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Indigenous Women: Powerful partners in transforming our world

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Letter from the Secretariat

Lat Sokem gives importance to education as a way towards empowerment of women, children and youth. In her own words: “I think education is very powerful; through it, we can help ourselves, family and society as well”. This is how Lat Sokem, in one of the proceeding articles, gives importance to education in the empowerment of women.

Empowerment is a process and a result of multiple intervening factors. For women, this has to do with eliminating traditional and behavioral barriers to gender equality. Goal 5 of Agenda 2030 seeks to achieve gender equality and empower all women and girls. It targets the elimination of all forms of discrimination, gender violence and harmful practices. Also, it aims to recognize unpaid and domestic work, ensure participation in decision-making and access to sexual and reproductive health care, secure equal rights to economic resources, enhance enabling technologies, and strengthen legislation and enforcement as tools to promote gender equality and women’s empowerment.

Indigenous women’s disempowerment results from the multiple disadvantages attributed to their intersecting identities as women and as indigenous peoples on top of historical discrimination. The stories in this issue underscores these intersectionalities galvanized by other socio-cultural, economic, political factors, including violence and the unprecedented impacts of climate change, contributing to the disempowerment of indigenous women. On the other hand, the stories also bring to fore how indigenous women, their communities and agencies including indigenous peoples organizations, are putting their sustainable development visions into practice taking stock of different knowledge, skills and strategies from different experiences and context guided by the high value indigenous peoples hold on land as equated to life and their roles as stewards for the next generation.

For indigenous women, gender empowerment entails collective process of acknowledging the existence of discrimination and critically defining the sources and factors leading to their disempowerment as women and as indigenous peoples through their lived experiences. Clearly, as much as disempowerment has resulted from the impacts of crosscutting factors through time, indigenous women’s

empowerment involves the whole community at large to address the multi-dimensional issues contributing to the situation.

The year 2017 marks the tenth year of the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples (UNDRIP). Initiated in 1983, it took 24 years before its final adoption by the United Nations General Assembly. While this was a battle won in the history of indigenous peoples’ struggles, its realization and enjoyment by indigenous peoples on the ground remains to be a challenge.

In observance of the UNDRIP’s 10th year anniversary, the United Nations Commission on the Status of Women (UNCSW) adopted “The Empowerment of Indigenous Women” as an emerging issue or focus area on its 61st Session held on 13-24 March this year. The Agreed Conclusions from this session recognized that “*the economic empowerment, inclusion and development of indigenous women, including through the establishment of indigenous-owned businesses, can enable them to improve their social, cultural, civil and political engagement, achieve greater economic independence and build more sustainable and resilient communities and notes the contribution of indigenous peoples to the broader economy*” (Para 34, E/CN.6/2017/L.5). In this regard, the Commission urges governments to facilitate through legislation or reform, women’s access to economic and productive resources including ownership and control over land (Para 40 (d), E/CN.6/2017/L.5), among others.

Similarly, interventions by indigenous peoples worldwide during the 16th Session of the UN Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues (UNPFII) held on 24 April-5 May 2017, identified the gaps between progress in terms of constitutional and legislative frameworks and the actual improvement of “... *indigenous peoples rights in the areas of health, education, human rights, economic and social development, environment and culture.*” (Para. 18, E/2017/43, E/C.19/2017/11)

The Report of the 16th Session of the UNPFII (E/2017/43-E/C.19/2017/11) contains a section on the follow-up to the recommendations on indigenous women revolving around gender violence, discrimination, effective participation, human rights and security

Continue on page 5

16th Session of United Nations Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues

UN Headquarters, New York, 24 April - 04 May 2017

Delivered by: Eleanor P. Dictaan-Bang-oa
(on behalf of the Asia Indigenous Peoples Caucus and the Asian Indigenous Women's Network)

Agenda Item 3: Follow-up to the recommendations of the Permanent Forum: "Empowerment of indigenous women"

In the 10th year of UNDRIP and 38th of CEDAW, indigenous women have yet to realize the fulfillment of their rights as indigenous peoples and women. The commitments and gains achieved at the international level have not been translated well into substantive actions at the national and local levels. Indigenous women, in particular, continue to feel the impacts of discrimination and non-recognition of their multiple identities as women. They continue to lose their lands, livelihoods and lives due to brazen initiatives for socio-economic development and environment conservation. This is on top of the lack of and inefficient delivery of basic social services that appropriately responds to their actual needs. Promises of better access to and delivery of basic social services as part of corporate social responsibility are used to appeal to indigenous peoples' consent.

The political arena and public spheres are dominated by men. In many communities, indigenous women are often excluded from political participation and major decision making processes and positions. Most countries have zero or very limited measures for ensuring participation and inclusion of indigenous women in the State decision-making power including the national parliaments, regional and local government bodies and government offices.¹

The complex interphase between traditional and behavioral obstacles to gender empowerment such as discriminatory laws on inheritance, marriage, child custody, guardianship and access to and rights over lands that tend to privilege men over women, among others, persist. Many indigenous women still face multiple forms of discrimination when trying to access basic public services such as education, employment, health, sanitation and safe drinking water. Such structural injustices keep indigenous women impoverished, dependent and vulnerable. Patriarchal mindset and discriminatory attitudes prevailing in mainstream and indigenous society continue to marginalize and discriminate indigenous women and girls. This marginalization and discrimination can be worse especially among indigenous women and girls with disabilities.

Conflict and militarization of our communities remain unabated, aggravating human rights violations, insecurity including devastating impacts on resources, livelihoods and indigenous socio-political structures. The recent military operation in Abra province, Philippines in the name of the state's anti-insurgency campaign, for example, has resulted to abandonment of farms, loss of livestock and burning of the communal forests of three indigenous peoples' communities.²

Violence against women, in different forms and intensity, i.e. unlawful killings, murder after rape, rape, attempted rape, physical assault, abduction and trafficking is intensifying across different countries in Asia. This is specially noted in areas affected by conflict and militarization. In Bangladesh, 492 incidents of violence against indigenous women and girls were documented between 2007 and 2016 (including 122, 85 and 58 cases in 2014, 2015 and 2016 respectively).³

Violence persists as a cause of disempowerment among indigenous women and girls. Violence against indigenous women and girls has become a key concern of indigenous peoples in the region because in many cases the perpetrators enjoy absolute impunity.

Recommendations:

1. We share the vision for sustainable development but there is a need to address the following
 - a. Peace – as a precondition to just and sustainable development. Consistent with Article 30 of the UNDRIP, we demand the pull out of military elements and other armed groups from our communities, to enable us to determine and implement our sustainable development initiatives free from threats, intimidation and violence.
 - b. Land security – as a primary economic resource that has been deprived from most indigenous women

¹ In Bangladesh, out of 350 seats in the national parliament, 50 are reserved for women, and not even one of the 50 is an indigenous woman. Except for the specialized CHT Regional Council and the Hill District Councils of the hill region, there are no specific reservation of seats for indigenous peoples (including indigenous women) in local government councils, whether in the CHT or in the plains.

² Northern Dispatch. April 2017.

³ Kapaceng Foundation, *Human Rights Reports 2016 on Indigenous Peoples in Bangladesh*, 2017.

and girls. Consistent with CEDAW, and the principles of economic empowerment, state and indigenous communities should provide facilitating mechanisms to ensure that indigenous women and girls have equal access to and security of land tenure.

2. We welcome the results of the UNCSW 61 with direct references on the empowerment of indigenous women. We particularly appreciate the effort done in the development of its *Strategy on Visibility and Inclusion of Indigenous Women*. We look forward to the UN Women's leadership in mobilizing national women machineries towards the implementation of this strategy at the national and local levels where indigenous women and girls are not just part of the stakeholders but are effectively participating as rights-holders.
3. We reiterate the need for capacity building among indigenous women and their communities, including timely and appropriate information, technical and logistical support as enabling process and services towards meaningful participation. In light of Agenda 2030, participation should not just be measured in numbers. States and other implementing agencies, should ensure that quality and substance are factored into the measures of inclusion and participation.
4. There is equally a need to enhance capacities among UN Country teams, state and other concerned agencies to understand and appreciate the specific situations of indigenous women and their communities in relation to the UNDRIP and other international instruments.
5. In relation to state obligations and commitments, we call on the UNPFII to push for the development and implementation of indigenous-sensitive and gender-responsive programs and approaches in consultation and partnership with indigenous women or peoples' organizations at the national and local levels.

Letter from the Secretariat (continuation)

issues. Among the specific recommendations for its 18th session, the UNPFII invited the International Labour Organization "to prepare a report on the situation of indigenous women with regard to informal work, migration and working conditions," and recommended the same to do a study on the "access to the labour market by and labour conditions of indigenous women and youth and the challenges, barriers and stereotypes that may affect their professional development." It has also invited the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) Secretariat to do a study on the impacts of climate change on indigenous women.

Needless to say, whatever gaps there are in policy and practice reflect on the development status of peoples on the ground. The global struggle for the recognition of indigenous peoples' ownership of their traditional lands and territories and their right to decide their development directions and strategies continues as aggression and violence impact on their lives and security. As discussions on an inclusive and sustainable development for people and planet proceeds, resource wars are happening on the ground. To quote a report from The Guardian (2017), "Since the start of 2015, one hundred thirty two (132) land and environmental defenders have died in Brazil: the highest number on Earth. Many of the killings were of people trying to combat illegal logging in the Amazon. The Philippines comes second on the list, with 75 deaths in all. Honduras remains the most dangerous country to be a defender, with more killings per capita than anywhere else." The report

further links this violence to industry, "The most deadly industry to go up against was mining, with 33 deaths last year relating to anti-mining activities, agribusiness, hydroelectric dams and logging were also key drivers of violence, Global Witness found. Many of the killings recorded occurred in remote villages deep within mountain ranges and rainforests, with **indigenous communities hardest hit.**" (The Guardian, 2017).

Such situation of conflict and insecurity augurs an utter contradiction of the sustainable development goals agreed by states as much as a violation of the human and collective rights of indigenous women and their communities. It disenfranchises indigenous women of their initiatives and efforts to build on and strengthen the "power within", "power with", "power to" and "power over" to determine their development targets and strategies.

Empowerment of indigenous women is a derivative change dependent on the progress in achieving the other goals of Agenda 2030 i.e. poverty and economic resources, education, health and wellbeing and food security, among others. Peace and security in indigenous territories, the last frontiers of resource diversity, is a sine qua non if Agenda 2030 is to be truly inclusive of indigenous peoples. On top of full and effective respect and protection of peoples' rights, enabling conditions that are gender-responsive and culturally sensitive has to be defined as we harness our knowledge, experiences and efforts to address empowerment of women, particularly, indigenous women, youth and girls. *aiwn*



Lalitpur, 2016. Indigenous women with disabilities in post earthquake situation are provided with wheelchair and peer counseling to help them reintegrate to the society. This initiative is supported by Bischöfliches Hilfswerk Misereor (MISEREOR) and coordinated by Nepal Indigenous Disabled Association (NIDA).

Life at the Margins


The Challenges of Indigenous Women with Disabilities¹

By Pratima Gurung

Introduction

The unique identities that indigenous women with disabilities (IWWDs) possess are often tied with physical, biological, cultural, emotional and intellectual state and situations. Indigenous peoples' identity is often tied to collective relationship to lands and resources that enable social, cultural and spiritual lives whereas disability is related with physical challenges focused on individual right. Recognition of disability as one of the aspects of identity that influences the experiences of an individual, not as the sole-defining feature of a person, is crucial. Similarly, gender is related with biological, social, economic, and political system and institutions.

¹ This article is prepared on the primary information from the field that the writer visited during her visit in twelve districts that were affected by the 2015 earthquake and from working with the government stakeholders and civil society organizations for implementing the rehabilitation projects in those respective areas and other information from secondary sources.



After the earthquake, this Dalit woman together with her disabled daughter becomes a beneficiary of a shelter program supported by MISEREOR and NIDA.

All these multiple identities that indigenous women with disabilities possess put them in a complex situation. They continue to suffer from number of discriminatory values and systems, positioning their lives at the margins and confining them at the nadir of existing social hierarchy. They are always lost within the layers of structural oppression imposed on them like sexism, racism and ableism and many more.

The *World Report on Disability* produced by the World Health Organization (WHO) and the World Bank in 2011 estimates that 1 billion of the world's population has a disability. If this percentage is applied to the estimated 300 million indigenous peoples (IPs) globally, the number of indigenous peoples with disabilities (IPWDs) is approximately estimated at 45 million, many of which are living in Asia and Pacific.²

Reflecting on this situation and reality, *The Statement by the First Gathering of Indigenous Persons with Disabilities in Asia and the Pacific in 2015* highlights that IPWDs face constant challenges to their ancestral land and resources, culture, traditions and languages. They also suffer from forced evictions, evacuations, militarization and polluted or destroyed resources and environment. In addition, they face multiple challenges such as multiple discrimination and barriers to participate in political, social and cultural activities in the society due to their identity as indigenous peoples. And as persons with disabilities, they confront challenges including lack of access to development programs and funds, education, employment, health care, communication and transportation services, among others.

Similarly, Gurung in her two papers, *Situation of Indigenous Persons with Disabilities and their Challenges in Implement-*

ing National and International Agreed Commitment and Disability and Diversity (2014), has explained the layers of structural and institutional discrimination that indigenous persons/women with disabilities face. She has examined national and international policies, in the form of advocacy, that support the rights of persons with disabilities. In her later article, she has strongly argued for the incorporation of IPWDs into the mainstream discourse, on the basis of the concept of human diversity (Gurung, 2015).

All these references reflect the situation that IPWDs are historically fraught with exclusion and minority status. The social stigma exists and they have to contend with the issues of exclusion and fragmentation while their social standing in the community further exposes them to desperate experiences. They are the “marginalized of the marginalized” (Hickey, 2014).

Hence, looking at the issues of gender, disability or discrimination in a linear way is not enough to understand the issues of IPWDs. Further understanding should rather focus on factors such as economics, geographical location, rural-urban differences, culture and language, access to services and resources, awareness about legal and administrative procedures and others. All these factors reinforce barriers that reproduce social exclusion which is overlooked in most of the cases globally.

In this article, I will be discussing few elements that are commonly related to indigenous women with disabilities such as data, disaster, differences and discrimination. The data are primary information collected from the field visits in twelve 2015 districts that were affected by earthquake in Nepal and other information are from secondary sources.

² *Statement by the First Gathering of Indigenous Persons with Disabilities from Asia and the Pacific*, 22-25 July 2015, Bangkok, Thailand. It can be downloaded from <http://aippnet.org/statement-by-the-first-gathering-of-indigenous-persons-with-disabilities-from-asia-and-the-pacific/>.

Gender, Disability and Identity

Among the world's total population, 15 % have disability and they make up the single largest marginalized group. The *World Report on Disability* indicates that the prevalence of disability among women is higher than men. In both developing and developed countries, the female disability prevalence is 19.2 % while male disability prevalence is 12 %. Furthermore, it is estimated that if women comprise at least half of the world population, then women with disabilities comprise at least a similar proportion of persons with disabilities (Ortoleva, 2010, citing Arnade and Haefner, 2006). Disability among women is caused by poverty and malnutrition, war, nuclear accidents, poor access to health care, illness, medicines and injections, dangerous work conditions, accidents, poisons and pesticides while others are inherited (Maxwell, Belser and David, 2007). Natural disaster such as earthquakes are also among the causes of disability (United Nations, 2006).

Gender identity is linked to a social quality, a code with wide range of implications like biological sex to social roles as well as identity intertwined with the roles constructed with society. It also points to differences emerging from that distinction where women experience several gender-based discriminations at the most fundamental levels.

In the same vein when the factor of identity as indigenous peoples is added, indigenous women face multiple discrimination and oppression at an individual, domestic and collective level. Their rights are not legally recognized, which affects their economic, political and socio-cultural lives. Being pushed into oblivion, indigenous women with disabilities experience forced sterilizations, violence, abuse, rape, and exclusion from services like health, education and social protection. They are poorer, isolated and generally have lower social status. With these several complexities, indigenous women

with disabilities are considered as one of the most marginalized groups in society whose roles in their communities have been lost due to colonization, assimilation, integration and segregation.

Looking at intersectionality, Tamang (2011), Nightingale (2013) and Gurung (2015) argued that indigenous women with disabilities suffer from multiple forms of discrimination and are least exercising and enjoying their rights because of their gender, ethnic origin, disability and poverty. When disability and identity as indigenous peoples intersect with gender, it results to inequality and severe and complex forms of discrimination. So, to understand the situation of indigenous women with disabilities, the multiple aspects of gender, disability and identity as indigenous peoples should be understood.

“

...indigenous women with disabilities are considered as one of the most marginalized groups in society whose roles in their communities have been lost due to colonization, assimilation, integration and segregation.

Bhaktapur, 2016. After the needs assessment and consultation with Disabled Peoples Organizations' leaders and rights holders, recovery (medicines) and rehabilitation (shelter) supports are provided to indigenous women with disabilities. This is supported by MISEREOR and coordinated by NIDA.



Issues of Indigenous Women with Disabilities

If we briefly review feminist literatures and international human rights documents of women, it reveals that women studies and rights have reached a paradigm shift focusing on the perspectives of women on the global issues on political, social, cultural, economic development, ecological and psychological matters. However, the issues pertaining to women, indigenous women and women with disabilities and their diversities, like indigenous women with disabilities, have not been discussed, approached, and planned. There are numbers of reasons behind such situation. Their distinct and complex situation of discrimination and confrontation of the negative consequences of environmental degradation, climate change and many more are hidden, silent and unknown to most around the globe. And, most of the times their rights are overlooked.

Looking at the overall context, Hans (2006) reflected that among the people of the world, women occupy secondary position or minority position that is further entrenched among the disabled themselves. The indigenous women with disabilities when interlinked with other status are secluded in another minority status; therefore, issues relating to them should be engaged in mainstream discourse making them a priority agenda of duty bearers who seem to be less aware of such an urgency with which immediate action is needed.

“

I don't know and don't want to know about all these rights, women's rights, indigenous peoples' rights, rights of persons with disabilities and many more, which you people talk about. I am 68 years old and a hardworking woman toiling for hand-to-mouth existence for all my family members. I take care of my daughter who has mental disability and her son.

One of the armed persons during the 12-year armed conflict in the country raped my daughter, and consequently, she gave birth to a baby boy who is 10 years old now. We neither got justice nor identified the crook to punish him, because of multiple hurdles such as: my daughter's disability, economic condition and ethnicity. I didn't have access to services and procedures for justice.

Years have passed; however, I am on the same position waiting for justice. I feel my daughter is in fact raped every time as I can't provide her proper social protection and basic needs. And, there is a chance that she will be raped again. So, what can I do? I can neither die nor kill myself.

Since I belong to the so-called Dalit caste within the Newar community, neighbors won't even eat when I provide them food if they come to my house. Life is so isolating. Most of the time, my mind is occupied by the insecure situation of my daughter when I am at work. I only pray to God that bad things will not happen again...

(Mother of an indigenous woman with mental disability, Ramechhap Municipality, Nepal, Field Study, 2016).

In most of the situations, firstly, socially constructed beliefs embedded within the two status of identity as indigenous peoples and as disabled lead to levels of discrimination which can cause people to limit themselves to remain in the 'private sphere' and in some cases, render people hopeless, imagining their life 'worse than fate', 'without options', wishing 'rather to die than to live' (Gurung, 2015). When gender dimension

is added to it, it further accelerates more complex situation to most women with disabilities (WWDs) and this brings more difficulties to their families and caretaker.

Secondly, there is no disaggregated and reliable data on gender, disability and ethnicity in existing developmental frameworks that lead the policies and programs bundle all the diverse identities into a single basket. This has consequently resulted to exclusion of the indigenous women with disabilities from development plans, programs and activities.

The culture of respecting and recognizing the diversity of peoples and individuals are explicit in international instruments like the Universal Declaration on Human Rights (UDHR), the Convention on the Elimination of all forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW), the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (CRPD), the UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples (UNDRIP) and the World Conference on Indigenous Peoples (WCIP) outcome document. However, these are not fully implemented and the desired results are not achieved.

Kathmandu, March 2016. Honorable House Speaker Ms Onsari Garhi Magar addressed the participants in the National Level Consultation and Dialogue on CEDAW for the preparation of shadow report on indigenous women including indigenous women with disabilities. She spoke on the diversity of women and the situation of indigenous women to be mainstreamed in the national and international documents.



“

We don't find the spaces and status of our identity as indigenous women with disability in indigenous organization/movement/discourse. It triggers me to question myself most of the times-where are we, actually?

The avenue of discussing the nature of intersectional discrimination has to be opened to reach the unreached. Those who engage in women, disability and indigenous organizations fail to reflect the diversity most of the times. Therefore, our voice is overlooked. There is no available disaggregated data so we are excluded during the formulation of policy and implementation of the programs. We are left nowhere and our voices are not heard.

(Lom Tamang, Member, National Indigenous Disabled Women Association, Nepal, Field Study, 2016).

Statistics on gender, indigenous women and rates of disability tend to be limited and inadequately captured. Hence, duty bearers and development partners are reluctant to understand and recognize the rights of indigenous peoples/women with disabilities during policy formation and program designing, respectively. We need to understand that gender, disability and ethnicity are not monolithic categories; instead, they have variations and diverse phenomenon relating with their identities in different social and political contexts. These contexts arise with different experiences and severity under which it should be addressed and reinforced by comprehensive data.

Thirdly, based on the diverse and distinct identity possessed by persons with disabilities including indigenous peoples/women with disabilities, there are significant variations in the type and severity of disabilities that affect both their everyday lives and their experiences in the aftermath of disasters. To reflect on the worst reality of the earthquake that happened in April and May 2015 in Nepal, approximately 9,000 people lost their lives and 2,200 were injured, most of which were from socially vulnerable groups, namely, women, children, the elderly, the *Dalits*, indigenous peoples and particularly, those with disabilities.

Different studies and information show that the *Dalits* and indigenous PWDs were the most vulnerable during and post-disaster situation. The data indicate that compared to PWDs from other caste and ethnic groups, a significant proportion of *Dalit* PWDs (62%) and indigenous PWDs (81%) have inadequate or poor access to public facilities. Likewise, a much larger proportion of *Dalit* PWDs (85%) are reported to have less than adequate access to public services, as did indigenous respondents (74%) in earthquake. The rate of earthquake impacts between *Dalit* and indigenous communities are greater than those among other communities (UNDP, 2016 and NDRC, 2016).

Nepal Indigenous Disabled Association (NIDA), an organization working for IPWDs has reached out to 12 earthquake-affected districts in collecting information about the situation of IPWDs. NIDA (2016) reflected that 65-70 % of indigenous persons with disabilities were affected by the earthquake and 50-55% of IPWDs did not receive adequate relief goods. With this information, what must be considered is that adequate relief and rehabilitation materials for PWDs primarily include assistive device. Another factor is understanding their needs based on the challenges they face on their livelihoods, social security, support services, shelter, access

to information and services and participation to government processes. In times of disaster, the environment where IPWDs live such as in the rural and hilly regions must be considered to ensure that they have a reliable access to information, safety aids, emergency shelters and rehabilitation services like medical, peer and psychosocial activities. All these relief and rehabilitation needs vary depending on the types of disability and the layers of discrimination they face in their daily lives based on their identities. However, these considerations were taken for granted while addressing PWDs in rescue, relief and recovery operations.

NIDA, while collecting information from the earthquake-affected districts, found out that among the 48 PWDs who lost their lives during the earthquake in Sindhupalchowk district, 29 of them were IPWDs—indicating uneven vulnerabilities (UNDP, 2016). The situation indicates that women, children, elderly, indigenous peo-

One of the houses destroyed by the earthquake in Kavre district belonged to an indigenous woman with disabilities.



ples, *Dalits* and other rural people including persons with disabilities are far more vulnerable as reflected from the recent earthquake. Many who lost their lives were indigenous children, elderly and PWDs living in the earthquake-affected regions.

The vulnerabilities that most IPWDs faced in times of disaster are related to safety, assistive devices, and access to relief operations. Moreover, the lack of knowledge of PWDs on the disabilities and disaster risk reduction measures including related government services can intensify their vulnerabilities. Though the safety and preparedness measures were important for them to live and lead their normal life, they do not put high regard to it. Some IPWDs could not maximize their access to available services because they were in traumatic situation. The mental shock and fear of losing their livelihoods, property, lands, and families were overwhelming that some who got injured and eventually became disabled were unable to admit their disabilities. Most IPWDs also are unaware about their rights as enshrined in international instruments such as UNCRPD and UNDRIP. Thus, this lack of awareness makes them more at risk and vulnerable.

Because of their remote location and physical conditions, persons with disabilities were the least priority during post-disaster response. Moreover, language differences, difficulty in accessing resources considering the procedures, communication and information systems, lack of sensitivity of service providers on both disability and ethnicity including safety preparedness exacerbated many other barriers. These conditions left out the indigenous women with disabilities from rescue, relief, recovery, rehabilitation and reconstruction programs.

“

A single and 52 year-old Tamang woman who acquired her disability during the earthquake in Nuwakot was unable to receive relief goods during the early relief goods distribution. This was due to the simple fact that she did not understand the Nepali language. She understands and speaks only her native Tamang language, and there were no translators/interpreters in the relief team who could translate for her.

After the disaster, we cannot call or contact other members of the community since most of them live very far. There were no records of received relief goods and recovery assistance.

While some of them who have access received the relief goods repeatedly, others who do not have connections with organizations and leaders did not receive any. Relief operations were under much pressure because people were in desperate need at that time. However, relief efforts remained inaccessible to many people.

(Leader of an organization of disabled people who is working in post disaster areas during the collection of necessary information, Field Study, 2016).

Ramechap, 2016. Supported by South Asian Women Fund (SAWF) and coordinated by National Indigenous Disabled Women Association – Nepal (NIDWAN), relief (shelter) and rehabilitation efforts have targeted 16 indigenous women with disabilities in one of the earthquake-affected districts.



Importantly, there are places where there are micro-political and social dynamics within individuals and communities that dictate who has access to assistance and support and who has not. Such situation excluded most people whose voices and capacity are out of reach. Obviously, most PWDs and IWWDs were not in the access framework of relief, recovery and rehabilitation programs.

Similarly, during the earthquake and after staying in the temporary shelter collectively, most indigenous women with disabilities are unsafe and face many difficulties. Their conditions are different because of their special needs of personal care such as when they have to change their clothes and when they function differently in their private activities.

“ I went back along with my family to our own shelter due to our daughter’s disability. Her condition and care were not possible in public places where we were sharing our shelter with others. Doing some activities would be more public to others in the same tent and there might be activities that are unsafe for our whole family in the future so we decided to return. Despite the risk, our trauma and fear of aftershocks, we returned to our own shelter and took care of her; because the temporary shelter was unsafe for her.

(Mother of an indigenous woman with physical disability, Sindhuli, Field Study, 2016)

Before the support



For women with disabilities, maintaining hygiene is very challenging, especially during their monthly periods. Those who do not have caretakers have high possibilities of living in unsafe, unprotected, and neglected situations while the risk of being abused and raped are heightened. Earthquake survivors including IWWDs, their families and caretakers have further realized the insecurity, trauma, fear and anxiety triggered by disasters.

There is also a concern on how civil society organizations look at disaster response programs. The implementation gap and the resulting exclusion of PWDs in post disaster programs stem from lack of consultation between and among women-led organizations, disabled

people-led organizations (DPOs) and the indigenous peoples-led organizations (IPOs). Each organization is focusing only on its own area, which resulted to the failure of reaching those who are most at risk and vulnerable.

A program supported by SAWF and coordinated by NIDWAN provided a shelter to an indigenous woman with intellectual disability in Ramechap district. Indigenous women with intellectual disability experience intersectional discrimination based on gender, caste, ethnicity, geography and economic condition.



After the support

“

We approved and provided what every donor wanted to distribute.

The policy related with disaster risk reduction to reach the most vulnerable people like PWDs does not focus on their data and needs. As it was an emergency situation, we focused on what we had access to and dealing with disability was different. We later on realized that there was need for white canes and crutches for the survivors. But most of the donors brought food and clothes and the government was focused on providing some small amount as a relief.

No one consulted the PWDs and they were the least priority. When the disabled people organizations (DPOs) working for PWDS came to provide relief, only the clever, active and those people living near the district head quarters and urban areas got the chance to receive relief. Groups of pregnant women, including women with disabilities and indigenous peoples and Dalits with disabilities were almost left behind and their special and urgent needs were not addressed especially as they should have.

(Executive Officer of Ramechhap Municipality, Field Study, 2016)

The efforts of providing reliefs and the policy measures of the government and civil societies to reach the vulnerable and at risk groups were not effective. The post disaster response efforts were insufficient, the victims/survivors and IWWDs are homeless and empty-handed. This depicts that the earthquake response mechanism of the state has routinely ignored or excluded these groups at all levels of disaster preparedness, mitigation and intervention and added additional layers of discrimination.

Coordination and collaboration in providing policy measures and actions among civil society organizations, government agencies and other stakeholders working for women/indigenous/*Dalits*/ persons with disabilities and marginalized groups is a must.



Mr Mahesh Kumar Mishra, the Executive Director of Ramechhap municipality spoke to indigenous women with disabilities during the Orientation on Post Disaster Learning and Safe Management in Earthquake-Affected districts. He expressed support to the women and indigenous women with disabilities whose lives are more vulnerable than others.

Conclusion

The data presented along with the described impacts of disaster, differences and discrimination on IWWDs indicate that they were both overlooked and marginalized during the emergency and relief phase that followed the 2015 earthquake in Nepal. The vulnerable situations they are facing at different layers at present are distinct from others with special considerations, care and needs.

The recognition and acceptance of their disability status and provision of their special needs are outstanding demands. The unimaginable challenges they are facing with their multiple identities must be eliminated. Policy measures and actions on the ground to address specific needs have to be based on the understanding and recognition of the diversity that is anchored on gender, disability and ethnicity. An inclusive approach to disaster risk reduction and post-disaster recovery efforts is required to address the special barriers PWDs and IWWDs have to hurdle. At most, these barriers have to be eliminated so that they will not be left behind.



Geneva, Switzerland, July 2016. During the 9th session of the Expert Mechanism on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples (EMRIP), a consultation on indigenous persons/women with disabilities was held with the Special Rapporteur on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities Ms Catalina Devandas, Special Rapporteur on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples Ms Victoria Tauli-Copuz and members of the EMRIP. Ms Pratima Gurung, the President of NIDWAN, and representatives of the Indigenous Peoples with Disabilities Global Network (IPWDGN) participated in the consultation. Also in attendance were representatives of UN agencies such as the OHCHR, ILO, UNPFII and CRPD secretariats, International Development Association (IDA), experts, members of the academia and professionals.

The Way Forward

At the international level, the widespread recognition of the rights of PWDs within the UNCRPD includes a section on specific rights within '*Situations of Risk and Humanitarian Emergencies*' and repeated commitments to include vulnerable segments of society.

Similarly, the Sendai Framework historically recognizes the need to meaningfully engage with most vulnerable stakeholders like women, persons with disabilities, indigenous peoples and other marginalized groups in all aspects of disaster risk reduction. The framework likewise highlights issues of inclusion, accessibility and universal design in terms of disaster preparedness, information sharing in the process of recovery, rehabilitation, and reconstruction.

And, recently, the World Humanitarian Summit 2016 has endorsed the *Charter on Inclusion of Persons with Disabilities in Humanitarian Action*. It has been developed to render humanitarian action inclusive of PWDs, by lifting the barriers that PWDs are facing in accessing relief, protection and recovery support and ensuring their partici-

pation in the development, planning and implementation of humanitarian programs. This Charter is open for endorsement by States and governments, UN agencies, organizations involved in humanitarian contexts and organizations of PWDs.

So the duties of right holders and duty bearers working for IWWDs need to ensure that the Convention, the Charter as well as the Sendai Framework are effectively implemented following the given approaches:

1. Respect the principles of non-discrimination, accessibility, participation, inclusive policy, inclusive responses and services, cooperation and coordination.
2. Design an inclusive approach to disaster risk reduction (DRR) which is critical to minimize the impacts of disaster on the most vulnerable segments of society—before, during, and after a disaster occurs. National level policies and programs are needed to operationalize the Sendai Framework and Charter of the Summit 2016 (indicating an opportunity for Nepal to lead by example).
3. Build cross-movement collaboration which has been extremely helpful in addressing exclusion issues like that of the IPWDs. This cross movement was galvanized by the creation of a disability caucus at the UNPFII 12th session and the formation of the Indigenous Persons with Disabilities Global Network, and the report of the UNPFII Secretariat on the situation of indigenous persons with disabilities during the 12th session. These are some avenues opened recently that need to be broadly expanded and initiated in the wider women, disability movement/discourse and realize it as a cross cutting issue.
4. Incorporate IPWDs and IWWDs issues in the 2030 Development Agenda by bridging the gap in gender, disability and ethnic discourse and address intersectional nature and respecting diversity at every national policy framework and guidelines with activities to mainstream them.
5. Implement all the agreed and ratified international instruments related with IPWDs and IWWDs to ensure their rights are respected, protected, promoted and fulfilled making them part of an inclusive society fit for all.

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About the Author

Pratima is the President of National Indigenous Disabled Women Association – Nepal (NIDWAN) and Asia member of Indigenous Persons with Disabilities Global Network (IPWDGN). In addition, she also teaches in Padma Kanya College in Nepal and is involved in research on gender, ethnicity, disability and development.

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Education Bridges and Anchors **Indigenous** **Women** to **Sustainable** **Development**

The Story of

Lave

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If I did not graduate from college, I think my life would have been very difficult. With only a high school diploma, I would not have been able to find a job. I might have become a simple seller; and I might not have become a knowledgeable or a successful person. I might not have understood about laws, human rights, and social issues. It's possible that I would not be aware of current affairs. Other people may have threatened me and I may not have been able to stand up for my community or myself.

If I were not educated, I may have lived in darkness like a foolish person.

I think education is very powerful; through it, we can help ourselves, family and society as well.



ik

*Story narrated and translated by Loek Sreyneang
Edited by Joy Wabba and William Ellis*



Those are the reflections of Mrs. Lat Sokem, also known as Lavik, whose sheer determination to be educated surpassed the obstacles to achieve her dreams—to graduate with a bachelor's degree, to have a beautiful family without forced marriage and to have her whole family eating enough food or having a decent standard of living.

The year 2016's celebration of the International Day of the World's Indigenous Peoples focused on the rights of indigenous peoples to education. These rights are expressed in several international human rights instruments and re-affirmed in the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples (UNDRIP).

Unfortunately, for indigenous peoples, the fulfillment of this right is elusive. They are far behind in their education compared with non-indigenous populations. The UN Women in its statement on this occasion claimed that there is even a wider gap in education for indigenous women and girls. The backgrounder of the UN on this celebration also indicated that indigenous women and girls lag behind compared to their non-indigenous counterparts. Hence, there is still a long and challenging road to fulfilling this right to education.

Particularly in Cambodia where Lavik, a Kreung, hails, the education of indigenous women is very low compared with the mainstream population. This is an observation despite the fact that the Ministry of Education, Youth and Sport didn't have specific number of literate indigenous peoples especially indigenous women compared with the mainstream population.

On the data on indigenous youth education, the Cambodian Indigenous Youth Association (CIYA), a national organization of indigenous youth, maintains that the

Bunong get better education more than the other indigenous peoples in Cambodia. In addition, there is a small number of educated Kreung women compared with the Bunong women. The Kreungs and Bunongs are indigenous peoples living in the northeast of Cambodia who are different from the mainstream populations such as the Chinese and Vietnamese.



Lavik (Mrs. Sokem) and her younger brother.

Having Little But Stepping Up

The story of Lavik, who is now an administrator and finance manager, a mother, a businesswoman, a designer, a community activist, a creative cook and a promoter for indigenous peoples' products, can inspire other indigenous women and girls who are struggling to gain an education. Her experiences show that education bridges opportunities from poverty and is an anchor to sustainable development.

Born in a refugee camp, Lavik grew up in Kalai village, Kalai commune, O Chhom district, Ratanakiri province in northeast of Cambodia. Born from a poor family of 9 children, her parents had only a small farm, which could not provide for their education.

Lavik's primary education was supported by her elder sister who was working in a rubber company.

Even at a young age, she experienced discrimination in school and in her own community due to her poverty of which she still remembers up to this time.

While studying at secondary school at Banlung City, Ratanakiri province, she stayed at her uncle's place for six years. Beginning from Grade 8, she started doing research work as a volunteer at Highlander Association (HA), a local NGO which supports indigenous peoples. She earned \$3 a day working on weekends, which she spent on school materials and food for her family. She spent her free time working on her parent's farm, too.

In 2004, she graduated from high school and in 2005 she began working at the Highlander Association full-time earning a meager salary. She brought her sister and her six brothers to Banlung City to

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One day, Lavik's flip-flops have worn-out. Without footwear to use, she got absent from school for two days. She cannot even afford to buy a new pair of flip-flops. When her friend named Khom decided to give her a pair of flip-flops, she was very excited and went back to school. Her teacher questioned and humiliated her in front of the whole class. The teacher asked: "Why did you miss school for two days?" To which Lavik replied, "I didn't have shoes to come to school!" The teacher then said, "Are you kidding me? You don't even have a pair of shoes?" Lavik, speechless and embarrassed, took her seat quietly.

One time when she was still 14 years old, Lavik had another taste of ignominy. She was wearing only a long shirt sewed with rubber band and a thin t-shirt which outlined her young body. Unmindful of her outfit, she leaned on a column in front of a main door watching little children playing jumping rope. Suddenly, a Khmer neighbor came up and began to berate her. "Why don't you wear a sleeveless undershirt? Your nipple is showing!" Lavik told her that she did not have undershirt to which the neighbor queried why. Again, Lavik told her that she has no money to buy undershirts. Besides, her mother didn't know where to buy one.

continue their studies using her monthly salary. In 2005, she earned a salary raise, and continued to use that money for her sister and brothers' schooling. From 2006-2007, she earned another promotion at work as a community facilitator on Indigenous Story Documentation, while continuing to support her family.

Lavik was not able to continue to university immediately after graduating from high school in 2004. But in 2007, she started attending Build Bright University in Banlung City in Ratanakiri province.

She paid her school fees by herself from 2007 until she graduated in 2012. In 2015, she was officially certified a graduate in General Management from Build Bright University.

Currently, she continues to support her two youngest brothers to finish high school. Her other brothers and sisters who finished their education in good schools with her support are currently employed in the private sector and her elder sister is managing a business on her behalf in Ratanakiri province.

Challenges that Hamper Education

The story of Lavik mirrors the obstacles which indigenous children confront in the pursuit of education. Firstly, the poverty of indigenous peoples limits their chances of achieving a formal education. For example, most of the students in Areng Valley in Koh Kong province drop from school at grade 6 and some of them drop at grade 9 because their parents cannot support their going to high school at Koh Kong's town. At the town, they need to spend on house rent and other expenses.

Secondly, there is an inadequate provision of educational services to indigenous communities especially in some remote communities. For instance, the secondary school is only up to third year in Memong commune in neighboring Monduliri province where the Bunong peoples are located. Meanwhile, in Areng Valley in Koh Kong province where the Chhorng live, there is no high school. In these cases, the students need to move and stay with relatives in the district towns which are about 20 kilometers away from home.

The Cambodian government has established boarding school in some town of provinces. The boarding schools cater to poor students or students who come from remote areas to continue their studies in high school. Indigenous girls, however, are not secured in boarding schools because of gender discrimination and stereotypes. They are often humiliated or deprecated by their peers. "Why are you indigenous Bunong so clever? You got the top score this month?" are some of the remarks they hear. They are even accused as tree loggers. The bullying, unfortunately, is not being reported to authorities. Respect for indigenous peoples and understanding

Sokem/Lavik on her graduation day in 2015.





Sreyneang is a Bunong indigenous woman from Mondulkiri province in northern Cambodia. She's a member of the Cambodia Indigenous Youth Association and is actively working for the promotion of the rights of indigenous peoples in her country.

of gender equality are still to be amplified through education.

The government also provides boarding facilities to indigenous students studying in state universities. However, education of indigenous peoples is still at the lowest compared with other national minorities such as the Cham (Muslim) and Chinese who are not indigenous peoples. There is a scholarship for indigenous youth but there is no specific data or statistics on the overall education of indigenous peoples.

As for other support from the government particularly for indigenous students, there is none. However, there are non-government organizations supporting the education of indigenous youths such as the Village Focus on Cambodia (VFC), Cambodia Corp Inc. (CCI), and Cambodia Law Education for Women (CLEW). They provide basic needs, college fees and school materials. These organizations are supported by foreign donors in Europe, Canada, Australia and North America.

Thirdly, lack of encouragement from parents of indigenous children for limited consciousness and appreciation of the importance of education hampers the endeavor of their children to complete formal education. Along this factor are the traditional norms and family's livelihoods which play a big part in dropping out from school especially by the young indigenous women. The young women perform important roles in the family's livelihoods especially in farming which include raising of livestock (pig, cow, buffalo). Sometimes, financial investments are poured more into the livestock. They also take care of household works such as cooking food for the family. Most of those who do not continue their studies marry one year after stopping from school.

Fourthly, the Economic Land Concession (ELC) is a top impediment to the education of indigenous youth in Cambodia at present. The ELC is part of

the government's development project which grants state private lands to national and foreign firms for agricultural and industrial-agricultural ventures. It is enormously contributing to the loss of natural resources, forest and non-timber products such as rattan, fish, dry resin and wood which indigenous peoples depend on for centuries. The loss of natural resources means the loss of indigenous families' income. With the loss of income, parents who are illiterate and whose livelihoods are dependent on the forests could not support their children to school.

Unable to continue their studies in the secondary to the tertiary levels, young indigenous men and women become workers in garment factories and in rubber companies or farm with their parents at their hometowns. The young men who have not attended school become farmers, hunters and collectors of non-timber products from the forests. The young women marry and work in their farms with their parents.

On the other hand, most of the indigenous students who did not graduate from college become teachers in primary schools. When they graduate from grade 12 and attend the teacher school for two years, they can teach in the primary school.

Striving Up

“This same story could have happened to any indigenous young girl,” Lavik said of her experience of not having a sleeveless undershirt. “But I am happy now, I can buy dozens of sleeveless undershirts if I want to,” she added. Where she is, now, emanated from her determination to overcome the challenges any indigenous girl faces.

“I try to learn from my difficult situation and I always share my reflections with other people. I would ask myself, ‘Why can other people live well, have enough clothes, food and a nice home?’ I could learn from others. First, I learned that I needed to invest in education in order to become strong. Second, I learned to do some planning and third I learned how to earn money to support myself.”

She now has advice for other indigenous women: “The most important point is to make good use of valuable time. I work until I run out of energy. I think this leads me to success. Furthermore, I always ask myself: ‘What things do I need to do? What do I lack? Where should I develop my skills and abilities?’ I find the answers and I work towards meeting my needs.”

“For those that are contemptuous, I don’t mind if they look down at me, or blame me, or jealous of me. Even though it hurts, it’s a tool to make our minds strong, to stand up and find success, and to overcome the obstacles.”

Finally, she thinks that ultimately it is up to individuals to make good decisions for themselves: “Lastly, I don’t compare myself with others, I focus on my abilities and I try very hard,” she said.

She is also inspired by Thomas Jefferson: “Never put off for tomorrow what you can do today.”

Mrs. Lat Sokem who is happily married with one daughter, sees the future with optimism. “I can’t predict the future. However, I want to strengthen my capacity on administration and finance in order to improve the work of other staff and indigenous organizations. I also want to contribute to society, especially supporting young indigenous peoples who are willing to learn and to gain relevant work experience,” she said.

She has bright expectations of other indigenous women who appreciate the importance of educa-

tion. She believes that in 10 years, strong indigenous women will hold important positions within government institutions, and in local and international organizations and the private sector.

For herself, her dream to become an Urgent Aid Transfer Officer is still lingering. In that position, which is in the Red Cross organization, she would provide food and support for the people in disaster situations. She is looking forward to it.



Lavik wearing the Kreung indigenous dress during the Indigenous Peoples' Day in 2016.

A Successful Entrepreneur

Lavik and her elder sister started their business in 2007. Lavik and her elder sister's business failed twice, but they didn't give up.

First, Lavik and her elder sister, Sreyneang, decided to run a restaurant in 2007, which did not prosper because her neighbor ran a similar business.

In 2008, she had a new business idea- to run a hair salon. Her sister studied hair styling at a free course in Banlung City for a month and found she was very talented. In the following month, her sister found it impossible to make a profit because they needed to spend their income on staff. The hair salon work stressed out her sister that eventually affected her overall health.

After failing for the second time, Lavik went back to the drawing board and began considering concepts she learned in university such as competition, capital, and ability. At that time, Lavik and her sister had around \$4000.

In 2009, Lavik shared a new business idea with her sister again. They found a new piece of land in

Banlung City and opened a convenience store. From 2011-2014, Lavik and her elder sister decided to scale up their business with bank loans of \$10,000. In 2015, she paid the loan back to the bank. The business is now quite successful. Her store now stocks a large range of products including imported products.

Lavik notes: "Cambodia has a free-trade market and it's difficult because many people run similar businesses. We need to consider and think about the basic needs of the customer, ensuring that customer services and products are desirable and affordable. If not, we would lose customers."

Another challenge is business management. Lavik's elder sister only finished Grade 2 so she can only calculate numbers but had difficulty reading the names of products.

Despite this, the convenience store is quite profitable without her fulltime supervision. This has allowed Lavik to have enough free time to dedicate herself to work for the improvement of the lives of other indigenous communities. *aiwn*

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Members of the Permanent Forum for the Term 2017-2019

There is a new set of members of the UNPFII for the term 2017-2019. Eight of the members are nominated by Governments and elected by the UN Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC) based on the five regional groupings of States being used at the UN. The other eight, representing the seven socio-cultural regions of the world, are appointed by the ECOSOC President from the nominations of indigenous peoples' organizations around the world.

The following new members of the Permanent Forum will serve their term from 1 January 2017 to 31 December 2019.

Nominated by Governments	Nominated by Indigenous Peoples' Organizations
African States: Mr. Gervais Nzoa (Cameroon)	Africa: Mr. Elifuhara Laltaika (United Republic of Tanzania), Ms. Mariam Wallet Aboubakrine (Mali)
Asia-Pacific States: Mr. Seyed Moshen Emadi (Iran)	Arctic: Ms. Anne Nuorgam (Finland)
Eastern European States: Ms. Aisa Mukabenova (Russian Federation)	Asia: Mr. Phoolman Chaudhary (Nepal)
Latin American and Caribbean States: Tarcila Rivera Zea (Perú), Jesus Guadalupe Fuentes Blanco (México)	North America: Ms. Terri Henry (United States of America)
Western and other States: Jens Dahl (Denmark) Mr. Brian Keane (United States of America)	Latin America and the Caribbean: Ms. Lourdes Tibán Guala (Ecuador)
	Eastern Europe, Russian Federation, Central Asia and Transcaucasia: Mr. Dimitri Zaitcev (Russian Federation)
	Pacific: Mr. Les Malezer (Australia)

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Global Advo

Indigenous Men and Women as Actors in Community-Based Monitoring and Information Systems

By Maribeth V. Bugtong-Biano



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Develop strong leaders who have accountabilities to their communities... We share knowledge to strengthen ourselves, our communities... It boils down to how we empower our communities.

These are the encouraging words from the UN Special Rapporteur on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples, Ms. Victoria Tauli-Corpuz, in her talk before a number of indigenous men and women from Asia, Latin America and Africa. Twenty one indigenous women and 3 men participated in a global advocacy and strategy workshop on February 9-12, 2016 at Mandaluyong City, the Philippines, which was organized by Tebtebba, AIWN and the Indigenous Peoples' Partnership on Climate Change, Forests and Sustainable Development.

The workshop aimed to increase the appreciation of indigenous women's knowledge and roles in land and resource management, and their contribution to

Indigenous Peoples' Sustainable Self-Determined Development (IPSSDD). It also meant to draw lessons from the experiences of indigenous women to strengthen women's full and effective participation in decision-making in relation to their rights over the sustainable use of their lands, forests and resources through Community-Based Monitoring and Information Systems (CBMIS) as well as to identify ways forward towards the empowerment of indigenous women at different levels and spaces of engagement.

For the members of the AIWN, the workshop provided them an opportunity to engage with their counterparts from Africa and Latin America.



Challenges faced and milestones gained by indigenous women in the 21st century

In the opening session, Ms. Tauli-Corpuz reiterated the many challenges to the roles of indigenous women in the protection of their lands and in their responses towards the ecological problem the world is beset with. “Look at the impacts of land degradation, ecological destruction and see what can be possibly done in response to these problems,” she emphasized.



As indigenous women focus on land-related concerns that affect them, Ms. Tauli-Corpuz stressed that attention should also be given to health and reproductive health of indigenous women. Not just about the lands and collective rights but also about how indigenous women can control their bodies and what happens to their bodies must be given focus. She said that “indigenous women have individual and basic rights to be safeguarded.”

Further dissecting into the issues indigenous women and girls around the world face, the Rapporteur said that their issues are linked to historical and inter-generational discrimination and the violation of collective rights.

Ms. Khumtiya Debbarma, convenor of the Indigenous Women’s Forum in the Northeast India (IWFNEI), related that the Tripuras among the indigenous peo-

ples in NE India are microscopic in the country. The interborder transfer of people is causing violence against indigenous women.

“The issues of indigenous women are not separate from the issues of women in general. The rights in other conventions apply to indigenous women,” further said by Ms. Tauli-Corpuz. Hence, the rights enshrined in the various international human rights instruments apply also to indigenous women. The United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples speaks particularly in Articles 21-22 the rights of indigenous women and their freedom from violence.

She said the issues of indigenous women are not separate from the whole issues of indigenous men, too. “Colonization has brought the idea of patriarchy and inequality which were perpetuated in the indigenous communities,” she added. Accordingly, indigenous peoples believe in balance, the equality of men and women which is supported by international human rights instruments. Equality and non-discrimination regardless of identity, religion, beliefs, age and so on are promoted in different fronts.

Ms. Tauli-Corpuz also challenged the participants to address the question of how violence against indigenous women is being addressed. It is important, she stressed, to build the leadership of indigenous women.

In the pursuit of community works, she encouraged them to think from this point: How are women affected by this work? How are the capacities of indigenous women built? “It is a fact that there are women increasingly participating in the works at the community level,” she also stressed. Indigenous children should also be considered in community development works.

To strengthen the communities of indigenous peoples is one of the key steps to address the problems raised by the participants, she emphasized. Educating the indigenous communities with the UNDRIP and ILO 169 and using these

instruments as a basis of empowerment and claiming the rights is one thing that must be continually pursued.

There are many milestones gained in the struggles of indigenous women. The Special Rapporteur claimed that she herself and her achievements as an indigenous woman is a milestone to speak of. She had taken important role in the drafting and adoption of the UNDRIP, she served as chairperson of the UNPFII and became a special rapporteur. Ms. Tauli-Corpuz and other indigenous women leaders and advocates managed to influence the Beijing Platform of Action and the HRC Resolution 1325. Adopted during the UN's Fourth World Conference on Women in 1995, the Beijing Platform of Action is the agenda for empowerment of women around the world. Resolution 1325 passed by the UN Security Council in 2000 acknowledged that women and children are adversely affected by armed conflict and increasingly targeted by combatants and armed groups.

Indigenous peoples and women in the 2030 development agenda

Ms. Grace Balawag who works with the Climate Change Mitigation and Adaptation Programme of Tebtebba gave an update about the 2030 Development Agenda. She stressed that the 17 Sustainable Development Goals are supposed to stimulate sustainable development around the world including indigenous peoples. It is a global ambition to be achieved. But, "how can we achieve this if indigenous peoples on the ground are not involved as stakeholders?" she commented.

The 17 SDGs and 169 targets demonstrate the scale and ambition of the new universal 2030 Development Agenda. It is built on the Millennium Development Goals which ended last 2015 and it aims to complete what was not achieved. It seeks to realize the human rights of all and to achieve gender equality and the

empowerment of all women and girls. Moreover, it is integrated and indivisible, and it balanced the three dimensions of sustainable development: the economic, social and environmental. Ms. Balawag said that the SDGs and targets will stimulate action over the next 15 years in areas of critical importance for humanity and the planet.

The 2030 Development Agenda is inclusive and actually has six references to indigenous peoples including indigenous women. Two are in the Preamble section, paras. 23 and 25. IPs are also referenced in para. 52 ("A call for action to change our world" section), para. 79 (Follow-up and review section entitled National Level chapter), and under Goals 2 and 4.

Indigenous peoples' participation in the implementation and monitoring of the SDG initiatives is important. As Ms. Balawag emphasized, "we should be continuously monitoring the monitoring of the SDG implementation. We can only monitor when we are engaged at the community."

Ms. Telma Da Silva Marques of the Conselho Indígena de Roraima (CIR) in Brazil could not agree more.

She reiterated the statement of the UNSR about indigenous peoples and indigenous women empowering themselves to be able to engage with the concerned governments. Speaking about her experience, she said, "I am able to speak to the ministry that deals on sustainable development. We had meetings where we invited 200 indigenous women for political public awareness. I'm working with the government as part of the council on the sustainable resource management."

Ms. Balawag emphasized that one role of indigenous peoples is to monitor what the government is doing while imple-

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...we should be continuously monitoring the monitoring of the SDG implementation. We can only monitor when we are engaged at the community.”



menting their own development initiatives in their communities. “Let us come up with our engagement plans with the government, the corporations and individuals. We do not have great expectations from the governments, the UN. We have to empower ourselves, develop and capacitate our people, the men and women and the youth. It all comes from us. Let us strengthen our own ranks. Through the IPSSDD framework and the CBMIS as one of the tools, we can pursue our own development agenda,” she affirmed.

IPSSDD as the holistic and integrated approach to development of IPs

While considering the 2030 Development Agenda set by States in their sustainable development, the perspectives and approaches of indigenous peoples must also be integrated. To reiterate, Ms. Balawag emphasized that the indigenous peoples’ sustainable self-determined development (IPSSDD) is not a new framework but an integrated and holistic approach which is based on indigenous peoples’ perspectives and vision. Promoted as indigenous peoples’ contribution to solutions to the current global multiple crises, IPSSDD puts premium to the human rights-based approach as its core.

IPSSDD also takes into consideration the indigenous peoples’ territorial management that is founded on the ecosys-

tems/landscape approaches. Interculturality, gender and intergenerational approaches including the promotion of indigenous traditional knowledge and other knowledge systems are within the scope of IPSSDD. Furthermore, IPSSDD takes into account support for diverse local economies and livelihoods towards economic sufficiency and sustainability, low and climate-friendly lifestyle.

What is CBMIS?

Towards IPSSDD, one of the efforts of the Partnership is the development of a Community-Based Monitoring and Information Systems (CBMIS). Tebtebba and its partners collaborated in identifying common domains, baselines and relevant indicators for monitoring status and trends relating to IP rights to LTR, knowledge, and well-being.

Ms. Balawag elucidated that in CBMIS, tools and technologies are adopted to establish baseline information. Community participatory mapping, resource inventories and demographic profiling of traditional local economies, livelihoods and innovations, traditional health and wellness, roles and effective participation of women, men, elders and youth in decision-making processes, among others are undertaken in CBMIS.

CBMIS aims to strengthen communities of indigenous peoples, to enhance and facilitate necessary capacity building activities, to enhance traditional livelihoods and diverse local economies, and to enhance traditional knowledge and practices such as on wet agriculture and shifting cultivation/rotational agriculture that has sustained indigenous peoples for generations.

Ms. Jo Ann Guillao, formerly of the Climate Change Mitigation and Adaptation Programme of Tebtebba, expounded on what CBMIS is. Accordingly, CBMIS is a bundle of research and monitoring approaches related to biodiversity, ecosystems, land and waters, and other resources as well as human well-be-

ing. It integrates the ecosystems/ecological dynamics, cultural and human rights and sustainability based approaches with conscious concern on gender, intergenerational and cultural diversity to indigenous peoples' economic development and well-being. Indigenous peoples and communities also use these as tools for their management and documentation of resources.

Within the framework of IPSSDD, CBMIS is strongly linked to Article 32 of the UNDRIP, which provides that indigenous peoples have the right to determine and develop priorities and strategies for the development of their lands or territories and other resources. It reflects the holistic view and relation of indigenous peoples to their ecosystem or territory.

"Monitoring is a major component of CBMIS," Ms. Guillao stressed. Monitoring is important and is intrinsic in the way of life of indigenous peoples 1) to have a full access and right over their resources 2) to counter existing state policies that are unfavorable to indigenous peoples 3) to be more critical of the changes in the natural resources and 4) to propose solutions to community problems.

Several of the monitoring practices of indigenous peoples include 1) agricultural calendar of indigenous communities; 2) proverbs or historical stories relating to environment; 3) specific customs and traditions related to harvest and other activities in the community; 5) identifying significant ecosystems for their traditional activities; and 6) identifying species of significance of such ecosystems.

Ms. Guillao said that community-based monitoring can be flexible and dynamic with the different tools and methodologies that can be used. In Nicaragua, the

map is an important tool while in Nepal the community radio is an equally important device. In Indonesia, more advance technologies are used in mapping. Ms. Devi Anggraini of PEREMPUAN AMAN shared that "drones are being used to reach the remote areas and to survey the general area/territories."

And, information gathered is communicated through various means. In Indonesia, AMAN uses Facebook and Twitter. "To reach a broader audience, we use new technologies. This is also to show that IPs can actually use these technological advances to aid them in community works," said Ms. Anggraini.

Additionally, Ms. Guillao said that CBMIS can serve the community in various ways such as the following: 1) CBMIS can provide strong evidence and information to strengthen community's negotiating position; 2) it provides a basis of action for peoples to restore and protect their environment/know the status of the community's lands, territories and resources; 3) it helps in maintaining and transmission of traditional knowledge;

4) it can also provide early warning of disasters or diseases; and 5) it can supplement data collected at the national or international level.

In CBMIS, indicators relevant to indigenous peoples are established. There are domains and types of information identified from the workshops held with partners. There are five

domains which include land, territories and resources, traditional knowledge, full and effective participation, and traditional governance. Each indicator means something. Ms. Guillao gave an example that if a language is gone, the traditional knowledge related to that language is gone as well.

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To reach a broader audience, we use new technologies. This is also to show that indigenous peoples can actually use these technological advances to aid them in community works.”

Ms. Guillao shared the gains and achievements of Tebtebba partners in their implementation of CBMIS. For one, the indigenous communities have become more strategic in the pursuit of community development and advocacy works as well as they became more united and aware of their community situation. In Nicaragua, some issues like land conflict is addressed through CBMIS. In Cameroon, they were able to stop logging through their monitoring activities. They were able to demonstrate that they are aware of their rights. Overall, capacities of communities are enhanced through the CBMIS exercises.

Moreover, they have gained high esteem and become more aware of the issues affecting them and these brought more effort for collective planning. In the process, the transmission of traditional knowledge is strengthened. The community has a critical involvement to act and stop any violations of their human rights. Their advocacy works at various levels have also widened and enriched by the information from the CBMIS.

“We practice oral tradition, we relied on outsiders. CBMIS gives us the opportunities to do our own research, validates our own work on the ground. (Now) we write about ourselves.”

There are opportunities offered by the CBMIS and the challenges in the CBMIS works, as presented by Ms. Guillao. One opportunity is to use data generated through CBMIS in conflict resolution and in access to justice in different levels. Some of the challenges include development of simple frameworks and toolkits that serve the community's information needs, but can also feed into national and global processes; consolidation and comparability of data among and across indigenous peoples, recognition and sustainability of the CBMIS works. The question of how to

bring the information to the government and the wider public is also a part of this challenge.

According to Ms. Sarah Subba of the Center for Indigenous Peoples Research and Development (CIPRED) in Nepal, CBMIS validates the works of indigenous peoples. “We practice oral tradition, we relied on outsiders. CBMIS gives us the opportunities to do our own research, validates our own work on the ground. (Now) we write about ourselves,” she said.

Systematizing CBMIS work through a database management system

Mr. Nicky Batang-ay of the Climate Change Mitigation and Adaptation Programme of Tebtebba discussed the development of a CBMIS database management system which is a part of the whole CBMIS initiatives under the Partnership. The database management system is a program/software system that uses standard method of cataloguing, retrieving, and running queries on data. It manages incoming data, organizes it, and provides ways for the data to be modified or extracted by users or other programs.

The CBMIS database system has the following functions: 1) input and store relevant information for Indigenous Peoples; 2) update and monitor information through time; 3) aggregate/disaggregate information at various levels; and 4) generate and produce report to support recognition, promotion and fulfilment of indigenous peoples self-sustained determined development.

In addition, the CBMIS database system will enhance the following: 1) standardization of data collection forms resulting into reliable data; 2) capture thematic data from the lowest territorial level; 3) profile and archive data into usable information; 4) input relevant data gathered from survey into data entry form; 5) export data in XLS, or CSV formats to be used in analysis; and 6) share data accordingly.

Engendering CBMIS: Experiences from the community

Experiences from Nicaragua

Presented by Dely Hansack Ignacio

Centro para la Autonomía y Desarrollo de los Pueblos Indígenas (CADPI)

Participation of Indigenous Women in Gender and CBMIS Works

The principle of CADPI is about caring for Mother Earth. The elements that come from Mother Earth are part of the central work of the organization. CADPI works for the protection of Mother Earth by operationalizing on different principles upholding to protect the earth.

Maps

CADPI constructed 3D maps to map out the northern part of the Caribbean area, where the indigenous peoples are located, and to document and eventually manage the natural resources. The maps are constructed from the viewpoint of the indigenous community.

For this, CADPI used a 3-step methodology, which is their organizational methodology. Indigenous peoples were invited to participate in the mapping workshop. The mapping scales used were selected and the materials for the 3D mapping were prepared. During the workshop small models were constructed. The project was carried out in 3 different communities— Sassa, Miguel Bikan, and Waspam.

The construction of these maps is a pilot project of CADPI supported by Tebtebba. This project which is a part of CBMIS was actively participated by indigenous women.

Map Construction Process

The organization identified the type of monitoring system to be used from the different perspectives of the different indigenous communities. The organizations of indigenous women participated in the design and the construction of the map.

There were also capacity building activities of the women's organizations on the utilization of CBMIS tools which can be useful in the management and monitoring of the natural resources in their IPs territories.

Inclusive Participation

In the construction of the 3D maps, women, youth, and elders actively participated. Everyone worked together to make the maps.

The IPs also considered the maps as very important tools. The community mapping activities are important means to transmit the indigenous knowledge of the elders to the youth so that later on they will be able to do this on their own.

By digitizing, all the information will be computerized for the IPs to use not only at present but also in the future. This project has allowed them to preserve their knowledge and culture as well as to conserve their biodiversity and uphold their self-determination.

Participation of Indigenous Women

CADPI works with different organizations as also requested by the indigenous territorial governments. These include those of the Mayangna people who have six different organizations.

The indigenous women are empowered because they are able to learn to manage their CBMIS, and also are able to monitor the natural resources within their community. The information is also used for the recognition and empowering of the indigenous women.

Importance of the Maps

In relation to climate change, the 3D maps are very important because they allow the people to conduct geo-referencing to determine the presence of colonizers, the extent of environmental degradation in their territories, and the location of conserved areas.

The maps helped the community to have better understanding of their resource inventories. When they digitized these inventories, they can make better plans for management of their resources in the future.

These maps are very useful in the management of their indigenous territories. They are also unifying factors for the IPs communities because they allow the members of community to work together in gathering information from the field and in constructing their maps.

Importance and Use of the CBMIS Tools

The information from the workshops and activities are used to determine the natural resources within the territories of the indigenous peoples and how these natural resources can be appropriately used. With the use of CBMIS tools, the resources that have potential within the community can be identified including their condition and location.

The tools basically allow for a greater control of indigenous peoples over their natural resources. Moreover, it also helps to identify and generate information about the threats, risks and problems that endanger the community's resources.

In addition, the CBMIS tools help the indigenous peoples' organizations and allow for equal participation of men and women. The data serve as basis for the planning of the organizations in the conservation and in the zoning of their territories while taking into account their potentials and their varied conditions.

The tools came as a response to the real need of the indigenous communities confronted with different environmental issues. Evidently, it is necessary to create and implement a simple mechanism that can be efficient, that can be used easily and accessed quickly.

Above all, in order for the IPs to have full control over their natural resources, the local government must adopt the CBMIS tools and ensure that indigenous peoples are involved at various levels of monitoring works.

Impacts

There have been huge changes within the communities. They have improved governance at the community level as they became more aware and have better knowledge of their territories and their economic potentials. Also, they were able to develop local initiatives based on the data generated.

CADPI, now, takes the lead in the management of resources of the IPs, and ensures the active and effective participation of indigenous women as managers and administrators of grassroots development. They are able to guarantee the sustainable use of natural resources and to restore their traditional knowledge systems within their territories.

Experiences from **Nepal**

Presented by Sarah Subba, Center for Indigenous Peoples' Research and Development (CIPRED)

CBMIS is a part of the works of NEFIN which is an umbrella of indigenous peoples' organizations in Nepal. NEFIN, through its climate change program has implemented a pilot project in a Dura community with about 3000 population, of which, almost half are women.

The works on CBMIS in Nepal started with a lot of capacity-building activities. This is what they call the foundational phase where they invested on education and awareness-raising on thematic issues including IPSSDD, CBMIS and climate change, among others. Communities were also trained on other technical aspects like doing carbon inventory.

The conduct of research is also a major component of the project. CIPRED conducted research works on various issues- climate change and related policies and programs and natural resource management in some pilot communities.

Strengthening economic capacity and well-being through livelihood program among the indigenous peoples in Nepal is a priority program included in the CBMIS. This brought about development of various local livelihoods and enterprise. 181 indigenous peoples including 109 women were trained on entrepreneurship development, beehive farming, cardamom plantation, vegetable farming and traditional handicrafts.

The role of media and communication to educate people and broaden reach of information cannot be discounted. The use of community radio in Nepal has greatly contributed to increase awareness on various issues affecting indigenous peoples like climate change and REDD+. As of reporting, 20 districts are being reached by community radios at various schedules.

Advocacy and networking is another area that women have participated. Position papers highlighting indigenous women's concerns were forwarded to the government when given opportunity to attend workshop/training. Specifically, NEFIN has submitted its position paper on forest and natural resources.

Impacts

NEFIN noted some indicators of success which are:

- More than 30 women are running their own small enterprises. There are women members in groups producing vegetable, cardamom and involved in schools.
- Around 20 percent of the total trainees can effectively advocate the rights and issues of indigenous women.
- 100 cases of VAW cases documented.

Challenges

- Many indigenous women have still no access to information and capacity-building initiatives.
- Indigenous women's issues are often lumped into the issues of women in general.
- Participation and leadership of indigenous women is limited.
- Gender equality with a lens of social inclusion still needs to be mainstreamed both institutionally and at program level.

Sustainable economies

Part of the workshop was an exchange of lessons learned from livelihood programs being implemented by organizations within the Partnership. The stories reveal the initiatives to empower indigenous women through entrepreneurship programs that capitalize on the traditional knowledge and skills of indigenous women. Capacity-building activities proved helpful in ensuring the indigenous women sustain their gains. Despite numerous setbacks, the women have gained grounds as the story from Peru shows. "Women are also more involved in the decision-making. Because they now have money and increased autonomy, they are better able to participate in the decision-making. Moreover, they are contributing to their economies, participating in organizational activities and are more capable of being women leaders," said Ms. Martha Magdalena Lira Tejada, facilitator in food education of CHIRAPAQ in Peru.

The participants also visited the gallery of the Non-Timber Forest Product (NTFP) Philippines in Quezon City to introduce them to community enterprise development. The NTFP personnel gave an overview of how they support communities in the Philippines in developing and marketing products. The participants also shared their own experiences of community enterprise.

Part of the global advocacy and strategy workshop were inputs on human rights and updates from the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC), and the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD). There was also a discussion on a draft gender policy and guideline that would ensure inclusion and empowerment of indigenous women in the Partnership as well with networks of Tebtebba such as the AIWN.

To cap the activity, a workshop outlined strategies to ensure continuing empowerment of indigenous women while addressing the prevailing challenges they are confronting. Capacity building, resource mobilization, advocacy in all fronts, research, social entrepreneurship and networking are among the strategies identified. *aiwn*



About the Author

Maribeth is a member of the AIWN secretariat and a staff of the Indigenous Women Programme of Tebtebba.

Experiences from Kenya

Presented by Antola Lanoi Twala,
Indigenous Livelihoods Enhancement Partners (ILEPA)

Beadwork Project in Narok County

The project area or community is the pastoralist Maasai people who face social exclusion and economic marginalization. It is becoming more difficult for the Maasai to survive sufficiently using their traditional means of livelihood so they opt for other means that destruct and degrade their environment. For instance, they are selling charcoal by logging trees. These short-term solutions give them quick cash but are not even sustainable for their local livelihoods.

The Maasai people value their identity. The women do bead projects, which is part of their culture. The Maasai women take good pride on their skills in beading. These skills have offered them new opportunity for the new means of livelihood that is not only environmental friendly but also sustainable. Through the project "Beadings for Life", ILEPA aims to empower the women on their livelihoods. The project is based in a community called Majimoto.

To enhance the capacity and broaden the production, ILEPA conducted trainings for Maasai women on how to do beading. In 2011, Tanako Investments was contracted by ILEPA to provide intensive skills training. The production of high quality beaded items using local resources is one way of building indigenous knowledge. The products are earrings, necklaces, ornaments, belts, bracelets, neckties, among others.

Aside from the trainings, learning exchange visit in Tanzania was undertaken. In 2010 and 2014, ILEPA visited along with the indigenous women one of the fair trades in Tanzania. Through this activity, the indigenous women were able to learn new market dynamics, acquire knowledge on trading designs and associated challenges, and were able to explore opportunities for cross-border networking and collaboration.

With the trainings with Tanako and exchange visits to Wendo in Tanzania, the women are now active in their beading businesses and are sharing their products with the world.

It is still a challenge for the Maasai women to produce a better quality of products. While each product is individually hand-crafted with their great skills, intricacy in designing and great attention to detail, every item comes from a unique story which is a reflection of who they are as peoples.

In 2015, ILEPA signed an agreement with a Greek company called Lastanca to supply them with bead products that are worth 3,500 USD. These were delivered and paid to the women on their bank accounts. They have also been working for small orders.

ILEPA does not, in any way, interfere with the group's governing system. The organization has acted as a bridge between the women and their markets. The main challenge is having access to the new markets.

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Human Rights Council Adopted Resolution on Preventing and Responding to Violence against Women and Girls, including indigenous women and girls

The HRC adopted on July 1, 2016 a resolution to accelerate efforts to eliminate violence against women and girls, including indigenous women and girls. The resolution specifically recognized that *"violence against indigenous women and girls cannot be separated from the wider context of discrimination and exclusion to which indigenous persons are often exposed in social, economic, cultural and political life, and deeply concerned about indications that indigenous women and girls are disproportionately affected by violence, including sexual violence, given the multiple and intersecting forms of discrimination to which they may be exposed."* Indigenous women and girls are also identified to face a heightened risk of sexual and gender-based violence during times of conflict, post-conflict, and humanitarian crisis situations as well as subjects of institutional and structural discrimination.

The resolution further expressed that indigenous women and girls *"may be overrepresented in criminal justice systems and may be more marginalized, and thus experience more violence before, during and after the period*

of incarceration." It also expressed concern on the low level of birth registrations among indigenous women and girls which affect the promotion and protection of their rights; that without birth registrations, they are more vulnerable to marginalization, exclusion, discrimination, violence, statelessness, exploitation and abuse.

The HRC resolution underscored that violence against women and girls, including indigenous women and girls, whether committed in the public or private sphere, is a matter of grave public concern and that States have the primary responsibility to protect and promote the human rights of women and girls. In this light, the States are strongly urged *"to take measures, in conjunction with indigenous peoples, to ensure that indigenous women and children enjoy full protection and guarantees against all forms of violence and discrimination in policy and in practice."*

The full text of the resolution can be accessed at <http://www.ohchr.org/EN/HRBodies/HRC/RegularSessions/Session32/Pages/ResDecStat.aspx>.

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Livelihood Project Empowers Indigenous Women for Survival

By Naie U Prue Marma

This is a story of rural indigenous women who succeeded in enhancing their economic position from worse to better. Sukarchari village in Balukhali Union, is almost surrounded by Kaptai Lake. Sukarchari village along with another village in the union is inhabited by both Chakma and Marma ethnic communities who were displaced from their ancestral lands and homesteads following the construction of the Kaptai Hydro-electric Project by damming the Karnafully River. The erection of the dam has, in fact, shattered the social life and economic standings of the indigenous peoples in the Chittagong Hill Tracts (CHT) in Bangladesh. Gone with their land, hearth and homes were the roots of their culture and memories that were built around their habitats for centuries. Almost 50% of the evacuees of the Kaptai

reservoir area were neither compensated nor their lands rehabilitated. They just got spread deep in the hills in search of their livelihoods.

This narrative is about the new generations whose grand-parents were displaced, about half a century ago following the inundation of their old habitats due to the Kaptai Dam. In the new locations where they are settled at, life was a grueling struggle to sustain and survive. The new settlements that they built had nothing to offer to them at the beginning, for their survival. Initially, they had to engage in cutting bamboos, felling trees, collecting firewood and vegetables for sale in the market for cash to buy food and other necessities. But these were not enough to support their families. They farmed pet animals to supplement their income that they derive from sell-



ing forest products. Flat lands are not available for growing crops or vegetables as these two villages are located on the hilltops surrounded by water. A lot of women used to get loans from different credit agencies. But they find it hard to pay back as they do not have dependable sources of income.

In spite of the fact that many non-government organizations (NGOs) are working in different villages, the rural women have limited access to quality leadership training and other learning opportunities that could increase their knowledge and awareness on human and women's rights. The Women's Education for Advancement and Empowerment (WEAVE), a woman-headed NGO, felt about this deficiency in the drive for women's empowerment. WEAVE, also a member of AIWN, knows that women in the indigenous societies play an important part in providing for family needs and much of the household needs are derived from nature, and it is the women who often have to visit the forestlands for family rations.

The role of women as food and care providers for their family has further developed in them an intimate knowledge about the forest and a symbiotic relationship with nature. But it is really strenuous to eke out a living from nature. Indigenous women basically collect various edible food items such as bamboo shoots, creeper vegetables, wild potatoes, and firewood including non-timber forest items for both household use and sale in the market for cash. Both women and men have to work hard to earn for the family. The women in these villages do not want their children to undergo such terrible experiences in providing for their families in future. They want to build better future for their children by arming them with higher education.

With this end in view, WEAVE has grouped 40 women from Sukarchari village and taught them the art of making plastic bag using plastic cane, which

they buy from the local market. This livelihood project intends to give them an extra leverage in earning extra money for the education of their children. Plastic bags made of plastic canes are very popular among the locals and especially among the tourists who regularly flock around Rangamati for sightseeing and holidays. These bags are extremely useful in carrying clothes and for shopping as well. Forty women were thus trained in batches for two months in bag making.

It has been found that a woman, after the training, can make a plastic bag in 3 days. This makes them earn a handsome amount in relatively a short time. About 20 to 25 of them can regularly give supply of bags to Chittagong tourist markets and earn Taka 400 per piece on an average. They receive regular orders for that. In this way, a number of women have acquired financial solvency to some extent. Some of them have used the money they earned from making bags to buy earrings made of gold, while others have spend it to rear goats and chickens; start their kitchen gardens; and pay their children's education expenses.

This micro-project which aimed to empower women has phased out but the trained women are continuously engaged in their newly-acquired livelihood. It is encouraging to note that the women in Sukarchari in Balukhali, even during their leisure time, are now able to help their families and themselves following the intervention of WEAVE. *aiwn*



About the Author

Naie U Prue Marma is the Executive Director of WEAVE based in Rangamati, Chittagong Hill Tracts, Bangladesh.

Indigenous Women and **Representatives** from **Asia-Pacific Call** for **Indigenous Peoples** and **Gender Responsive** **Emission Reduction Programs**

By Eleanor Dictaan-Bang-oa



Tebtebba (Indigenous Peoples' International Centre for Policy Research and Education) based in the Philippines, gathered 19 indigenous women and representatives from indigenous peoples' and non-government organizations working for Indigenous Peoples in relation to climate change and related matters in Bangladesh, Bhutan, Burma, Cambodia, Fiji, India, Nepal, Papua New Guinea, Philippines, Thailand, Vanuatu and Vietnam, to the Asia-Pacific Regional Workshop on Indigenous Peoples and Gender Responsive Emissions Reduction Programs held on 25-27 February 2017 in Hanoi, Vietnam. The activity was co-organized with the Centre of Research and Development in Upland Areas (CERDA) based in Hanoi, Vietnam. The workshop was organized to:

1. Provide an overview of the UNDRIP, the UNFCCC and REDD+ initiatives and how these intersect with the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development which is global in implementation and in the context of empowering women;
2. Define gaps and challenges in indigenous women's engagements in national and local REDD+/climate change and development initiatives;
3. Unite on a common engagement platform for indigenous women in REDD+ countries in the Asia-Pacific region to feed into the Capacity Building on REDD+ for Forest Dependent Indigenous Peoples in East Asia, Pacific and South Asia Regions Project and other advocacy spaces; and
4. Provide a venue for project partners' inception meeting.

The workshop kicked off with a review of the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples (UNDRIP) as the overarching framework with an emphasis on indigenous women and peoples not just as stakeholders but as rights holders. A briefing on the REDD+ highlighting the Cancun Safeguards resulting from indigenous peoples' proactive engagement at the global UNFCCC processes was also provided.

The discussion on indigenous women in REDD+ countries in the region began with participants from Vanuatu, Nepal and Vietnam presenting their experiences as part of the CSO National Platforms. This has generated discussions on the situation of indigenous women and their communities with regards to climate change.

The last 2 days were spent on a briefing regarding the FCPF and a series of workshops to develop recommendations for an indigenous peoples and gender responsive REDD+ and emissions reduction program.

Highlights from the Interactive Discussions and Workshops

Coming from different countries of varying stages in REDD+ implementation, the participants brought with them varied experiences regarding REDD+, from 'just beginning' (Cambodia) to 'advanced' engagements (i.e., Fiji, Nepal and Vietnam). Nonetheless, workshop results point to three major issues affecting the full and effective participation of indigenous women in this process:

1. Non-recognition of indigenous peoples, specially indigenous women, and the particularities attached to their identities and the significance of their knowledge, roles and practices in emissions reduction and climate resilience. Where there exists a legal framework addressing indigenous peoples' rights, comprehension by state agencies is weak resulting to ineffective operationalization on the ground (e.g., Philippines). An interesting exemption is Fiji where most of the state constituency are indigenous peoples.
2. Zero and/or weak indigenous women/peoples' institutions/organizations. In some FCPF Countries, there are no strong indigenous women's organizations among self-identifying indigenous peoples (e.g., Vietnam, Bhutan). Where there are indigenous and women's organizations, participation can be sporadic due to equally pressing work and interests, geographical scope and issues of technical and logistical access and lack of personnel to follow on or fully engage on the REDD+ work. Specifically, for indigenous women, their participation is also affected by the intersecting factors of gender discrimination, lack of awareness, resources, support and self confidence that results from the experience of historical discrimination as peoples and as women. These are on top of women's poverty, both in terms of resources and time. At a skills level, there is a general need to strengthen capacities for documentation and evidence-based advocacy to influence directions of REDD+/ERPs at the local and national levels.

Good Practice: "In Vietnam, CERDA, in partnership with Tebtebba and with support generated from the NORAD, established community cooperatives and the alliance of co-operatives after series of institutional development activities. It is through the co-operatives that we were able to be recognized by the government as a legal entity. Through the cooperative, we do a lot of capacity building on understanding and addressing the serious problem of illegal logging, REDD+, livelihoods and how these intersect with our rights, including continuing institutional development. The registration of the co-operative, under government rules gave it a legal status making the communities eligible to participate in REDD+ as an independent actor with ownership of their



initiatives and actions. Being a recognized entity, we were able to secure community tenure of the forest for at least 50 years. With an organization and the association of co-operatives and the landscape based approach, enhanced capacities and skills and livelihood support, the community has been successful and cost-effective in protecting the forest against illegal logging so far. CERDA's households cluster approach was cited as instrumental in enhancing women's participation in these initiatives." (Ms. Vu Thi Hien)

3. Lack of access to appropriate and full information. There exist inconsistencies, fragmentation and insufficiency of information from the national level initiation and implementation on the ground. At the local level, there is a seeming disconnect of information provided on the relationships between the REDD+ and other information dissemination and capacity building initiatives undertaken for this phase. In some areas, information dissemination has been conducted without due consideration of the capacity of the communities to understand what is being said and women are not encouraged to speak. The usual practice of focusing information dissemination to village leaders has also been cited as reinforcing women's marginalization since leadership and decision making in most indigenous communities are male-dominated.
4. Lack of resources and support services to enable indigenous women and peoples' participation and engagement with the process. Most of the participants are part of the national CSO platforms and most of their work in this

area are voluntary. While most would like to engage their constituents in the process, there are limited funds that are directly accessible to do this. Where there are available spaces for access, the process and requirements are difficult for indigenous women and their organizations to comply with. This, according to the participants, is demoralizing.

Good Practice: Fiji recognizes indigenous peoples' ownership of their lands which is a big problem for their Asian neighbors. Participant expressed appreciation of the REDD+ provision specific on indigenous women and peoples and CSO participation and the fact that the advocacy and capacity building phase have been well resourced in terms of expertise and funding. According to Ms. Haddy Jatou Sey of the FCPF, this was a result of the FCPF's extensive dialogue with the Fiji government to allocate part of the U\$D3.8 M budget to the CSO platform. This was done during the design phase of the program.

From the discussions is a document (see next page) containing the position of indigenous women from Asia-Pacific on REDD+/ERPs. *aiwn*



About the Author

Eleanor is a member of the AIWN secretariat as well as the coordinator of the Indigenous Women Programme of Tebtebba.

Indigenous Peoples and Gender Responsive Emissions Reduction Program: A Call by Indigenous Women in Asia and Pacific

Indigenous Peoples' contributions to sustaining the earth and its resources and mankind's cultural, intellectual, political and economic development has been recognized in different international processes and agreements including the Paris Agreement and the Cancun Safeguards under the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC), the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD) and the Sustainable Development Goals. This recognition implies the need to strengthen and enhance indigenous peoples' knowledge, skills and practice in conservation and use of lands, waters, forests and natural resources which are key to the vision of Agenda 2030. For indigenous peoples, these call for the full and effective operationalization of the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples at the local level.

Indigenous women's knowledge and multiple roles from the domestic to the collective/community level encompass their daily activities and relationships to the land as stewards. Honoring the land which sustains life obliges indigenous peoples, especially women, to ensure the integrity of their territories for future generation. However, historical discrimination and patriarchy prevail rendering them generally invisible in the current global discussions and national-local initiatives on sustainable development and climate change, including the Reducing Emissions from Deforestation and Forest Degradation REDD+/Emissions Reduction Programs (ERPs), among others.

We are 19 indigenous women and representatives from indigenous peoples' and non-government organizations working for Indigenous Peoples in relation to climate change and related matters in Bangladesh, Bhutan, Burma, Cambodia, Fiji, India, Nepal, Papua New Guinea, Philippines, Thailand, Vanuatu and Vietnam, participating in the Asia-Pacific Regional Workshop on Indigenous Peoples and Gender Responsive Emissions Reduction Programs held on 25-27 February 2017 in Hanoi, Vietnam. Having shared our situations in our vision to advance the status of indigenous women, we are forwarding the following concerns and recommendations to the Forest Carbon Partnership Facility, the national REDD+ Working Groups, CSO National Platforms, to our own organizations and communities and to other concerned groups and agencies to ensure compliance to the REDD+ safeguards consistent to the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples (UNDRIP) and the substantive achievement of Agenda 2030.

A. SUSTAINING CLIMATE RESILIENCE

With knowledge and practices developed through generations, indigenous women continue to ensure and sustain the lives, land and resources of their communities and the future generation but remain discriminated in the ownership and control of lands, forests and resources. The right to own, manage and control land, forests and resources are primary factors in indigenous women's livelihood, community well-being and food security. The recognition of these rights is crucial in sustaining emissions reduction initiatives and actions.

State and business interests like extractive industries, palm oil plantations, hydropower dams, including environmental conservation and protection initiatives have encroached into our lands resulting to deforestation, erosion of biodiversity, land, knowledge, culture and spirituality.

Conflicts continue to emerge in this situation galvanized by militarization as a peace and order strategy employed by state and private sectors exposing women and children to gender violence and human rights violations. These have and are displacing us physically, economically, socially and culturally impacting on our right to self-determination and governance as indigenous peoples.

1. Institutionalize Strategic Environmental and Social Assessment under the REDD+ /ERP at all levels.
2. Tenurial reform which should be done in respect of indigenous peoples' right to their ancestral lands, territories and resources. State agencies should provide resources to delineate indigenous peoples' territories through mapping, resolve existing disputes and provide security of tenure ensuring effective consultation and participation of indigenous peoples and transparency in the process. Specifically, reforms should address the status of land tenure among indigenous women and provide legal remedies and mechanism to address security of land tenure for indigenous women. Conflicting laws/policies/programs that impede the full operationalization of indigenous women and peoples' right to their customary lands and resources should be addressed by REDD+ Strategies and Actions. State commitment to these should be monitored.
3. Governments to conduct strategic social and environmental assessment as part of the readiness and ERP design to address the issue of land tenure, especially for indigenous women and institutionalize an accessible process or mechanism to facilitate security of tenure and put in place preventive actions against eviction and displacement as part of the Safeguards Information System.

4. As part of the feasibility study of governments, social and environmental assessment and due diligence should be undertaken to ensure that private initiatives in the name of emissions reduction are consistent with the right to free prior and informed consent.

B. CAPACITY BUILDING

Our capacities to fully and effectively engage as women and as indigenous peoples in state and other initiatives related to climate change, REDD+ and sustainable development, remain limited due to various intersecting factors among which are the lack of appropriate information, resources and support which are reinforcing traditional and behavioral gender barriers.

Strengthening indigenous women's agencies and/or institutions and indigenous peoples' communities and organizations as a whole is crucial to be able to articulate, operationalize and negotiate our visions of sustained climate resilience and inclusive development. This includes better understanding of the context of indigenous women's marginalization among REDD+ actors and addressing this within and among indigenous organizations/communities and in the broader social context. Capacity building is a two-way process.

1. Institutionalize investment in processes that ensure the strengthening and institutional development of indigenous women and peoples' organizations. These processes should be designed to provide a means through which state agencies and other stakeholders learn from the specific situations of indigenous women and peoples towards more informed interventions and actions.
2. Provide time, resources and create spaces in REDD+ strategies and actions to raise the awareness of indigenous women on their rights as women and as indigenous peoples and how these are/are not translated into state policies, regulations and programs related to forests, the REDD+ and ERP.
3. REDD+ initiatives and actions should address the intersectionalities of gender discrimination and provide enabling spaces for indigenous women for full and effective participation in all levels. Governments should allocate adequate time and resources to enable meaningful consultations and dialogues with indigenous women through targeted consultations specially those who are directly impacted by the REDD+ initiatives, to provide timely, full, adequate and appropriate information to enable understanding how it impacts on their rights as women and indigenous peoples, including benefits and risks, as a primary process towards free and prior informed consent.
4. REDD+ actions should facilitate recognition of and strengthen the protection and advancement of the rights, knowledge and roles of indigenous women in climate mitigation and adaptation, emissions reduction, resource management and conservation and sustainable development.
5. Direct access to funds and resources by indigenous women and their organizations/agencies in support of their own local/community emissions reduction initiatives, livelihoods, appropriate technology and innovation. Current standards, requirements and processes to access grants should be simplified or mechanisms installed to accommodate direct access by indigenous women's organizations/agencies.
6. REDD+ actions should include organizing and equipping indigenous women and their communities to access and effectively manage resources, implement projects and programs through skills development workshops on popular education methods and approaches, project proposal development and fund-raising as well as organizational and finance management.

C. GOVERNANCE: PARTICIPATION, MONITORING AND BENEFIT SHARING

Indigenous women are most often left out of public life and decision making because of their poverty in time caused by their multiple roles and responsibilities in the family and in the community. Existing practices and approaches may not necessarily apply effectively among indigenous women where the work and agricultural cycle, spiritual and other socio-cultural and community matters have to be considered

1. Readiness and ERP designs should include targeted consultation processes and capacity building activities for indigenous women and peoples including providing ample time, resources and spaces specific for indigenous women to be able to participate fully and effectively in decision making processes from local to national levels and in all project phases and processes from conceptualization, design, implementation, evaluation and benefit sharing, including IP and gender sensitive grievance mechanism;
2. Provide spaces and enabling resources for indigenous women representation at the Forest Carbon Partnership Facility's Participants Committee level. Where REDD+ initiatives and interventions involve indigenous peoples, the FCPF - PC should ensure the participation of indigenous women representative/s from the country under review.
3. Ensure the gender analysis of REDD+/ERP design, implementation, evaluation and benefit – sharing using culture-sensitive and gender responsive approaches with the active engagement of indigenous women.

D. MONITORING

1. Institutionalize gender assessment in the SESA towards the development of specific Gender Action Plans and indicators for monitoring of REDD+ from strategies to activities, including benefits.
2. Allocate resources for the development of culture-sensitive gender indicators in consultation with indigenous women in consideration of their knowledge, roles and other contributions to sustaining community well-being viz ecological resilience and emissions reduction and ensure that these are reflected in the safeguards and benefit sharing plans of all ERP design documents.
3. As part of the national monitoring system, governments, in consultation with indigenous peoples, to develop culturally appropriate and gender-specific indicators for monitoring community based activities and livelihoods.
4. Provide resources for the creation of an independent international monitoring and evaluation process that includes experts from indigenous women/peoples results of which should be directly communicated to the communities concerned.
5. Designate independent funding to assess, set-up where needed, and strengthen existing indigenous, gender-sensitive and accessible grievance mechanisms ensuring that indigenous women are represented.

E. BENEFIT SHARING

Benefits from forests, forest conservation and emissions reduction should not be viewed merely in terms of carbon sequestration and opportunity cost. Based on a longer term perspective of empowerment and transformation towards sustained, rights-based and gender responsive climate resilient communities, indigenous women and peoples have been articulating the significance of non-carbon benefits from the REDD+/ERP i.e recognition of land rights, securing indigenous women and peoples' land tenure and livelihoods, recognition of and development of indigenous knowledge and management of their territories and resources, adaptive and appropriate technologies and innovation, among others.

1. Gender and women empowerment can result from the REDD+/ERP which can be considered as a benefit. Addressing traditional and behavioral gender barriers, with the participation of and in full consultation with indigenous women, therefore, should be targeted in all design documents at the global to the local levels.
2. REDD+/ERP strategies and action should establish gender sensitive and disaggregated baselines and a documentation system accessible to and useable for and by indigenous peoples to enable negotiation for equitable benefit sharing.
3. Design equitable, gender-sensitive benefit-sharing mechanisms with due respect to existing indigenous institutions and in full consideration of advancing the status of indigenous women. *aiwn*

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Position of a Special Rapporteur on the Right to Development Established

The UN Human Rights Council adopted a resolution (A/HRC/33/L.29) on 29 September 2016 establishing the mandate for a Special Rapporteur on the Right to Development. Appointed for a period of three years, the special rapporteur will have the following mandate (A/HRC/33/L.29 paragraphs 14):

- (a) *To contribute to the promotion, protection and fulfilment of the right to development in the context of the coherent and integrated implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and other internationally agreed outcomes of 2015, including the Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction, the Addis Ababa Action Agenda of the Third International Conference on Financing for Development and the Paris Agreement on Climate Change, and to this effect, participate in relevant international meetings and conferences;*
- (b) *To engage and support efforts to mainstream the right to development among various United Nations bodies, development agencies, international development, financial and trade institutions, and to submit proposals aimed at strengthening the revitalized global partnership for sustainable development from the perspective of the right to development;*
- (c) *To contribute to the work of the Working Group with a view to supporting the accomplishment of its overall mandate, taking into account, inter alia, the deliberations and recommendations of the Working Group while avoiding any duplication;*
- (d) *To submit any specific study by the Human Rights Council in accordance with its mandate;*
- (e) *To submit an annual report to the Human Rights Council and to the General Assembly covering all activities relating to the mandate, with a view to maximizing the benefits of the reporting process;*

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Ensuring Food Security
through **Traditional Knowledge**

The Story of *Liza*
Suminggil-Sampag

By Angelina B. Ortiz



Introduction

Under Goal 2 of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), it is imperative to end hunger, achieve food security, improve nutrition and promote sustainable agriculture. This is not just the obligation of governments and UN agencies but its attainment rests in everyone's hands.

Indigenous peoples have been contributing to food security for centuries through their sustainable agriculture utilizing their own traditional knowledge and skills. The indigenous women in particular, play important roles in ensuring food security in their communities as seed keepers and propagators of traditional varieties of food crops. They have been practicing carbon-efficient agricultural production.

There are, however, multiple obstacles to indigenous peoples' endeavour to secure and sustain their food supply. Foremost is the non-recognition of their rights over their lands, territories and resources on which they depend to survive. Also, well-funded ad campaigns from multinational agrochemical companies popularized application of inorganic fertilizers and planting of so-called 'miracle' seeds. These issues are coupled with decreasing land area for food production due to land grabbing and conversion (including forest lands) for industrial purposes, non-food plantations and mining among others. Poverty and hunger are already felt by indigenous communities affected.

Despite these prevailing setbacks to the achievement of Goal 2, the story of Liza Suminggil-Sampag, a Dibabawon farmer in Davao del Norte, Southern Philippines, is a testament that indigenous women and their communities are persistently pursuing a food system that is really contributing towards a transformative society.

Liza is among the many indigenous women of the Ata-Manobo community who plant rice, corn, root crops and vegetables for living and sustenance. And like many of these women, she and her family

till a small parcel of land to raise additional income and food of her household.

At present, Liza lives in a remote community in Kapalong, which is about 90 kilometers away from the town center. In this community, the Ata-Manobo people of 85 families composed of more or less 300 individuals (160 females and 140 males) with an average of 5 members per family, are settled. Each

family mostly owns three to five hectares but they can only till up to two hectares maximum because of their limited capacity to develop their lands. Lack of capital and knowledge to maximize development of their farm prohibit them from increasing the size of land to till and the variety of plants to plant.

Manual labor and less advanced farming method always result to meager produce, which is made worse by the effects of climate change. The community does not have access to and does not receive any government support services to farmers due to geographical distance.

The community has been logged heavily in the 1960s and at present the secondary forest has grown. In some part of the ancestral domain, there are full-grown species of endemic trees but are being cut. Liza feels the effect of the logging especially because animals and plants became endangered. Materials for building houses, performing rituals and making musical instruments are dwindling. Landmarks and burial grounds have been desecrated and venues for spiritual ceremonies are also affected. Lands are now denuded and became prone to flood and landslide.

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Despite these prevailing setbacks to the achievement of Goal 2, the story of Liza Suminggil-Sampag, a Dibabawon farmer in Davao del Norte, Southern Philippines, is a testament that indigenous women and their communities are persistently pursuing a food system that is really contributing towards a transformative society.



Cutting of trees still exists in the forest, despite the total log ban policy. This illegal activity has become an option of some members of the community as a remedy to earn during the lean months. Also, there are threats of intrusion of plantations by companies like the Black Pearl Company who is bribing the Ata-Manobo to lease them their land for 25 years for a rental of P6,000.00 (\$127) per hectare per year. Many of the community people have signed the contract written in English without understanding it well.

The usual mode of transportation to town is through the *habal habal*, an improvised single motorcycle, passing a hilly and rugged road with an average fare of P1,500.00 (\$32) per way for each vehicle. With this exorbitant fare, people mostly prefer to travel by bamboo raft along the river, especially when transporting their farm products to the nearest market center. In most cases, the buyers accord them the lowest price for corn that got wet while traversing the said body of water.

The community is also producing cash crops like banana and peanut but only few are planting peanuts due to cost of seeds. Women in the community participate in the marketing of their products. They manually haul the products and sell it to the local buyers and buy important goods for consumption in return. However, during harvest time, prices of farm products tend to go low due to high supply. After selling their produce, another additional concern for the women is how to manage their income as many of the husbands use the earning for their vices like drinking liquor and gambling.

Liza practices indigenous traditional agriculture

Farming with her husband in his inherited land, Liza, a mother of eight children, is always concerned about the availability of food for her family. Her family experienced food shortage after typhoon Bopha in 2012 and after their community has experienced a severe drought last

year. To placate her fears of her family going hungry anytime, she and her husband are planting root crops, vegetables and corn. They also plant root crops that can withstand drought, like sweet potato, cassava and taro. In addition, they gather food in the forest like *ubod* of the *Kalapi* or rattan shoots.

All the needs of Liza's family for food and income are derived from their farms. Knowing the harm of synthetic agricultural chemicals to human health and the environment, they produce crops organically. They grow their crops using the traditional and natural farming technology like planting of native rice varieties with the integration of root crops, vegetables, indigenous cereal crops (like *darwa* and *aglay*), banana and herbal medicines. They believe that such common technology in farming is still effective in ensuring abundant harvest. By common technology, they refer to a planting calendar, practice crop rotation, multiple cropping and shifting cultivation. These indigenous ways are sustaining the fertility of the soil.

Their agricultural activities follow a crop production calendar. Planting happens in the months of April to June and they expect a good harvest in the months of August to September. It is also from September to November that the fruits of their trees ripen and signals the time for harvest. After the harvest, rice straw is left on the field to decompose to serve as fertilizers. They would prepare the farm for planting, and if needed, they would seek help from others (*Iusongay*) to expand their farm. Then, they would grow root crops like sweet potatoes which can be harvested during the lean months of January to April.

In the community, the people observe the size of the moon before planting. The Ata-Manobo people believe that planting is perfect during full moon. They also interpret the sound of the bird (locally called *limokon*) and dreams they have before planting. The sound of the bird when heard from the east is interpreted as a good sign and bad when heard from

the opposite side. Good dreams are also positive signs of a bountiful harvest in the future.

Lusongay, a concerted effort of the community in tilling their lands from land preparation to the harvesting stage, is very much upheld and still practiced in the community. This practice of helping each other through *lusongay* is often more participated by women than men. They usually do the weeding, harvesting and cooking food for all the laborers. In most cases, it is the women who lead planting and harvesting on time to avoid being disturbed by inclement weather condition.

Most of the community members are not using synthetic pesticides and fertilizers because they are convinced that their indigenous way of managing pests and restoring the fertility of the soil is still working. They control pests like *piyangaw* or rice bug that infests rice plants during the milky stage by burning the *gisayis*, one species of tree, near the farm. Burning produces a foul odor from the *gisayis* which keeps the insect away from the field.

They have two ways to restore soil fertility. First, they leave a portion of their farms to fallow for two years until grasses and small trees start to grow again (*ipalati*). Another is rotational cropping. For example, what has been planted with rice will be planted with sweet potato, banana or vegetable during the next cropping cycle.

Irrigation is not available in the community. They are planting upland rice or rain-fed rice field. During the dry season, they get small harvest that is not sufficient to feed the family until the next harvest season. Rice and corn are usually stored for future consumption. They kept the dried seeds in big basket locally

called *daus* or *lukong* and made from a dried bark of a tree.

Food production is not separate from the spiritual realm. A ritual is conducted to ask the support of *Manama* (Supreme Being) for good life and abundant harvest of the people. They believe that the guidance of *Manama* is always with them because they are given food from their plants and good health to till their farms and Liza is very thankful for this. As a way of showing her gratitude, she shares their family's harvest to their neighbours who are still waiting for their planted crops to mature. Seeds are also kept for the next planting season and are also shared to those families who do not have own seeds for planting.

Despite successes, there are still threats to their practices with the entry of seedlings introduced from the lowlands. There are also hybrid seedlings distributed through a government poverty alleviation program which are dependent on commercial pesticides and fertilizers. The community are aware on the side effect commercial and inorganic chemicals will bring to them especially to human health and soil. But they cannot just reject the assistance considering that they have limited alternatives.

Community people have difficulties in adapting the crops given to them from lowlands to their upland farming. It took sometime for them to learn the planting and maintenance practices. Only few of them got the appropriate way of planting such type of varieties. Liza is still hopeful that through continuously planting of traditional seeds and promoting it to her neighbors will eventually eliminate alien seeds in their farms.

Looking forward with optimism

To prevent the erosion of the Ata-Manobo farming system among the younger generation, Liza, like other parents in their community, usually brings along her children with her to their farm especially during weekends and summer



They believe that the guidance of Manama is always with them because they are given food from their plants and good health to till their farms and Liza is very thankful for this.



vacation. She wants her children, who are mostly going to school, to learn their traditional farming skills from her and her husband. When they are grown up, she is confident that her children can also earn a living by practicing their traditional farming skills.

Transmitting traditional knowledge and skills on indigenous traditional farming to the younger generation is an advocacy of Liza to other parents and elders in their community. She calls for practical learning experiences of children in the field as part of their education. In addition, she recommends that parents and elders will be invited to share their skills and knowledge to the children in school. According to her, such initiative will help children to be more aware and knowledgeable on the practices of the Ata-Manobo community despite the influx of advance technologies. Fortunately, a community learning school in her community is implementing exactly what Liza is advocating for and doing with her children.

As a part of their collectivity and being a member of indigenous farmers' association in their community, Liza actively participates in community activities, attending school and community meetings. She is very willing to take care of the domestic animals that a government program will be distributing as long they can be grown organically. These would be added to the pigs and chicken she is raising as additional resources. She is also involved in activities which aim to increase their traditional food supply.

Despite the difficulties they had, she remains optimistic that life will be better with the support of her husband and children. *aiwn*



About the Author

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Pidlisan Women

Peacekeepers & Guardians of Values

By Florence Daguitan

“

We have kept the fire of commitment burning to maintain peace, harmonious relations and solidarity in our communities. We have, time and again, gathered our collective strengths and ideas on how to quell threats to our culture and social values and we earnestly hope that if our time on this earth will lapse, our younger sisters will carry on the torch and continue to safeguard these legacies.

That was a remark of Nellie Bolinget, one of the women peacekeepers in Fidelisan, Sagada, Mt. Province in northern Philippines. They continue to struggle to maintain traditional values against modernity and changing values.

Although still vivid in their memory, the elderly women of Pidlisan today cannot recall the time when the elders called a meeting and requested the women's group to take over the *pasaliw*. *Pasaliw* is the monitoring and implementation of sanctions to violators specifically during the *ubaya*.

The *ubaya* is a traditional holiday during which villagers are not allowed to go out and work in rice fields, forests, sacred sites and not to pass by some identified trails and footpath. *Ubaya* is declared when community rituals are performed, e.g., series of rituals in rice farming activities starting from land preparation up to the thanksgiving rituals and after the rice harvest season. But there are also *ubaya* that need not be declared openly like the performance of burial, or in rare case, when a house was burned.

People believe that the days of the *ubaya* should

be given to the spirits and unseen beings to freely roam around their abodes without disturbance from human beings. During this time, people confine themselves within the residential areas. It is believed that during this community holiday, unseen spirits are accorded respect.

During *ubaya*, the women and girls go to the *uubunan* and men and boys to the *dap-ay*. The *uubunan* is an open space in a shaded area, where women and girls get together to tell stories, exchange ideas and experiences. It is also where older women teach and give unsolicited advice to younger women while taking turns in carrying babies and looking after the toddlers. *Dap-ay* on the other hand, is a structure which serves as a sleeping quarter for unmarried and widowed men. It is also a meeting place where important decisions concerning the community are made by elders and where young boys learn the culture of their peoples.

There was a time when it was the men who performed the *pasaliw* and sanctions for violations were readily accepted. That has, however, changed when

some individuals started to argue with the implementers of *pasaliw* which sometimes resulted to physical fights and altercations. Recognizing the capacity of women to successfully negotiate without resulting to conflicts due to respect accorded to them in the community, the men passed the task of implementing *pasaliw* to the women.

In the late '80s, the liquor ban which constitutes prohibition of selling alcoholic drinks, of getting drunk and disturbing peace in the community was agreed upon and was closely followed by a local anti-gambling ordinance. This is to deter folks from vices that can cause conflicts within the family and the community. Gambling in particular deprives the family members of their share from the family's income and promotes the attitude of selfishness and/or opportunism. On the other hand, drunkenness can lead to fighting among peers, conflicts between couples or with members of their family, or disturbance of public peace.

The women committed themselves to enforce the liquor ban and apprehend violators. This commitment is performed on a voluntary basis. When roving, the women would remind individuals, who are mostly men, to obey the regulations on drinking liquor as well as on gambling. Not all women though, are joining the *pasaliw*. Those with domestic respon-

sibilities especially women with children less than four years old and below who need ample care and attention are not joining the voluntary work. Fathers also take care of their children when the mothers go out for the *pasaliw*.

If violation necessitates sanctions, these are reported to the *barangay* (the smallest political unit in the Philippines) officials who are responsible in implementing the needed disciplinary actions. There is sanction on storeowners who are caught violating the liquor ban. For the first offense, the storeowner is penalized for P500 (\$10) and P1000 (\$20) for the second offense. The penalty is doubled or tripled accordingly as the violation is repeated.

Sitting with apprehended individuals, the women would remind violators of the traditional values of *inayan* and *lawa*. *Inayan* and *lawa* are expressions of taboo, not to do bad things so as not to invite bad health, bad luck or adverse incidents happening to oneself or one's family and relatives.

For some years, the women view the performance of the *pasaliw* and monitoring the compliance of liquor ban as an honor and opportunity to serve their people and community. It gives them the chance to come together every now and then to assess and strategize on resolving unavoidable conflicts without having to mar relationships of individuals, families

Manang Nellie started her tour of duty implementing the *pasaliw* and monitoring compliance of her community to the liquor ban in the '80s and continues to be very active at present. *Pasaliw* is much easier than monitoring the latter as this can just be done by going around the rice fields, sacred sites and areas where people should not be going during the performance of community rituals and is usually done at daytime.

In ensuring the liquor ban is observed, it is not only the stores which are monitored but also areas where men usually gather, drink liquor and gamble. To be able to cover all possible areas and to effectively manage their time, the women would divide their group into three. They would agree which group would monitor a certain area.

Manang Nellie does not mind participating in this voluntary endeavor. Joyful to render service to the community, she sees it as coming together and bonding of women.

Just recently, the work has become difficult for her and the other women because of the behaviors of the young people. Despite being caught in the act, the apprehended youth would obviously hide their alcoholic drinks and deny their drinking or gambling. It is even more difficult to impose the fines for violations. Fines are not promptly paid by the offenders so there is a need to remind them several times. As an elder, it pains her to see young people disrespecting their elders and to see some people not taking responsibilities for their actions.

Regardless of the challenges, Manang Nellie sees the need to continue doing what she is doing for as long as she can. Monitoring and ensuring the liquor ban is observed and no gambling is happening is an effective mechanism to prevent the youth from vices that can destroy their future. Going around their community serves as a venue for the women to remind the young folks as well as the community to respect the community protocol against liquor drinking and gambling which have devastating impacts on themselves, on their families and their community as a whole.

and clans, thus, maintaining community peace and solidarity.

The 21st century brought many challenges such as more people at Fidelisan are going along strongly with the tides of cash economy and modernity. To earn more income from tourism and mining, there are frequent violations of the *ubaya*. With increased disposable income, there are more men and adolescent boys who are into vices particularly liquor drinking and gambling.

For some years, the women's group wavered in their task in reporting violators. They themselves felt the need to cope with the ever intensifying need for cash to cope with the constantly rising prices of basic commodities and to be able to send their children to higher education. Hence, they need to increase their days of work.

But they realized that their wavering stance on this matter is worsening the condition of gambling and alcoholism. For some time, the community witnessed accidents and deaths happening during *ubaya*, public disturbance due to drunkenness and even children are lured into small time gambling. The women faced difficulties, helplessness and the heavy impact of the worsening situation.

Recognizing that the problem has gone beyond their capacity, the women's group put this concern for discussion in the tribal assembly in 2012. By 2014, the Pidlisan community was able to review their community policies, amended some implementing rules and installed stronger sanctions. Up to 2014, the sanction for violating *ubaya*, like going and working in areas prohibited during *ubaya*, was P100 a day (\$2). For violators whose occupation brings them regular cash, the P100 - a day penalty was increased to P1,000.00 (\$20) for the first offense and suspension from work for two months.

The tribe re-affirmed the importance of such rules and the women now have resumed their role in the *pasaliw* with confidence and renewed commitment. *aiwn*



About the Author

Florence is the program coordinator of the Indigenous Peoples and Biodiversity Programme of Tebtebba.

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UNSRIP reported on the impacts of investments and conservation to the UN GA

The UN Special Rapporteur on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples Ms. Victoria Tauli-Corpuz transmitted to the UN General Assembly two thematic reports on August 2015 and on July 2016.



In the earlier report, Ms. Tauli-Corpuz focused on the international investments treaties and free trade regimes and their impacts on the rights of indigenous peoples. The report claims that *"investment clauses of free trade agreements and bilateral and multilateral investment treaties, as they are currently conceptualized and implemented, have actual and potential negative impacts on indigenous peoples' rights, in particular on their rights to self-determination; lands, territories and resources; participation; and free, prior and informed consent."*

In her recommendations, she called the States to *"ensure that gender considerations are adequately integrated into the development of such human rights impact assessments and that its intersecting relationship with other sources of discrimination be analysed so that the specific vulnerability of indigenous women to the effects of investment practices is considered."*

The special rapporteur also stressed the involvement of indigenous peoples including indigenous women in the negotiating process for all investments and free trade agreements. This involvement is necessary when human rights impact assessments have identified potential issues relating to indigenous peoples.

In the recent report submitted on July 2016, Ms. Tauli-Corpuz made an analysis of the conservation measures and their impacts on the rights of indigenous peoples. She indicated that there have been complex and multiple violations of the collective and individual rights of indigenous peoples due to conservation measures implemented. She particularly mentioned about the abuses against indigenous women in Nepal by the Chitwan National Park rangers and military officers.

Foremost in her recommendation to address the issues brought about by conservation measures is the effective implementation of the UNDRIP and the ratification of ILO Convention 169 by countries that have not ratified it yet.

Update from the CSW60 (2016)

The United Nations Commission on the Status of Women in its 60th session last 14-24 March 2016 adopted an agreed conclusion (E/2016/27) which details how the 2030 Sustainable Development Goals will be implemented to ensure that women and girls will not be left behind. It has, notably, included a specific paragraph for indigenous women:

23. The Commission, in order to continue working towards the full, effective and accelerated implementation of the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action, which will make a crucial contribution to the implementation of the 2030 Agenda, urges Governments, at all levels and as appropriate, with the relevant entities of the United Nations system and international and regional organizations, within their respective mandates and bearing in mind national priorities, and invites national human rights institutions where they exist, civil society, including non-governmental organizations, inter alia, women's and community-based organizations, feminist groups, youth-led organizations, faith-based organizations, the private sector, employer organizations, trade unions, the media and other relevant actors, as applicable, to take the following actions:

(v) Formulate and implement, in collaboration with indigenous peoples, in particular indigenous women and their organizations, policies and programmes designed to promote capacity-building and strengthen their leadership while recognizing the distinct and important role of indigenous women and girls in sustainable development, and prevent and eliminate discrimination and violence against indigenous women and girls, which has a negative impact on their human rights and fundamental freedoms, to which they are disproportionately vulnerable and which constitutes a major impediment to indigenous women's full, equal and effective participation in society, the economy, and political decision-making;

In the draft resolution (E/CN.6/2016/L.6) on the Multi-year programme of work of the CSW, the empowerment of indigenous women is the focus area of the 61st session (2017) of the CSW. Specifically, it provides:

Recalling the invitation to the Commission on the Status of Women to consider the issue of the empowerment of indigenous women at a future session, as stated paragraph 19 of General Assembly resolution 69/2 of 22 September 2014, and acknowledging the intention to place this issue as a focus area of its sixty-first session, ...

See the draft resolution at <http://www.unwomen.org/en/csw/csw60-2016>.

Independent Expert on the protection against violence and discrimination based on SOGI appointed

The Human Rights Council appointed, for a period of three years starting 2016, an Independent Expert on protection against violence and discrimination based on sexual orientation and gender identity (SOGI).

The Independent Expert is mandated "to assess the implementation of existing international human rights instruments with regard to ways to overcome violence and discrimination against persons on the basis of their sexual orientation or gender identity, and to identify and address the root causes of violence and discrimination".

The Independent Expert appointed last November 2016 is Mr. Vitit Muntarbhorn.



Photo credit: UN photo / Jean-Marc Ferré
(<http://www.ohchr.org/EN/Issues/SexualOrientationGender/Pages/VititMuntarbhorn.aspx>)

11 Independent Experts Elected to CEDAW Monitoring Body

The following experts were elected to serve on the Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women from 1 January 2017 until 31 December 2019: Dalia Leinarte (Lithuania), Nicole Ameline (France), Wenyan Song (China), Nahla Haidar (Lebanon), Gunnar Bergby (Norway), Bandana Rana (Nepal), Rosario Manalo (Philippines), Hilary Gbedemah (Ghana), Theodora Oby Nwankwo (Nigeria), Aicha Vall Verges (Mauritania) and Marion Bethel (Bahamas).

They will serve in the Committee in their personal capacity and each expert will serve a four-year term with elections held every two years. The Committee monitors the implementation of the CEDAW by State parties.

The independent experts were elected on June 21, 2016 from 25 candidates.

IPs participated in the dialogue on the local communities and indigenous peoples platform

Indigenous peoples under the banner of the International Indigenous Peoples Forum on Climate Change (IIPFCC) participated in an open multi-stakeholder dialogue that tackled the operationalization of the local communities and indigenous peoples platform at the recent Bonn Climate Change Talks last May 16, 2017.

The new platform created under the Paris Agreement adopted last December 2015 will provide space for indigenous peoples and local communities to exchange lessons learned and share perspectives on emissions reduction, adaptation and resilience building. This platform is also meant to provide avenue for indigenous peoples and local communities to participate and contribute to the various processes of the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC).

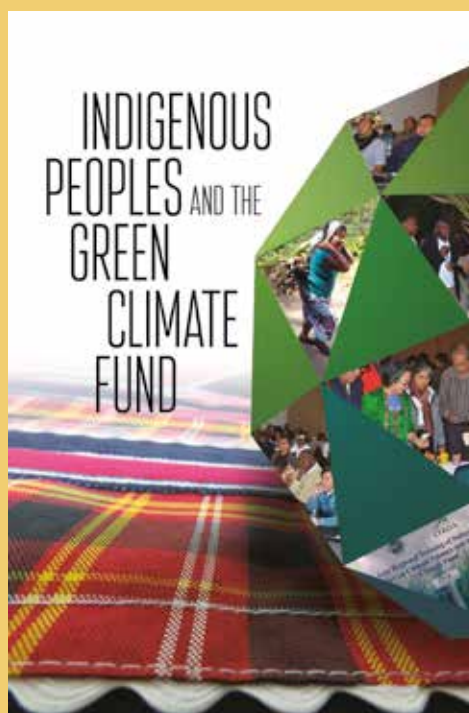
During the dialogue, indigenous representatives called for the promotion and recognition of sustainable practices of indigenous peoples, full and effective participation of local communities and indigenous peoples, adequate funding and support for capacity building, special measure and attention to indigenous women and youth and context-based knowledge exchange.

The dialogue was also attended by representatives of UN agencies, State Parties and observer NGOs.

Development of an IP Policy in progress at the Green Climate Fund

A number of indigenous peoples with support from other civil society organizations (CSOs) have been lobbying the Green Climate Fund (GCF) since its initial meetings to adopt an Indigenous Peoples policy. During the 15th Board meeting last December 2016, the Board in its decision has requested the Secretariat to prepare for consideration of the Board in its 17th meeting a fund-wide Indigenous Peoples' policy. It also invited submissions from members and alternate members of the Board as well as observer organizations towards the development of an IP policy.

Due to significant backlog on the workload of the Green Climate Fund, the indigenous peoples' policy has not been included in the agenda for the B 17 on July 2017. Indigenous peoples have already submitted a petition letter to the board to do a progress report on the status of the development of the IP policy. So far, indigenous peoples are hopeful that this agenda item will be prioritized in the 18th board meeting that is due to happen on 30 September to 2 October 2017.



Dates to Remember

27-29

NOVEMBER 2017

Forum on Business and Human Rights

Venue: Palais des Nations, Geneva, Switzerland

6-17

NOVEMBER 2017

UNFCCC

**COP 23; CMP 13; CMA 1-2; SBI 47;
and SBSTTA 47**

Venue: Bonn, Germany

16-27

APRIL 2018

UNPFII 17

Venue: United Nations Headquarters

New York, USA

12-23

MARCH 2018

CSW62

Venue: United Nations Headquarters, New York, USA

Priority theme:

Challenges and opportunities in achieving gender equality and the empowerment of rural women and girls

Review theme:

Participation in and access of women to the media, and information and communications technologies and their impact on and use as an instrument for the advancement and empowerment of women (agreed conclusions of the forty-seventh session)



Photo credits: Parboti Roy, Bangladesh (upper left photo); Kanlaya Chularattakorn, IWNT, Thailand (upper right photo); Eileen Cunningham Mairena (lower right photo)

aiwm

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- ⇒ Community
- ⇒ Wildlife
- ⇒ Wild vegetables
- ⇒ Medicinal herbs

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