


Strategic Framework

2022-2026

Our Vision of a Self-Determined Future
through Advocacy, Capacity Building,
Grantmaking, and Communications

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I. Introduction

In early 2020, our staff and board embarked on a journey to collectively dream, envision, and build a new strategic framework that will guide our work over the next five years and beyond. As an organization that upholds and honors the power of the community and the collective, we strive to build our organization through a staff-led strategic planning process. To begin this work, we set off on three goals: to articulate our shared values and principles, establish a policy on gender balance across our work, and reassess our programmatic priorities. Our process started with a series of joint, virtual sessions where we learned about the history of Cultural Survival starting from its inception and up to this day, we deepened our understanding about each of our programs, conducted a SWOT (Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, Threats) analysis, and gathered our collective aspirations. Moving forward, we created four working groups: a values and principles working group, a gender balance policy working group, a programmatic priorities working group, and a board governance working group, that were each tasked with contributing pieces to the new Strategic Framework, results of which you will see below.

Since the start of this process, we have collectively learned several lessons through internal and external inquiry, group discussions, deep listening, adaptation, and analysis. Building the Strategic Plan parallel to our proactive response to the needs of Indigenous Peoples during the pandemic has not been an easy task. However, what we have learned has been valuable and navigated us to move towards a new chapter of our journey as an organization. As an organization we did not have to switch to remote working as we had already worked remotely and have had pre-existing processes and structures in place: regular team meetings, staff meetings, personal check-ins, strategy sessions and so on, via platforms such as Gotomeeting, Zoom, Skype, Whatsapp, etc. Secondly, our cross-functional teams have evolved to become highly agile and adaptable, which has proved to be one of our unique strengths as an institution. Thirdly, we have been steadily moving towards and have been explicit about our holistic rights-based approach, which allows for a higher degree of efficiency across all of our program and administrative teams. One example of how we work with communities holistically and provide wrap around support and resources includes: awarding a radio station an Indigenous Community Media Fund grant, co-creating a joint campaign, providing training for women who volunteer at that station, supporting a youth fellow from their community, joint advocacy at the UN on a topic of importance to their community, a grant from the Keepers of the Earth Fund, a feature article in our Cultural Survival Quarterly magazine and website, inviting community leaders to participate in a webinar, and so on.

Further, the team is increasingly decentralized geographically, while still holding a strong commitment and sense of ownership over the work. Each of our team members are tapped into their local and regional networks and manage diverse stakeholders operating as points of information sharing, networking, and feedback for our work. Moreover, our reliance on local data, our connections across different networks, our linkages from local to global are proving to be one of the main factors for our success. When we use this holistic model, we invest in built-in capacity and cross-programmatic functionality, which saves significant financial resources and staff time.

Over the past year, several team members applied their leadership within our strategic planning working groups. Our team members were empowered and entrusted to carry out this important work collaboratively. The working groups created opportunities to strengthen



communication and a space for team members to co-create what they want Cultural Survival to be in the years to come. Additionally, throughout 2020 and 2021 we held healing and decolonization spaces which helped us navigate the ongoing pandemic, build trust and mutual support for each other, and to better understand our diverse cultures, experiences and goals. These sessions enabled staff to feel more connected, understood and valued, and they were able to bring their traditional ceremonies, songs, poetry, prayers and full selves into these virtual spaces.

While we were collectively working to build the strategy and decolonize our work, some changes have already been under way. For example, we proposed changes to our Personnel Policy based on ongoing feedback and an internal survey regarding our current personnel policies. These changes include separating our Family Leave and Parental Leave policies, expanding the definition of family to be aligned with the range of traditional definitions of family in Indigenous communities, introducing options for pooling vacation time to help staff members in need, and using gender neutral language to support inclusivity. In terms of our organizational structure, in addition to several other hires across the organization, in the past year we have expanded our leadership to include a Director of Strategic Partnerships and Communications, a Director of Programs, and a Director of Advocacy and Policy, expanding our leadership team to five Director positions. The purpose of the senior leadership expansion is to share responsibility among people of diverse perspectives and build a more collective approach to our decision-making at Cultural Survival.

We believe that this framework serves as a guide for our work, but as an organization that works to support Indigenous communities, we keep our fingers on the pulse and continue to respond to the most pressing needs of communities that we serve, ready to pivot to meet those needs on the ground. We don't intend for this strategic plan to be static, but rather for it to be a living document that reflects the ever-changing reality and conditions of Indigenous Peoples, the global Indigenous Peoples' Movement, and Cultural Survival as an organization.

Cultural Survival Staff and Board

II. About Cultural Survival

Our Mission:

Cultural Survival advocates for Indigenous Peoples' rights and supports Indigenous communities' self-determination, cultures and political resilience since 1972.

Our Vision:

Cultural Survival envisions a future that respects and honors Indigenous Peoples' inherent rights and dynamic cultures, deeply and richly interwoven in lands, languages, spiritual traditions, and artistic expression, rooted in self-determination and self-governance.

Our Work:

Cultural Survival is an Indigenous-led NGO and U.S. registered non-profit that advocates for Indigenous Peoples' rights and supports Indigenous communities' self-determination, cultures, and political resilience, since 1972. For almost 50 years, Cultural Survival has partnered with Indigenous communities to advance Indigenous Peoples' rights and cultures worldwide. The core of our efforts rest on the principles of supporting, amplifying efforts and raising awareness of self-determination for Indigenous communities.

Cultural Survival has curated a robust network of partnerships with Indigenous communities spanning over 70 countries on 6 continents. Our work is predicated on the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples (UNDRIP) where we work to empower Indigenous Peoples as they strive to assert their rights to self-determination and sustain their lands, cultures, and vital ecosystems that are essential to the health of our planet and all living things. Additionally, Cultural Survival has important connections and influence across movements, sectors, governmental agencies, and international mechanisms like the United Nations, where we have held consultative status with the United Nations Economic Social and Cultural Council since 2005. We support grassroots Indigenous solutions to protect, respect and fulfill the rights of Indigenous communities and our approach centers traditional knowledge to restore balance in the natural world. Based in Cambridge, MA, we have 28 staff based in 10 countries; our staff is majority women, and both staff and board are majority Indigenous— we are a true reflection of the communities we serve!

Our work is predicated on the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples. We engage opportunities to leverage our experience and leadership in advocacy, media, public education, programs, and in providing platforms to amplify and empower the voices of Indigenous Peoples as they work to claim their rights to self-determination, their lands, cultures, and precious ecosystems that are essential to the whole planet. Cultural Survival supports a movement of empowered Indigenous Peoples organizing their communities to engage the local, regional, and international processes, national policies and human rights bodies to respect, protect, and exercise their rights. Our organization is Indigenous-led and has a diverse Board of Directors bringing experiences from the Indigenous and non-Indigenous worlds to inform our perspectives and scope of work.

III. Values and Principles

At Cultural Survival, our staff and board came together over a series of months to build and manifest what we believe are the core values of our organization, as we act both internally with members of a team, and externally with our wider kin, partners, donors and members, partner organizations and stakeholders. Developing this list of values and principles has been a multi-stage process that engaged Cultural Survival's full staff, leadership, and Board of Directors over a period of months.

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These values already existed within the Cultural Survival community, they were just not explicit. Collectively discussing, debating, and writing them down was an important exercise for us, to take a moment to step back and really articulate together what it is we are striving for, and what should guide our actions and relationships. Articulating this also allows those outside of our circle to understand what we are about as an organization,”

explains Galina Angarova (Buryat), Executive Director.

The process began with the establishment of an internal working group on values and principles, who mapped a process of consultation with our team moving forward. A first step included surveying staff and board to identify key values upheld in their professional, community, and personal lives. For our staff and board Zoom discussion, we presented a total of 53 concepts that came forward as a result of gathering and systematization of the survey responses. In break-out groups we discussed which values most spoke to us, and what they meant in our lives and at work. The working group coalesced the leading values into a short list, combining some concepts, and we established an operational difference between core values we hold and the principles we put into action in order to realize core values.

Part of this process included rich discussions on the importance of language in determining meaning. We recognized that some concepts simply do not exist equally in different languages, especially given the wide diversity of our staff and board: among us, we speak 23 different languages, hail from 16 different countries, and represent 20 different Indigenous cultures. Not to mention the many more cultures and communities where we have worked, lived, and built relationships with our partners. Given this diversity, we did our best to approximate and convey meaning through context, and be flexible in our own interpretations.

We drafted explanations of how we understand each value in the context of Cultural Survival based on our personal experiences, notes from staff and board dialogues, and survey responses. After a few rounds of edits, the final version was reviewed and adopted in our May 2021 board meeting.

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At CS, we have worked with our Indigenous communities and staff to develop a set of Values and Principles that will guide our work in a “pono” or proper way that honors the diversity of Indigenous ways of knowing and being, and helps to guide our actions to be sure we work in support of Indigenous Peoples in a way that is acceptable and welcomed by them.”

-Kaimana Barcarse (Kanaka Hawaii), Board Chair

AS THE CULTURAL SURVIVAL COMMUNITY, THESE ARE THE VALUES WE UPHOLD:

Self-determination

We center, value, and promote the self-determination of Indigenous Peoples to freely determine their political conditions and to pursue their own forms of economic, social, and cultural development, especially with regard to their own ways of life, cosmovisions, and the integrity of their lands and territories. Towards realizing self-determination, we advocate for the Free, Prior, and Informed Consent of Indigenous Peoples to be upheld in all decisions that affect them.

Indigenous cosmovisions

At Cultural Survival, we work towards a vision that centers, promotes, and values the cosmovisions of Indigenous Peoples as a core tenant of our work. We understand Indigenous cosmovisions as diverse ways of thinking, living, and being in relationship with, and knowing the world. These cosmovisions are as diverse as there are Indigenous Peoples on the planet, and operate on systems of ideas and practices that define each community's beliefs, values, and customs and their relationships with Mother Earth.

Trust

Trust is a value that allows us to operate in reciprocal relationships with those around us, in which trust is an antecedent to action. Cultural Survival places trust in our community partners, our funders and donors, in our team members, and in our leaderships.

Humility

Humility is a value that allows us to understand that there are greater forces outside of our organization and outside of ourselves as individuals. We allow ourselves to be guided by the wisdom of our ancestors and those who have laid the groundwork before us. We acknowledge our limitations and our weaknesses, while always working towards improvement.

Interculturalism

Indigenous Peoples across the globe are extremely diverse. Among our partners, within our team, and within individuals, we represent an array of diverse cultures and ways of understanding the world. We respect and acknowledge diversity of Indigenous Peoples, geography, race, ethnicity, sexual orientation, gender, ability, language, religion, spirituality, age, experiences, viewpoint and cosmovision.

Community

We consider community, collectivity, and collaboration as fundamental ways of life. This extends to our vision of land stewardship, our relationship with life on earth and our interdependence. We value and respect collective rights as defined by the UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples, in addition to individual human rights.



BASED ON AND INCORPORATING THESE CORE VALUES, WE OPERATE ACCORDING TO THE FOLLOWING PRINCIPLES:

Respect

We respect the feelings, wishes, rights, identities and traditions of others, with particular consideration and recognition of the self-determination of the communities we work with and their unique processes of decision-making. Respect is an essential aspect in all interactions we engage in.

Equity

We believe in the inherent dignity of all human beings and lifeforms, while recognizing that the reality we live in has not been equal for all. We condemn racism, misogyny, and all forms of violence and oppression, and seek equity for all. We inform our idea of equity through Indigenous cosmovisions. We recognize that external forces have disrupted the balances of community relations, gender relations, relations with nature, and cultural relations, and our programs seek to support work that heals this balance, in alignment with Indigenous cosmovisions.

Accountability

We are accountable for our words and our actions. We are accountable to our communities, our elders and our youth, to generations in the future and to our ancestors of the past. We believe that honesty, consistency, and communication are core to accountability.

Solidarity

Informed by our sense of community and trust, we harness empathy and value acting in solidarity with others. Solidarity is an opportunity for collaboration, sharing, reciprocity, and working in collective towards a common objective. At the same time it helps us build good relationships with others in the long term. It is a service towards a common interest or movement based on knowledge and empathy for a cause.

IV. Gender Balance Approach



In order to coexist, we have to relearn nature, balance, and complementarity, so we can continue to live in balance in all spaces and ways of living, thus the importance of building mechanisms that help us find common ground and acknowledge our differences. A gender policy is born from the need to heal our relationships and look towards a more just and dignified horizon, in the face of an increasingly decadent humanity, "

- Sócrates Vásquez (Ayuujk Jääy, Pueblo Ayuujk), Journalist and Community Media Program Manager.

At Cultural Survival we recognize that today, as a result of colonization, we live in a world where gender relationships are out of balance, and these imbalances of power, voice, and respect exist across the gender spectrum. We also acknowledge that Indigenous Peoples' views and understandings of gender are just as diverse as their cultures, and these views are fundamentally different from those of western societies. While western societies glorify the individual, Indigenous Peoples prioritize the communal. Given this fundamental difference and Cultural Survival's mission, this policy was built in alignment with Indigenous cosmovisions.

In May 2020, Cultural Survival established a working group with the purpose of building a Gender Balance Policy that would enshrine our values, principles, and aspirations. Many staff participated in the drafting, review, and discussion of this policy. For over a year, staff generously invested time, emotional labor, vulnerability, and humility to create a policy that would guide our work. As an Indigenous-led organization, consensus, inclusion, and equal representation are in our DNA, and we believe this policy is an important step towards achieving gender equity in our organization and in our relationships with those with whom we may engage. Cultural Survival's attention to gender does not begin with this policy. For many years, Cultural Survival's programs have prioritized projects centering women and engaging women's and girls' leadership. At the time of drafting this policy, 17 of our 25 total staff members, and 8 of 13 board members are women. Indigenous women's leadership and empowerment are fundamental to our work. The policy is also explicit about our commitment to participation and equity for people of all genders and takes steps to achieve this.

This policy seeks to work towards balance and equilibrium in all social and community relations, including gender relations, relations with nature, and spiritual relations in all aspects of our work. External forces have disrupted the balance of these relationships, and our programs, communications, and internal policies seek to support work that heals these relationships, in alignment with Indigenous cosmovisions. We are aware of the complexity of the ways in which outside forces have imposed harmful ideologies on Indigenous communities and of the concepts, practices, and consequences of inequality, discrimination, and violence that exist as a result. Violence, including physical, psychological, and in the form of exclusion and marginalization, takes place against Indigenous Peoples in general, and in communities there is also violence against more vulnerable groups such as women; transgender people, non-binary people, and people of other genders; people with disabilities; elders; and children. Throughout the policy, we refer to "people of all genders." In all cases, this includes women, men, Two-Spirit people, non-binary people, trans people, and people who have other culturally specific gender identities.

The policy comprises two main sections: an introduction, or philosophy, in which we reflect on the organization's understanding of gender as it relates to the diversity of Indigenous Peoples and the varying dynamics of equity and justice, as well as a policy section, in which we lay out concrete objectives and action steps for the organization's programs, institutional practices, communications, and evaluation.

Cultural Survival's Gender Policy was approved and adopted by our Board of Directors in May 2021. In the coming months we will continue working with all our personnel to help us through the implementation and execution process of this policy at all levels of the organization.

You can read the Cultural Survival's Gender Policy here: [add link](#)

V. Programmatic Approach

a. Four-Pronged strategy:

Towards the goal of supporting and advocating for Indigenous communities' well-being, Cultural Survival employs a four-pronged strategy of grantmaking, capacity building, advocacy, and communications to carry out our work. This strategy describes how we work to achieve lasting change in a way that honors and supports Indigenous Peoples' self-determination and collective rights. Although these four areas have been a pre-existing part of Cultural Survival's work towards achieving its mission, this is the first time these four strategies have been identified and communicated explicitly together as working in tandem. With this strategic framework we are communicating to our allies, donors, partners, and our community that we see these four strategies as interrelated, creating a synergy that is at the heart of our theory of change: We combine advocacy, capacity building, grantmaking, and communications, to provide holistic, wrap-around support to Indigenous communities towards realizing and asserting their rights and self-determination.



What is holistic wrap-around support?

Within a community that we have established a long term partnership with, Cultural Survival supports that community through each of our four pronged strategies, in a holistic way that engages all of our programs. For example, Cultural Survival may provide grants to a local community radio station to strengthen its infrastructure or equipment through our Indigenous Community Media Fund. We invite members of the radio station to participate in trainings on the production of radio programming about human rights topics. We invite women at the station to engage in personalized capacity building on healing and Indigenous women's leadership. A local radio station, may be denied an opportunity to use an officially licensed radio frequency, and joins in a lawsuit organized by Cultural Survival against the government for violating Indigenous Peoples freedom of expression. In a village nearby the radio station, a transnational company violates the community's right to Free, Prior, Informed Consent by initiating construction on a hydroelectric dam, and so Cultural Survival initiates a campaign to denounce these violations nationally and internationally, drawing attention of UN human rights mechanisms. Through our Keepers of the Earth Fund, we may make a grant to a local women's organization who is working to educate the community about their land rights. We invite Indigenous women involved in this work to a training on defense of human rights, and later they join a CS delegation to participate at the UN Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues in New York, where they network with other activists and organizations. A local artists-cooperative from the community could be invited to market their traditional weavings at the Cultural Survival Bazaar, generating income for many families in the community. Two local youth are supported by a fellowship with Cultural Survival to document stories of their elders in short documentary films and produce public health radio programming in the community's local Indigenous language in response to the COVID-19 pandemic.





GRANTMAKING:

Our grantmaking is in its 5th year of operations and is implemented through a long-term vision of resourcing the global Indigenous Peoples Movement, self-determination and the collective rights of Indigenous Peoples. It is carried out through our Keepers of the Earth Fund and our Indigenous Community Media Fund. Our Keepers of the Earth Fund is a small grants fund designed to support Indigenous Peoples' community advocacy and development projects. Since 2017, the Keepers of the Earth Fund through small grants and technical assistance has supported over 175 projects in 35 countries totaling \$763,172 in grants. Our Indigenous Community Media Fund provides opportunities for international Indigenous radio stations to strengthen their broadcast infrastructure and systems and also provides training opportunities in journalism, broadcasting, audio editing, technical skills and more to Indigenous community radio journalists around the world. Since 2017, the Indigenous Community Media Fund (formerly known as the Community Media Grants Project) has awarded 169 grants to 130 community radio stations in 19 countries, totalling \$1,225,907. We build relationships with our partners in the long term through site visits, mentoring and technical support.

CAPACITY BUILDING:

As part of our wrap-around services to our partners, Cultural Survival provides capacity building opportunities through workshops, youth fellowships, community exchanges, networking, international travel, and one-on-one mentoring. CS Youth Fellowships support individuals and groups of youth in their efforts to build their radio journalism and radio broadcasting skills through training, community radio visits and exchanges, radio production, and conference attendance. Since 2018 we have awarded 24 youth fellowships, including support for 16 young Indigenous women, totaling \$76,000. In recent years, CS workshops have provided training for our Indigenous partners, especially Indigenous women, on topics such as women's empowerment, the defense of human rights, Indigenous philosophies of communication, strengthening technical capacities in radio production, and more. Our plan is to increase funding sources to support Indigenous youth fellowships and capacity building for Indigenous women and expand the topics to climate change, land rights and livelihoods, and cultures and languages' revitalization.

ADVOCACY:

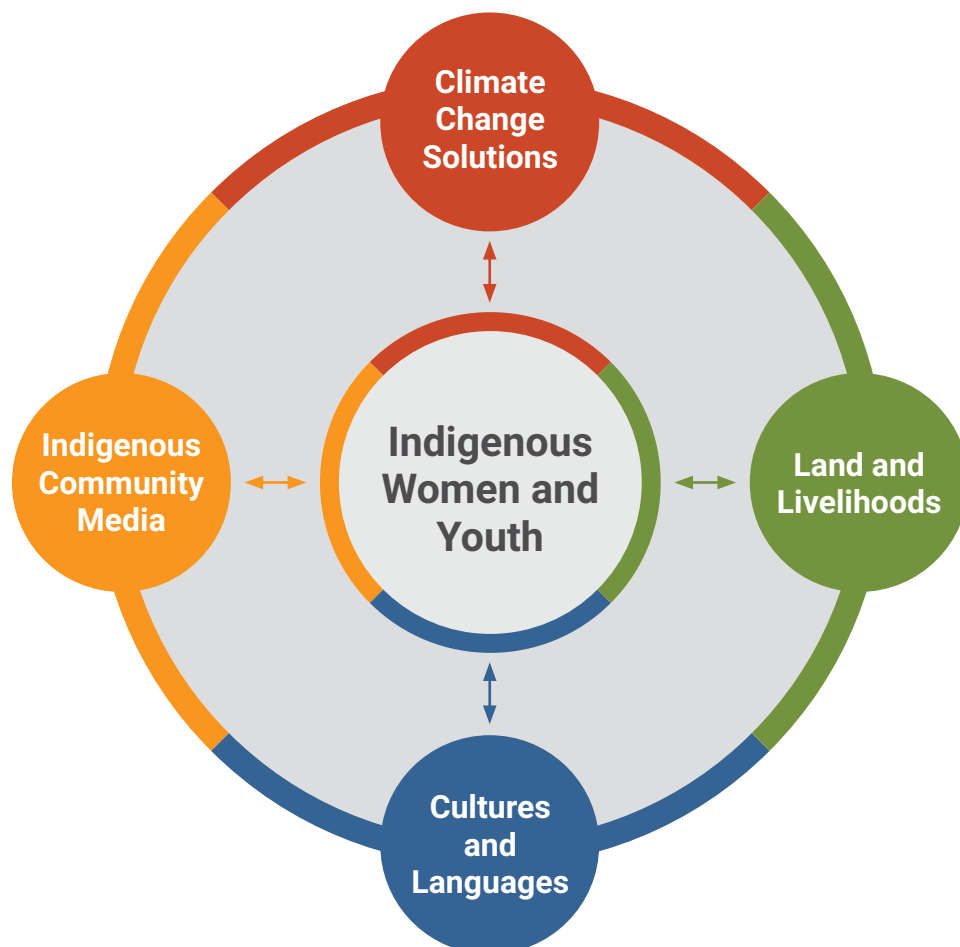
As Indigenous communities work to implement their rights and self-determination, they often encounter external challenges. Our advocacy program works with our partners through local, regional, and international mechanisms to implement the UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples, and denounce and bring visibility to situations in which these rights are violated. Our advocacy strategy has included six main areas of work: 1) Providing technical support to grantee partners at their request; 2) Participation in international human rights mechanisms including the UN Permanent Forum on Indigenous Peoples Issues, the UN Human Rights Council's Universal Periodic Review, UN Treaty bodies such as the Commission for the Elimination of Discrimination Against Women, and with the UN Special Rapporteurs on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples; 3) Strategic litigation against governments when Indigenous rights are violated ; 4) Shareholder advocacy and corporate engagement with companies whose operations affect Indigenous Peoples and their lands; 5) Tracking, investigating, and denouncing violence and criminalization against Indigenous Human Rights Defenders; and 6) local advocacy at the request of Indigenous partners on the Native lands of our headquarters in the greater Boston-Cambridge, Massachusetts area.

COMMUNICATIONS:

The fourth approach to Cultural Survival's emerging strategy is communications, and strives to directly uplift and amplify Indigenous Peoples' voices through the following media platforms: our award-winning Cultural Survival Quarterly magazine; website and database of articles; webinars; social media; Indigenous Rights Radio; podcasts and more. This includes building awareness, shifting paradigms and consciousness, shifting and reclaiming the narrative, and in turn, shifting agency. With over 49 years of experience working with Indigenous Peoples and building a robust global network, we recognize first hand the importance of Indigenous media and communications. Indigenous-produced programming strengthens Indigenous Peoples' capacity to claim their rights and enables access to essential information and broadcasting in Indigenous languages that ensures widespread understanding and cultural continuity. Cultural Survival's communications has been a stronghold for many years, and as we move into our next chapter, communications is an essential and now, explicit area of our work that works collaboratively and threads together all other facets of our work, including the three other parts of the four-pronged approach. Cultural Survival's communications connect peoples, movements, organizations and others through storytelling across landscapes, waterways, issues areas from local to global, and vice versa. Our communications is the public, external, visual, and audio vehicle that represents the organization and the core vessel that articulates our work with our community, donors and general public. Our website and its resources serves as a digital resource hub and advocacy platform for the global Indigenous Peoples movement and Indigenous Peoples globally.

b. Thematic Areas

Our work on thematic areas was carried out by the programmatic priorities working group which met and deliberated from August 2020 to April 2022 in order to reach a set of recommendations of programmatic priorities that builds off historical, existing and emerging work at Cultural Survival. In addition to the conclusions drawn from key documents and reports, we gained insights from surveys of staff and external stakeholders that included funders, Indigenous-led leaders and organizations, international experts, partner radio stations, and grantee partners from our Indigenous Community Media Fund and the Keepers of the Earth Fund. The notes covering our review totals more than a hundred and thirty pages, including the minutes for weekly meetings, the design, application, and analysis of both surveys. Based on numerous consultations, recommendations and building off 49 years of experience and work in the field of Indigenous Peoples' rights, Cultural Survival will embark upon **a new holistic, thematic, rights-based direction that works on the nexus of themes that we have identified as the most burning issues for Indigenous Peoples today: land and livelihoods, climate change solutions, cultures and languages, indigenous community media and communications, and the leadership of Indigenous women and youth as a cross-thematic thread.** Our plan is to not stop any of the current programs but rather evolve and incorporate them into this framework and build on our ongoing work through the application of the four-pronged approach outlined above. Every thread in this new direction is interrelated and interdependent, with Indigenous women and youth being the main protagonists of the change we collectively aspire to work towards.



Cross-cutting Theme: Indigenous Women and Youth



Indigenous women need more support to reach their potential. They want to reestablish their harmony with men [equality]. We need harmony within our species in order to restore harmony with the earth, animals, plants and water.” -Avexnim Cojti (Maya K'iche'), Director of Programs

Indigenous women have long been marginalized and continue to face multiple forms of discrimination based on their ethnic origin; gender; economic, political, societal status or class; disability; and location. However, it is Indigenous women that carry millenia old traditional knowledge about the land and biodiversity that is embedded in their cultures and languages. It's the knowledge that has been passed down from one generation to the next that makes Indigenous Women original storytellers, keepers of our traditions and oral history, community leaders and the best experts of their own landscapes. Indigenous women are also leaders in the global Indigenous Peoples' movement and the women's movement. For many years, Cultural Survival has prioritized projects centering women and engaging womens' and girls' leadership and we will continue working to uplift Indigenous women according to Indigenous values and protocols self-determined by Indigenous communities. We strive to support Indigenous women to be the decision-makers and protagonists of their own stories and take the leadership and participation roles that they choose and deserve to take.

Young people hold the power to shift the dynamics of the world. If we want change, we must provide support to Indigenous youth leaders in making change possible. Indigenous youth in particular continue to face racism, discrimination and marginalization, lack access to opportunities, networks and resources, but when they have a sense of belonging, a sense of empowerment to change the conditions that affect them and a strong cultural identity they become resilient, powerful individuals for their communities. The participation of our Indigenous youth is crucial in strengthening self-governance, land rights, fighting climate change, containing the loss of biodiversity, restoring ecosystems, and stewarding our cultural heritage. Cultural Survival is uniquely positioned to provide the support most needed to help Indigenous youth successfully carry out this work.

Indigenous women and youth are powerful changemakers towards strengthening healthy families, communities and the planet. Currently, the global agenda is at an inflection point where policymakers, foundations and other stakeholders recognize the key role of women and youth in addressing climate change, loss of biodiversity, achieving food sovereignty and the SDGs among others. As the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and the Beijing Declaration play out after their adoptions, Cultural Survival is well positioned to advocate for Indigenous women and youth in local, regional and international spaces. Cultural Survival comes to this work in an authentic way through the work we do, how we do our work, and who makes up our staff and board. Indigenous women on our staff and board have created and implemented programs at Cultural Survival alongside our male and LGBTQIA+ colleagues (Indigenous and non Indigenous) and Indigenous allied staff and board. Some of the concrete examples include the fact that our team is majority women and majority Indigenous, our grants' reviewing and management teams are led by Indigenous women, and our emerging strategies on climate change and land justice are also led and advised by Indigenous women on the team.

Land and Livelihoods

The importance of Land and Livelihoods came up as one of the top issues for Indigenous Peoples both as a result of our internal and external reviews. Indigenous Peoples and their lands are inseparable: our cultures, languages, cosmovisions and ways of life are connected to the lands we are from. Indigenous Peoples and their landscapes co-evolve together, and it is this interdependent relationship that creates such richness of biodiversity and culture. Highly biodiverse areas such as the U.S. Pacific Northwest, for example, have been found to be a direct result of Indigenous stewardship.¹ The health of Indigenous lands, including forests, and rivers, is also integral to Indigenous livelihoods. Their ability to maintain their traditional livelihoods and economies, to harvest foods, fish, hunt, keep bees, herd animals, gather materials for housing, crafts, clothing, and ceremony, are all dependent on uninterrupted access to their land, hence we include livelihoods to our land approach.

Unfortunately, the modern world's thirst for expansion and development threatens the integrity of Indigenous lands and livelihoods. There is a growing number of assaults, attacks, and displacement of Indigenous Peoples from their lands by governments, mining companies, agricultural companies and even conservation groups. Indigenous Peoples globally feel unprecedented pressure on their lands and ways of life.

We envision this work as strengthening Indigenous Peoples' self-determination, sovereignty, land defense, land titling, traditional ways of managing natural resources, biodiversity conservation and proliferation of traditional economies and livelihoods. This thematic thread will also be closely tied to another emerging theme of climate change solutions, as we believe that management of traditional lands and territories of Indigenous Peoples provides climate and conservation benefits for all.

The theme of Lands and Livelihoods will cut across our programs and strategies. Our advocacy work will support Indigenous stewardship of lands and territories by elevating local struggles to international spaces. Training on land rights and tenure will be a key component for our capacity building strategy. We hope to secure additional funding for our Keepers of the Earth Fund to support community-led work related to this theme. Our current Bazaar program would fall under this thematic thread as it provides an opportunity for traditional artistic/ economic occupations to survive and thrive within their homelands. Finally, we will deploy our Communications to fully support land and livelihoods through content development and strategies to widely disseminate stories that uplift this work.

Indigenous Community Media

Our Indigenous Community Media has been the stronghold and the identity of Cultural Survival's work for almost two decades with more than 130 Indigenous radio partners across Latin America, in Southern and Eastern Africa, and in Nepal, India and Bangladesh. Our Indigenous Rights Radio program is also part of our Indigenous Community Media work with a network including 1200 + radio stations and an estimated reach of between 11 to 50 million listeners, most of whom are Indigenous and in rural areas, where community radio is often the only or main source of information.

We view Indigenous Community Media work both as a goal in and of itself to support the right to the freedom of expression, and a vehicle to achieve the larger goal of self-determination as prescribed by the UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples.

¹ <https://www.sciencemag.org/news/2021/04/pacific-northwest-s-forest-gardens-were-deliberately-planted-indigenous-people>

Cultural Survival supports Indigenous Community Media through various means: by advocating for Indigenous Peoples' freedom of expression and their right to access their own forms of media; by resourcing communities' media and communications work through small grants; by providing training in media and content production, technical support to radio stations, use of technology, gender balance, and more; by highlighting the work of Indigenous media through CS communications on our website, social media, and CSQ; and providing news, culture, and human rights related radio content to our radio network via our platform Indigenous Rights Radio.

The thematic area of Indigenous Community Media will include our current programs and strategies: Community Media, Indigenous Rights Radio, and Communications (social media, *Cultural Survival Quarterly* magazine, and our website). Possible areas of expansion include online radio and other community media such as TV, audiovisual materials, print media, new technologies for communication and connectivity for Indigenous communities such as wifi and broadband. We have already started the production of podcasts in Spanish. We intend to invest more in podcast production in English, Spanish and Indigenous languages. One of the recommendations that clearly came through as a result of the survey is to increase the use of Indigenous languages in all our communications and radio productions.

Cultures and Languages

Cultural Survival's work to promote cultures and languages has been a historical priority since its founding and is directly connected to our work on community media, radio, our magazine, our Bazaar, and communications work more broadly. Supporting cultural and language diversity and revitalization also directly supports biological diversity and conservation. Indigenous Peoples' traditional knowledge is key to continuing protecting the land we've inhabited for millennia. Our languages are essential to maintain and transmit our traditional knowledge to future generations. We believe in the sacred and interdependent relationship between the land, its peoples and their cultures; the erosion of culture leads to the erosion of biodiversity, land and soil.

Cultural Survival will continue to uplift the importance of culture and languages in our advocacy work by engaging with the World Intellectual Property Organization (WIPO) and further advocating for and resourcing a cultural pillar in addition to the three pillars of sustainable development: economic, environmental and social at the UN level and other spaces. CS will focus its communications work, including our magazine and website podcasts, to uplift stories of Indigenous artists, culture bearers and language leaders to further advocate for cultural and language revitalization. Our capacity building component will support artists through our Indigenous Artist Institute, and our grantmaking will support arts and culture through grants for our partner communities. Our current Bazaar program will fall under this thematic thread as well as emerging strategies to create Cultural Survival artists residencies and supporting creative forms of self expression such as performance arts, painting, sculpture, dance, poetry, etc. Finally, as part of this theme, CS will continue its healing and decolonization work from our diverse Indigenous perspectives.

Climate Change Solutions

Climate change came up as one of the top two issues of concern for Indigenous Peoples along with and directly connected to the issues of land rights. It is becoming the number one risk for Indigenous Peoples globally, as Indigenous communities are disproportionately affected by its impacts and are among the first to face the direct consequences. In the Arctic, communities are suffering from the receding ice, melting permafrost, changing weather patterns, increased storms, as well as changes in species and animal behavior that impacts

their access to their subsistence resources. In the high altitudes of the Himalayas, people depend on the seasonal flow of water from glaciers and unprecedented melting is resulting in more water in the short term, but less will be available in the long term. Communities across the globe, from Siberia to the Amazon, are affected by the raging fires.

Meanwhile, an abundance of research has demonstrated that Indigenous Peoples hold solutions to climate change. Although Indigenous Peoples around the globe represent just 6.2 percent of the population, they manage or hold tenure over 25 percent of the world's land surface, support about 80 percent of the global biodiversity¹, and manage at least 24 percent (54,546 MtC) of the total carbon stored above ground in the world's tropical forests², a sum greater than 250 times the amount of carbon dioxide emitted by global air travel in 2015.³ Areas titled to Indigenous communities have been shown to store 36% more carbon per hectare than public conservation land.⁴ According to an analysis by the World Resources Institute, by securing Indigenous land rights in Bolivia, Brazil, and Colombia alone, we could avoid the release of up to 59 megatons of carbon emissions every year — the equivalent of taking 9 to 12 million passenger vehicles off the road.⁵ The 2019 IPBES report found that between 65-75% of the earth's surface has been significantly altered by human actions, but on average, these trends have been less severe or avoided in areas held or managed by Indigenous Peoples and Local Communities.⁶ Leading climate researchers have concluded: "[There is] an urgent need to make collective tenure security a critical part of emission reduction strategies. Empowering forest peoples to continue their historical role as stewards of the environment is essential for stabilizing Earth's climate."⁷ When Indigenous Peoples have rights to their lands, they are able to steward these lands in ways that prevent fossil fuel extraction, maintain carbon-capturing forests, ensure soil regeneration and carbon capture through traditional agriculture and agroecology, and protect biodiversity. The gap between recognized and unrecognized land rights points to significant opportunities to scale-up the protection of Indigenous lands.

The science is clear—Indigenous communities are critical in reversing the climate crisis. Indigenous Peoples have long been viewed as victims of the effects of climate change, but in reality they are agents of climate solutions and environmental conservation. Consequences of climate change in Latin America may differ from those of Africa or Asia, but one thing remains true: local resilience requires local traditional knowledge. We cannot address a global crisis without focusing on local, place-based solutions. Supporting Indigenous communities at the local level, supports and enriches the ecosystem in that region, and the health of that regional ecosystem impacts surrounding ecosystems. This strengthens the interconnected and interdependent web of ecosystems, or web of life rather, and Indigenous Peoples' traditional knowledge is the catalyst for the necessary climate change mitigation our world desperately needs. From traditional Indigenous home design to traditional fire management, and from agro-pastoralists to agroecology and agroforestry methods, Indigenous Peoples have lived in reciprocal balance with their environments for millenia and continue to do so up to this day.

¹ ***A spatial overview of the global importance of Indigenous lands for conservation***

² ***Toward a Global Baseline of Carbon Storage in Collective Lands***

³ [http:// www.atag.org/facts-and-figures.html](http://www.atag.org/facts-and-figures.html).

⁴ **Stevens, Caleb, Robert Winterbottom, Katie Reytar, and Jenny Springer. *Securing Rights, Combating Climate Change: How Strengthening Community Forest Rights Mitigates Climate Change*. Report. 2014.**

⁵ http://www.wri.org/sites/default/files/Climate_Benefits_Tenure_Costs.pdf

⁶ <https://www.un.org/sustainabledevelopment/blog/2019/05/nature-decline-unprecedented-report/>

⁷ *Ibid*

VI. Next Steps

1

Our Name. One of the questions posed for our anonymous survey to the staff was whether the name Cultural Survival reflects our organizational mission, vision and values and the state of the global Indigenous movement and the current reality. The responses split evenly: half of the participants responded “yes”, while the other half said “no”. We would like to consult with our board and explore this further.

2

We will continue building staff capacity and hire new staff in geographical areas where we are expanding our program work including the regions of South America, Africa, and Asia.

3

We will further streamline an equitable gender balance approach within CS by prioritizing projects that center marginalized groups and working to uplift Indigenous women and youth according to Indigenous values and protocols self-determined by Indigenous communities. Some of the next steps include: implementation of the recommendations outlined in the gender balance policy including developing a review process for all personnel-related policies through the gender balance and equity lense; hiring an HR coordinator; elaborating a detailed grievance mechanism; creating a transgender employment policy; further developing internal and external instruments addressing sexual harrassment; developing language for contracts with partners and general communications that embraces gender inclusion and safer spaces for all; and thus reject all acts of harassment and violence based on gender, culture, and other identities within the communities, organizations and projects with which we collaborate.

4

For Advocacy work, we will continue to advocate for Indigenous Peoples’ rights at the UN level and other international fora, while adding additional spaces of key relevance to newly articulated thematic areas, fore example, we have identified the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) and Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD) negotiations and meetings as key spaces to advocate for Indigenous Peoples’ climate change solutions, land rights and Indigenous-led conservation. We plan to actively participate in the upcoming COP26 in November 2021 and the UN Biodiversity Conference in April 2022. We will increase our work in the area of corporate engagement, especially within the supply chain of the rapidly expanding EV sector.



5

For Capacity Building work, we will expand our curricula for our Indigenous women women workshops to include human and Indigenous rights advocacy, climate solutions, and land rights in addition to the media and communications modules. Other areas of expansion may include modules on traditional livelihoods, food sovereignty and Indigenous-led conservation. We also plan to increase funding sources to expand youth fellowships to develop their leadership in the areas of climate change, land rights and livelihoods, and cultures and languages' revitalization. Our emerging strategies will also include facilitating cross-cultural exchanges on topics of grassroots climate solutions and languages' revitalization as well as creating CS artists residencies and supporting creative forms of self expression such as performance and visual arts. Finally, CS will also continue its healing and decolonization work from our diverse Indigenous perspectives both within and outside the organization.

6

For Grantmaking, our aspiration is to build ongoing, long-term financial support for the Keepers of the Earth Fund and the Indigenous Community Media Fund so that more resources are available to grassroots Indigenous organizations, Indigenous governments, and Indigenous radio stations and further support building of the Indigenous Movement globally. Moving forward, we aspire to direct at least 50% of our support to Indigenous-led women and youth groups and collaborate with others to increase and diversify the resources going to Indigenous-led organizations and governments, especially led by women and youth on issues of land, traditional livelihoods, climate solutions, cultures, languages, and freedom of expression and media.

7

For Communications, some of our goals and future plans include communicating an effective advocacy agenda that supports and mainstream the rights of Indigenous Peoples to the wider public, highlighting self-determined agency of Indigenous Peoples, and the important role Indigenous knowledge plays in solving today's problems; strengthening communication with the general public, donors, and supporters of Cultural Survival; building on effective communication strategies and vehicles (website, social media, media outreach) currently with emerging trends and platforms for raising awareness about Indigenous Peoples rights, solutions, and struggles; increasing the visibility of Cultural Survival and promoting the organizational mission and work in the mainstream and Indigenous media; serving as a knowledge base and a digital hub of resources for Indigenous Peoples' and their advocacy needs, and communicating to linguistically diverse audiences to increase Cultural Survival's global reach.