

# INDIGENOUS FELLOWSHIP PROGRAMME 1997-2017

## 20 YEARS, 20 STORIES



UNITED NATIONS  
HUMAN RIGHTS  
OFFICE OF THE HIGH COMMISSIONER

## THE UNITED NATIONS INDIGENEOUS FELLOWSHIP PROGRAMME

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<http://www.ohchr.org/EN/Issues/IPeoples/Pages/Fellowship.aspx>

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# THE INDIGENOUS FELLOWSHIP PROGRAMME

## 20 years of empowering indigenous peoples to claim their rights

The Indigenous Fellowship Programme (IFP) is a **comprehensive human rights training programme**, which was established 20 years ago by the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR) in the context of the first International Decade of the World's Indigenous Peoples (1995-2004). The programme **builds the capacity and expertise of indigenous peoples** on the United Nations system and human rights bodies so that they are in a better position to protect and promote the rights of their indigenous communities at the local, regional and international level. The training programme takes place in Geneva and is currently available in four languages: English, Spanish, French and Russian.

In 2006, a **national and regional fellowship programme** was established. In this programme, former indigenous fellows who participated in the

Geneva programme are placed in an OHCHR country or regional office. The fellows gain “on-the-job” experience and apply, in a more practical way, the knowledge and skills that they acquired during their training in Geneva. The programme also assists OHCHR field and regional presences to develop and implement activities on the protection and promotion of the rights of indigenous peoples, and to strengthen their networks with civil society organisations working in the field of indigenous peoples’ rights.

This publication is a selection of twenty stories from former indigenous fellows. It provides a **snapshot of the inspiring and important work done by former fellows** when they return to their communities and apply the skills and knowledge that they learn during the fellowship programme.

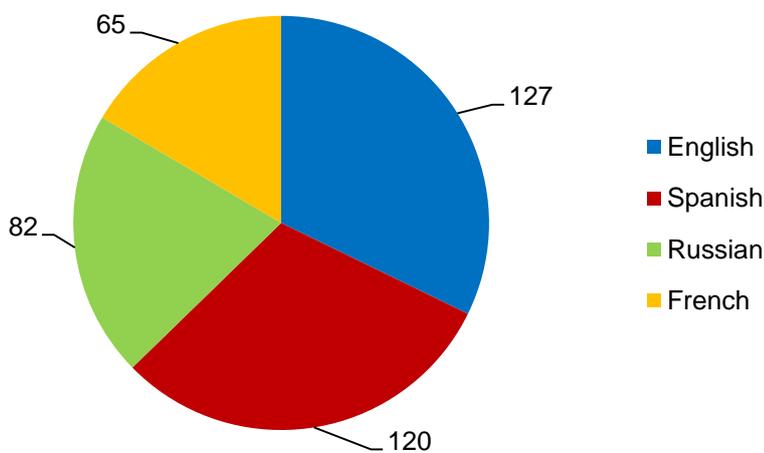


# THE FELLOWSHIP PROGRAMME IN NUMBERS

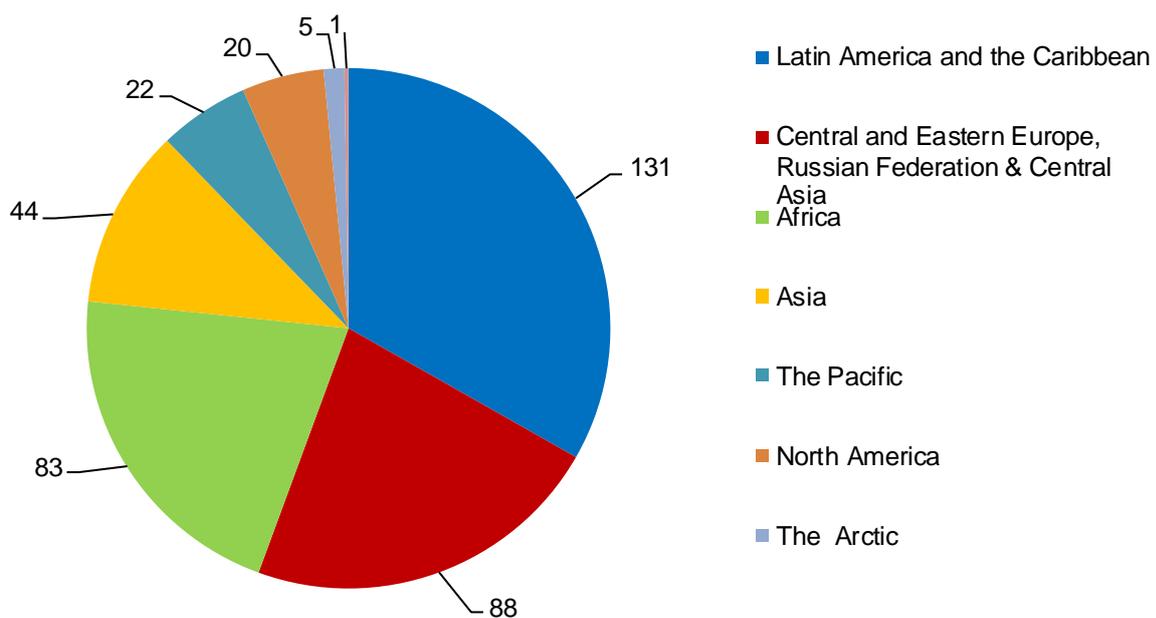
Since the Fellowship was launched in 1997, **more than 300 indigenous women and men from 63 countries around the world have participated in the programme.**

Former fellows have since used the knowledge and skills they acquired during the programme to provide **human rights training to many more indigenous peoples in their communities.**

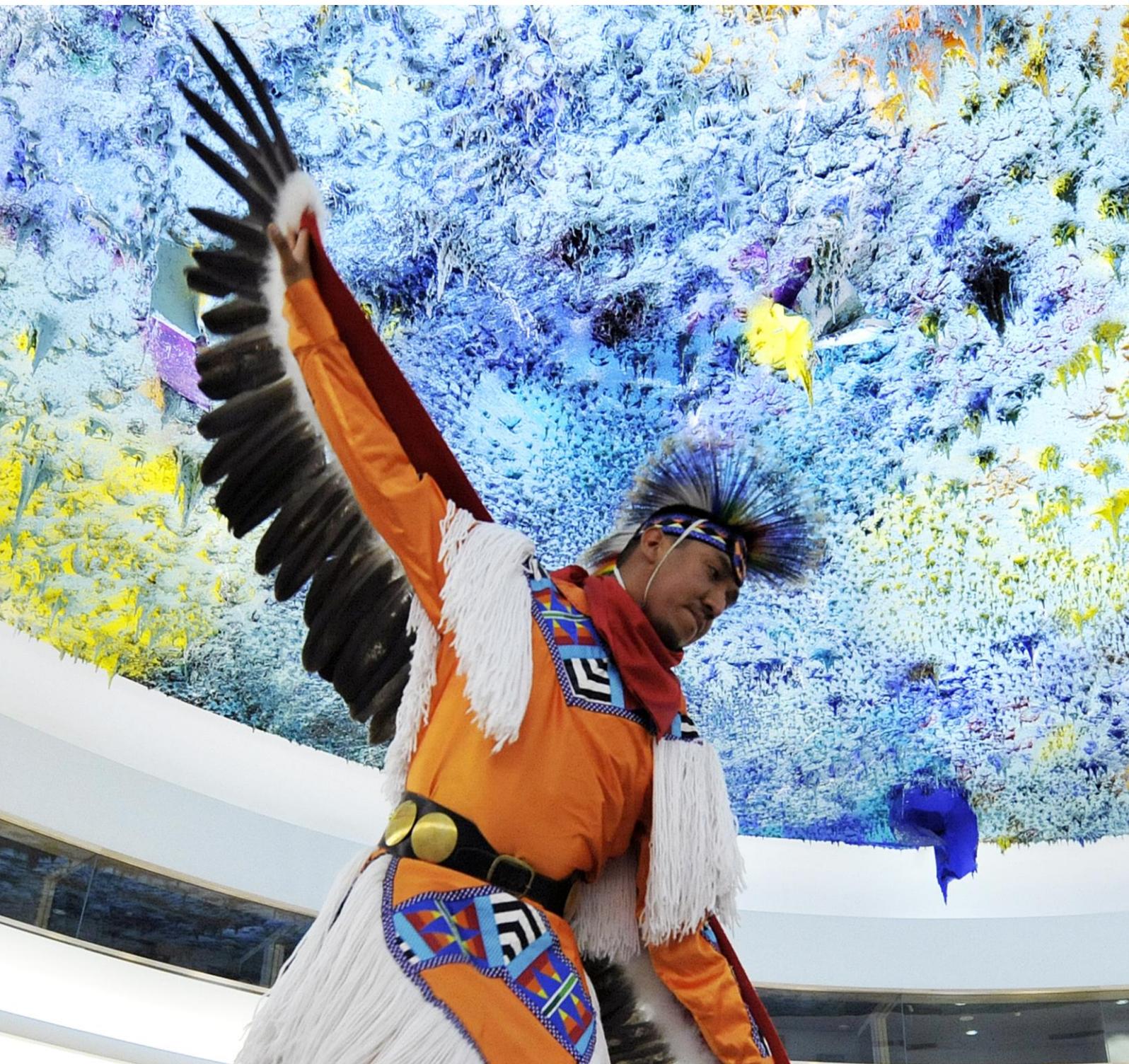
**Fellows by language group (1997-2017)**



**Fellows by region (1997-2017)**



# ENGLISH-SPEAKING PROGRAMME



# PACIFIC

## VONDA MALONE'S STORY

Vonda is a Torres Strait Islander from Australia. She participated in the Fellowship Programme in 2001.



Vonda Malone (nee Moar) created history in March 2016 when she became the first indigenous woman to be elected mayor of the Torres Shire Council, a local government in the Torres Strait, a region in the far north of Australia. Vonda has extensive experience in indigenous affairs in Australia, including 24 years working with Federal and State governments. She was also the first Torres Strait Islander woman to work internationally with the Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade (DFAT) and with the United Nations through the Fellowship Programme. Vonda's significant contribution to the Torres Strait was recognized in 2003 when the Government of Australia awarded her a Centenary Medal.

After completing the Fellowship Programme, Vonda dedicated her efforts to improving health outcomes for indigenous peoples. Through her executive roles in various State, Federal and non-government health organisations, Vonda has played a fundamental role in the delivery and improvement of health services for indigenous peoples living in the Torres Strait. Vonda is also a strong advocate and role model for Indigenous women, and she has played a crucial role in advancing women's issues in the Torres Strait region. In 2010, she participated in Oxfam Australia's "Straight Talk Program", a national programme that aims to build the capacity of indigenous women so that they can be change makers in their communities. In 2012, Vonda was appointed to the Strait Talk Steering Committee to support and facilitate the rollout of similar regional and national leadership forums for indigenous women throughout Australia.

# TRACEY WHARE'S STORY

Tracey is a Māori from New Zealand. She participated in the Fellowship Programme in 1998.

*“The training opportunity provided an excellent basis upon which to continue my learning and it has led me to my current work as an indigenous advocate.”*



Tracey was the first Māori to participate in the Fellowship Programme. The experience was a pivotal moment in her journey to becoming a defender of indigenous peoples' rights. Tracey believes that, without the Fellowship Programme, she would have been able to advocate for the rights of indigenous peoples in the way that she has through domestic and international mechanisms.

As a trained lawyer, Tracey has represented Māori at the domestic level on a broad range of legal matters including, natural resource management, claims before the Waitangi Tribunal and family and criminal law matters. Tracey is also a technical adviser to the Iwi Chairs Forum, a mechanism that monitors New Zealand's implementation of the Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples, and she is a trustee of the Aotearoa Indigenous Rights Trust, which advocates for indigenous peoples' rights in UN fora and disseminates information to Māori on United Nations processes and decisions that affect indigenous peoples, especially Māori.

Following her participation in the Fellowship Programme, Tracey participated in the Working Group on Indigenous Populations and the Working Group on the draft Declaration on the Rights of

Indigenous Peoples. Tracey has continued to engage with international human rights bodies and mechanisms. She regularly attends sessions of the Expert Mechanism on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples (EMRIP) and participates in its studies and expert workshops, for example the workshop held in 2016 on the review of the EMRIP mandate.

She has also attended sessions of the Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues and, from 2012 to 2014, worked as the Rapporteur and Secretariat of the Indigenous Global Coordinating Group for the 2014 UN World Conference on Indigenous Peoples. Regarding treaty bodies, Tracey has written alternative reports for the Committee on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination (CERD) and the Human Rights Committee (HRC). She has also attended sessions of CERD and the HRC to directly brief the members of the committees on Māori rights. Tracey is currently completing her Masters aw at the University of Auckland. The focus of her thesis is the participation of indigenous peoples in UN fora.

# LATIN AMERICA AND THE CARIBBEAN

## PABLO MISS'S STORY

Pablo belongs to the Maya Q'eqchi people from Belize. He participated in the Fellowship Programme in 2013.



Pablo is the Program Coordinator for the Maya Leaders Alliance of Southern Belize (MLA), a coalition of Maya organisations and leaders. Since 2013, Pablo has used the experience and knowledge he acquired during the Fellowship Programme to make interventions before sessions of the Human Rights Council, draft alternative reports for the Committee on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination (CERD) and provide information on the situation of indigenous peoples in Belize to the Special Rapporteur on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples, the Special Rapporteur on the Right to Food, and the UN Working Group on Business and Human Rights. Many of these human rights bodies have subsequently raised the issues of extractive industries on Maya lands and the rights of Maya people to their traditional lands.

In 2015, the Maya Leader's Alliance achieved a landmark legal victory before the Caribbean Court of Justice, which recognized that 39 Q'eqchi and Mopan Maya indigenous communities had property rights to their traditional lands. The evidence before the Caribbean Court of Justice

included reports, early-warning letters and statements from UN treaty bodies and special procedures. Drawing from the knowledge and skills he acquired from the Fellowship Programme, Pablo currently serves as the lead spokesperson for the Maya people in the negotiations for the implementation of the orders from this decision.

Pablo's understanding of UN human rights bodies has allowed MLA to use its community education outreach programme to disseminate information amongst 39 Maya communities on how the UN system can be used to promote and protect the rights of indigenous peoples. As a result, there is now greater awareness amongst Maya people of the function and role of the Human Rights Council, treaty bodies and special procedures, and how these bodies are relevant to the struggle of the Maya people. Pablo has also facilitated MLA's participation in UN fora, such as the Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues, to build regional alliances and exchange knowledge and information with other indigenous peoples.

The Maya people recognize that economic development is an important vehicle for achieving self-determination. In March 2017, Pablo represented the MLA at the UN Expert Seminar on Good Practices and Challenges for Indigenous People's Entrepreneurship for the Expert Mechanism on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples (EMRIP). He is also tasked with leading the Creating Maya Economies initiative. The work of MLA in the area of economic development was recognized internationally in 2015 when MLA was awarded the Equator Prize for outstanding success in promoting local sustainable development solutions for people, nature and resilient communities. The 2015 prize, organized by the Equator Initiative within the United Nations Development Programme, was awarded to 21 outstanding local and indigenous community initiatives, which were selected from 1461 nominations spanning 126 countries.

# AFRICA

## DELARIA (BABA) FESTUS'S STORY

Baba belongs to the ǀKhomani San people from South Africa. She participated in the Fellowship Programme in 2006.



***“By being equipped with this knowledge [from the Fellowship] I was able to be part of the process of organising ourselves as indigenous peoples’ organisations in the Southern African region. This has enabled us to now make informed decisions when having consultations or discussions with our governments with regards to indigenous peoples.”***

Following the Fellowship, Baba worked with the Khwa ttu San Culture & Education Centre in Yzerfontein, South Africa. This centre provides training to San youth who have a keen interest in San culture and the issues that affect San people.

Young San women and men from all over the Southern Africa region come to the Centre to learn more about their history, culture and traditional

knowledge. The training empowers San people to avoid exploitation and better promote and protect their rights. Similarly to the Fellowship Programme, it also provides San people with knowledge that they can then pass on to their own communities or the general public.

Baba is currently responsible for the coordination of projects for women in the Kgalagadi Youth and Women’s Development Network. This organisation facilitates the empowerment of indigenous women and youth, who come from the most marginalized, rural and excluded areas of South African society. The main objective of the Network is to provide community services and programmes to indigenous women and youth, with a particular emphasis on capacity building, women’s rights, human rights, domestic violence and the development and education of women and girls. These services and programmes help to improve the schooling crisis in the Southern Kalahari by preventing school dropouts, as well as HIV/AIDS awareness and prevention, youth empowerment and advocacy, the promotion and protection indigenous peoples rights to culture, and to respect, protect and fulfil the right to health.

In addition to her work at the Kgalagadi Youth and Women’s Development Network, Baba represents her fellow San people at the local, national and international level, by participating in conferences and workshops on indigenous peoples’ rights and general human rights issues.

# THE ARCTIC

## SAARA TERVANIEMI'S STORY

Saara belongs to the Sámi people from Finland. She participated in the Fellowship Programme in 2007.

Saara's interest in social issues and social justice is closely linked to her background. She grew up in the southern part of the Sámi homeland, where dramatic ecological and social changes were taking place due to Finnish hydropower projects. These events played a major role in accelerating the assimilation of Sámi in to the Finnish population, which included a decrease in the use of the Sámi language.

When Saara applied to the Fellowship Programme she was already studying International Relations at university. Participating in the programme allowed her to extend her knowledge on the UN system and indigenous peoples' rights at the international level, topics that were not included in her university studies.

Saara believes that the most valuable aspect of the Fellowship Programme was sharing the experience with three other indigenous activists. This allowed the fellows to exchange information and histories of their similar experiences as indigenous peoples. For Saara, this knowledge-sharing was an empowering, as well as grounding experience.

During the Fellowship Programme, Saara learnt to evaluate how and in what situations the UN system can assist to protect and promote indigenous peoples' rights. She also learnt strategies to make an impact in both the short and the long-term. For Saara, however, although it is crucial to promote indigenous issues at the international level, it is also vital to remember that for indigenous peoples – in their world – everything begins at and returns to the local level: to the villages.

Since the Fellowship Programme, Saara has been a strong advocate for local Sámi communities in Finland. She has worked in different Sámi organisations, including as an alternative member of the Sámi parliament of Finland (2008-2011). Recently, she was nominated to the Saami Council (2017-2020) and the Social, Economic and Culture Expert Group (SECEG), which works under the Arctic Council's Sustainable Development Working Group.



In her research work at the University of Lapland, Saara closely monitors the development and situation of indigenous peoples' rights from the point of view of the Sámi. She also actively participates in multiple projects, which involves producing data and analysing and further developing the processes whereby new data is produced. An awareness of indigenous peoples' rights and international human rights standards is highly relevant to modern reindeer herding, which Saara's family practices. Saara is currently a member of the Muddusjärvi reindeer co-operative working group, which is evaluating the effects of the commercial forest industry on Sámi reindeer herding.

When Saara participated to the Fellowship Programme 10 years ago, she would not have imagined how little indigenous peoples' rights have advanced in Finland during this 10-year time span. Finland has still not ratified ILO 169 and, to some extent, Sámi rights in Finland have taken a step backwards. Existing rights have also not been respected by legislative processes. A recent example of this is the Deanu river agreement where Finland started negotiating with the Sámi parliament after having already signed the agreement. Saara considers her biggest success to be that she and her three children are reclaiming the Sámi language, and that she is living her life in the Sámi village of Aanaar, deeply rooted in the traditional livelihood and culture of the Sámi.

# NORTH AMERICA

## MELISSA CLYDE'S STORY

Melissa is from the Navajo Nation in the USA. She participated in the Fellowship Programme in 2011.



Melissa works to educate tribal nations about the rights of the child and indigenous peoples' rights, so that they are better placed to advocate for the rights of their children. Over the last 10 years, Melissa has worked in partnership with the Navajo Nation and other tribes to develop child welfare policies and procedures, improve data collection and analysis, and educate elected leaders on best practices for Native American and Alaska Native children. Melissa also supports tribal nations to advocate at the national level on national

strategies to improve the outcomes of indigenous children.

Melissa currently works for a private operating foundation that provides opportunities for tribes to access advocacy platforms that they would not otherwise have access to. These platforms allow tribes to generate more exposure on the issues affecting their communities. Melissa's objective is to use this model to strengthen the voices and visibility of tribal nations, and to promote and protect the rights of indigenous children and indigenous peoples in the USA.

***“Children have a right to family, access to culture, education and health in order to thrive.”***

In 2012, Melissa helped to organise a visit of the Special Rapporteur on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples, James Anaya, to hear testimony about violations of the rights of tribal nations, in particular the Navajo Nation, during his country visit to the USA. Melissa also provides training to tribal nations about the UN human rights bodies and the Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples, and supports tribal nations to advocate, at the local and national level, on the issues that affect their communities.

# ASIA

## PHOOLMAN CHAUDHARY'S STORY

Phoolman belongs to the Tharu people from Nepal. He participated in the Fellowship Programme in 2015.



Since participating in the Fellowship Programme, Phoolman has been able to strengthen his advocacy work on the rights of indigenous peoples, in particular the Tharu people from Nepal.

Phoolman is currently the chairperson of the Asian Indigenous International Network (AIIN), an organisation that advocates for indigenous peoples' rights and works to build the capacity of indigenous peoples to address the challenges facing their communities. At the national level, Phoolman frequently travels throughout Nepal visiting districts and villages in urban to very rural and remote areas to facilitate and participate in seminars and workshops on the social, economic and political issues confronting Nepal's indigenous peoples. He is also working on the design and implementation of a government funded fisheries project in the Kanchanpur district of Nepal. This project will directly benefit the livelihoods and employment opportunities of indigenous peoples in the region.

In 2016 and 2017, Phoolman participated in and presented at a number of events to raise awareness of indigenous peoples' rights and the Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples. These events included a number of Tharu spiritual and cultural festivals, such as the "Lawangi Pooja" at Ghori Ghora lake in Kailali district, the UN Asia Regional Forum on Business and Human Rights in Soha, Qatar, and a meeting on indigenous issues in Jharkhand, India, which was attended by over 80 indigenous representatives and youths from 8 Indian states in India. Phoolman also facilitated a four day campaigning event with Nepalese youth from 9-11 April 2017 in Sunsari district, on the implementation of the Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples, ILO Convention 169, and the linkages between indigenous peoples and the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. Over 1200 youth who are affiliated with the Youth Federation of Indigenous Nationalities Nepal (YFIN) participated in this event. In 2015 and 2016, Phoolman also participated in the 8<sup>th</sup> and 9<sup>th</sup> sessions of the Expert Mechanism on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples, where he brought attention to the situation of the Tharu community and other indigenous peoples.

Phoolman was recently elected as a member of the Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues for 2017-2019. As one of the thematic areas in this mandate is the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, this position will allow Phoolman to continue the work that he has previously done on sustainable development and the impact of climate change on indigenous peoples.

# SPANISH-SPEAKING PROGRAMME



# LATIN AMERICA AND THE CARIBBEAN

## TANIA EDITH PARIONA TARQUI'S STORY

Tania belongs to the Quechua people from Peru. She participated in the Fellowship Programme in 2000.

Tania is an indigenous activist, politician and vocal advocate for the rights of indigenous peoples, in particular indigenous children, youth and women. She was recently elected as a member of the Congress of the Republic of Peru for the period 2016 – 2021. Tania's congress positions include President of the Indigenous Parliamentary Group and Secretary for the Commission on Justice and Human Rights. She is also a member of the following four parliamentary commissions: the Ordinary Commission on Andean, Amazonian and Afro-Peruvian Peoples, Environment and Ecology; the Ordinary Commission on Women and Families; the Commission on Social Inclusion; and the Commission on Culture and Cultural Heritage.

In addition to her current role as a parliamentarian, Tania continues to advocate for the rights of indigenous peoples through her memberships with a number of local, regional and international organisations. These organisations include, the Indigenous Collective of Ayacucho (Colectivo Indígena de Ayacucho), the Network of Indigenous Youth Organizations of Peru (REOJIP), the National Organization of Indigenous Women of Peru (ONAMIAP, Organización Nacional de Mujeres Indígenas del Perú), the Global Indigenous Youth Caucus and the Continental Network of Indigenous Women of the Americas (ECMIA, Enlace Continental de Mujeres Indígenas de las Américas).

***“For me, the 2009 programme signified the definition of my life project and reaffirmed my identity as well as my commitment to my community and to the first peoples of my country and of the world.”***



Since completing the Fellowship Programme in 2009, Tania has participated in a number of international fora on the rights of indigenous peoples. For example, the UN Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues from 2010 to 2012 as the representative of the Youth Caucus; the 59th meeting of the Commission on the Status of Women in 2015, where she participated as a member of the ECMIA; and the first UN international expert group meeting on indigenous youth in 2013, where she was invited to attend as an indigenous youth expert. Tania was also part of the Indigenous Global Coordinating Group, an initiative developed by indigenous peoples to ensure that they were able to participate in the 2014 World Conference of Indigenous People (WCIP), and the preparatory and post-WCIP processes. Tania is currently completing a Masters in “Human Development: Approaches and Policies” at the Pontifical Catholic University of Peru.

# LINDA MANAKA INFANTE SURUTA

Linda belongs to the Baniva people from Venezuela. She participated in the Fellowship Programme in 2010.



After finishing the fellowship, Manaka returned to her home country determined to put what she learned to good use, defending the rights of her peoples – the Baniva – and other indigenous peoples in Venezuela, and taking all possible measures to save her language from extinction. Manaka immediately mobilized with her organisation to demand the release of Yukpa chief, Sabino Romero, who had been imprisoned without due process, denounce the illegal mining of coltan in the Amazon and its effects on Baniva and other indigenous peoples, and organise Baniva teachers so they could teach the Baniva language in Baniva community schools. As part of Manaka's advocacy efforts, she also met the UN Resident Coordinator and Country Team (UNCT) to seek their support in highlighting these issues to authorities.

Manaka's meeting with the UN Resident Coordinator and the UNCT marked the start of a close collaboration with the UNCT, which ultimately resulted in Manaka being hired as a Human Rights Adviser. In this role, she helped the UNCT inform the government and civil society about the UPR in preparation for Venezuela's first review, and provided advice on other urgent human rights issues such as reforming the penal system. Manaka began to realize that to truly protect indigenous rights you have to also combat corruption and impunity. This realization would take her away from her community and her country to join the International Commission against Impunity in Guatemala (CICIG) as a legal investigator, the first indigenous woman to be selected to their international team.

indigenous woman to be selected to their international team.

In Guatemala, Manaka's suspicions were confirmed through her investigations. She worked on dismantling a criminal network that allowed a former Army Captain, who was convicted of murdering a human rights activist who defended indigenous peoples, to control the penitentiary in collusion with high-level officials at the Ministry of Interior. She also worked on dismantling another criminal network that allowed companies to pay bribes to the Government in exchange for favours. These companies were also pursuing extractive industry projects that would affect indigenous communities in Guatemala. Due to the hard work of Manaka and her colleagues, the CICIG was eventually able to prove that both the President and Vice-President were involved in the bribery ring. This discovery led to the resignations of the President and the Vice-President.

In 2016, Manaka took time off to complete a lifelong dream to research how human rights concepts are present in Baniva worldviews and teachings. She obtained a Master's in International Human Rights Law from the University of Notre Dame in the same year. This year of study allowed Manaka to reconnect with her peoples and reinstate her public advocacy for indigenous rights in Venezuela. For example, she went to the UN Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues to advocate and raise more awareness on disappearing indigenous languages like her own, and the effects of coltan mining in the Amazon on the Baniva and other indigenous peoples. Once again, like during the Fellowship, during 2016 Manaka met inspiring indigenous activists from around the world fighting for the same cause. She was elected to head the Indigenous Languages Caucus, which proposed an International Year of Indigenous Languages. At the end of 2016, the UN Mission in Colombia offered Manaka a job as the Liaison Officer in the Department of Meta, a region with a large and diverse indigenous population, including Arawak peoples like the Banivas. Manka accepted the offer and she is now in Meta assisting international observers monitor and verify the implementation of Colombia's peace accord, which will end a conflict that caused so much hardship for Manaka's fellow indigenous Colombian brothers and sisters.

Looking back at the Fellowship, Manaka believes that the programme provided her with many valuable experiences. But, if she had to pick the most important one, it would be the confirmation that she is not alone in the fight for the rights of her people and there are a myriad of ways for indigenous peoples to work with the UN to defend their rights. Indigenous peoples should not feel afraid to knock on doors – indeed to knock on all doors – to demand that attention is given to their rights. Manaka started out defending the rights of her peoples, of her country, but now believes this is a global fight, and is determined to fight for every indigenous man, woman and child, anywhere, around the world.

# EVELÍN CAROLINA ACOSTA GUTIÉRREZ'S STORY

Evelín belongs to the Wayuu people from Colombia. She participated in the Fellowship Programme in 2006.



Evelin is a social worker and indigenous leader of the Wayuu people in Colombia. Evelin believes that the Fellowship Programme enabled her to improve training opportunities and community consultation for the Wayuu at the local level, and raise awareness of the situation of the Wayuu at the national and international level. It also allowed her to form strategic alliances, which help to strengthen Wayuu organisations and empower Wayuu women.

Evelin is currently the coordinator of the Wayuu Women's Strength Association (la Asociación Fuerza de Mujeres Wayuu – Sütsüin Jiyeyu Wayuu) and a member of the Association of Wayuu Traditional Authorities (Asociación de Autoridades Tradicionales Wayuu) in the Cerro de Teta area, in the north east of Colombia. She also plays an active role in the Network of Indigenous Women for Biodiversity in Latin America and the Caribbean (la Red de Mujeres Indígenas sobre Biodiversidad de América Latina y el Caribe, RMIB-LAC). Through these roles and organisations, Evelin facilitates and participates in communication initiatives, advocacy campaigns, training sessions and community consultations for the Wayuu. For example, a recent training programme on "Indigenous women and other forms of knowledge", which was attended by indigenous, Afro-descendant and rural women. Evelin also supports community workshops for the Wayuu, in particular on the principle of free, prior and informed consent, and raises awareness about violations of the rights of the Wayuu through monitoring missions, an advocacy campaign called "Woumainkat" (mother earth) and the online blog "Notiwayuu".

At the international level, Evelin has participated in sessions of the Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues. Through her work with RMIB-LAC, Evelin has also represented the Wayuu and other indigenous peoples in relation to traditional knowledge, traditional cultural expressions and genetic resources through the Convention Bodies of the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD). Within the framework of the CBD process, Evelin has participated in training workshops for indigenous women on the CBD and the integration of gender perspectives.

# ANA MARÍA (ANIXH) PABLO TERCERO'S STORY

Ana María belongs to the Maya-Q'anjob'al people from Guatemala. She participated in the Fellowship Programme in 2014, followed by a 5 month national fellowship at the OHCHR country office in Guatemala.

In 2001, and at the age of 17, Ana Maria founded the Youth Council for Indigenous Development (Consejo de Jóvenes para el Desarrollo Ixcoyense) and became heavily involved in advocacy for indigenous youth in Guatemala. Ana Maria used the knowledge and skills she acquired during the Geneva and national fellowship programmes to strengthen her work in this area. She joined the National Network for Maya Youth Guatemala (Red Nacional de Jóvenes Mayas Guatemala, RENOJ), an indigenous youth organisation, and, in 2015, she led RENOJ monitoring to address racism and discrimination suffered by indigenous peoples and indigenous women from political parties, different political actors and the electoral system. Ana Maria also worked with RENOJ to strengthen indigenous peoples' participation in decision-making in Guatemala and assisted a coalition of indigenous peoples' organisations prepare an alternative report for the Committee on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination (CERD).



At the local level, Ana Maria continues to work ceaselessly with her community in the struggle to promote and protect their rights as indigenous peoples. After completing the national fellowship, Ana María returned to her community – the Maya Q'anjob'al of San Juan Ixcay – to fight the persecution and criminalization of indigenous rights defenders in northern Huehuetenango, which are used as a pretext for racism and oppression against the Maya Q'anjob'al. As part of this advocacy, in 2015 Ana Maria contributed to the preparation of an urgent action appeal to the UN Special Rapporteur on the rights of indigenous peoples in relation to 6 indigenous activists in pre-trial detention.

Ana María is currently the President of the Q'anjob'al Linguistic Community of the Academy of Maya Languages of Guatemala (Comunidad Lingüística Q'anjob'al de la Academia de Lenguas Mayas de Guatemala, ALMG), a four-year position that she has held since December 2016. ALMG aims to promote the full enjoyment of the collective rights of the indigenous peoples of Guatemala, as well as the use and protection of indigenous languages.

***“The Fellowship helped me to strengthen my knowledge of the mechanisms for the international protection of the rights of indigenous peoples, which I am now applying through training sessions for young people.”***

# MONICA MICHELENA DIAZ'S STORY

**Monica belongs to the Charrúa people from Uruguay. She participated in the Fellowship Programme in 2013.**

In 2007, Monica decided to study anthropology so that she could challenge the belief of anthropologists that her community, the Charrúa people, was not indigenous. Today, thanks to her work, many anthropology professors in Uruguay consider the Charrúa people to be indigenous.

Mónica believes that participating in the Fellowship Programme allowed her to extend her advocacy on indigenous peoples' rights in to international fora, in a way that consolidated and enhanced her work at the domestic level. During the Fellowship, Mónica participated, through the Council of the Charrúa Nation (Consejo de la Nación Charrúa), in the review of Uruguay at the Universal Periodic Review. Monica contributed to the drafting of a report from the Council of the Charrúa Nation on the situation of indigenous peoples in Uruguay, which contained a range of recommendations including the ratification of the ILO Indigenous and Tribal Peoples Convention, 1989 (No. 169) (ILO Convention 169). This was the first time a report had been submitted and recommendations proposed on these issues. Prior to the UPR session, Monica also lobbied the President of Uruguay on indigenous peoples' rights and presented him with a petition on the ratification of ILO Convention 169. Monica's efforts were rewarded: Uruguay accepted a number of the recommendations that were proposed by the Council of the Charrúa Nation, including the ratification of ILO Convention 169. In 2014, Uruguay pledged to ratify ILO Convention 169.

***“This report had a strong impact on the rights of indigenous peoples in Uruguay”***

In June 2014, Monica was named as the advisor on indigenous issues in the Uruguayan Ministry of Foreign Affairs (La Unidad Étnico Racial del Ministerio de Relaciones Exteriores de Uruguay). This was the first time an indigenous person had held a ministerial position in Uruguay. Importantly, she was charged with the responsibility of assisting with the preparation of State reports for the UN treaty bodies. In September 2014, Monica was part of the Uruguayan delegation for the World Conference on Indigenous Peoples at the United Nations in New York. During the conference, Mónica contributed to the intervention of the Foreign Minister, Luis Almagro, who began his statement by asking for the forgiveness of the

indigenous people of Uruguay for the genocide perpetrated against them by Uruguay in 1831. This statement was a very symbolic and important moment for the indigenous peoples of Uruguay and the Charrúa. Since July 2015, Mónica is also the Uruguayan delegate to the Fund for the Development of Indigenous Peoples of Latin America and the Caribbean (Fondo para el Desarrollo de los Pueblos Indígenas de América Latina y El Caribe, FILAC). Mónica believes that her participation in the Fellowship Programme was one of the reasons why she was offered these leadership positions in the Uruguay Government.



Following the Fellowship and notwithstanding her roles in government, Monica has continued to work with her own community and indigenous organisations. For example, Mónica drafted a plan of action for the Council of the Charrúa Nation, which the Council subsequently adopted. Mónica believes that, had it not been for the Fellowship, this plan of action would not have been as comprehensive or advanced in terms of the legal framework. In October 2014, Mónica was also elected to the Governing Council of the Intercultural Indigenous Chair of the Intercultural Indigenous University (Consejo de Gobierno Indígena Intercultural de la Universidad Indígena Intercultural), an emblematic programme of FILAC.

# RUSSIAN-SPEAKING PROGRAMME



# RUSSIAN FEDERATION

## GRIGORIY DYUKAREV 'S STORY

Grigoriy belongs to the Nenet people from the Russian Federation. He participated in the Fellowship Programme in 2009.



For the past seven years, Grigoriy has worked with the Commissioner for Human Rights in Krasnoyarsk Krai, Russia. In this role, he promotes and safeguards the rights of indigenous peoples, in particular indigenous small-numbered peoples of the North.

Grigoriy is the first indigenous person to be employed with the office of the Ombudsman in Russia. During his time at the Commissioner for Human Rights, more than 700 indigenous peoples have approached Grigoriy for assistance on a range of matters, including nature conservation and management, employment, housing, education, healthcare and legal issues. Grigoriy

was able to help the majority of these people either through the support of the police or the public prosecutor's, or by liaising with the relevant government authorities. Many of the solutions to these matters led to improved policies and laws on the rights of indigenous peoples in Krasnoyarsk Krai.

Grigoriy lists one of his biggest achievements at the Commission as helping a Nenet woman obtain Russian nationality. The woman was born in the tundra during the USSR period and her family bred deer for a living. However, as her parents were unable to get her official identify documents, she became stateless. After the collapse of the USSR, she married according to Nenets tradition and had four children, but remained stateless. Following a lengthy process, Grigoriy was successful in helping the Nenet woman acquire Russian nationality and therefore ending her statelessness.

***“Participating in the OHCHR Fellowship Programme was a reason for my employment at the Commissioner for Human Rights in Krasnoyarsk Krai. Now I am more capable of helping people. Great possibilities come with greater responsibility; I cannot sit out and keep silent. Every time I was solving issues I relied on the experience and knowledge obtained during the OHCHR Fellowship.”***

# VASILY NEMECHKIN'S STORY

Vasily belongs to the Mordovin people from the Russian Federation. He participated in the Fellowship Programme in 2012.

Vasily applied for the Fellowship Programme when he was still a law student at Ogarev Mordovia State University. His university did not offer a course on the rights of indigenous peoples and minorities and Vasily wanted to learn more about the subject area. After completing the Fellowship, Vasily wrote his PhD thesis on the "Realization of national minorities rights in the Russian Federation: theoretical and legal analysis".

At the international level, Vasily participated in the 11th session of the Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues in 2012 and the 8th session of the Expert Mechanism on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples (EMRIP) in 2015. In May 2016, Vasily also participated in an Expert seminar – "The Finno-Ugric peoples and sustainable development. Health of indigenous peoples" – that was held in Russia regarding the EMRIP study on the right to health.

***"The Fellowship helped me structure this course and understand how the United Nations works in practice. When you see with your own eyes how the United Nations functions, then you are in a better position to explain it to your students."***

Prior to completing the Fellowship, Vasily had always aspired to teach a university course on the rights of indigenous peoples and minorities. He believes that the Fellowship gave him the necessary skills and knowledge to make this dream a reality. In 2013, and as an Associate Professor at Ogarev Mordovia State University, Vasily established a course on human rights, which included a module on the rights of indigenous peoples and minorities. He estimates that between 100 and 150 students complete the course each year. This course allowed Vasily to share the knowledge he acquired during the Fellowship on indigenous peoples' rights with his students.



# SVETLANA KOLCHURINA'S STORY

**Svetlana belongs to the Komi-Permyak people from the Russian Federation. She participated in the Fellowship Programme in 2013.**

Svetlana is currently working to safeguard the future of the Network of Ethnocultural Centres of Karelia in northwest Russia. Established in 2015, the Network of Ethnocultural Centres and Heritage Organizations (ECHO) supports community initiatives by indigenous peoples to revitalize their cultures, preserve traditional knowledge, and develop programmes for the sustainable development of indigenous territories, which builds on indigenous cultural and historical identity. Examples of ECHO's programmes include trainings on social entrepreneurship to improve the social and economic wellbeing of indigenous communities, and the revitalization and use of

indigenous languages through partnerships with NGOs, professionals and businesses. For example, the translation of price tags in to indigenous languages.

In 2016, Svetlana was appointed the regional coordinator of a research project on sustainable development in the Karelia region within the context of cultural and historical identity. This project was led by the World Bank and the Ministry of Culture of the Republic of Karelia. Svetlana believes that she was offered this position because of the knowledge, skills and networks she gained during the Fellowship Programme in Geneva.



# FRENCH-SPEAKING PROGRAMME



# MARIE-EVE LACHAPELLE-BORDELEAU'S STORY

**Marie-Eve belongs to the Crie Nation from Canada. She participated in the Fellowship Programme in 2012.**

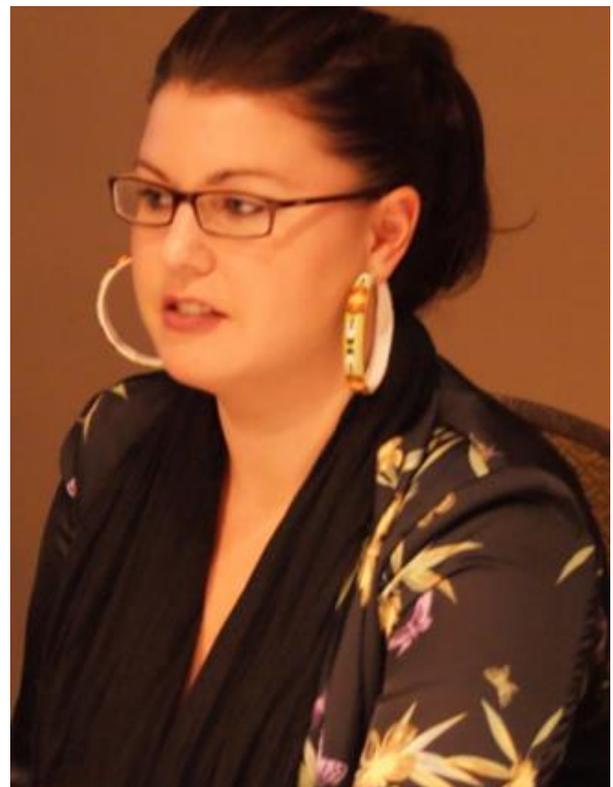
Marie-Eve is a lawyer, mediator and consultant for various indigenous communities and indigenous organisations in Canada. These roles have allowed her to make a significant and diverse contribution to the indigenous peoples in Canada, in particular First Nations communities in the province of Quebec. For example, Marie-Eve currently advises the Assembly of the First Nations of Quebec and Labrador on a range of legal issues. She also travels to First Nation communities to provide legal advice on legislation regarding matrimonial real property on reserves and how to use the protections under the legislation.

Marie-Eve is currently contributing to a project with Carole Brazeau, a 2016 OHCHR indigenous Fellow who works for the National Aboriginal Circle against Family Violence (NACAFV), to prepare a legal information and training toolkit for shelters that provide services to indigenous women. The project is run through the NACAFV, an organisation that supports front-line workers in shelters and transition houses across Canada. In the first phase of this project in 2016, Marie-Eve and Carole co-facilitated consultations with fifty practitioners from women's shelters from eight separate locations across Canada. As an extension of this consultation process, Marie-Eve and Carole also delivered human rights training to indigenous women. The legal information and training toolkit will be used at a national training forum for shelter practitioners in November 2017.

Marie-Eve and Carole are also collaborating on an advocacy project regarding the large gap in government funding, which has led to either inadequate or non-existent women's shelters in indigenous communities. As a result, First Nations,

Inuit and Métis women and girls are unable to access women's shelters to escape and recover from domestic violence and intimate partner violence.

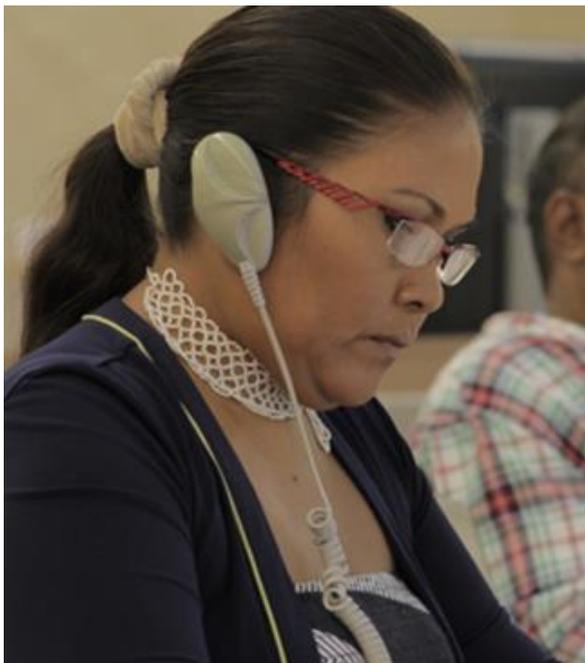
In addition to her work on women's shelters, Marie-Eve recently cofounded a mobile mediation clinic for indigenous communities, which is specifically adapted to the cultural realities of indigenous peoples. The clinic provides legal services in the areas of civil, commercial, family and labour law, and helps to improve access to justice for indigenous peoples, in particular for those who live in isolated and remote communities.



# LATIN AMERICA AND THE CARIBBEAN

## FLORENCINE EDOUARD'S STORY

Florencine belongs to the Palikur/Téleuyu peoples from French Guiana. She participated in the Fellowship Programme in 2013.



Florencine was the first indigenous person from French Guiana to participate in the Fellowship Programme. When she returned to her community after the programme, Florencine organized training sessions for indigenous peoples, including those living in isolated communities, so that she could pass on the knowledge and skills that she learnt during the Fellowship to other indigenous people in her country.

Florencine believes that the Fellowship Programme taught her to speak more diplomatically and to advocate more effectively and persuasively. She applied these newly-learned skills when she met with States during the Fellowship, notably the permanent missions of France and Brazil, with whom she raised the issue of illegal gold panning in French Guiana. This lobbying bore its fruit in July 2013 when the Organisation of Indigenous Nations in French Guiana (Organisation des Nations Autochtones de Guyane), the organisation that Florencine works for, received a letter from the French Minister of Justice, announcing the strengthening of legal provisions in Guiana regarding the clandestine

exploitation of mineral resources.

Since 2013, Florencine has contributed to the drafting of alternative reports on the rights of indigenous peoples in French Guiana for the Committee on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination (CERD), the Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW) and the Human Rights Committee (HRC). In July 2016, Florencine travelled to Geneva to present to CEDAW at its 64th session an alternative report for the review of France.

In response to her alternative report to CEDAW, the Commission nationale consultative des droits de l'homme (National Consultative Commission on Human Rights, CNCDH) interviewed Florencine in late-2016 regarding illegal gold panning in French Guiana and its impact on indigenous peoples. On 23 February 2017, the CNCDH released an advice that made several recommendations on indigenous peoples. Significantly, the CNCDH recommended that the French authorities implement a strategy to address illegal gold panning, whilst also ensuring that the rights of indigenous peoples are respected in a manner consistent with the Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples.

In Florencine's opinion, one of the strengths of the Fellowship is that it trains people who understand indigenous people's way of thinking and who are capable of disseminating the knowledge from the programme in to the language of indigenous peoples. Former fellows are therefore very well positioned to use the skills and knowledge they learnt during the Fellowship Programme to train indigenous peoples in their community on how to promote and protect the rights of indigenous peoples.

***"This training is a springboard for forming indigenous leaders... The advantage is its practical element. It helps indigenous people to better understand and use the protection mechanisms of human rights within the United Nations."***

# AFRICA

## EVARISTE NDIKUMANA'S STORY

Evariste belongs to the Batwa people from Burundi. He participated in the Fellowship Programme in 2009.



Evariste is a founding member of the Association of Hope for Young Batwas (ASSEJEBA, Association Espoir pour les Jeunes Batwa). Following his participation in the Fellowship Programme, in 2010, Evariste was elected to the Burundi National Assembly as a Batwa representative. In 2011, he graduated from university – only the second Batwa to ever achieve this feat.

Prior to the Fellowship Programme, Evariste had no knowledge on the rights of indigenous peoples. After completing the programme, Evariste returned to Burundi to share his newly-acquired knowledge with members of ASSEJEBA and other civil society organisations. He also decided to write his end of studies thesis on the impact of the abstention by Burundi in the vote on the UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples (UNDRIP).

As many Batwa were not aware of the existence of the UNDRIP, Evariste and his colleagues at

ASSEJEBA launched a campaign to raise awareness among the Batwa on the UNDRIP. This included training for members of ASSEJEBA and other community leaders on improving the effectiveness and impact of their advocacy on indigenous peoples' rights. Attendees at these training sessions received copies of the UNDRIP, which they used when they returned to their communities to educate people in villages throughout Burundi on the rights of indigenous peoples and the UNDRIP. ASSEJEBA also provided training for parliamentarians and government officials, as many were not aware of the UNDRIP.

The training sessions run by Evariste and his colleagues at ASSEJEBA created an advocacy space within the Burundi parliament to lobby the Government to adopt the UNDRIP. This shift was significant as the Government has previously stated that rights for indigenous peoples do not exist.

Evariste believes that the Fellowship Programme has been integral to the success of his advocacy efforts with ASSEJEBA, as it taught him how to negotiate with government. The programme also helped him to establish valuable and collaborative networks with other indigenous peoples in Africa and from regions around the world. These networks benefit the Batwa as they foster the sharing of knowledge and best practices between different indigenous peoples. For example, Evariste and ASSEJEBA now work with Batwa who live in the Great Lakes Region (Burundi, Democratic Republic of the Congo, Rwanda and Uganda).

At the international level, Evariste has also participated in sessions of the Expert Mechanism on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples (EMRIP).

# JANE NAINI MERIWA'S STORY

Jane belongs to the Yakku people from Kenya. She participated in the Fellowship Programme in 2014.

Jane Naini Meriwas is the founder and Director of the Samburu Women Trust, an indigenous women's organization that empowers local Samburu women through initiatives and programmes that aim to promote and protect the rights of Samburu women and girls.

For more than 15 years, Jane has worked at the national, regional and international level as an indigenous women's rights defender, a development practitioner and a mentor to advance the rights of indigenous peoples, in particular indigenous women and girls. Jane has also raised awareness about the damaging effects of climate change on indigenous peoples in Kenya, in particular its impact on nomadic pastoralist communities due to lower rainfalls and more frequent droughts.



Jane believes that the Fellowship Programme is a crucial tool for indigenous peoples around the world to uphold their rights and navigate the technical UN human rights mechanisms. Jane believes that the Fellowship programme equipped her with the confidence, knowledge and courage to be able to advance indigenous peoples' rights through different advocacy platforms, including the Special Procedures of the UN Human Rights Council, the African Commission on Human and Peoples' Rights and the human rights treaty bodies.

In March 2016, Jane was funded by the United Nations Voluntary Fund for Indigenous Peoples to attend the 92nd session of the Committee on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination (CERD) for the review of Kenya. During this session, Jane raised concerns and lobbied for recommendations to respect and support the rights, dignity and wellbeing of indigenous peoples in Kenya. CERD included a number of recommendations on indigenous peoples in its concluding observations to Kenya, including on access to justice, access to education and the principle of free, prior and informed consent. CERD also included a specific recommendation on the situation of the Sengwer, peoples in relation to acts threatening their physical security and property, the legal acknowledgement of their collective rights to their lands, resources and communal territories and to participate in the exploitation, management and conservation of the associated natural resources.

A significant achievement for Jane is her work on starting a conversation around harmful cultural practices that affect indigenous women and girls, in particular child beading. Jane has been able to bring the Samburu community together to discuss child beading and develop strategies to tackle the issue in a collaborative and inclusive manner. As a result, Jane has been successful in changing attitudes towards child beading amongst the Samburu. Importantly, elders have begun to prohibit the construction of the traditional huts that are used to facilitate the sexual relationships between Morans (male warriors aged between 15-35 years) and the underage Samburu girls, who are sometimes as young as 9 years old. Since Jane started her work on child beading, the number of Samburu girls enrolled in school has increased. Community perceptions towards Samburu women and girls in leadership positions are also slowly changing.

In addition to her work with the Samburu Women Trust, Jane sits on several boards in Kenya, including the National Coalition of Human Rights Defenders (Advisory Board Council) and the County Education Board. In 2009, Jane participated as a Fellow in the Training Programme on the Equal Status and Human Rights of Women in East Africa, and in 2016 she was elected for a three-year term as the East Africa Regional Representative for the Indigenous Peoples of Africa Coordinating Committee.

# NICOLAS MUKUMO MUSHUMBI'S STORY

Nicolas belongs to the Batwa people from the Democratic Republic of the Congo. He participated in the Fellowship Programme in 2012.



Nicolas is the technical assistant responsible for programs at the Programme Intégré pour le Développement du peuple Pygmée au Kivu (PIDP – SHIRIKA LA BAMBUTI) in the Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC).

After completing the Fellowship Programme, Nicolas shared his newly acquired knowledge with pygmy leaders and led training sessions for his colleagues at PIDP – SHIRIKA LA BAMBUTI on the UN human rights bodies and indigenous peoples' rights. These training sessions strengthened the capacity and expertise of PIDP – SHIRIKA LA BAMBUTI to use UN human rights

bodies to promote and protect the rights of indigenous peoples in DRC, in particular the pygmy population.

In 2013, PIDP – SHIRIKA LA BAMBUTI prepared a submission for the review of DRC during the second session of the Universal Periodic Review (UPR). PIDP – SHIRIKA LA BAMBUTI then participated in the 27th regular session of the Human Rights Council in September 2014 during which DRC accepted four recommendations on pygmies. Nicolas was involved in this process along with Diel Mochire Mwenge, a former 2011 OHCHR indigenous fellow who is also the provincial Director of PIDP – SHIRIKA LA BAMBUTI.

Following the 2014 UPR, PIDP – SHIRIKA LA BAMBUTI, through the work of staff such as Nicolas and Diel, established a project to monitor the implementation of the UPR recommendations by the DRC government. This initiative was coupled with a campaign to advocate for the rights of pygmies in North Kivu, a province in the north-west of DRC. PIDP – SHIRIKA LA BAMBUTI has also recently started to set up community forestry projects and “Community and Indigenous Heritage Zones” (Les Aires de Patrimoine Autochtone et Communautaire – “APACS”) in the pygmy forests of eastern DRC. This is the only initiative of its kind in DRC.





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