



INTERNATIONAL INDIAN
TREATY COUNCIL

2020 ANNUAL REPORT

WWW.IITC.ORG



FROM THE BOARD

Ya'at'eeh, Respectful Greetings.

On behalf of the 14 IITC Board of Directors, I would like to thank our staff and everyone who worked with us and supported the International Indian Treaty Council in 2020. We know that 2020 was a tough year for us all. My own Diné Nation was hit hard by COVID-19. We lost friends, family members and esteemed elders. Our hearts and prayers go out to everyone from all Nations of the world who also suffered that way. As you might know, IITC also lost a respected Board member to the pandemic in August, Mariano Ochoa from the Yaqui Nation in Sonora Mexico, but his example of selfless work for the people is still with us.

The good news is that the work of IITC continued to advance and grow stronger in 2020 despite these challenges. I am proud to say that we helped Indigenous communities to launch and strengthen food sovereignty and seed trading projects to restore our Nations' health, strength and food independence. IITC continued to defend human rights, protect our sacred sites and way of life, and share information about our struggles. We also continued to bring Treaty violations to the attention of the world. As a veteran of the occupation of Alcatraz Island which sparked the international Indigenous movement in 1969, I am happy that IITC was able to hold our two annual Alcatraz sunrise gatherings in October (Indigenous Peoples Day) and November (Indigenous Peoples Thanksgiving) in spite of the pandemic. We shared our cultures and promoted Truth in History as we have for more than 40 years at these gatherings, but with reduced numbers of on-site participants and social distancing. Elders like me sent recorded messages which were played at the events, and Indigenous Peoples and our supporters around the world joined us through radio and webcasts.

I want to close this message by thanking the foundations, Tribes, organizations and individual donors who provided support to IITC to keep our work going strong in 2020. We hope that we can partner with you in the future, and we send our best wishes to you, your families, organizations and Nations. Together we will stay strong!

Ahe'hee,

Lenny Foster, Diné Nation

Member, IITC Board of Directors

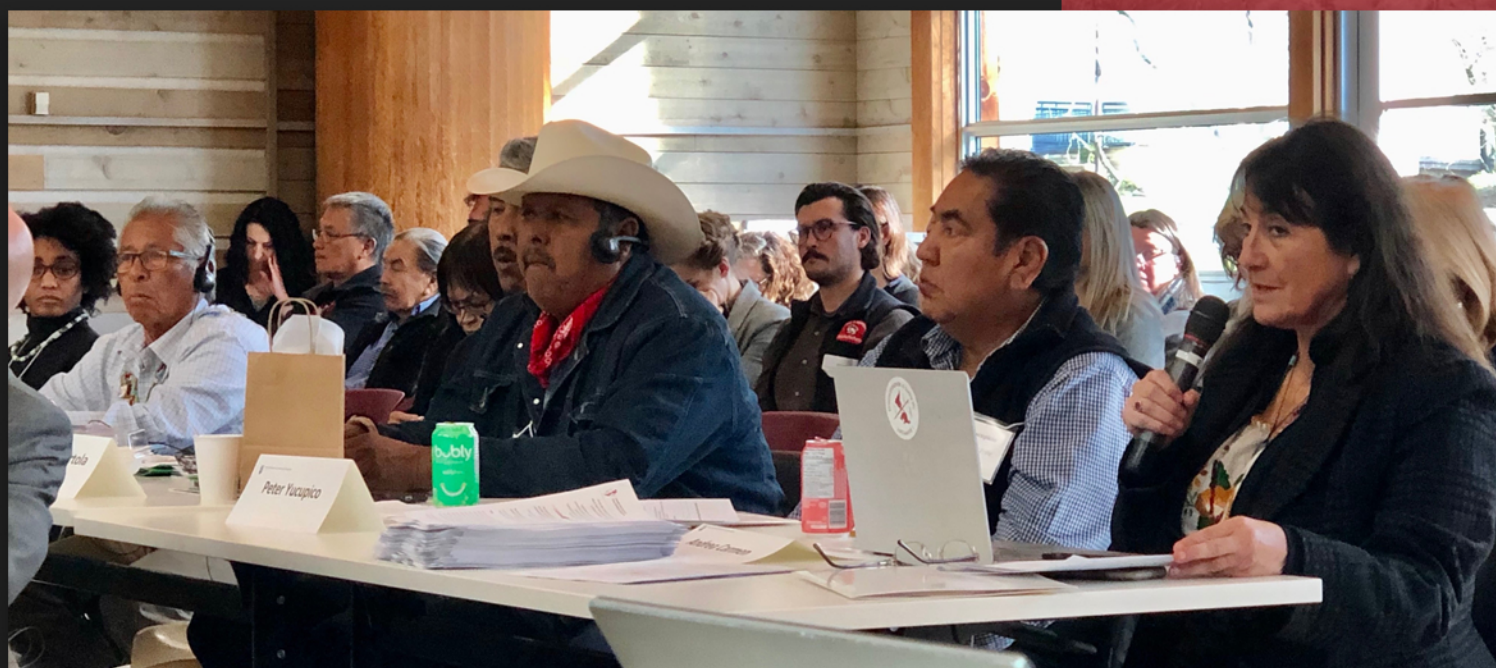
Representing the National Native American Prisoners' Rights Coalition



PROGRAM HIGHLIGHTS

IITC's **Guiding Principles** affirm that "Indigenous Peoples should speak for and represent themselves before the world community as an essential aspect of their Self-Determination." In 2020, IITC continued its commitment to this principle by providing training, credentials, coordination, and mentorship for 28 Indigenous representatives, including youth and women, to participate in 38 virtual and in-person UN and international sessions to share their expertise, defend their rights and make their voices heard. IITC also increased on-line information-sharing and electronic dissemination to reach over 60,000 unique users, contacts and followers through social media, webcasts, webinars, e-news and our popular website, www.iitc.org.

Following are other highlights of work carried out by IITC in each of its core program areas.



Yaqui and IITC delegation attend the 1st International Expert Seminar on International Repatriation in Vancouver, March 6 2020

DEFENDING HUMAN RIGHTS



IITC defends the rights of Indigenous Peoples as affirmed in the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples and other human rights standards, and works to ensure that States, corporations and the UN System fully respect and implement these rights. IITC provides training, capacity-building and direct access for Indigenous human rights defenders to effectively use human rights bodies and processes to protect their rights and redress violations.

To learn more:

<https://www.iitc.org/program-areas/defending-human-rights/>

IITC advanced its long-standing work for the creation of a new international mechanism for the repatriation of Indigenous Peoples' sacred items and human remains from museums, universities, collectors and auction houses around the world. IITC assisted with the adoption of supportive resolutions by the UN Human Rights Council and UN General Assembly and was an organizer and presenter at the first UN-sponsored international expert seminar on repatriation in March, furthering recognition of this key right for Indigenous Peoples.

IITC worked with the new Special Rapporteur on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples Francisco Cali Tzay to coordinate, gather and compile submissions from North America and around the world for his groundbreaking study on the impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic. He presented his groundbreaking study and recommendations [A/75/185] to the UN General Assembly on October 12, reflecting over 150 contributions from Indigenous Peoples, States, organizations and UN agencies, as the foundation of additional work on this topic in 2021.

FOOD SOVEREIGNTY

IITC's Food Sovereignty Program builds the informed participation of Indigenous traditional food producers and knowledge holders in local/tribal, national, regional and international processes to defend their right to food and restore traditional food systems. IITC organizes opportunities for Indigenous food producers to share traditional knowledge, seeds and sustainable practices and develop strategies to address common threats.

To learn more:

<https://www.iitc.org/program-areas/food-sovereignty/>



IITC organized, with other partners and co-hosts, two regional Food Sovereignty gatherings bringing together Indigenous food producers from two vital food and knowledge systems: the Sonoran Desert of Southern Arizona and Northern Mexico, and the Great Lakes Region of the US and Canada. Outcome documents with recommendations, commitments and strategies for future work were adopted by consensus at the [O'odham haicu hu:g'o wud si ha'icu, Ba:wi 'o t-gewkdag](#) ("O'odham traditional foods are sacred, Tepary Beans are our strength") Food Sovereignty Conference held January 17-18 in the Comobabi Community, Tohono O'odham Nation, and the [Gizhaadaandaa Minomin: Let's Take Care of Wild Rice](#) gathering held virtually on July 10th.

IITC continued to serve as a founding member on the Coordinating Committee for the Civil Society and Indigenous Peoples Mechanism, bringing the lived experiences of Indigenous Food producers and Indigenous youth into global discussions on food policy at the UN Committee on Food Security.

Tohono O'odham girl at the Tepary and Sonora Desert Food Systems Conference, Arizona, January 2020



ENVIRONMENTAL HEALTH



IITC's Environmental Health Program carries out information-sharing, North-South networking, training and advocacy addressing the severe health, environmental and human rights impacts of toxic pesticides, persistent organic pollutants, mercury and extractive industries. The program promotes safe alternatives, builds capacity of impacted communities to assert their right to Free Prior and Informed Consent, promotes governmental and corporate accountability, and works for policy change including a halt to the international trade in banned pesticides.

To learn more:

<https://www.iitc.org/program-areas/environmental-health/>

Since 2010, IITC organized several consultations and symposiums bringing together Indigenous women from several regions to address the reproductive and intergenerational health impacts caused by banned pesticides and other environmental toxics and brought examples of environmental violence to the attention of the world community. On July 9th, 2020, the UN Special Rapporteur on Human Rights and Toxics, Mr. Baskut Tuncak, issued a statement endorsed by 35 other UN Human Rights Council experts including the UN Special Rapporteur on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples, declaring that **"the practice of wealthy States exporting their banned toxic chemicals to poorer nations that lack the capacity to control the risks is deplorable and must end."** [IITC publicly welcomed this historic and long-awaited call on July 13th](#).

On December 31, Mexican President Andres Manuel Lopez Obrador issued a decree announcing that Mexico will phase out the "use, acquisition, distribution, promotion, and import of glyphosate", Monsanto's infamous cancer-causing herbicide, and called on companies in Mexico to replace glyphosate with sustainable and culturally appropriate alternatives to "safeguard human health, the country's biocultural diversity, and the environment". [IITC's press release](#) highlighted our many years of work that led to this landmark decision, including a 2015 submission to the UN Committee on the Rights of the Child addressing the human rights impacts suffered by Yaqui Nation in Mexico as a result of the international import and export of banned and highly toxic pesticides.

At the end of 2019, IITC completed an annex to its award-winning 1997 video on California Indigenous Peoples and the ongoing impacts of the California Gold Rush. Distribution of **"Gold, Greed and Genocide: 20 Years Later, The Struggle for Truth in History and Healing in California Continues"** began in early 2020, accompanied by a study guide for Jr. and Sr. High School teachers and students. It highlights ongoing work to address the Gold Rush's legacy of mercury contamination in Northern California, including Tribal clean-up and education efforts and adoption of the UN Minamata Convention on Mercury that calls for reduction of exposures and clean-up of contaminated sites. Both videos, the study guide, and a resource list can be viewed or downloaded at <https://www.iitc.org/gold-greed-genocide/>. Screenings can be arranged by request.

TREATIES & STANDARD SETTING

International recognition of Treaties between Indigenous Nations and States was the first issue brought to the United Nations by IITC in 1977. IITC continues to work for the recognition and enforcement of Treaty rights to water, health, land, food, Consent and Self-Determination and for the establishment of bi-lateral processes to resolve Treaty violations. IITC was also a leader throughout the 40-year process of development and adoption of the UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples, and continues to work for its full implementation, including by advancing new International standards and mechanisms to uphold and defend the rights of Indigenous Peoples.

To learn more:

<https://www.iitc.org/program-areas/treaties-standard-setting/>

IITC submitted urgent filings on July 11th and September 25th, together with the Black Hills Sioux Nation Council and the Sicangu Treaty Council, to UN Special Rapporteurs on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples, Human Rights Defenders, Peaceful Assembly and Cultural Rights. These submissions addressed the US government violations of the 1868 Ft. Laramie Treaty and criminal charges against Human and Treaty Rights defender Nick Tilsen, Oglala Lakota, as a result of peaceful protests against a Trump campaign rally on July 3rd held without consent at Mt. Rushmore on Ocetci Sakowin Treaty Lands. [These UN Human Rights experts issued a public statement](#) expressing their concern about the criminal charges and the ongoing intimidation of Mr. Tilsen and calling on the US to initiate dialogue with the Oceti Sakowin to resolve Treaty violations.

As one of the two global co-convenors of the Indigenous Peoples Major Group for the UN Sustainable Development Goals (SDG's), IITC continued to build awareness to increase direct engagement by Indigenous Peoples for their implementation at the national level.



CLIMATE CHANGE

IITC considers the Climate Crisis to be an existential, urgent threat with impacts that cut across other program areas. IITC works with grass-roots Indigenous communities to support responses based on traditional knowledge and practices and ensures that the rights and voices of Indigenous Peoples are included and respected in national and global climate actions.

To learn more:

https://www.iitc.org/program-areas/environmental-health/#Climate_Change



IITC continued to emphasize and uplift the vital role of Indigenous Peoples' knowledge, practices, and rights in global climate action. IITC's Executive Director Andrea Carmen represents Indigenous Peoples from North America on the UNFCCC Facilitative Working Group (FWG) of the Local Communities and Indigenous Peoples Platform established in 2018. In 2020, she was selected by the Indigenous members to serve as the FWG co-chair.

IITC, with civil society allies, launched an advocacy campaign at the UN Human Rights Council to establish a new UN Special Rapporteur (human rights expert) to address human rights violations resulting from the causes, impacts and in some cases, false solutions to climate change. This initiative is supported by hundreds of organizations, scientists, Indigenous Peoples and a growing number of countries, and will continue to gain momentum in 2021.

COVID-19 RESPONSE

The COVID-19 pandemic highlighted the past and ongoing disparities impacting Indigenous Peoples including lack of access to culturally appropriate health care services, decades of exposure to environmental contamination and erosion of their healthy, traditional food systems. In 2020, IITC adjusted its activities to respond to the COVID-19 crisis and support Indigenous Peoples and communities suffering disproportionately from its impacts.

To learn more:

<https://www.iitc.org/resources/covid-19/>

IITC worked with Tribal organizations to restore healthy, sustainable food systems. Even before COVID-19, many reservations in the US were known as “food deserts” with limited access to nutritious foods, contributing to a range of health vulnerabilities. IITC’s Food and Seed Sovereignty COVID Relief Alliance, launched in May, supports family and community gardens, seed-sharing and food distribution projects to restore resiliency and build food independence on the Yaqui, Tohono O’odham, Hopi, and Navajo (Dine) reservations as well as in Yaqui Pueblos in Northern Mexico.

IITC moved from holding in-person gatherings and conferences to webinars for information sharing and movement building. From May through November, IITC organized 18 **“Rights of Indigenous Peoples in the Time of COVID-19”**, webinars with presentations by Indigenous knowledge holders, youth, elders, women, persons with disabilities, food producers and tribal leaders from several regions to share challenges and impacts as well as “on the ground” responses and long-term solutions. These webinars can be accessed on [IITC’s YouTube page](#).

IITC worked with Shift7, a group of generous donors, to distribute over 200,000 personal protective equipment (PPE) items including masks, hand sanitizer, gloves and other medical supplies to Indigenous communities with high or rising numbers of COVID-19 cases in Arizona, Minnesota, California, and Northern Mexico. IITC worked with Tribal leaders and traditional authorities to ensure that the most vulnerable community members, including elders, first responders, disabled persons, homeless individuals, ceremonial leaders, care givers and health workers, received the PPE as a first priority.



IITC Staff member Chris Honahnie delivers seeds to Dine community farmers in New Mexico, June 4th 2020



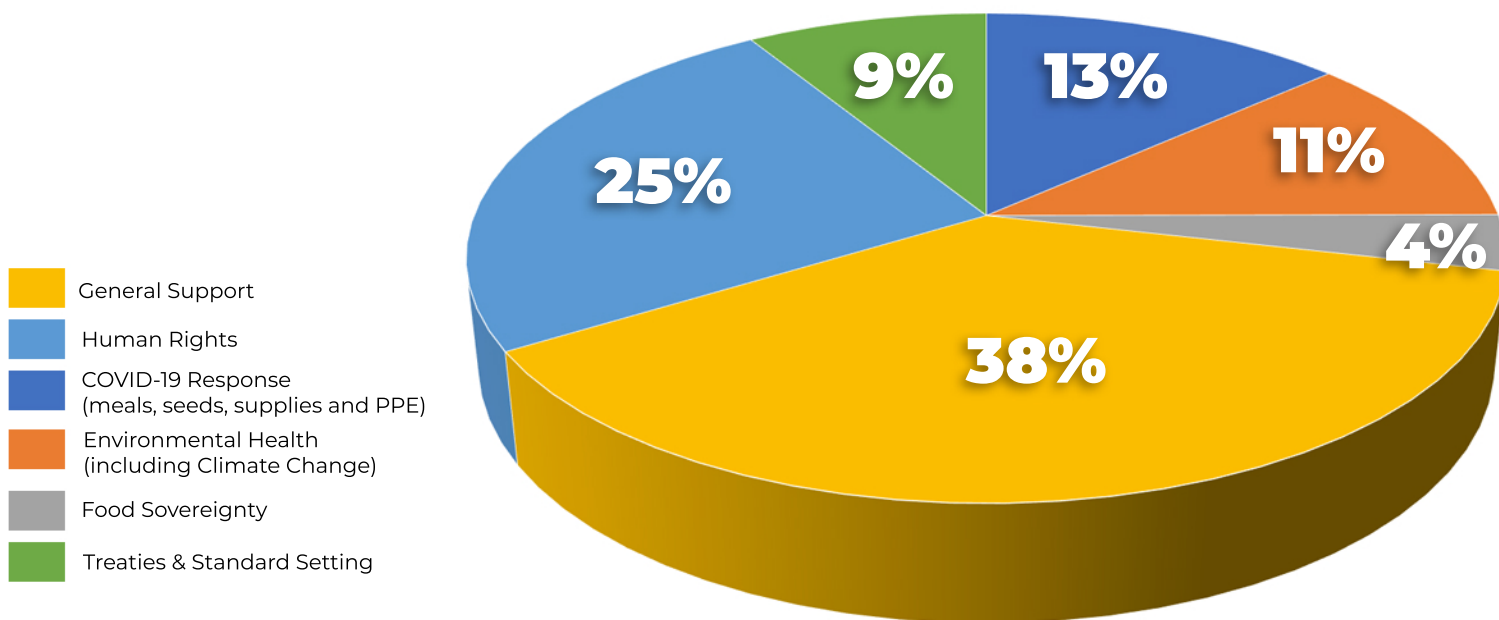
2020 FISCAL REPORT

Despite challenges created by the pandemic, IITC's financial situation remained strong. In 2020, IITC received income totaling **\$953,211.86**, including in-kind contributions for travel during the first quarter, legal consultation, communications services, and PPE supplies which were distributed to Tribes and communities. This amount also included 6 passthrough grants to support Indigenous communities' COVID-relief Food Sovereignty projects. Our total expenditures in 2020 were **\$554,186.60**, leaving us with a net amount of **\$257,711.33** at the end of year to carry over into 2021. This includes grant funds we received for the 46th Anniversary Treaty Conference and the 5th International Indigenous Peoples Corn Conference that had to be postponed due to the pandemic. As in previous years, IITC kept its expenditures for administration, management and fundraising to under 21% of the total.

We are very happy to report that in December 2020, thanks to a special grant from the Bay and Paul Foundations, IITC was able to pay off the mortgage on our Tucson Office building, which we purchased in 2018. IITC now owns it free and clear, a major advance for our long-term stability and sustainability!

The chart below provides the breakdown of IITC's 2020 income by program area.

INTERNATIONAL INDIAN TREATY COUNCIL 2020 Income by Program



THANK YOU!

IITC's staff, Board of Directors and affiliates express our sincere appreciation to the following foundations, Tribes, corporations and organizations whose generous contributions made our work possible in 2020:

AgroEcology Fund	Bay and Paul Foundations	Community Foundation of S. Arizona
Fleishhacker Foundation	Groundswell Fund	Lannan Foundation
Libra Foundation	Lush Charity Pot	Marisla Foundation
Native Voices Rising	NDN Collective	Nisqually Indian Tribe
NoVo Foundation	Pascua Yaqui Tribe	San Francisco Arts Commission
Santa Fe Natural Tobacco Company Foundation	Tohono O'odham Nation	
	Yocha Dehe Wintun Nation	

IITC also thanks the **133** individual donors whose support was very much appreciated in 2020.





INTERNATIONAL INDIAN TREATY COUNCIL

The International Indian Treaty Council (IITC) is an organization of Indigenous Peoples from North, Central, South America, the Caribbean and the Pacific founded in 1974 on the Standing Rock Reservation in South Dakota. IITC works for the Sovereignty and Self Determination of Indigenous Peoples and the recognition and protection of Indigenous Rights, Treaties, Traditional Cultures and Sacred Lands. IITC was founded in 1974 on the Standing Rock Reservation in South Dakota to be an international voice for the rights and survival of Indigenous Peoples and in 1977 was the first Indigenous organization to receive Consultative Status with the UN Economic and Social Council. In 2011 IITC was the first Indigenous organization in history to be upgraded to "General Consultative Status" by ECOSOC in recognition of its decades of work in a range of UN bodies and processes.

IITC BOARD OF DIRECTORS

Ron Lameman, IITC Board President, Beaver Lake Cree Nation, Alberta Canada, Treaties 1-11 • **Hinewirangi Kohu**, IITC Board Vice President, Maori Nation, Aotearoa (New Zealand), Te Whanua o te Rau Aroha • **Tai Pelli**, IITC Board Secretary/Treasurer, United Confederation of Taino People, Caribbean Region • **Maria Celestina Balan**, Centro de Proyectos para el Desarrollo Integral Indígena (CEPRODI) • **Radley Davis**, Pit River Nation, California • **Rodney Factor**, Seminole Nation, Oklahoma, Seminole Sovereignty Protection Initiative • **Leonard Foster**, Dine' Nation, National Native American Prisoners' Rights Coalition, Arizona • **William A. Means**, Oglala Lakota Nation, Wicahpi Koyaka Tiospaye, Pine Ridge, South Dakota • **Faith Gemmill**, Venetie Tribal Government, Gwich'in Athabaskan Nation, Alaska • **Lisa Bellanger**, Leech Lake Anishinabe Nation, Three Fires Society • **Pu'uhonua "Bumpy" Kanahele**, Hawaiian Nation, Spokesperson and Head of State, Sovereign Nation State of Hawaii • **Saul Vicente Vásquez**, Zapoteca, Oaxaca México, Unidad de la Fuerza Indígena y Campesina (UFIC) • **Yamilka Hernandez**, Movimiento Juventud, Kuna, Panama, Panama • **Juan Gregorio Jaime Leon**, Yaqui Traditional Authorities, Río Yaqui Sonora Mexico • **Rigoberta Menchu Tum**, Honorary Board Member/Miembra Honoraria: Nobel Laureate

Andrea Carmen, Yaqui Nation, IITC Executive Director



San Francisco
2940 16th St #305
San Francisco, CA 94103
(415) 641-4482
iitc@treatycouncil.org

Tucson
100 E Ajo Way
Tucson, AZ 85713
(520) 833-9797
info@treatycouncil.org

Subscribe to IITC's e-news on our website and connect with us on Facebook, Twitter, LinkedIn, and YouTube