



IITC 2020 Year-end Update and Fundraising Appeal

Respectful greetings to our friends, supporters, and allies,



Yaqui family garden box growing traditional foods and medicines, Tucson Arizona, July 2020

This has been a very challenging, and for far too many of us, a heartbreaking year. The COVID-19 pandemic has come into Indigenous Peoples' territories with a vengeance, highlighting long-standing disparities and vulnerabilities caused by lack of access to health care, erosion of our original food systems, and decades of resource exploitation.

As we mourn our losses, the pandemic has also been an urgent call to action for IITC. Our vital work to inform our Peoples and bring them together is more essential than ever.

Although our year is normally filled with in-person gatherings, in April we switched to a virtual format to bring Indigenous Peoples and our allies together for information-sharing and dialogue. IITC organized 20 webinars and online events with presentations by Indigenous elders, knowledge holders, youth and human rights experts, sharing strategies for resiliency, resistance, and healing. A new webinar series focusing on practical skills and traditional knowledge for eco- and food system protection, with topics like seed saving, fire prevention, water conservation, and soil restoration, will begin in January 2021.

Thanks to the generosity of concerned donors, IITC staff also distributed over 200,000 masks and gloves, hand sanitizers, and medical equipment to Indigenous Nations and communities in Minnesota, Arizona, California, and Sonora Mexico. Just last week we sent another 6000+ PPE items urgently needed to protect the health of the 8 Yaqui Pueblos in Sonora, Mexico.

A long-standing priority for IITC is the restoration and protection of our Food Sovereignty. In response to the double impacts of climate change and the pandemic, IITC has focused this year on building alliances to support family and community gardens, distribute food and meals with locally-grown sources, repatriate/rematriate original seeds, build youth engagement, and share information, knowledge, and methods. IITC also raised funds to support Indigenous Food Sovereignty COVID relief projects in the Yaqui, Tohono O'odham, Dine and Hopi Nations, and in Central and Northern Mexico. In 2021, additional projects are planned in Arizona, Oklahoma, Mexico, Panama, and Guatemala.



Since May 2020, IITC's COVID-19 relief program has received and distributed over 200,000 PPE including masks, gloves, hand sanitizers, and medical equipment as well as original seeds and home gardening supplies to Indigenous Tribal members in Arizona, New Mexico, Northern Mexico, Minnesota and California



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IITC continues to focus on the climate crisis as a primary threat to Indigenous Peoples' Food Sovereignty, ecosystems, and lifeways. As this year's co-chair of a new body created at the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) to protect and strengthen Indigenous Peoples' knowledge and practices, we continue to advocate for the rights and full participation of Indigenous Peoples in Climate action on all levels.

In 2021, IITC will continue to respond to these urgent environmental and health threats. IITC will continue to build on our local, national, and international advances to ensure that Indigenous Peoples are able to speak for and represent themselves before the world community in key areas including Food Sovereignty, Climate Change, protection of biodiversity, repatriation of sacred items, and reduction and elimination of harmful environmental toxics.



*IITC Staff member Chris Honahnie delivers seeds from the San Xavier Community Farm in Tucson to the Dine Nation in New Mexico on June 4th 2020.
Photo: Janene Yazzie*

As an organization working for the rights and survival of Indigenous Peoples for 46 years, IITC needs your help and support more now than ever as we respond to these urgent needs. We respectfully ask you to partner with us by making a year-end tax-deductible donation to IITC. You can mail a check to IITC's Tucson Arizona office: 100 E. Ajo Way, Tucson Arizona, 85713. Or make a secure on-line contribution via the "Donate" button at: <http://www.iitc.org/support-our-work/>. All contributions - large or small - are greatly appreciated!

Please share this appeal with your family, friends, and colleagues who also may want to support IITC's work to defend the rights, cultures, and ways of life of Indigenous Peoples. We invite you to stay informed and engaged in our work by subscribing to "IITC e-news" via our web page, connecting with us on Facebook, Twitter, and LinkedIn.

On behalf of the IITC, I thank you warmly for your support and wish you and your family good health and blessings for the coming year.

Andrea Carmen, Executive Director,
International Indian Treaty Council