. I'd like to continue helping to get our language more prominently seen and heard within our home, including local radio, local grocery stores, and local signage, but most importantly, in small family and/or friend settings and daily moments.

Spend time alone outside from time to time, and don't go too hard on yourself for not learning overnight!

LM: *Any advice for other Indigenous youth who may be thinking of learning their language?*

GMM: Spend time alone outside from time to time, and don't go too hard on yourself for not learning overnight!

LM: *Anything else you'd like to say that we haven't touched on?*

GMM: *nupinqaa NUPINQAA*!!! Keep going!!!

In Gisèle's words, "Learning our language is like learning to see the world in full color." Photo: Gisèle Maria Martin, 2018

Gisèle Maria Martin *is a citizen of the Tla-o-qui-aht First Nation on the west coast of Vancouver Island. She is a Nuu-chah-nulth language and culture activist and artist. She has worked as a First Nations cultural educator and interpretive guide since 1993. She is involved in the movement to protect and continue Cultural Lifeways within her community, as well as various language revitalization efforts. Gisèle is a sought-after presenter with a reputation for being as an incredibly engaging orator for children, youth, and adult audiences.*

SX̱EDŦELISIYE (Renee Sampson)
W̱SÁNEĆ, CANADA
with an introduction by Luisa Maffi

Our Children Are Our Hope and Future

REFLECTIONS OF A LANGUAGE APPRENTICE TURNED LANGUAGE IMMERSION TEACHER

Luisa Maffi, 2019

It was one of those stubbornly-not-yet-summer early June days on Salt Spring Island, British Columbia, on the west coast of Canada, eight years ago. The sky was overcast and the air cool, but that seemed to be no deterrent to the small group of campers who had pitched their tents on a beautiful, secluded beach on the south end of the island. Everybody was keeping busy. Children playing. Some of the young adults tending the campfire on which the food being readied by some of the others would soon be roasting—the smoke that rose from the fire seeming to magically mingle with the ethereal sounds of a flute played by one of the campers. In the background, sitting on a log that had drifted onto the beach, an Elder intensely absorbed in turning strips of bark into the structure of a traditional fish trap.

That was the scene that greeted me as I stepped onto the beach on that day of 2011, an invited guest of the intergenerational contingent from the W̱SÁNEĆ First Nation who had come to what is known to them as W̱ENNÁNEĆ, a part of their traditional territory, for a language-and-culture immersion weekend. Salt Spring/W̱ENNÁNEĆ is also where I live and where Terralingua operates. I was there as a guest because Terralingua had just started collaborating with the W̱SÁNEĆ on one of their language revitalization projects. We were supporting the first cohort of W̱SÁNEĆ Language Apprentices in their effort to document some of their traditional stories and turn them into storybooks illustrated by themselves, which would then be shared with the community.

The gathering of Apprentices and Elders on the land at W̱ENNÁNEĆ was another facet of the amazing work the W̱SÁNEĆ were engaging in to rebuild the intergenerational transmission of their language and cultural traditions. It was a privilege to share a meal and a few light moments with them in that serene, almost timeless setting. After we ate, the same Elder, STOLȻEŁ (John Elliott), began to sing to the rhythmic beat of his drum, soon capturing the rapturous attention of his two granddaughters, who were among the children frolicking on the beach.

Above: W̱SÁNEĆ immersion camp on the land at W̱ENNÁNEĆ (Salt Spring Island, British Columbia), June 2011. Photo: Terralingua, 2011

SX̱EDŦELISIYE (Renee Sampson) was one of the Language Apprentices partaking in the gathering, and the two girls were the oldest of her three daughters. The following year, we asked her and four other Apprentices to share with us their thoughts about their experience as language learners and trainees preparing to teach the language to younger generations of W̱SÁNEĆ. We shared their message in the Spring 2012 issue of *Langscape Magazine* (Vol. 2.10), in a piece titled "Language Stories of the SENĆOŦEN Language Apprentices."

Now fast forward to June 2019 and shift the setting to Victoria, the capital of British Columbia. That's where I attend the *HELISET TŦE SḴÁL* "Let the Languages Live" conference (June 24–26, 2019), an international gathering of Indigenous Peoples to celebrate the 2019 International Year of Indigenous Languages. And that's where, at one of the sessions, I see SX̱EDŦELISIYE and one of the other (now former) Apprentices, PENÁĆ (David Underwood), again. My eyes fill with tears when I hear them fluidly speak to each other in their own language, SENĆOŦEN. What they were endeavoring, indeed struggling, to accomplish back in 2011 has now become a reality, and they're now teaching the language to the next generation.

I decided there and then to ask them whether they would write a 2019 update on what they had to say seven years earlier, which we would then publish along with their original text from 2012. SX̱EDŦELISIYE agreed. What you'll find below is a slightly edited version of her 2012 words from *Langscape Magazine* 2.10, followed by her 2019 reflections. Together, the two pieces give an inspiring perspective on the road that SX̱EDŦELISIYE has traveled in her passionate journey from Language Apprentice to Language Immersion Teacher, reconnecting to her ancestors to become a conduit of her language and culture for the children—as she puts it, her people's "hope and future."

SX̱EDŦELISIYE, 2012

My three daughters TOLISIYE, LIQIŦIÁ, and ŦE,ILIYE were given *SENĆOŦEN SNÁs* (names) by their SILE STOLȻEŁ (Grandfather John). Using SENĆOŦEN names as their legal first names was a statement: we wanted to instil in our children to be proud of being W̱SÁNEĆ. Their names connect to the land (*LIQI*: "waterlily"), sea (*TOL*: "out at sea"), and W̱SÁNEĆ virtues (*ŦE,IT*: "truth"). I want my children to have the opportunity that many of our

Above: W̱SÁNEĆ Elder STOLȻEŁ (John Elliott) at W̱ENNÁNEĆ in 2011, with granddaughters ŦE,ILIYE (age 1) and TOLISIYE (age 6). Photo: Terralingua, 2011

Three W̱SÁNEĆ generations at the 2011 immersion camp at W̱ENNÁNEĆ: Elder STOLQEŁ, his son PENÁW̱EN, his granddaughters LIQIƛIÁ and TOLISIYE. Photo: Terralingua, 2011

people did not have, that I did not have, to hear our ancestral tongue in the home. I am learning SENĆOŦEN alongside my children, and I know there will be a time when they will surpass me in fluency. Using the language with my daughters has become a daily thing. Morning routines in our home are now in the language, and all my girls are now acknowledging me as TÁN (mom) and used to me ignoring them until they acknowledge me in SENĆOŦEN.

Our language nest is called SENĆOŦEN LE,NOṈET SCUL,ÁUTW̱ (SENĆOŦEN Survival School). It consists of eight students. It is a SENĆOŦEN immersion preschool/daycare. The curriculum is based on our W̱SÁNEĆ 13 ŁKÁLJ SĆELÁNEṈ (thirteen moons). The themes are culturally tied to our W̱SÁNEĆ beliefs, harvesting, and connections to land. The students are learning from a SENĆOŦEN perspective, and we are using the Dave Elliott SENĆOŦEN Alphabet. The students work on six different booklets that introduce colors, numeracy, shapes, SENĆOŦEN alphabet practice, names, and family and community.

Parents are required to sign a contract that they will commit themselves to learning the language alongside their child. Take-home parent kits are another way to get language into the home, and we are close to having this resource available to parents. These kits contain flash cards, labels, games, recipes, and many resources that parents can use in the home.

> Parents are required to sign a contract that they will commit themselves to learning the language alongside their child.

Also, we have Elders and language instructors come a couple of days a week to help us new language teachers with language fluency building.

Our language nest is so important, and we are trying to be creative to keep it sustainable. These children have learned so much in the three months (since we started the language nest), and these three- and four-year-olds are bringing language into their homes. Our language is still in a critical state, and we're looking at different methods of revitalizing and keeping our language alive. Our children are our hope and future.

> Three- and four-year-olds are bringing language into their homes.

SX̱EDŦELISIYE, 2019

ÍY, SƏÁĆEL SIÁM NE SĆÁLEĆE. SX̱EDŦELISIYE ŦE NE SNÁ Ć,SE LÁ,E EṮ W̱SÁNEĆ. ĆÁ,I SEN LÁ,E TŦE LE,NOṈET SCUL,ÁUTW̱ 6 SĆELÁNEṈ SEN.

Good day. My name is SX̱EDŦELISIYE (Renee Sampson), and I come from the W̱SÁNEĆ Nation. I have been working at our SENĆOŦEN Survival School in Kindergarten for over six years and now at a K/1 class for two years. When I first met Luisa, my youngest daughter was a baby, and we were out on W̱ENNÁNEĆ (Salt Spring Island), which is part of our traditional territory. We were attempting to have an immersion weekend with our Elders, camping, singing, canoeing, and feasting. It was very difficult for me as a young language learner to stay in the language.

> The support from our community is tremendous. They are proud to see their children or grandchildren opening up with prayer in the home and in community gatherings, sharing songs and language.

As I reflect back, my plate was full as I had three young daughters and was almost done with my undergraduate degree in education and about to embark on our newest initiative of starting our language nest. We began with eight students, and today those students are in

SX̱EDŦELISIYE visiting her ṮEṮÁĆES (relatives of the deep, islands in W̱SÁNEĆ territory), with her youngest SENĆOŦEN apprentice. Photo: SƮÁSEN, 2010

Grade 6 in our bilingual program. My middle daughter was three when she started and now she is eleven. I have now completed my Masters in Indigenous Language Revitalization and am moving into the role of language coordinator of our LE,NOṈET Immersion School, which houses 94 students. We intend to continue our program to Grade 12 and are in the midst of developing our next five-year plan for our students.

Left: Immersion camp at W̱ENNÁNEĆ in 2011. From the left: STOLQEŁ, Paul Wagner, Tye Swallow, SX̱EDŦELISIYE. Right: Canoeing to the 2011 immersion camp. Photos: SƮÁSEN, 2011

SX̱EDŦELISIYE's girls, left to right: ŦE,ILIYE, TOLISIYE, LIQIŦIÁ.
Photo: SX̱EDŦELISIYE, 2010

The support from our community is tremendous. They are supporting our language initiative by enrolling their children or grandchildren in our immersion program. They are proud to see their children or grandchildren opening up with prayer in the home and in community gatherings, sharing songs and language. Having children speaking and using the language has not happened for two generations, and we are now seeing language being used once again in our villages.

For me, learning my ancestral language has changed my whole outlook on life and my worldview. I have a sense of belonging to my territory and my ancestors. I work hard to honor them and everything that they have left for us.

SX̱EDŦELISIYE in 2018, with her daughters TOLISIYE (left), ŦE,ILIYE (center), and LIQIŦIÁ (right).
Photo: Megan Supernault, 2018

SX̱EDŦELISIYE *hails from the W̱SÁNEĆ (Coast Salish) Nation, one of the First Peoples of what is now British Columbia, Canada. A proud mother of three daughters, she was one of the first participants in the W̱SÁNEĆ Language Apprentice program as a learner of her language, SENĆOŦEN, and as a trainee for teaching the language to younger generations. With a Masters in Indigenous Language Revitalization, SX̱EDŦELISIYE is now SENĆOŦEN Immersion teacher/language coordinator and a University of Victoria instructor.*

Edna Kilusu
MAASAI, TANZANIA

Lessons of the MAASAI WARRIORS (MORANI)

Me at home in my traditional dress. Behind me are the goats that I fear could be taken by cheetahs at night while I am at my aunt's for folktales.
Photo: Sioni Ayubu, 2017

My aunt surrounded by some of my cousins—the audience for her nightly stories. Photo: Orkeeswa School, 2017

"Do not come back after I lock the door," my mother says, warning me not to be late returning tonight. While she milks the cows, I quickly build the fire and ensure that it is ready for making *ugali*, an everyday meal of corn flour and water eaten in most Maasai communities in Tanzania. Once the *ugali* is ready, without even washing my hands, I thankfully say, "See you, Mama." I slowly step out into the scary, unknown darkness. Before making any further movement, I quietly listen and attentively look around to see if there are any dangerous animals, like elephants or cheetahs, coming for our corn and goats. But because it is as dark as the paint that *isikolio* use on their faces, I cannot see anything. Anxiously, I say to mom, "See you, Mama" one more time. As I sprint to the other side of the *boma* where my aunt's house is located, I loudly count "1, 2, 3!" to scare away anything that might have been waiting for me. As I approach my aunt's house, out of breath, I hastily say, "*Hodi.*"

Me (in orange) and my cousins playing at home. Behind us is my aunt's house where we go for stories every night. Photo: Brit Hyde, 2016

Before anyone responds, I push through the door and close it quickly behind me. Inside, I find my cousins sitting around a sparkling fire with their eyes wide open and ears ready for interesting and scary stories. Their readiness is a sign of their devotion to folktales. Tonight's story is about Morani—the warriors of our society.

Inside, I find my cousins sitting around a sparkling fire with their eyes wide open and ears ready for interesting and scary stories.

My aunt begins, "Once upon a time, the warriors went to *orpul,* a place where Morani go temporarily to gain strength by eating meat and drinking local medicine so that they can protect the society. On their way to *orpul*, they met *engukuu,* an orangutan who tends to be nice and friendly to people in the afternoon but comes back at night and secretly counts the warriors to determine the size of his feast." As my aunt continues telling the story, some of us start to fall asleep. I never do because I am too busy asking questions. *What happened to the warriors? Were they able to escape or did engukuu eat them all?* My aunt tells me to be patient and then continues, "Each night *engukuu* ate one warrior, and when there was only one warrior left, *engukuu* went to the forest and gathered his friends for a feast knowing that this was going to be his last warrior." Worried that we all might have fallen asleep, my aunt pauses to ask in a voice full of concern, "Are you all still listening? Do you want to hear what happened next?" "Yes, we do!" some of us shout, and those asleep suddenly wake up. "When *engukuu* came back with his friends, the last warrior had left. He returned to the village and told the warriors who had stayed behind about the *engukuu.* A crowd of angry Maasai warriors with spears and shields gathered, ready to go kill the *engukuu*." By now the fire has gone down and is nearly extinguished. My aunt tells us to gather more firewood before she continues, but no one wants to go out in the dark alone—for fear of the *engukuu*—so we all go together.

My aunt tells us to gather more firewood before she continues, but no one wants to go out in the dark alone, so we all go together.

Once the fire is crackling again, my aunt resumes. "When *engukuu* was beaten nearly to death by the warriors, he insisted, 'Because I know I am just going to die, cut my thumb and all the warriors I have eaten will revive!'" In amazement, we all shout "Wow!" My aunt continues, "Once the warriors cut *engukuu's* thumb, all the warriors that were eaten escaped from the thumb's enclosure, one by one. Each one came out saying, 'Huh! It is so hot in this house,'" my aunt concludes with a laugh.

It is time for us to go back to our houses. I know for sure that my mother is already asleep and has locked the door, but I could not leave before the story ended. Staying over with my aunt is not possible—Mama expects me back no matter what. Despite her warning, I must go back and wake her to get in, or else I will be in even bigger trouble, and Mama won't let me go to my aunt's for more stories. It is even darker than when I left my house, but I have no other option. I sprint back, but this time, having heard the story about *engukuu* attacking warriors who are bigger and stronger than me, I am even more scared. It is quite funny, really: after a scary, sleepless night, I still return to my aunt's for more folktales every night.

It is quite funny, really: after a scary, sleepless night, I still return to my aunt's for more folktales every night.

Growing up in Lendikinya village, Tanzania, I listened to traditional Maasai stories like this one every night after dinner. Folktales were told as a means to give answers to difficult questions for the younger generation. We learned that warriors endured in order to take care of their communities. In the Maasai culture, warriors were—and still are—viewed as the strongest members of the tribe. They are in charge of protection, but sadly, no one is protecting stories these days. We no longer tell and listen to these folktales. They are discouraged because our teachers insist that we study for school. Clearly, it is important for us to get an education, but I worry that ten years from now, many Maasai traditions will be forgotten. Important stories will be lost. How do we move forward without forgetting our past?

Maasai Morani with sticks and spears that they use for protection. Photo: Kesuma Mkare, 2017

Left: Here, I'm carrying the firewood that we use for cooking and for the open fire that we sit around when listening to the folktales. Photo: Brit Hyde, 2016. Right: The open fire we sit around while listening to the stories. When we first arrive at my aunt's, there is usually a pot cooking over it. By the time the stories begin, the pot will be gone, so we can gaze right into the flames as we listen. Photo: Lemomo Lukumai, 2017

Edna Kilusu *is an international student from Tanzania. She is currently a senior (12th grade) at St. Mark's School in Southborough, Massachusetts, USA. She will be attending Gettysburg College in Pennsylvania, USA, next year. She is a Maasai, an ethnic group found in Tanzania and Kenya.*

The Pati Karapau Ceremony of NUA LU'A

Fauzi Bin Abdul Majid
PALU'E, INDONESIA

My name is Fauzi Bin Abdul Majid. I am 24 years old. I am a Palu'e,one of the Indigenous peoples of Indonesia. I am a student in the English Education Study Program of Nusa Nipa University of Maumere, Indonesia. I'm going do my thesis about our traditional culture, Palu'e. When I was looking for the best subject for my thesis, my aunty suggested I research our traditional culture as it exists on Palu'e Island. Palu'e Island, locally called *Nua Lu'a,* is under the administrative region of Sikka Regency of Nusa Tenggara Timur Province of Indonesia. Palu'e is one of the subdistricts of Sikka Regency. *Sara Lu'a* is one of the local languages spoken by Palu'e people. Palu'e Island preserves a unique culture that includes our Sara Lu'a language, legend stories, traditional songs and dances, and traditional ceremonies. I went to Palu'e Island in December 2018 in hopes of attending the *Pati Karapau,* one of the traditional ceremonies held in the hamlet of Ko'a, which is part of Rokirole Village.

This traditional ceremony is usually performed every five years. It is the peak ceremony of thanksgiving rituals, acknowledging that the success of all work done during the previous five years is due to the greatness, grace, and blessings of the *Era Wula Wathu Tana.* The Era Wula Watu Tana is believed by the Palu'e people to be the highest, most powerful entity creating and giving life for humans. *"Era Wula"* refers to the high power or local god, and *"Watu Tana"* refers to the ancestors and the earth. The Palu'e people believe the Era Wula is the sun and the moon, and the Watu Tana are the land and the ancestors, and each must be given some food in any ceremony. "Pati Karapau" itself means "the sacrifice of buffalo." In Ko'a, the buffalo is ranked as the sacrificial animal of the highest order. Although this is never explicitly stated, according to *hada,* or law, its blood is meant to serve as a replacement for the human blood in sacrifices. The buffalo that is sacrificed in this offering (the *Lakimosa Pati,* or the ritual of slaughter) is a symbol or sign of thanks being given to the Era Wula Watu Tana.

I went to Palu'e Island last December to meet the Ko'a *Lakimosa Tana,* or the ceremony leader. The Lakimosa Tana was really nice to me and gave me the schedule for the Pati Karapau ceremony. I am really happy that the Lakimosa Tana gave me permission to follow the ceremony, and in January 2019, I attended in the Pati Karapau ceremony.

Above: The Lakimosa (right), leader of the Pati Karapau ceremony, discusses the ceremony beforehand. Photo: Fauzi Bin Abdul Majid, 2019

The Pati Karapau ceremony has many steps, the most important of which is a ritual called *Phoka Pu'u Ca Supo Ngalu Lawa*. In Phoka Pu'u Ca Supo Ngalu Lawa, I saw the buffalo slaughtered by the Lakimosa Pati. The Lakimosa Tana, along with his son, cut the neck and the back legs of the buffalo while dancing and chanting *"Oro . . . e."* After the buffalo had been slaughtered as a sacrifice to the Era Wula Watu Tana, the Lakimosa Tana put grass to the buffalo's mouth and rice to its stomach to give thanks to the local god and to the ancestors. After the ceremony was done I went back to the city, but, as the Lakimosa Tana told me, I learned that we must protect and care for our traditional culture. He let me record videos and take some pictures of the Pati Karapau ceremony as my part of my research and also as documentation for my generation so we will learn and know about the ceremony.

Traditional cultures like mine play an important role in civilization. They help strike a balance with mother nature, and promote the conservation of nature and respecting each other. I learned a lot from this ceremony, especially from the way the Lakimosa Tana together with his people carried it out. Togetherness is really important: when we have some event or ceremony we need other people to make the ritual happen. I also learned how we as human beings must always be near the Creator that is God. In this ceremony, Palu'e people believe that we must respect and praise God as our Creator.

My young generation of Palu'e must learn the Pati Karapau ceremony because we will carry it on when the old generation dies. We need to be introduced to the local traditional culture, especially the Pati Karapau ceremony, so that our cultural and social identity are not uprooted. The noble values of the Pati Karapau ceremony must continue to be instilled in the young generation. It can be a strong foundation in facing the currents of external influence that can uproot our cultural identity.

I believe that embracing traditional cultures can make Indigenous people believe in themselves and their natural identity. I hope all the people in this world learn about other traditional cultures, so that we can learn to respect them.

Above: The Lakimosa with the sacrificial buffalo. Photo: Fauzi Bin Abdul Majid, 2019

The Lakimosa plants the *Thunggu Thunggu*, or the flags of traditional ritual. Photo: Fauzi Bin Abdul Majid, 2019

The Lakimosa and his son come to the *Lakimosa Pati* to be ready to perform and to slaughter the buffalo. Photo: Donisisus Mastino Sera, 2019

Women in *Ko'a* sing and dance before the buffalo is slaughtered. Photo: Donisisus Mastino Sera, 2019

Right: A ritual called *Petha Lakimosa Pati* must be performed before the Lakimosa slaughters the buffalo. Photo: Donisisus Mastino Sera, 2019

Below: People dance while waiting for the Lakimosa to come to the Thupu,the place where the buffalo is slaughtered. Photo: Fauzi Bin Abdul Majid, 2019

Right: The buffalo must be slaughtered in front of many people. Photo: Donisisus Mastino Sera, 2019

Left: The Lakimosa's brother with the storyteller Fauzi Bin Abdul Majid at the *Thupu Tana Natha Ca*. Photo: Kelvin Thiru, 2019

Right: Participants pose after the Pati Karapau is over. Pictured are relatives of the Lakimosa, the Lakimosa himself, and two Catholic priests. I am at the center of the group Photo: Kelvin Thiru, 2019

Left: *Pati Karapau (The Sacrifice of Buffalo) Ceremony.*
Video: Fauzi Bin Abdul Majid, 2019
(https://vimeo.com/353425807)

Fauzi Bin Abdul Majid, *age 24, is a student at Nusa Nipa University of Maumere of Indonesia. He is a member of the Palu'e Indigenous people of Indonesia. The Palu'e practice various world religions as well traditional ancestor worship. Fauzi believes most younger Palu'e want to learn and know more about traditional rituals, which is why he is interested in documenting the Pati Karapau ceremony.*

Army ANTS

Eusebia Flores
YAQUI, MEXICO

I am a founding member of the Indigenous Yaqui and Comcaac film collective, La Marabunta Filmadora, practicing participatory video (PV) across Mexico and beyond.

Since learning PV from InsightShare in 2010, we have been using it to preserve our culture and territories. Our name, translated as The Army Ant Film Collective, stands for the power of PV and our power as communities working together for justice: both are unstoppable!

> The power of participatory video and our power as communities working together for justice: both are unstoppable!

We quickly realized that through PV we were able to create unity, to solve our own problems, and to celebrate ourselves. Two of our films, *Victimas Del Desarrollo* (http://bit.ly/37bX0IM) and *Pintado La Raya* (http://bit.ly/2KsxftM), tell the story of our resistance to a gas pipeline laid illegally on our territories, while *Yooram Luturia* (http://bit.ly/357yMgK) offers a version of a famous Yaqui oath, which reminds each member of the tribe of their commitment to protect the environment and territory.

> Our films have given our communities the strength to resist abuse from governments and big companies, as well as the pride to nurture our own traditions and customs.

Our films have given our communities the strength to resist abuse from governments and big companies, as well as the pride to nurture our own traditions and customs. These are powerful values that we wanted to share. So, we started passing on our knowledge to other Indigenous communities in northern Mexico (the Yoreme, Tohono O´odham, Pima, Guarijio, Comcaac, and Ralámuli).

Above: Yoreme participatory video trainees learning how to film using a drone. Photo: Thor Morales/InsightShare, 2019

Romelia from the Comcaac team filming on the beach.
Photo: Thor Morales/InsightShare, 2015

The La Marabunta Filmadora participatory film team: (left to right) Eusebia, Samuel, Anabela, Faviola. Photo: Thor Morales/InsightShare, 2015

Connecting Indigenous Cultures. Video: Thor Morales (InsightShare Associate) & Jose Ramon Torres Molina (Comcaac Facilitator), 2016 (http://bit.ly/2Ok8lO2)

Yoremnokki. Video: La Marabunta Filmadora, 2019 (http://bit.ly/2NQCSnJ)

Cultura Ralámuli. Video: La Marabunta Filmadora, 2019 (http://bit.ly/2QpJF9N)

Our aim has been to establish the first Indigenous Centre of Participatory Video in northwestern Mexico, to empower communities and strengthen our cultures and environments through locally generated media. The hub is a bridge from the Pacific Ocean to the Sierra Madre Occidental that brings our communities together for support and solidarity.

This year we held PV workshops for the Yoreme and Ralámuli communities. Each group created films about issues important to their communities.

For the Yoreme, the issue was language loss. Changing attitudes and Spanish-speaking bias in their area has led to a weakening of their native language to the brink of erasure. So, the community made the film *Yoremnokki* and learned about their mother tongue by interviewing community elders.

The Yoreme youth were inspired to be proud of their culture, to preserve it, and to renew it.

The Yoreme youth were inspired to be proud of their culture, to preserve it, and to renew it. One of our trainees said, "I really liked this training because we became aware of how important it is to speak our native language [Yoreme]. We filmed in our community and interviewed elders who still speak our mother language. I, as a kid, I would like to learn to speak Yoreme language."

On the other hand, the Ralámuli trainees wanted to talk about acculturation and territory—two very deep and complicated topics. The prevalence of these two themes in most Indigenous communities across the globe is astonishing. Culture and territorial loss seem to be inextricably linked, being the cause and effect of one another.

Culture and territorial loss seem to be inextricably linked, being the cause and effect of one another.

By teaching other communities how to use PV, we hope to foster an unstoppable movement of "Ants," who can share the stories of their communities and help others do the same.

Junior Guajajara and Ranielly Guajajara (they are not siblings: all Guajajara people use the same last name) practice camera-use during a show-and-tell game. They were the youngest participants in the training, but that didn't stop them from unfolding their creativity and leaving aside shyness to fully engage in all participatory video activities. Photo: Thor Morales/InsightShare, 2019

As I write this I have just returned from Arariboia Indigenous Territory, in Brazil, home to the Guajajara people. There, I co-facilitated a participatory video training with my colleague Anabela Carlon. In partnership with Mari Corrêa from Instituto Catitu and Midia India (an Indigenous media collective), we identified the need to have a workshop at Zutiwa village. The training was mainly for Guajajara youth: six men and four women. They focused on one of the most important festivities of the Guajajara: *A festa da Menina Moça*, the rite of passage from girl to maiden. The trainees created a film about that beautiful and powerful celebration. As of this writing, the film is only in the Guajajara language. After the proper consent process, trainees will explore if the film can be shared on a global scale.

Flay Guajajara, from Mídia India, leads his team in interviewing a singer, who despite being young is considered a master, while he prepares the *jenipapo* ink for painting the bodies of young singers who will chant through the night for the Menina Moça festival. Photo: Thor Morales/InsightShare, 2019

This is the first international hub started by La Marabunta Filmadora. We left a video kit so that participants can continue using video to address and support ongoing challenges and needs.

In October 2019, La Marabunta Filmadora will travel to Ecuador to share our knowledge of PV with Indigenous women's groups and have outreach events in Quito. This trip has been made possible through a partnership with the ALDHEA Foundation. At a time of unprecedented threats to Indigenous Peoples across the Americas, these trips, and the alliances they will build, carry the hope of moving forward with dignity and strength.

Eusebia Flores, *better known as Chevy, is a Yaqui woman from Tetabiate, one of eight Yaqui villages in northwestern Mexico. Eusebia is a member of La Marabunta Filmadora and has found participatory video (PV) to be a key factor in uniting the Yaqui people against common challenges and threats. Her work is devoted to biocultural conservation and sparking local pride and dignity among young Yaqui men and women.*

Dely Roy Nalo
VANUATU/KIRIBATI, VANUATU
and Thomas Dick

TEKS

PROMOTING AND SAFEGUARDING BIOCULTURAL DIVERSITY THROUGH THE ARTS

Traditional: habits and ways built over the years that are flexible and change in relation to new circumstances and situations

Entertainment: an opportunity for the people to express and adjust, to adapt, safeguard *kastom* music and acts using contemporary arts in the face of overwhelming foreign influences

Kastom (custom): practices that bind people together in relation to the land, their leaders, and the environment

Support: using appropriate tools to promote and support positive kastom and traditional practices in ways that are respectful of our people

In the South Pacific island nation of Vanuatu there are over 130 different languages spoken. With its population of approximately 263,000, this means Vanuatu has the highest rate of per capita linguistic diversity on the planet.

In the South Pacific island nation of Vanuatu, over 130 different languages are spoken. With its population of approximately 263,000, this means Vanuatu has the highest rate of per capita linguistic diversity on the planet. For many people in Vanuatu, one of these languages is the first language that they learn from their mother. These languages—and the knowledge and practices that they represent and articulate—are important expressions of cultural diversity. As the cash economy penetrates deeper and deeper into the islands of Vanuatu, communities

Above: Volcano on Gaua, the largest and second most populous of the Banks Islands in Torba Province of Northern Vanuatu. Photo: Cristina Panicali, 2013

Kastom performers from Fanafo village, Espiritu Santo. Photo: Cristina Panicali, 2013

are identifying the need for alternative, locally based approaches to the promotion and preservation of important traditional wisdom practices—including dances, music, songs, and stories—and connecting these with contemporary music and dance.

One of the ways that communities in Vanuatu are responding is through the Traditional Entertainment and Kastom Support (TEKS) unit of Further Arts—a local NGO working with communities on arts and cultural projects. Dely Roy Nalo, an Indigenous woman of Vanuatu and Kiribati descent, founded TEKS in 2011. Dely conceived TEKS to provide space and equal opportunity for traditional performers to express and showcase their artistic talents in a local cultural festival on Espiritu Santo Island in northern Vanuatu. At the same time, TEKS also provides support to practitioners of kastom and those communities that safeguard its values.

Dely speaks fluent English, French, and the local creole Bislama (the lingua franca of Vanuatu) in addition to her father's vernacular language, Mwerlap. She says, "I feel that I understand enough about diverse Vanuatu cultures and that I have a reasonable understanding of many foreign cultures. I created TEKS as a unit to serve as a bridge between the different conceptual worlds."

TEKS supports a range of traditional wisdom practices such as dances, music, songs, stories, carving, weaving, painting, drawing, and fabric art. There are two principal ways that TEKS engages with communities to support these activities: firstly, by assisting village groups to organize and host Mini Arts Festivals (MAFs); and secondly, by documenting these MAFs through co-produced audiovisual content in vernacular languages.

Dely explains, "My idea is that if each culture can understand or at the very least acknowledge each other, a platform can be set for mutual respect." TEKS aspires to be there to facilitate that platform and foster the connections.

The full, 35-picture version of this photo essay is available online at | http://bit.ly/2KFKzvg and http://bit.ly/332mPrb.

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Preparing leaves for traditional dress for a performance at Lukaotem Gud Santo Festival in Luganville, Espiritu Santo. Photo: Cristina Panicali, 2013

A traditional performer from Gaua blows the conch shell at the opening ceremony of Singaot Musik Kamp, Espiritu Santo. Photo: Cristina Panicali, 2013

A Leweton Cultural Village performer, Charlie, playing the bush bass at Lukaotem Gud Santo Festival in Luganville, Espiritu Santo. Photo: Cristina Panicali, 2013

Dancing at the opening ceremony of Singaot Musik Kamp, Espiritu Santo. Photo: Cristina Panicali, 2013

Women kastom performers at the Salav Festival in Namasari village, Gaua. Photo: Cristina Panicali, 2013

Men performing Qwat kastom dance at the Salav Festival in Namasari village, Gaua. Photo: Cristina Panicali, 2013

Lily Weul, leader of the Salap women's water music group, Gaua. Photo: Cristina Panicali, 2013

The Salap women's group performing their mesmerizing water music at the Salav Festival in Namasari village, Gaua. Photo: Cristina Panicali, 2013

Children performing na-Mag kastom dance at the Salav Festival in Namasari village, Gaua. Photo: Cristina Panicali, 2013

Whole community song and dance at the Fanafo Indigenous Kastom Day in Fanafo, Espiritu Santo. Photo: Ham Maurice Joel, 2014

Local and regional Melanesian musicians and dancers perform at the Emyo Tinyo Dance & Music Festival in Emyotungan village, West Ambrym. Photo: Sarah Doyle, 2014

The volcanic landscape of Ambrym, visited by performers during the Emyo Tinyo Dance & Music Festival in Emyotungan village, Ambrym. Photo: Sarah Doyle, 2014

Dely Roy Nalo looking at historic photos with Merion Roul of Namasari village, Gaua. Photo: Cristina Panicali, 2013

Dely Roy Nalo, founder and leader of TEKS unit: "I face enormous challenges in my work as a female, but I am committed and passionate about ensuring that the voices and stories of both men and women are heard to strengthen harmony and respect between people as a foundational value." Photo: Cristina Panicali, 2013

Tokbor mask at the Salav Festival in Namasari village, Gaua island. Photo: Cristina Panicali, 2013

Dely Roy Nalo *(Vanuatu/Kiribati) is a visual artist and cultural consultant based in Luganville, Espiritu Santo Island, Vanuatu. She works with rural and remote communities on cultural and artistic initiatives through her consultancy, Lokol Eyes. Having gained recognition locally and nationally for her past work with TEKS, she continues to expand its international network of cultural artists and professionals.*

Thomas Dick *is founder of Further Arts (www.furtherarts.org), an NGO based in Port Vila, Vanuatu that works with local communities on arts and cultural projects. Further Arts seeks to empower people to develop long-term social and commercial enterprises in the creative arts, agriculture, and communications that are culturally, socially, environmentally, and financially sustainable.*

We'e'ena Tikuna
TIKUNA, BRAZIL

Overcoming the Odds to REACH MY DREAMS:

AN INDIGENOUS ARTIST'S STORY

I am We'e'ena Tikuna, a member of the Tikuna people of Brazil. My name means "the jaguar that swims to the other side in the river." My story is the story of an Indigenous woman who has overcome many obstacles.

I was born in the Tikuna Umariaçu Indigenous Land in Amazonas, Alto Rio Solimões. I came from my village to the city at the age of twelve. I didn't speak Portuguese, Brazil's dominant language, but today I am a visual artist, Indigenous singer, public speaker, nutritionist, fashion designer, and activist. I've launched the first brand of contemporary clothing to be designed by a Brazilian Indigenous woman. It was my dream to make and design my own line of Indigenous clothing, and for twelve years now I have been making my dream come true.

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All art is a form of resistance. We Indigenous people are the protagonists of our own histories. Today, Indigenous visibility is important. With my fashion designs I want to give visibility to Indigenous culture, to Indigenous women, and to the beauty of the creations of contemporary artists like myself who fight for the Indigenous cause. For instance, my fashion shows have my own Indigenous soundtrack, and the models are all or mostly Indigenous. This helps create opportunities and dreams.

All art is a form of resistance. We Indigenous people are the protagonists of our own histories.

In my culture we use paints to draw graphics on our skin and wear clothing made from the fiber of Tururi, an Amazonian tree species. Each drawing has its own meaning and importance. As I live in the city, I cannot have my body painted at all times. When I first trained as a visual artist, however, I carried out an in-depth study of Tikuna graphics.

Above: We'e'ena Tikuna is an Indigenous artist from Amazonas, Brazil. We'e'ena, whose name means "the jaguar that swims across the river," was born in the Tikuna Umariaçu Indigenous Land in the Amazon, on the Upper Solimões River. Photo: Anton Carballo, 2018

We'e'ena has won various awards, including being named Best Indigenous Artist in Brazil. Twelve of her works have been included in the permanent collection of the Manaus Historical Museum. Photo: Anton Carballo, 2019

Now I incorporate all this ancestral meaning into each piece of clothing I design, and then add my own contemporary touches—because we Indigenous people are up to date with the latest trends, aren't we?

Ever since white people first came to Brazil, our Indigenous graphics have always attracted the attention of historians, writers, and travelers. Besides the beauty of the drawings, what surprised most whites was that we Indigenous people always paint our bodies and also decorate our utilitarian pieces, such as bows, arrows, ceramics, and other handicrafts.

In Brazil, we Indigenous people use body painting as a means of expression linked to various manifestations of our cultures. It is a way to transmit meaning-rich information. It is a system of visual communication, in which most of our body paintings represent fauna, flora, rivers, the forest, or everyday objects. There is a specific design for each aspect of life we celebrate: one symbolizes our continuing fight for our rights; another, marriage; a third, death; and so on. All our rituals are portrayed in body painting. That is the most intense form of artistic expression we have in all of our graphics.

As a recording artist, We'e'ena's first album was titled *We'e'ena—Indigenous Charm.* The lyrics speak of cultural resistance, Indigenous identity, and preservation of nature. Photo: Unknown, 2019

The Tikuna people are organized by clans. Tikuna graphics represent our clans through face paintings that symbolize clan animals of the sky and the earth. During certain rituals (for instance, the one marking a girl's rite of passage into womanhood), paintings depicting animals and spirits also appear as graphics on the clothes of masked men, which are made of Tururi wood-fiber fabric. Our paints are made from plants like *achiote*, *genipapo*, or *babassu*, most of the time mixed with yellow clay and juices from palm trees.

I create my designs with an eye to our ancestry, but also with an eye to our future.

Indigenous graphics express more than just a desire for beauty: they are a complex code of communication that, for us Indigenous people, represents our culture and tradition. I create my designs with an eye to our ancestry, but also with an eye to our future.

Because We'e'ena lives in the city, she feels that she can't have her body painted at all times. She says, "I have suffered prejudice in the city against my body paintings and my Native clothes. My work in Indigenous fashion design was born out of my desire to overcome this kind of prejudice." Photo: Muringa Fotografia, 2018

"We'e'ena Tikuna—Indigenous Art" is the first contemporary fashion label to be designed by an Indigenous Brazilian. Photo: Gabriella Riveiro, 2019

Left: As an Indigenous speaker and activist, We'e'ena has participated in numerous debates at universities and other forums. Right: We'e'ena and her husband Anton Carballo, a violinist in the Brazilian Symphony Orchestra. They have overcome all the barriers of prejudice that still exist against marriage between a white man and an Indigenous woman. Photos: Muringa Fotografia, 2018

Right: *Moda Indígena, We'e'ena Tikuna, Arte Indígena Contemporânea.* Video: We'e'ena Tikuna, 2019 (http://bit.ly/2Omefyj)

We'e'ena Tikuna's *achievements go well beyond fashion design. The first Tikuna to graduate with a bachelor's degree, she also is a singer and songwriter in her Indigenous language, a prize-winning graphic artist, and a speaker, writer, and activist focused on Indigenous culture, nutrition, entrepreneurship, spirituality, and the visibility of Indigenous women.*

We'e'ena is the first member of the Tikuna people to graduate with a bachelor's degree in nutrition. She has since obtained a doctorate degree. Photo: Alex Rodrigues, 2018

Sean Anthony
Dagondon Rusiana
BAGOBO-TAGABAWA, PHILIPPINES

In an INDIGENOUS UNIVERSITY

JOURNEY OF A PAMUSEPIAN

Formal education and a degree is something that we Indigenous peoples in the Philippines value as a tool for self-realization and development. For many Indigenous peoples, education is a way out of the multiple impacts of poverty that have hounded Indigenous peoples throughout history. Access to education, however, is a challenge. Luckily, I got a scholarship at the University of Southern Philippines–Pamulaan Center for Indigenous Peoples Education (USEP–Pamulaan). I never thought I would survive four years of college in a structured, semi-isolated, and cellphone-less institution—but I did.

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My start as a Pamusepian (the name for USEP–Pamulaan students) was not that easy. I had to adjust to a new environment and people from different Indigenous communities while trying to be independent from my parents. Curfew and no cellphones were things I was able to deal with, but the most challenging was complying with all the formational activities that USEP–Pamulaan was conducting.

Every morning, we woke up early for our morning worship, after which we cleaned our assigned area and did some gardening. After that, we ate breakfast together and prepared ourselves for our class. After our whole-day class, we went back to our formation house, then back to our gardening.

The USEP–Pamulaan program uses an Indigenous-responsive curriculum. I believe having two gardening sessions daily not only emulates the daily life in our home communities but also serves as a way for the institute to ingrain in us the meaning of a global Indigenous value and perspective that "land is life."

> Having two gardening sessions serves as a way for the institute to ingrain in us the meaning of a global Indigenous value and perspective that 'land is life.'

Every meal time, all of us gathered in the dining hall to eat together. Dinner time included announcements about our school requirements, meetings, and upcoming activities in the center, or we discussed our personal concerns or did short culture-based activities, such as translating words into different languages and sharing trivia and facts about our respective tribes. Friday dinners were usually followed by recreational activities revolving around faith, our cultures, or something educational. Aside from the regular morning chores, Saturday meant the weekly thematic sessions. In these sessions, we discussed different attitudes necessary to becoming good leaders in our communities, such as simplicity, humility, faith, passion for service, and many more. In the evening, we conducted worship where we praised God together and shared experiences and challenges about our faith in God. Sundays were days for ourselves but we were encouraged to go to church. Yes! We really had a lot of activities and everyone had their own schedule. At first, I felt like a robot trying to keep up. As I developed self-discipline through time, however, I realized I was having fun.

Moreover, inside the center, we were also divided into different committees. I was a member of four committees: the Program, Training, Maintenance, and Tour committees. Of all committee tasks I was assigned, the one that I really liked was tour-guiding inside The Living Heritage Center of Philippine Indigenous Peoples. This is an enclosed big room inside the center where everyone can see the living traditions of the Indigenous peoples in the Philippines, and it is considered as the heart of the center. When we had visitors, we toured them inside and showed them the different cultures that we have and all the current realities and challenges that we are facing. The best part of this task was seeing people being amazed at our heritage center, which reminded me of how this place sparked my interest in discovering more things about my own tribe the very first time I saw it.

> Sharing with others our living traditions as Indigenous peoples makes me proud of who I am and inspires me to embrace and discover more about the culture that we have.

Sharing with others our living traditions as Indigenous peoples makes me proud of who I am and inspires me to embrace and discover more about the culture that we have. I was once assigned to the Cordillera Corner, which focuses on the Indigenous peoples of the mountains of Luzon—and which definitely does not include my real tribe, the Bagobo-Tagabawa. It was challenging to share things about other tribes because I was afraid of misrepresenting or creating misconceptions. To resolve this, I asked my co-Pamusepians coming from the Cordillera to validate the things I said, including the correct pronunciation and the meaning of the artifacts that are displayed in that part of the heritage center. With that, I learned things not just from my own tribe but also from others, which helped me widen my horizons and develop respect for cultural diversity.

Part of the USEP–Pamulaan curriculum for my course, which is the Bachelor of Elementary Education degree, is community immersion. This was two months of teaching Matigsalug children in Sitio Contract, Datu Salumay, Marilog, Davao City. Seeing the interest of these children to go to school amidst their poverty has been very inspiring, especially for an education student like me. Living with the community for two months also gave me an opportunity to experience the Matigsalug culture and lifeways, which are relatively traditional.

Knowing something secondhand as opposed to direct encounters is definitely a different level of learning. I had heard a lot about the traditional practice of having multiple wives among some Indigenous peoples, but I did not expect to encounter a living case during my immersion. That's what happened, though: We met a community leader who had two wives. Personally, I am against this traditional practice. I felt sad for the two wives.

Going from a relatively traditional community, I had my teaching practicum in a Subanén community that is mainstreamed in Dumingag, Zamboanga Del Sur. For a non-Subanén to teach the Subanéns their own language and culture was a big challenge! We started with the Subanén dictionary and encouraged daily use of words/terms. We did our best to learn more about Subanén culture to be able to integrate this into our teaching. At the end of three months, we were so touched to hear students using basic Subanén, including daily greetings like good morning/afternoon, thank you, and so on. While we were sad to leave the community, a feeling of satisfaction that we were able to teach them something prevailed.

Looking back, I can see myself in the Subanén students trying to learn a new or different culture. What made it easier for me is the sum of the experiences I have had as a Pamusepian. I have learned to actualize respect, thereby becoming more accepting and open to learning other cultures.

All these experiences have inspired me, a city kid, to go back to my roots and discover more about my own culture. I have developed several articles and research papers discussing different aspects of Bagobo-Tagabawa culture, and I am planning to write more. I am learning my own dialect and am honing my skill at traditional dancing, thanks to my Bagobo-Tagabawa classmates.

All these experiences have inspired me, a city kid, to go back to my roots and discover more about my own culture. I graduated with a Bachelor of Elementary Education Degree (BEED) on June 11, 2019. I look forward to being able to live out the valuable lessons I learned as a Pamusepian, which aim for transformational leadership with a passion for serving others.

Above: Entrance at Pamulaan Center for Indigenous Peoples Education. Photo: Unknown, 2018

Teaching practice in Dumingag, Zamboanga del Sur.
Photo: Sean Anthony D. Rusiana, 2019

A presentation during a cultural exchange with visitors.
Photo: Dale Perez, 2019

Reading tutorial during immersion at Contract, Marilog, Davao City.
Photo: Johncel Clamaña, 2018

Sean and his family on graduation day (L to R): Diosdado Rusiana Jr. (Sean's father), Elenita Rusiana (mother), Sean Anthony Dagondon Rusiana (author), Martina Rusiana (Sean's grandmother), and Janeth Rusiana (Sean's father's sister). Photo: Unknown, 2019

Sean Anthony D. Rusiana *is Bagobo-Tagabawa from Silca, Crossing Bayabas, Toril, Davao City. He was one of the leading youth in Tebtebba's "Respecting Diversity, Promoting Equity: Mainstreaming the Rights of Indigenous Children in the Indigenous Peoples' Agenda and National Indigenous Peoples' Situationer"—a partnership project with the UNICEF and OHCHR in 2016. Sean is currently reviewing for the Licensure Examination for Teachers.*

Somnath Dadas
DHANGAR, INDIA
with Kanna K.Siripurapu

In Pursuit of DREAMS

AN ODYSSEY OF SELF-DISCOVERY AND HOMECOMING OF A YOUNG DHANGAR MAN

I'm Somnath Dadas (22), a young Dhangar (shepherd) man, and this is my journey of self-discovery, a story of chasing my dreams and returning to my cultural roots. I'm a native of Kothale village of the Indian state of Maharashtra, the second child to my parents, and I have two twin siblings. I belong to the Dhangar community, an Indigenous nomadic pastoral community, which traditionally rears large flocks of sheep. Traditionally, Dhangars do not pursue formal education, as their nomadic lifestyle does not allow them to, even if they wanted to. Neither my parents nor my elder brother had formal education, and I was next in line. But I wanted to change things!

I can still vividly recall, after my graduation from high school, my father asked me to join him in our traditional occupation—shepherding. He wished to increase the flock size by my joining him, but I told him I had other things on my mind—pursuing higher studies.

With great difficulty, I convinced my parents and set out to pursue my dreams of higher studies. In fact, I was the first person from our family to pursue higher studies, and recently I graduated with a Master of Social Work (MSW) from the prestigious Tata Institute of Social Sciences (TISS), Mumbai, Maharashtra, India.

This is my journey of self-discovery, a story of chasing my dreams and returning to my cultural roots.

The journey, however, was not so easy! Having studied in a vernacular medium until my intermediate studies began, it turned out to be an uphill climb to follow English language-based instruction in undergraduate studies. It pushed me into a state of despair and led

Above: In this picture from 10 years ago, I'm receiving a participation certificate from Anthra, an NGO working to empower nomadic pastoral peoples.
Photo: Anthra, 2009

Since then, I've been able to realize my dream of getting a higher education. Here, I'm collecting data for my master's thesis on the Dhangar community.
Photo: Pandurang Dadas, 2018

A proud moment: graduating with a Masters of Social Work from the Tata Institute of Social Sciences, Mumbai.
Photo: Tata Institute of Social Sciences, 2019

to the development of a severe inferiority complex. It is extremely difficult for people like us to survive in spaces where higher education is taught predominantly in English.

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My dreams almost came to a standstill after I graduated from higher secondary school. My grandmother was diagnosed with cancer, and my father sold half of our sheep flock to cover her medical expenses. The entire family was stressed out because of our poor circumstances. I decided to accept admission at a public *ashram* (boarding) school to pursue further studies. It was a hard choice for me to leave my family and move into a hostel. I had to move away from my parents, as they migrate with the livestock and cannot stay in one place.

I was lucky to get access to formal education, which was possible because of the public ashram school scheme promoted by the Government of India for students belonging to the nomadic tribes-denotified tribes (NT-DNT) communities (an official designation referring to certain nomadic tribal groups who have been persecuted historically, and still are today). The Indian government launched the scheme exclusively for NT-DNT children, as their nomadic families do not have permanent settlements and keep moving from place to place once every three days or so. The quality of education at ashram schools is usually inferior. Usually a single teacher teaches all the subjects—languages, science, math, and so on. Also, ashram schools usually have very poor infrastructure and facilities. It was not surprising that I ended up without basics and never saw even a single piece of lab equipment. Furthermore, the quality of food provided for us was pathetic! A few times I even found worms in the food served for us. I never faced discrimination while enrolled at the school, as the pupils hail mostly from NT-DNT communities.

Neither my immediate nor extended family are formally educated, so at boarding school I was left without anyone to guide me.

During the Diwali festival and summer vacations, I would call my family and find out the location of their temporary home and join them to lend an extra hand. During the entire period of my studies at the boarding school, I was enrolled in an "earn and learn" scheme: I used to work for four hours after school and earned the equivalent of 1 U.S. dollar per day. I dreamed of pursuing a master's degree after graduating from the ashram school. Neither my immediate nor extended family are formally educated, so I was left without anyone to guide me. Originally, I dreamed of pursuing medicine but could not, as I did not have access to information regarding the admission process. Instead I enrolled in undergraduate studies in the sciences.

I took a loan from the bank and borrowed money from relatives and friends to begin to pay for the college fees and maintenance. As it was not enough, I started working part-time during college days and full-time during vacations at a local catering firm to cover the remainder of my expenses. My family was not in a position to support me financially, and I refused to put pressure on them either. This has created a kind of friction and gap between my parents and me.

I toiled hard and finished my undergraduate studies. Then I made the leap to the Tata Institute of Social Sciences in Mumbai to pursue my Master of Social Work with an emphasis in livelihood and social entrepreneurship. It was here that all my nightmares came true! Life in a large metropolitan area and having English as the medium of instruction at TISS were hard. I was unfamiliar with the language and would hide in the classroom during the first semester, afraid to respond to questions asked by professors. Dealing with economic hardships, staying away from family, and having challenges with communication in English put me under tremendous pressure and often left me feeling despondent! When I approached the bank for an education loan they refused, as none of my family members have steady jobs. Somehow, I managed to get a large education loan. I have spent many sleepless nights thinking about loan repayment. My classmates used to discuss their hopes and future plans, but there was only one thing on my mind—repayment of the loan!

It was the exposure to the outside world through my higher studies, along with my internship, that gave me a fresh perspective on mobile pastoralism and my own Dhangar community.

During my graduate studies I had an internship at Anthra, a non-for-profit organization, based out of Pune city, that works to empower the mobile pastoralist communities of India. I had been familiar with their work since my childhood. As a child I used to participate in events organized by Anthra at our village. However, it was the exposure to the outside world through my higher studies, along with the internship at Anthra, that gave me a fresh perspective on mobile pastoralism and my own Dhangar community. Also, I did my master's thesis on the Dhangar community in Maharashtra, which was an eye-opener. It helped me to see our community in a different light. My observations of our community from a different angle helped me to take pride in our mobile pastoral knowledge, culture, and traditions. Soon after my graduation, I accepted a position at Tata Motors Limited-CSR (Corporate Social Responsibility), and started working with farmers, the landless community, and a women's self-help group in the Kallam block of Osmanabad district (Marathwada region) of Maharashtra. With my newfound knowledge, I have started working towards strengthening the traditional occupations of our pastoralist community, farmers, and the landless community.

Livestock rearing traditionally has been the core livelihood source of my community, and its success is determined by the availability

Above and Previous Page: I still support my parents in taking care of our family's sheep flock. Photos: Omkar Dadas, 2019

Left: I want to give back to my tribal community. One way is to organize a meeting to create awareness of state-supported economic development schemes. Photo: Pratik Bhoye, 2019. Right: Another, even more tangible way to give back is by supplying solar lamps to shepherds at an affordable price. The lamps will be very useful during migration. Photo: Pritha Mandothan, 2019

and health of the pasture and other natural resources. For the past two or three decades, however, our traditional mobile pastoral system had been undergoing changes due to a decline in pasture lands, shifts in agriculture patterns, restrictions on access to customary grazing lands and forest lands, expansion of highways, rapid urbanization, and depletion of water resources, to name a few. The rapid changes all around have left the mobile pastoral communities and similar resource-dependent poor communities at a crossroads.

Currently, nomadic communities are left vulnerable in a rapidly changing modern India. The traditional nomadic lifestyle makes most government schemes inaccessible to them. Often, Dhangars are excluded from basic citizenship rights, such as ration and voter ID cards. Nomadic life also poses other challenges, such as limited access to formal education, health care, etc. As a result, the illiteracy rate among Dhangars is one of the highest among the mobile pastoral communities. Moreover, mobile pastoralists do not have permits for grazing their livestock. The lack of proper policy for development and conservation of common property resources, especially village pastures and grazing lands, and increasingly stringent impositions of the forest department on accessing customary grazing lands inside the forests, has been killing traditional mobile pastoralism in India.

In this discouraging scenario, neither Dhangar parents nor youth want to take up livestock rearing. Young people have been diverting towards any employment other than pastoralism and they aspire to a different future than the lives of their parents. But there are instances of a few people returning to mobile pastoralism due to insecurities and challenges in other occupations. Overall, though, the young generation of Dhangar is more likely to stay away from our traditional occupation.

Further, climate change in India will bring more challenges to the livelihood security of mobile pastoralists. I would like to use my formal education, new job, and the networks I have developed to good use. I am working with organizations like Anthra to reach out to the government to design and implement insurance schemes for mobile pastoralists. There is a lot to be done in securing access to proper health care for both livestock and humans of mobile pastoralist communities in India. I feel that the government should prioritize the supply of provisions to mobile pastoralist families at the public distribution centers at villages on their migration route. The road is long and I would like to do whatever little I can for the well-being of pastoralist community. Also, I have plans to organize a grassroots group to advocate for issues of concern to my community.

I would like to use my formal education, new job, and the networks I have developed to good use. I am working to design and implement insurance schemes for mobile pastoralists.

Somnath Dadas *belongs to the Dhangar community, an Indigenous nomadic pastoral community of the Indian state of Maharashtra. He has a Master of Social Work with an emphasis on livelihood and social entrepreneurship and is now employed at Tata Motors Limited-CSR, Maharashtra. He's interested in work with farmers, pastoralists, and the landless community.*

Kanna K. Siripurapu *is a researcher interested in biocultural diversity of the Indigenous nomadic pastoral systems and agroecological systems of India. He is associated with the Revitalizing Rainfed Agriculture Network, Telangana, India.*

Marie Michelle Hirwa
BATWA, RWANDA

They Call Me UMSANGWABUTAKA

MY PEOPLE WERE THE FIRST TO REACH THIS LAND BUT TODAY WE DON'T OWN ANY OF IT

I am Marie Michelle Hirwa, born on September 12, 1986. I was born into a family of seven children in the Kacyiru commune, now called Gasabo, in Kigali, the capital of Rwanda. Both my mum and dad passed away when I was 9 years old. Most of my siblings have also since passed away and now my brother and I are the only ones left alive.

I was born into a family of Batwa, the Indigenous people of Rwanda. The name "Batwa" is also how we are known in the neighboring countries of Burundi and Uganda. According to Rwandan tradition, the Batwa were the first people to come to what is now Rwanda; we were here before any other ethnic group. That is why many in Rwanda called us *Abasangwabutaka*, "the first to reach this land" (singular: *Umsangwabutaka*).

We may have come here first, but today the Batwa do not own any land. Legally, people are supposed to be equal and the same in Rwanda, but in reality the Batwa still experience some discrimination: in community life, in schools and work places. Our people can't afford a bank loan, have no access to a passport, and struggle to get our children access to education. Briefly, we suffer socio-economic stigma and are among the poorest people in Rwanda.

> The Batwa were the first people to come to what is now Rwanda. We may have come here first, but today we do not own any land.

The current government of Rwanda has the political will and good policy of maintaining all Rwandans as the only ethnic group (*Ndi Umunyarwanda*), as we all speak the same language and share the same history and culture. But we do believe that we have a different story and history from the rest of Rwandans, therefore we should have a special treatment in order to catch up. The government calls us "historically marginalized people," but we really feel we don't have a proper name or

Above: Marie around the time she finished high school. Photo: Unknown, 2006

A Batwa woman making traditional pots at the informal Batwa community of Bwiza near Kigali, Rwanda, in 2008. Pottery making became synonymous with Batwa in Rwanda since their eviction from their traditional forest territories and continues to be one of the few economic activities available to them. Photo: Karl Weyrauch, 2008. Courtesy of Pygmy Survival Alliance: pygmysurvival.org, facebook.com/PygmySurvival

identification. However much the government is doing, we still face stigma and discrimination as many people still distance from us in social life: in schools; in work places; in churches; and so on. Socially, people are slow to have relationships with us, and even if they try, they seem to be sacrificing their reputation in the society.

The elders in my community told me, "We were kicked out and told to hit the road and deal with our own problems."

Sometime after Rwanda gained its independence, the government wanted to focus on conservation and big commercial projects, as well as on tourism development in the forests, and so took away the Batwa's ancestral lands with little or no compensation. This was in the 1970s and 1980s. As the elders in my community told me, "We were kicked out and told to hit the road and deal with our own problems. And this was not easy as we had to start a new life in a new environment with no land and no financial means."

It used to be that Batwa were hunters, but nowadays most of us live by making pottery, such as cooking pots, mugs, and flower pots, and by low-pay, rubbish jobs like removing a dead cat or dog, digging a toilet hole, etc. We are portrayed as a people who live only for the present and don't care about the future: no saving, no investing, and no long-term projects or plans. Most Rwandans see us as a stupid people with no values, or at least no civilized ones—a people who deserve to go live in the forests.

I do feel like we were treated like objects, not human beings. For example, my grandparents told me that in pre-colonial times, if somebody's field was producing less than expected, they would hunt down a Batwa and cut his or her finger off and plant it in that unproductive or non-arable land, and they believed that doing so would help it to become fertile.

Until now, people say that when a man has a back pain, he needs to have sex with *Umutwakazi* (a Batwa woman) as a treatment.

In my own life, I have experienced a great deal of the discrimination all Batwa face.

My family was very poor. Growing up, we could hardly find enough food or clothing, or meet any other basic need. The whole family of seven children and mum and dad lived in a very tiny thatch hut. We were sleeping and cooking in one muddy room. We suffered stigma from the rest of the community, who called us silly names just to discriminate against us. People would not share food or drink with us; certainly none of them would marry someone from our community. Every single time there was something stolen in our neighborhood, Batwa were the first to be suspected.

Access to education was a very big issue. I went to a primary school, but there were just a few of us Batwa and other children would just insult us and call us *nyaritwa*, a meaningless human being. Even when someone other than Batwa said some nonsense thing, people would say that she or he has an *ubwengetwa* (a "Batwa brain," which means they think wrongly like a Batwa). I know many children who quit school because of the stigma.

I went to a primary school, but there were just a few of us Batwa and other children would just insult us. I know many children who quit school because of the stigma.

I nearly quit too, but luckily I carried on and managed to reach secondary school. Unfortunately, I was the only *Umutwakazi* there, and other students would hardly accept to sit with me either in a class or share the same table in the refectory, or share a room in a dormitory.

My schoolmates would make fun of me: "Ask your mum if maybe your dad does not come from some tribe other than Batwa, because you look clean and beautiful, there is no way you can be *Umutwakazi*"—as if someone from Batwa community can't be clean and beautiful. I have been told that other people have said, "We didn't know that she was *Umutwakazi*, oh, she is so cute—she could be a contestant in the Miss Rwanda Competition!" I have had many friends with whom I thought I was getting on well, but once they found out that I am *Umutwakazi*, they ran away. I am quite sure that many men do not want to date me because I am *Umutwakazi*.

It was not easy to pay school fees, but thanks to support from a Catholic charity called Caritas Rwanda I was able to remain. I did well in secondary school and managed to qualify for university.

I was not able to afford the costs until, miraculously, I got a scholarship and enrolled in a UNILAK (Secular University of Kigali). I started in 2008 but couldn't finish out the year because my sponsor stopped paying for me. I took a normal job to support myself and went back to my studies in 2010. Then, in 2013, which was to have been the last year of my studies, I fell in love with a man who promised to marry me after he got me pregnant. But as soon as he found that I was *Umutwakazi*, he changed his mind. He is not from the Batwa community and did not want anyone to find out because it would be a big shame to him and his family. I painfully went through all of this and missed my studies and suffered as a stigmatized single mum after I had my baby in January 2014.

Today, I am still struggling to find ways to finish my studies and write my dissertation. The father of my son sometimes arranges to meet him—but not me. He does not want people to know that he had any

Marie Hirwa (author) with her son. Photo: Unknown, 2015

relationship with an *Umutwakazi*. I struggle when my son asks me why we do not live with his dad, knowing that this will never happen. It's a shame that I can't find a way of explaining it to him, and I am sure other children make fun of him and tell him that his mum is an *Umutwakazi*.

I fell in love with a man who promised to marry me after he got me pregnant. But as soon as he found that I was *Umutwakazi*, he changed his mind.

Kinyarwanda is indeed the language spoken by all citizens of Rwanda, including us Batwa. But we speak it with a particular accent of our own called *urutwatwa*. People make fun of us because of this. (As with me now, some Batwa people may lose this accent if they have lived for quite some time in a different social environment). We also have our own traditional dance and song, which is called *Intwatwa* and people highly enjoy it. People often invite us to perform at their events, but they still think our payment is only food and drinks, which is not helping us to transform our socio-economic lives.

We continue to live with bad housing, however much the government does to provide modern houses for us. People make fun of us, saying we do not deserve that kind of housing, as some of us take off the sheet metal roofing and sell it. This makes the rest of the community, including some local leaders, think that all us do not want to live a good life in good housing.

Yes, we have had some Batwa people in the political sector, but still we are not fully involved in political life and decision-making.

At work places, you may not easily discover discrimination or stigma, but access to jobs is not easy for us, as Batwa do not have the capacity to compete with other Rwandans because we did not have access to education before and our living conditions did not allow us to study well.

It's up to the government to think about motivating policies aiming at empowering Batwa, such as affirmative action. Even today, people would think it funny if a Batwa were to hold

Singers and dancers of the Kwizera Performance Cooperative from the Batwa community of Cyaruzinge on the outskirts of Kigali, Rwanda. Batwa are often invited to perform their traditional song and dance known as Intwatwa at events in Rwanda. Photo: Karl Weyrauch, 2018
Courtesy of Pygmy Survival Alliance: pygmysurvival.org, facebook.com/PygmySurvival

Batwa music is a distinctive combination of voice, hand-claps, and flutes known as Amakondera, played here by members of Kwizera. Photo: Karl Weyrauch, 2019
Courtesy of Pygmy Survival Alliance: pygmysurvival.org, facebook.com/PygmySurvival

a high leadership position, and I am sure any mistake or failure of that organization or institution would be attributed to it being led by a Batwa.

Many churches have special community outreach programs and projects and try to really work with the community spiritually. But it looks like the Batwa are left behind.

Even with the many programs and policies in place, and with the laws and the Rwandan constitution stipulating that all Rwandans are equal, we Batwa still have in our minds that we are stigmatized, and this must be so in the minds of other Rwandans because they continue to behave in a way that stigmatizes us.

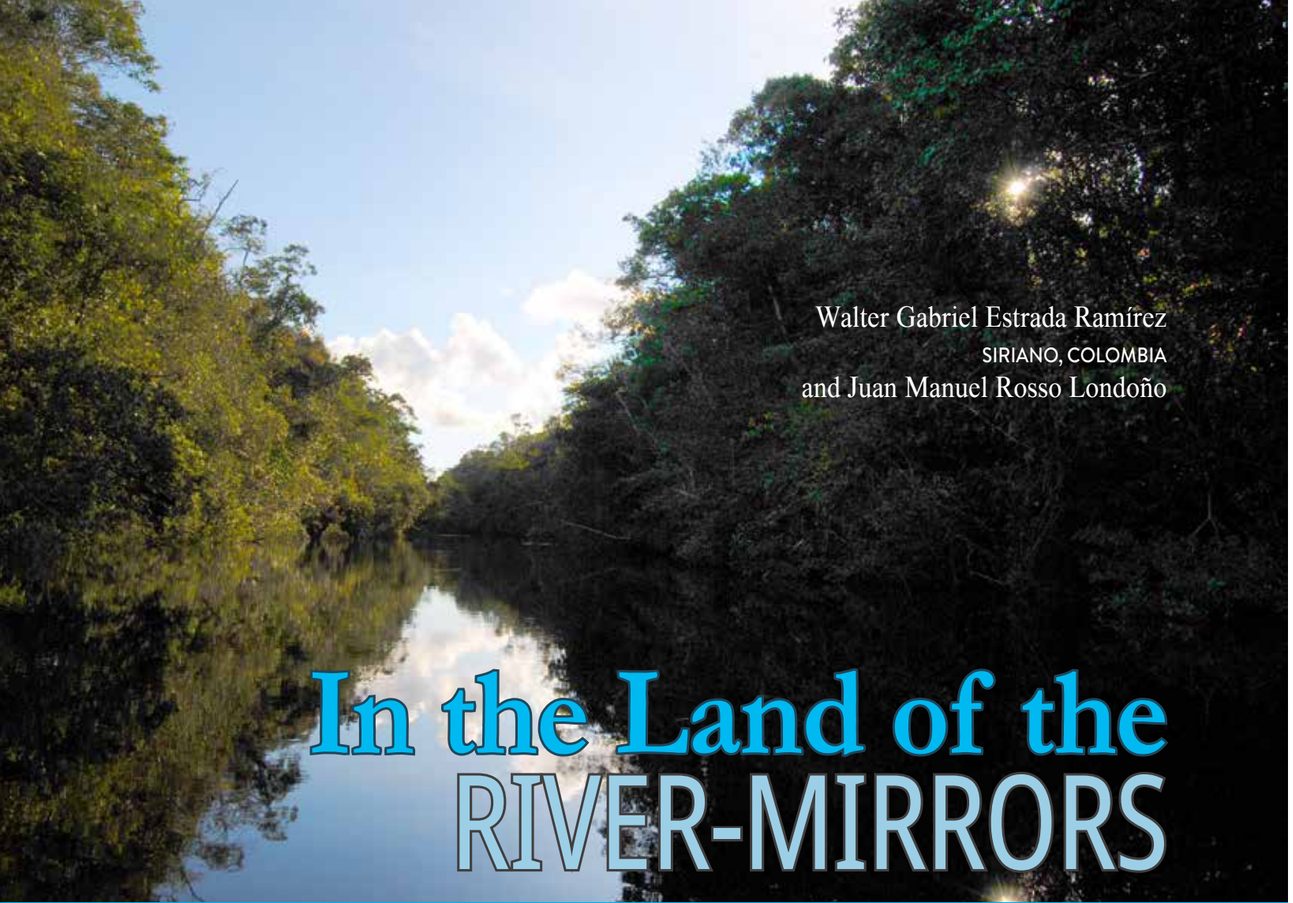
As for me, I accept that I am Umutwakazi but still I do not feel comfortable, as I belong to a group that not everyone respects. Now, I consider myself lucky, as I went to school and got opportunity to somehow be integrated in other groups. I feel sorry for my people, especially when I see that there is a long way to go in order to catch up on the rest of Rwandans. Honestly, I accept who I am, but I am not comfortable to be called that (a Batwa) when I am with other people. I know who I am but do not feel proud, and many of us, especially those with advanced education, also have that feeling. I wish I could run a project to integrate my people into other communities and help them to change their mindset, and empower them both socially and economically.

I know who I am but do not feel proud, and many of us, especially those with advanced education, also have that feeling.

Looking at the pillars of the government of Rwanda, which are social equality, economic improvement good governance, and justice, we really feel we are not fully socially integrated. Economically we are the weakest community in Rwanda and cannot position ourselves in good governance programs. It is the discrimination and stigma we still face that prevents us from achieving our full measure of justice. That's what most of us feel, but with the government's effort and campaign, we will get there however long this might be.

In 2011, the Batwa community at Bwiza—including members of Kwizera—moved to newly built homes provided by the government at Cyaruzinge (shown here under construction). At the official launch of the new housing, members of Kwizera had the honor of performing for Rwanda's First Lady. Photo: Phil Vernon, 2011

Marie Michelle Hirwa *is a single mother of one boy. Together they live in the capital city of Rwanda, Kigali. She was born into a family of seven children in the Kacyiru commune, now called Gasabo, in Kigali.*



Walter Gabriel Estrada Ramírez
SIRIANO, COLOMBIA
and Juan Manuel Rosso Londoño

In the Land of the RIVER-MIRRORS

DIALOGUES ABOUT "BEE-CULTURAL" DIVERSITY

Origins

Walter

I was born on the 2nd of May, 1989, in the Guadalajara community, along the Paca River in the Colombian Vaupés, Northwestern Amazon. I belong to the Siriano ethnic group as for my father-line, and my mother belongs to the Bará ethnic group from the San Gabriel de Caño Colorado community in the basin of the Pirá-Paraná River.

I was raised in different communities where my father was a teacher, and that is why I understand and speak many of the languages that are spoken in the Vaupés. I began school at the age of five. When I was in second grade, I was sent to a boarding school in Acaricuara that was managed by the Catholic Church.

I studied there and spent time with my parents during school vacations only. Then I would see the preventive dances done to ensure the health of people and the land and the important *Yurupari* rituals that took place in the community, but did not understand their meaning, although I did like the chants and sounds that came from the *maloca*. Then we went to live in Mitú, the capital, and we lost contact with our culture, although at bedtime my mom would tell us stories and traditions, and sometime my uncles (the ones that are *Kumuã* or wise men) would visit us and tell us many things about our culture. But in our heads, those were only like fairytales and myths. They were not real. This was the result of the education we received in elementary and secondary school: there, we were taught to love Western or White culture and forced to forget our roots in order to become, some day, professionals capable of building important businesses to "contribute to the development of our region and country."

Juan

I was born in 1975 in Bogotá, Colombia, surrounded by the high summits of the northwestern Andes. The growing city was my main playground, but I retain my countryside experiences among my best early memories. My father's hands and voice guided me in the encounter with mountains, plains, rivers, and seas, mixed with grandpa's stories of horses, hunts, cowboys, and long travels within the vague, rough, and magical bounds of "civilization."

I found a form of delight in my contact with these spaces. They were an important influence in building my thoughts, practices, and perceptions of nature.

I decided to study Animal Husbandry in my search for a broader approach to the rural world. As a city person, I had a limited view of the manifold realities and imaginaries about peasant life and food production. I thought my career choice could fill this gap.

Long after graduating, I understood that all the information we received was mostly related to a particular view of "rurality," stemming more from industrial and technological perspectives than from a reflection about better ways to live and feed ourselves. The Green Revolution (along with other similar development promises) left its legacy in many generations of Colombian technicians, professionals, and scientists from institutions dealing with agriculture and livestock.

First Encounters

Walter

When I finished school, I longed for university studies. I wanted to become a professional and get a good job in town; but I was not able to do so then because I did not have the money to pay. So, I opted to study for a livestock technical career.

During that time, even though I still used my own language, our teachers taught us that our culture and customs did not matter because

Walter in front of a hive of stingless bees in his family's *chagra* close to Mitú. Stingless beekeeping (meliponiculture) is a highly diverse practice in different socio-environmental contexts. Photo: J. M. Rosso, 2011

Juan

My first encounter with the rainforest was in a special place called Sierra de La Macarena, a colonization area since the 1950s, in the transition zone between the Amazon and the *Llanos*, the eastern great plains of Colombia. As a schoolteacher, I had the privilege to witness intense social and natural processes in this "other country," unknown to me until then. As a consequence of a complex string of events, *doña* Eneida, my local "mom," expressed her desire to keep Africanized honeybees. Could beekeeping be an interesting productive activity for the settlers, in alternative to the totally non-profitable conventional agriculture, or the illegal coca plantations for cocaine production? Could it help to link conservation and economic benefits?

The beekeeping drove me to an enchanted approach to biodiversity. Under the patient but rigorous guidance of my *profe* Guiomar in the Bee Laboratory at the Universidad Nacional, I discovered there was more than one bee species: nearly 20,000 in the world! Bees taught me many interesting and useful things about biology, and I realized they do something more important for providing food than making sweet honey: pollination.

Since then, my professional activity and my research interests have been linked with knowledge, use, and management of native bees and stingless beekeeping. Bees have been my best pretext to visit and meet very interesting and beautiful people and landscapes.

Entrance to a colony of Amazonian native stingless bees *tõ dobea* (*Melipona cf. rufescens*). Nearly 500 species of these highly eusocial bees occur in tropical and subtropical regions and have a key role in reproduction of native and cultivated plants. Photo: J. M. Rosso, 2011

Above: Sensing the other bank of the river. Photo: J. M. Rosso, 2010

they were not "civilized." Even more, our knowledge about the world had no real foundations.

It was very important for me, personally, to get to know about beekeeping. At last I was finding something compatible with my thoughts and with the things I was willing to do for my region; I felt that to work with these bees was an opportunity. I learned about how to manage them, their biology, and the value of their products on the "green markets." I wanted to devote my time to this, and with lots of enthusiasm I helped in all the project's activities.

I saw the Vaupés River for the first time in 2008, a few months before the beginning of my doctoral studies. I went to Mitú to accompany a group of student technicians, expecting to teach them about meliponiculture and production of special goods. I intended to show them how native "resources" could generate alternatives for "sustainable development," linking conservation and economic competitiveness in a context of high biological diversity like the Amazon Basin. Walter took part in this group.

The Other Bank of the River

Walter

When I finished my technical studies, the institution where I studied offered me the opportunity to become instructor in a project with the NGO Tropenbos. The objective was to build capacity among Indigenous instructors that would work with the communities in their social, environmental and cultural development. Thanks to many

Juan

One afternoon we were chatting, and Walter asked me, "Profe, what do you think of us Indians?" I was caught totally by surprise and stammered something, realizing that I didn't know much about the people I was working with. Walter, wistfully, began to share some things about his culture and his world vision and some thoughts that

One afternoon Walter asked me, "Profe, what do you think of us Indians?" Photo: J. M. Rosso, 2008

different friends, at this point of my life I was able to find many answers and much strength to return to the culture I had left behind. These persons shared with us many experiences in which our culture, knowledge and traditions seem as valid as the Western ones we were learning of. The encounter with "different" white people helped me to change attitude towards my own culture. It made me be aware and look over my shoulder, value traditions and knowledge, something I had lost because of Western education.

Although I had always kept inside me some of the Indigenous sparkle, during this time I finally learned about what I really am, about what we own, about everything.

Finally, while I was working in my communities, I was talking to them about maintaining and recovering our traditions, and sometimes people asked profound questions about our customs . . . and I did not have the answers. So then I asked myself, "What am I doing to recover our culture?" From that moment many more questions arose, and I wanted to know all about our culture, so I didn't spare any opportunity to talk with the elders.

Dead beauty. Photo: J. M. Rosso, 2008

astonished me. I began to discover the symbolic and perception abyss that separates our cultures, and I asked myself how much my work was contributing to the extinction of their knowledge and culture, as I was leading them to incorporate my own models, concepts, and practices.

In those days, I had also met the woman who is now my wife and the mother of my Juan Miguel and Guadalupe. She was working in the Vaupés, too, dreaming and finally managing to build a different school, one in which Indigenous children would not have to be like children in the cities. Natalia introduced me to Belarmino, also an Indigenous person, and an officer of the Association of Traditional Indigenous Authorities of the Yapú Zone. They were making strides in the process of thinking of new ways to maintain their culture and territories while trying to establish relations with the Western world.

We invited Belarmino to visit us and get to know the bees and the butterfly house owned by a biocommerce company on the same farm. The process begins with butterflies flying freely and laying their eggs on plants, from where they are carefully collected. After that, caterpillars are fed and cocoons are stored until butterflies emerge. At this point, a factory worker breaks the insect's thorax (where flight muscles are located) to avoid damage by wingbeat, and then he puts the butterflies in glass jars until they die. Then they are prepared for distribution to collectors and craftsmen. When Belarmino saw a dying butterfly in a jar, he tried to open the jar, thinking the butterfly was suffocating. He was unaware that dead beauty was precisely the goal. His disconcerted expression made a deep impression on me, which later forced me to review carefully the ways in which our culture and our science see and understand nature.

Adult landing in the butterfly house. Photo: J. M. Rosso, 2008

Pushing Dominos Backwards

Walter

With Juan I shared and talked about life, about our stories and traditions. We remained in occasional contact for a few years. So when I decided to have my initiation ritual, Juan gave me many reasons for doing so. I decided that I had to start with myself. So, I did. I have been transmitting this to more young people, such as my younger brother. Cultural initiation was an important milestone to experience living the tradition. It was like pushing dominos backwards.

Juan

After a few months of being in Brazil for my doctorate, I decided to change my thesis focus. It wasn't easy because of academic and social pressures. I shared my dilemma with Walter, and he gave me a simple but wise answer, as if from a storybook: "Do what your heart dictates."

Originally, my research aimed to contribute to knowledge about intensive rearing systems for stingless bees. It was then that concepts such as mechanicism, positivism and utilitarianism took shape in my mind for the first time. A buzz from ethical and aesthetic dimensions of research and fieldwork pollinated the idea of including other perspectives in my academic efforts. Why and for what do we do research? What is the nature of nature?

Flying in Light and Shadow

Walter

I was part of a group of initiates who leapt into the challenge of trying to attain the knowledge and maybe some day be like our fathers. This makes me feel so proud because I am giving myself to the continuation of our traditions, of our wisdom. Knowing secrets revealed to initiates only gives me strength and pride about who we are.

If some day I could become a *Kumú*, I too could be so valuable to our people because that implies taking care of them spiritually; enhancing a permanent communication between our world, our brothers, and people from different dimensions; and making life possible in our territory making *buena vida* possible.

Finally, the awaited day. The semi-darkness in the *maloca* . . . the dance, following the rhythm from the sticks and the pit jingles.
Photo: J. M. Rosso, 2010

Juan

Three years later, the bee project was finished. The hives disappeared, and the young apprentices started other journeys. Nevertheless, in a *chagra* close to Mitú, some hives of *nitĩ dobea* and *tõ dobea* remained solidly placed on sawhorses, and worker bees moved in and out in droves, revealing a healthy colony.

On my last trip to the Vaupés in 2011, I met Walter in San Gabriel, the most remote community in the Yapú Zone, where I was working the previous year. Walter and his brother were ending their first cycle of cultural initiation, guided by their uncles, some of the few *Kumuã* elders that are still alive and revitalizing their culture. For three days, I witnessed the preparation of the ceremony: the harvest of *pupuña*; the inhalation of pepper and the visits to the river to vomit for cleansing the body; the prayers on foodstuff that could then be consumed again after weeks without eating any fat, hot, or roasted and burned foods, consuming mainly *casabe* and *manivara*.

Finally, the awaited day. The semi-darkness in the *maloca*, illuminated just by the soft light from the resinous *breo*. The dance, following the rhythm of the sticks and the pit jingles tied to the ankles; the feather crowns; the singing sounds and the whispering of the historian relating the origins; the dense smoke from tobacco and *breo*. The sacred plants: *mambe* for good thinking and overcoming fatigue, *yopo* for clearing the mind, and *caapi* to purge and learn; the *chicha* to cheer up and nourish, diligently and abundantly prepared by each woman, and offered again and again in *cuyas*. The happiness of the cane flutes, inviting youth, elders, women, and children to participate in the life-renewing party.

And in a special space, Walter, together with the other initiates, younger than him, but everyone ready to walk through the threshold of adult life, receive the knowledge, and be bearers of an old power, today at risk of extinction.

Reflecting About Reflections

Walter

Now I am in university, in the city, learning about white people's perceptions and concept of a "good life." I'm learning things so as to make an intercultural dialogue possible. Along this line, when Juan and I were doing ethnobiological work about stingless bees, it was the bees who were connecting our two sides.

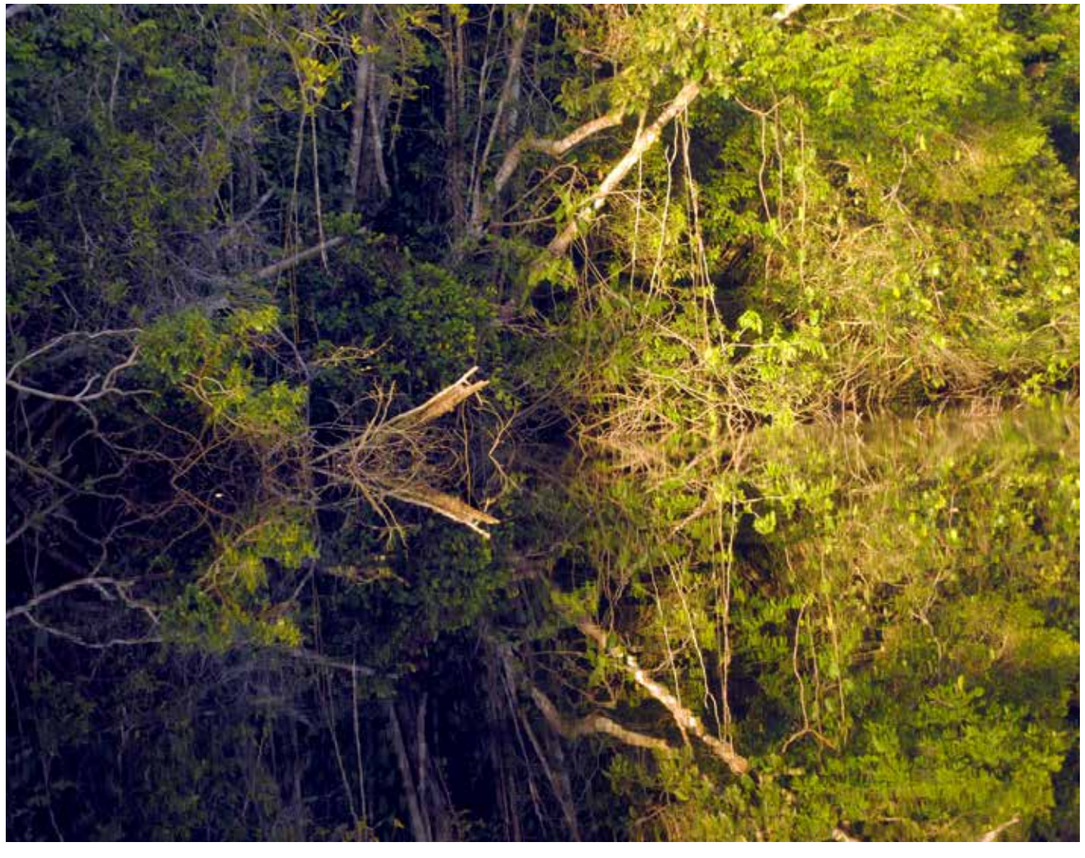
I think my life has moved within both worlds. Now I think I can understand my Indigenous world and am willing to do anything to preserve our traditional knowledge. But I also want to be able to move within the Western world because I feel that by knowing that world I will be prepared to better understand and help outsiders to recognize and validate us and our ways of life.

Juan

Today, Walter is studying biology at the Universidad Nacional de Colombia. I imagine he no longer has doubts about who he is. Maybe he understands that just writing or recording some cultural facts could not be the way to preserve them. It's necessary to live traditions to keep culture and territories alive. He turned and flowed in a different way than many of his young contemporaries in the Vaupés and had the bravery to row into his origins.

Thanks to the fortunate encounter with Walter, Natalia, Belarmino, and many other friends from the river and other corners of the world, I understand intercultural dialogue as a research methodology, giving shape to the idea of research serving the preservation of diversity, which is far more beautiful than the homogeneous. Beauty, goodness, and truth: these are the three principles guiding thoughts and actions, as I learned from great friends and healers. Moreover, I am recovering the sense of my own tradition, taking a historical and critical view of my origins, and reconciling ideas and spirituality. My life has taken a radical turn and navigates in turbulent, but illuminating, waters.

The river-mirror. Black waters are the result of organic substances from vegetation drained through plain sandy soils and are typical from mid and high Río Negro basin. Photo: J. M. Rosso, 2010



From Both Banks of the River

Our dialogue has expanded, in time and space, to this day. From time to time, we meet in places as diverse as Cartagena or Montpellier, trying to share the seeds that germinated after lots of conversations along the river, on the jungle trails, in the city, and in the mountains. There are many questions, thoughts, contradictions, and transformations on each side of the river. Each one tells and retells himself and the other, and some change emerges after that sifting.

As the black river reflects the jungle and the sky, we encounter in each other an image of ourselves and the strength to rebuild our own internal landscapes, revealing new ways to inhabit and being in the world.

Glossary

Despite the risk of oversimplification of concepts, we offer a short orientation on some of the terms used in the text:

Breo: combustible plant resin, sometimes collected by bees
Caapi: Banisteriopsis caapi (Malpighiaceae) vine
Casabe: kind of bread made with bitter cassava
Chagra: slash-and-burn crop field
Chicha: fermented manioc beverage
Cuyas: Crescentia cujete (Bignoniaceae) or *Lagenaria vulgaris* (Cucurbitaceae) vessels
Kumuã: plural of *kumú*; shamans or *payés*
Maloca: longhouse
Mambe: powdered preparation with coca and *Cecropia* sp. (Urticaceae) ashes for chewing
Manivara: some species of termites
Meliponiculture: stingless beekeeping
Niti dobea and *tõ dobea*: stingless bees genus *Melipona*
Pupuña: Bactris gassipaes palm
Yopo: in the area designates powdered tobacco for snuff; in other zones this name is given to *Anadenanthera peregrina* (Fabaceae)
Yuruparí: complex concept encompassing an essential or primordial force that creates the universe, contained in sacred instruments and celebrated in a very important ritual

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Walter Gabriel Estrada Ramírez *(Sioro in his language) hails from the Siriano and Bará Indigenous Peoples of the Colombian Vaupés. He's studying for a degree in biology at the Universidad Nacional de Colombia in Bogotá. He has experience in ornithology and botany and has done research in his own community on traditional knowledge of stingless bees.*

Juan Manuel Rosso Londoño *holds a PhD in entomology from the University of São Paulo, Brazil. He's a lecturer at the Universidad Distrital Francisco José de Caldas in Bogotá, Colombia and a field researcher in the Reserva Natural Hacienda El Paraíso. He has worked on rural, environmental, and sociocultural issues—almost always with bees buzzing around.*

Young Voices from the RUSSIAN ARCTIC

FOUR INTERVIEWS BY GALYA MORRELL

These stories are offered by Arctic Indigenous youths in the form of interviews with Arctic explorer, artist, and photographer Galya Morrell of Avannaa, an organization whose mission is to carry out "an eyewitness cultural expedition to the world's most isolated communities affected by climate and societal change." We are deeply grateful to Galya for making it possible for these amazing youth to share their voices with the world. And we're all the more grateful in that Galya did so under what turned out to be unexpected difficult circumstances—a clear testimony to her passionate commitment to the younger generations of Arctic Indigenous Peoples.

DREAMING OF A BEAUTIFUL WORLD WHERE I COULD LIVE ONE DAY

Katrina Trofimova

EVEN, RUSSIAN FEDERATION

For me, art is a mere instrument of survival. I was born in an Arctic village, where fathers and brothers were vanishing faster than ice. I was running away from violence, hiding in nature, and dreaming of a beautiful world where I could live one day.

On the left side of the Indigirka River, just below its confluence with the Allaikha, lies Chokurdakh, a little place, famous for the remains of prehistoric mammoths found in the area. Here, 18 years ago, Katrina was born.

There is no year-round road in and out of Chokurdakh. It's only in the winter, when temperatures plummet to –50 °C, that the Indigirka River becomes a frozen highway.

Katrina was born in Chokurdakh but didn't grow up there. Her family lived in an even more remote and less accessible place: Olenegorsk village, whose name literally means "a reindeer place." There was no running water there, or indoor toilet, not much to be found in the store and, again, no real road. Yet, Katrina says over and over again that this was the best place to grow up as a child and become an artist.

Above: "I dream about the time when animals and people can talk together again," says Katrina Trofimova, a young Even artist from Northern Yakutia. Artwork: Katrina Trofimova. Photo: 2018

We spent days outside, in nature. Dressed in reindeer furs from head to toe, like little penguins, we were invulnerable to the frost. When we got hungry, we simply fished and fried the catch on the snowy shore. Nature was my home.

My father, like everyone else in the village, was drinking, and when he got drunk he would get violent and we had to flee. Was I scared? Not really. We saw it as a hide-and-seek game, rather than "abuse." It was normal. Everyone lived just like that.

I loved my father and he loved me.

My father died from alcohol when I was 11. He left my mother with four children, and our life changed forever after his departure. Was I angry at him? No, I wasn't. Unlike city kids, we knew that life can be unfair and all you need to do is to stay human regardless of your surroundings.

I was running away from violence,
hiding in nature, and dreaming
of a beautiful world where
I could live one day.

And then my brother committed suicide. He was just 18. It was horrible, but again, it was normal. Boys often take their lives on the edge of the planet, all around the Arctic.

Some may say that my childhood was tragic, but as an artist and a human being, I see it as the best place, somewhere I would want to return to and live in again. I had love.

Since I was born in August, my mother gave me two names: Augustina-Katrina. She had read in the newspaper that it was getting trendy. Yet, in my village, I was the only one with two names.

I was born under the sign of the Lion, and I feel that Lion is my protector and guardian, both in life and in art. One thing I am learning from Lion is wisdom.

There are no lions in the Arctic, except for the one that lives in Katrina's heart. There are polar bears, Arctic wolves, and reindeer. Katrina talks to them and they talk back to her.

Some may say that my childhood was
tragic, but as an artist and a human being,
I see it as the best place, somewhere I would
want to return to and live in again.
I had love.

The Arctic world, and the world in general, is in equilibrium. It was conceived as such, and when humans try to alter it for greed or angst or jealousy, things get broken.

Inset: A graduate of the Arctica boarding school for Indigenous children of Siberia, Katrina is dreaming of a career as an ethno-designer. Bottom: Katrina Trofimova's artwork traveled with the Arctic Without Borders exhibition on the drifting ice of the North Pole in 2018. Photos: Galya Morrell, 2018

A polar bear is carrying the universe on his back, along with a reindeer and little Arctic Clowns—the humans who learned to live in unison with nature. Artwork: Katrina Trofimova. Photo: 2018

Katrina explains the meaning of her work: "We, Indigenous children of Siberia, are dreaming of meeting the Indigenous children of Canada and Greenland—maybe on the North Pole." Artwork: Katrina Trofimova. Photo: 2018

"Let's meet on the North Pole and become one family!"—the Arctica boarding school Indigenous students sing and dance on the snow near their school. Photo: Galya Morrell, 2018

Arctic Without Borders was filmed in Yakutia, Siberia, and has been shown at the North Pole in the A*rctic Without Borders* exhibition in April, 2018. Video: Galya Morrell, 2018 (http://bit.ly/35lLHff)

In many of my paintings, you will see a polar bear on top of the world and carrying a reindeer on its head. The polar bear ensures the balance, but the reindeer does too. And then you will see little Arctic clowns balancing on top of the reindeer. They are humans who live in unison with nature.

Our world is a boat that is sinking. As an artist, I see it as my mission to reveal some earthly things that are mostly unseen and look at them from the perspective of the Cosmos.

As an artist, I see it as my mission to reveal some earthly things that are mostly unseen, and look at them from the perspective of the Cosmos.

At the age of 14, Katrina entered the Arctica School, a boarding school for gifted Indigenous children in Neryungri, Yakutia, located in the very heart of Siberia. Arctica has been a partner of two of the expeditions of Avannaa, Arctic Without Borders, and Arctic Arts, and through this partnership Katrina's paintings ended up being showcased at the mobile exhibition of Indigenous artists at the North Pole in 2018. Finally, her bear was really standing on top of the planet with the reindeer on its head, carrying the little Arctic clowns high in the sky. On a drifting floe of ice, Katrina's works became stage decorations for the first children's play devoted to climate change and ocean pollution at the North Pole.

For more, see the website of Galya Morrell, Adventure Artist (http://galyamorrell.com/net_900.html).

***Katrina Trofimova** is an 18-year-old Even artist from Yakutia, Siberia. At the age of 14, she entered a boarding school for gifted Indigenous children in Neryungri, Yakutia. In 2018, her paintings were showcased at a mobile exhibition of Indigenous artists on the North Pole.*

YOU NEED TO CARRY THE TORCH OF LIGHT

D'ulus Mukhin

EVEN, RUSSIAN FEDERATION

"As a child," says D'ulus, "I was beaten at school on a daily basis. My classmates thought I was ugly. They did not like the shape of my eyes, and my ears were too big for them. I don't hate my bullies; I hug them and shake their hands because no matter how bad circumstances may be, you need to carry the torch of light. This is what makes you an artist and a human being."

Those eyes . . . No PhD in ophthalmology could explain with confidence what there is in them. There is something so deep, so beautiful, and so powerful that hard science simply couldn't capture it.

I remember the day when I first met D'ulus more than five years ago, on the shore of the Aldan River in the heart of Siberia. There stood a boy, a little Shaman—with his drum painted with little Reindeer-spirits—frozen in the middle of the white world. Like a sculpture, he was an integral part of an Arctic landscape—that is, until he started to drum-dance.

No matter how bad circumstances may be, you need to carry the torch of light. This is what makes you an artist and a human being.

His voice, dance, and movement flickered against the −50 °C cold, making me feel as if I were on fire. In a second he turned into a flint, a flint of the Arctic, creating sparks whose light can empower us to see not only outward but inward as well.

Above: Drum-dancing is the heart of life in Siberia. D'ulus Mukhin, the youngest of the Siberian shamans, is trying to awaken his sleeping settlement from amnesia. Photo: Galya Morrell, 2014

Krest-Khaldjay, a little settlement in Yakutia, Siberia, is a place where old traditions have been thriving since the collapse of the Soviet Union. D'ulus Mukhin is drum-dancing downtown, hoping to bring all generations together. Photo: Galya Morrell, 2014

Left: An acclaimed actor in Yakutian cinema, D'ulus Mukhin is bringing together traditions and modernity: "People in the villages eat raw meat, stores are empty. China will arrive here soon." Middle: D'ulus Mukhin got his first role in a Yakutian film after his portrait was exhibited at The Explorers Club in New York City. "I was born in a little village which has been forgotten by God and Government. We had to survive." Right: It is −30 ˚C, but in a week it will be −55 ˚C. That's winter in Siberia. Photos: Galya Morrell, 2014

For the next three days, I couldn't concentrate on anything but D'ulus. I made a series of portraits of him as we traveled together with his Even grandfather Egor Egorovich Egorov along the bank of the Aldan River. From his grandfather, a great Even hunter, I learned the incredible life story of D'ulus—a story of love, compassion, and acceptance. There is a vast mix of Arctic bloods running in his veins, making him a living embodiment of Siberia.

Meeting D'ulus and becoming his friend was a gift. But a greater gift has been watching D'ulus rise from his childhood to critical acclaim as one of the most talented young actors in Yakutia, who uses his unique voice to open up stories we're not used to hearing and to turn the spotlight on the communities he comes from.

In this film (http://bit.ly/33YxkgE), D'ulus plays the lead role of a stuttering boy, living during World War II in the heart of Gulag land.

Recently, D'ulus has been the face of an Arctic Without Borders exhibition in Hawaii. "I have a feeling that he can see through us, can see through mountains and rocks, can see hidden figures," said Aunti Puna, one of the most respected elders on Kauai. People of Kauai invited D'ulus to come and visit, be their guest, gather with elders and children, and be one of them.

"I want to be many things," says D'ulus, "not just an actor or a drum-dancer. As an artist, I know that my mission is to break stereotypes that we are born into. I learned a lot from Nature and from my grandparents, with whom I grew up. We didn't have comforts at our home, but I had plenty of love despite the fact I had been adopted as a child."

Below: At −48 ˚C, the young Yakutian dancers and singers in the small village of Krest-Khaldjay in the heart of Siberia are getting ready for a performance downtown. Photo: Galya Morrell, 2014

D'ulus Mukhin, the adopted son of an Indigenous family in Siberia, has become the engine of a dying village and the hope for its revival.
Photo: Galya Morrell, 2014

D'ulus Mukhin, 19, is an Even actor and drum-dancer from Yakutia, Siberia. Acclaimed in Yakutian cinema, he uses his unique voice to open up stories that we're not used to hearing. He says his mission is to break the stereotypes people are born into.

THERE ARE NO CORNERS IN THE TUNDRA

Khadry Okotetto

NENETS, RUSSIAN FEDERATION

I WAS BORN IN THE TUNDRA and grew up with the animals. My first language was the language of reindeer and of Arctic birds. I was raised by my grandparents, like everybody else here. I was a lucky guy. As an artist, I see my main mission in storytelling, in seeing the past and the future with an unobstructed eye.

Khadry was born in a chum, *a mobile hut made of reindeer skins, in the Yamal Peninsula tundra of northwestern Siberia. He grew up with the reindeer and moved across the vast land with his nomadic family. When he was seven, he was told that from now on he would have a different name, a Russian one. Two hours later, a helicopter landed next to the chum and took him to the residential school. There he was told to forget his native language and culture because it was too barbaric and uncivilized.*

> My first language was the language of reindeer and of Arctic birds.

In the tundra, we didn't have toys; instead we had little straws, patches of skin, and little rocks. When I was five, I was building little chums and little reindeer sleds and carving little wooden toys.

Above: "I was jailed in a Russian boarding school where they tried to make a Russian second-class citizen out of me—because I was a 'primitive Nenets.' I rebelled."
Photo: Galya Morrell, 2017

"In the civilized world, you have beds and walls. I miss my tundra every single second, just because the tundra does not have walls." Photos: Galya Morrell, 2017

We imitated the voices of animals and birds. We knew how to talk to them. Every night, after a long day, we went to bed and were telling stories.

We were never punished by our parents and grandparents and never had to stand in the "corner." There are no corners in the tundra.

In the residential school, storytelling at night was forbidden. As a punishment, we were pulled out in the corridor and were told to stand there in our underwear, or sometimes we were stripped naked. It was very embarrassing, and we couldn't understand what exactly we had done wrong.

In the residential school, storytelling at night was forbidden. As a punishment, we were pulled out in the corridor and were told to stand there in our underwear, or sometimes we were stripped naked. It was very embarrassing, and we couldn't understand what exactly we had done wrong.

"Reindeer dreams. I was born in the *chum* in the tundra, and the Reindeer was our God. Now I live in a big city, but I still follow his way." Photo: Galya Morrell, 2017

I missed the freedom of the tundra and continued storytelling and making art in a clandestine way.

Today I want to tell the story of my land. I know how to imitate birds, seals, walruses, and the Arctic wind, so I really don't need an interpreter. I want to make friends with people of Alaska, Nunavut, and Greenland because the Arctic should not have any borders. We are brothers—Arctic Without Borders!

I am a dancer, singer, sculptor, fashion designer, but most importantly, I am a storyteller.

The name of my latest artwork is "Arctic Jailed in the Golden Frame." It's the story of the birth of a man into an illusory world. Today we are all born into a cage of stereotypes.

I built a nest out of broken mirrors—they represent snow, ice, and our shattered illusions, and a little tent above it.

According to the Nenets, the universe consists of seven cardinal directions: North, South, East, West, up, down, and the center, which represents a human being.

From an orphanage in the Arctic to the heart of Moscow: Khadry Okotetto performing at the Schusev Museum of Architecture during the opening of Galya Morrell's Icebergs exhibition, brought in from Greenland. Photo: Galya Morrell, 2017

"We live in a 'broken life.' We don't remember the past and are blind to the future. I have broken the mirror into thousands of pieces to start the Circle of Life once again." Photo: Galya Morrell, 2019

"We are born naked. We are born with no chains and no entitlements. We all come to the surface from underneath the drifting ice. I live as a reminder to the people who forgot why they were born." Photo: Galya Morrell, 2019

Each person comes into the greater world equipped with his or her own individual world, and that world forms with the birth of a person.

To be truly born, you need to sever the chains of stereotyping. And that's the hardest part. I want to combine tradition and modernity in my art so that it may be understood not only by the members of my nomadic tribe, but also by anyone living far away from my land.

I want to combine tradition and modernity in my art, so that it may be understood not only by the members of my nomadic tribe, but also by anyone living far away from my land.

Khadry Okotetto, 24, is a Nenets artist from the Yamal Peninsula of northwestern Siberia. He was born on the tundra, moving across the land with his nomadic family. A dancer, singer, sculptor, and fashion designer, he sees himself above all as a storyteller.

I WANT TO KEEP THE PAST AND BRING IT INTO THE FUTURE

Vova Yadne

NENETS, RUSSIAN FEDERATION

I started carving when I was five. But even before that, I saw mammoth tusks in our Nenets tundra and played with them: they were my toys. I watched my father carving. I saw plain bones magically transforming into animals, humans, and spirits. I was intrigued by the magic of transformation. I wanted to become a magician myself. My brothers and sisters chose to become doctors. They loved our tundra, but they didn't want to continue the tradition. I don't judge them. But then I thought: I'm the only one left. I'm the youngest one. So I decided to stay and become an artist.

My brothers and sisters chose to become doctors. They loved our tundra, but they didn't want to continue the tradition. I thought: I'm the only one left. So I decided to stay and become an artist.

Vova Yadne was born in the Arctic. He learned this art from his parents, Inna and Victor Yadne, the famous Nenets carvers from the Yamal Peninsula. Today he gives workshops at Aboriginal fairs all across Russia, including in downtown Moscow, teaching children and their parents how to carve.

Above: Mammoth tusk is a hard material—just like life is in the Arctic. Vova started carving when he was an infant in the Nenets tundra. Photo: Galya Morrell, 2019

Vova Yadne is listening to the stories told by Greenlandic Inuit elder Ole Jorgen Hammeken, while working on a sculpture of a polar bear. Photo: Galya Morrell, 2019

Carving mammoth tusk is a difficult job. I tried to learn from Vova—with little success. Carving requires precision, patience, and, most importantly, knowledge of the world of nature. Vova knows this world better than anyone: he was born above the Arctic Circle.

Vova says that he became an artist when he saw his father carving a sculpture in which a polar bear is warming up a human "cub" frozen in a blizzard. It is said that encounters of this sort were common in the days when there was no boundary between animals and humans, when they shared the same home and lived in it like brothers and sisters. From that moment on, he wanted to tell stories long forgotten, yet so much needed in the modern world.

In winter, snow covers everything—it's a magical world, where everything is hidden under the white canvas. I guess everyone who was lucky enough to be

Thawing permafrost in the Nenets tundra is exposing more remains of woolly mammoths, which become sculptures in Vova's hands. Photo: Galya Morrell, 2019

Top: A baby woolly mammoth, traveling through the universe on an ice floe, is one of Vova's favorite subjects.
Bottom: Made out of mammoth tusk from the Nenets tundra and black wood, an Arctic goose looks for its way in a melting world.
Artwork: Vova Yadne. Photos: 2019

Vova Yadne is getting ready for the day in the *chum*, a portable nomadic home driven across the tundra by a team of reindeer. Photo: Galya Morrell, 2019

born here will become an artist. I am looking at the old huts, roads that lead to nowhere, elders walking up the streets, and birds frozen in the sky. My grandparents are living the nomadic life, and traveling with them by reindeer gives me a completely different perspective on the modern world.

I carve because I want to keep the past and bring it into the future. The mammoth tusks found in our land tell stories. I want to tell my own stories, which are deeply rooted in my heritage.

I carve because I want to keep the past and bring it into the future.

As I talk to Vova, he is working on his new narrative, "A Boy and His Fish." A boy catches a fish; he is happy and yet confused. He feels sorry for the fish, but his little dog is hungry and asks for food. What should he do? If he feeds the fish to his little dog, his dog will then love him, protect him, and one day may even save his life. On the other hand, if he lets the fish go, then he will get everything from the Universe, whatever he wishes for. The stars lying under the boy's feet remind him of eternity. This is a hard dilemma in the Arctic.

At some point, I too wanted to become a doctor like my brothers. But if everyone leaves, our culture and language will be gone much sooner than you think.

I don't have complete answers to all the questions. At some point, I too wanted to become a doctor like my brothers. But if everyone leaves, our culture and language will be gone much sooner than you think.

Vova Yadne *is a 16-year-old Nenets artist from the Yamal Peninsula of northwestern Siberia. He learned to carve mammoth tusks at age five from his parents, famous Nenets carvers. Today he holds carving workshops at Aboriginal fairs all across Russia.*

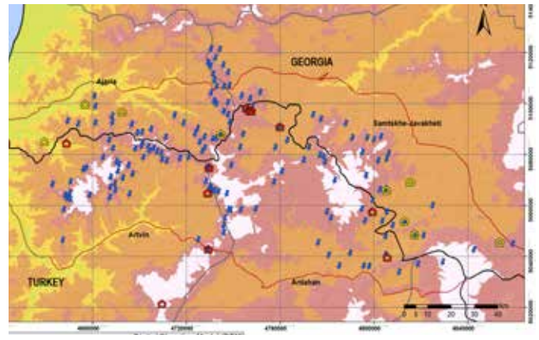
Ceren Kazancı
LAZ, GEORGIA/TURKEY
and Soner Oruç

Biocultural Diversity on the BORDER

THE YAYLAS OF THE WESTERN LESSER CAUCASUS

In 2016, we set off on a journey to the highlands (*yaylas*) of the Georgia–Turkey border region. We were very excited and eager to learn new things. We wanted to breathe some fresh mountain air, drink from pasture springs, and get in touch with the pastoralists of the region and observe their transhumance practices. Too, we wanted to learn the local names of wild plants and their usage. We did this because we had decided to make a long-term commitment to documenting the unique traditional plant knowledge of the transhumants and their life in harmony with nature before they disappear. This photo essay shares some of what we have seen, heard, smelled, and touched; what we have learned; and how we felt, over the last two years in the yaylas. This is the story of what the mountains have told us.

This is the story of what the mountains have told us.



Distribution of yayla settlements along the Georgia–Turkey border in the Western Lesser Caucasus region, a biodiversity hotspot that is also home to numerous cultures. Map: Peren Tuzkaya, 2016

The mountains of the Western Lesser Caucasus are part of one of the thirty-six biodiversity hotspots of the world. They are home to diverse plant species and high levels of endemism. Moreover, various ethnolinguistic groups—Turks, Georgians, Kurds, Lazi, Megrelians, Hemshins, Armenians, Russians, Azeris, Greeks, the Lom people, Lezgins, Kists, and Abkhazians—inhabit this region. Every year when the snow starts to melt, the meadows blossom with flowers and seem to call out to the herds. That is the time for transhumants to move with their herds from their villages to the highland plateaus, which they call "yayla" or "yeyla."

Above: The *şaşortkovan* is a beautiful type of crocus that sprays the *yaylas* with white every fall before the snows come. The name means "the flower that expels grandmothers," and it signals that it is time to leave the yayla! Photo: Soner Oruç, 2017

Men, in general, are busy with taking care of herds. Here, an Afghan shepherd is working due to shortage of people in Turkish yaylas. Photo: Soner Oruç, 2017

Some of them live in houses made of wood and stone; others, in tents. The vital figures in the yaylas are the women. These working women are called "şaşorti." They are responsible for all the housework, including milking and making traditional butter, yogurt, and cheese. Plant richness in the region provides plentiful natural resources for subsistence. This, in turn, has created a fund of wisdom about plant use, as food, medicine, and contruction materials. Every house smells like a mixed spruce (*nadzvi*) and fir (*sotchi*) forest. We couldn't leave any house without having tasted a wild vegetable dish (*phkhali* in Georgian) and wild berry marmelades or compotes. Nor were we allowed to forget the cheeses and creams, of course.

Every house smells like a mixed spruce (*nadzvi*) and fir (*sotchi*) forest.

Here it is said, "Many civilizations have arisen in these mountains. Many bridges have been constructed, many bridges

Inset: A Hemshin woman in Bilbilhan Yayla—the most multicultural area we met with in Turkey. Photo: Zeynep Türkmen, 2016

Left: *Polygonum carneum*—a culturally important plant in yaylas. People collect it and make it into a traditional soup that is eaten together for healing. Photo: Soner Oruç, 2017

Wooden yayla houses built on steep slopes at an elevation of 2400 m. Meydancık-Artvin, Turkey. Photo: Soner Oruç, 2017

demolished. Many houses have been built, many houses went to ruin." This land has witnessed many wars, migrations, and even exiles. Maybe that is why it is such a multicultural and multilingual region. The cultural and linguistic diversity of this area has enabled intensive knowledge and experience exchange among communities, which ended up creating a diverse pool of traditional knowledge about life. Yet the question of which came first—Did the region's biodiversity entice different cultures to settle here, or did it help create them?—seems impossible to settle. In any case, it is obvious that biocultural diversity has promoted resilience and collective adaptation to life in this land.

People in the yaylas are aware of the rich diversity of life around them. They appreciate the fresh air, the clean water they have, and the importance of the forest and meadows for their healthy life. They call themselves lucky. On the other hand, most of them recognize how the environment and the lifestyles that depend on it have dramatically transformed over the last thirty years. New wide roads, huge dams, climate warming, and out-migration of young people are the main challenges they have faced. During this period, the population of most of the yaylas has decreased by at least fifty percent on average.

Right: Traditional wooden yayla house with stone foundation built by the *şaşorti* (Paşa Aydemir), in Arsiyan Yayla, near Artvin, Turkey. Photo: Soner Oruç, 2017

While we were disappointed to see only one family, or none at all, in some yaylas, fortunately we have memories of more positive encounters to keep our hope alive. One morning, we met a group of people near our camping area. We learned that they had come

A Russian farmer drawing a traditional horse rake around the Turkish–Georgian border near Kartsakhi Lake. Photo: Soner Oruç, 2017

A mountain vegetable garden in Bagin Yayla-Artvin—a refuge for local seed diversity. Photo: Soner Oruç, 2017

A cow ornamented with a wooden good-luck charm (*uzani* tree sticks of *Viburnum* spp.) against the evil eye and illness. Photo: Soner Oruç, 2017

from a faraway big city and to their yaylas for two or three days for what they call (in Turkish) the Yayla Pancarı Festivali. Although they have given up their transhumance life, they told us that they have been organizing this festival for five years now. To witness this small but valuable step towards maintaining traditions and contact with nature made us very happy and hopeful.

In one of our other trips, we met with a shepherd called Mürsel eme in Balgöze Yayla-Ardahan. We enthusiastically admired his knowledge and perception of nature. He knows the names and various usages of a good many of the plant species in several languages. When we asked Mürsel eme, "How do you learn all this plant knowledge in different languages?" he said, "I have traveled over many lands. When I meet with any person, I like to learn something from him or her. When I do, I tie a knot. Later, whenever I untie that knot, I remember what I have learned from him or her."

> "When I meet with any person, I like to learn something from him or her. When I do, I tie a knot. Later, whenever I untie that knot, I remember what I have learned from him or her."

We consider ourselves lucky to meet with such people. We understand how vital it is to stay in contact with people who have provided us with information and continue to document their wisdom and stories. When we returned in 2017, we became concerned after we could not immediately find four of our interviewees from the first year. We wanted to see them again, say hello, and drink tea with them. Unfortunately, eventually we learned that two of them were sick and the other two had passed away! It was shocking for us. We have nothing to say except "thank you" for sharing your warmth, unique wisdom, and stories. God bless you, Atabek eme and Nazmiye aunty! This sad experience made us realize that one human being is a microcosm of a language, a culture, a body of wisdom—a world.

We always keep in mind the story of a weed species that the Lazi call kurum as a noteworthy example of the threats to biocultural unity. Although kurum was a main healthy food source for Lazi

Double good-luck symbols: a horse shoe and immortelle flower on the door of a yayla house in Goderdzi Yayla, Georgia. Photo: Soner Oruç, 2017

and Megrelians until the 1970s, nowadays it is almost impossible to find it being used in the area except as a birdseed. Its role as food for people has been erased from the land, along with the memories of which plant species are related to it, the process of its cultivation and harvest, and the bread, soup, rice, and other traditional dishes associated with it. Unfortunately, all the local words (in both Laz and Megrelian) related to this information have sunk without a trace.

Now when we go back to the yaylas, we want to tie our own knot to help remind us of the new things we have learned, in the hope that it will encourage us to "be the change we wish to see" on our lifelong journey of discovering the diversity of plants, cultures, and languages—the diversity of life.

Inset: *Kurum* (*Setaria italica*) display in Arhavi Dikyamaç Village Living Museum, Turkey. Traditionally an important food source for Lazi and Megrelian people, Kurum is used for only birdseed nowadays. Photo: Soner Oruç, 2016

A woman spinning wool from a local sheep breed called "Hemshin sheep" to knit booties for her grandchild. Bilbilhan Yayla, Turkey. Photo: Zeynep Türkmen, 2017

Inset: Ceren (right) interviewing Anete Merevishvili (middle) and Natela Kokoshvili (left) about traditional plant knowledge in Ude Yayla in Meskheti Region. Photo: Soner Oruç, 2017

This story first appeared as a web extra in *Langscape Magazine* 7(1), Summer 2018.

Ceren Kazancı *is a doctoral student in ecology at Ilia State University in Tbilisi, Georgia. She focuses on highland communities and is interested in the ethnobotany of transhumant pastoralists. As an Indigenous Laz, she seeks to unearth her traditional culture and contribute to its conservation and continuity.*

Soner Oruç *is an ornithologist. He loves to be in nature and make observations about people and nature. He travels through Anatolia and Georgia recording traditional wisdom. Together, Soner and Ceren have been making documentaries about ethnobotany and also produce homemade plant-based products.*

A child beading wild strawberries (*marts'q'vi, çiğelek*) for later eating in Adjara, Georgia. At one time, it was common for each şaşorti to bring a child with her to the yaylas. He or she helped the grandmother and experienced the culture with her. Photo: Soner Oruç, 2017

Marine Biodiversity and CULTURAL DIVERSITY

Lisba Yesudas and Johnson Jament
MUKKUVAR, INDIA

THE COASTAL COMMUNITIES OF TRIVANDRUM, KERALA, INDIA

Marine biodiversity and cultural diversity are deeply interwoven in the coastal fishing communities of Trivandrum, Kerala, South India. This is the story of our ancestors, the story of our fellow community members; it's the story of our life! It's about our connection with the sea, the coast, and the marine environment.

We would like to tell you here how our forefathers have been safeguarding that environment and its bountiful resources. We would also like to talk about how our brothers and sisters, elders, and today's "educated" people are feeling compelled to follow the path of "modern developers" who have little concern for the biodiversity, the rich cultural heritage, and the environment that has sustained us through the centuries. And we would like to emphasize the rapid industrialization that leads to the destruction of social identity, culture, and marine wealth, and even of the livelihood of the people who inhabit these communities. We wonder why some of our highly educated community members are reluctant to speak the coastal language, take little or no pride in their cultural heritage and ancestry, or why they aren't acknowledging, supporting, and disseminating the coastal communities' efforts to conserve the marine biodiversity of the area.

There's little awareness about the biocultural diversity of the coast. In particular, politicians, academics, policy makers, and conservationists in India have shown minimal interest in the biodiversity of the sea and the cultural practices of the coastal communities. The coastal people are one of the most excluded, marginalized, and discriminated communities in India's most socially developed and literate state of Kerala. Our mother tongue—our coastal language, *Kadappuram Bhasha*—isn't considered to be worthy of recognition. Traditional fishermen's economic contributions aren't valued or promoted. Existing systems have provided limited

Above: Coastal community's rendezvous with their destiny. Fishermen at Valiathura beach are getting ready for their daily fish catch, while other community members enjoy the evening beauty of the beach. Photo: Robert Panippilla, 2013

A day of happiness for fishermen. Fishermen at Valiathura have big smiles on their faces when they're able to amass their environmentally friendly fishing wealth. Photo: Robert Panippilla, 2013

initiatives to protect marine diversity despite the existence of a marine biodiversity register, which coastal people influence and participate in. In the official documentation and recordings of traditional knowledge, folklore, music, and songs, the coastal communities' representation is minimal. In school textbooks, the coastal communities don't even exist; there isn't a single story or text about fishermen's lives and culture. When there are discussions about environmental issues, the rich marine environment and ecosystems are often excluded.

In this context, it's important to stress the interconnection of the coastal communities with the marine environment and its ecosystems. Fishing in the deep sea is the main occupation of the people of this region. The fishermen use a range of nets, hooks, and other fishing techniques to catch a variety of fish species along with other aquatic animals. For surface-level fishing, netting is the principal method applied, while a line-fishing technique is used to catch the fish that dwell on the ocean bed. All these fishing techniques are based upon knowledge of the fish and their behavior, with an appreciation of their life span, migration, foraging, and habitat. These traditional methods don't involve destructive fishing practices, such as bottom trawling over vulnerable habitats. A sustainability principle used by these traditional harvesters of the sea is "do not kill fish eggs and marine ecosystems." Keeping to this principle, they don't own trawling boats. The purpose of their existence isn't making a profit, but rather maintaining a sustainable living and enjoying the beauty of freshness.

A variety of fish ready for cooking. An abundance of fresh fish is part of the Trivandrum fishermen's daily diet. Photo: Johnson Jament, 2014

An environmentally friendly cooking style. A young lady, Judith Antony, is barbecuing fish (*meen pollikkal*) using locally available coconut tree resources. Photo: Johnson Jament, 2014

The wealth and health of the coastal communities is dependent upon their daily fish catch. That is their main source of income and sole economic activity; women are mostly engaged in direct fish selling and are responsible for making fish accessible for domestic use, hotels, and tourists. The community feels a sense of pride and satisfaction when they are able to catch adequate quantities of fish, and people become despondent and sad when their daily catch doesn't meet their needs. In their daily conversations they discuss the variety of fishes and different ways of catching them, and engage in debates about what type of fishing technique is appropriate for particular species in a given period of time. Fishing isn't only their occupational activity, but also a cultural activity.

Eating habits and the menu of the coastal communities change daily, depending on what's caught by the fishermen. They eat more food, and with greater variety, when supplies are plentiful, and eat less when the fishing is poor. Fisherwomen are traditionally in charge of the daily recipes and cuisines. Nutrition is generally good because of cooking and eating fresh fish and a variety of species. The health and life expectancy of the fishing community fluctuates due to their eating habits and fishing-related activities. The diet is full of delicious food with fish for two or three meals a day, mixed with locally produced tapioca and red rice imported from other parts of Kerala. Coastal communities organize marriages and commemorate their important days consistently with the availability of fish catches. These are people whose lifestyles are highly influenced by their engagement with marine biodiversity.

Our mother tongue—our coastal language, Kadappuram Bhasha—isn't considered to be worthy of recognition. Traditional fishermen's economic contributions aren't valued or promoted.

People also have a high regard for religious ceremony, and before they begin their fishing activities, they pray, "Give us today our daily bread." Depending on what situations they encounter on the sea, they say, *Kenkadeviamma* (local pronunciation of Gangadevi amma) *kappathunke*, meaning "Mother Goddess of Ganga, please protect us." The last day of the week is observed as Sabbath (which is Sunday in their context), a day of rest in which they abstain from going out to fish. They become stronger or weaker in their belief system depending on their daily fish catch and direct experiences at sea. That is, their beliefs are strengthened when their catch is good and sea going is easy, and weakened when the catch isn't good and they encounter trouble at sea.

Seeking *Kadalamma's* (Mother Sea's) blessing. A group of fishermen at Karumkulam beach getting ready to cross the sea for fishing. Photo: Johnson Jament, 2014

Preparing the nets for their daily "bread." A group of fishermen at Karumkulam beach are gearing up for the day's fishing venture. Photo: Johnson Jament, 2014

They may be seen lighting candles as thanksgiving and participating in religious activities and festivals when the fishing is abundant. When they have difficult experiences at sea and the catch isn't adequate, they express their anger and grief and blame their god for not responding to their needs and wants, the same way as they do when they have quarrels with their neighbors and other community members.

In the language of the coastal community, the sea is called *kadal*, and affectionately *kadalamma* (Mother Sea/Ocean). Hundreds of names of marine species, ecosystems, and habitats are found in the local language. With these names, it's possible to identify diversity between species and diversity within species. It's possible to document the extinction of species through recordings of the coastal language. *Vattakkanni, elappaatti, naviya kathi* are examples of endangered fish species. When a word for a given species disappears from the language, this suggests that the species itself has disappeared. The word *paru* is used for marine ecosystems and habitats. There are hundreds of such parus along the Trivandrum coast. The word *cheru* refers to a muddy area underwater. According to the fishermen's traditional knowledge, this is a type of fish habitat. And so on. The language embraces the richness of marine biodiversity.

By engaging in sustainable and environment-friendly fishing activities, coastal communities play a major role in the conservation of the marine environment of the Trivandrum coast. People hesitate allowing the use of nets that cause the destruction of fish eggs, fish hatchlings and other animals, and the local ecosystems. It's their unwritten law. They are against the extinction of fish and plant species and ecological destruction. Whenever dangerous activities come to light, they protest and discourage their fellow fishermen. It's their cultural value system.

By engaging in sustainable and environment-friendly fishing activities, coastal communities play a major role in the conservation of the marine environment.

In this way, biocultural diversity is their lives, traditions, histories, upbringing, and existence—ultimately, their very freedom. Their evolution as a community is linked to their cultural diversity, which is intrinsic to marine resources and their conservation and protection. The economic contributions and daily life interactions of coastal communities are dependent upon marine biodiversity, as are their socio-cultural resources, including their language, culture and history. Any change, displacement, or destruction of these would lead to the further exclusion, discrimination, and marginalisation of these communities.

In recent years, especially since the liberalization of the Indian economy in the 1990s, lots of changes have been happening in terms of marine biodiversity and the cultural diversity of the coastal communities. First, in place of different kinds of nets for catching various types of fish, a small group of fishermen has started taking advantage of *valiya vala* "big nets," which are able to catch all kinds of fishes, including those that haven't yet reached maturity. The operation of mechanized boats in the place of *tholava* (traditional boats made of locally available bamboo) has increased. *Adakkam kolli vala*, literally meaning "net killing all," has made its appearance. Fishfinder technology has been adopted in place of people's own insights, *kaniyam (kanicham)*.

Second, some community members have become negative to their coastal language, and show a reluctance to speak their mother tongue. More and more people are shifting to the dominant languages, English and Malayalam. The medium of instruction in schools is either Malayalam or English, and these languages become a prevalent social reality. The education system discourages local people from continuing their association with the sea and the marine environment. Educated people within the communities feel proud of their children not having experience with the sea, the coast, and those play and leisure activities traditionally associated with the beach. Slowly, we are going through the "extinction of experience" of the natural environment.

Third, coastal development has drastically changed the coastline. The shoreline north of Trivandrum has changed so much that there's now less and less beach, while the south end has gained more and more. Ecosystems change, and marine health becomes vulnerable. The State Government of Kerala dreams of developing a Vizhinjam Trans-shipment Container Port project that proposes to dredge five kilometers of the sea, build artificial sea berths, and displace the coastal communities. The Central Government of India works with the Meenakumari Commission Report, which recommends that large foreign fishing ships be allowed in to exploit the fishermen's traditional fishing area.

The biocultural diversity of the coastal communities, their changing attitude toward it, and their own efforts to continue their interconnection with the sea and marine environment all have educational implications. Firstly, biocultural diversity should be one of the basic features of the education system in India. It could be part of the primary school environmental curriculum that is already in place. The present curriculum should adapt to meet the needs of the communities and promote useful life lessons. There should be provisions to exemplify the coastal communities' oral traditions, histories, music, games, health practices, and many other aspects of their cultural diversity. By including the fishermen's traditional marine knowledge, it would be possible to make the curriculum relevant to the communities' socio-economic and environmental contexts. The existing constructivist model of teaching and learning should be focused on discussing fishermen's contributions in the area of biocultural diversity and why fishing is no longer considered a respectable or desirable occupation. Instilling marine knowledge and promoting opportunities for developing the communities' cultural practices should be a priority for the education of these communities.

Secondly, educational reforms should acknowledge and appreciate coastal communities' efforts to conserve and protect marine resources through their environmentally friendly and sustainable fishing activities and their close association with the sea and its ecosystems. It's important to build upon already established sustainable practices in these areas. These practices must be widely recognized, encouraged, and disseminated. Rewards and promotions should be part of this process. Higher education institutions in India and specifically in Kerala should encourage more research studies in the field of marine biodiversity and cultural diversity of the coastal communities and facilitate documentation of their traditional cultural knowledge of the sea, water, climate, fish species and other animals, and marine ecosystems.

Thirdly, any formal education systems should strive to keep the trust of the local communities and work collaboratively with them to make the idea of biocultural diversity a reality. This would create an opportunity for educators and other stakeholders in the education sector to work with traditional and Indigenous communities. Communities feel positive about continuing their conservation efforts, keeping their language and other cultural resources, and transmitting these to future generations, and this attitude needs to be reinforced and supported. This would also encourage alternative development models such as sustainable economies and Indigenous solutions for world problems. In the case of India, it would bring more national integration and promote respect and inclusion of the neglected sectors of society.

A lone boy at the beach. Jerry, the boy, is one of a decreasing number of children who use the beach for their daily physical activities and play.
Photo: Johnson Jament, 2014

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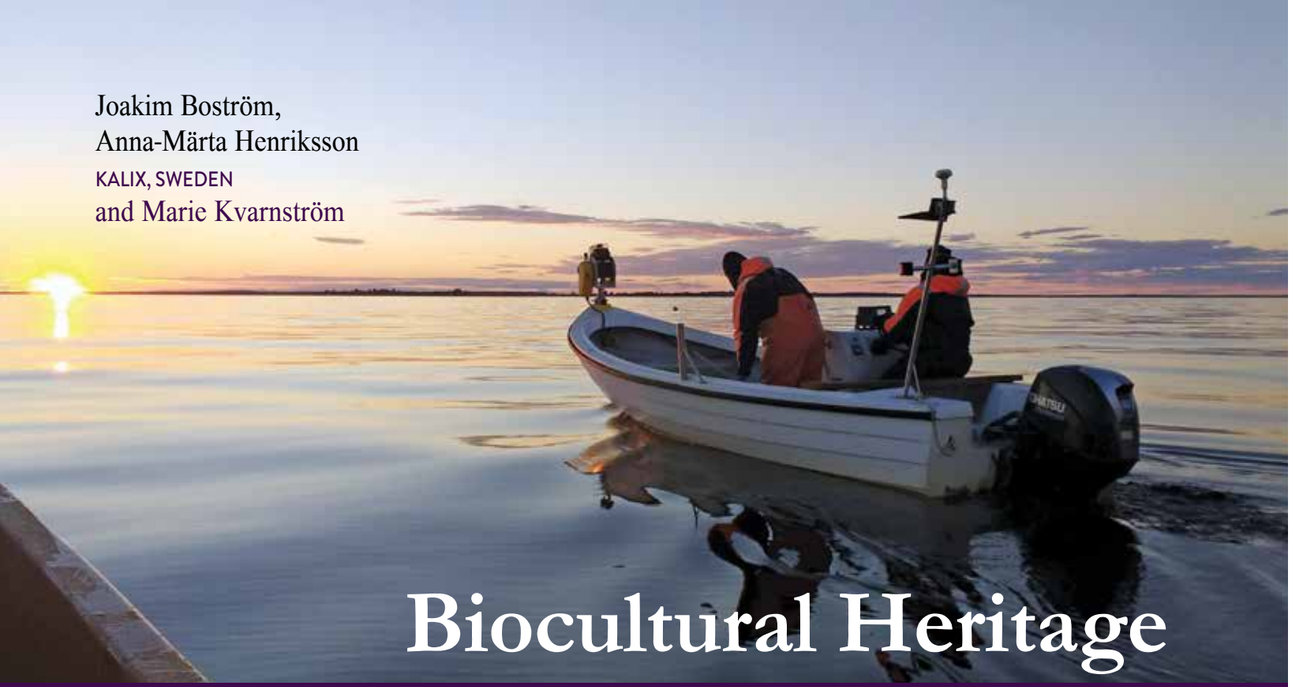
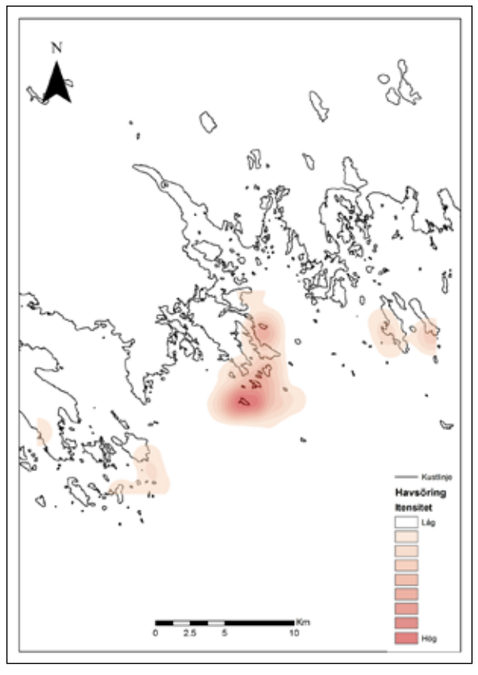
Joakim Boström,
Anna-Märta Henriksson
KALIX, SWEDEN
and Marie Kvarnström



Biocultural Heritage

THE FISHING VILLAGES OF THE FAR NORTH OF SWEDEN



In the villages of the Kalix archipelago in the far north of Sweden, the community-based organization Kustringen is aiming to conserve local and traditional knowledge, practices, and innovations related to fishing and archipelago life in general. The archipelago lies in the Bothnian Bay, the northernmost part of the Baltic Sea. Learning from our elders and bringing their knowledge to future generations is a lifeline and a great part of the identity of our small communities. New laws and regulations challenge the possibilities of carrying on our valued traditional fishing practices, which are closely linked to our identity and quality of life. If we lose this, part of our soul and our connectedness as communities may be lost. Our struggles to get a degree of local governance have long been neglected by the regional and national authorities. We ask ourselves what it is that makes "scientific" knowledge more accepted and valued than local, traditional knowledge that builds on the communities' experiences, observations, and practices from our lives in the archipelago's landscapes for hundreds, even thousands, of years.

For the five Kalix villages of Påläng, Ryssbält, Storön, Nyborg, and Ytterbyn, the traditional customs and practices of our ancestors in living from sea and land are still very much part of our lives. In the past, fishing was a must for life in these villages. The fish, together with seal hunting and small-scale farming, provided the means for people to live quite well. The knowledge of the fishers of the past, inherited over many generations, about where and when to fish, how the different fish species moved with the seasons, how to read wind, sea, and ice, and much more was almost inexhaustible.

Above: Jenny Lundbäck and Joakim Boström fishing at sunrise in the Bothnian Bay. Photo: Roland Stenman, 2016
Bottom Left: Map of areas with high and low intensity of by-catches of sea trout as documented by the local Kalix fishers in Kustringen. Kustringen proposes that the fishing prohibition could be lifted in the areas with few sea trout by-catches without affecting the sea trout population.

Wherever you go in the coastal villages along the Bothnian Bay, you find traces of fishing. Some are historical remnants with a nostalgic or museum status, but many ports, fishing camps, sheds, and boats are still in use today, similar to those used for centuries. Near the fishing villages along the coast, you can often find stone mazes, in the local language called trombolistáns, some of them dating from the thirteenth century. Their use is surrounded by mystery and speculation; maybe they were used in ceremonies to appease weather, winds, fishes, or gods.

While the fishers of the Bothnian Bay were mostly men, the women in the fisher families took care of the catch, an important component of which was herring. They and their children gutted the herring, and later their husbands made hard salted or fermented herring, important food for the winter.

> The knowledge of the fishers of the past, inherited over many generations, about where and when to fish was almost inexhaustible.

Over the last half-century, the fisher families discovered that roe from the small fish vendace could be sold as a delicacy. The women developed a process for preparing the roe, which had to be cleaned from blood and scales. This was a tricky business—each fish yields only three to five grams of the precious roe. The women realized that one has to flush the roe quickly with a lot of water and then let it dry without damaging the tiny granules. They tested different materials for the holders to dry the roe and eventually found a kind of nylon that had the right structure. The next problem for the women to solve was to determine the best temperature to dry the roe. Those experiments still form the basis for preparing the vendace roe from Kalix today, which is sold at prices of up to 3800 SEK (Swedish kronor) per kilo. Since 2010, Kalix Löjrom, the caviar of Kalix, has been accorded the Protected Designation of Origin (PDO) status issued by the European Union as a geographical indication of the origin of traditional specialty products; it is the only Swedish product with PDO status. Kalix Löjrom is often served at royal dinners and at the Nobel Prize banquets. The roe preparation is still very much a traditional family business, and it is common to have three generations of family members working together to produce this delicacy.

Brothers Sven and Henning Olofsson from Storön, Kalix, on a seal hunt in the southern part of Bothnian Bay in the 1930s.
Photo: Gustaf or Knut Olofsson, 1930s

The know-how of when, where, and how to fish in the Kalix archipelago has been transferred from generation to generation. In this photo from the 1950s, Einar and Sven Olofsson have caught so much vendace that they had to skip a day of moose hunting to take care of the catch. Photo: Jan-Olav Innergård, 1950s

Fishing in the archipelago is still a vital part of life for most people, as is being out in the forests to pick berries and mushrooms or hunt moose or small game. The villages' fishing waters are not divided between individual owners but shared in community associations. Each fishing rights holder gets to use the different fishing spots according to a system unique to each village, which can be based on auctioning of spots for limited periods or on rotational systems.

> The roe preparation is still very much a traditional family business, and it is common to have three generations of family members working together to produce this delicacy.

Two voices summarize what fishing means to people in the villages:

"Fishing gives an incredible sense of freedom. Being out at sea and catching fish that can be gutted, salted, and grilled over the fire brings peace to the soul. We have lived from fish since times immemorial, and the fish are in our genes. Some words that summarize its importance: freedom, joy, friendship, happiness, fatigue. The list can be made long and includes joy, hard work, and sorrow."

> "Fishing gives an incredible sense of freedom. Being out at sea and catching fish that can be gutted, salted, and grilled over the fire brings peace to the soul."

"The significance of fishing can, to some extent, be compared to being able to go out and pick berries or mushrooms in the woods, to be able to retrieve resources from nature to the household. It is our culture, our past and present, it is something that gives us identity and togetherness. Being able to fish for the household needs also has an economic aspect, and it is environmentally more sustainable

Joakim Boström (forefront) removing fish from a net while out fishing with community members Roland Nyman and Sten Hellman. Joakim learned from his grandfather the best locations to fish, the best methods for fishing, and the signs and symbols that can be seen in nature. Photo: Clare Benson, 2016

compared to buying fish in the store, which has been transported long distances."

In recent decades, new challenges to maintaining our biocultural riches have emerged for fishers in the Kalix archipelago. They are of two kinds: new fishing regulations and the growing number of seals.

In 2006, a Swedish law was enacted that prohibits fishing in Bothnian Bay waters less than three meters deep between April 1st and June 10th and between October 1st and December 31st. The purpose was to protect the sea trout population in the area. Suddenly, fishing was prohibited in large areas where it had been a vital part of the local household economy and way of life for many generations. The traditional artisanal fishing for whitefish, perch, and pike during spring and autumn is now almost extinct, since the prohibition periods coincide with the main traditional fishing periods.

And then in 2009, the European Union introduced a law that bans all selling of fish and fish products from the sea without a professional fishing license. This means that our community members in the Kalix archipelago can no longer sell surplus fish unless we acquire a professional fishing license, a process which is costly, complicated, and uncertain of approval.

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The other "new" challenge is the return of the seals. For centuries in the past, seals were an important source of food, pelts, and oil for local communities in Kalix. Even today, there are people from the older generation who can tell stories about seals and seal hunting and share their traditional knowledge about how to use the seal as a valuable resource, and this is very much part of the local intangible biocultural heritage.

During the 1960s, the seal populations in the Baltic Sea declined sharply as a result of contamination by industrial chemicals such as PCBs and DDT. The seals became almost extinct, and in 1974 seal hunting was banned. Over time, the waters of the Baltic Sea became gradually less polluted, and in the 1990s the seal populations started to increase again. Today, there are so many gray seals (*Halichoerus grypus*) and ringed seals (*Pusa hispida*) in the Bothnian Bay that traditional fishing with nets is virtually impossible in many areas. The seals gather around our boats as soon as we lower the nets into the water, and they immediately start eating the fish from the nets. The local communities have alerted researchers and politicians that there is an acute problem with the unmanaged seal population. What will happen if the seal populations continue with the same explosive rate of growth? Will there be diseases, famine, or fish stocks that collapse?

The knowledge and storytelling around fishing, and the possibility to fish for the household and for parts of the family income, have joined people together for many generations.

As a result of the recent challenges, many people in the coastal communities are experiencing a loss of connection with their local landscape and seascape and a loss of quality of life. The knowledge and storytelling around fishing, and the possibility to fish for the household and for parts of the family income, have joined people together for many generations. As a response, fishers in the villages Påläng, Ryssbält, Storön, Nyborg, and Ytterbyn have formed a local association, Kustringen (the Coastal Ring) and started to work together to document local knowledge and seek a dialogue with the local, regional, and national authorities on possibilities for local comanagement of our local fisheries to preserve our biocultural heritage.

In a World Wildlife Fund-sponsored mapping project by Kustringen, around forty local fishers mapped our collective knowledge about fishing. We provided information on fishing sites, species abundance, seasonality of fishing, and so on based on memory and documentation from the 1950s until the present. We also collected photos and stories related to fishing. One important result is a map of areas where by-catches of sea trout have been frequent and areas where little or no trout have been caught over the years. In the areas having no by-catches of sea trout, we propose that the fishing ban be lifted and that Kustringen be given the mandate to provide data on the status of fish stocks over time. The professional coastal fishers in the area have regional self-management of fishing quotas, in consultation with the Swedish Agency for Marine and Water Management and supported by research done by the Swedish University of Agricultural Sciences. This could be a useful model for the authorities to consider in development of similar comanagement for the small-scale artisanal and household fishers in the Kalix archipelago.

Axelia Henriksson, the granddaughter of Anna-Märta Henriksson and a new-generation fisher. Photo: Anna-Märta Henriksson, 2014

Kustringen has tried to initiate dialogue with local, regional, and national authorities, but their response has not been very encouraging so far in spite of several meetings held. The members of Kustringen believe that our government authorities and academics need to learn to meet the local natural resource users as equals, take into account our local and traditional knowledge, and listen to what we have to say. They need to realize that laws, paragraphs, statistics, and research are not always the only ways to create long-term sustainable management of biodiversity and ecosystems. What local resource users have to say is not schemes to maximize personal benefits, but knowledge that has enabled people to live and manage their natural resources in a sustainable way for many generations. We continue to organize workshops where government representatives and scientific organizations are invited to meet with the local communities for mutual exchange of knowledge. In spring 2018, Kustringen invited seal researchers and county administrative board representatives to discuss options to deal with the current problems associated with growing seal populations. Some seal researchers have started to listen to the local fishers, which is a good sign.

Over the years, Kustringen has collaborated with the Swedish Biodiversity Centre at the Swedish University of Agricultural Sciences. Here, a few researchers were mandated by the government to support the continued use of traditional ecological knowledge for the benefit of future generations. Their work is linked to a growing international recognition of the importance of traditional ecological knowledge, and they find Kustringen's work very valuable.

Government authorities and academics need to learn to meet the local natural resource users as equals, take into account our local and traditional knowledge, and listen to what we have to say.

Some of the villages also have their own community initiatives for dialogue. Every year in July, the village of Storön celebrates the Day of the Fish, and in 2018 Storön's community center organized a panel discussion about fishing traditions and the rules that have hampered the use and transfer of local traditional knowledge. The moderator was a well-known Swedish TV journalist, born in the area, and there was panelists from fishers' organizations, as well as politicians and researchers.

Local and traditional knowledge should be an important part of life and identity for every society. Passing on such knowledge unites people, land, and sea and makes us feel at home.

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Joakim Boström *is a navigating officer on an ice-breaker in Bothnian Bay, the northernmost part of the Baltic Sea. He's chairman of the community-based organization Kustringen and an active household fisher.*

Anna-Märta Henriksson *was born and lives on Storön in the Kalix archipelago. She is alderman of Storön and is interested in fishing and local culture, working with holders of* ***local and traditional knowledge.***

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Can the Cenotes BE SAVED?

Text and photos
Yolanda López-Maldonado
YUCATEC MAYA, MEXICO

"This is the account of how all was in suspense, all calm, in silence; all motionless, still, and the expanse of the sky was empty. . . . There was nothing standing, only the calm water, the placid sea, alone and tranquil. Nothing existed."

—Popol Vuh

It's rainy season in Yucatán, in the south of Mexico. For more than eight months, a great portion of the rain that falls will infiltrate and reach the Maya soils, and sometimes, a stream will disappear into a cave or *cenote*, recharging the groundwater aquifer. Along with caves and springs, *cenotes* (from the Mayan word *d'zonot*, "sinkhole") are types of karst—a landscape underlain by eroding limestone. Cenotes can vary in size from a tiny individual sinkhole to whole interconnected cave systems and can be found both on land and inshore marine areas. In principle, all cenotes in Yucatán are connected; however, it's possible that, due to sedimentation, some cenotes are now isolated because ducts have become filled.

Cenotes are the home of important endemic species. They feed springs and support wetlands, and they provide our water needs. Nevertheless, some environmental problems (such as pollution and biodiversity loss) particularly affect the Ring of Cenotes—a globally important groundwater system, now designated as a World Heritage site by the United Nations Educational, Scientific, and Cultural Organization (UNESCO)—that was created by the Chicxulub meteorite impact sixty-five million years ago. (This is the event thought to have caused the extinction of Earth's dinosaurs.) Despite these problems, Indigenous peoples search for personal and spiritual meaning in many cenotes of Yucatán.

Most of the rural communities in Yucatán depend, directly or indirectly, on groundwater resources derived from more than 2,000 cenotes. Beekeepers, farmers, Maya elders, women, children—all of them are the direct local resource users and are also responsible for taking care of and protecting the cenotes.

Above: Tranquil water typifies the cenotes of Yucatán, Mexico. 2014

> Cenotes are the home of important endemic species; they feed springs and support wetlands; and they provide our water needs.

Sacred natural sites are areas of land or water with special spiritual significance to people and communities and may include mountains, hills, forests, groves, rivers, lakes, lagoons, islands, springs, and caves. They're the oldest protected areas of the planet, constitute biodiversity hotspots, and are useful for conservation. Sacred natural sites are, however, subject to a wide range of threats, including culture change, which can lead to loss of the spiritual values that safeguard them. Protecting sacred sites is especially critical in Indigenous communities, as these places constitute sources of cultural identity.

Yucatán has many places of cultural and environmental significance, most of them water related, including traditional sacred natural sites such as springs, landscapes. and caves, as well as human-made monuments. The Maya, one of the ancient cultures that developed in the region, have a particular worldview about cenotes as a source of freshwater.

As an academic woman, I learned through science that freshwater represents an important life-sustaining resource. As a Maya woman, I was taught about the importance and the sacredness of life, and this has instilled in me an extreme curiosity about and feeling of awe for nature. Born and raised in Yucatán and with a Maya background, I directed my efforts to caring about what surrounds me: water.

> As an academic woman, I learned that freshwater is a life-sustaining resource. As a Maya woman, I was taught about the importance and sacredness of life.

Due to the universality of water, I strongly believe that water isn't simply a question of science, since there's enough evidence of the importance of water management to past and present societies—of which the Maya of Yucatán are one example. The Maya developed a complex system of water management dependent on water collection and storage devices. The hydraulic system was tailored to local biophysical conditions and adaptively engineered to the evolving needs of a growing population. But, most importantly, my cultural group has a particular cosmology, a worldview, and traditional ecological knowledge about water—all of which have been handed down through generations.

My interest in cultural issues is closely linked to my background. I grew up in a small community in Yucatán, where dramatic ecological, social, and cultural changes have been taking place ever since the Spanish conquest. These events played a major role in accelerating the assimilation of Maya people into the "non-Indigenous population," which included a decrease in the use, continuity, and preservation of our traditions.

From a young age, I regularly visited cenotes with my mother. Some days the weather was so warm that we were ready to enter and swim in the cenotes located around my community. Before entering the cave, however, we had to ask for permission from the spirits living in there. We did this every time we visited the cenotes. For me, the exchange of cultural information and histories with my mother re-affirmed my identity and was an empowering, as well as a grounding, experience. Since those times, my vision is to support the conservation of cenotes by respecting Maya wisdom.

> For me, the exchange of cultural information and histories with my mother re-affirmed my identity and was an empowering, as well as a grounding, experience.

Over the years, I also realized that the importance of the water to the Maya is simple: everything is related to water and the underworld, where supernatural beings live, where the souls of the dead go, and where ancestors reside. Historically, practices and culture were oriented toward water in general and rainfall in particular. Archaeological sites with such evidence are signs of long-term spiritual connection and cultural importance. This suggests that the cenotes in the Maya area were culturally valued and respected in the past.

For the contemporary Maya of Yucatán, the situation is different. Cenotes are commercially used primarily for tourism and agriculture, despite the evidence everywhere of the ancient sacredness of groundwater in the Yucatán. Many of the cenotes contained ancient Maya pottery, fire pits, and human and animal remains below the water table, but some of them are now contaminated and degraded. Sacredness appears to be understood by some of the population, but certainly not all. Some believe that cenotes are the abode of deities and spirits and understand that cenotes were primarily used for rituals in the past. Colonization brought with it disempowerment and dispossession of Indigenous Peoples, making it difficult for them to relate to their environment.

As a way to support Indigenous Peoples and their community initiatives to revitalize their culture, preserve traditional knowledge, and safeguard the future of cenotes as important cultural and spiritual places, I decided to enroll in a PhD program and started a research project on cenotes in 2013. PhD projects about hydrology can be based on scientific papers and adopt many forms, but most of them tend to exclude the cultural values and knowledge of Indigenous people. From the beginning, I felt that embarking on a PhD was an opportunity to give voice to my ancestors. This motivated me to develop and build relationships with local Indigenous communities in Yucatán and to take part

Local wells (*pozos*) are used to extract water from the cenotes. 2014

Sacred cenote in Chichen Itza, Yucatán. 2017

A Maya elder during our visit to the cenotes. 2014

Bringing Indigenous knowledge back into the hands of my community. 2015

in a process of coproduction of knowledge, so that I could share the knowledge and skills that I learned during my PhD studies throughout community events, workshops, and activities with youth. This was a pivotal moment in my journey to becoming a guardian of our sacred natural sites.

My work was guided by Maya elders, mentors, and local community members who, through their knowledge and along with the incorporation of scientific findings, allowed me to contribute towards cenote conservation. My goal was to help revitalize Maya Indigenous knowledge to preserve sacred natural sites through the emotional involvement of the Maya with the environment.

From the beginning, I felt that embarking on a PhD was an opportunity to give voice to my ancestors.

The Maya have survived for millennia by using and managing their groundwater resources. Cenotes were sacred sites and important elements for survival during the dry season. They played a major role in religion, politics, and subsistence; provided fish, clay for pottery, and stalactites to build altars; and were associated with rituals and ceremonies. They were thus set aside as religious sites, as places inhabited by spirits. Cenotes needed to be culturally protected, and evidence of this can be found throughout the entire Maya zone. Although local people value and have some knowledge about the resource, they continue to have a heavy impact on it.

By *bridging* natural and social sciences with the knowledge held by the Indigenous people and by developing actions with different groups, through carefully planned local projects and cooperation, I believe that it's possible to protect cenotes and to work together for better ecosystems.

Culture and traditions from the past and current knowledge can be brought together to increase the range of knowledge available to address some of the problems. For example, groundwater use in the Maya region has depended on an intimate knowledge of the resource. Nowadays, the population still practices some water-oriented ceremonies, but values, beliefs, and meanings regarding cenotes' sacredness seem to have declined. Although some ancient Maya Indigenous beliefs still exist, cenotes have been suffering from this erosion of values. Naturally, there's always cultural change and thus the loss of some values, changing the ways in which groundwater is used, but these values can change still further—toward conservation. Such changes would necessarily involve deliberation and mutual learning among the people engaged.

But how do the Maya people value the cenotes at present? One way to understand this is through an analysis of how they ascribe meaning to them. For example, when asked, almost all the people in Yucatán believe in spirits and supernatural beings that guard the entrance of the cenotes and caves. Some seemed to know of the ancient institution of cenote guardians, spiritually powerful humans or animals, and mentioned that the guardian of the cenote is a snake: "To be a guardian, you must have the knowledge and special powers that X'menes [Maya healers] used to have. No one has it now; it's something which someone was born with" (student, female, 21 years).

They believe that those beings punish people who enter the cenotes without permission. However, there's no agreement regarding current management and what can be done to protect cenotes. Overall, the responses suggest that the link between sacredness and cenotes has been broken, even for those who acknowledged spiritual powers: "I don't know the cenotes, and I've never been into a cave, but I know that some spirit inhabits them and protects the entrance of the cenote" (student, male, 20 years). Linguistics often provides insights into local perceptions: people in the communities recognize more than twenty ways to characterize "water" in the Mayan language, but they weren't able to express the specific concepts of "contaminated water" or "polluted water." Besides, the majority of the population didn't understand that all cenotes are part of a single, interconnected groundwater system, and cultural values didn't seem to be considered. Thus, with little coordination among users and government, conservation of cenotes is a challenge.

Cenotes are part of a culture thousands of years old and cannot be managed in isolation from it.

We can't ignore people's strong desire to learn about cenotes, restore cultural practices, and revitalize the values of sacred places, despite the profound sense of loss of local and traditional knowledge (e.g., rainwater harvesting) and a lack of self-recognition as custodians. Confronting those problems means that there's a need for cultural and environmental revitalization and recognition of cenotes as sacred natural sites. Cenotes must be understood as an integral part of the society that uses the resource. Because cenotes are interconnected through the groundwater basin, they cannot be managed as isolated entities. Similarly, cenotes are part of a culture thousands of years old and can't be managed in isolation from it.

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Yolanda López-Maldonado *is a systems thinker and Indigenous Yucatec Maya scholar in integrative science for sustainability. Her work emphasizes that societies are embedded parts of the biosphere. She has focused on social aspects of nature conservation by combining natural and social sciences with traditional ecological knowledge that respects Indigenous knowledge.*

Ceremonial items on the table: the green cross, copal, and the traditional beverage. 2017

North East Network
FARM SCHOOL

Kewekhrozo (Peter) Thopi
and Tshenyilou (Lele) Chirhah
CHAKHESANG NAGA, INDIA

Nagaland is a small mountain state in the North East Region (NER) of India. NER is one of the world's biodiversity hotspots, and the diverse ethnic communities of the region have significantly contributed to sustaining this biodiversity. There are numerous Indigenous tribes in Nagaland, most of which speak related languages and are collectively referred to as "Nagas." We are Chakhesang Naga.

Our food comes from our land, forests, water bodies, and farmland. It is part of our ecosystem, but it is also part of our culture, our knowledge systems, our spirituality, and our bonding with Mother Earth.

Our food is part of our ecosystem, but it is also part of our culture, our knowledge systems, our spirituality, and our bonding with Mother Earth.

Nagas practice ecological farming through diversified forms of agriculture like jhum agriculture, terrace rice cultivation, home gardens, and seed saving and sharing. Farming is intrinsically linked to our communities and landscapes, transmitting knowledge, skills, practices, and technologies down the generations.

But now our fragile ecosystem is under threat. Biodiversity degradation makes our state vulnerable to climate change, poverty, and climate-induced migration, but our culture is equally damaged by the economy and government policy. Farmers are steadily moving from collective to individualized farming that emphasizes profit maximization. Cash crops now seem to outweigh food crops.

This shift is gradually alienating communities' intrinsic relationship with their commons forest, land, seeds, biodiversity, water, traditional knowledge, and culture. Children have begun leaving the villages to go to schools in neighboring towns; there, they are not taught about their commons or their traditional cultures.

Today, globalization has impacted the way local communities perceive, produce, and consume food. The decrease in production of local food and the growing dependency on food from external sources impinges on the social, cultural, and political rights of Indigenous Peoples.

But those of us at the North East Network (NEN), a women's rights and social justice organization, have been working to change this. In 2014, with the help of InsightShare (a community development organization), we, and other communities from the states of Meghalaya and Nagaland, began creating participatory

Above: Naga women at stall featuring seeds and crops at the 2019 biodiversity festival. Photo: North East Network, 2019
Previous Page: Lele among crops in local farm lands during the first participatory video workshop in Nagaland. Photo: Chris Atkins/InsightShare, 2014

The participatory video team out capturing footage together. Photo: Chris Atkins/InsightShare, 2015

videos on our food systems, agriculture, and other cultural and environmental issues. NEN chose to make films about biodiversity, livelihoods, and traditional knowledge. One such film, "Millet—Securing Lives," focuses on millet, a native crop. The film documents the harvesting of millet and captures the voices of the custodian farmers of Chizami and Sumi villages. Millet is more than nutritious food; it helps ensure climate resilience, community bonding, and well-being.

We began creating participatory videos on our food systems, agriculture, and other cultural and environmental issues.

In the process of making our film, elements of our culture burst back into life: field songs were sung once again, traditional garments made, and traditional meals cooked.

Since then, we have continued to make participatory videos about Naga culture, land, and food. We have even hosted seed exchanges and screened our videos at biodiversity festivals to encourage traditional agroecology. This year we were awarded a prize at the National Community Film Festival for our film "Salt in My Village," and last year we won a prize at the same festival for "Millet—Securing Lives."

But, most importantly, we are bringing traditional knowledge back to our fellow youth. A major concern has been the alienation of young people from their environment. This can be partly attributed to urban education systems, where the ecology of the mountains and local farming systems are neglected. So for the last four years, NEN has been hosting the NEN Farm School.

The NEN Farm School teaches children and parents from urban areas about locally sourced food, farmlands, and ecologies. Through understanding the journey of food from farm to

NEN's Farm School. Participatory video has also been integral to sharing intergenerational knowledge. Photo: North East Network, 2019

plate, our youth can move towards sustainable food production in the future.

When we first started using participatory video, the chair of our village council remarked: "You see, we know all sorts of films from English to Hindi and even Korean. Through these films we know about the world. However, how much do we know about ourselves through films about us? This will give us a chance to make our own films and look at ourselves." Through our summer school and the films we make, we youth begin to know ourselves and recognize the power in being ourselves. We are keen to continue this journey: InsightShare has been invited to return next March to facilitate more trainings and teach more people how to use participatory video.

The NEN Farm School teaches children and parents from urban areas about the journey of food from farm to plate so our youth can move towards sustainable food production in the future.

Salt in My Village documents the salt narratives of Matikhru community, the process of the salt making and challenges thereof, and the future of salt making. Video: North East Network, 2017 (http://bit.ly/2CQtbiK)

Millets—Securing Lives documents the invaluable nature of millets-based agro-biodiverse farming and captures the voices of the custodian farmers of Chizami and Sumi villages. Video: North East Network, 2015 (http://bit.ly/2NTjwyq)

Locals at the Indigenous Terra Madre Festival entering a screening of participatory videos. Over 50 videos were made by Garo, Khasi, and Naga youth for the festival hosted by the North East Slow Food and Agrobiodiversity Society and Indigenous Partnership for Agrobiodiversity and Food Sovereignty. Photo: Nick Lunch/InsightShare, 2015

The NEN Farm School teaches children and parents from urban areas about locally sourced food, farmlands, and ecologies. Through understanding the journey of food from farm to plate, our youth can move towards sustainable food production in the future. Video: Wekhanyi (Peter) Thopi, and Tshenyilou (Lele) Chirhah, 2019 (http://bit.ly/33VSBaV)

Kewekhrozo (Peter) Thopi *is 30 years old and is a program assistant at NEN, where he conducts video trainings and creates videos on matters of culture, environment, and food systems.*

Tshenyilou (Lele) Chirhah *is 26 years old and is a project assistant at NEN. She mobilizes community support for environmental and cultural issues, produces films, and conducts trainings in participatory video.*

Ewaso Ng'iro CAMEL CARAVAN

Laissa Malih
LAIKIPIAN MAASAI, KENYA

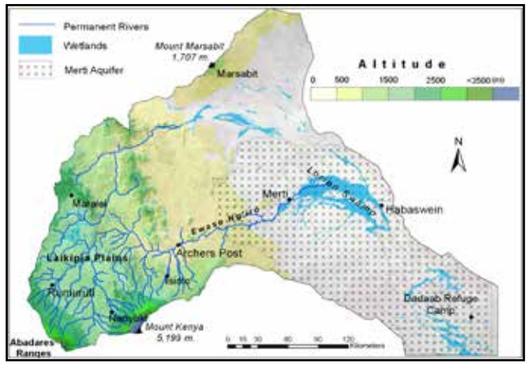
The Ewaso Ng'iro Camel Caravan is a five-day annual journey for climate change adaptation and peaceful co-existence along the Ewaso Ng'iro River in Kenya. The purpose is to promote shared understanding of threats facing the river, along with the cooperation needed to lessen them. Camels are used because they are resilient animals and symbolize the communities' resilience and willingness to adapt to climate change. The caravan is organized by Indigenous communities (Maasai, Samburu, Somali, Borana, Gabra, and Rendille). Since the caravan's beginnings in 2013, more and more youths are stepping into leadership roles. The Camel Caravans have produced several good results, including the halting of a planned mega-dam on the river.

In my video of the Camel Caravan, you'll see Indigenous youth rapping about issues facing their communities. The first group you'll see are from the Indigenous community called Somali in Kenya and are rapping in the Swahili language. They are asking us to listen to their message: they are worried about being able to get a good education and find employment, and are asking Kenya's politicians, and all people of good will, to help them in their struggles.

Above: *Ewaso Ng'iro—Camel Caravan.* Video: Laissa Malih, 2018

The second group of youths are from the Indigenous communities of the Laikipian Maasai and Samburu. They composed a song in the Maasai language while on the 2018 Camel Caravan. It's addressed both to the Ewaso Ng'iro River and to elders.

SONG
My Ewaso Ng'iro,
let us take care of our environment,
so we can get water that we can drink.
Ooh, this Ewaso Ng'iro, we no longer get water,
I am crying, Ewaso Ng'iro, we no longer get water,
I am asking old men of our land,
who were and have been before us,
How was this land long ago when I was a little kid?
Our land when you were a little kid,
there was a lot of vegetation,
water and wild fruits that we could eat
while herding our cows in the forests.



De Leeuw, J., et al. (2012). Benefits of Riverine Water Discharge into the Lorian Swamp, Kenya. *Water.* https://doi.org/10.3390/w4041009

Camels are used because they are resilient animals and symbolize the communities' resilience and willingness to adapt to climate change.

Scene from the film *Ewaso Ng'iro—Camel Caravan*, a video from the 2018 Camel Caravan. In the video, Indigenous youth from Somali community in Kenya and Lakipiak Maasai and Samburu communities rap about issues facing their community.

Laissa Malih *is a Laikipian Maasai and the first female filmmaker in her community interested in documenting, linking, amplifying, and scaling up the voices of youth across diverse Indigenous cultures in Kenya and beyond. She studied film production in school, motivated by her community's marginalization and lack of voice—a voice originally theirs.*

Strengthening the Link Between GREEN "FIGHTS" & LANGUAGE "FIGHTS"

Beñat Garaio Mendizabal
BASQUE, SPAIN

A PROPOSAL FROM BASQUE COUNTRY

Langscape Magazine is the loudspeaker and meeting point for those of us . . . who believe that there is an alternative in this world, another way to understand our lives. We resist thinking that we will live and die on the same errant planet, a planet that is being systematically destroyed by our neglect and cannibalistic attitude.

Above and Inset: Basque couple with common farming tools, and group of Basque farmers with popular musical instruments. These pictures were taken 100 years ago. Photos: Loreak Mendian

The way Basque farmers, *baserritarrak*, looked 100 years ago. Photo: Loreak Mendian

Global warming is a reality, and we may soon see how, for example, two entire countries (Maldives and Tuvalu) will disappear from the face of the Earth due to the rapid melting of the northern and southern polar ice caps. Survival of the fittest? No, it's definitely our fault.

Language shift, resulting in language death, is the decay of languages that can lead to their total disappearance. To be fair, a language does not die, but the speakers of that language stop using that language, shifting generally to a language of higher status. According to the *Ethnologue* report, we have more than 7,000 languages on this planet, but we should start the countdown: a language dies approximately every two weeks.

nik ere geldituko dut: "I will also stop the AHT (high-speed train)"—A famous rallying cry in Basque Country, written in Basque. Photo: Agurruza, 2013

Survival of the fittest? Not at all. A speaker may favor an alien language so as to have better prospects for their future; to avoid stigmatization from majority language speakers; to obey the orders of an autocratic regime that is promoting the language of the elite to the cost of others; and so on and so forth.

A language does not die, but the speakers of that language stop using that language.

Indeed, language diversity and ecological diversity walk hand in hand. Moreover, we could argue that many language activists are also environmentalists, and vice versa. Interdisciplinary collaboration is vital if we want to achieve our aims; alone, we're too small to convince the silent masses, let alone the big corporations, the governments, the lobbies . . . Why don't we join forces to have a voice on these issues? Nobody apart from us is going to get off their comfy couches at home, unless they are persuaded, attracted, or motivated by a big wave.

Many language activists are also environmentalists, and vice versa.

Here, I'd like to talk about a specific spot in this world, called Basque Country. What can I say about it, if not that I love it with all my energy, and I am pleased when I see her virtues, but it hurts my feelings when I see her erring? My love of *Euskal Herria,* which means "the land of the Basque language," does not blind me, and I will do my best to contribute to the start of a change.

Until a century ago, my great-grandparents lived in a rural region where fishermen, shepherds, and peasants had a very hard

6,000,000 € will be allocated to finish this project. "We deserve prosperity and modernity." What about the massive environmental damage, the corruption, and the uselessness? Photo: Grupo Reputación Corporativa, 2012

life, a life that could be eased only by their devoted love of God and the quite distinct culture, customs, and language that guided their way. But that mountainous green land was severely disrupted when the mining industry set up shop there, changing the social networks, bringing in many people with different beliefs and languages, and destroying the landscape of several valleys. That was the beginning of the largest historical decay of the Basque language, a decay that has been present ever since.

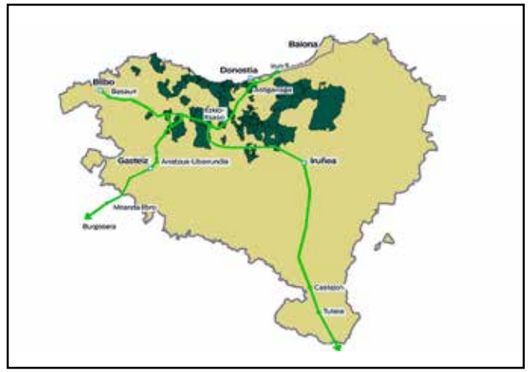
When the mining industry set up shop in Basque Country, that was the beginning of the largest historical decay of the Basque language.

General Franco's dictatorship could have inflicted the last stab to Basque Country and, therefore, to the language—and vice versa. The regime's atrocious repression, witnessed by the entire world in the town of Gernika (Guernica), was supported by Franco's overt assimilationist policy (what some would rightly call linguicide), mushrooming industrial development, road infrastructure and urbanization, and the immigration of thousands and thousands of Spaniards brought in to work as cheap laborers, with not even the slightest effort to maintain the local heritage.

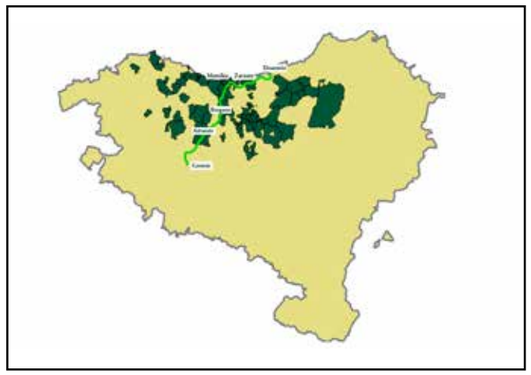
General Franco's overt assimilationist policy was what some would rightly call linguicide.

Moreover, those immigrants worked side by side with many Spaniard peers who were already under major stress, putting in long work shifts in a new industrial environment, far away from their beloved homeland. Under these conditions, one can understand and empathize with the demographic and socio-cultural shift in Basque Country.

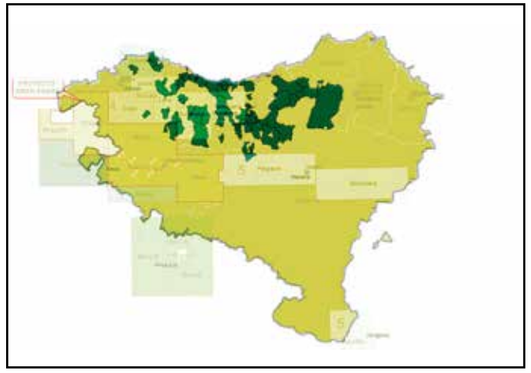
The history and the origin of the Basque language (Euskara) are very unique. Being an isolated non-Indo-European language, possibly the oldest in Europe, it is almost a treasure. But, to quote a reputed Basque linguist, the real miracle is how Euskara has survived under these harsh circumstances.



In green you can see the itinerary of the high-speed train and how it will affect the Federation of Basque-speaking Municipalities (UEMA).
Map: Beñat Garaio Mendizabal, 2015



This map shows the itinerary (in green) of the AP-1/AP-48 Highway and how it will affect the UEMA municipalities.
Map: Beñat Garaio Mendizabal, 2015



Notice the locations of fracking prospects (represented by squares) and how they will affect the UEMA municipalities (in green).
Map: Beñat Garaio Mendizabal, 2015

The language and political activists on both sides of the Pyrenees, the Northern Basques (in France) and the Southern Basques (in Spain) have tenaciously worked to ensure a future for our past. The decay, however, hasn't stopped, and although the knowledge of the language is growing and growing, the use of the language is still declining. What else can be done?

But what about the environmental issues, you will ask. Well, the strong opposition of Basque society has not put a stop to many initiatives that are helping destroy our ecological diversity. As in many other parts of the world, fracking, the construction of huge infrastructure projects (especially roads and the high-speed train), and more urbanization are all shaping our new "langscape."

Fracking, the construction of huge infrastructure projects, and more urbanization are all shaping our new "langscape."

First of all, the AP-48/AP-1 Highway and the forthcoming high-speed train will create massive ecological disruption, as roads and rail need to go through steep valleys and huge numbers of tunnels, and long high bridges have been and are being built.

"We need to move forward." "We need to become a top region in Europe." "We need to follow the path of modernity in order not to fall behind." "These infrastructure developments will bring prosperity to this country." These are some of the mantras reflected in the mainstream media.

So far, these projects have brought some prosperity, but just for the pockets of the development companies and their handmaidens—the politicians. The initial budget is being constantly exceeded. Several reports have begun to challenge the usefulness of "modernity." For example, the journey from Gasteiz (Vitoria in Spanish) to Bilbao will last about forty minutes by train, when these days it can take no more than forty-five to fifty minutes by bus! Moreover, the journey from Gasteiz to Donostia (San Sebastian in Spanish) can now be completed in one hour and ten minutes if the driver takes the new AP-48 highway, while by using the old N-1 route the "boring and never-ending journey" was one and a quarter hours long!

Prosperity will change our lives, right? It is true that the train could alleviate the high congestion of trucks on the main roads of Basque Country, but governments have chosen the most expensive and damaging alternatives. Why?

Now fracking is emerging as the most recent enemy of our land: ninety-one percent of the territory of the Basque Autonomous Community (one of the three components of Basque Country) will be subjected to fracking for gas. Fracking meets strong opposition all over the world, as it has proved to be lethal for the environment.

Why should we risk our future? We could take advantage of windmills, solar panels, biomass centrals, wave-energy centrals . . . Do we seriously want to "perforate the veins of our Mother Earth"? That was the motto of an anti-fracking NGO in Basque Country, and I feel it is a powerful call to awakening.

And here's the crux of the matter: many of these infrastructure developments will directly and indirectly affect the heartlands of the Basque language, so they will have detrimental influences on both the environment and the language.

Many of these infrastructure developments will have detrimental influences on both the environment and the language.

As in the Irish Gaeltacht towns where the Irish-speaking municipalities are protected by law, there is a similar initiative in Basque Country: the Federation of Basque-speaking Municipalities. To become a member, over seventy percent of the population needs to have a solid knowledge of Basque. As in Ireland, generally these municipalities are small rural towns with little industry and a relatively strong capacity to integrate newcomers, due to their linguistic and their cultural integrity. These heartlands are now getting weaker, however, as many of the newcomers are non-Basque-speaking people, looking just for relaxation and a green landscape.

Many social and cultural actors are concerned with this issue, and a number of scholars and professionals from different disciplines have created a working group called *Lurraldea eta Hizkuntza*, that is, "Territory and Language." This group's aim is to acknowledge that the future of Euskara depends not only on social, political, or linguistic factors, but also on economic, industrial, and urbanization factors. In a manner similar to what Wales and the Åland islands did, this group is lobbying for legislative change and proposing potential measures to stop the rampant, uncontrolled urbanization and the shift of the Basque language.

The future of the Basque language depends not only on social, political, or linguistic factors, but also on economic, industrial, and urbanization factors.

I studied for a master's degree in Language Support and Revitalization at the School of Oriental and African Studies at the University of London. From Day 1, we were told that interdisciplinary collaboration is crucial in order to get things done. As I said earlier, linguistic and ecological diversity can be closely interlinked, and the combination of linguistic and "green" fights can be nothing other than beneficial. It's inspiring to see that in Basque Country feminist NGOs are allying with pro-Euskara causes, and vice versa, since the oppression of a language can be in some ways linked to the oppression to women.

The key aspect here is *empowerment*. It was encouraging that in 2012, when my city, Vitoria/Gasteiz, was named European Green Capital of the year, some scholars, especially sociologist Iñaki Martínez de Luna and linguist Albert Bastardas, tried to achieve the signing of a "Linguistic Ecology Declaration"—a document that would have stressed the importance of addressing both issues and the benefits of combining them.

Unfortunately, that effort didn't go very far. But I would like to pick up that thread and continue insisting on the usefulness of this collaboration. Aside from any practical reasons, I must keep stressing the point simply because I believe in this diverse and rich world: this is the world I want to live in. But, as I have just said, this new joint fight could be really practical. In a region with high political fragmentation and a covert linguistic conflict (Basque has been a strong identity marker for the mainly left-wing, pro-independence inhabitants), both our land and our language need a stronger foundation to have a bright future.

I believe in this diverse and rich world: this is the world I want to live in.

Lately, the strictly environmentalist movement (including some green political parties) hasn't been particularly favorable to the revitalization of the language, and some of the associations involved in green fights use Spanish (or French) as their vehicular language.

On the other hand, the left-wing, pro-independence EH Bildu coalition—the largest party trying to revitalize the language, or at least the largest party having an overt and brave pro-Basque language policy—has adopted in its manifesto some of the ideas from environmentalist NGOs, such as food sovereignty, local consumption, end of big infrastructure projects (including fracking and the high-speed train), a sensible urbanization plan, a focus on renewable energy, and so forth. Moreover, the idea of writing this article came to me when I read, in the manifesto of Desazkundea, the de-growth collective of Basque Country (de-growth: we live in a finite world but are supposed to grow indefinitely, so we need to reverse that trend to live harmoniously on this planet), that since we were trying to go local, then the use and promotion of the Basque language was an obvious choice.

So, why don't we try and take the language out of the political fight and offer it to those who are closer to us—that is, those who are sympathetic to the Basque language but do not want to question their national identity at this time? And at the same time, why don't we ignite the "green fighting" fire of language activists and become associated with a more general, stronger support group for diversity?

The mainstream parties won't go any farther in both their linguistic and ecological ideas until they're under pressure from society, so we'd better listen to that call and start putting our ideas into the political agendas of our friends, acquaintances, neighbors, and so on. The first steps are already made: the attempt to sign the Declaration, Desazkundea's proposal . . . We just need to start following the path.

The author would like to thank Caoife Garvey and Txetxu Garaio ("aitte") for their support and friendship. Urte askotarako!

This story first appeared in *Langscape Magazine* 4(2), Winter 2015, pp. 66–70.

Various organizations around Basque Country organize activities to raise awareness of and fundraise for the Basque language, such as noncompetitive runs and festivals, which attract thousands of people. Photos: Tierra Estrella (top) and EITB (bottom)

Beñat Garaio Mendizabal *hails from the Spanish portion of Basque Country/Euskal Herria. Holding a master's degree in Language Support and Revitalization from the School of Oriental and African Studies, University of London, he's affiliated with the Basque organization ELEBILAB – Bilingualism Laboratory. In addition to his sociolinguistic interests, he holds deep ecological concerns.*

Hēmi Whaanga
and Priscilla Wehi
MĀORI, AOTEAROA/NEW ZEALAND

Ancestral Sayings and Indigenous Knowledge

LEARNING FROM MĀORI ORAL TRADITION

E koekoe te tūī, e ketekete te kākā, e kūkū te kererū
"The *tūī* chatters, the parrot gabbles, the wood pigeon coos."
(A saying for "It takes all kinds...")

Above: An adult *tūī* vocalizing with feathers fluffed out, Te Puke, North Island of Aotearoa/New Zealand. Photo: Raewyn Adams, 2012
(from "New Zealand Birds Online"; reproduced with permission)

Hēmi:

As a young child, I often sat at the window of my house peering out at the roses, manicured lawns, and hedges, listening to introduced birds like the sparrows and blackbirds as they fluttered through their days. These first memories of nature were blueprints that have remained ingrained in my mind's eye as an adult. I rarely saw and experienced things Indigenous. I rarely heard the chatters of *tūī* (*Prosthemadera novaeseelandiae*), the gabbles of the *kaka* (*Nestor meridionalis*), the coos of the *kererū* (*Hemiphaga novaeseelandiae*). They were as scarce as a *kōtuku* of a single flight:

He kōtuku rerenga tahi i te tau
"The white heron of a single flight in the season"
(A familiar saying used for a rare visitor,
often one of importance)

Our kin, the birds, now fly with a new plumage, a new label, new names, and a new meaning for us. They are often mentioned in the same breath as "under threat," "rare," "endangered," "at risk," "prohibited." These were not the words I grew up with when I listened to my father recalling his childhood—hunting, interacting with, and gathering the descendants of Tāne (the god of the forest) and Rehua (the star also known as Antares, the deity of wisdom, medicine, and well-being and the sign of summer and its many species). As a child I carried many rare and endangered birds crumpled in my pocket—that is, in the form of the colonizers' banknotes with which I would go buy bread and milk at the local shop.

My father would share the blueprints of his memories and those passed to him by his parents and their parents—by my ancestors, my *tīpuna*.

My father would share the blueprints of his memories and those passed to him by his parents and their parents—by my ancestors, my *tīpuna.* Our physical and cultural landscape had dramatically changed since the time of my tīpuna. Our trees now lined the walls and halls of our colonial houses. I would watch and listen, yearning to see through his mind's eye and that of my tīpuna, to feel and hear their stories, the songs, the poems, our history, our ancestral sayings, my Indigenous language.

Koia tēnei: ko te toroa noho au,
e tangi ana ki tōna kāinga; e mihi ana
"This is a fact: I live like an albatross, crying out to its
nesting place and greeting (you in sorrow)."
(A saying used to refer to the confiscation of lands
and the displacement of Māori from their homes)

I would watch and listen, yearning to see through his mind's eye and that of my tīpuna, to feel and hear their stories, the songs, the poems, our history, our ancestral sayings, my Indigenous language.

Cilla:

The tūī was my friend growing up. I was lucky enough to spend a lot of time in our forests when I was a child, particularly in the summers, and that was where my love for the world around me grew. We would walk past the filmy ferns, glittering with water after rain, and feed the parrots or *kākā* outside our house on sugar water, similar to the honeydew that they love to lick in the forest. My godfather could mimic the calls of many of the birds, like the chattering of the parakeets or *kākāriki* overhead. But even living in a small city during the rest of the year, there was opportunity to observe and interact with some of our native birds.

I was lucky enough to spend a lot of time in our forests when I was a child, particularly in the summers, and that was where my love for the world around me grew.

Once, a baby tūī fell from its nest in our garden, and we couldn't put it back. The nest, and its tree, was too high. So, we fledged the baby tūī; it lived in our house, and we spent the early summer hunting for grubs to feed it. I tried to teach it to talk, but lacked the skills of previous generations of Māori who taught these birds to speak, with their magnificent powers of mimicry. Finally, we took our pet to a wildlife sanctuary to be a wild bird once again; it was illegal for us to keep our tūī, as with all other native birds. I never saw it again. Yet, every summer when I see the male tūī puffing its chest, and chasing the other males away from its territory of flax nectar, I am reminded of "our" tūī.

The details of tūī's life are recorded in *whakataukī*, ancestral sayings that act as a repository of ecological knowledge, and in the many names that describe the changes in their body shape, form, and behavior.

He ua kōwhai
"A *kōwhai* shower"
(A saying that describes a spring shower, at the time of the
kōwhai blooms, and signals the appearance of the *tūī* as
well as the availability of some food sources)

Hemi and Cilla:

Fast forward 40 or so years to the present, and our journeys and blueprints have changed drastically, as have the blueprints of the communities we grew up in and the cultural blueprints of this land. The history, language, songs, and wisdom of our tīpuna are no longer lost to us. We appreciate and value our place between Ranginui (Sky father) and Papatūānuku (Earth mother). Working closely with like-minded scientists, friends, colleagues, respected leaders, elders, experts, and practitioners has allowed privileged access to the knowledge and science, to the many stories, songs, poems, history, and ancestral sayings of our tīpuna, and has brought a deeper respect for collaborations and collaborators.

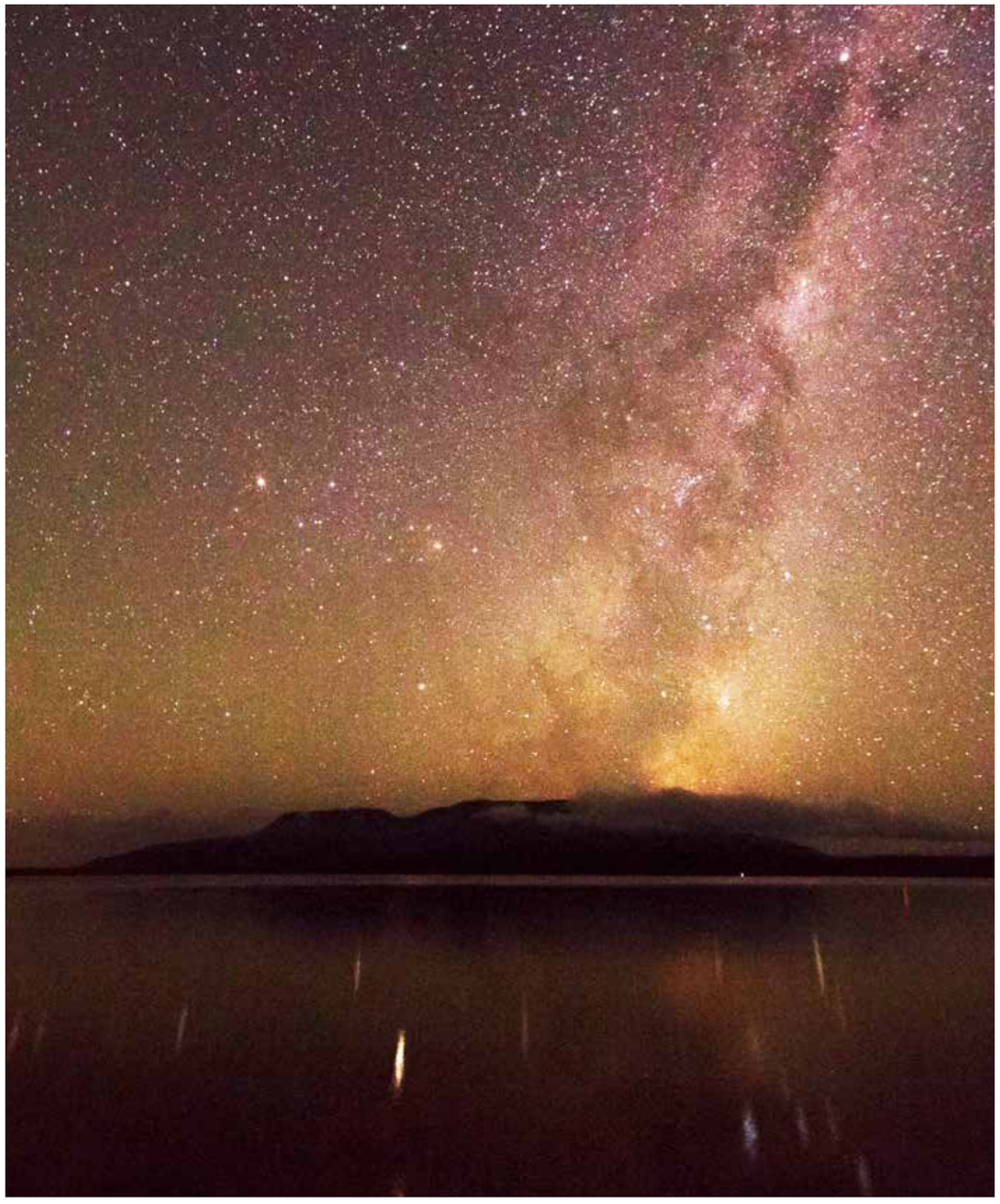
Whāia te mātauranga hei oranga mō koutou.
"Seek after learning for the sake of your well-being."

When we now hear the chattering of tūī, we recall its role in *whakapapa* (genealogy) and mythology, the many names it carries: its male form *kōkōuri, kōpūrehe, kōkōtaua*, and *tute* and female form *kōkōtea* and *kouwha*. We associate it with the star Rehua, and Tāne's ascent to seek knowledge and understanding for his kin. We see the *whetū* (star) affixed to its neck that brought tūī a voice: a gift from Rehua to remind us of the origin of tūī and other birds. We cast our minds to kōkōuri and kōkōtea, the celestial sacred pools of the Magellan Clouds that have the same names as the male and female tūī.

Tūī are highly prized birds in Māori society. Along with the kererū and the kākā, they were harvested in great numbers, sometimes tamed and taught to speak, to recite *mihi* (formal speeches), *karakia* (incantations), and whakataukī (ancestral sayings), hence the whakataukī:

Me he korokoro tūī
"Like the throat of a tūī"
(Said of a gifted orator or singer)

Cilla Wehi with her pet tūī. Photo: Hamish McAllum, circa 1982



Rehua (Antares) reflecting in Lake Tarawera with Mount Tarawera in the background, North Island of Aotearoa/New Zealand.
Photo: Erica Sinclair, 2016

Words like ecosystem, biodiversity, global warming, climate change, and extinction are now part of our vernacular, our everyday language. They now form layers in our blueprint of understanding—our mind's eye. Thus, many human questions are now no longer framed inwardly, focused on individualism, on small things. We have a deeper appreciation of our impact on ecosystems, and now we collaborate to seek solutions to these global issues. Where can we seek answers to these global issues to guide future directions, future generations, future blueprints? Can the teachings of the past provide guidance in our quest for solutions to local and global problems? Are there clues in Indigenous knowledge, in our oral traditions, in our ancestral sayings?

We have a deeper appreciation of our impact on ecosystems, and now we collaborate to seek solutions to these global issues.

For the past 10 years, we have sought to unpack some of the critical messages in oral tradition, in whakataukī. These sayings contain a wealth of material about Indigenous science, ecological knowledge, and the ways in which our tīpuna formulated, tested, and modified their knowledge according to ecological, environmental, and societal changes over the past 600 years. These sayings remain an important method for transmitting critical intergenerational information about all aspects of life, including traditional knowledge, tribal memory, historic events, behavior, and personal achievement.

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Ehara i te mea poka hou mai, nō Hawaiki mai anō
"It is not something of recent origin but
a tradition from Hawaiki."
(This saying refers to the source and destination of life. In some traditions, Hawaiki is perceived to be a physical place from which the Māori people first emerged before arriving in Aotearoa/New Zealand.)

Much of the elders' wisdom about the ethics, philosophy, and straightforward tactics for how best to live in a dynamic balance with the environment, plants, and animals is rapidly being lost through the combined impacts of urbanization, abandonment and/or prohibition of customary uses of plants and animals, and the depletion of ecosystems. Humankind is at a cultural, linguistic, biological, and spiritual crossroad. The many paths to our future are riddled with choices.

Ahakoa whati te manga, e takoto ana anō te kōhiwi
"Although the branch is broken off, the trunk remains."
(The loss of a branch does not destroy a tree
whose trunk consists of solid heartwood.
Misfortunes will not ruin an individual
or group if the foundations are strong.)

To solve real-world problems, we have to engage with all forms of knowledge, language, and science to control deforestation, reduce carbon dioxide emissions, adapt to climate change, and halt ecosystem degradation. We need to work closely with the local communities that are most affected to devise new observations and new whakataukī that embrace these local and global concerns. We also need to foster the *kaitiaki* (environmental guardians) of the future, our kaitiaki wherever they may live, with the principles of sustainability in mind. In our changing world, we need kaitiaki in urban areas and on farms, in global fora and in our homes.

To solve real-world problems, we have to engage with all forms of knowledge, language, and science to control deforestation, reduce carbon dioxide emissions, adapt to climate change, and halt ecosystem degradation.

Stories are like ecosystems, with a community of meanings, interpretations, and systems interacting with their physical, cultural, and spiritual environments. As Indigenous Peoples have realized, all parts of the story matter. The observations in whakataukī may change, but the principles beneath endure.

Whatungarongaro te tangata, toitū te whenua.
"People pass on, but land remains."

This story first appeared in *Langscape Magazine* 5(2), Winter 2016, pp. 56–59.

A *kauri* tree. Photo: Simon Steinberger, 2005 (Pixabay)

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"Although the branch is broken off, the trunk remains."

(The loss of a branch does not destroy a tree whose trunk consists of solid heartwood. Misfortunes will not ruin an individual or group if the foundations are strong.)

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Terralingua
Unity in Biocultural Diversity

Terralingua *n* **1:** the languages of the Earth, the many voices of the world's diverse peoples. **2:** the language of the Earth, the voice of Mother Nature. **3:** an international nonprofit organization that works to sustain the **biocultural diversity of life** — a vital heritage to be valued, protected, and nurtured for generations to come.¶ From Italian *terra* 'earth' and *lingua* 'language'

"The vitality of our languages and cultures and the health of our home territories are interconnected. Whatever we can do to help or protect one will help the other."

— Gisèle Maria Martin, Tla-o-qui-aht, Canada

"Stories are like ecosystems, with a community of meanings, interpretations, and systems interacting with their physical, cultural, and spiritual environments. As Indigenous Peoples have realized, all parts of the story matter."

— Hēmi Whaanga and Priscilla Wehi, Māori, Aotearoa/New Zealand