

# Cultural Survival Voices

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*Promoting the rights, voices, and visions of indigenous peoples*

## Fair Trade & Indigenous Peoples

By Jenn Goodman and Mark Camp

If you are an indigenous person selling crafts or crops, you probably know that the price paid by the person in a city who buys your product is far higher than the price you received for your work. You know that getting any product from the producer to the market involves many steps and many people, each of whom needs to be paid. You probably also know that many of those people are paid more than you, even though you are the one who made the product. You probably suspect that part of the reason for this is that you are indigenous.

The system known as “fair trade” was set up to correct this unfair arrangement. The fair trade idea is that you, the producer, should be paid fairly for your labor, and that you should share control over how the system works. Fair trade has helped thousands of farmers and craftspeople worldwide improve their incomes and lives. But because their lives are still hard, the fair trade market is more complicated than putting a few extra cents in their pockets. In order for fair trade to achieve its goals, everyone involved—from the producers to the consumers—must understand how it works.

There are many advantages to fair trade. It helps farmers and traditional craftspeople make a living without moving away from their communities, and it helps keep their crafts and other traditions alive. And it helps create greater parity between producers and importers by giving indigenous producers some of the respect and control they deserve.

In the same way that the indigenous rights movement has evolved over the past several

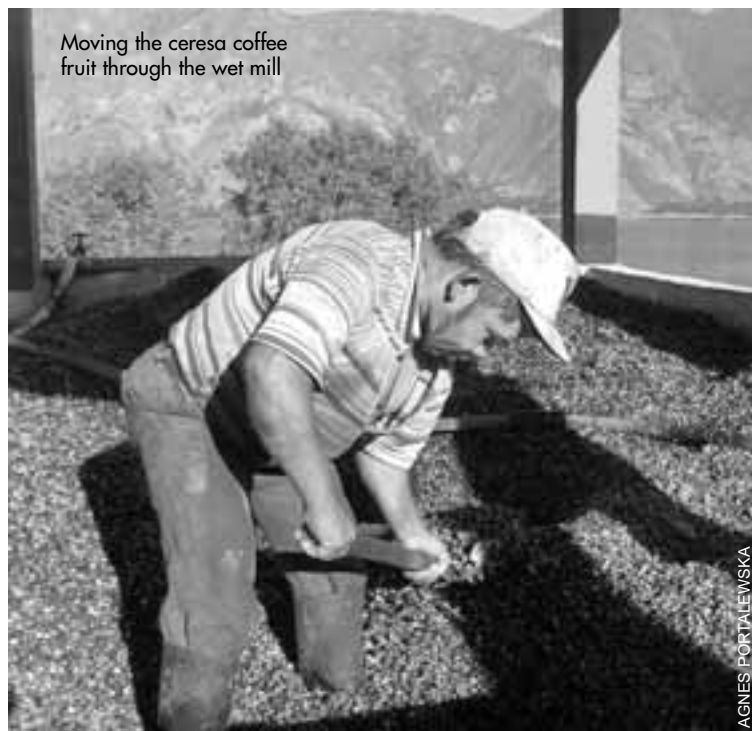
decades, so too has the fair trade movement. Fair trade began as an alternative model to “business as usual” by focusing on the relationships between producers and fair trade importers. As it rapidly expands, however, fair trade runs the risk of losing that connectedness and becoming nothing more than a marketing scheme.

For fair trade to be truly fair, both indigenous producers and fair traders must have a complete understanding of all levels of their shared business enterprise, and of how the fair trade process is supposed to work. This issue of *Voices* includes a poster on Fair Trade principles, as well as an illustration of one fair trade business enterprise: coffee.

Fair trade also is fairer when producers have relationships with more than one importer. Doing so puts those producers in a much better bargaining position with each buyer.

While the fair trade system was set up to protect and benefit indigenous producers, one contemporary problem with it is that while producers’ business practices are closely scrutinized, importers’ business practices are not monitored nearly so closely. There is an urgent need to level the playing field so that all participants in a fair trade business enterprise are subject to equal oversight and accountability measures.

From an indigenous rights point of view, fair trade is about opportunity and empowerment. While fair trade is off to a good start, it still has far to go before it will fully meet the needs of the people it was intended to serve.



Moving the cerasa coffee fruit through the wet mill

AGNES PORTALEWSKA

This issue of *Cultural Survival Voices* focuses on indigenous peoples, fair trade, and water rights (see page 2).

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## In this issue...

This issue of *Voices* deals with both the oldest human needs and one of the newest human innovations. The old need is water, an ever-scarcer commodity in an overcrowded and increasingly industrialized world. To get the water they need for farming, fishing, and living, indigenous peoples have to rely on both innovation and tradition, each of which is represented in this issue. Neera Burra writes about Indian women in drought-plagued western Orissa who formed a collective to build dams, plant trees, dig canals, and create catchments, transforming the landscape and providing year-round water. Eleanor Dictaan-Bang-oa describes the complex traditional water-management scheme of the Kankanaey people of the Philippines—a prime example of the unique value of indigenous knowledge.

This issue also addresses one of the most promising economic innovations for indigenous peoples: fair trade. At first glance, fair trade sounds like a panacea, returning a greater share of profit to the people who make crafts and grow food, and helping reinforce the traditions that produce those items. But the reality of fair trade is somewhat more complicated, as the articles in this issue make clear. As Tara Tidwell Cullen explains, Guatemalan textiles are in great demand in industrialized countries, which is good news for weavers selling their work through fair-trade networks. But the colors favored by buyers are not the traditional colors that the weavers themselves wear, and to feed the growing demand for textiles women have to abandon the small backstrap looms they traditionally use for the higher-capacity footlooms usually reserved for men.

We also feature an article on fair trade coffee. Here the system helps eliminate middle-men and increase profits for growers, but even with those improvements, there are many steps between the coffee plant and the coffee cup, each of which takes a share of the sale price.

The upshot of these articles is that fair trade cannot cure all the ills of world. It does, however, offer a major improvement over existing economic systems, and it really can help promote cultural survival if the system is managed with creativity and resilience—and those, of course, are the hallmarks of any indigenous culture.

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Dyeing thread at Asociación Maya (see Guatemalan War Widows Keep Weaving and their Community Alive, page 6).



AGNIESZKA PORTALEWSKA

### Cultural Survival

Cultural Survival is the leading U.S.-based international indigenous rights organization.

Cultural Survival is a nongovernmental membership organization dedicated to promoting the rights of indigenous peoples and the cultural diversity of humankind.

Whether Indians, Aborigines, or First Peoples, one out of every 20 people on our planet is indigenous with their own cultures, languages, and special relationships to their lands. Their ways of life are threatened by powerful economic interests, poorly considered development policies, and the negative consequences of globalization.

Founded 35 years ago, Cultural Survival partners with indigenous peoples to :

- Educate policymakers and the public about violations of indigenous human rights, threats to their lands and resources, and the demise of their cultures, languages, and belief systems.
- Empower indigenous peoples by enabling them to share with one another solutions to common problems, and by supporting them with media, technology, and effective political participation capacity-building training.
- Support indigenous efforts to negotiate with corporations, financial institutions, and governments, and to advocate for their human rights before courts and inter-governmental organizations.

Cultural Survival publishes the award-winning *Cultural Survival Quarterly* magazine, the multi-lingual newspaper *Cultural Survival Voices*, and the web-based *Weekly Indigenous News* (www.cs.org).

Cultural Survival assists indigenous communities in the United States, Brazil, Colombia, Ecuador, Guatemala, and Mexico, as well as Ersari Turkmen in Afghanistan, Tibetans, reindeer-herding Totem Peoples along the Siberian-Mongolian border, and the Maasai, Mpimbwe, and Ituri Forest peoples in Africa.

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## Indigenous Leader Elected President of Bolivia

By Bret Gustafson



Evo Morales, indigenous Aymara leader, was elected president of Bolivia on December 18, 2005.

In the election of December 18, 2005, Bolivians made history, as 54 percent of the country's voters chose Evo Morales, the Aymara leader of the combative coca-growers' unions. "500 years of campaigning and popular resistance by indigenous people has not been in vain," Morales said at his inauguration. "We are here, and we say that we have achieved power to end the injustice, the inequality, and oppression that we have lived under."

Morales and his party, the Movement to Socialism, swept the elections in the first round with an absolute majority, trouncing competitors on the right: one a cement mogul and fast-food franchise owner, the other a businessman-economist cultivated by the United States as its preferred choice.

Morales' rise to power did not come by the traditional path of wealth and racial privilege, but through years of peasant union struggle in a country deeply marked by social and racial inequalities. In Bolivia's short and difficult democratic history, presidents—sometimes even those who were in third place in the popular vote—were usually chosen through back-door deals made in Congress.

The election in Bolivia is the latest in a series of Latin American victories for leftist candidates, and Morales' victory promises to further dramatize this process by "indigenizing" both his country and the entire region.

Morales comes to power in the wake of a much longer history of indigenous mobilization and change in Bolivia. Starting in 1985, the country's non-indigenous elite classes began introducing free-market, or "neoliberal", policies aimed at modernizing Bolivia by opening it up to global capital while breaking down existing structures of class-based representation.

As indigenous movements surged in the late 1980s and 1990s, the government sought to channel this energy through policies referred to as "interculturalism"—a tentative effort to recognize indigenous culture and incorporate it into political structures. On the surface, interculturalism reversed five centuries of government policies of racism and exclusion. It included limited land reform that recognized indigenous rights to collective territories; a decentralization process that gave some recognition to traditional leadership structures; and, most ambitiously, education reform that used indigenous languages, histories, and knowledge in state schools.

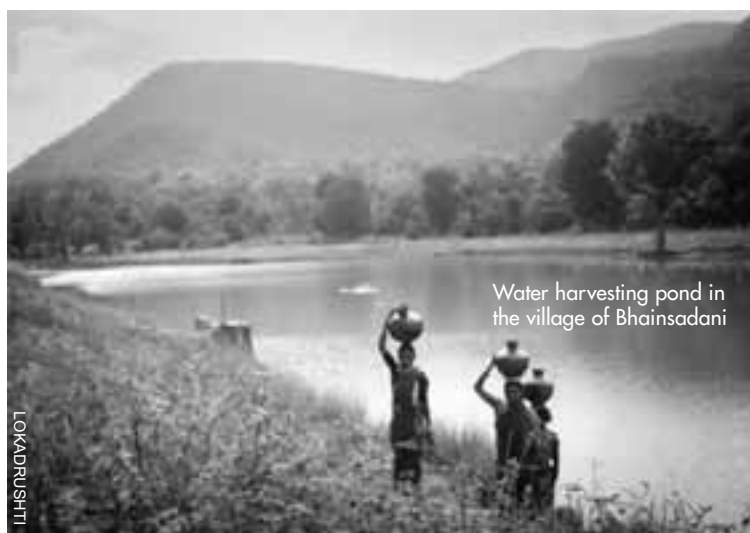
These reforms were embraced by many indigenous peoples, but they failed to address underlying problems in Bolivia: massive economic inequality, the absence of political representation, and racism that pervades public institutions and daily life. As another Aymara leader told a non-indigenous Bolivian television commentator, "What we want for the future is that my daughter does not have to grow up to be your maid."

Morales took advantage of these state reforms, even as he militantly opposed other policies that were tied to the U.S.-backed attempt to eradicate the coca plantations of his supporters (see *Cultural Survival Quarterly* Vol. 26.4). Most importantly, he embraced new structures of decentralization and democratization. His union, transformed into a political party, captured most of the municipalities in the Chapare region in 1997, creating a strong base of support there. The party then reached out to other indigenous movements of the eastern lowlands and created alliances with non-indigenous urbanites who were sympathetic to their cause.

Morales is thus not merely an indigenous leader pursuing indigenous demands, but the leader of a broad movement that combines many social, economic, and cultural platforms for change. His victory is a historic and radical moment for indigenous peoples of Bolivia and of the continent. Rafael González, chair of the Committee for Campesino Unity in Guatemala, said, "Morales' victory will have repercussions throughout the Americas." And Luis Macas, the president of the Confederation of Indigenous Nationalities of Ecuador, said that Morales' election was the most important event for indigenous people "since the time of Spanish colonialism."

## Tribal Women Beat Drought and the System

By Neera Burra



**T**he Nuapada district in the western part of India's Orissa state has been fundamentally transformed in recent years, with improved living standards, increased access to water, and improved health. But change did not come from government action or international relief agencies, but from village women who banded together and tackled what seemed to be insurmountable problems.

The Nuapada district suffers from erratic rainfall, long dry spells, and drought-like conditions every alternate year, making life very difficult for the tribal populations dependent on rainfall for their life-sustaining agriculture and forestry. In 1985 approximately 86 percent of Nuapada's population lived below the poverty line, with an annual per capita income less than Rs. 8500 (U.S. \$200).

To deal with that problem and salvage their villages, their families, and their livelihoods, the tribal women in 1985 launched grassroots efforts to bring water to their villages. They were aided by Lokadrushti, a nongovernmental organization that focuses on building local, self-managed groups that would address poverty issues. In Nuapada, Lokadrushti organized groups aimed at educating local people on their rights and entitlements, and set up *samaj vikas mahila samitis* (women's development committees). One of their major priorities was the management of water, and their successes to date have been impressive.

For example, in Bhainsadani village, people lacked drinking water from February to July each year. Village leaders Subhudra Paharia and Hema Majhi first spearheaded a march to protest for water and inspired the women of Bhainsadani to ini-

tiate a movement, organize rallies, and appeal to the Block Development Officer (BDO) on the issue of water problems. Then the women rallied the village to construct a dam on the Rani Jhola stream, as well as a cement canal and large water-harvesting pond. The work was completed in 1996, and since then, the village has maintained the structure with its own labor and savings.

At the same time, the local women's collective took up forestry activities and set up a system to maintain the catchment area. Today, the face of Bhainsadani has changed. The wells and tube wells have been recharged, and there is water even during the summer. The forest has been regenerated, and villagers are rearing more livestock.

The Nuapada women's organizations also were able to turn around serious water-related health issues in the area. For example, in 1998 hundreds of people in the Boden Block villages of Kirekela, Kirejhola, Kotamal, and Karlakot suffered from the black teeth, bent legs and hands, and premature aging associated with excessive fluoride content in water. As a remedy, the government sealed all the deep surface tube wells without providing any alternative water sources.

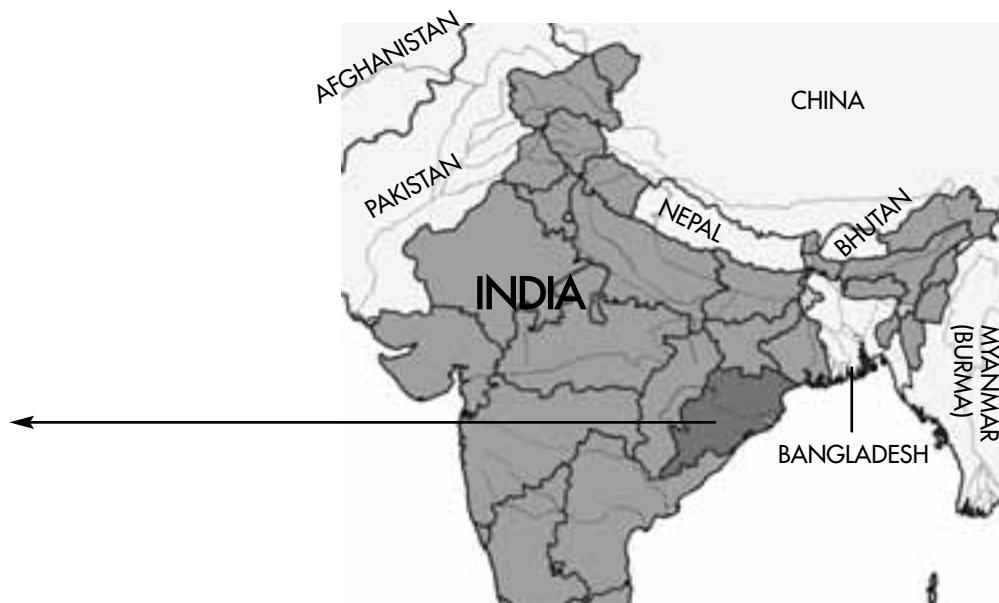
Alarmed by this situation, Chitri Dei and Usa Dei—two leaders from the Samaj Vikash Mahila Samity (SVMS) federation—moved from village to village, door to door, to mobilize the tribal women to demand from the government sufficient drinking water without excessive fluoride. The village women's committees, with the cooperation of SVMS, organized rallies of hundreds of villagers, taking their demonstrations to local government officials to demand a permanent solution.

After persisting for four years, the women achieved their victory in 2002, when the government agreed to provide drinking water through a pipeline from the Sunder River, about 12 kilometers from the villages.

In addition, the women's federation has organized village women's self-help groups, as well as thrift and credit activities with the local banks, through which women have taken loans to dig wells and purchase pump sets.

The long struggle to gain greater access to water resources has made a major difference in tribal women's lives. Without having to trek long distances for water, women now have more time to attend to their homes, families, and micro-enterprises. More importantly, tribal women's organizations have been able to take an active part in community matters and gain some political power. With the help of Lokadrushti, they are increasingly recognized by local officials as compelling agents of change.

*Dr. Neera Burra is a social anthropologist currently working with UNDP's India Office as Assistant Resident Representative and Senior Social Development Advisor.*



## Tradition Keeps Water Flowing in the Philippines

By Eleanor P. Dictaan-Bang-oa

**I**n the northern Philippine region of Besao, where my family has its roots, agriculture is the backbone of life, and rice is a staple food. So water is valued as much as land. But for the 10,000 iBasao (the people of Basao), management of their water resources is challenged by depleted supplies, deforestation, overlapping claims to water sources, “alternative” development strategies, insufficient infrastructure, and cash crop farming.

For the farmers of Besao, the answer has been to uphold their traditional practices and adjust them to meet contemporary challenges. Chief among the iBasao’s practices is a concept called *inayan*, or *lawa*, which governs day-to-day life by discouraging any act that causes harm to anybody or anything and forbids the violation of the community’s standards of behavior. Each person is supposed to use his or her own conscience in deciding right and wrong, reinforced with the idea that punishment for wrongdoing will be carried out by Kabunian (God). It is a simple command of “don’t” based in values like respect for other people and nature, justice, morality, harmony, sharing resources, and helping one another.

The iBesao regard water as a living thing that needs sustenance to perpetuate itself and provide for humans. This notion is embodied in the concept of Nakinbaey, a supernatural being that inhabits most water sources and other sacred sites in Besao. Among the iBesao, water is produced by the Nakinbaey, so to ensure water supply, the Nakinbaey must be pleased and kept from leaving the source. Traditionally that



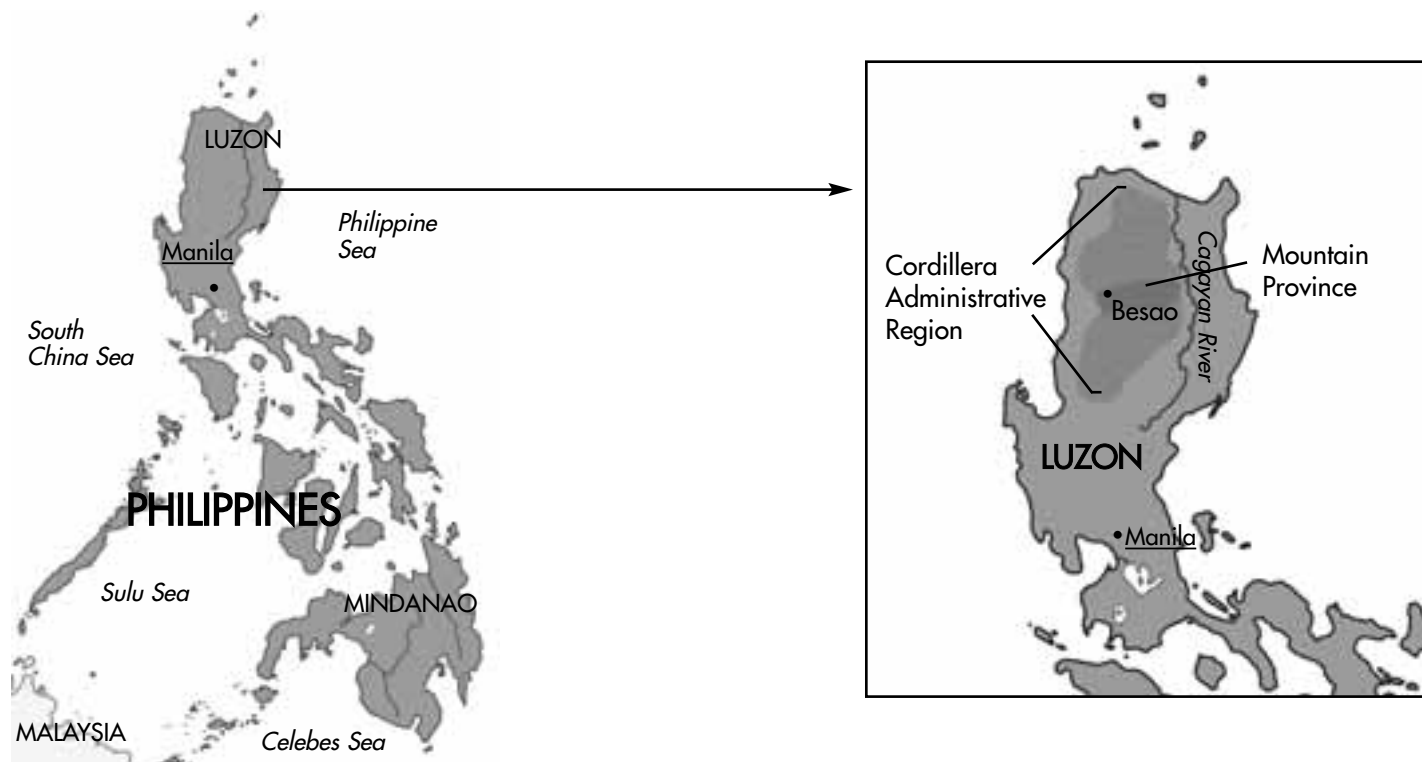
was done by community elders through a cleansing ritual called *legleg*. Some elders attribute the current decreasing water supply to the lack of practice of the ritual, and there is increasing community support for the revival of *legleg*.

For the iBasao, water is a shared resource that cannot be privatized. But while ownership is communal, the community of farmers who first tapped the system for their use has priority rights to water. Rights also are claimed by the community through which the water naturally flows. No one is allowed to divert water from its natural course or from existing irrigation systems without consent from the communities that depend on it. Rights to access and use of water for irrigation comes with the right to land.

The Kapusean River source, for example, is located within the rice field of the farmer Gan-i. But the community’s right to use the water and the general spiritual regard for water, prevail over Gan-i’s ability to farm all year round. Joaquin Anosan, who lives in Suquib, says that all the farmers using the Kapusean source downstream of Gan-i’s field have agreed to give a part of their harvest to Gan-i in exchange for his lost opportunity to continuously farm his field. Today, Gan-i’s grandchildren are allowed to use the rice field but are restricted by the community from using farm animals in tilling it.

The iBasao’s system is based on mutual respect, equity, and reverence for nature. Through that system, the people of Besao have evolved sophisticated and effective methods to protect and manage their water resources—methods that can serve as a model for all humanity.

*Eleanor Dictaan-Bang-oa is a staff member of the Gender Desk of the Tebtebba Foundation (Indigenous Peoples’ International Centre for Policy Research and Education).*





# Guatemalan War Widows Keep Weaving and their Community Alive

By Jennifer Wilhoit and Tara Tidwell Cullen

**I**n the 1980s the women of Guatemala's department of Sololá, in the Canton Pujujil region on the edge of Lake Atitlán, watched as their community slowly disintegrated under the pressures of the country's decades-long civil war. Most of these women were widows, and many had already been forced to move to the city or to send their children to the city to find jobs in order to support their families. Fearful that they would soon lose their Mayan language, culture, and community cohesiveness, a group of widows decided to use one Mayan tradition, backstrap weaving, to provide a sustainable income without leaving home.

The women founded a weaving cooperative in 1985, and in 1987, with the help of Canadian businessman Ron Spector, they created Asociación Maya. Though many of the members still live in poverty, they say the association has improved their lives, and they are grateful for the opportunity to make a living without leaving their community.

In many ways, the fair trade crafts industry is different from the fair trade coffee industry. While the basic principles of paying a fair price, treating workers well, and protecting the environment apply, the absence of a structured pricing system has left the definition of "fair" up to interpretation for crafts producers in the South and traders in the North. Asociación Maya's members' experiences illustrate tensions that can arise, even under the fair trade system, when indigenous peoples decide to use their cultures to sustain their economies.

Rosario Yaxon Cumes, a weaver, says her work for the association allows her to care for her children: "I am a widow of the violence in 1981 and 1982. For this reason, I am very dependent on the cooperative," she said. "The problem is that there is not much demand for the work."

The cooperative dyes, weaves, and sells garments such as vests and scarves, as well as change purses, shoulder bags, and other accessories. All of this work is made from chenille and cotton fibers and dyes the cooperative purchases from stores in Miami, Florida. The bright pinks, lime greens, and oranges that are fashionable today in Mayan communities (and which the association members use to weave textiles for their own clothing) do not sell well in North American and European markets, where deeper and richer blends are preferred, so in 1998 the association changed from more traditional approaches.

Even with special attention to North American and Europe, the association struggles to find a large market. Unlike the fair trade coffee market, in which cooperatives are meant to help assure a steady income,



Odilia Elmida Guaracas,  
Quiché, office manager of  
Asociación Maya

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Asociación Maya offers weavers a higher price for their work but not a guarantee that their work will sell.

Weavers are paid for each piece when they deliver a finished textile to the association office. One textile, such as a scarf or piece of a bag or jacket, can be completed in as little as three days. But the weavers face other daily demands, such as caring for children, maintaining the household, and preparing meals; for widows, who do not have husbands also earning an income, the money they make is rarely enough. It is, however, better than any alternative. Without the association, the women would be weaving textiles for local use at a third of the income, or would have to move to the city for other poorly paid work. "It's not enough, but it's something," said weaver Juana Ajcalón Ajcalón.

A particular challenge for Asociación Maya is that the organization has no steady market in which to sell its work. Pieces are sold in two local tourist towns, and none of the woven items are sold in Canton Pujujil. The association also sells weavings internationally, mostly through its connections with Spector. But that market is small and intermittent.

There's another problem: Weavers want to preserve the 3,000-year-old tradition of backstrap weaving, but

that technique is inefficient when producing for a mass market. Backstraps have been replaced by footlooms in most parts of the world. Because the footloom has a larger frame, its users can produce a wider variety of textiles more quickly. This reduces production costs and allows stores to charge lower prices, while maintaining or improving the per-piece income of the weaver.

But weavers have been hesitant to adopt the new technology in Guatemala, where there is a division of labor along gender lines: In almost all communities, men use the footlooms and women use the backstraps. For women to break this tradition in order to increase their income would require a major cultural shift.

Despite the hardships the association faces and the market instability the weavers experience, Asociación Maya has allowed the communities of Canton Pujujil to stay together during the final years of the civil war and the first crucial years of peace. To meet world market demand, the association members have chosen to change some aspects of their traditional weaving practices in order to save others. More importantly, their production for the world market has allowed them to avoid even more poorly paid work and to maintain their families, languages, and livelihoods in a way that could never be replicated in a city.

# KNOW YOUR RIGHTS

## A Cup of Truth

By Mark Camp, Sofia Flynn, and Agnes Portalewska

**T**he most common product in the fair trade system is coffee. The fair trade pricing system was created as a safety net for coffee farmers. It guarantees that growers' cooperatives receive at least \$1.21 for a pound of nonorganic green coffee beans, and \$1.36 for a pound of organic beans, even if the market price falls below that level. Fair trade buyers also must pay a five-cent-per-pound social premium that the cooperative may use as it sees fit, often for development projects (though coop members may vote to have the premium divided among them). So the minimum price a cooperative will receive for a pound of organic fair trade coffee is \$1.41.

The basic principles of fair trade coffee are set by the Fairtrade Labelling Organization (FLO), which certifies fair trade cooperatives, and TransFair, the organization that makes sure cooperatives meet those standards. A third organization, the Fair Trade Federation (FTF), also has set guidelines for its members (see the "Know Your Rights" pullout section for more details). Cooperatives that are certified by the FLO are inspected every year, and importers and roasters have to give reports to TransFair that prove they are meeting the organization's business guidelines. FTF members must sign a pledge to follow the FTF guidelines.

Under these guidelines, companies that buy coffee have to deal directly with growers' cooperatives, and they have to pay at least the minimum fair trade price. Buyers also have to give cooperatives financial and technical training and help set up environmentally sustainable practices, including organic farming, if you want to do it.

To many small growers, however, "fair trade" means nothing more than that they receive a "fair price"—or more than the price they would get from the coyotes who buy the *ceresa* (the unprocessed fruit that contains the coffee beans) from them on the street. Many growers do not recognize the term "fair trade" or understand how the system works. Even farmers who belong to a cooperative sometimes don't fully understand the system—something that hits home when the world market price for coffee rises above the fair trade price, and growers' coops struggle to deliver the quantities they have promised to their buyers.

Here is how growers can avoid some of those problems: Because the market price for coffee changes and can rise above the fair trade minimum price, growers should not sign a contract with buyers that



A Tzutujil Maya coffee producer runs the wet mill, removing coffee beans from the *ceresa* coffee fruit.

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would set a price in advance. Although fair trade organizations like the FLO tries to help farmers, they cannot force buyers to renegotiate a contract, so growers should be sure to keep options open. "The rule of fair trade is you're supposed to move with it," said John Cossette, a sales associate for fair trade coffee broker Royal Coffee. "If you bought forward [by signing contracts to resell the coffee at a set price to other companies] based on your contract [with a cooperative] and believed that's how it was going to be sold, you were taking a great risk."

The kind of deal growers get out of the fair trade system depends on how well they understand it, but opportunities to learn about the business of fair trade are limited. The Fairtrade Labelling Organization (FLO) visits cooperatives once a year for certification inspections, and representatives of TransFair USA, Élan Organics, and other fair trade buyers visit regularly, as well. But all of these visits focus on improving the farmers' organic production techniques, rather than providing education in negotiation, management, or other business skills.

"Coops really need to have an understanding of the business process and international process, so they have ways of defending themselves," said Erika Hernandez of Élan. "Coop managers need to learn better how to communicate with farmers about what's expected. At the end of the day, it comes back to business."

To succeed in fair trade, coffee farmers, you need to know as much about the production and supply chain as the brokers, roasters, and labeling organizations. TransFair and FLO are heading in this direction. These organizations held workshops this year in Guatemala to help cooperative members better understand contracts, market fluctuation, and internal marketing so managers can better communicate with farmers. This education is essential to the success of the system; without it, the educational and resource disparities that marginalize indigenous peoples and small coffee farmers will be reinforced by fair trade. Such an outcome would be a tragedy for a social movement that has so much potential to improve indigenous peoples' lives.



# FAIR TRADE PRINCIPLES

KNOW YOUR RIGHTS

WHEN YOU WORK WITH A FAIR TRADE ORGANIZATION, YOU SHOULD EXPECT IT TO FOLLOW THE GUIDELINES LISTED HERE. THESE PRINCIPLES, WHICH ALL FAIR TRADE ORGANIZATIONS HAVE AGREED TO, ARE DESIGNED TO PROTECT YOUR RIGHTS AND IMPROVE YOUR BUSINESS AND YOUR COMMUNITY.

## ☐ Fair Traders Should Pay You a Fair Wage

You should be paid fairly for your products, which means that you should receive at least your country's minimum wage. Since minimum wage usually isn't enough for survival, whenever possible you should negotiate for a "living wage." A living wage covers basic expenses such as food, shelter, education, and health care for you and your family.

## ☐ Fair Traders Should Provide Financial and Technical Support

Fair traders who buy directly from your cooperative should provide you with financial help, which may include direct loans, prepayment or partial prepayment for your products, or helping you find alternative sources of financing. They should give you pre-financing if you ask for it. They should also help you diversify your business by working with multiple buyers.

## ☐ Fair Traders Should Respect Cultural Identity

Fair trade organizations should encourage you to develop products based on your cultural traditions and should promote your artistic talents so you can sustain your cultural identity.

## ☐ Fair Traders Should Encourage Environmental Sustainability

Fair trade organizations should work with you to develop environmentally friendly practices and sustainable management of your local resources.

## ☐ Fair Traders Should Educate Consumers

Fair traders have an obligation to educate buyers about the importance of purchasing your products, and a responsibility to encourage buyers to request fair trade products where they aren't already available.

## ☐ Fair Traders Should Establish a Long-Term, Stable Relationship With You

Your trading partners should sign a contract with you for the first part of the season and a letter of intent for the rest of the season, so you can make plans and set up sustainable practices.

## ☐ Fair Traders Should Be Accountable

All members' of the Fair Trade Federation should have their finances, management policies, and business practices monitored by the Fair Trade Federation. Even if a fair trade organization is not a federation member, it should still make its financial records available to you. Your cooperative has a right to request this information if it has not already been provided.

## ☐ Fair Traders Should Establish a Cooperative Workplace

Fair trade organizations should work with worker-owned, democratically run cooperatives and associations, so that you and your community can benefit significantly from your relationship with the fair trader.



# WHEN AN ORGANIZATION CLAIMS IT IS DOING “FAIR TRADE,” IT IMPLIES THAT IT IS HOLDING TO THESE PRINCIPLES. IF YOU HAVE QUESTIONS ABOUT WHETHER YOUR FAIR TRADE PARTNER IS FOLLOWING THROUGH ON THE ACCEPTED GUIDELINES FOR FAIR TRADE, YOU CAN CONTACT:

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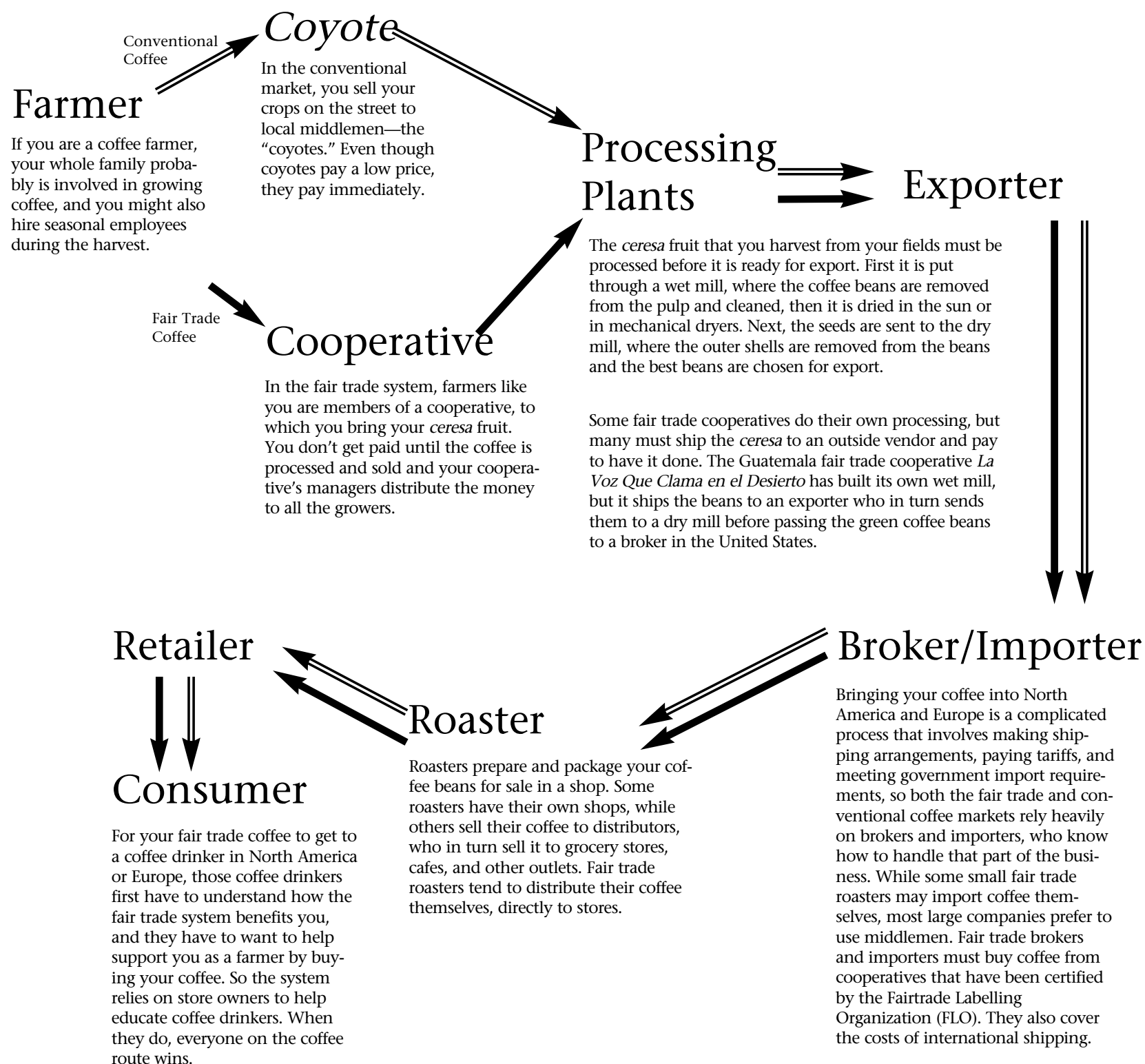
## Bean Counting

When consumers buy a pound of fair trade organic coffee, the purchase covers many different expenses, including your pay as the grower. Retail markups vary considerably, as do administrative costs for the roasters, importers, and cooperatives. Coffee Importer and cooperator Dean's Beans gave Cultural Survival a rundown of the costs associated with a pound of his coffee:



# HOW YOUR COFFEE HARVEST GETS TO MARKET

Whether you grow conventional coffee or fair trade coffee, your crop has to pass through many hands before it reaches a coffee drinker. One of the major claims of fair trade is that the system eliminates middlemen and makes a direct connection between you, the farmer, and the roasters. In fact, the path of a coffee bean from crop to cup varies greatly among fair trade cooperatives and roasters, and in all cases it involves a lot of people. Here are some of the steps your crop is likely to follow:



## Miscarriage of Justice

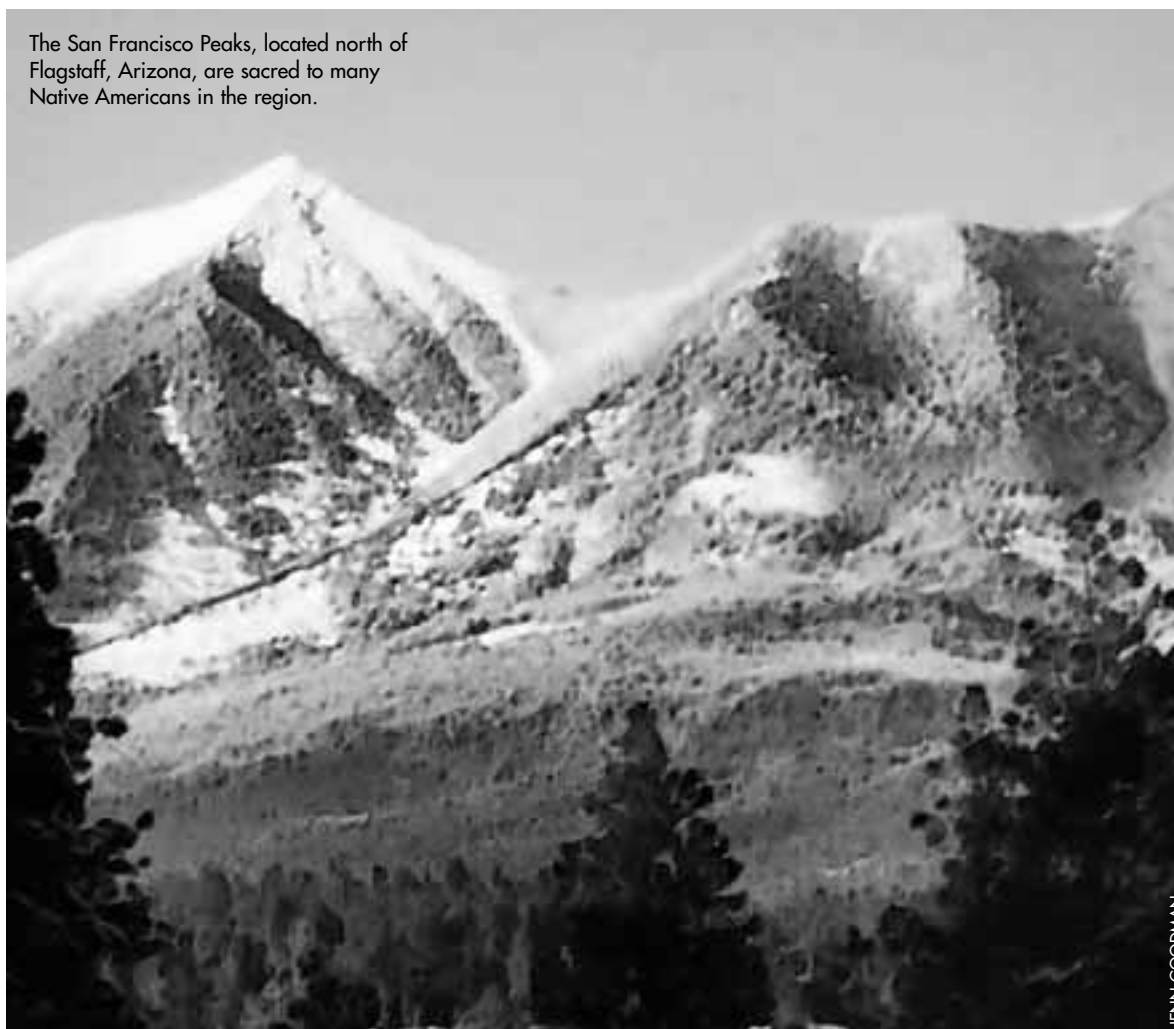
By Mark Cherrington

**O**n January 11, United States District Court Judge Paul G. Rosenblatt issued his decision in *Navajo Nation v. U.S. Forest Service*, ruling against six Native American tribes that had sued to stop the expansion of a Forest Service ski area on Arizona's San Francisco Peaks. The plan would produce snow from water reclaimed by a Flagstaff sewage treatment facility and was the final step in a larger expansion scheme approved in a 1979 court decision.

The tribes, which included the Navajo Nation, the Hopi Tribe, the Havasupai Tribe, the Hualapai Tribe, the Yavapai Apache Nation, and the White Mountain Apache Nation, all consider the peaks a sacred site and argued that the snowmaking plan would violate their rights under the Religious Freedom Restoration Act. They also claimed that using treated sewage water would cause serious environmental damage. But Rosenblatt rejected those claims. Because the earlier court decision had already approved the work on the ski area, the Forest Service in this case had only to show that it had given due consideration to the snowmaking plan's environmental and religious consequences and that it had examined alternative approaches. Rosenblatt found that that the service had, indeed, met that very low standard.

The court did give special attention to the tribes' claims in regard to the Religious Freedom Restoration Act, but the act's narrow definitions doomed those claims from the start. Under the act, the snowmaking plan would only be disallowed if it limited the tribes' access to the mountain or prevented them from practicing their religion. Rosenblatt interpreted religious practice to be limited to specific ceremonial sites or access to plants and animals used in ceremonies, and since the ski area did not contain any specific ceremonial sites or unique species, he found that the plan did not violate the act. This self-serving reasoning reached its peak in the case of one individual plaintiff, a Hopi religious leader named Bill Bucky Preston. In rejecting Preston's claims under the Religious Freedom act, Rosenblatt explained, apparently without irony, that "Plaintiff Preston does not conduct any religious activities within the [ski] area. Plaintiff

The San Francisco Peaks, located north of Flagstaff, Arizona, are sacred to many Native Americans in the region.



JENN GOODMAN

Preston testified that the Snowbowl's presence on the peaks prevents him from doing so."

Howard Shaker, a lawyer who represented several of the tribes, summarized the judge's decision by saying, "The federal government felt, and the court affirmed, that the economic viability of the Arizona Snowbowl Resorts Limited Partnership was more of a priority than the beliefs of hundreds of thousands of Native Americans."

"This ruling is a devastating tragedy for all those who value environmental health, culture, and

religious freedom," said Klee Benally, Navajo of the Save the Peaks Coalition. "This is a miscarriage of justice. This is a defeat for those who have faith that the justice system is unbiased and indiscriminate, and all of us, native or not, will pay the price."

The tribes said that they would appeal the judge's ruling and would seek an injunction. "This is not the end," said Bucky Preston. "We have to continue to go forward in a peaceful way, until we let the mountain know that we're not going to give up."

# THE ESSENCE OF LIFE

*Photographs by Scott Stephens*

*Water plays an essential role in the daily life of the Anishinabe community living on the shores of Trout Lake in Northwest Ontario*



The Anjecone family at a summer traditional gathering

*Water is our lifeblood: it is the lifeblood of Mother Earth, and the essence of life. In many indigenous cultures, as men tend the sacred fire, women are considered the caretakers of water. Many aboriginal societies are located around bodies of water because our gatherings and family activities depend on it. Water provides a subsistence base for us and the activities that sustain us. Water is a key component to our sense of community, our sense of identity, our spiritual ways, and our livelihood.*

*Around six families inhabit the Trout Lake area. This small but cohesive indigenous community has struggled to gain recognition from the Canadian government as a "traditional" territory. The community faces constant challenges from developers who want to build up the area and assume proprietary control of its resources.*

—Scott Stephens



Lawrence Anjecone at Nameikosipii, Ontario, during a traditional Anishinabe community gathering



Jordan and Michael Anjecone fishing for pickerel



Nameikosipii, Trout Lake

*Photographer Scott Stephens is from the Lac Seul First Nation in northwestern Ontario, Canada.*

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## Canada Arrives at Controversial Reparations Agreement

By Jessica Edwards

**A** boriginal survivors of Canada's residential-school era have mixed emotions about the Canadian federal government's November 23 decision to pay CAD \$2 billion in reparations to survivors.

The unprecedented reparations deal includes a CAD \$10,000 "common experience" payment to the approximately 90,000 living people who attended the residential schools, an additional CAD \$3,000 for every year the students attended, nearly CAD \$200 million in funding for healing and educational programs, and the option of pursuing individual claims of abuse through the courts. Survivors 65 years and older can apply for an early payment of CAD \$8,000.

"You can't put a price tag on the lost cultural languages or the people being taken from their homes for years [at a time]," said Mike Benson, Executive Director of the National Residential School Survivor Society (NRSSS). "But for some of the elderly survivors, they are finally getting acknowledgement [that this happened]."

The residential school system in Canada operated from the 1870s through the 1950s and '60s, with the last school closing late in the 20th century, according to the Indian Residential Schools Resolution website. Residential schools, which were funded by the federal government and often operated by churches, were designed to

transform aboriginal Canadians into mainstream Christians, and have been blamed for the disappearance of aboriginal languages, as well as the physical and sexual abuse of the children who attended.

Benson said that under the agreement, it should now be easier for survivors to prove their claims of abuse, which will be settled in addition to the common-experience payment.

Assembly of First Nations National Chief Phil Fontaine said in a press release that "no amount of money will ever heal the emotional scars," though he believes that the reparations package "will contribute to the journey on the path to healing."

Don Kelly, communications director for the AFN, explained that a public apology was not released in conjunction with the reparations deal because there was no "legal mechanism" for Prime Minister Paul Martin to apologize within the court-ordered deal.

"The government of Canada wants closure on this," said Benson. "It reflects on them in the international community that it's Canada—guardian of human rights—and [its] natives are still fighting for compensation."

*This article was originally published on December 13, 2005.*

## Indigenous journalists create technology and advocacy network

**I**n October, indigenous journalists created a technology-based organization, RED AIPIN, at the Agencia Internacional de Prensa India (AIPIN) seminar to defend indigenous journalists and disseminate information, as well as to become an umbrella organization for other indigenous groups or news groups. Journalists from Argentina, Bolivia, Chile, Ecuador, Mexico, Panama, and Peru are the main participants within the alliance; however, any newsgroup with a focus on indigenous peoples is welcome to join. RED AIPIN is also in

the process of partnering with the First Nations Assembly of Canada, another indigenous-rights advocacy organization. The group is currently searching for web space to host their organization, and is working under Yahoo! Groups in the meantime.

For more information, or to join this network, contact: aipin\_seminario@yahoo.es

*This article was originally published on October 14, 2005.*



## Upcoming Events

February 4, 2006

**13th Annual Northwest Regional International Day of Solidarity with Leonard Peltier March and Rally for Justice**  
Tacoma, WA

March 6–10, 2006

**Inter-American Commission on Human Rights (IACHR)**  
Washington, DC

March 14–18, 2006

**Global Summit on HIV/AIDS, Traditional Medicine & Indigenous Knowledge**  
Accra, Ghana

March 14–18 2006

**Global Summit on HIV/AIDS, Traditional Medicine & Indigenous Knowledge**  
Saint Paul, Minnesota

March 16–22, 2006 (Registration is due by March 3)

**4th World Water Forum**  
Mexico City, Mexico

March 16, 2006–April 21, 2006

**UN Commission on Human Rights**  
Geneva, Switzerland

March 17–26, 2006

**3rd International Folk Festival**  
Nepal

May 15–26, 2006

**UN Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues (UNPFII)**  
UN Headquarters New York, New York

June 19–22, 2006

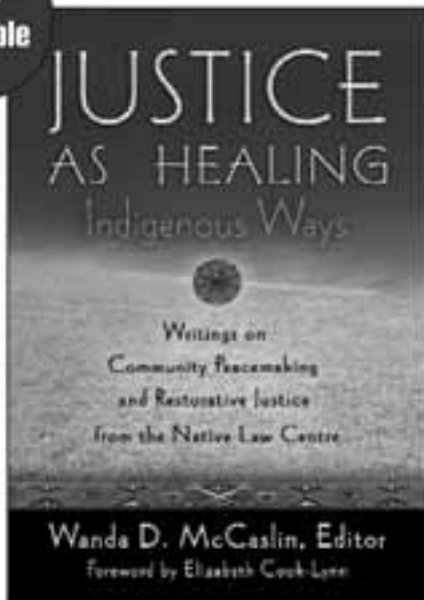
**International Indigenous Business and Entrepreneurship Conference**  
Albuquerque, New Mexico

July 17–20, 2006

**First Nation Economic Opportunities Conference**  
Sydney, Australia

*Please visit [www.cs.org](http://www.cs.org) and click on Events for more information and additional calendar listings.*

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—Pia Maybury-Lewis, Co-founder of Cultural Survival



## Aboriginal Practices Play a Role in Reducing Global Warming

By Mark Cherrington

**E**ach year, an area of Australia larger than Great Britain goes up in smoke as a result of wildfires. The flames are destructive, of course, but it turns out that the fires' smoke may be even more problematic, as each year it adds some 3 million tons of carbon dioxide and other greenhouse gases to the atmosphere, significantly contributing to global warming.

The extent and intensity of modern fires is largely the result of Aboriginal communities being removed from the land during colonization. Traditionally, Aboriginal communities set intentional blazes for hunting and ceremonial purposes. These fires prevented a buildup of fuel on the ground and created effective firebreaks, so that natural wildfires were smaller and shorter-lived. Now, in a new scheme set up by the Commonwealth Scientific and Industrial Research Organization (CSIRO) and the Aboriginal Northern Land Council, Aborigines are returning to the land and reestablishing their old fire regimes. The scheme, called the Arnhem Land Fire Abatement Project, is aimed not only at reducing the severity of wildfires, but also at providing a substantial stream of income for Aborigines through international carbon-emissions trading programs. The carbon-trading programs work by allowing major companies, which produce large amounts of carbon through their industrial operations, to offset their carbon production (and thus avoid fines and penalties) by buying carbon credits from operations that reduce the amount of carbon released to the atmosphere—operations like the Arnhem Land project. Based on the current value of carbon credits, the project's managers estimate that it could earn Aboriginal communities nearly \$10 million a year.

Dr. Garry Cook, the CSIRO project director, said that in addition to the climate benefits, the project would help put a value on traditional knowledge and give younger generations a reason to learn it and preserve it. Aboriginal land-management methods would also have major benefits for threatened wildlife, Cook said.

Early results are encouraging: In the program's first year, with Aboriginal fire breaks in place, only 16 percent of Western Arnhem Land burned, where the average over the preceding five years was 37 percent.

### Pacific Islanders Displaced by Rising Sea Level

In December, the United Nations Environment Program announced that the people of Tegua, in the Pacific island chain of Vanuatu, had become the world's first climate-change refugees, as rising sea levels forced them to abandon their coastal homes. "We are seeing king tides across the region," said Taito Nakalevu, climate-change adaptation officer with the Pacific Regional Environment Program, which helped move more than 100 villagers in the Lateu settlement to higher ground farther inland. "These are normal events, but it is the frequency that is abnormal and a threat to livelihoods. People are being forced to build sea walls and other defenses not just to defend their



Timothy Buthimang with the cycad, a sacred Wangurri totem, Arnhem Land, Australia.

homes, but to defend agricultural land." Erosion from flooding in recent years averaged two to four meters a year, and the standing water left by the floods led to increased mosquito populations and higher levels of malaria and skin diseases in village children.

One of the challenges in the relocation was the absence of fresh water at the new village, which is called Lirak. The villagers had relied on fresh-water springs that only occur at low tide along the coast. In Lirak they will get their water from six 6,000-liter water tanks that will hold rainfall collected by the roofs of the houses.

### Inuit Petition Human Rights Commission to Oppose U.S. Greenhouse Gas Emissions

During the United Nations' climate-change conference in Montreal in December, Sheila Watt-Cloutier, an Inuk woman and chair of the Inuit Circumpolar Conference, submitted a petition to the Inter-American Commission on Human Rights seeking relief from Inuits' human rights violations caused by United States greenhouse gas emissions. The 163-page petition, which documents global warming's effect on the Arctic environment and the Inuits' hunting-based economy, included testimony from 63 Inuit from northern Canada and Alaska and was prepared by more than 300 scientists and six indigenous-peoples organizations. It focuses on the United States because the U.S. is the largest producer of greenhouse gases,

and because the Bush administration has refused to join international efforts to reduce emissions.

The damage cited in the petition is in line with scientists' projections, which suggest that global warming will occur earliest and be most pronounced at the poles. "Our region is the globe's climate-change barometer," Watt-Cloutier said. "If you want to protect the planet, look to the Arctic and listen to what Inuit are saying."

The petition asks the Human Rights Commission, which was established by the Organization of American States, to recommend that the U.S. adopt mandatory greenhouse-gas emission limits and cooperate with other nations. The petition also asks the commission to declare that the U.S. has an obligation to help Inuit adapt to unavoidable impacts of climate change, and that it should take into account the impact of its emissions on the Arctic and Inuit before approving all major government actions.

"This petition is not about money," Watt-Cloutier said. "It is about encouraging the United States of America to join the world community, to agree to deep cuts in greenhouse-gas emissions needed to protect the Arctic environment and Inuit culture. Climate change is destroying our environment and eroding our culture. But we refuse to disappear. We will not become a footnote to globalization."

