



Briefing
Launch of Indigenous Women's Funders Working Group

March 14, 2018 – Philanthropy New York

Thank you for your interest and for joining the Indigenous Women's Funders Working Group launch event!

International Funders for Indigenous Peoples (IFIP) and International Forum of Indigenous Women (FIMI) were thrilled to have partnered, co-sponsored and facilitated the launch of the Indigenous Women's Funders Working Group on March 14, 2018 at Philanthropy New York.

During the launch event, we discussed the issues most impacting Indigenous women, the importance of the working group, of creating a learning and collaborative space for funders, and the necessity of forming an Indigenous Women Funders Working Group at this critical time.

Below IFIP shares a summary of the conversation as well as a call to join the Indigenous Women Funder's Working Group.


Current issues most impacting Indigenous Women around the world

At the launch event, we heard from funders and Indigenous Women leaders Lucy Mulenkei, Joan Carling, and youth leader Indira Vargas.

Indigenous women leaders attending the event shared with participants about the current issues impacting Indigenous Women that stem from land grabbing for industrial agriculture, to the impact of economic development policies dependent on the extractive industry. These policies often lead to the violation of Indigenous Peoples rights and harm of the environment. We also heard about how in the name of the environment, conservation models have caused the removal of Indigenous Peoples from their lands or severely limited access to or use of the resources on their traditional lands.

Indigenous women leaders, stressed the high level of vulnerability experienced by Indigenous Peoples and in particular Indigenous women. More governments are moving to limiting the space of civil society and in many cases to criminalize Indigenous Peoples for protecting their territories. Indigenous women are almost always at the forefront of protecting their livelihoods, community well-being, and their territories.

Despite persistent obstacles, we also heard about the proposals Indigenous women have to combat these critical issues, highlighting the multiple Indigenous women networks that exist across all the social-cultural regions. As well as, the many Indigenous women organizations working to advance their rights and protection of their traditional knowledge and practices as Indigenous Peoples and as Indigenous women.



Participants also learned how the Indigenous women movement is preparing the next generation of leaders. Indigenous youth play a critical role to ensure the intergenerational transfer of traditional knowledge and leadership. In the Latin America region, for instance, Indigenous youth have identified five critical issues: health and reproductive rights, economic empowerment, education, and access to information and communications as critical to their empowerment. Each issue is being looked at through a cultural lens to ensure it serves the needs of Indigenous youth including respect for their cultural identity.

Supporting Indigenous women as change agents and ensuring access to funding is critically important to Indigenous women. As reported on the AWID, FIMI and IFIP report A Call to Action: Insights into the Status of Funding for Indigenous Women's Groups, "Indigenous Women organizations have less access to resources than other women's rights organizations despite having a similar organizational profile."


Seizing this moment in history -Increased Indigenous women and girl led international mobilizations and organizations

The group also reflected on the contributions Indigenous women have made on the global processes as change agents within their communities to secure collective rights of Indigenous Peoples and to advance gender equality within their communities and globally.

As stated on the UN Women Strategy for Inclusion and Visibility of Indigenous Women, "During the 1995 World Conference on Women, Indigenous women reflected their distinct proposals for measures to protect their right to self-determination, cultural identities, and survival in a Beijing Declaration of Indigenous Women. This common agenda contributed to unifying and strengthening the capacities of the Indigenous women's movement, which, as a result, became more equipped for demanding change at global, regional and country levels".

Since the 1995 World Conference on Women, Indigenous women have contributed to important global actions and voiced their priorities. In 2013 the World Conference of Indigenous Women laid out the priorities of the Indigenous women's movement.

- ❖ Recognition and respect of "rights to lands, territories, and resources as enshrined in Indigenous customary law, the UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples, and other international human rights instruments." Including, right to freely pursue own economic, social, and cultural development."
- ❖ Zero tolerance "for all forms of discrimination, lack of access to education and healthcare, high rates of poverty, maternal and child mortality. Including, "all forms of violence, such as domestic violence and sexual abuse, including in the contexts of trafficking, armed conflict, environmental violence and extractive industries."
- ❖ Recognition of "the importance of sexual and reproductive health and education for all ages. This includes associated rights to culturally appropriate health and



education services in our communities, and the right to exercise, maintain, and control indigenous health knowledge and practices.”

- ❖ Affirmation and respect of Indigenous women’s knowledge, wisdom, and practical experience, which has sustained human societies over generations.”

While contributions made by Indigenous women are recognized at regional and global processes, when it comes to the donor community supporting direct actions and proposals by Indigenous women organizations, the evidence shows the donor community is not adequately or equitably investing in Indigenous women’s organizations. As a philanthropic and donor community, we must address this gap.

Other reports point to funding of Indigenous Peoples represents less than 1% both in the US and globally of the total giving by US foundations. Indigenous organizations don’t enjoy the same levels of support as non-indigenous organizations, funding is almost always restricted and limited, keeping Indigenous organizations from growing and limiting their ability to effectively improve the conditions of their communities or advance laws and public policy that respects the rights of Indigenous Peoples and Indigenous women.

The Necessity and Function of a Working Group

IFIP, a global donor affinity group, seeks to engage with the donor community to address this persistent gap within the funding community and within the women’s rights movement of funders. Building on IFIP’s and its partners’ past learning, findings and insights on Indigenous Women, this working group will focus on fostering learning among peers and form collaborations that contribute to expanding and transforming funding partnerships with Indigenous Women.

IFIP believes that by providing a platform for funders for continuing the dialogue, learning, and collaboration, the donor community can more strategically advance Indigenous Women’s rights that are aligned with their priorities.

As Teresa Zapeta of FIMI said, “this first meeting with the support of IFIP, will help collect your ideas and thoughts on how we can continue to do this type of meetings with donors to help Indigenous women access more funds and be able to be empowered at the community level.”

Funders attending the conference shared both their interest on the working group and shared that by working collaboratively could increase the visibility of Indigenous women organizations. The Working Group was seen as the platform to carry these conversations forward.

Funders also see this working group as building the capacity for the funders to learn and more effectively support Indigenous Women (youth, elders, LGTBQ, and disabled). As one of the funders participants shared, “It is not just about the collaborations but it is important to raise the voices of those of indigenous women who cannot easily be reached. Overall, funders acknowledge their interest to participate on Indigenous Women working group.

Next Steps

IFIP is committed to advance this work and to provide donors a platform where they can come and engage with peers on learning and strategizing as well as building new partnerships. To support this work, IFIP envisions the following types of Working Group activities:

- ❖ Convene in-person meetings at IFIP conferences and events like CSW and the UNPFII or key international Indigenous women's conferences where Working Group members can continue to grow their learning and plan a path to improve coordination among grantmakers. This will allow funders to build the vision to work together to support and advance the empowerment of Indigenous women.
- ❖ Facilitate calls of Working Group members to advance the empowerment of Indigenous women across all issues.
- ❖ Organize webinars aimed at increasing knowledge and understanding of the Indigenous Women movement and thematic issues.

IFIP will hold a conference call on May 23, 2018, at 8:30 am PST / 11:30 am EST with funders interested in joining the working group.

- ❖ To confirm your interest and to participate on this working group, please contact Lourdes Inga at lourdes@internationalfunders.org
- ❖ To join the May 23, 2018 working group conference call, please contact Ashley Hernandez at ashley@internationalfunders.org
- ❖ For your information, we also included as an Annex the list of activities happening between April 15-26 in New York focused on Indigenous Women in connection with the Seventeenth Session of the UN Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues (UNPFII).

We look forward to engaging with you in dialogue to build strategies, create opportunities for collaboration and growing the IFIP community to include funders that ally and partner with Indigenous women organizations globally.

Respectfully,



Lourdes Inga, IFIP

Enclosed: List of activities at the UNPFII



UN Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues – Seventeenth Session April 16 – 27, 2018

Activities focused on Indigenous Women

- International Indigenous Women's Forum (FIMI) [events](#) at the UNPFII
- 3rd International Indigenous Women's Symposium on Environmental and Reproductive Health Focus: Advancing research and assessing impacts of Environmental Violence on Indigenous Women and Girls, see agenda [here](#), April 14 and 15, 2018.

Other events

- List of UNPFII side events is located [here](#)
- **Skill-sharing on Grant-making** – Hosted by Ford Foundation – coordinated by Amazon Watch, Cultural Survival, and International Funders for Indigenous Peoples (IFIP)

Date: April 16 and Time: 3:30pm-6:00pm

Location: Ford Foundation, 1440 Broadway, NY (enter on 40th Street between Broadway and 6th Avenue) Times Square Room, 19th Floor

- **IFIP's Indigenous Territories Funders Working Group Launch** - The new Working Group will focus on fostering learning among peers and collaborative action that contributes to expanding and transforming how funders work in Indigenous Territories. To RSVP, please email Ashley Hernandez at ashley@internationalfunders.org

Date: April 19 and Time: 3:30 pm – 5:00 pm

Location: Millennium Hotel, One United Nations Plaza, NY