



# Cultural Survival

ANNUAL REPORT 2010

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# Changing of the Guard

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#### COVER PHOTO:

Kauinurie and her son on the annual pilgrimage to Wirikuta in Mexico. Read about our campaign to stop a Canadian mine from threatening a fragile desert and the Wixárika culture on page 9. Photo by Yvonne Negrin.

This report covers the period from January 1, 2010 to December 31, 2010 and financial information for September 1, 2009 to August 31, 2010.

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In August 2010, Ellen Lutz stepped down as executive director of Cultural Survival because of serious health issues (see the tribute to her on page 22), having transformed the organization in her six years of service. The board of directors immediately initiated an international search for a new director, receiving applications from around the world, and interviewing dozens of highly qualified candidates. In December, the board announced it had chosen Suzanne Benally as the next director of the organization. She is Navajo and Santa Clara Tewa from New Mexico.

Suzanne comes to Cultural Survival from Naropa University in Boulder, Colorado, where she was the associate provost for institutional planning and assessment and associate vice president for academic affairs. She was a core faculty member in environmental studies and a member of the president's cabinet.

Before starting at Naropa in 1999, she was deputy director and director of education programs at the American Indian Science and Engineering Society and director of the Institute on Ethnic Diversity at the Western Interstate Commission for Higher Education. She has been a teacher at the university level and has served as a consultant to philanthropic foundations, nonprofit organizations, and many higher education institutions. Additionally, she has worked extensively with American Indian communities. Her interests, teaching, and passions are focused on the relationship between land, spirituality, and people as reflected in stories, and in environmental issues and Indigenous rights. "I think Suzanne is a great choice to lead the combined Cultural Survival and Global Response organization and expand its advocacy into the critical environmental issues facing Indigenous Peoples," said Sarah Fuller, chair of the Cultural Survival board, on announcing the decision.

"Suzanne Benally has been at the heart of the university's transformation since my arrival," said Naropa University president Stuart Lord. "Her clarity, compassion, and wisdom have made her a cherished member of the entire university community and a vital member of the cabinet. We are delighted for this amazing opportunity for her to lead the Cultural Survival organization and to further her lifelong commitment to Indigenous Peoples and the issues facing them. We will miss Suzanne but fully support her mission to create change in the world."

Suzanne grew up in New Mexico. Her mother is Navajo and her father Santa Clara Tewa. She was raised on the Navajo Nation and at Santa Clara Pueblo. Growing up Native, she is deeply aware of the issues and concerns that face Native peoples and their environments. Her interests in Indigenous Peoples all over the world have led her to expand her thinking and work towards a global framework for environmental justice and Indigenous rights. “Development and the environmental issues affect Indigenous peoples all over the world,” she says. “At one time we understood and engaged the issues specific to our own homelands; now, with globalization and climate change, we have to understand and engage these issues from a global framework more so than in the past.

“I am incredibly honored to be able to lead a global organization such as Cultural Survival and use my skills and heart to help address Indigenous human rights and environmental concerns in the world, which I am passionate about. The work speaks to who I am as an Indigenous person and to all of our cultural survival.”

Suzanne started her new position on January 31, 2011 and is splitting her time between the Boulder and Cambridge offices of Cultural Survival.



Suzanne Benally

# A MESSAGE FROM THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

For Cultural Survival, 2010 represents a year of transition and change, while holding the course on our mission and programs. We were all deeply saddened by the death of Ellen Lutz, former executive director (see page 22), in November. Her legacy resides in the work that Cultural Survival achieved over the past six years as reflected in the report that follows.

This past year, the work of Cultural Survival with Indigenous partnerships and other nongovernment organizations took on direct actions with governments in conducting an on-the-ground human rights investigation in Kenya; coordinating congressional hearings on Indigenous issues in the United States; introducing a bill to the Guatemalan Congress to secure legal protections for Indigenous community radio stations; taking the government of Panama to the Inter-American Commission on Human Rights on behalf of the of the Ngöbe people; submitting reports on Indigenous rights to the United Nations Human Rights Council; and campaigning for the United States to endorse the UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples.

In addition to these unprecedented efforts, our existing programs moved forward with Indigenous environmental and human rights advocacy campaigns and support for Indigenous communities' efforts to protect their endangered languages and cultures.

At the urgent request of Indigenous communities, Cultural Survival's Global Response program developed advocacy campaigns in Kenya urging the government to stop human rights abuses of Samburu villagers by Kenyan police; in Papua New Guinea, calling on the government to halt mining permits that would allow dumping of toxic wastes into the marine ecosystem and destroying the livelihoods of Indigenous people; in Panama, urging the president to overturn new pro-industry laws that would make protest illegal and further deny basic human rights to Indigenous Peoples; and, in Mexico, answering the call of the Wixárika (Huichol) people seeking to protect their sacred cultural and ecological reserve from a Canadian mining company.

Cultural Survival's Guatemala Radio Project has grown to include 205 community-owned, volunteer-run stations broadcasting to over 1.5 million listeners on topics of vital importance to Mayan communities. In January a Community Radio Bill was cleared for debate in Congress, representing a significant step towards recognition and support of Indigenous community radio. Cultural Survival's Guatemala staff and deputy executive director Mark Camp are currently identifying next steps to strengthen the community radio movement in Guatemala, enabling Indigenous Maya to promote their human and environmental rights, health and education, fair trade and sustainable development, and to sustain their languages and cultures.

The Endangered Languages Program supports the work of our Native American language partners: the Euchee, Northern Arapaho, Wampanoag, Sac and Fox, and Alutiiq, in their community-based language revitalization programs. Cultural Survival continues to work with these programs' most critical need: ongoing funding to support master-apprentice programs in developing new fluent speakers. This year, Cultural Survival, together with a coalition of Native organizations, successfully advocated for increased federal funding for Native language programs, and proposed a presidential executive order to mandate improved federal support for Native language revitalization within the next five years.

The Panama Dam case is emblematic of the serious challenges facing Indigenous Peoples. In 2007, the Ngöbe people of western Panama requested Cultural Survival's help in stopping a government-sponsored hydroelectric dam that threatened their lands, communities, and cultural life. Despite successfully obtaining an injunction to stop the dam through the Inter-American Commission on Human Rights, the Panamanian government and AES Corporation persisted in employing strategies that divided the communities and fractured their unified resistance. Our legal partners in the case, the Harvard International Human Rights Clinic, in consultation with Ngöbe communities, determined that the most beneficial action now is to negotiate for economic compensation for community members and protection of their land above the projected reservoir line. While a disappointing outcome for this case, Ngöbe people across Panama are actively defending their environmental and cultural rights against other logging, mining, and dam-building projects on their lands. In the past few weeks, Panama has retracted two repressive laws following massive protests by Ngöbe communities. Our Global Response program continues to generate international awareness and public support for their efforts.

The *Cultural Survival Quarterly* celebrates its 35th year of publication, featuring articles by and about Indigenous Peoples, and highlighting current issues. Our website serves as a resource for activists, policy makers, scholars, the public, and, most importantly, for Indigenous communities defending their environments, languages, and cultures. Our bazaars showcase the work of dozens of Indigenous artisans, assisting communities to earn a fair wage for selling their goods, and encouraging the U.S. public to become informed about and involved in Indigenous rights issues. This year, for the first time, we held a bazaar in New York City, generously hosted by the National Museum of the American Indian.

In 2010, foundation funding, income from bazaars, and individual giving to Cultural Survival all increased compared to the prior year. Buoyed by that success, we made the decision to invest in significant programmatic activities such as the human rights investigation in Kenya, which we felt was an immediate and critical need, and which ultimately resulted in lives saved and policies changed. We enter 2011 with cautious optimism, planning to strengthen our cash reserves and seek funding to meet the urgent requests from Indigenous communities.

As farewells for Ellen were given, I was appointed the new executive director and began walking in the footsteps of a very dedicated international human rights leader. While that alone is a significant challenge, as Cultural Survival's new leader, I will seek to identify and implement strategies for continued financial sustainability, strengthening and expanding our current programs, and developing new advocacy projects to address the impact of climate change and environmental issues on Indigenous Peoples worldwide.

I want to thank all of you who contribute your voices, your passion, and your financial support to make Cultural Survival's work possible. I hope to hear from you: what you care about and how you can help fulfill our mission of partnering with Indigenous communities to defend their endangered lands, languages, and cultures.

With spirit I look forward to the work ahead together,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Suzanne Benally". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first name "Suzanne" written in a larger, more prominent script than the last name "Benally".

Suzanne Benally



**“If Cultural Survival had not stepped in to investigate, stand up for us and our rights, and continue to fight for us, we would not be able to still exist. Cultural Survival is like our warrior for our entire tribe.”**

— John Lenanyangerra, Samburu  
community leader, Kenya

Samburu women testify about police abuses.  
Photo by Tina Ramme.

# PROGRAMS: GLOBAL RESPONSE

DEFENDING INDIGENOUS PEOPLES' RIGHTS, LANDS, AND NATURAL RESOURCES

The Global Response program conducts international letter-writing campaigns on behalf of Indigenous communities that are facing environmental threats from mining, dams, logging, and other extractive industries operating without consent on their territory. The program also conducts on-the-ground investigations to support communities' efforts to protect their resources and environments.

In January, program director Paula Palmer and human rights expert Chris Allan traveled to Kenya to investigate reports of police atrocities and attacks on many pastoralist Samburu communities. They spent two weeks interviewing Indigenous people in five communities, as well as politicians, nonprofit organizations, clergy, and others involved in the situation. They documented gross human rights violations and crimes by the police, including murder, rape, arson, and theft. Their report was delivered to the United Nations, the president and attorney general of Kenya, and news agencies around the world. It got the attention of British documentary filmmakers, who went to Kenya and filmed police abuse of Samburu people firsthand for a documentary that will air on PBS and BBC in 2011.

The Global Response program also conducted a letter-writing campaign urging the Kenyan government to take action to protect Indigenous rights and curb police brutality. It is heartening to note that, although there have been isolated attacks on Samburu men by individual police officers, no further full-scale police assaults on Samburu communities have occurred since publication of our report. On Cultural Survival's recommendation, Samburu people created a network of human rights monitors who are now reporting such crimes and abus-

es to Kenyan human rights organizations and lawyers. A Global Response program intern spent two months with the Samburu helping them establish this network and engaging the Nairobi law firms.

The second Global Response campaign of the year was initiated at the request of Indigenous communities on Papua New Guinea's Rai Coast. A Chinese mining company had wrangled a government permit to dump millions of tons of toxic waste from its Ramu nickel mine and refinery into the ocean off the Rai Coast, in spite of scientific studies that warned of massive damage to the marine ecosystem. The legislature quickly passed amendments to the environmental law, denying landowners the right to sue the company for any damages to their property or their economy from the mining project. When Indigenous people, whose lives and livelihoods depend on the sea, took to the streets in protest, the attorney general threatened to arrest anyone who spoke out against the new law. Coastal residents won a temporary injunction to prevent the company from dumping its waste into the sea, but when they went to court seeking a permanent injunction, they were threatened, harassed, and intimidated.

The Global Response campaign called on the Papua New Guinea government to repeal the amendments, curtail government repression, and revoke the Chinese company's permit to dump mining waste into the sea. We also helped secure funding so that scientists could travel to Papua New Guinea to testify about the environmental dangers of ocean dumping. After a number of delays, the trial began as this annual report was being written in February 2011.



**“What used to be a local campaign in Madang is now a nation-wide issue, and this could lead to the downfall of the ruling party: the National Alliance, headed by the current prime minister. We did not think it would come this far, but the landowners have done it with support from their lawyer and Cultural Survival.”**

— John Chitoo, Bismarck Ramu Group,  
Papua New Guinea, on the Cultural  
Survival campaign to stop a nickel mine  
from dumping waste in the ocean.

Papua New Guinea fishermen like this one provide food for thousands of coastal families. Plans to dump toxic waste into the sea threaten their food supply. Photo by Johnny Shaw.

## PROGRAMS: GLOBAL RESPONSE (CONTINUED)

**“Thank you for the support and solidarity of your organization in the case of mining concessions in our sacred site called Wirikuta . . . The prestige of your organization helped us make the case to members of the media . . . . We also hope that Cultural Survival’s members respond with enough letters to affect the attitude of our government officials, increasing the pressure needed to stop the mine in Wirikuta.”**

— The Wixárika Communities of the Wixárika People

The third Global Response campaign sought to overturn repressive laws passed by Panama’s national assembly in May and June. The laws were intended to attract multinational corporations to invest in Panama, at the expense of the environment and the Indigenous Peoples. They eliminated the requirement for conducting environmental impact studies for industrial development projects approved by the government, restricted labor unions’ right to strike, authorized two-year jail terms for street protesters, and protected police from prosecution or punishment for human rights abuses they commit on the job. In early July, banana workers—mainly Indigenous Ngöbe—called for a strike in protest, and within a few days thousands of Ngöbe men, women, and children were creating road blocks and marching. The police cracked down hard, killing at least three men and wounding and blinding hundreds more with birdshot. The unprecedented police violence shocked the nation and roused widespread protest from students, environmentalists, and human rights organizations.

We quickly issued action alerts by email, and our members sent letters to Panama’s president and the legislature urging them to revoke the repressive laws and to investigate the police violence and punish those found guilty of using excessive force. After a 90-day negotiation period, the worst of the laws were revoked.

Global Response continues to press the president to also revoke an executive decree that interferes with the Ngöbe people’s electoral process. By controlling the

Ngöbe elections, the government hopes to undermine the leadership’s opposition to open-pit mining in Ngöbe territory. With the world’s second largest copper reserves on their lands, the Ngöbe people are under tremendous pressure to sacrifice the tropical rainforests, rivers, and resources of their homeland.

In September, Global Response answered the call of Mexico’s Wixárika (Huichol) people to help them protect their sacred cultural and ecological reserve, Wirikuta. On the edge of the high Chihuahua Desert, Wirikuta is the destination of the Wixárika people’s annual 300-mile pilgrimage to the place where the sun first rose. For thousands of years, Wixárika pilgrims have retraced the steps of their ancestors to Wirikuta’s sacred mountain, praying ancient prayers to maintain the earth’s equilibrium and keep their culture alive. Now a Canadian mining company wants to mine silver on the sacred mountain. If allowed to move forward, the mine would not only desecrate the sacred site, it would reduce and pollute the water supply for the region’s peasant farmers, mar the landscape and spoil the tourist economy, and threaten a fragile high-desert ecosystem that sustains the world’s greatest diversity of cactus species and many endangered birds.

The Wixárika traditional authorities appealed for help, and Global Response initiated a campaign urging Mexico’s president to deny the mining permit and uphold the protected status of the Wirikuta Cultural and Ecological Reserve.



**“I didn’t have the privilege of attending university, but my work with radio has given me an education.”**

— Angelica Cubul Sul (Kakchiquel), 23, of Sumpango, explaining her experience attending Cultural Survival workshops.

**“Never did we think an international organization would take an interest in us. But Cultural Survival helps us with getting the law approved, holding workshops with women and young people, and carrying out different activities. Cultural Survival has brought harmony to the community radios in Guatemala, by uniting them.”**

— Anselmo Xunic (Kakchiquel), of Radio Ixchel, Sumpango Sacatepequez.

# PROGRAMS: GUATEMALA RADIO PROJECT

## PROMOTING INDIGENOUS VOICES IN GUATEMALA

In a country where a majority of people live in rural areas, speak one of 24 different languages, have only a third-grade education, and do not have regular Internet access, getting news and information across the hilly countryside is a difficult task, and one that Cultural Survival is successfully taking on. The Community Radio Project partners with a network of 205 community radio stations across the country, to provide training and support to local volunteers who run each station. Small-scale radio is a technology that is inexpensive to operate, easy to run, and highly effective as a means for communication in the rural areas where these stations are located.

This year, Pocomam Mayan staff member Cesar Gomez, along with our Content Production Team, produced 154 programs in 6 Mayan languages, Spanish, and, for the first time, in Garifuna, an Indigenous Caribbean language native to the eastern coast of Guatemala. These programs were broadcast across 205 stations, reaching 1.5 million listeners across rural Guatemala. Productions ranged from 30-second spots on HIV awareness to 4-minute programs on fair-trade agriculture, from interviews on Indigenous women's political participation to a *radionovella* series on conserving fresh water sources using traditional Mayan knowledge. Using a train-the-trainers system, we conducted multiple workshops that educated 365 community radio leaders on topics such as citizen journalism, technology, human rights, political participation, radio production, and others, which they brought back to their own communities to share.

Despite all of community radio's benefits, it is not fully legalized in Guatemala. The right to radio is guaranteed in the country's Peace Accords and Constitution, but is not accounted for in the old telecommunications law, which covers licensing and bandwidth distribution. As a result, stations can be—and routinely are—shut down by the police. Part of Cultural Survival's work in Guatemala is advocating for a reform to the current telecommunica-

tions law that would fully recognize and support community radio. In January the Community Radio Bill 4087 gained a favorable recommendation from the Congressional Committee on Indigenous Issues. This important step cleared the way for Congress to schedule the bill for debate. In February, Cultural Survival hosted a press conference in support of the bill where Indigenous activist and Nobel laureate Rigoberta Menchu Tum, UN Special Rapporteur on the Promotion and Protection of the Right to Freedom of Opinion and Expression Frank La Rue, and three Guatemalan congressmen participated as panelists. Menchu explained, "I would like to give homage to the struggle of community radio stations, which, with the strength of their communities behind them, have struggled for many years for the right of Indigenous Peoples to have their own media . . . I would like to congratulate you on the Bill 4087; I believe there is a historic act taking place." She encouraged legislators to continue their support for the bill until it can be made law. Despite promises from many, 2010 closed without a date scheduled for debate on the Congress floor. Radio volunteers now trained in political participation, along with seasoned Indigenous activists inside the country and out, continue building pressure for a vote on democratizing the media in Guatemala.

### **UN Special Rapporteur on Freedom of Speech Stands Up for Community Radio in Guatemala**

After taking part in the February 11, 2010, press conference on community radio organized by Cultural Survival, UN Special Rapporteur Frank La Rue filed a case in Guatemala's Constitutional Court against the government, claiming that the existing telecommunications law is in violation of freedom of expression and speech guaranteed in the Guatemalan Constitution. He spoke of this matter at the press conference and has taken action recommending that passing the proposed bill that Cultural Survival and its partners have submitted to Congress will resolve the constitutional violation.



**“Language is important not only as a way of communicating with others, but as a carrier of culture. Language loss has many ramifications, such as loss of culture, family ties, lifeways, and the ability to be successful in one’s environment. Preservation of the unique language and cultural heritage of the Northern Arapaho Tribe is paramount in the tribe and must be maintained for future generations. We are very appreciative of the assistance, professionalism, generosity and support of Cultural Survival.”**

— Gail Ridgely, Superintendent,  
Arapaho Language Lodge

Yoney Spencer teaching the Euchee language to tribal children. Photo courtesy of Euchee Language Project.

# PROGRAMS: ENDANGERED LANGUAGES

## REVITALIZING NATIVE LANGUAGES

The Endangered Language Program offers support to Native American programs around the country, which are working to revitalize their languages, 70 of which are spoken by only a handful of very elderly people. In addition to efforts to increase federal funding and create online resources for all tribal language efforts, the program has four principal partners, the Euchee Language Project, the Northern Arapaho Language Lodges, the Sauk Language Department of the Sac and Fox Nation, and the Wopanaak Language Reclamation Project. The work with partners includes assistance with grant writing, fund raising, and events that have generated more than \$850,000 in direct aid to tribes since these partnerships were first established during 2007-2008. The money has paid for Native language immersion education activities and materials such as master-apprentice teams, preschool and kindergarten classroom equipment, language grammars and teaching books, youth after-school programs, and summer camps.

For example, this funding provided the Hinon'eitiino'ooowu (Arapaho Language Lodge) immersion school on the Wind River Reservation in Wyoming with a truckload of equipment for their preschool and kindergarten classrooms, including sand and water tables, play kitchens, dress-up centers, mobile listening and art stations, grocery sets, stuffed animals, a doctor's office, and a variety of writing materials. Teachers will use all of these items and the additional funds to help the students learn Arapaho and apply the language to daily life.

The Sac and Fox Nation won a \$300,000 grant from the federal Administration for Native Americans, which will help create the Sauk language Kimachipena immersion school. The grant will support a master-apprentice program in which three teachers will learn the Sauk language from the last five elderly speakers. With that training, the teachers should be fluent enough to teach children in the immersion school, which is scheduled to open in 2012. We also were able to raise funds in direct support for the

Euchee Language Project's daily youth language programs in Sapulpa, Oklahoma.

Work continued on the Endangered Languages Program's website, the Language Gathering, with 57 tribal language program profiles from 22 states added to the website under construction. Additional content development is underway. We will eventually have profiles of nearly 300 tribal language programs, all of which will be able to share information, ideas, and best practices.

In July, as a member of the National Alliance to Save Native Languages, Cultural Survival co-sponsored the Alliance's annual National Native Language Revitalization Summit that brought top officials from the U.S. departments of Education and Interior and members of Congress and their staffers into direct dialogue with immersion-school program directors and Native language advocates. Participants pressed federal officials to uphold provisions of the 1990 Native American Languages Act that allow Native children to be taught and tested in their own languages and that the No Child Left Behind Act has undermined. Language summit attendees also urged congressional appropriators to increase funding in 2011 for language preservation and maintenance projects.

This spring Cultural Survival also presented a draft of a presidential executive order on Native language revitalization to members of the Obama administration. The draft order highlights the urgent situation of more than 70 endangered languages and mandates broad interagency cooperation and support for Native languages across federal agencies. The order would also mandate that federal agencies comply with previously disregarded provisions in the 1990 Native American Languages Act. Cultural Survival was one among more than a dozen organizations to develop and propose the order.



“Cultural Survival has given me the chance to demonstrate my Indigenous art. It has allowed me to speak about the history of weaving and share ideas about organic dyeing. It has also given me the chance to talk about the history of Oaxaca and my village. I have been able to explain many aspects of my Zapotec culture to people at the bazaars. Without Cultural Survival this exchange would not have been possible.”

— Zapotec weaver Jose Buenaventura  
Gonzalez, Oaxaca, Mexico



# PROGRAMS: CULTURAL SURVIVAL BAZAARS

PROMOTING INDIGENOUS ARTS AND CULTURE

**“Cultural Survival brings together artisans like us, who are living our heritage through the production of our art. We educate the public about the danger we face of losing our cultures through mass production in a global marketplace. Cultural Survival provides the venues and marketing necessary for successful shows, especially in the current economy. Offering shopping in a global marketplace to knowledgeable people has not only proven beneficial for us, but essential in allowing us the opportunity to earn the income needed to continue focusing on creating original art that is true to our ancestry.”**

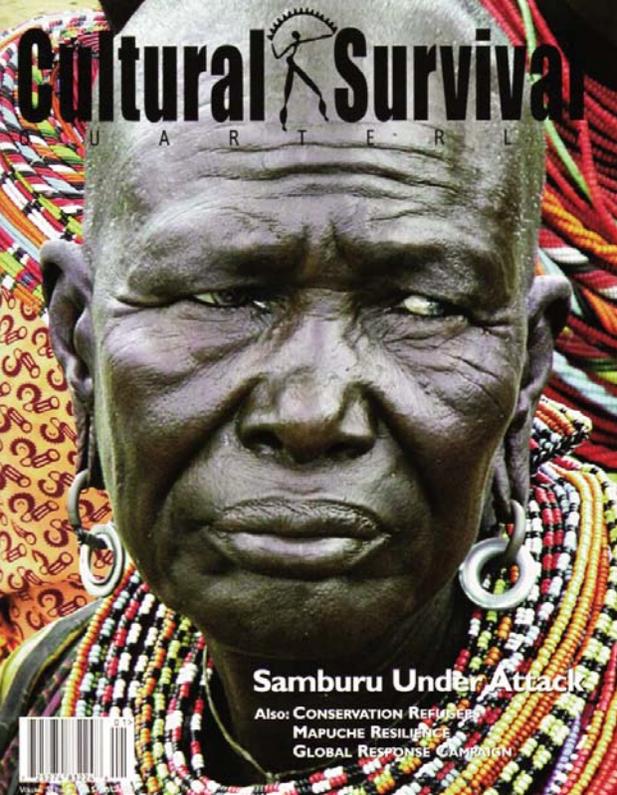
— Lenny Novak, Algonquin/Abenaki Artist

The bazaar program creates a meaningful venue for cultural exchange. For Indigenous artisans and performer partners, fair trade companies and nonprofits, the bazaars provide a marketplace for handmade Native arts and crafts, and fund important community projects, as well as the artisan’s livelihoods. For Cultural Survival, the bazaars are an important part of our outreach and education. Every year the bazaars’ advertising and the articles it generates reach more than one million people.

Since 2002, the bazaars have raised almost \$3.5 million dollars for Native artists, their communities, fair trade, and important human rights and environmental programs. In 2010, Cultural Survival hosted nine bazaars that added over \$473,000 to that total.

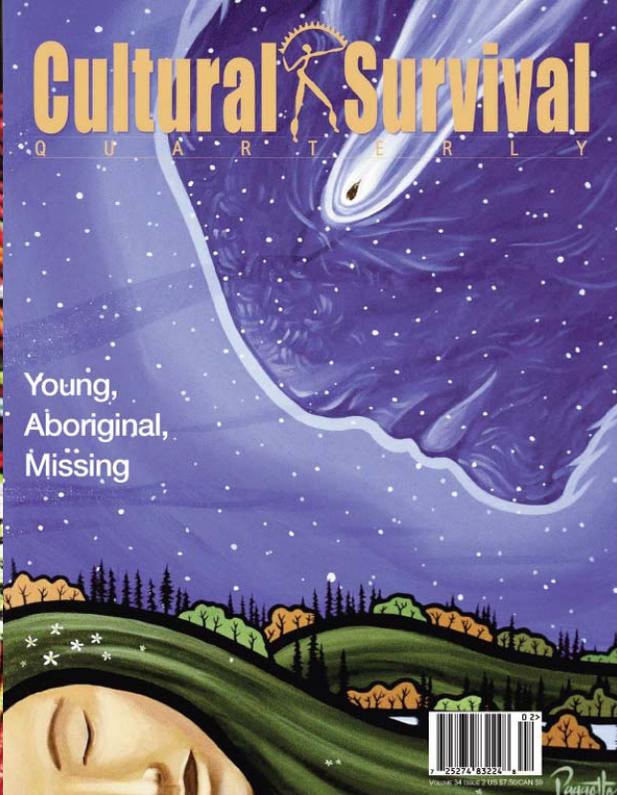
The bazaars last year generated \$272,000 for artisans from 33 countries and supported community-generated projects that ranged from student scholarships to micro-loan programs, agricultural development, and health clinics. For example, some of the \$16,000 that fair-trade retailer Thread of Hope raised at the bazaars went to United for a Better Life, a cooperative of about 80 Mayan women who live in marginalized communities on the

outskirts of Guatemala City. They used the money to finance daycare, a Montessori preschool and elementary school, and partially subsidize the pharmacy and medical clinic, including a prenatal clinic and healthy babies program. Some of the \$3,000 that Yayla Rugs generated went to Barakat, an Indigenous organization in Pakistan that provides school and human rights training for more than 3,000 women and children in central Asia each year. And the \$4,000 generated by Ugandan nonprofit organization Project Have Hope supported displaced Acholi people through agricultural programs like balcony gardens and mushroom cultivation, sponsoring 101 children in school, establishing an adult literacy program for 32 female students, providing micro-loans to enable 76 women to expand or start new businesses, and giving vocational training to 26 women. These and many other community projects are in addition to the benefits of simply providing a living to artisans’ families and reinforcing Indigenous traditions.

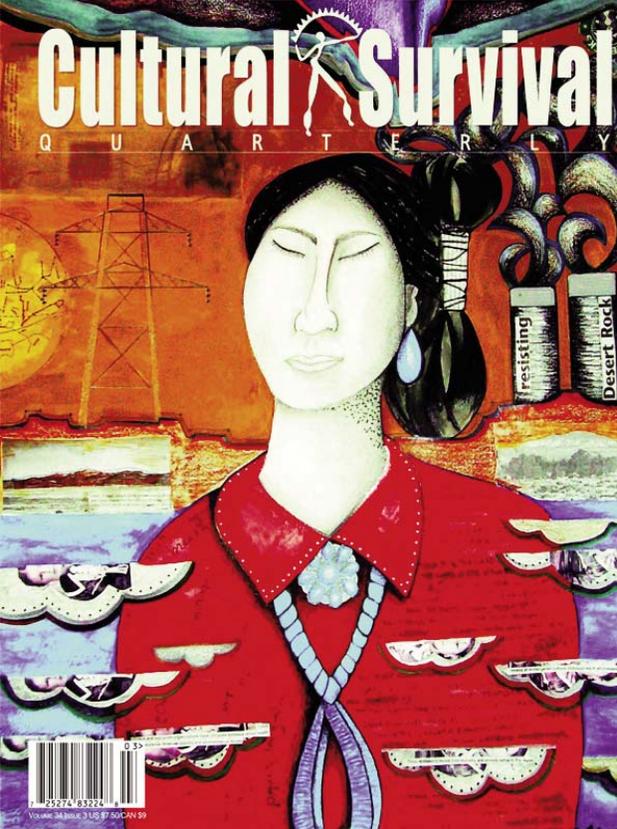


### Samburu Under Attack

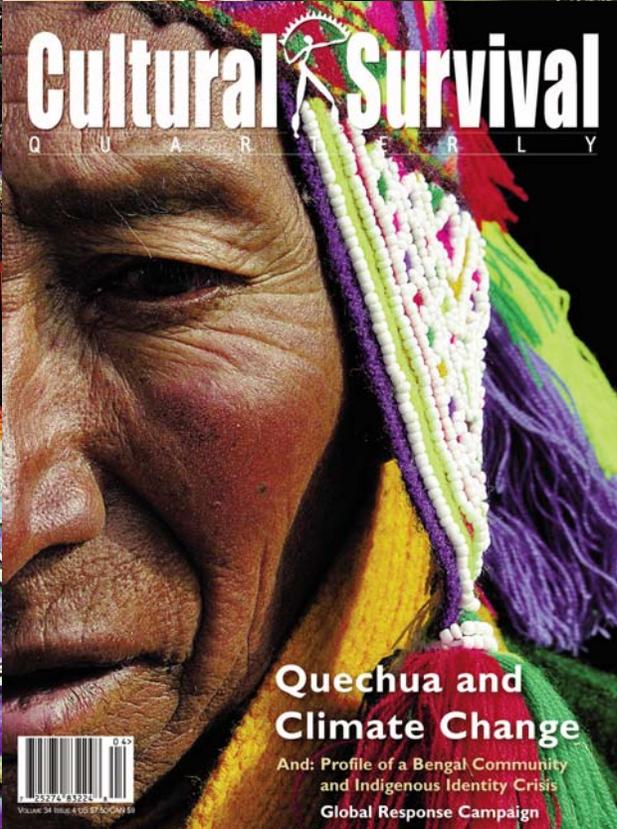
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MAPUCHE RESILIENCE  
GLOBAL RESPONSE CAMPAIGN



### Young, Aboriginal, Missing



### Resisting Desert Rock



### Quechua and Climate Change

And: Profile of a Bengal Community  
and Indigenous Identity Crisis  
Global Response Campaign



# PROGRAMS: COMMUNICATIONS

PUBLICIZING INDIGENOUS ISSUES



Communications is a central part of Cultural Survival's work, informing people about Indigenous issues and cultures and providing a platform for Indigenous writers and photographers to tell their stories.

Our website continues to be a major focus of our communications efforts, and over the past year it has seen constant revision and improvement, with a new home page design and new structural changes to make navigation easier for site visitors. We have also been adding much more video and multimedia to the site. All these efforts have paid off in increasing numbers of visitors, longer average time spent on the site, and more pages viewed in each visit. In December alone we had almost 60,000 visitors from 192 countries and territories.

The *Cultural Survival Quarterly* this year reflected several ongoing priorities. First, and most important, we greatly increased the number of pieces written by Indigenous authors, with a goal of eventually having almost all of our pieces produced by Indigenous writers. We also put a much greater emphasis on artwork by Indigenous artists in addition to the beautiful photographs we regularly feature. The magazines we produced this year included a major article on Cultural Survival's human rights investigation in Kenya (based on the investigation's comprehensive report), explorations of Indigenous efforts to mitigate the effects of climate change, a report

on how Indigenous communities are being displaced by well-meaning conservation programs, and several very personal essays by young Indigenous women. The coming year will see even more Indigenous writing and artwork, along with increasing emphasis on the role of Indigenous Peoples in environmental protection.

We also produced a special extra edition of the *Quarterly* in Portuguese as an advocacy tool for Xavante communities in Brazil, who are trying to reclaim their traditional territory. A thousand copies were shipped to Brazil and are now being used by the Xavante.

Our monthly e-newsletter is now reaching about 18,000 readers, carrying updates on our various advocacy campaigns, news from the wider world of Indigenous rights, and information about Cultural Survival initiatives and events.



Ngöbe people throughout Panama are protesting a new law that makes it easier for companies to exploit their lands and natural resources. Here they pray that mining will not desecrate the sacred Mount Chorcha. Photo by Marian Ahn Thorpe.

CULTURAL SURVIVAL

## PROGRAMS - CHANGUINOLA DAM CAMPAIGN

For the past three years, Cultural Survival has been pursuing a case on behalf of the Ngöbe people of Panama through the Inter-American human rights system, first through a petition with the Inter-American Commission on Human Rights and ultimately in the Inter-American Court of Human Rights. The case deals with a hydroelectric dam being built across the Changuinola River by a subsidiary of an American energy company, AES, under license from the Panamanian government. That dam will flood the homeland of several Ngöbe communities. The company and the government used a variety of unscrupulous methods to get the land from the people, in process ignoring or, in some cases, overtly violating their rights. At one point, a permanent police cordon was set up around the area to facilitate the dam construction. The communities asked Cultural Survival to intervene on their behalf, and with them we filed a petition with the Inter-American Commission, seeking an injunction to stop construction of the dam and start consultations with Indigenous stakeholders.

With generous donations from our members, Cultural Survival enlisted experts, gathered evidence, prepared documentation, and brought Ngöbe representatives to the United Nations Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues and to congressional hearings in Washington, D.C., to give testimony on the petition. After those hearings, the commission did, indeed, call for the government to stop construction while the case was being heard, but the government and company ignored that call (the commission has limited enforcement powers) and they stepped up construction. Cultural Survival Executive Director Ellen Lutz, who handled the case, traveled to Panama a second time in 2009 to work with the local communities and plan strategy, but she found that there was increasing disagreement among those communities. AES had been working hard to sow dissent, systematically paying off community members, aggravating existing factions, and using intimidation in

to undermine opposition and show that the communities were not unanimously opposed to the dam.

At the same time, Ellen's health began to fail (see page 22), and she could no longer carry on her work. So Cultural Survival asked the Harvard Law School Human Rights Program to take over active pursuit of the case, as they had the resources and expertise to continue our efforts. In December 2010, when Inter-American Human Rights Commissioner Dinah Shelton conducted a site visit in Panama, a team from the Harvard clinic was there to present witnesses from the dissenting communities. At this writing, while the Inter-American Court of Human Rights continues its deliberations, the clinic is helping the Ngöbe negotiate the best possible compensation package from AES.

While Cultural Survival (with the collaboration of national and international environmental organizations) has not succeeded in stopping construction of the Chan 75 dam, our involvement is producing a better outcome for the affected Ngöbe families. Chan 75 is the first of more than 40 dams that the government of Panama is planning. One of our goals from the beginning was to make this fight costly enough for the government that they would be more likely to respect Indigenous rights in future dam plans. There is no question that the government has been publicly humiliated by the long case in the Inter-American human rights system. We remain hopeful that they might take a more enlightened approach in the future.



**"The Ngöbe community thanks Global Response/Cultural Survival very much for your support and solidarity in the successful campaign to revoke Law # 30, which caused so much pain and suffering to our families in Bocas del Toro. We deeply appreciate your solidarity."**

— Feliciano Santos Santos, Movement for the Defense of the Territories and Ecosystems of Bocas del Toro, Panama

Ngöbe delegates, Feliciano Santos Santos (left) and Estanislao Bejerano from Panama testify in front of the Tom Lantos Human Rights Committee on how American investments are destroying their culture and way of life. Photo by Paula Palmer.

# OTHER CULTURAL SURVIVAL ACCOMPLISHMENTS

## **Cultural Survival Participates in Congressional Human Rights Hearings**

Cultural Survival took part in a hearing held by the U.S. House of Representatives Tom Lantos Human Rights Commission on Indigenous Peoples in Latin America, development, and U.S. foreign policy. The Indigenous speakers in the April 29 hearing explained how U.S. foreign policy is affecting their communities, often in dramatic and disastrous ways. Cultural Survival director Ellen Lutz worked with the commission to set up the hearings, and hired a bus to bring Indigenous observers from New York, where they were attending the UN Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues.

Commission co-chair James McGovern, who has long been a strong advocate for human rights, called for investment in the protection of Indigenous lands, both as a conservation measure and in recognition of Indigenous Peoples' rights. "Protect land, protect it from development that would displace people," he said from the chair. McGovern also strongly encouraged direct conversations between Indigenous Peoples and national governments, especially with regard to the Free Trade Agreements proposed between the United States and various Latin American nations, which currently are being negotiated without the input of Indigenous Peoples. "I hope we move away from that," he said. "If we're all talking about the rights of Indigenous Peoples, they need to have a larger presence." The hearing included representatives of the State Department and USAID, as well as Professor Dinah Shelton of George Washington University School of Law and the Inter-American Commission on Human Rights.

## **Cultural Survival at the United Nations Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues**

During the ninth session of the United Nations Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues in April, 2010, Cultural Survival hosted two special events. "Persuading the United States and Canada to adopt the Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples" was a strategy session on how to get the last two opposing countries to endorse the UN declaration, cosponsored with Lancaster University. "Mapping Community-Based Protected Areas: a model for sustainable development and cultural and environmental protection" was cosponsored by CORALINA and the Heller School for Social Policy and Management at Brandeis University.

## **Rights of Indigenous People Symposium**

To encourage dialogue around the U.S. endorsement and implementation of the UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples, Cultural Survival partnered with Urban Zen and Amnesty International to host a panel discussion with innovative thought leaders and policy makers on November 10 in New York. The evening was moderated by Elsa Stamatopoulou, former Chief of the UN Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues. Speakers included Larry Cox, the executive director of Amnesty International; Les Malezer (Gabi Gabi), member of the board of Cultural Survival and general manager for the Foundation of Aboriginal and Islander Research Action; and Kent Lebsock (Lakota), coordinator of the Owe Aku International Justice Program.

## IN MEMORIAM: ELLEN LUTZ

**“It is painful to lose a great friend, a great visionary leader, and a courageous person. Ellen lived her life with full dignity and respect.”** —Stella Tamang, South Asia Indigenous Women’s Forum



Ellen Lutz, the executive director of Cultural Survival from 2004 to 2010, passed away on November 4, the victim of metastatic breast cancer. She was 55.

Ellen became director of the Cultural Survival in 2004 and transformed the organization over the next six years, strongly emphasizing human rights and advocacy, areas in which she had an international reputation. She led Cultural Survival into Native American language revitalization; she started a program to submit Indigenous rights reports to the UN Human Rights Council; she launched our first on-the-ground human rights investigation, in Kenya; she oversaw Cultural Survival’s merger with Global Response; she helped organize congressional hearings on Indigenous rights; and she moved the organization away from development work and project sponsorship, building and strengthening Cultural Survival’s own programs. And that’s the short list.

Beyond the programmatic changes, Ellen pushed very hard to have Cultural Survival move toward more Indigenous involvement in the organization itself. She prompted a significant increase in the number of Indigenous board members and Cultural Survival staff members, aiming for a 50/50 mix of Indigenous and non-Indigenous representation. Those Indigenous board members have included international luminaries, including the chair of the UN Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues, the chair of the Indigenous Peoples’ Caucus, and the principal defender for the Special Court for Sierra Leone. “From the beginning,” says Cultural Survival board vice-chair Richard Grounds, “she was very clear about directly engaging Indigenous communities in terms of their concerns, their input, and their involvement with programs, not only on the receiving end, but making decisions and participating in the work of Cultural Survival. That way of going about the work has really revolutionized the organization.”



As Ellen's disease progressed, she actually increased her efforts, and in addition to presiding over Cultural Survival's most ambitious year yet, she co-edited two pioneering books, *Prosecuting Heads of State* (Cambridge University Press) and *Human Rights and Conflict Management in Context* (Syracuse University Press). She continued working at Cultural Survival until mere weeks before her death.

Ellen's concern for human rights began when, as a 15-year-old exchange student to Uruguay, she witnessed the onset of Uruguay's state-sponsored "Dirty War." After graduating from Temple University in 1976, she earned a master's degree in anthropology from Bryn Mawr in 1978, then took a law degree in international law and human rights from Boalt Hall Law School at the University of California at Berkeley.

Ellen's interest in Latin America continued as professional work with Amnesty International in San Francisco and Washington, D.C. From 1989 to 1994 she headed the California office of Human Rights Watch, where she conducted research and published on little-known but extensive human rights abuses in Mexico, and where she was co-counsel in two groundbreaking human rights cases in U.S. courts, against the infamous Philippine dictator Ferdinand Marcos and Argentine general Suarez-Mason.

Moving with her family to Massachusetts in 1994, she helped to set up the Center for Human Rights and Conflict Resolution at the Fletcher School of Law and Diplomacy at Tufts University. She was the first executive director for that center and also taught international law, human rights, and mediation at Tufts, Harvard, and the University of Massachusetts, and she wrote widely. One of her students, now a professor at Occidental College, recalled how "warm and desirous she was of connecting to students in an often cold institutional world; a marvelous force of nature."

**She was one of those dynamic leaders whose energetic work for human rights causes should be an inspiration to us all."** —Doug Herman, Smithsonian National Museum of the American Indian

**"Ellen has been one of my heroes. She taught us that no tyrant should go unchallenged and no small group should be powerless. She fought with a superior intellect to wrest justice out of life's most unjust developments, and never seemed to have her own self-interest interfere with efforts. We have lost a champion, an esteemed leader, a hero of all we aspire to do in the name of justice."**

—Westy Egmont, Egmont Associates, Cultural Survival board member

As news of Ellen's death circulated, heartfelt tributes to her poured into Cultural Survival's offices from every corner of the world, reflecting both her wide circle of friends and the enormous impact of her human rights work. Cultural Survival board member Westy Egmont spoke for many—including the Cultural Survival staff—when he wrote, "Ellen has been one of my heroes. She taught so many of us that no tyrant should go unchallenged and no small group should be powerless. She lived large, fought with a superior intellect to wrest justice out of life's most unjust developments, and never let her own self-interest interfere with those efforts. Ellen came to all such engagements with total humility, genuine concern, apparent knowledge, and a progressive set of values that all worked together beautifully. We have lost a champion, an esteemed leader, a hero of all we aspire to do in the name of justice. I have lost a dear friend."

A fund has been set up in Ellen's name to underwrite an annual Ellen L. Lutz Indigenous Rights Award, which will honor a heroic advocate for the rights of Indigenous Peoples. To learn more about the fund, please contact Polly Laurelchild-Hertig at [polly@cs.org](mailto:polly@cs.org) or 617-441-5400 x 18.

# GOVERNANCE

Cultural Survival is governed by a board of directors that serves as the organization's legal accountability mechanism and bears all the responsibilities of boards of directors in the United States and in the Commonwealth of Massachusetts. The board works through committees, including an Executive Committee, a Finance Committee, a Fundraising Committee, and a Nominating Committee.

A unique feature of our board is our Program Council, a committee predominantly made up of Indigenous board members who possess the knowledge, experience, and skills to assist the organization to evaluate current programs, set policy on complex program-related issues, and identify potential new programs and opportunities for growth.

## BOARD OF DIRECTORS

### PRESIDENT AND CHAIRMAN OF THE BOARD

**Sarah Fuller** is the president of Decision Resources, Inc., an international publishing and consulting firm. She previously served as vice president of Arthur D. Little, Inc., and president of Arthur D. Little Decision Resources.

### VICE CHAIR

**Richard A. Grounds**, Euchee, directs the Euchee Language Project, in which first-language Euchee-speaking elders teach community leaders and youth. He is active in international affairs regarding Indigenous Peoples' rights. He received his doctorate in comparative religion from Princeton University and served as co-chair of Cultural Survival's Program Council from 2005-2008.

### TREASURER

**Jeff Wallace** is founder of North Star Management, a firm that manages and develops commercial buildings in Boston. He holds a degree from Huxley College of Environmental Studies in Bellingham, WA, and an MBA. His past experience includes working for a venture capital firm and for an architect/developer before founding his company.

### CLERK

**Jean Jackson** is a professor of anthropology at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology. Her books, articles, and teaching focus on medical anthropology, social and ethnic identity, gender issues, and Indigenous mobilization in Colombia. She received her doctorate in anthropology from Stanford University.

**Karmen Ramírez Boscán**, Wayuu, is an international Indigenous Peoples' rights activist with a lifetime of experience working with Wayuu communities in Colombia as well as national organizations such as Sütsüin Jiyeyu Wayuu—Strength of Women Wayuu—National Indigenous Organization of Colombia, and Andean Coordinator of Indigenous Organizations. She has advocated for Indigenous issues internationally working as a consultant for the International Labor Organization, Indigenous Peoples and Minorities Unit at the Office of the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights, Organization of American States, and the UN Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues. She has a background in social communication and journalism.

**Marcus Briggs-Cloud** is Miccosukke of the Great Maskoke Nation of Florida, and is a son of the Wind Clan people and grandson of the Bird Clan people. He recently worked as a Maskoke language instructor at the University of Oklahoma and as a high school student counselor for the Indian Education Office in Norman, Oklahoma. He also has served as assistant director of youth programs and Maskoke language instructor for the Poarch Band of Creek Indians of Alabama. He currently is an Oxfam International Youth Action Partner and a National Steering Committee member of the United Methodist Student Movement. Marcus earned a master's degree in theological studies at the Harvard Divinity School.

## BOARD OF DIRECTORS (CONTINUED)

**Westy A. Egmont**, Egmont Associates, was the president of the International Institute of Boston for nine years. He previously served as the director of the Greater Boston Food Bank and hosted and produced a public television program. He holds a doctorate of divinity from Andover Newton Theological School.

**Laura R. Graham** is a professor of anthropology at the University of Iowa. Her work focuses on lowland South American Indigenous Peoples' activities in national and international arenas, especially the Xavante of central Brazil (Ge) and the Wayúu (Arawak, also known as Guajiro) of Venezuela and Colombia. She is past chair of the American Anthropological Association's Committee for Human Rights and chairs their Task Group on Language and Social Justice. From 1994-2005 she directed the Xavante Education Fund, a Cultural Survival Special Project. She now coordinates the Xavante Warã Association's projects with Cultural Survival.

**James Howe** is a professor of anthropology at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology. A specialist on the Kuna of Panama, his research focuses on political and historical anthropology, Indigenous-state relations, and the impact of missionaries. He received his doctorate in anthropology from the University of Pennsylvania.

**Cecilia Lenk**, town councilor for Watertown, Massachusetts, is the former vice president of information technology for Decision Resources. She has developed numerous national and international Internet initiatives in the areas of science, health, and science education. She received her doctorate in biology at Harvard University.

**Pia Maybury-Lewis** is a cofounder of Cultural Survival. She was a member of the staff until 2009, managing the intern and bazaar programs.

**Les Malezer**, Native Australian of the Gabi Gabi Community, is the general manager for the Foundation for Aboriginal and Islander Research Action based in Woolloongabba, Australia. He is also the chairperson for the international Indigenous Peoples' Caucus. He was instrumental in lobbying governments to support the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples with the caucus.

**P. Ranganath Nayak** is the chief executive officer of Cytel Software. He has more than 24 years of senior-level management experience in technology and management consulting, and holds a doctorate in mechanical engineering from the Massachusetts Institute of Technology.

**Vincent O. Nmehielle**, Ikwerre from the Niger Delta region of Nigeria, is an associate professor of law at the University of the Witwatersrand Law School, Johannesburg, South Africa. He was the former principal defender for Liberian president Charles Taylor at the Special Court for Sierra Leone in The Hague. He holds a doctorate in international and comparative law from George Washington University.

**Ramona L. Peters** (Nosapocket of the Bear Clan), Mashpee Wampanoag, lives and works in Cape Cod, Massachusetts, and is a nationally known artist who has revived her tribe's traditional pottery-making techniques. She is a visual historian of her culture, fulfilling this role through various undertakings as a teacher, spokesperson, curator, interpreter, consultant, and Indigenous rights activist.

## **BOARD OF DIRECTORS (continued)**

**Stella Tamang**, Tamang tribe from Nepal, was chair of the International Indigenous Womens Caucus at the third session of the U.N. Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues and is currently the chair of the South Asia Indigenous Womens Forum and an advisor to the Nepal Tamang Women Ghedung. She founded Bikalpa Gyan Kendra in Nepal to contribute to students' education and livelihood by combining academic learning with practical training.

**Martha Claire Tompkins** serves as the principal of a personal investment management and acquisitions fund in Houston, Texas. She has a degree from Sarah Lawrence College and studied with Cultural Survival co-founder David Maybury-Lewis at Harvard University.

**Roy Young** established Nature's Own, a wholesale and retail mineral and fossil business that imports handcrafts from Pakistan and Brazil. He has a deep commitment to environmental conservation and founded numerous environmental nonprofit organizations, including Global Response, ECOS, Northern Ohio Recycling Project, Eco-Cycle, Rocky Flats Truth Force, Global Greengrants Fund, and Trust for Land Restoration. He holds a BS in geology from Duke University.

## **ADDITIONAL PROGRAM COUNCIL MEMBERS AND PROGRAM ADVISORS**

jessie little doe baird (Wampanoag)  
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Ancelmo Xunic (Kaqchikel), Guatemala Radio Project Bookkeeper

# INTERN PROGRAM

**“Interning at Cultural Survival was a particularly rewarding experience. I was exposed to a variety of work, largely focused on advocacy initiatives involving the Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples and specific cases of mining exploitation in Panama and Papua New Guinea. I developed a stronger understanding of nonprofit advocacy work and the many issues facing Indigenous Peoples worldwide.”**

—Bradford Merzigian, summer 2010 intern

**“I had a great experience during my time as a Marketing and Events Intern. I especially enjoyed learning about how the bazaars mutually benefited both Indigenous artists and Cultural Survival. They are a creative and quite unusual event that serves many purposes at once, which I find to be an important characteristic of social justice work. The bazaars are inspiring events that I was honored to be a part of.”**

—Katherine Quackenbush, summer 2010 intern

Cultural Survival’s work could not be accomplished without our interns. Interns are involved in all areas of the organization’s work and play a vital role in day-to-day operations at Cultural Survival. This year we hosted 28 interns from universities around the country.

*Guatemala Radio Project:* Interns assisted in evaluating all the radio program episodes, helped write quarterly reports and grant applications, and set up speaking engagements about the project for station representatives.

*Endangered Languages:* Interns helped organize materials for hundreds of Native American language advocates attending the National Native Language Revitalization Summit. Interns also assisted with fundraising, helping research foundations and develop donor files for potential funders for Native



American language programs. Interns and graduate volunteers helped organize outreach calls and interviews with dozens of tribal language programs across the United States.

*Fundraising and Events:* Interns contributed to the success of our expanded bazaars program by educating the public about Indigenous issues and fair trade, setting up and breaking down the bazaars, maintaining security, encouraging attendees to join Cultural Survival, assisting vendors and performers, selling rugs and crafts, handing out flyers, and directing traffic.

*Publications and Research:* Interns wrote or contributed to articles that were published in the *Cultural Survival Quarterly* and wrote features and urgent appeals for the website.

# CULTURAL SURVIVAL MEMBERS



## Anne St. Goar

Anne St. Goar has been a Cultural Survival member and donor since 1989, when cofounder David Maybury-Lewis gave a talk at Massachusetts General Hospital in Boston where she was a primary care physician. Now 88, Anne is retired; she is an active member of the Unitarian Universalist church, an avid amateur horticulturist, and enjoys traveling and spending time with her children and eight grandchildren.

**Why she became a donor to Cultural Survival:**

**"It's important to keep cultures alive. Maintaining the culture is central to Indigenous Peoples' lives."**

**What she sees as a current challenge: "Climate change is affecting Indigenous Peoples disproportionately."**

## Making a difference as a family: The Balcoms

The Balcom family of Clovis, California—Jan, Mark, and daughter Heather—have been involved in Global Response campaigns since Heather was in middle school. Jan relates, **"Our daughter found it empowering as a relatively powerless youngster to be able to help make a difference by writing letters."** While their daughter is now grown, Jan is still actively involved: writing letters and reading and then passing on her copy of the *Cultural Survival Quarterly* to her local library (where she assures us it "is prominently displayed"), and donating to Cultural Survival.

Today, Jan says, **"I appreciate the important work of the Global Response program and of Cultural Survival. We NEED the cultural knowledge and wisdom that we endanger and extinguish every day — knowledge our civilization has largely forgotten of how to live sustainably with this world. Cultural Survival recognizes this and does something about it."**

## MEMBERSHIP

Our members continue to make all our work possible, writing letters to governments and corporations, offering ideas and help, and providing the financial resources needed to carry out our mission. This year 1,203 people joined the organization.

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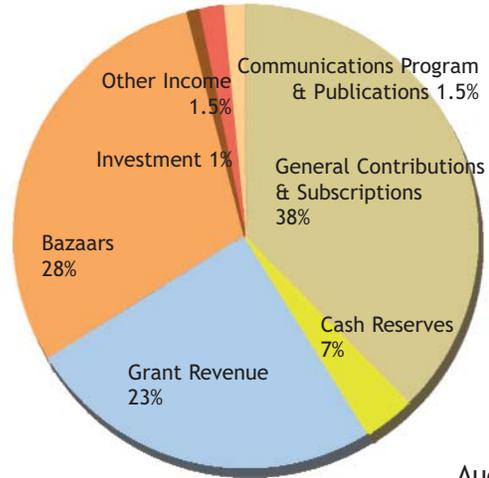
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## FISCAL YEAR 2010

General Contributions & Subscriptions	\$656,862	38%
Investment	\$13,560	1%
Grant Revenue	\$399,956	23%
Bazaars	\$472,844	28%
Communications Program & Publications	\$22,178	1.5%
Other Income	\$22,958	1.5%
<i>Subtotal</i>	<i>-----</i> \$1,588,358	
Spending from Cash Reserves	\$119,781	7%
<b>Total</b>	<b>\$1,708,139</b>	

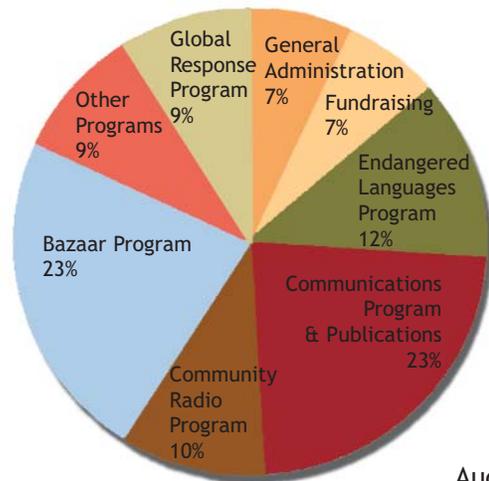


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## FISCAL YEAR 2010

### Expenses

Fundraising	\$108,653	7%
General Administration	\$124,615	7%
Endangered Languages Program	\$209,234	12%
Communications Program & Publications	\$395,586	23%
Community Radio Program	\$173,409	10%
Bazaar Program	\$389,525	23%
Global Response Program	\$150,969	9%
Other Programs	\$156,149	9%
<b>Total</b>	<b>\$1,708,139</b>	



Audited

# FINANCIAL REPORT

There are many aspects to Indigenous issues, more than any single organization can address. Cultural Survival has identified several areas that it feels are especially important, and, as the charts opposite show, we have focused our efforts and our finances around them.

We feel that one of the largest contributing factors to abuses of Indigenous Peoples' rights is the fact that they happen out of sight. Most non-Indigenous people know very little about Indigenous communities or about their efforts to defend themselves. As a result, the larger public doesn't take action to support those communities' efforts. It is crucial, then, to give Indigenous Peoples a voice, a platform to make themselves and their issues known to the broader world. Our publications and communications program addresses that concern.

One of the most urgent issues that Indigenous communities face is the loss of their languages, often as a result of government programs and the cultural hegemony of the larger, non-Indigenous society. We address this issue through our Endangered Languages Program, which seeks to support Native communities' efforts to keep their languages alive.

Many Indigenous communities are small, remote, and isolated, making it difficult to defend themselves, to get outside information, or to coordinate their efforts with other groups. Our Community Radio Program is addressing that issue by building a network of small, affordable radio stations throughout Guatemala.

A huge number of Indigenous communities face severe environmental damage from mines, dams, oil drilling, and other extractive industries taking place on their land, usually without their permission. These communities are often too small to have political power or to generate broad public support for their cause, and without it they face dire consequences. The Global Response Program addresses this concern by launching international letter-writing campaigns in partnership with these communities.

Culturally appropriate economic development is a rare commodity in many Indigenous communities. These remote communities don't have ready access to markets or the capacity to promote their products. The Bazaars Program bridges that gap and introduces hundreds of thousands of non-Indigenous people to Indigenous artists. At the same time, it provides revenue that supports individual artists' families and whole communities.



UNITED  
NATIONS  
DECLARATION  
ON THE  
RIGHTS OF  
INDIGENOUS  
PEOPLES



Cultural  Survival

CULTURAL SURVIVAL

# INDIGENOUS RIGHTS IN ACTION

## **U.S. Endorses UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples**

At the White House Tribal Nations Conference on December 15, 2010, President Barack Obama announced that the United States would “lend its support” to the UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples. “The aspirations it affirms,” he said, “including the respect for the institutions and rich cultures of Native peoples, are one we must always seek to fulfill. . . I want to be clear: what matters far more than words, what matters far more than any resolution or declaration, are actions to match those words. . . That’s the standard I expect my administration to be held to.”

The statement is significant because the United States was one of only four countries that voted against the declaration when the UN General Assembly adopted it in 2007, and the last of those four to have reversed its former opposition.

Cultural Survival program officer Jennifer Weston was on hand for Obama’s announcement as a member of the press, and she reports that the mood was jubilant. President Fawn Sharp of the Quinault Nation, who introduced President Obama to open the summit, reflected later, “It’s exciting and a long time coming, but I especially appreciate his comments that it’s actions not words that matter, and I believe he’s very committed to not only being a signatory but to implementing both the spirit and intent of the declaration.”

The president’s decision is the result of a comprehensive review of the declaration by the Obama administration, which held extensive consultations with tribal governments and received over 3,000 written comments. Cultural Survival this summer mounted a

campaign to provide every tribal president and chairperson in the U.S. with a copy of the declaration, a sample letter to submit to President Obama, and background information and perspective on the declaration. Volunteers and staff then logged hundreds of follow-up calls to tribal government offices urging submission of letters detailing how the declaration reinforces the exercise of local tribal rights. Many tribes sent letters, and their pressure played a role in changing the U.S. position. Many of the largest national intertribal organizations in the U.S., including the National Congress of American Indians and the United Southern and Eastern Tribes, also passed resolutions calling for endorsement and implementation of the declaration.

At the close of the Tribal Nations Conference the White House issued their official statement on supporting the declaration, which was generally positive, highlighting the administration’s many efforts on behalf of Native Peoples. It was, in fact, far more wholehearted in its endorsement than those of Canada or New Zealand, two of the other countries that initially voted against the declaration. There was, however, one disappointing aspect of the statement.

Perhaps the most important provision in the declaration is the requirement that governments get Indigenous Peoples “free, prior, and informed consent” before embarking on any development project or other action that would affect the Indigenous People’s territory. The White House statement says that, “the United States understands [the importance of a] call for a process of meaningful consultation with tribal leaders, but not necessarily the agreement of those leaders, before the actions addressed in those consultations are taken.”

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