

**CELEBRATING LIFE
2 decades with URI**



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COSMOVISION

ANCESTRAL LEGACY



América Latina & El Caribe

LATIN AMERICA AND THE CARIBBEAN REGION

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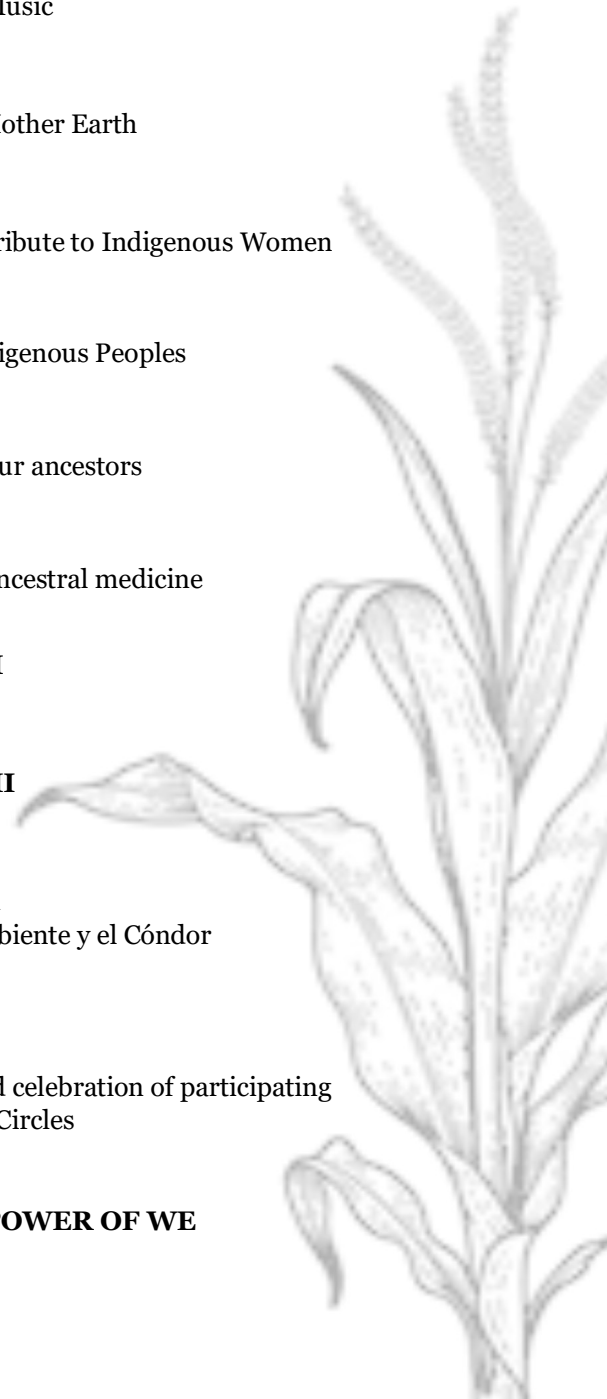
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About the authors



Sofía Painiqueo Tragnolao

Singer-songwriter, born and raised in the Dibulko Community.

Mapudungun is her first language. At the age of 12 she sang at Basic School, then she participated in Villarrica Festival, accompanied by a group of children from the same school.

In Angol, she formed a group with other young people, then participated in a TVN program called Dingolondando, together with Rayen Kütxalen. Later she traveled to Santiago where she formed Aflai (Eternal) group and they made presentations in different institutions, such as schools, universities, social organizations, among others.

She was Global Counselor of URI Latin America and The Caribbean between 2016 and 2020.

Raúl Mamani

He was born in Jujuy, Argentina, in a Kolla Indigenous Community.

In 1980 he moved to Buenos Aires, and in 1982 he joined the NGO "Centro Kolla" in this capital.

In 1985, he began an important task, rescuing indigenous thought and worldview through oral traditions, together with other indigenous brothers.

He was invited to join United Religions Initiative (URI) from the very beginning of this movement, becoming after being elected, Global Councilor from 2005 to 2010.





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He became involved in interfaith work through United Religions Initiative in 2002 and worked to develop a Circle of Cooperation of indigenous peoples of different faiths in his city and he has been a member of the URI ever since, and he was Global Advisor for the South America Region and Caribbean.





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"In the Mola is reflected the wisdom of the Guna Woman" Fany Ávila (+)

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May Peace prevail on Earth



América Latina & El Caribe



Prologue

At United Religions Initiative (URI), we conduct ourselves according to a code of ethics embodied in twenty-one guiding principles of thought, emotion, and action, oriented to healing mother earth and all living beings, and the creation of cultures of peace. One of them is respect for the sacred wisdom of each religion, spiritual expression, and indigenous tradition. All of them lead us to embody this motto: Unity in Interreligious and Intercultural Diversity in our activities.

This is how this digital book, COSMOVISION, Ancestral Legacy was born. It is a dream come true that emerged in a series of ten Conversations about Indigenous Cosmovision that were held between June 2020 and June 2021 within the framework of activities organized by our Region within URI 20th Anniversary Program. The Conversations were convened and moderated by Sofía Painiqueo, representative of Círculos de Cooperación (CC) Aflaiái (Aflaiái Cooperation Circle), who at that time was the Global Councilor of URI (2016 to 2020); and Raúl Mamani, founder and representative of Círculo de Cooperación Qewña, who was also Global Councilor from 2005 to 2008. This publication is carried out with the contribution of all the participants and the support of the URI Regional Office.

Each of these Conversations had a topic presenter: Sofía Painiqueo, Raúl Mamani, Alejandrino Quispe, Betty Martínez, Fany González, Rosalía Gutiérrez, Rosa Delia Quizhpe (current Global Councilor), Vilma Palax Tuy, María Eva Cayu; and important interventions by Ana Linda Ávila and Francisco Morales (present Global Advisor) who presented us with their particular view of an aspect of reality as spokespersons for the Mayan, Kolla, Quechua, Kuna, Quishua, Quinaroes and Mapuche cultures, and as representatives of different Circles of Cooperation of the Latin American and Caribbean Region

The titles of each of the chapters are suggestive and invite us to learn about a particular aspect of the lives and different societies of Indigenous Cosmovision. They are also a way to promote a nourishing dialogue invited by their narratives, and a way to experience the richness of cultural diversity. The chapters profoundly represent them: I) Indigenous Music, II) Offerings to Mother Earth, III) Arts in Tribute to Indigenous Women, IV) Rights of Indigenous Peoples, V) Tribute to our ancestors, VI) Indigenous ancestral medicine, VII) Identity, VIII) The seeds, IX) The Environment and the Condor and X) Closing of the Conversations: Synthesis and celebration of the participating CCs.

This bilingual edition aspires to make our Region's indigenous thought, rooted in our ancestry, known, and enjoyed by a wide audience worldwide. With this purpose we were headed to gather these testimonies and give them visibility, because these voices show other ways of coexisting with nature, the cosmos and living beings, which we believe are necessary in contemporary historical horizons.

Widely disseminating the richness and value that their cosmovision has for humanity today, is a way of showing solidarity with those original societies that have suffered and continue to suffer discrimination and contempt.

This book shows their valuable stories and appeals to respect and self-determination of indigenous peoples in defense of their territories and safeguarding of the natural resources present in their ecosystems. It also urges that their lives be protected, because in addition to being direct descendants from their ancestors, they have been the guardians of our natural heritage throughout the years.

From the cultural heritage of the ancient traditions and spiritualities of URI Latin America and the Caribbean, we venture and pledge on the understanding and harmony of all human beings and our hearts be full of fraternal love, we accompany the realization of this book COSMOVISION: Ancestral Legacy.

Enóé Texier
Coordinadora de URI para América Latina y El Caribe

Preface

ITXOBILL MONGEN MAPUMEU: Biodiversity on Earth

Sofia Painiqueo

To speak about earth's biodiversity is to talk of native people's life in earth, in the soil, in the habitat. Talking of biodiversity implies the connection we have with the environment.

We, as human beings, are brothers of all the diversity of life that exists in nature. We are just one more being that live in spaces of the Great Mother Nature, we have this vision inherited from our grandparents, from our ancestors, because they knew how to connect with all their older and younger brothers.

The Mapuche people, specifically in their own habitat, have their own way of acting, of connecting with their mother tongue, Mapudhngun, with their own space; we have our own way and can talk with the world around us, can seek balance, harmony with other living beings. And how do we seek this balance, this harmony?

Sharing in the same field, in the same habitat, in the middle of nature, where there are no fences, where there is no confinement; there, where nothing is missing, in the space where everything that is most important for life is found, just like the living beings that are living in the water, in the air, on the ground.

We are living beings that live on the ground, there we were given a space to live, but we are not the only ones who have to feed ourselves, that have to walk, to breathe, to exchange knowledge and experiences. There are other beings who have more strength, more energy, more experiences than us. These beings know the natural order, they know the laws of nature and it is with them that we must interact through our spirituality by sharing food, dances, conversations, speeches, instruments. That sharing is done from our spirituality and thus the reciprocity of energies is created.

It is immediately noticeable when there is reciprocity with other beings. Those other beings are everything that you can see, everything you can feel, everything that is in nature itself, from what is in the "MINCHE MAPU" as we say, from what is under the ground itself, what is in space and in the constellations. There are living beings there, all around us and with them we have to be respectful, be well.

Be well in the sense of being healthy, of having what is necessary for each living being; and what is necessary for each one is their food, their healthy life. Those living beings do have the power, the strength, the energy to select their food, which we human beings do not have, we only have what nature gives us, in the environments where we live. And when we Mapuches sow, we have to talk to nature, talk with all that environment so that everyone collaborates with the growth of the food that we need to live, like corn, potatoes, barley, beans. Everything that comes from nature is our food.

Preface

I say everything, and in some way, it is for everyone; but we have some things that are attainable and some foods that we know and can consume, because there are some foods that other living beings consume and that must be respected.

We must have balance and harmony with the other brothers to be able to live calmly and perhaps not in peace, but with respect, with equal rights towards Mother Earth. Therefore, it is so important for native peoples to be part of our great Nature and take care of her.

Take care of Nature so as not to destroy it, not to devastate its strength. Unfortunately, we devastate its strength by cutting down trees, polluting waters, polluting the air, leaving garbage anywhere and thus we are killing other younger or older brothers with contamination.

The land must be loved, the land must be respected as I respect myself, as a human being.

We believe that we cannot have any intervention in Nature's body, because we can die when they treat us badly, it is the same thing with our Mother Earth, that is why we defend her, we want it, each living beings in her body need it.

OUR ORIGIN CONNECTS US

Raul Mamani

My story begins in Miyuyoc, which is a Kolla community in northern Argentina. We are part of a society known as indigenous, whose ancestral development has thousands of years in a space that today occupies several Andean countries. In 1980, by my own decision, I went to live in Buenos Aires.

My search led me to travel around the Andean world and meet brothers who were already on the path of revaluing our history and development as peoples. This task helped me understand the meaning of all the practices that our people kept still and connected me with the foundations of life that my grandparents left behind.

Understanding the importance of connection as a starting point to achieve well-being, I began to inquire about other societies in the world. In this way I came to connect people from other continents who, being so different externally, were so internally the same. Thinking that only the American peoples were indigenous, I discovered that there were people throughout the world who also identified themselves in the same way.

Why do we look alike while being different? Because we are connected to life in the same way. For us, Nature-Pachamama is the place where we develop our lives in connection and respect towards all forms of life regardless of color or shape.

In our Andean Cultures we have an essential value known as AYNI or reciprocity. Reciprocity is based on the action of giving, and then receiving; that is how life works and our Grandparents understood it. Today's society is established on the importance of profit and ancestral societies are based on existence.

The proposal is to recover the connection and receive the benefits that Nature and the Cosmos offer us every second. The difference of skin, religion, cultures, ideologies etc. only make us look different, but if we look at where we come from, we will understand that we have more things in common.

Chapter I

Indigenous Music



[Recuperando Instrumentos Ancestrales: Un Acto Político y Filosófico-Espiritual - ICCA Consortium](#)

In the first talk that was called “Indigenous Music,” participated some members of CC Aflai, among them, Aukan Painiqueo, Valeria, Javier, Esteban, and Ailen.

Sofía Painiqueo told us about the talents and gifts of her people: We dare to speak about what it is the original music of our Mapuche people because we practice it, and it is not easy to talk about music when one does not sing, or dance, or play an instrument; I think I was born to sing and to play instruments.

In the original people’s culture, we always have what we call, here in Chile, a gift, it is like a chip that nature gives you. Each Mapuche has something particular in their life, be it their voice, craft work or in any job or task they develop. We always have a specialty; in fact, there are Mapuches who handle a lot of lab work, do medicine, as well as do music and sing.

To be Mapuche, and to belong to indigenous people, does not mean that we are all singers.

We are not singers that perform on stages or at festivals, nor do we study music. We carry music within ourselves, in our lives, because music is part of our daily life.

We are like the birds, like all the birds, we are like the noise of the water of the estuary, we are like the river and the sea. Then, music and song are born with us, from our habitat, from the place where we are born, because it is nature and its environment that teaches us to sing, teaches us to get our voice out ...

And you will say, how is this possible? Well, for me it is very easy to see, because food influences our vocal cords, our ears; as well as the way we wash ourselves, the water with which we wash ourselves also has an influence, and you could ask, but what birds are involved in those actions? Are there animals? So, we can say that the habitat has a lot to do with having rhythm and melody. If storms happen, if there are lightnings, if there are tremors, tidal waves, and earthquakes, all those intervene in our music and melodies.



[Sofia Painiqueo Tragnolao - Día de la Música - Angol 2017 - YouTube | Sofia, Youtube, Desarrollo \(pinterest.com\)](#)

We always talk about OM

OM is something that is in the habitat and says OM. When I was a child I listened to many sounds in the field, in nature. I listened to the song of the frogs, of the tadpoles that we call *koltxao* or *coiguilias* that live in the swamp. They make strange sounds, like a warning that something is coming, something that scares you, that raises you up ... "a bug is coming," and a bug comes that makes a certain music. We also have *sanjuanitos* here, little birds that sing, and then one says "uh, I can make a melody like that, right?" Of course, I can! Because we have that melody deeply inside ourselves, like the noise of water ...

Sounds deliver everything to us... they deliver rhythm that we can combine in a song. We also listen to the elders when they sing; we have our spiritual guides, and our female medical doctors who sing wonderfully beautiful. Each one of them has their own song, and you cannot copy it, so you cannot be singing like a Machi (medicine man or woman/healers), because their songs are born in them, are delivered to them, they are like their letter of introduction to nature. Their poetic songs and their melodies speak of all the *entunen* and the Machi have strength in holding them when singing. We cannot do that because we are not Machi, what we can do is talk about the butterfly and the *txaitxaiko* (water leaps). I can talk about the tadpoles, the lightning, and the thunder that I feel, but the Machi have an energy that is very much directly connected when they sing, and they cannot forget that they have a protocol to present themselves to nature.

We, simple singers, collected songs from our grandparents, we thought about "how my father sang, how our grandmother sang ..." There are many names of grandmothers that have left, who used to sing, and that's when one says, "that's how my grandmother used to do it, that's how my dad was doing it." My dad, for example, sang when he was chopping wood, when he was lighting the fire, when he was plowing the ground to sow, and he did it by saying words, humming melodies or even whistling.

Here, there are many little birds that make wonderful whistles. If you wanted to whistle like them, you would have to live with them; there, under the trees, being with them day and night, from the moment they get up until they go to bed, doing this to be able to capture all their sounds and make them yours. Sometimes unintentionally, one has that connection, and it takes hold of you ... and you don't need to be aware of the little bird that is singing anymore, it is something that you feel, and it is natural. And suddenly ... the little bird is singing! Singing to me, or is he singing for me?

Of course, he is! That little bird is talking to me, so you pay attention, but you do not say "I'm going to study how this little bird is singing", it is nature itself that embraces you and says: "come with me, dance with me, sing with me!" and this makes you feel good, and the one who is destined to sing, feels comfortable because there exists a music school for Mapuche musicians.



[Mapuche – Música y danza - Chile Precolombino](#)

instruments from nature, they build and make their instruments from trees, vines, reeds, bamboo, and from stones. They make music that has to do with spirituality, mainly for healing, for harvests, for the birth of children, to rock the newborn babies or raise their babies. Even the women sing when they are weaving in the loom, they are weaving, and they are singing.

Being able to sing is normal for a Mapuche woman, that is why no one can say "oh look at her, she's singing". ¡Of course! She is singing because she is happy, she is with nature and everyone has to be attentive to this because this is the way that energies can permeate your work, and everyone who sees it, will later be able to feel it, because their *newen* participated in the song (*newen* in Mapuche language means: strength, energy).

The Mapuche say that everything has to do with their energy. It happens with sowing, when sowing and singing, when harvesting, when collecting and seeding. In the same way they sing to clean, they sing to venting the seed, they sing to the barley, they sing to the wheat, the corn, the potatoes. When a house, a *Rhuka*, which is a Mapuche construction, is built, they have to dance and have to sing, and it is a tremendous joy when everyone participates, because the Mapuche *Rhuka* is built collectively, where everyone participates in different ways. Some sing, others dance, others play instruments, and an entire orchestra is formed to celebrate. The Mapuche do not go to a music conservatory, our music arises when we listen to the birds, the wind, the water ... everything in our music has a connection with animal and plant life, with birds, reptiles, with everyone who participates. That's why music is so important, to show the joy we have, how healthy we are...

In our environment the birds sing, and who knows if they are singing in Mapuche language? In Mapudhngun (Mapuche language) it is said that the birds speak, and that there is our vocabulary, that our language is based in nature. As for speech, we do not invent the words, the words are there, that is why nature is so important to us. Hence our struggle of our people to defend our habitat, our land; this is why so many Mapuche are imprisoned, or are beaten, or have died, protecting the land we need, because without our land we are nothing.

Imagine for a moment the healing music for a patient who is in shock with the energies of nature, shocked with someone who did not know how to treat him and could have been left with paralysis, blindness, deafness, or something that could have affected his stomach.

To heal this person, the Machi (who are healers) do it by singing, and do you know who they sing to? They sing to the disease, to the one who is causing the disease, they say: "It's you, I know you, it's you who live with me in this same territory, we are together... and why do you want to harm? I do not harm you, you are powerful, and you can get people sick, you can harm a person, but we have the power that nature gave us, this medicine, so that we can heal, and we want you to go, and you go!"

All this is said to the disease by singing, with all the rhythm and musicalization, with instruments that are from the earth, instruments that are taken out from nature. There are also instruments that have been incorporated into our Mapuche music, such as the accordion, the flute, the harmonica, the trumpet, the guitar, all of them have come together but with our tonality, with our music. I see this, not only in our people, but also in other native peoples; that there are instruments that have been incorporated that do not belong to the indigenous culture, but our brothers use them, and give them their rhythm and melody from their people, from their culture, and perhaps it is good, perhaps it is bad, but it is important to make it clear that if we only wanted to use our instruments, we would also make beautiful music, a very beautiful one.

All instruments are important, they are valuable, and together they all make harmonies. We want to show this and make a difference, and it is not syncretism because there is a well-defined culture, cultures that are really marked, but we cannot speak of mixed cultures.

Syncretism or concordance can be developed, but these does not identify or define an original culture, that is my vision, we talk about that, and it is the way we present ourselves when we make Mapuche music, and we include a guitar or a piano. There are also other instruments such as the trumpet, that is now not made of vegetable fiber, but also of steel, with a steel reed. There is the jingle bell that is made of alpaca or banana; all these instruments have been incorporated into our Mapuche music.

On the other hand, I would like to tell you that Mapuche instruments have conditions to be played, either by someone who is male or female. Women cannot play the same instruments that men play, there are also other restrictions, such as when we are not Machis.

Wind instruments have been banned for young women for years, even before we made music. The elders established that the wind instruments could not be played by young women, mainly single, because if they did, they would damage their womb, as well as the growth of their breasts which need to be very exuberant. So, women have to take care of themselves, if they don't, their organism disorganizes itself, their children can have problems when they are born and when they grow up. That's what the grandmothers say, so we can't play the *ñollkiñ* (original wind Mapuche instrument), which is an instrument that is breathed in, not blown, unlike the *txutxuka* (another wind instrument of Mapuche origin) that is also blown.



I would like to show you today this instrument, that is so noble and so dignified, it is called *txutxuka*. Our grandparents, in wartime with the Spaniards, played it to let it be known the fight they were having, if they had won or lost a battle, if they had been good, or when meetings were held, they always began with a touch of *txutxuka*...

Nahuel Painiqueo presents an instrument, the *pivllka* or *pifillka* that is made of vegetable fiber and oak wood. It has a special work inside and it has a scale that gives a particular sound. The *pivllka* is not touched by women. The Mapuches say that each instrument says something, some say: "come by, come, come in, go ahead, you are welcome." All Mapuche instruments are made of trees that come from nature, be it stone, some vegetable or grass. There were many instruments who are typical of our culture, such as the *paupaweñ*, which has been replaced by the trumpe. Nowadays there is no *paupaweñ* because the vegetable fiber, also called *paupaweñ*, which is necessary to build it, is no longer found. Mapuche musical instruments are made to counteract bad energies, there are also percussion instruments such as the *chueca*, which are also used in healing the sick.

Machis require instruments because they are made to counteract bad vibes, bad energies, and they are made in such a way that they also do healing.

The Mapuche musician gets up early. An authentic Mapuche musician performs a ceremony in the morning with his/her instrument and talks to it saying: "it is good that we are together, it is good that you protect me, and I protect you, we are going to serenade the sun and the day that has given us life today." This ritual is done by the Mapuche musician in the morning, especially those who play the *txutxuka*, and they also do a ceremony in the afternoon when the sun goes down. This is something that only a few preserves in the Mapuche culture today. Original, indigenous peoples in general have been losing all the wisdom of taking care of their heritage, taking care of their own culture, and because of that, some of us seem ignorant, somehow innocent, because we don't have any knowledge, nothing that links us directly with nature.

We are going to show you the *woño woño*, which means: "what is looking backwards." It is the *chueca*, a sport implement and a musical implement; it is an instrument used in the background to make percussion, and it is made of *boldo*. The *boldo*, here in Chile, is used as medicine and it is a perennial tree that does not loses its leaves and does not loses its aroma, not for a long time, it is a very firm tree. Men use the *woño woño* to play *palín* (which is similar to hockey). With that implement they sing to connect with the force of nature, with the *boldo* trees, so they can win; so, they leave the game, this sport, unharmed, and to not have an accident. There is a whole protocol in the use of that *woño*. Javier is going to show how he plays *palín* and how he builds the *woño*.

At this moment Javier intervenes and tells us: - This is a *woño* (and he shows it), in Spanish it is known as a *chueca*, it is an instrument that is used to make music, as well as it is used to measure, in some way, it tells about the force between a member of a community and another member of another community.



Foto: Gabriel Gatica R. [Niños aprenden cultura mapuche jugando palín – ArtePopular](#)

The woño is mainly considered a typical sport of the Mapuche people. We chose this type of tree to make the stick, because since we were little our grandparents taught us to choose wood. This stick is special, because it is built from the "boldo," that exists here in our territory. There is a special time when we can collect this wood from nature, that date starts on March, and it keeps decreasing, until July. This wood can only be collected on this date period on the hills, places where this tree wood grows. There is a whole protocol to enter the hills' space, we made a prayer, very early in the day, and it must be in times of waning, still the moon must be full. One must choose this wood because it must be strong, because we use it to compete and measure the strength between one sector and another. A great ceremony is held between one sector and the other. A whole prayer is made, it always starts the day before, and the next day we make music, and dance at night. The next day, the great sport competence is carried out and ends with great gathering. Several pairs of game layers are made and the person from the other place is seen as an opponent, but at the same time as a great friend, and one chooses in life to be friends forever, between one community and another.

We say that this chueca or woño, as we call it here, has many purposes, such as making music, or playing sports. So, this is more or less, to explain, in broad terms, what our woño consists of, and we also use in times of war, to be capable and strong as Mapuches.

Sofía Painiqueo comments: "Thanks Javier!" and she keeps talking.

We are now going to talk about the instruments, and about the music and, in order not to get bored, we will play a musical theme, I don't know if we can do it completely because not all the instruments are here, but we are going to play with the instruments that we have there.

We are going to do the *longkomeu*, which is a Mapuche dance that has a lot of rhythm. The song that accompanies the theme is related to the meeting of chiefs, leaders, ringleaders, Mapuche authorities, all meeting together. This song is dedicated to them. They get together to talk, to talk about their whole history, their whole way of life, their upbringing, their children, their environment.

Before, there were large meetings in which leaders got together and there the men and women spoke, the chiefs spoke, and with each speech they made, it ended with a chueca applause.

The Mapuche are very proud of being people of the land because they feel comfortable, they feel good, they feel at ease. The Mapuche are happy when they are in their land, and this is a theme in one of the phrases said in the songs, words and conversations: "we are beautiful, we are strong, we are beautiful, we have energy and we have life, because we have the land, because the habitat exists." This is what this song says, that is why we find that there are many issues discussed in this great and important meeting.

In this URI celebration, we would like to send its authorities a lot of strength, a lot of energy. It has been 20 years of rotating one authority after another, some of which started and are still members. I met Father Dolan through the memory and memories of Rosalía, because she was the first indigenous woman who participated from the beginning in the meetings of the people that today conform URI.

I want to dedicate this song to Rosalía, because she is a string fighter, and thanks to this woman, all this indigenous people are now here, because she took care of telling everyone that there existed indigenous people, and then, afterward, each one of us took charge saying: "Of course, we want to belong and we want to participate," so thank you Rosalía.

Let's go and play this *longkomei* (sounds longkomeo). The sound could not have been the best for you, but I wanted to tell you that here, in this musical instrument, called KULTXUNG, the sound OM is in the sounds background. This instrument represents the universe, it represents the world. In our Mapuche cosmovision it is represented the entire constellation of stars, the moon and the wind are also represented. Inside this sound there are many symbolic elements of nature, such as those related to medicine, animals, birds, stones, minerals, metals.

Francisco Morales intervenes, I don't play any instrument, but I have an anecdote about indigenous culture and music. When I was 18 years old, a long time ago, as it happens to all urban indigenous people, we have problems finding our identity in the city, and it took me a long time to find mine in the city. It happened to me in a very strange place, in a rock, in our town. There I had the opportunity to listen to a music group, and I saw all that I wanted to find in my head, uniting my spirit with my identity, which is what Sofía was explaining about our identity. So, it magically fell on me as if it was genetic information coming from long time ago, information that I could not find rationally, or geographically, or even going to the place where I was born. It was something that I could not connect with, and it was connected in a magical way, it was with the music, the music united soul and identity.

A person from the audience asks you to further explain the issue of why there are instruments for men and why instruments for women.

Sofía Painiqueo responds: Of course, it is important that each musician knows why. First, because of the relationship we have with nature, nature is male and female, and each gender has its function in nature, in all beings and living species, both, male and female. It is also in the vegetables, in the trees and in the stones with which we make our instruments. This also has to do with who we are as persons, the instruments for men are only played by them, it is not that women cannot play them, because they could, there are some women, who innocently, without knowing, play them, but after they do it, they have consequences, such as problems of health, that's the downside.

Raúl Mamani participates and says: Sofía, I really appreciate that you shared what are the Mapuche people and their music, and for the brothers who are present, I would like to make a small contribution, I want to say that we, as indigenous peoples, did not know, or it didn't occurred to us, that instruments and music, should be separated for women and men, but that is how they are clearly in nature...

Many people do not know that there is the male stone and the female stone, everything is like that. So, we must be aware that everything that has been done in nature and in the cosmos is in a relationship of opposites that complement each other, and when that relationship of integrated opposites is lost, imbalance and disharmony arises...

We, as all the indigenous peoples of the world, have that ancestral vision that everything is related, and this relationship is of complementary opposites, and not only in music but in medicine. As we already talked about in our Cosmovision Talks, everything is done in that way, it is not that it is our whim that women do not play one instrument or that men play another, but it is because this is the way that harmony is made in life...

Observe this, because each indigenous people have its way of expressing it, is not only about music but about life itself, including food. In many aspects of life, there is this relationship of complementary opposites. It is good because it would help us to rediscover, once and for all, how life works, and this would serve, for the whole society, to return to harmony again, because today it is what we need as human beings.

Sofía Painiqueo comments: ¡That's right! As human beings who belong to the earth, we need to have harmony with nature, show nature that we are healthy, that we are happy, and that is why the Mapuche sing in the habitat, when they are looking for firewood, because most of them cook with firewood, we have to go out to look for it in the fields, and we do it by singing to nature...

When birds and animals are locked up, we sing to them. Mapuches sing with their animals, to their own children and the little ones, so that they are happy, because there is harmony with their animals and thus, the children learn to sing to them...



[Neuquillatún: La importante ceremonia espiritual del pueblo mapuche \(tvu.cl\)](#)

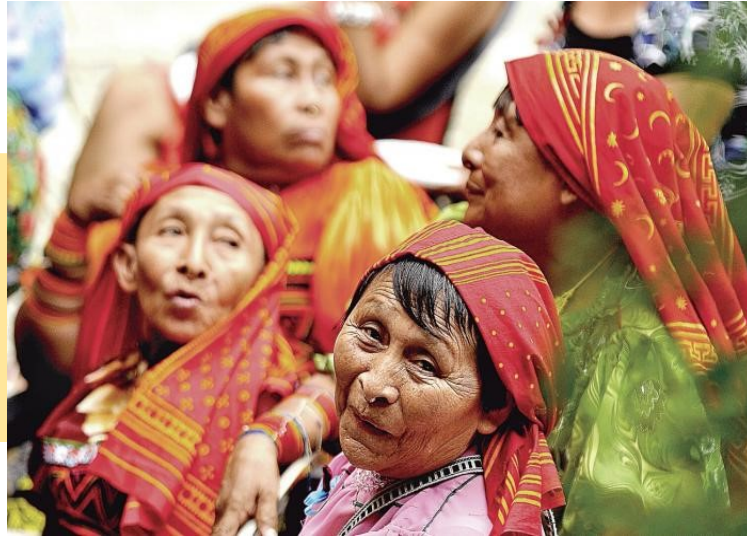
We sing to life, to our lives, to our history, to our needs, whether they are positive or negative, because for many some needs may be negative, that is, what is good for some is bad for others and, it depends on the habitat, of the conception of the world that you live in, of their cosmovision. When we talk about the world, in public policies, in Spanish, we say that “progress and development are important,” but indigenous peoples do not speak of development and progress because it is like saying: ‘we are going to promote progress with money, cutting down a few trees or removing some hills to pass through them,’ that implies that nature would be destroyed because of that progress and as native peoples we do not think like that, we call progress and development when we are well, when we are healthy, when we are in harmony, it is then when we find balance...

We are all healthy, as human beings and in our biodiversity, but there can be no progress when more than half of the world is dying of diseases, violence, weapons, when people are fighting ... that is not progress, there can be a lot of money and technology, but what has that been for? for whom? This is a battle that we always fight, we fight for the practice of harmony and balance, and this is something that is done when one has all that in the brain, it is something like: why do I want so much luxury? There are many people who do not have those luxuries that others call progress and technology. How am I going to communicate if there are some people who do not have technology, if there is so much machinery that is causing damage? We must emphasize that, in our struggle as native, originary peoples. We also sing those sorrows and sadness because the invader came, because today they continue to run us from our lands, because today they shut our mouths because we fight, for claiming our rights, and all that becomes a song too. The Machis sing about all this when they are in a ceremony, they sing it crying for all the injustice that exists today. This injustice is transformed into a stone that is put in front of us and prevents our progress in health. We cannot heal because there are many things that play against our decision and our work to heal, this is something we sing crying in the ceremony of healing, in that spiritual ceremony when we express our gratitude to nature...

Why do my children not speak my language anymore? Why are my children no longer wearing their clothes? Why are my children no longer on earth? Why don't they drink their own medicine anymore? All of this is something that gives us suffering and the Machi sings it, but he sings it with sorrow, but there are other things that they sing with joy and strength, I don't know if the same thing happens in other brother native peoples.

Rosalía Gutiérrez intervenes, I think that you have to work a lot with young people, because here in Argentina when you want to impose something on a young person, you have to talk a lot with them, it is true that sometimes there is a gap between the elderly and the young because there is precisely no understanding. I work especially with youth, and I know that I cannot tell them to paint themselves, but by talking with them, little by little they understand what cosmovision is.

Ana Linda Ávila explains: Our music is also composed of the flute and the maraca. The maraca is played by women and the flute by men. Previously only men could, but now women also play the flute. We also have what is ‘the Machi’ for them, who sings at the specific moment when a person dies, then he plays the maraca and sings.



[La herencia panameña que reside en la cultura indígena \(laestrella.com.pa\)](http://laestrella.com.pa)

Young people must be made aware of this, because when they arrive in the city, they no longer want to speak their language. I don't know if it is because they are ashamed of it, but young people should be made conscious and aware, the mother should talk to the child at home, because our culture is getting lost here in Panama. I say that they also feel ashamed because when they go on the street, others make fun of them. Previously the ladies who were dressed as 'mola' were made fun of and now they don't, that's normal.

Sofia Painiqueo points out: What you are saying happens in all indigenous peoples, all young people who have been discriminated against or mistreated have created a 'complex' that they are an Indian, that they are backward, that the Indians are useless, and because of that, they don't want to assume their identity. On the other hand, the elderly have also moved away from being persevering, from being constant in what our culture is, and in teaching it, language mainly, because without language there is no culture, we cannot sing, we cannot speak, we cannot say anything if we don't have a living language. We are ignorant of our own culture when we have so much knowledge, so many values, and our culture has been left aside because the system only recognizes a single culture, a monolingual knowledge, there is not multiculturalism in those countries.

Francisco Morales once again comments: I agree with Sofia; since I started at URI, I presented myself as an urban indigenous person, precisely because I feel that I represent that part of the indigenous peoples who have grown up in the cities. I know how difficult it is to reconnect with the identity, it's not really easy. But I also believe that we have a beautiful opportunity in these meetings, a good opportunity to take this message to other young indigenous people who are possibly in the region.

When I was younger, I thought that language was not important, I believed that it was not necessary and now I realize, after a long time, how important language is, and this is something that must happen to many of us. I also believe that the most beautiful thing that indigenous peoples have, with respect to music, is the relationship that indigenous men and indigenous women have with the creation of music, because all the peoples of the world have music, but we indigenous people have the particularity of having a special relationship between male, female, and the creation of music. That is why you must understand that there are instruments for men and instruments for women, because that order is related to, precisely, with the origin of music for indigenous peoples. That harmony is very important because precisely when we, indigenous people, return, we find music again.

As in my case, I returned and my harmony returned through music, because music is harmony for us. Sometimes music, the genetics that is processed through it, can give us back the story that, many times, the books do not tell.

Chapter II

Offering to Mother Earth



[Apos: los espíritus de las montañas incas \(boletomachupicchu.com\)](http://boletomachupicchu.com)

Alejandrino in his participation tells us: Before starting with the exhibition, I want you to think and consider that religion is one thing and cosmovision another. Sometimes you ought to refer to the term religiosity, but in the Andean cosmovision, religiosity is also understood as something different, because the men of the Andes live from agriculture, our world is always concerned about food and economics. We rightly combine the material part and the spiritual part. The Apu (male Andean divinity) can be local, regional, and national, according to its altitude, amplitude, and visibility.

Alejandrino goes on saying: - The Apus must take care of the crops of their streams or valleys, from hail, lightning, frost, and other phenomena of nature. Therefore, the Apus must be repaid at the appropriate time. To do this, it is necessary to talk about the months of the Andean year: the month of August is the time or period where we must purify the spiritual part of nature, so that in September we can start to plough up and be able to sow. There are some products, such as potatoes and other tubers, that are planted in September and October, because the ripening period requires more time. Corn is sown in November, to have the first tender fruits in March, and to be able to consume them and drive away hunger (*Muchuy Waraka*). In August is done the purification of the land, through offerings to the Apus, so that they too are with us and can look at our cultivated land areas, at our crops or cement plants (cementerías in Spanish) like we call them.

It is about practicing reciprocity and respect between man and mother nature, so we have to offer her the best fruits of our previous harvest, that are specially selected, so that the Apus give all the best for us, for a good coexistence, all this is part of our spirituality.

Alejandrino continues expressing: Each community has a very special Apu. The territory of the local or communal Apu includes from the location's highest mountain to the river, that is, from the summit to the river because on its slopes we have very fertile cultivation areas. The offering is made so that it protects both, the plants and us. It is an action of reciprocity, and that is our spirituality and that is how we inherit it to our children.

It is true that there was interference by the Catholic religion, that is why, when I was a child, my parents took the offerings to the Apu at midnight, because if a priest discovered the place of the offerings, he would place a cross and assigned the site a Christian name, that of a saint or a saint. From that moment the Christian believers would venerate this saint. In many places that we managed to protect, the crosses were not placed, and we continued to maintain our spirituality by our offerings every year in the month of August.

Religious people assume it in another way, but for our spirituality, this practice is immersed in an economic matter, we are always thinking that the sowing must go well for a good harvest, and we do it all the time with joy, we do not take it as forced labor. Time is of no interest for us, so when we are sowing, we can have breakfast at seven, eight or nine, and we do our work very happy, we are not counting the hours, we can take the necessary time and do everything at will. We live in nature and from nature.

Enoé Texier intervenes with a question: Alejandrino, I have a question. A few years ago an elderly person who cared for the land in your community passed that baton to you and now you are going to pass it on to a young man, is there a ritual? Is there something that marks that end and that beginning?

Alejandrino responds, I was chosen because as always, there is an evening and a "coqueada" (chewing coca with a specific objective). We did the same, we invited several young people and the coca appointed one and he accompanied me this year. You must walk about two hours on foot, along thorny paths, it is not easy but now we do it during the day, we no longer feel mistrust. When I started, we used to carry it by midnight.

Sofia Painiqueo asks: What is the name of the person who heads these ceremonies?

Alejandrino says: Here he is called Pungu, coming from the term "*puncu*," which is the one who guards the door or mouth of the Apu, "*puncu*" means "door" in Quechua. The Pacha Mama or Mother Nature, appears as the female and the Apu as the male, then we have a duality, feminine energy and positive energy.

Currently the city of Ayacucho is populated by Catholics and Evangelicals. Here, there is an Andean sacred place that was called Picota, but Christians have already put a cross on it and have called it Lord of La Picota. The same occurs throughout the Andean area, in Cuzco, for example, the Apu Quyllurit'i is now Lord of Quyllurit'i, because he has a Christian cross on it.

There are people who visit us and ask: what about Jesus Christ? And God? Sometimes we take Jesus Christ or God as couples of the Pacha Mama because they are males. The Apu do not get along with Jesus Christ or with God out of jealousy, they can fight because they are males, but they (Jesus Christ and God) can be considered as allies of Pachamama, who is female.

Those of us, we are in our cosmovision are always in nature, on the other hand Catholics always go to look for a church or a cross, to cross themselves many times, without understanding why they do it, but we are always living in nature, anywhere where we are, we can provide or share the first serving of our drink, a little beer, chicha, sugar cane, some fruits, because we are sharing nature's space, we cannot disrespect her.

Sofia Painiqueo participates saying: Here the Mapuches say that the representatives of the great energies are disgusted with us indigenous people, particularly the Mapuches, because most of the rituals are no longer practiced, some are, but there are others that have been forgotten. From what I see, you also do this, because the great mountains are not visited every day by the Mapuches; when we are in great urgency someone remembers, but sometimes it is too late.

It is very important to promote all these values that we, as indigenous peoples have and want to preserve for our youth, so they can put it into practice; because indigenous people should put our values into practice, otherwise we are a poor human being who does not know our culture.

Alejandrino tells, I'm going to tell something. About two months ago a neighbor of the community lost his wife. When we pass 70 years of age, we begin losing our virility, but he, to show that with Apu's help he could regain his energy, he visited Apu -he was half drunk- then he looked for a young partner. When he returned, he fell off the rails, we had to heal him, but he did not regain his virility, because the Apu is not for those things.

Rosalía Gutiérrez comments: I want to offer this meeting to the Pachamama. The whole month of August is Pachamama's month, and I want to toast Mother Earth, and tell you that throughout the Andean region we do ceremonies in honor of the Pachamama, in Bolivia, in the north of Argentina in the areas of farmers, and in Ecuador. In each place, it is done differently, there is not a single way to do the ceremony, some do it at the end of the month and most on the first of August. The day before the ceremony we prepare a great meal. I was taught to give abundance to the Earth and the Earth also gives abundance to everything that we ask her for.

People ought to become aware that the Earth is alive, although it is difficult for many people to accept this, but we grew up that way. In the city, people sometimes get emotional and cry because they never considered that the Earth has a life. Now with URI, we have managed to do Pachamama with Jews, with Muslims, so that others also understand that it is part of our lives and is not religion, it is a lifestyle.

When religion came, we were not allowed to do this Pachamama ceremony, the priests said that it was a pagan festival, of the devil and for years here in Argentina our parents hid it so that we would not even see it, because they said that if we learned to do the Pachamama they were going to punish and discriminate against us.

My sister Clementina is an Evangelical and it has been difficult for her to sit with me to do the Pachamama ceremony again. Currently she does not do it because a Pastor has washed her head well and has forbidden her to do so, but in hard times she has been with me. I liked that she went to Chile, to the URI Meeting of Indigenous Women in Temuco (2017) and saw that there were others who were not evangelists, they were Catholics. There she was able to share and that was the message that URI left her.

Alejandrino says: We can dance, sing and drink in front of the images when we share in Christian festivals, but at the door of the Apu you cannot dance, sing, much less drink, because for us, it is a sacred place.

Mario Frontera Tuilián asks: Alejandrino, I would like to know what was your task in all this time, and now that you are going to be replaced, what would your task be after this?

Eleanildo Nascimento asks: - Alejandrino, I would like you to also talk about ¿how are the processes of attacks by Christian religious against indigenous people in your country? In Brazil we have again a very strong wave of action by evangelical groups against indigenous tribes to convert them to Christianity and deny all their spirituality.

Alejandrino responds: - Mario, from the moment my predecessor chose me, I accompanied him for three years and in that time, he taught me what the process of bringing the offering is like, where the essential elements are obtained, and added to this is the best selected fruits kept by the community, from the last harvest. I am going to teach Walter, the chosen one, after that I will continue with my work as a commoner, if he needs me for something in his task, I will have to support him.

Answering to Eleanildo's question: thanks to URI I had the opportunity to be in a conversation in San Francisco, California - EEUU, at the Inter Faith temple, together with ten religious' leaders of the world and I discovered that there is a small group that practices pure idealism. They are not Christians, Buddhists, Islamists, or Mohammedans, and they have told us of the cosmovision that we are pagan because we worship and believe in something existing, something material. This is a very delicate subject to philosophize, but we are ready, and we can answer: Christians, Buddhists, Islamists, Mohammedans; they are also pagan, because Christ, Buddha and Muhammad existed.

The objective of the meeting of religious leaders was how to avoid environmental pollution and global warming, from religions standpoints. There were two religious leaders who told us that because of us pagans who do not know how to pray, these phenomena occur. They stated that if all the inhabitants of the world began to pray one hour a month, global warming and environmental pollution would end, as you say.

They must know that religions are a way of life, that is what they live on, it is not like that in the cosmovision, here it is only a voluntary practice, a commitment with oneself. Cosmovision is not like religions where you study to be a priest, you are going to have a title and a salary; the Catholic Church has a lot of money and a lot of properties. In my case, I walked two hours bare footed for 3 years, I took the offering to the Apu because I had a mission as a community member. For us, cosmovision is a commitment of reciprocity, because we receive the benefits of Mother Nature, and thanks to that, we live.

In Brazil it seems that many indigenous peoples have lost their way of conceiving the universe, which is why they are easy evangelized. We are busy in the search for the original name in *Runa Simi* (Quechua language) of our Apus, a name that was given by our grandparents by the inhabitants of Tawantinsuyu. The months of the year have a meaning that corresponds to nature, they are not empty terms, for example: *PauqarWaray killa* is (the month of) March and translated into Spanish means: month of abundance, in this month there are already tender fruits that can be eaten. The ripe fruit to harvest is in the month of May.

Sofia Painiqueo explains: We belong to nature, we behave like nature when we are in connection with her; nature makes you laugh, cry, scares you, makes you happy... I wanted to ask how do you make your offerings to Mother Earth, do you also place animals, birds, green vegetables in your offerings?

Alejandrino responds: Cattle people do not put the image of an animal to the offering, they put the blood or a piece of an ear of the animal that grazes in the jurisdiction of the Apu, it can be a cow, a sheep, a goat, a pig, a dog, a chicken or other domestic animal, and they keep it alive.

Sofia Painiqueo intervenes and says: In Mapuche culture, when the animals are going to be sacrificed, first there must be a presentation to Mother Nature within the same great ceremony, because nature has allowed us to have these little animals, and we are going to share with her the best of them, that is their blood. The animal must be prepared, we must dance with the animal before it is handed over, and it must be sacrificed in such a way to receive the blood in a well. The skin of the animal must be removed in a special way, one must remove the meat from the joints, and share it with everyone, nothing is lost.

But there are also animals that share the ceremony with us, and we must keep them present from the beginning of the ceremony until it ends, and it lasts almost two days and one night. Animals are left tied during the whole ceremony: the cow, the horse, the mutton. They are given water and they are there all the time, and when the ceremony ends, the animals participate in the ending dancing around the altar and then go to their homes. These animals cannot be sacrificed, they are kept so they can procreate until they die alone.

We put the green vegetables in the ceremony in the early morning. They participate in the ceremony to say: that is what the great Mother Earth has given us. They are not very fresh, but we need the energy of "the owner of the water," and we beg him to support us. We present the vegetables to him because they came out of his body, but we are going to ingest them. This is the way we show that we are grateful, presenting birds, animals, vegetables, dry crops.

Alejandrino participates: - This month of August we have spirituality festivals, which are always based on reciprocity, where an Apu that has wild animals such as a fox, a partridge, a sparrow, or another animal in abundance, will give them to other Apu, that doesn't have it or have lost it. This is usually done overnight. The gifts have the purpose of maintaining the balance of nature.

Francisco Morales says: For the projection of our cosmovision, of our culture, how do you see in the future the relationship between global society and what we say, between the knowledge of Mother Earth and the knowledge of science, and if are they ever going to relate?

Alejandrino responds: What the Andean man does is natural science, not done in laboratories, and our science is always there to improve and seek a collective benefit. In the Andean world, the one who has the most, always shares with the one who has the least. Nature itself makes reciprocity return because the earth is a ship that continues to rotate daily, those of us, humans, are the ones who are fighting and perhaps we are the most conflictive and harmful animals that Mother Nature has.

Francisco asks again: In these times when people talk about the pandemic, I wonder, if we, as human beings, are 'the pandemic' for Mother Earth?

Alejandrino replies: Nature will respond, when she has a disease, she self-medicates by herself, alone. For example, in the United States almost no plants are used as firewood, then lightning came, collided with the dry forests and there were fires. Nature is going to have to recover its original form one day, we humans are causing it a lot of damage, we do not respect it.

María Eva tells us: Here in the Condor, they only authorized me to have ten people to do the ceremony at sea. On other occasions, children and animals were brought, but this time Mother Earth was offered food that was cooked with the previous day. Before doing the ceremony, we ask permission to Mother Earth, we ask if it can be done, the land is kissed, the sea is greeted, Mother Earth is honored and there, each one makes a furrow in silence and another with a loud voice, thanks or ask for something for Mother Earth. We take seeds, food, liquor, avocado tortillas, and flowers to the ceremony.

Also, from the first to the fourteenth of August we do not cut our hair or nails, and we walk very slowly because Mother Earth is in motion preparing the soil to give us our food. We also drink four teas of male rue that cleanses our organism. We prepare the sugar cane with the male rue and take three small sips.

Respect for the cosmovision is being neglected and that is why many things are happening, we must be very strong on a spiritual level, we must be aligned, saving our energy.

Alejandrino responds: The pandemic is killing many people, more men than women, this is creating an energy imbalance and in some way nature itself is going to compensate for it. We are energy, lives are energy, and at any moment Mother Nature herself is going to self-medicate, perhaps causing disasters in some places, because she's going to have to compensate and balance herself.

Chapter III

The Arts, a Tribute to Indigenous Women



[Escuela de Arte Kuna - URI AMÉRICA LATINA Y EL CARIBE \(urialc.org\)](http://urialc.org)

Betty Martínez in her speech tells: I met Mrs. Fany Ávila (†) many years ago when we were young, at a fair on the beach where we began to sell molas. After that we went from fair to fair. When our children were little, we went to the Chorrera, Ocu and David fairs. After that we began to form groups of artisans: Panama Viejo, Mi Pueblito, 5 de Mayo, Balboa and Colón were some of them. When she was there, she was my secretary, we always talked about how we were going to transport molas to other countries and put labels on them, but none of this was possible. (All names correspond to towns of Panama country).

Fany González participates and says: Betty is emphasizing what her group wanted to achieve: we wanted to have an original stamp for the molas (fabric made with colored fabrics, art typical of the Kuna culture, Panama) that they make. So, people who are not Kunas could not carry or transport those molas because they belong to our identity.

We have always sought support from different people. Currently we have a deputy in our country who is a Kuna, but we have not had an answer. This is a great struggle that we are leading to ensure that only indigenous women can work on the molas, because there are already many Latinos who exploit Kuna women with this issue of handicrafts.

Someone asks: Fany, when you say Latinos, what do you mean?

Fany answers: We call Latinos to those who are not indigenous, to whites.

Sofía Painiqueo expresses: We thank the sisters, Betty and Fany, for exposing us to an issue that is so hot not only for the Kuna people, but for all indigenous peoples, because this will always be the case, if the authorities do not set limits. It will continue happening if indigenous people are not truly acknowledged with all our knowledge, with all our work, with all our life.

Sofía Painiqueo continues saying: - The disciplines, the life arts of indigenous peoples, have always suffered actions of appropriation by people who have taken advantage from us, who act fast and seek access to sell our products without caring about respect or about disseminating sources of information related to what art represent for the artists, what town are they from, where do they do it, what are our needs that we decide to have such garments for sale. There are garments that are not to be traded, however, the authorities do nothing about it. Women are the ones who make the garments, they make all the art and then have to fight to sell them, they do it to be able to feed her children, to take food to their homes.

Francisco Morales comments: - We had a global virtual meeting of young people entitled “Race, Color and Interreligious Movement” and it caught my attention that such young boys had that decision to change, so I think we don't have to think so much about what the States do, but instead we must begin empowering ourselves. Here in Buenos Aires, we have laws of all colors and yet nothing happens, so I think that what we ought to do is ‘take the bull by the antlers.’ Most of the Indigenous Circles are producers of some type of handicraft or songs... I believe that this, in some way, must represent a quality change at this time in our Region in particular. I believe that we need that passion for ancestral indigenous arts be reflected in all aspects of URI's work. Also, go to the Global Council to talk about these things, so that it does not stay at the local level only. We also have to strengthen the collaboration of our Circle of Cooperation with another Circle of Cooperation, foster these alliances. There are many Circles then, it is important to promote that spirit of wanting to collaborate with others.

Hermógenes López suggests: - An idea came to me about registering a trademark in intellectual property. My suggestion is to first do a kind of training on the existing rules on intellectual property and after you have that information, do a special session on the art that you are creating, write a kind of writing and make the intellectual record. My proposal is to start from there and for the communities to organize themselves, because that is a way to protect our art.

Sofía Painiqueo contributes: - I'm going to give an example of what I have closest to, which are my records. These are registered with copyright and the same people who are in copyright have taken my records and are selling them in Europe and the US, so there has been no respect, but one thing is important to emphasize, and it is, patenting our creations as native peoples, this is something very significant and that not everyone knows.

Rosalía Gutiérrez tells: - For those of us who sell handicrafts, Coronavirus time of the Coronavirus has been terrible. We could not sell it, and we still continue to suffer, we are dying of hunger, locked up, we do not have support from the government and if we do not sell handicrafts, we do not have money to pay our expenses.

Rosalía Gutiérrez continues telling: - Here in Buenos Aires we have circles that are rich and I think we can encourage non-discrimination of the indigenous among us, we have to get together, talk to each other and leave aside the differences that perhaps we have, because the political parties often make us fight or the religions divide us, but we must be strong, maintain our strength and follow the values of Mother Earth.



Enoé Texier expresses: I think it is a good time to do things. From the Regional Coordination with Fany Ávila (†) in 2013 we made a bilingual Spanish/English triptych on the work carried out by artisan women of the MUKUA CC, Panama. They also sent me molas and some other handicrafts and we made a CC MUKUA identification banner. It was the occasion of the URI World Assembly in San Francisco, and within the presentation's framework of each of the regions, we discussed the importance of the work of the 'Kuna School of Art for the Design and Creation of the Mola,' and installed a table with the information on the MUCKUA CC banner as a background and exhibited the garments and crafts that were sold during the event. What was collected with the sale plus a small solidarity seed fund, served to support this School for a time. Later, unfortunately, for reasons beyond the control of the members of the Circle, this experience could not continue to be developed. I hope there will be better times in Panama and that its members can give continuity to this beautiful School Project.

Enoé Texier continues: The crafts of the native peoples are the product of an art that responds to a cosmovision, to a culture, to a series of ancestral symbolic conceptions. What we, at the Regional Coordination had in mind when we developed and began with the banners of the Cooperation Circles' project began, was to show the world the richness of indigenous peoples' art. Today, given the world situation and the opportunities offered by new technologies, we have a website available, as a window for selling indigenous' crafts from URI's Cooperation Circles in our Region, so people can begin to buy those handicrafts that our Region can do, and those of URI Global who show interest. This is a possibility that we have.

Hermogenes gives an example: I am going to give you the example of a business circle. This circle grew in Colombia where a big number of people got together to sell different products, not only handicrafts, but also imported products. In this circle, if someone needs shoes of a specific color or model, they simply place it on the network and that is how everyone else in the circle finds out. There are approximately 2.000 people, and all the information is passed on via the internet and a deadline is established for deliver, there is also a norm, because without norms businesses fail.

Hermogenes continues saying: I would like us to always remember that we should not talk about competing, because competition destroys, creates enemies, competition destroys businesses. On the other hand, cooperation is essential, so we must educate ourselves about it and assimilate all about cooperation, but for this, it is necessary that we be generous and kind, to be able to carry out the project by supporting each other. With these parameters we must count on those who are able to manage networks, and the values that we, as adults, have with respect to ethics, kindness, and generosity. Our own commitment to that ethic will make us comply with these things at all costs, in this way the circle is going to be successful.

Salette Aquino says: I was in a meeting in Latin America, in Iguazú, I bought Fany Ávila (†) a very nice bag that I had for many years, I always liked to see it, but once a friend fell in love with it, so I decided to give it to her.

I very much agree with the platform for selling handicrafts of all the indigenous peoples of Latin America. More and more, I always ask myself, why and when we, who are a little bit whiter, are going to recognize the deep values of the indigenous peoples, of black people? Humanity, as a whole, has to change. It is not possible to walk like this, I want to be working with everyone, I want to put a grain of sand in the construction of peace.

Raúl Mamani points out: - The reality of indigenous peoples has always been based on the Western world's misunderstanding of the values of our people, and it is very interesting for me to hear Hermógenes talk about cooperating and not competing, because indigenous peoples always chose cooperation as the basis of our society. Everyone had their own way of doing it, we are trying to sustain that, and our sister Fany Ávila (†), with her small bag full of products that she used to bring to the meetings, has been the best example and the best way to keep the culture alive.

On the other hand, we are trying to adapt to the Western world, to a world that is not ours and to which we were forcibly introduced. Then we ought to make a balance to see how can we live in this system and at the same time maintain our own customs. People have lost the ability to cooperate, so they compete, and by competing over each other society is deteriorating. We are thinking in taking the elements (of Western world), like tools, such as the electronic commerce system. Someone said there that URI has more than 1.000 Cooperation Circles in the world, this is a great opportunity, and of course we would have to have another meeting, to see how we can put together a strategy to reach that market.

Belonging to URI must give us the possibility of trade or exchange of indigenous products that are made from an idea, a thought about life. So, I think it is important to see how we can all put together a strategy not only of marketing, but also to exchange values.

María Eva Cayu says: Right now I am leading here in Argentina, a handicrafts team, together with a group of women who accompany me, but due to the pandemic the markets are closed, and we have not been able to make sales, and for me it is very sad to tell them that they have to wait a little longer, and that we are sure that little by little things will be fixed.

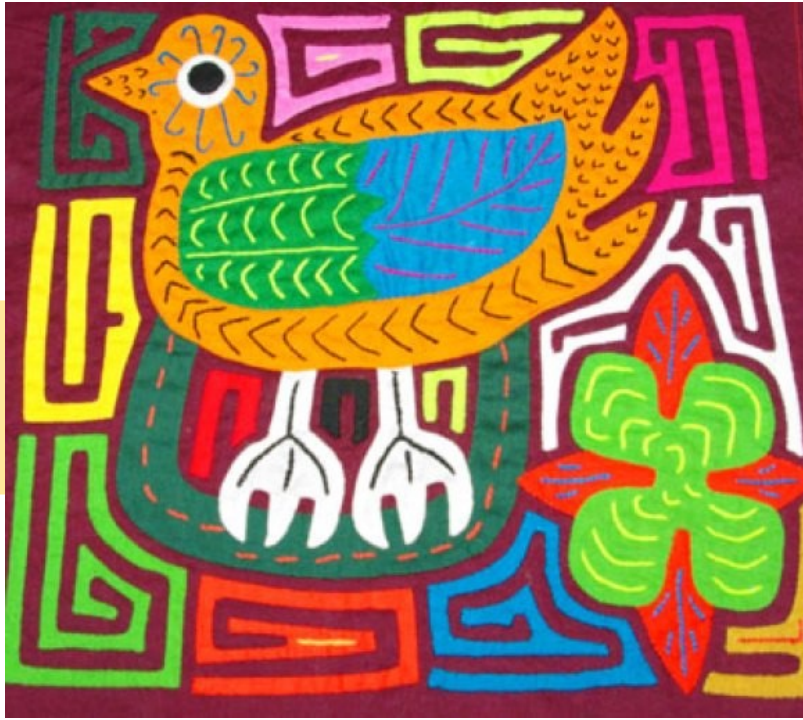
Ana Linda Ávila participates and tells: We are supporting women (who are doing arts and crafts), they really need a lot of support, and this is the actual reality for us here, in Panama. There are many women needing support, sometimes when I return home, there they are, waiting for me, and it is very painful and very sad for me to tell them no, not yet. When there is a special request, I make it so that they can sew and be happy, because in that way we have something to work with, we move little by little, but always trying to find solutions.

A few years ago, we had some problems. The fact is that only the Kuna of Panama sew molas and they realized that they were being sold in Costa Rica. At that time, we did everything possible so that the molas were not sold there, because the molas are from Panama. The government sometimes tries to give seminars to Kuna women, but the problem is in sales as Fany says, because it is a reality for all of us that we have difficulties to sell and then they want to buy our products cheaper, and you know how hard it is to work by hand day and night.

Raúl Mamani expresses: Latin America is the place in the world where there has been more exchange or ethnic blending, it is then (important) that we speak about the sense of our values. For example, it may be that Yanina Arias (from Comechingón people of Córdoba, Argentina) has indigenous ancestors, so she should start searching, and recover the values of her grandparents, of her indigenous ancestors. This is how we see it, because the indigenous people are, decidedly, associated with a way of understanding life, an understanding that it goes beyond face and color, in fact there are red-skinned Indians with us in America, there are white-skinned Indians in Europe, there are indigenous people with dark skin in Africa, there are indigenous people with yellow skin in Asia. There are also indigenous people in India, so the face or color is not what identifies them, what identifies them is, indeed, is the way they understand and live life, and that is where we must aim.

I am certain that, at the beginning, at some point, all societies were indigenous, that somewhere a collective, operative mode appeared, we are sure that we can recover that way (of living). I think that most people can do it, we all have the opportunity to live according to the indigenous peoples cosmivision, taking care of mother nature, sharing with all the elements of the earth.

Sofía Painiqueo adds: And to live respecting indigenous values, because being indigenous is one thing and wanting to be indigenous is another, being indigenous is born with you and wanting to adapt is something else.



[Escuela de Arte Kuna - URI AMÉRICA LATINA Y EL CARIBE \(urialc.org\)](http://urialc.org)

Fany concludes by saying: Art is general, everything around us is art. Grandmothers say that when they make a blanket or any fabric, if a person wants it to do another just the same, it never comes out, despite being the same fabric and knit, it never comes out the same, because we have different days, for example, one day we are fine and another day we are worried and it might be the same stitch, the same color, but the blankets and the fabric come out different. Art is a creation, a sensation, an emotion; both painting and fabric and music are a caress for the soul.

Chapter IV

Rights of Indigenous Peoples



[Día Internacional de los Pueblos Indígenas 2020: la probabilidad de vivir en la pobreza extrema | ONG Manos Unidas](#)

Raúl Mamani begins talking and stating: The issue of indigenous rights is an issue of almost a century. There were almost 100 years of claims, struggles, negotiations, and so on. In those 100 years there have been leaders of all kinds who managed, claimed and who were able to achieve important changes for our people.

It all started in 1919 when the 1st World War ended. The independent countries created an organization called "League of Nations" that same year, when a place for workers was incorporated, because at that time, workers around the world had, in some ways many difficulties, conflicts, a lot of exploitation, which led to the creation of ILO (International Labor Organization). This organization observed that within all the groups of workers there were some who were different, the indigenous workers, so the ILO realized that they were being exploited for having different cultural conditions.

In 1930 the ILO made an agreement on forced labor because there were many workers in this condition, and it incorporated the indigenous peoples. All this process meant that the rights of indigenous peoples were recognized, at least as workers, only up to that point, but not as a peoples or as indigenous peoples but as workers, because meanwhile, on the other hand, the States also were developing indigenous politics.

In 1940, a meeting was held in Mexico, in Pátzcuaro on April 19. American countries attended with the purpose of designing policies for indigenous people, and for that reason, April 19 is known as the Day of the American Indian. In that meeting, the States wanted to build a structure so that strategies and policies could be designed for indigenous peoples, but they did all of this without the participation of the indigenous people. That is when the Inter-American Indigenous Institute was founded, which is a non-governmental organization, but was part of all the governments of America and financed by all governments. This Institute met every 4 years and each meeting concluded with recommendations.

It was in 1945 when the Second World War ended, that the States that were in that conflict decided founding what we now know as the United Nations Organization (UN). At the same time of the UN foundation, the ILO became one organ more of the UN, and begun again considering strategies to generate rights for indigenous peoples.

All this work that begun, around the year 1950, concludes in the year 57' when the Convention 107 on Tribal and Semi-Tribal Indigenous Populations was approved. This agreement was created to assimilate indigenous peoples, in fact, with that agreement what they did was integrate indigenous peoples into the world of the State, without considering their particularities; they did not emphasize culture, or everything that indigenous peoples particularly had. None of that mattered to them, they wanted the indigenous peoples to stop being indigenous and to become citizens. When the indigenous leadership knew about these strategies, then the indigenous movements begun.

At the beginning of the decade of the 60's, meetings started to surge to see how we, indigenous people, could influence the policies of the States. All these actions brought about the formation of groups and organizations. One of the best known or most relevant was the Encounter that was held in Paraguay in 1972, which was called the Parliament of the Southern Cone, which was attended by leaders from all countries, especially from South America. There were also representatives from Canada, the US, and I think the Samis from Europe also came. All this led to the creation of a global organization known as the Global Council of Indigenous Peoples in 1975 by Brother York Manuel, an indigenous person from Canada who made up his mind and had the economic capacity, which brought together indigenous peoples from all over America. The Global Council of Indigenous Peoples brought together the indigenous peoples of all America, the Northern Europe, the Philippines, Australia, and a group from Africa. This made the indigenous people begin to strengthen the work of the indigenous initiative itself and regional institutions were formed, such as the Consejo Indígena de Sur América/Indian Council of South America-CISA (Indian Council of South America) that was formed in 1980 and of which all the indigenous peoples of South America were part. In Central America was formed the CORPI, which was the Confederation of Central America, and in the EEUU and Canada the American Indigenous Movement.

Each regional organization had consultative status within the United Nations (UN), and therefore could send representatives. While this was taking place, the UN took a decision, in 1982, to create a work group on Indigenous Populations. It was in then when these indigenous leaders participated making all the efforts, claims and proposing all kinds of ideas to be able to generate rights for our people. All the processes that took place through this working group, and what the organizations brought with them, contributed to a great development of the indigenous movement and this transformed the entire panorama. States now had to address the claims of indigenous people, which also led to the reformulation of Convention 107 as 169 in 1989, which placed more emphasis on respecting the cultures and lifestyle of indigenous peoples. The agreement also recognizes the right of indigenous peoples to define their development priorities

Then, the concept "People" appeared, which was something that also generated a lot of irritation within the States, because it spoke of issues that were inherent to indigenous peoples such as education, health, work, and the recognition of collective rights.

In 1989, one of the last meetings of the Council of the Inter-American Indigenous Institute was held, and at the same time, parallel meetings where indigenous people attended, were allowed, in response to pressure from the indigenous leadership. I participated in 1989 in Villa Angostura, in a technology meeting of indigenous peoples and then we went to San Martin de Los Andes, which was near the place where the Council was held. It was one of the last meetings because the Indigenous Institute soon would cease to be valid because Indigenous leaders had already advanced acting beyond America, because in the UN everything was done at global level and the States were giving grounds to the demands of the peoples.

Then, in 1992, all of this happened 500 years after the arrival of Columbus in America. I do not say discovery because, it is really something that does not make sense. Supposedly the Catholic Church affirms this concept of discovery, that means we did not have a soul and if we did not have a soul, then we were not people.

The doctrine of discovery has been discussed a lot and when I participated in a meeting about this topic, I said that the most important thing for us was to create a doctrine of connection, because the indigenous peoples, due to the processes of colonization, have lost a lot of connection with our environment, with what our grandparents had. Connection with the environment has been a process that they achieved through thousands and thousands of years, and many of us have lost that, and we must recover it, we must be very focused on that process of connection, of seeing everything that is within our reach. Around, and reconnect with the Pachamama, the water, the air, with the benefits it brings for us, for our health, for our community social balance.



[Pachamama: Origen, qué es, historia y mucho más \(hablemosdeculturas.com\)](http://hablemosdeculturas.com)

The process continued, and in the year 92' the Indigenous Fund for Latin America and the Caribbean-FILA was created, it emerged when the Inter-American Indigenous Institute was already dying. Meanwhile, the indigenous organizations received resources and funds for all the work that I am telling you. It began to seem that FILA's strategy was to be able to capitalize on all those resources and leave out all that indigenous leadership that came with self-development, with self-sustainability in the fight for rights. Then FILA absorbed practically everything and made courses with those resources. The money of the indigenous peoples was being handled by three European countries; so, we can say that 1992 was a year of transformation.

In the last 10 years in Jujuy, Argentina, Sister Natalia Sarapura was appointed vice president of FILA and secretary of the indigenous peoples of the province; she made a disaster out of us including the miners and generating confrontations. She is part of the State, now she is the province's Minister of Development, and it is unfortunate that these are the type of people that FILA prepares, but even so the indigenous leaders continue to work.

In the year 82', when the working group on indigenous populations was formed at the United Nations, periodical meetings were held, in which ideas such as our right to tell the world that we are different were developed. Then, from all this work processes, in 2007, it was approved the Declaration of the Rights of Indigenous Peoples, which represents the culmination of an entire struggle of almost 100 years.

Among the most important achievements we find the right to autonomy and self-determination, the right to equality and non-discrimination, free prior informed consent. This consent means that when the States carry out activities in spaces belonging to the indigenous peoples, or the communities, they must make a prior consultation informing those communities about the development they want to do in those spaces.

In Jujuy we have stopped mining, companies that made all the fiber optic cabling, we have managed to stop construction of roads for mining, because with Convention 169 and now with the Declaration of Rights, we can somehow confront all those abuses. Later, the right to health and a healthy environment was also achieved, and that is an important right because when we speak of a healthy environment, we know that we do not want mining because they pollute us and make us sick.

The recount that I have just made about our rights does not mean that the Declaration of Rights for Indigenous Peoples that was approved in 2007 ends, even if it had a majority acceptance, there were eleven who did not want to vote and four who opposed, these last were: EEUU, Canada, Australia, and New Zealand. Some say they opposed it because they already had legislation and others say they did not want to be part of this because they were worried, especially Australia and New Zealand.

In any case, in 2010, the declaration was approved by all the countries of the world and the only thing left to do is for each country was to have a law that adopts this declaration and thus the indigenous peoples will have more tools to be able to take care of ourselves, and take care of our community, our territory. We know that the world is in turmoil, today's world with the issue of the pandemic is totally crazy. Here in Jujuy, we have had many femicides, there is a lot of stress, and the States takes advantage of the weakness of the people and moves forward.

We, the indigenous peoples, do not want confrontations, we are claiming the basic rights that are: life, to maintain ourselves culturally, to maintain our language, knowledge, health, and education. We only want the States to understand that indigenous peoples are pre-existing, existed before the States, and in America we are more than 250 years old, and we have existed for more than 10,000 years. I take as a reference the corn that has existed for 9,000 years, which has already been proven, because scientists have studied it and they say that the indigenous people of Central America made the first corn. Then the States should have the obligation to recognize the rights of preexistence of our people and of course, all this has to do with the awareness-raising work that we do at United Religions Initiative-URI, where we, indigenous people, have to raise awareness of these realities because we want peace, we never waged war. Within the URI, we are the best example of how development can be achieved, how can balance be achieved between people, between societies. War is not necessary.

We know that throughout America there were and still are many different indigenous peoples with different cultures, but we had a connection to such an extent that when the conquerors arrived in America, corn was planted in southern Chile and, also in Canada, so how was it that corn was developed in such large spaces and how was it that so many varieties of corn were obtained? It is estimated that there are more than 500 varieties of corn, the same with other products such as potatoes, amaranths, so many other things that our grandparents left us, such as knowledge about medicine, health, the technology of everything you have to do with agriculture, and much of that technology is being taken to other parts of the world. In Bolivia, in the Andean zone, there was an irrigation system called "*Sucacoyos*", then some Israeli technicians had the opportunity to get to know it and today they are applying that system in Israel.

When I was in India, I was amazed because there was a large vegetable market, with potatoes of all colors and sizes, just as we see here in the Andean world. Those things that we observe give us reasons to continue working, to tell the world that we are People, that we have always been collective, that we live in connection with our mother nature, we are nature, our body comes from her.

Sofia Painiqueo comments: On one hand, the UN and international organizations say they are fighting for indigenous peoples, for their rights and for their recognition, on the other, large transnational companies are settling in indigenous territory to invade our lands, to invade what little we have left today. There are salmon farms, pine and eucalyptus plantations that have dried up the land and this is not only in Chile and Argentina, but for all the original peoples of the world. This has been a denial of the recognition of our rights and our life, sometimes I even feel that there are people who do not look at you as a person, as people, they see you as something very inferior.

The Chilean government has created a land fund for indigenous youth who have nowhere to live in the city, so it seems that these are gifts that governments offer us, and it is our right to collectively claim that we, as communities, that those lands, that are usurped, are returned to us.

Mario Frontera Tulián intervenes: At this time, in Córdoba, there is land grabbing, and in some cases, they are made on behalf of the indigenous peoples. Many times, they use the rights that we do not use and manipulated them by political organizations on behalf of the indigenous peoples. They have also used ancestral symbols on behalf of peoples, they do many things that we indigenous peoples do not do.

I firmly believe that in URI we can achieve great objectives, but for this we must achieve unity among ourselves, the unity we need to achieve a consensus that allows us to advance on specific issues, so in the future, when we are not there, there will be another matrix where young people can stand up, because it is a great reality of indigenous peoples that there are not many young leaders and the few that there are, are murdered, persecuted, politically restricted, or bought for money.

The world is changing after COVID 19, values, social guidelines, economic policies are changing. So, we have the duty as an indigenous people to be able to capitalize on these changes in other communities and this depends on us. We must take responsibility for what we have to do, because it is a reality that we have achieved great things, but we have also blocked ourselves.

Yelitza Rangel states: Here in Venezuela, we have the Organic Law of Indigenous Peoples and Communities, but I want to make it very clear that this was a government strategy, dressed up facing populism that took advantage of those great masses of indigenous peoples and communities that represent a large part of the population.

Since 1999, indigenous peoples and communities have been recognized, censused and documents of identification have been issued for us, though it seems that a window is opened for many projects, but everything always remains the same. The Amazon region was included in the last national Parliament election, it is a region where the indigenous force is greater, and after indigenous representatives won, they disqualified the deputies. Coincidentally those are the regions that have gold and precious stones, that is, all important elements from nature, also a great source of water such as the Amazon River and the Orinoco River. We have an important part of the rivers and great biodiversity, it is not only our culture but also the connection with nature. We have very well written laws, but it is dead letter, because when it comes to applying it, when making a claim, they displace you because the Orinoco belt is being invaded, looted, exploited by mining and contamination.

While it is true that we managed to remove transnationals, it is also true that the ‘garimpeiros’, the paramilitaries, the National Guard remained and no one has access to those places, the world does not know that most of the Venezuelan biodiversity and the entire environment that means the Amazon is being destroyed.

We must find solutions; we must reinvent ourselves to make a difference. I believe that how to achieve it is the great question that all of us as indigenous peoples ask ourselves, how can we fight against the great monster that is the State if you do not have support.

Thanks to URI we have been able to visit communities and strengthen ties, looking for the best that each of the women, men and children have, strengthening those ties from the beginning and blending in, because we think that by contributing, ‘granite to granite’ (little by little), we can achieve a change from interior to exterior, because fighting against populism is not easy, so the best way is to start from the inside and so people see that there is a change.

Rosalía Gutiérrez adds, I think it is very important that we become aware and start the change ourselves. I believe that URI is a space where we can begin to recover our spirit, our energy, the connection with Mother Earth. We are indigenous and we have a cosmovision and some have their Catholic, Evangelical religion, and I am very happy that at URI we have this space to make a change, a change that starts from ourselves, because if we change then we will show others our transformation, what we want, and I believe that by contributing together, the world will change little by little, but let's start with ourselves and the Region, let's start loving each other, talking to each other.

If the people who are in charge of the laws do nothing to change, it does not make sense, there are going to be many laws, but I believe that the best law is for us to change, and what was taught by URI is that we have to talk between ourselves, we have to be sincere and I believe in the principles and in everything we say about URI.

Sofía Painiqueo intervenes: We have lost the connection with the ancestors and although we say that we are indigenous and that we believe in our nature, it is that connection specifically that we are lacking, to recover it we must talk about it. Here we talk about the administrators of the great nature that are directly linked to spirituality, to what the native peoples have as a fundamental basis for our unity, to achieve many things in life and if we lose that, we will have lost our minds. There are young people who were born under that world and who do not have the knowledge that must be carried in our identity, in our being, and is the connection with the ancestors, and that is what we are doing. URI is a bridge that collaborates with that, not only for indigenous peoples but for all their people, for the different religions, all the people who are grouped in URI are injected with a little spirituality.

María Eva Cayu affirms: We are lacking the connection with our ancestors, but we must not stay in the past because that way we will not be able to move forward. It is difficult for us to make progress, we have laws, but they are not respected, such as Article 75, subsection 22, subsection 17, we have the ILO, International Convention 169, and even so they continue to usurp the lands for the powerful. Here in Bariloche they are taking our brothers out of their communities to give space to large landowners, for this reason we have to be united, to be balanced on a spiritual level, because there are many laws, but we are also there, who without violence, with peace, we have to go out, care for and respect Mother Nature and she will take care of us.

Yanina Arias adds: Here in Argentina, there are many new communities and unfortunately the government and politics ruin everything that we really are. I said that I was going to focus, and I got in touch with nature, with my ancestors and the truth is that I had very good news. Let's not forget to connect, that is the most important and the strongest thing that we have, because governments and politics rule, it is as if they want to take us off our axis, fighting with each other. If the laws are made by humans, we must remember our ancestors, our guides because we know that they will always lead us on the right path.

Analinda Ávila comments: All governments have laws for us, but they are not complied with, they are not shown to complied with them, so laws remain unknown, and nothing is done. For example, right now my group of indigenous people is having problems with COVID19, there are some who have lost their jobs and are being taken out of their apartments, now they will have to go to the islands. It is true what they say, we must fight, move forward, have faith that we have to continue making these laws to help indigenous communities.

Rosa Delia ends by saying: These are important meeting moments, these are moments to listen to each other again, to have new initiatives, to articulate what each one of us does as URI, to strengthen, to have the necessary spiritual strength, to be pillars and build on them a high spirit that vibrates for each one, for our peoples, and that we have lights to know what we have to do, because many times we feel lost without knowing what to do, without knowing what changes we have to make. This COVID19 season has been a wake-up call for everyone, it has been a time in which we have been able to think about many things, rectify some and see which is the correct path that we must follow.

Chapter V

A tribute to our ancestors



[Religión mapuche - Wikipedia, la enciclopedia libre](#)

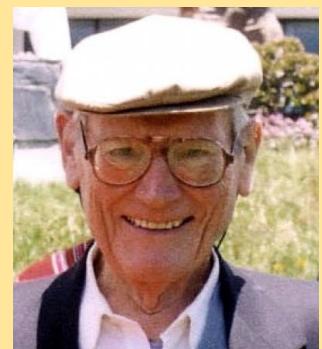
Rosalía Gutiérrez begins by saying: To me, to talk about the ancestors in November is very important because it is talking about the deceased who are celebrated on the first of November. We put a tiered table with a blanket, the Christian brothers put it black as if it were in mourning, but on the contrary, we use it very colorful, we put the dough with bread, apple, food and even candy when they are children/ Then on November 2 we invite all our friends and the friends of the dead. Today is a day of tribute to the ancestors and to Father Dolan who is an ancestral guide for URI Latin America and the Caribbean.

Father Dolan was from Argentina and lived in the US. He brought URI to the region; he brought together different religions, and he also called the natives.

Father Dolan's dream was for indigenous people to be part of a dialogue with other religions, and he invited them to a meeting that was held in 1997 in Argentina.

The indigenous people who attended did not participate in the entire meeting, at one point they left because they did not want to meet with other churches, because they said that religions were imposed by Colonization and that thanks to it they had lost their ancestral culture.

I stayed arguing with religious leaders, with the Catholics. There I met Charles Gibbs (Director of URI), who encouraged me to continue and since then I have been at URI.



Father Luis Dolan



Charles Gibbs

Raúl Mamani argues: - When we talk about death it is from the sense and meaning of the Andean conception. For example, to define everything that exists, there is a term used in the Andean world which is "Pacha", that is why "Pacha mama" is "mother earth." There was always plenty of thought about what the term would be to define what Pacha is not. If Pacha represents the physical dimension, what would that non-physical dimension be, and in the Andean world it is known by the term "*Wiracocha*." When we talk about death we are talking about a physical dimension, and that the person we know is not living with us anymore, and through the process of all that is physical we know that sooner or later what we are observing, the body, would disappear. In religions they speak of the soul, which is something that is not seen and is not corrupted, this would be the non-physical part.

For the Andean world, death was never pain, in fact, there are some communities that have quite curious traditions, such as, for example, in Los Andes area, when the closest relative dies it was fleshed out and kept him with the family, especially the skull, and it was very common to have it inside the house. Therefore, sometimes it was misinterpreted, and they thought that they had actions linked to a dark and demonic thing.

When we speak of the physical and non-physical world, we are speaking of two realities that for us are somehow connected. While we are sharing, working, while we are developing as people, as a group, as communities our mechanism has always been cooperation. As they were no longer sharing with us on the social plane, they were integrated into the non-physical world that was also connected with the physical, and in this way, we could have connection.

In some cultures, or peoples, the years within the Andean calendar had thirteen months, because it is a lunar calendar and there are four lunar phases, so a month would have 28 days, each lunar phase lasts 7 days, which in total is 364 days, remaining thus a day to connect with the previous cycle. For us, according to the Gregorian calendar, we would now be in November, it was "Aya Marçay Quilla." Aya is death, Quilla is moon or month, and Marçay is community or town. It was the moment when we shared with the dead people's town. We didn't consider that the dead had disappeared but that they were still interacting with the living and that is why every year, at that time on the calendar, food and drinks are prepared. Due to the subject of Christianity, now it is done on November 1 and 2, we set the table, and it is done by inviting neighbors or relatives, the food on the table is distributed equally to all present, after we sing and dance because it is about joy. That is why I repeat again, that for us death is not pain, we know how it works, we are able to understand all this, and we can balance emotions, because when people have lost a very close being, stress causes suffering, causes depression and then, all that brings sick situations.

When you lose a relative, a friend, someone you appreciate very much, the best thing you can do is appreciate everything that the person has left. In the Andean world after burying someone we dance and make music. It is such a natural thing for us and just as we rejoice when we are born, we rejoice when we leave, because we reintegrate ourselves, all what conforms the body comes from the earth, we have built it from all the elements and when we leave all this returns to its place. So, for us the importance of this month of the dead is to remember our deceased, to remember what they did for us, so let's rejoice because that will fill us with balance, with harmony, and we are going to see death in a different way, not with pain.

A participant asks: Does the word dead exist In the Kuna language and Quechua language?

Alejandro Quispe answers: Not exactly, but if we translate death in Quechua it is "*Wañu*" which is also when the moon changes, reaches its end and is reborn again. They have given it that name to refer to the dead, but the dead will also appear in other dimensions, they continue to live, those who die go to the memory of the living and always remain as energy.

Sofia Painiqueo also responds: In Mapuche the word dead is said "*Lai Antü.*" When we talk about the stars that die when eclipses occur, they die for a moment but then they return, and in that death bad announcements may occur, it may happen that other diversity of life is scared, or perhaps suffer some more negative than positive changes in their life. It is not good when the stars die, but in the life of human beings when we die, only the body, the matter dies, but the spirit, the strength, and the energy stay. That is why we talk about the ancestors and about the spirits that have already left, because they are incorporated into the Universe to be part of those great energies in nature, and from there, they support us so that there is feedback through our dreams, because when we sleep, they reveal to us things that they can feel and see from the depths of the Universe.

Dying for us is just dying in the body, matter dies, but the spirit is still alive, and we celebrate the one that we are saying goodbye, so that, in the other life, in the other dimension, he learns many things. Through dreams, the dead connect with us as we celebrate them, we talk with them, that's why in November, when we go to the cemetery, we take food and drinks they liked to share and talk with their spirits.

Francisco Morales comments: The indigenous language has a lot of wisdom. For having incorporated Spanish, we are using the word "dead." obviously to make ourselves understood. It would be good if with the passage of time we could add that conception of the indigenous language, that is not to talk about the dead, and have a conception that more than a death, it is a different ordering of life.

Rosadelia Quizpe complements saying: Almost in all of Ecuador there are the same characteristics, when there is a deceased, a physically disappeared person, it is said that the spirit of the person stays there, and it always helps those of us who are alive. We always refer especially to the people who had the good will to support us in all aspects, it is them who are invoked, asked, and we share with them.

Lauro Vicente Sarango says: Making a little reference to what Raúl Mamani said about the Pacha, about the conception we have of it, I want to say that I have been able to listen to indigenous comrades from Ecuador, and from a part of Peru, when they talk about the Pacha in 3 dimensions: Hanan Pacha (celestial space, cosmos), Kay Pacha (it is the present, the here and now) and Ukhu Pacha (the world below, the heart of the earth).

So, with death there is the conception that they go to rest, to occupy the places that are called the Hanan Pacha, Kay Pacha and Ukhu Pacha, then the spirit remains communicating with all who can, especially with those who call their attention. For example, the conception is clear that if animals and plants are alive, then a stream, a spring and a lagoon are spaces that are alive and in contact with the Hanan Pacha. Therefore, the healing ceremony that the healers have always performed here is to go to a lake or a spring, because it is well known that they are alive and that inside those places are circulating the great spirits of those who have already passed the Ukhu Pacha. When a healer mentions spirits different from those that he knew, then those spirits will come to help us, especially to give us strength, energy, health, because they all come to help people to heal.

Analinda Ávila says: I am going to speak about death, but from our religion, from the region of the Comarca. We call death "*Burgualed;*" when the person dies a hammock is used instead of a coffin, we sing to him or her from the same day he/she dies until the day he/she is to be buried, because it will be like a guide that helps the person to reach the other world, the other dimension. The next day the person is taken to the cemetery, and it is celebrated as a party, food is offered, and things are taken to be distributed to the people who accompany the deceased. After the person is already buried, they leave him a meal because they say that his spirit will arrive at night to eat, and they also lightened him with a lamp so that nothing remains dark and the spirit that comes knows where it is going to walk.

Sofía Painiqueo expresses: Our Mapuche people also do a great party when an elderly person or an authority with some position in the community dies. Depending on their hierarchy, the celebration is done with the presence of the entire community. They put the coffin in the middle, surround it, and it is kept there. Everyone shares about their environment, but not all sectors are the same, there is always a small variation, although we are a single large territory, we are divided into four parts, so depending on the sector each has their own ways of doing it and that is to be respected. There are some small differences, before they use to open the coffin to find out what the disease the person had, then they cleaned it, washed it like they were washing a dead meat and after they left it in the air on a tree to be dissected, then they put it in a clay jug the height of a person, they would put him half seated and thus they would bury him with the most important things that the person had in life, such as jewelry or some things that that person always had.

Analinda Ávila states: If a person dies in the city, they open the coffin, but if he dies in the region, the “comarca,” they don’t, because they say that if they do, the person will not get where he wants to go, because God sent him complete and that’s the way he has to go.

Sofía Painiqueo states: Now everything is prohibited because communities are governed by Chilean law, but I am talking about the most ancestral, how it was done before, with our own laws that were respected, but now with the imposed law we are like one more citizen, and we fight and fight, that is why we are having this conversation, to express that we also have our own system, our own ways of attending, of respecting, of saying good bye to our dead, which are not known or respected by the other system.

Yanina Arias intervenes: In the Comechingon village when a person dies, they used to make a celebration and bury the dead person under their houses. They made some half-buried mud brick houses and there they put all who died, who were there to protect their families, and they celebrated when a person died, but later when the colonization came, there were less indigenous people, they were evangelized and had their cemetery set aside.

On the Day of the Dead, food, drinks, wine were also left on the burial site. It is not customary for us to go to cemeteries as they do in Mexico, but we also made gifts to the ancestors and we believe, the same as everyone, that they are there, that they are helping us and that they are sharing their spirit with us. I think we all share the same customs, the only strange thing is that the Comechingones put them in a fetal position to return them to the earth as they came, as if they were a baby, and they buried them under their houses.

María Eva Cayu tells: I am rescuing things from what I have been hearing about. So, I found out how they buried a Lonco, who is a person with spiritual rank. A grandmother told me how it was done, and when we arrived at the place, I spoke with the relatives of the Lonco, and they gave me permission to do it as it was done in the past.

Don Manuel Cazul always told us that when he went to the *wemapu* we had to bury him up high, then a well was dug and he was placed facing the sun. They put all belongings that he appreciated, his mate, his vest with Mapuche drawings, the Mapuche flag and all the elements that he loved very much. Then at the wake we sang with the *cuntrul*, we made a round with the *cuntrul* for an hour or two, where brother Manuel was and with some branches, we blew him like a fan. There was no crying or pain because the brother Manuel just went to another level, and he will always be with us. A meal was also made for all who came to share, a meal without salt.

The spirits leave physically, but they remain with us. When I travel, they can accompany me, I summon my ancestors and I feel their energy. Sister Sofía knows very well that I have had all kinds of inconveniences to get to a Ceremony, I say that I will arrive, and I know that my ancestors are accompanying me and that they are always with us. Through the *peuman*, the dreams, we connect with our ancestors and when we are having a bad time, we also remember them, they are always present on a spiritual level.

Rosalía Gutiérrez reflects: I was also young, I didn't know many things (about my ancestors) and when the older people told me things about them, I felt ashamed. Today I say to the indigenous youth, do not be ashamed, the colonization must be ashamed. We are returning to BE, we are recovering (our identity) and one of the things that we have is the issue of death, this is something that the Westerner never understood. Why do the indigenous people speak with the dead, honor the dead and have them present? I think that Western society does not understand the ancestral conception of death in the indigenous world, the West sees death with pain, with fear of talking about it, with fear all the time.

I believe that having this awareness of the ancestors is recovering life, when we cannot solve a problem, be it money or whatever, we leave our strength in them, and they are powerful, they do what we cannot do, they can even enter the hand of a doctor to heal an organ, but it depends on us, because if we don't trust them they won't do anything. When I realize that I can't take it anymore for some reason, then I say that I am not going to make a problem and I ask for their help. The ancestors are very grateful, all the time I am talking to them, giving them gifts and not only in November but all the time when I can give them or return them something.

I believe that the Cosmovision has to help us to recover, that will help us not to be afraid of being poor, not to be afraid of anything, because they have for us everything we need. Sometimes we do not trust them, wrapping us in our problems and we get sick, we die, we have cancer, because all the time we are making problems with those things that have barriers, which do not exist for them.

Ágata Brito points out: I am like a Westerner, it is now that I have another vision of what life is like after we leave here and I know that it is forever, it is just one more phase when we leave the physical body and there are many places to know, to live; because God is something very great, has other plans for us, so that we can also experience on other planets, in other dimensions. That is something that Westerners fear because there are many sins and if they do not pay for them now, they go to hell, and nobody wants to go to hell.

Adriana Reyes expresses herself: The vision that you have as original peoples is beautiful. I, like Ágata, am a Westerner, raised in the Catholic religion, therefore, the notion of death was always associated with suffering, crying and pain. Once I entered the university and began to study Anthropology, I found the diversity of cultures, with their diversity of handling death and I think that the one that most positively impressed me was the holiday that Mexicans do for their ancestors, they do not live death with regret, with sadness, on the contrary, that helped me to change my vision of death.

I remember that as a child I suffered when I thought that my mother or father were going to die. For me that was a thought that gave me anguish until I got to know other cultures and understood that it was a step to a life that was undoubtedly better. When have we seen that one (who has died) has been returned? Where they are there is no sadness, there is no suffering, there is no pain, there is no anguish.

There is a very beautiful thing that Rosalía likes to spread around, and it is her close relationship with her ancestors, in fact, she always brings them to all the meetings, and that because it helps us, young people, to have a different connection with death. Death causes sadness because you do not have that person physically, but in reality you are suffering for yourself, because you are feeling sorry for yourself. I lost my father nine years ago and my first cousin fourteen years ago and I think they are the two deaths that have marked me the most in my life, especially that of my first cousin, which unfortunately was a murder, a product of violence and violence, of disorder in my country since Chávez came to power, that is one of the things that I cannot forgive the Chavista regime and that is that they took the life of my relative from me.



[Así es cómo el pueblo mapuche despedía a sus difuntos \(tvu.cl\)](http://tvu.cl)

Sofía Painiqueo comments: We celebrate with the ancestor when he or she leaves, so that they leave happy. Things are put on them, taking care that they do not lack anything they ate or drank in their life, but when we do not comply with that, we make some spirits suffer, because we do not place what has to be placed or do what really corresponds us to do. That is why it is important to know how to say good-bye to them because if those spirits are suffering, they enter the house and they can hurt you, and maybe you can even see them.

Daniel expresses his thinking: I understand as a Christian that you share many of my beliefs, I believe that we really have more similarities than differences. Like you, I believe that there is a life after this and that our ancestors when they leave this life are also in some way close to us and that they also see us, help us, and I also believe that one day we will meet with them, to exist forever.

Alejandro Quispe: Natural death is joy, but, forced death, has left a lot of living energy, that is why it causes pain. For our ancestors, if an accident occurred and they died, they would be buried face down, for example, the boys who have died in Peru recently and who have been killed by the police, should be given another treatment.

Raúl Mamani concludes: Although we come from different cultures and religions, we definitely have many things in common and we have to look for those coincidences, filling the differences. It is important that human society returns to the point where they lived together in a balanced and harmonious way. Because human society has gotten out of the way, out of balance, there have been many situations that have occurred and that today are in permanent decline. Human society poses difficulties to the whole environment, human society needs to return to balance, and the URI is a proposal where we can build that harmony and balance again.

Chapter VI

Indigenous ancestral medicine



[Dedica la revista Tukari su reciente número a la medicina tradicional indígena | Universidad de Guadalajara \(udg.mx\)](#)

María Eva Cayu begins by telling: - When we cut a medicinal herb we ask the plant for permission, we do not go and cut it, but we ask its permission first, we tell it what we want the medicine for and we wait a moment for the plant to remove its energy and when we cut a twig it doesn't hurt, we do that out of respect. There is also the issue of the moon, the schedule should be in the early morning by means of a prayer, this is done with great respect, we say a prayer as our way of respect, to honor the plant that is giving us medicine.

When we cut ourselves, for example, a finger, what we have to do is burn a cotton sheet fabric in the lighter, when it is warm, we have to wrap the finger and automatically stop the bleeding, they must be astonished, but really our grandmothers healed like this. If we had diarrhea, they burned a piece of bread crumb on the coals, they put it in a cup with hot water and when it was warm, we drank it, and the colitis was automatically cut off. The same for decomposition, when we roast with *petilín* firewood, we keep the ashes that we remove from the top in a jar, which is like a foam and when someone is decomposed, we put warm water, strain through a strainer and a gauze and we give it to the person to drink, after a while he is already renewed.

We have the *paico* that is useful for this time because it is to deworm, it also serves for the pain in the tummy (belly); We have horsetail, which is for the urinary tract, kidneys, liver, swelling, it also serves for sight, skin, hair loss, it is very important because it is also a diuretic; in the same way we have the *yerba meona* which is also a diuretic and for urinary diseases, bladder, calculus, grit, headache. To cleanse the liver, we have the *dandelion*, which is a biliary protector, cleanser, is used for arthritis, and is a liver protector. We have the *nettle* that is well known worldwide and is used for anemia, it is diuretic, alkaline, for arthritis, gout, calculus, grit, inflammation, for the prostate, it is digestive, it is also used for the gallbladder and for the skin. The *nettle* also works for the circulatory part, many people take the nettle wand and stick it on the legs, everything looks like a rash but after a while the blood begins to circulate. We have *rosemary* that apart from serving for different meats or for bread, helps the circulatory system, prevents heart disease, for when you have an oral problem it is very good; we have *ginger* that can be combined with other medicine and is for health protection, activates the dilating vessel, stimulates circulation. There is the *matico* or pañil, which we also have in Chile, Peru and Argentina, it is a small tree that serves to purify the body, it is diuretic, soothing antibacterial, it helps in inflammation, flatulence, to wash wounds, it also opens the respiratory tract, it is anti-inflammatory and for the lungs, so it is advisable to drink one or two cups of *matico* o pañil tea per day.

Sofía Painiqueo explains: - Within the Mapuche culture there are spirits with energies that speak to you (non-indigenous) as equals, as if you are another being that has hurt them. They want you to leave because they have their own medicine, just as you are powerful to harm them. We too have medicine to defend ourselves, to heal ourselves, let us respect each other in the same way, just as we respect you, we want you to respect our patient.

When we prepare a medicine, we must talk with living beings, with medicines, because everything is alive and that is why we talk, to have a balance, to show respect for the other living being. It is something like saying: "I need a part of your body to apply to the other body and thus heal it and if you gave it to me, could you support me in this? I need it to heal." This is done in a very orderly way, following a protocol to talk with nature, is a way that we, indigenous people, have to heal and it is very important that we can recover the knowledge to apply our medicine without being a *machi* or *spiritual guide*. Each being, each component of society of the native peoples should know themselves to self-medicate at least some diseases."

Analinda Ávila participates telling: - When you get a medicinal plant, you have to do some prayers, some rituals to talk with those plants and tell them what you need, we do that in almost all regions. Here I have a series of plants that we use (shows the plants to the camera). I think you know the *noni* plant, we crush those leaves and then put it in a bottle with a little alcohol and use it for rheumatism, for people who hurt their knees, feet, ankles, shoulders, we also have the *mastranto* leaf that we use for diarrhea, we boil it in the form of tea, and we also have good herb leaves that we use for stomach pain. We use *basil* leaves for baths when the person has a fever and headache, right now we are using these leaves a lot because of COVID-19. We use *sage* leaf for headaches, we do not drink it, but we use it to make baths. We boil *rosemary* and leave it outside to serenate and it calms down and when you take a bath it helps to remove the phlegm. There is *bitter stick*, which we cut into pieces and then make a boiled tea, that has also helped a lot in the region for people who have COVID-19. We cut the *guineo stem* (a kind of banana) and use the slime that sprouts to heal the person when they have a wound and prevent it from becoming infected.

Rosalía Gutiérrez adds: - It is important to have the spirit and the body harmonized, if we do not have that balance, we do not know where the diseases come from, because if one gets physically ill, the spirit cannot be lifted, it falls, that is why we also have to balance when the body is sick and lift the spirit, not to become sad. Many times, when someone in the house gets sick and everyone is sad crying, they cannot lift that person, so when one gets physically sick there has to be joy around them, so that the spirit has strength.

We do not realize it, but most diseases are caused by stress, fear, anger, nerves, worries and many of these diseases little by little damage the organs, that's why my dad and my grandparents always said, that we have to live in balance not only with ourselves, our body and spirit, but with society, with the world, with the people around us, with everything we have around us. And if we go to a business to buy then try to balance with the seller, to harmonize the seller if he is very angry. People are very sick and very stressed, as we see it happening now with COVID-19 and if we harmonize with all that, a disease will not come for us.

That is why it is very important to take into account that sometimes when our stomach hurts or our head hurts, sometimes it is due to some mental problem or stress or nerves or perhaps we have not fed the body well, then we have to make that balance since we get up in the morning, feeling that we are alive, because at night, while the body rests, a cleansing is being done.

I believe that we have to learn from mother earth, from the birds that sing at dawn, that sing for life, and we do not have to get up worried because we do not pay bills or because we do not have money, but we have to be grateful that we have life, health. That has to keep us happy all day and so the day will be complete when we are complete.

Vilma Palax comments: - For us, ancestral medicine has a very big meaning. For a person to have balance he or she must bathe with seven things that contain: *pericón, chilca, rue, the rose, a cigar, cinnamon, garlic and rosemary*, the person bathes with it to recover soon. Suppose there is an emergency and someone has a stomach ache, has fever, or whatever, what we do before taking him to a doctor or looking for medicine is to gather fire, they take 2 eggs and passed them all over by the person to cleanse the spirit and then when this is finished they take those eggs and put them in the fire, when the eggs explode and sound like a rocket, it means that the disease is cured and half an hour later the person reacts and there is no need to go to a doctor. But when the egg just squeaks, then the person needs to be treated as soon as possible, but if the egg spits, it means that the person is poorly balanced and then there are other ways to help him.

If a person has diarrhea, vomiting, we look for the leaf which is a plant that always comes out on the road or where the water passes. This plant is sewn using three large leaves and two roots, it is given to the patient and a half hour later the person already begins to react. Also, for coughs we have onion, garlic, pine essence, avocado seed, and other plants. For example, for COVID-19 not to affect a family, every morning we have a tea called the lemon mother, and we also make eucalyptus tea, apple leaf tea, lemon tea, and thanks to God the disease has not affected us.

Francisco Morales intervenes: - I think it is essential to understand that indigenous medicine is preventive, because really it focuses on the harmony of man with the environment in which he lives. I would dare to say that this Coronavirus is a complete, factual and scientific evidence of what I am saying because COVID-19 is precisely a natural reaction to the invasion of human life and I believe that if in the future, and in future generations we want to live in a healthier society, we have to learn more from the indigenous cultures, perhaps the western world has to give it the place that it has never given to indigenous medicine and I would dare to say that it is currently the alternative to a healthier world.

Nowadays there is a talk about the vaccines in all the countries, in the main powers, but I also dare to say that humanity will not take long to need another vaccine, so I believe that we indigenous people have more than ever to raise our voice in all spaces, in order to have a healthy world for future generations, our children, our grandchildren.

Carlos ends up proposing: - What would happen if we not only talked about ancestral medicine, but could also systematize its value, its potential in a few pages, and be able to disseminate it, share it with botanists, with doctors, accumulate that tactical and real knowledge that works for the benefit of a wider population, this would be my recommendation. There is an enormous factual and historical knowledge, in us, proven by generations and that is going to be lost, because all of us have become commercialized, it is easier for us to take a pill and poison ourselves with chemicals, etc.

Chapter VII

Identity



Foto de archivo: www.shutterstock.com

Rosa Delia Quizhpe begins by stating: - My name is Rosa Delia Quizhpe, I am from Ecuador, my cultural roots are from the Saraguro ethnic group that is located south of the Andean region of Ecuador. My work has been in education of children and youngsters. At this moment I am participating in URI as Global Advisor and I feel very satisfied with the objectives of URI, to reach the world and share peace.

They asked me to talk about a very important topic that for me is the main thing, our root. I say that it is about pride for the entire nation, for all activity and all coexistence. I think that it is something very relevant and with your help, complementing, we are going to give it a body, putting into action and a lot of encouragement to make it work, because if it does not work it is because we are not putting it into practice and thus it will not have any transcendence.

Identity is so old, so broad, so important and it is delicate to talk about it, identity is not just a passport or identity card, it is a set of personal characteristics, identity goes much further, it is what results from connecting, is reason in line with heart.

To continue, I want to ask some questions that will help us on this important topic. First, identify who am I? Why am I here in this world, on this earth, in this space, or in this country? Or maybe what am I in URI for?

These questions will help us to know each other more, where do I come from, who were my parents? Which are my cultural roots, my mother tongue? How was my space, my family, beliefs and especially spirituality? That is the energetic part that makes us feel good or that makes us feel bad or makes us think, what do I need to live in excellence in one way or another? Because we all belong to a culture, but many times we forget it.

Another question is: where am I going and with whom? Point out my goals and what my mission is. Many times, we go through our lives without knowing why I am here, what should I do. Those things must be very clear, we must know them, especially the energetic part, the spiritual part. After focusing on these questions, we will have some answers and by developing them with all our intentions and habits, being ourselves, then we will become a light to share with others.

We need identity to recognize that human beings are unique and diverse, therefore, identity should reach us at two levels, the socio-cultural identity that is of the body and the energetic or spiritual identity.

Identity allows us to respect ourselves, respect the differences that people and social groups have. Identity requires continually educating, updating, and strengthening ourselves in different aspects of real life. Identity is the perfect source of light. Identity is the key to light and light is the truth and the truth sets us free. As a URI brotherhood we seek peace for the world, I want to emphasize that peace is with the self, and who is the SELF? It is a deep self and once I develop it and have peace, I share it first with my close friends and then I share peace with the world, becoming beings of light, beings of clarity, transparency, action, for which, from my criteria, is to have a clear identity as a person.

In URI, as a Circle of Cooperation, we must be very clear about our identity, our thinking, our truth, our desire, and our mission. It seems important to me to identify if what reason says is in consonance with the heart, meanwhile, they (at URI) help us to identify ourselves to be humble, but without humiliating ourselves, to be sincere, true, honest, harmonious, and active. These are the characteristics that make human beings vibrate high, value themselves, and to have the ability to share in the world and for the world.

Identity is the key to light or clarity, it is also the key to bury darkness. Light is peace, peace lives in us and if we keep it, we can share, if we don't keep it, we are empty and we have nothing to give to others. We only need the wisdom of discernment to choose and maintain the package that gives me light or the package that darkness gives me. When we are very well identified with our body, mind, soul, and spirit we are a treasure, we are worth gold, and that is why we take care of it, we maintain it, we multiply it intelligently to be shared, and that treasure for me is identity.

Interculturality cannot be created without a clear identity. This seems important to me as well, because if interculturality cannot be generated within URI, interreligious dialogue cannot be generated. Identity is acquired from childhood through parents. In the process of energetic identification there must be honesty to make the undesirable clean, cut and transmute, transmuted into light, forgiving all negative memories. Identity has a great value. I compare it with the deep roots of an immense tree from where the wisdom of peace is born and flows”.

Francisco Morales comments: -We as URI are always making efforts in interreligious dialogue, but perhaps sometimes we forget identities and perhaps this is a stage that we must begin to change, change that vision. For example, being able to understand more and to be able to give more visibility to these processes such as the diversity of identities that exist in the indigenous world, because sometimes they think that the indigenous world is one, and is not just one, there is a very great diversity and perhaps URI needs to understand this a little more this time the great diversity that there is.

Salette Aquino opines: - Without identity you cannot generate interculturality, you cannot generate dialogue, interrelation. If one is not clear about who he is, if one is not harmonized, it is difficult to understand outside (oneself) and I think that if in URI each one rethinks, harmonizes, or questions itself, it will help interreligious and intercultural dialogue. When I speak of identity, I also speak of religious identity. If an indigenous person is Catholic, he does not have to hide it, he has to take it out.

Enoé Texier comments: - To the students of the School of Social Work, who are naturally born to paid service to others, I like to teach them to go a little inward, to take care of themselves, because those who serve others are focused outwardly and many times they forget themselves.

María Eva Cayu adds: - We carry our identity since we are born, we have our culture, our religion, we do our ceremonies, we maintain part of our culture, like the language, the medicine that is part of what is ours, and how we act with Mother Earth. The worldview that we have is part of our identity, we carry our identity with our doing, with our light.

Sofía Painiqueo expresses: - When one has a secure identity, one can go anywhere in the world and not get lost. We have to strengthen our way of being in the world, for me nature itself also has its identity, one that no one can make it change. It is not easy for us to change our thinking, our way of being, our way of loving, of sharing, of the world that surround us.

Francisco Morales states: - It is important to create new identities, it is favorable to create identities of peace, identities of a more friendly citizenship with Mother Earth, also with interreligious citizenship, it seems to me that we have to focus on transmitting that feeling.

Alejandro Quispe intervenes: - In America since the invasion, there is a mixture of identities but as humans we are one. Identities are created by man, but originally, we have (always) been one, later with the invasions and with the creations that man makes this (belief) has become independent and (now) there are some more aggressive cultures, other peaceful ones and other peoples that have different forms.

We are at URI where we talk about inter-religiousness. Religions are created by man who created his own ways of conceiving the Universe, each people has created their own way of conceiving the world. If we are here in America wanting to be reborn as a man or as a person belonging to the original cultures, then we have to behave like them, because identity is also a way of life, it is not a theory, it is a practice, because we can speak wonderfully in theory and we can explain it academically and sometimes we say one thing, but we do something else, and I hope that this doesn't happen with our identity.

María Eugenia Crespo participates: - Sometimes we can say that there is an individual identity. In Christianity we say that we are unique and unrepeatable, something like the mold was broken when we were born and each one has their own identity that is sometimes identified with the name, although a name can be repeated. I am me and within me I have an individual identity that can be very beautiful because, like a flower, I also bring something of my own, unique, and very particular. At the same time, I can use that identity to fight with other identities, differentiate myself and compete with them, and that's when that identity becomes more of an individualism.

There is also the collective identity, which is the one in which we associate with others who have our same reality, for example, those people who have the same way of thinking, and that is what we are trying to avoid with URI, that religious identity or worldviews of some ones compete and fight with that of others, but we find the beauty of exchange and mutual knowledge.

Thinking as a Christian, that beauty and that identity with which God has created each of us is not to compete but to complete, it is like a garden that has many flowers and that is more beautiful when there is more diversity of fragrances, more sizes, shapes and colors of flowers, that is what completes a garden and I believe that in this humanity we are all part of it, both in our diversity and in our particularity.

Francisco Morales exposes about Writing and Orality and tells us: - My name is Francisco Morales, I am an Aymara indigenous from the north of Argentina, I currently live in the city of Buenos Aires, I am a student of Social Sciences at the University of Buenos Aires and mainly I consider myself an urban indigenous. That is a term of much controversy, because in many places it is not understood, I have been told that there are no urban indigenous people but that there are only indigenous people and there is in me the need to categorize a large group that live in urban areas, because that gives us a place within the Law. In today's society, to be able to demand certain policies at the state level and gives us a chance, to us indigenous people, who leave our territory, to live in urban areas to preserve our culture, because if not, many of the young and not so young who come to live in the city lose their culture, that is why I identify a lot with all the claims of minorities.

The University is a space in which one has to adapt or have to leave, for indigenous people it is like that. In 2008-2009 I met a professor named Mario Petrone, who was a well-known professor at the UBA, he said that we indigenous people did not exist in Latin American history, but we did not exist not because they had denied us, but because history started in 1880, and one day I asked the professor why there was nothing that spoke of the indigenous people in Argentina, why did we have to study the history starting from that date, and Professor Mario Petrone told me: "Look, we don't have authors in the school to talk about it, I suggest that if you have that interest, write, because it is for that reason that you are in this career, do your research, write and we will have material to teach here at the University.

One day I came across my first computer, when it came to me, I was like playing to see what happened and without wanting in 2010 the first small book I made appeared. I always had a very great interest in citizenship, in the State and what place we indigenous people have there, obviously I came across the indigenous world that we know well is an oral world. Before, I believed that indigenous languages had no value and one day I realized that it was the other way around, indigenous languages possessed the knowledge, the philosophy of our people and the important thing in preserving that philosophy was that it was found in medicine, in the words, in the songs, let's say that was the first discovery, my first approach to orality.

I ran into a great challenge in the indigenous world, because most of our brothers judged me to be a colonized person, not to be acting as an indigenous person. So, the group that we formed, several indigenous students, had to become a little apart, until 2012/2013 we were always hiding, our work could not be recognized, neither by the indigenous nor by the non-indigenous world, we were always as if we were *mestizos* within a reality.

The issue of consensus was being lost in the indigenous culture we were entering the dynamics of voting in all indigenous organizations. Consensus emerged from the investigation of our culture, of our language, as well as the term of peace. In the indigenous culture there are no terms for peace, because we do not have a word for war either, we solved problems through consensus, with community dialogue, and all this arose through the works that were published from the connection with orality.

All this that I tell you arose precisely from experience, from being able to speak. You cannot learn this in books, but if we do not keep it, it is lost, it is disappearing and we are precisely in a stage where indigenous peoples need tools to conserve the culture because unfortunately the advance of globalization and modernity is leading our cultures through an alley of confinement, where deforestation and mining are advancing, where kilometers of hectares of forest are lost, kilometers of indigenous wisdom are lost in each advance of those aspects.

Rosalía Gutiérrez says: - When I started in the indigenous movement, I was studying a teaching, to become a teacher. After I became aware, I wanted to throw away all the books because I felt that they had never told me the history of our people. I disavowed the books of Aristotle, Plato, I said that it made no sense so many wise intellectuals, academics, if they could not help me to recover our identity. Later I realized that in reality we indigenous people, especially my generation, learned so much from orality, from stories, from testimonies, from experience, from example, in short, from the wisdom that was passed down from generation to generation. They did not give us books to read but they told us, and they taught us, so we got used to orality and not to writing, which is why it is very difficult for the guided children in my community to read.

One takes the knowledge from orality and from writing, it seems spiritual or natural that one does not remember them later. Orality is very important but people have to know this, because when they wanted to set up libraries in the Argentine Congress here in Buenos Aires, they asked us to take our books, but then we didn't have any books, so we decided to go with handicrafts because those were our books and yet, when they see me with the crafts they don't recognize me as a sociologist, they tell us that the crafts are not a book fair and that's when we have to explain that there is knowledge, there that those would be the books for us and we begin to explain what each thing means.

An unidentified participant comment: - The indigenous of America have a great knowledge of things that can be defined, in a word: culture.

I remember that in the 70's when I was entering university, that I was one of the first indigenous people to approach it, and in truth I did not find absolutely anything within the study curriculum that dealt with indigenous issues or issues of ecosystems where the indigenous people are. There was no Latin American philosophy, apparently we had no rights to learn to read Spanish or to write in Spanish, the indigenous culture of Latin America has not been considered as a source of study for the development of peoples, the knowledge of indigenous peoples has been taken as models, but only for everyday practical life, not as scientific knowledge.

Sofía Painiqueo participates: - Orality for native peoples is first than writing and we have not left it and we are not going to leave it, because this is a permanent struggle that we have. I do not want to say that writing is not important, because it is very important especially for our children, our grandchildren who were born under a technological world, of computers, pencils, telephone, television ... they were born under the world of writing, that is their custom. They have a culture that for the indigenous is borrowed, it is an imposed culture that has not allowed many to continue with orality, both to parents and children. Writing presents or saves you the knowledge as in a container that you have and that you can see whenever you want.

The history of native peoples has always been written from western versions. There are some who come close and some who are not even close and treat us badly, there are people who have been correcting their message, who have been meticulously selecting, have soaked of history connecting with the right people. It is custom of non-indigenous people to put the bibliography when they make a book. Now the main source of information is being placed because we also claimed that when it comes to the subjects or the cultures of the native peoples, the source of information is never mentioned and that is bad, because it contaminates and impoverishes the indigenous peoples' own knowledge.

It is important that we indigenous people can write our own history, we can write about our own cosmovision, just like Francisco does as a young indigenous person, always looking for a way to be full of knowledge. I celebrate that they make a trustworthy book, that represent the history, the reality, the thought, the knowledge of the culture to come.

For me it is very important that orality is practiced, because this leads the spirit to intonation, to how rich is the seasoning that languages have, all that connection we have with the habitat and everything that can be narrated, legends, history, songs, poetry in our culture has to be transmitted orally, but that does not take away the right to have it written.



[Cultura Tradicional y Pueblos Indígenas – EVE Museos e Innovación \(evemuseografia.com\)](http://evemuseografia.com)

Enoé Texier opines: - Something that I think and believe is, that the knowledge that the indigenous societies of the region and of the world have, is very important for humanity today. Anything that is done to spread that knowledge it is nutritious and that each one chooses the teaching that best suits them. As an Anthropology teacher I say it properly, I always felt that lack, there are many students who would like to feed on this knowledge, who are open to it, but do not have access to this first-hand information. My connection with indigenous friends allowed me to invite them and to listen to them, read them notes and texts that those friends gave me in Encuentros, it was something, but not enough. I believe that reliable information must be made available to young people who are interested in knowing the indigenous world, I think it is very important and especially in these times.

David Limo expresses to finish: - For Christianity, what is in the Bible are actually scriptures about Jesus, but essentially, they are ways through which Jesus's orality is extracted, like in various documents as in the case of the Gospels, the so-called Document Q which was a document developed based on the orality of Jesus. Christianity is also rescuing its ancestral roots, since in some way all the thought of what they have really comes from the life, custom and orality of a people as old as the Hebrew people and as messianic as was the primitive church. There is a limitation in writing, writing is always an interpretation of orality and not necessarily what was actually said. This is interesting because in orality there is also another characteristic, that is the concept of democracy, I can say what I think starting from what I feel, but in writing there is the mediation of ideology and the mediation of writing it well, so that others think that I am saying things correctly or believe that I am at the forefront of contemporary issues.

The thought that has led the German Protestant School in terms of talking about the historical Jesus in Christianity, is precisely to discover that ancient Jesus, that primal Jesus, that ancestral Jesus, that oral Jesus who discovered values that have transcended the ideology, times, and occasions, including ecclesiastical leadership.

I believe that at URI we can all feel proud because we have this wisdom that helps us to vindicate our own identities, for example in my case, to continue insisting on that ancestral Jesus who can say what he thinks regardless of what others may think, even about contemporary morality. Actually, the Jesus of oral Christianity is immoral in front of contemporary society, that's why they killed him, that's why he got to the cross. That is the interpretation of us Christians and I think that is why I see many other crucifixions such as our ancestral peoples that in reality continue to be crucified, based on what they think and say, which ends up being an anti-system message.

Chapter VIII

The Seeds



[Guardianes de semillas resisten al monopolio de empresas multinacionales - Cxhab Wala Kiwe \(nasaacin.org\)](http://nasaacin.org)

Vilma begins by saying: - Guatemala is an agricultural country, where almost the majority of the population are farmers and more so in these times, when the corn planting begins. In Guatemala we have a very long process that is managed in accordance with how our ancestral movement is going, for example, the Mayan New Year begins on January 6, then twelve glasses of salt are placed on an altar and when one of those glasses gets wet it means that this is time for harvest. Before, they knew how to harvest according to the phases of the moon and the stars.

For the corn harvest, a ceremony is held with Mother Earth so that the corn in all this process will not suffer. Suppose there are natural disasters such as wind, droughts or other forms that attack our crops, then we do this ceremony at that time, so that at the end of the year all this process ends with a good harvest. Seed counts are also made, the count is made four by four seeds until the process is elevated, there we use what we call the four cardinal points, it is like the horse's leap four by four.

Our ancestors used these seeds to see the future of people, what they do and how. The future begins to be foreseen with the seeds, for us the seeds have a too wide and also sacred function and are of great importance for our times.

The *piloy* seeds are used for example to manage time, because when one is harvesting it, it is entangled according to time, it means that it goes around the 365 days. Here (in Guatemala) there is a wide class of seeds, there are seeds that heal, such as the avocado seed that is good for tea. The seeds of daily consumption such as corn are used at all times and have a wide variety of proteins that help almost the greatest part of the Guatemalan population, we realize that the sustainable base for a family is corn.

The white cob in our body is in our bones, teeth, it is a pure seed, every time the corn is sown, an atoll of corn is made with lime, but when it is for the harvest we put ashes, we made this traditional atoll with beans and begin to serve all the people who come to work, to do the sowing. We have red corn that it is not planted lately because apparently it doesn't generate much and lately it has a high price, this corn represents our blood, so it is also in the body, we have the yellow color that is used for example when a child is born, when there is a baptism.

The corn or each seed that we have has a wide function, they are used to make necklaces, bracelets, earrings, they also use it for the sacred and to save money, for development; We also have the seeds of the pitus trees, these seeds are sacred and are used by the spiritual guides to count the time, suppose that someone with emotional, psychological, family problems arrives where the spiritual guide because he wants to see how he is doing in the In the future, 260 seeds are used, which is 13x20, the same as the pregnancy process, then a fist of those seeds is grabbed, they are dropped and a count is made, four by four, the Mayan calendar has 20 days, the quantity depends to leave.

As we know, in each country the seeds have a great meaning, for us red beans are used as bracelets for babies or newborns, so that the evil eye does not find them, they are used as protection although sometimes it seems something illogical, But in rural areas it sometimes happens, so the seeds in Guatemala have a broad meaning, they have a variable presentation, it depends on how they consume it and when doing a ceremony the corn is put last, when all the corn It turns white as well as a straw it means that the whole crop comes out well, but if everything comes out black or burned it means that the crop changes, the land could have the possibility of suffering drought, a strong natural disaster, also in the process it becomes curved, All the plant that contaminates it is removed and *quicoi* is planted in front of it, so that the corn or the cornfields do not fall, they do not suffer for the animals, because there are also birds that come to eat the m corn and do not let it grow or the final product to come out.

Different seeds are used in each season, but 365 days a year what will never be lacking is corn and beans, it is consumed daily, every day 3 times a day, breakfast, lunch and dinner. In these times the peach comes out a lot, according to the grandparents said, every time a peach grows the stick is pierced, they add honey and that honey absorbs it and when the peaches come out they already come out in a sweet way; we also have the seed of rue that is used for colic; the lemon seed that is used for lung problems because it helps a little to remove phlegm, it mixes with the eye; seeds for when one has insomnia problems, 13 seeds are put under the pillow so that one can fall asleep, also that seed is used to make *atollites* that make it spicy, cumin, pepper, a lot of ingredients, that seed when They are grinding it to stone it is put like gum, most of the elderly are scared because they say that death, tragedies or things like that are seen, so that affects the family and they use it very little, in the Gregorian calendar on the day of the Kings”.

Francisco suggests: - Here in Argentina, we have great soils, it is a land of agriculture with a great variety of products of rural make. We have sustained a great fight concerning transgenic seeds, which have to do with creation of improved or manipulated seeds, which can resist vermin, insects but suddenly damage the plant itself.

This issue of seeds is a great connector of Latin America culture. It would be very good to think about this unity of cultures around food. Something that also has a great difference in Latin America, is how is the diet of our peoples today, that has been altered by the arrival of new foods to America, foods that brought great diseases for us and that now there are many organizations working to a return to ancestral foods. This means going back to the traditional seeds. A very important topic to share could be food preparation from each region, where we can all share how a typical Guatemalan Mayan meal is made”.

Liliana affirms: - Our mother nature is very wise; it has been proven that there are plants that heal. I was in a certificate course that talked about dignified reparation through plants, so it was very interesting, and was given by a female lawyer of indigenous origins and she told us how through plants women can find that dignified reparation, because there are plants that heal on a psychological level.

Here in Guatemala, there is a tradition of eating *cocotes* trees in the tombs so the spirits of our grandparents can come and enjoy those sweets. We also leave little pieces of corn, and their *güisquil* so that they can enjoy that”.

Fanny intervenes: - One of the most important seeds of our Kuna people in Panama is the cacao seed. It is very significant for our people, when we have it very dry we use it to do our ritual, (which consist of) an incense to our ancestors or ourselves, to help us if we have an evil spirit or if we have the spirit of high fever; we then get into something like a sauna, with all those seeds and that relieves our fever".

Ana Linda adds: - Those cocoa beans are very important, because in addition to the ritual, we use them to drink with ground corn, and according to what I have known it is very important for cancer. Another seed that we use for our food is corn, for example, if you are going to make a soup then we knead the corn to add to the soup".

Carlos reflects: - We have to rescue culture, principles and values of our ancestors, their concrete foundations so as not to lose our cultures, so as not to lose our roots, the knowledge, so as not to lose the essence of our ancestors. We consider, in the same way, the power to impart our knowledge, how much or how little we know, in order to contribute as much as possible the direction of the new generations.

Currently, we have lost a lot the very essence of peoples, the very essence of our cultures, the very essence of nature, with events and workshops we can make a contribution and strengthen those culture ties, of teaching and more, of all our wisdom".

María Eva asks: - I wanted to ask the sister who spoke about putting honey to make the peaches come out sweet, how do they do it? And how do they prepare the lemon seeds for the lungs?

The importance of the seeds is fundamental, it is sacred, because it is the food that Mother Earth gives us, that is why we have to take care of it and be aware that it does not become contaminated when we save them from one year to the next. We must be very careful, buy organic, when one buys vegetables or fruit, keep the seed in a cool and dry place. A ceremony should be held when the seed is saved, when it is also going to be planted, ask for the four cardinal points to have *newen*".

Rosaura responds to Maria Eva: - This is done when the peach tree still does not have flowers, and does not have the fruit itself, then the tree is pruned a little and the stem is calculated, more or less, as 30 to 60 centimeters and it is in that part that we place pure honey, not processed honey. Honey is placed on the part of the tree, and that little part is closed and then the sweet peach comes out.

With lemon seeds you start by grinding them and then joined with the lemon leaves, it is then mixed with what is known as *crementina* or *elocote*, sometimes they put eucalyptus, garlic or onion, all that is put together to boil, and when it does, we wait about 5 minutes for the essence itself to come out, and one takes it, even if one has no problems. It is good for asthma, for lung problems, for coughing, even that is good for Covid, it is taken in single sips. It is also used to purify the mind, if you have it in a little *guacalito*, you take out all the steam, you put your head and inhale and exhale for 13 times, you cannot do it 14, or 15 times, or reach 20, because it can only be done 13 times".

Rosa Delia expresses: - I admire the whole environment where we, indigenous people, develop, grow, and live. By saying that I do not want to ignore reality and the work of non-indigenous people, but I rather want to say that there is a correlation. I also want to deepen about the environment or planting work, of the seeds that we cultivate and that we maintain in our communities. I see the abundance that Mother Earth gives us to be able to have all our daily sustenance and to save, also see the wisdom of all the people, of all the communities, of each one of you in keeping the ceremonies. In each region, in each country, there is a lot of people's wisdom in preparing natural medicine, now at this time especially to protect ourselves from COVID 19.

I want to add that beyond the physical seed, beyond the seed of our fields, in each of our hearts is the seed of peace that we want to share with the world, that seed must be cultivated in different ways so that we can give birth to it, grow it, and share it with others. We are thirsty for that inner peace, for the peace that we need to share with others, because from afar and in a virtual way, we must vibrate with good energy and with a good heart for each one, for our families, for the community and for the whole world."

Someone concludes: - The seed is also like a person who has life, so when we plant it, it will generate more life. Farmers see the land as a commodity and the seed becomes anything, perhaps that is why many times there is no good production and the plant that comes out already comes out with the energy of the one who sowed it. I think that this is what we, as an indigenous people, have to recover in this Uri's space, because the Coronavirus taught us that we should not be separated and that sometimes chemistry is not the solution".



["Semillas criollas son la base de la soberanía alimentaria" \(bloglemu.blogspot.com\)](http://bloglemu.blogspot.com)

Chapter IX

The Environment and the Condor



[La lenta agonía del cóndor, el dios alado de Sudamérica \(coolt.com\)](http://coolt.com)

María Eva begins by telling: - In Rio Negro Province, 284 km from Vielma, Condors' liberation is carried out in the Andean Condor Conservation of Bueno Aires, that joins together the mountain range including the sea and the sister country of Chile, Pacific and Atlantic Oceans.

We have about 57 condors released in the Paireman area of which ten we already have living in a natural way (free). The first couple released was Mailen a female and Peuman a male, they chose their home in Tembrado on the Sumucura plateau, they had several children, so we have a total of ten youngsters.

Condors take 10 years to mature and lay 1 egg per year, they are 1.20 meters high and when open their wings measure 3 meters. They live for approximately 75 to 80 years, they fly, around 75 thousand meters. Their eggs arrive in Buenos Aires and are placed in incubators. Several employees are needed to assist the condors and once a week they perform ultrasounds to see how their growth goes and they take around 56 to 60 days to be born. Two days before the egg is cracked, staff stays in that room to assist the hatching, because if the *condorito* cannot crack the egg then there will be an assistant who will help him. When they are born, they give them their food, they cut the meat very small, they have a mitten with the faces of the mother and the father and with that puppet they feed them and they get nourished, because the goal is that when they are released they will go and meet greater condors on the plateau. When they are 6 months old, they go to Paireman by plane and stay in Esquel, where a van will pick them up so they can adapt to the place and climate.

They are fed small pieces of animal meat, each time they weigh a little more, increasing the amount. Condors are very important for the environment because they clean from infected focus, from dead animals. There is lack of knowledge -about condors- in the rural people, they kill animals and anoint them with poison, which is prohibited, then as condors fly down and eat those dead animals, they smell and absorb that poison and die. In 2007 we had many poisoned condors due to the ignorance of rural people they say that the animals kill their animals, but they don't, because they have tiny and very weak hooves so they cannot grab anything, that is why they are scavengers, they have a bad image that they are animal killers it is not so.

Condors are taken to Paireman and installed in an immense cage until liberation. They have a blue microchip for males and a white one for females, it is a transmitter through which they communicate, via GPS, to track them and know where they are, if they need something, if they are well, know where the eggs are, because they usually go to different places flying many kilometers.

In our spiritual realm, native peoples honor condors because they represent us at a spiritual level. People before used to say that condor is the bird that flies highest and therefore it carries messages to God, and they also say that when a person dies the condor takes the soul to the land above.

The condor can live up to 80 years, it is said that when they die, they feel they do not have the strength to fly, and they can no longer walk through the mountains, it is then when they look for the highest mountain and jump headlong to die. Native people's persons say that they do it because they want to die and be food for other animals. It is impressive how condor's behavior is manifested.

The condor has only one partner and if it is left without its partner, it remains alone. On April 22, Luis, a biologist from Buenos Aires, called me to tell me that, that same day a *condorita* called Pacha Mama arrived in Buenos Aires from France. She was born in August, International Earth Day.

A video is projected that shows: - For thousands and thousands of years condors have been pierced by native communities throughout South America. When we learn to respect those who are different, we will learn to walk the path of our grandparents, which we want to share, no matter our language, no matter the culture, what matters is sharing this passion to recover the environment. We know that all our technology is not enough to guarantee the survival of the condor if we do not understand what the word respect means. The idea is to honor life, biodiversity, if we honor it, it would not even be necessary to conserve because things conserve themselves.

María Eva narrows down: - We go 2 days before to where the liberation of the condors is going to be done. We have small cones to be in at night, we have a sacred fire and another to cook, we spend all night outdoors to give *nhewen* to the condors that are going to be released the next day. At 6 am in the morning we do a ceremony, and we ask for *kume waypa*, meaning that the condors going to be released are in good health. After the ceremony we have breakfast and go to the Botana field where we open the gate and start the liberation, and when it ends, we share things that people bring, oven made bread, roast, and the boys from the schools make crafts.

Here in Rio Negro province, the communities are already tired of complaining with the government about mining, because they do not stop the continue polluting of Currú Leuvú river that we have. We have laws but legislators do not respect them, we take a step and they put a foot on top of us, so we cannot move forward, but we must continue because what are we going to leave to the children that are being born. For years we have had an issue with water because when the Chinese opened mines in Sierra Grande they took the water from a lot of places, so when the Mapuche grandmothers open the taps at night sometimes they can collect a liter and a half, but they cannot have their orchards as they had them before. The places are without water and the government always looks the other way, they give the mines to foreigners, they are not interested in their own family, in their life, they are not interested in anything. Therefore, we said that we need to raise awareness about this issue with children, because they are the ones who are going to understand that trees must be planted, that they must plant them in their garden, that trees must not be damaged, because they are the lungs where we breathe, that we do not have to be throwing garbage. We must do workshops to take care of the environment.

Francisco participates saying: -The condor is an animal that lives in the 2 points in north and south of South America, that is why, the Mapuches and the Andean Coyas, also have it as a sacred animal, even though we are different peoples, so different that nowadays in public policies we even have opposing views, but even so the Andean condor is an animal that united us.

Rosadelia intervenes: - It is very important to know that the condor is back, especially in Ecuador, there was a time when it seemed to have disappeared, but it was not. There is other part of the people who are protecting the forests that are becoming a habitat for the condor. This was not seen much before, but now they are working in Ecuador, and it is something very special for us because a few kilometers away in a community called "Gera" the condors appeared about 6 years ago. This is so beautiful for us because a condor is a symbol of majesty, of greatness, of unity, which is why in the Andean world condors are highly revered, and this important nature being is highly appreciated.

There is the eagle and the condor, and one season there was a meeting of both. The condor representing the northern part of America. It is very important that in the southern Andean part we also think and go along this line of work to make meetings of the eagle and the condor again. That meeting was something done for some time in Imbabura in the north of Ecuador, where brothers from the north came and also representatives from the south, and the meeting was very beautiful, it was a great act that took place, and wise men from different places went.

Someone comments: - Here in Panama there are no condors, so I cannot say many things about the condor because I have no experience with that, but we do have it with the environment. Right now, we are having problems with the environment, because due to the pandemic many people are throwing the masks into the sea and the rivers, and this is something that it should not be done. We should remember that there are animals in the sea and in the river, so we must take good care of them and avoid throwing masks.

Enoé Texier says: - I recently read from an indigenous man named Yaku. He said that there was a concept towards which humanity should be guided, in this times, which is biocentrism, because bio is life and when you are guided by an idea, at the end, you don't care much about the idea, but what matters to you is Mother Earth and this is biology, it is the living being that you are that matters, like the condor, then your perception changes and your action changes.

Mariana ends by saying: - For me, the pandemic gave the Earth a break, because the truth is that when the pandemic appeared, the human being was deciding about whether to go into quarantine. Then the animals began to appear on the land, on the beaches, in the streets. How the human being had to protect himself from the virus was something positive in a way, because they stopped contaminating a little, and when they stopped, they gave the earth a little breathing space, for so many things that humans do to it. I believe that the pandemic was for our land, not for the people who pollute and cause harm.



[Orinoco Padre Rio: El cóndor de Los Andes](#)

Chapter X

Closing talks

Synthesis and celebration of participating Cooperation Circles



[Cosmovisiones de los pueblos originarios | ESTRENANDODIA](#)

Raúl Mamani begins the meeting by saying: - All the work we did this last year has been related to 20 years of United Religions Initiative (URI) creation, where different religious leaders committed themselves to work for peace, the environment, and all suffering human being today. This celebration has been important for us because, in some way, we wanted to show URI who we, indigenous people are, what we think, what is our vision of the world and life, so I would like to take a little tour of what the indigenous meant within this organization.

In 1994 I had the opportunity to receive an invitation from Lama Gangchen Rinpoche, who came from Tibet, to share a ceremony with indigenous people here in Argentina. From this relationship he made me an invitation to share the proposal "Let's make peace with the environment", which was a project he had with the United Nations. Later, in a meeting in October, same year, I met Father Dolan, who invited me to be part of the experience of creating an organization for interreligious dialogue. We began with the idea of building this space, which is URI, in which we already have 20 years of working experience. This whole process took place in a permanent dialogue, even though he lived in New York, and since he was an Argentine, from time to time he would come here and we would meet to talk with our group, the community of indigenous students. Talking with Father Dolan we explained them what our role would be in URI.

There they began to talk about the Indigenous Cosmvision, and in 2000 when these initiatives were already being built throughout the world, they called us to sign the letter of URI foundation, and that same year Father Dolan helped us to do a meeting in Quito-Ecuador to talk about the Indigenous Cosmvision, where many indigenous brothers attended, especially from Latin America and we were already able to speak within the URI space.

In January 2002 we met again in Mexico in the first Regional Assembly, and there were also other new indigenous brothers. This (initiative) grew, always talking about this idea of sharing our work, an idea that URI had already been considering supported by its principles. Everyone who is part of URI knows that it has Principles, Purposes, and a Preamble (PPPs). The indigenous initiative was accompanied from all that we had been building. That year (2002), in the first Global Assembly, URI members from all over the world met in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil and there an idea aroused of building something more important within indigenous work and therefore we set out to build the Indigenous Multiple Circle.

In 2004 we met again in Ayacucho, Peru at the Second Regional Assembly and we had a guided visit to two or three communities, and thanks to it many brothers were able to really understand how the indigenous world lives its day by day. The second Global Assembly was held in Seoul on 2005, and we were able to share again with all the religious leaders in URI. The indigenous peoples have always been willing to share based on differences, that is the indigenous cosmovision, and that is why we have been participating in URI.

In 2007 Charles Gibbs, who was then URI's Executive Director, visited Latin America, especially Venezuela, Brazil and Argentina and we were able to share with him all our indigenous work. That same year, in September, URI's founder, Bishop Bill Swing, came and talking with him, we managed to get a budget assigned to the indigenous initiative for the years 2008-2009; we also managed to get him to support us so that more indigenous brothers participated. In Mayapur, India, at the 2008 Global Assembly, we also met with more indigenous brothers from other parts of the world, such as Sister Katty Sandoval, who is from the United States, from a town that is exactly where they began working with the Jesuit missions in California. All that process that has helped us understand that the indigenous people did have to be visible in this space of interreligious dialogue.

In 2009 we had the opportunity to meet again at regional level, but only indigenous in Cuzco, Peru. There we were fortunate to go to Machu Picchu and do a great ceremony so that our work could continue.

Participation of indigenous people has been a process that has taken place in URI. Logically, we have spoken with religious leaders, but it has been very difficult to somehow portray indigenous values into URI's work. When we speak of circularity, it is a concept that can be understood, just as when one makes a graph of a circle. But when one expresses circularity in a specific work, it is not so easy to understand, because the indigenous vision arises from the collective, we do not think that there should be a leader who goes ahead and another one behind, the indigenous world is based on another concept in which we are all part of everything.

When we talk about local groups, which are the Cooperation Circles, we are proposing that in the circle we are all the same, there is no one in front of you, there is no one behind you, no one is above or below you. The circle is sacred because it is designed to create unity, this has been a practice of indigenous peoples, not only in America but all around the world. We have also agreed, together with many indigenous leaders, that we must recover human beings. Society today has a pyramidal conception in which there someone at a point that has and decides, and the rest is the base supporting the one who decides. It does not work that way in the indigenous world. It works in a circular way, what takes us to the idea that we are all equal, but not only because we are equal, but because no one is ahead and no one is behind, no one above and no one below. That's what URI is going to design, that's going to design balance.

Forty years ago, indigenous peoples were subjected to discriminatory policies, but in recent times there have been very big changes, and perhaps one of the most important changes in this region known as Latin America is what is going to happen in Chile. All indigenous people have eyes in Chile because just now, there is going to be an opportunity that, historically, is going to be transcendental for us, because we will define how a plural society should be, how a society should really be where everyone has the same rights being different, because in Chile there are ten indigenous peoples and you can find cultural manifestations that have come from all over the world.

Many indigenous brothers do not want to be with religious people, because the latter protest against (them), but we must build an egalitarian society, a different society so that all human beings can freely express their culture, their religion, their political idea and that we finally arrive to a consensus to be able to build harmonious, balanced societies, so that the benefits are for all.

Sofía Painiqueo ponders: - I would like to tell you that URI has been a school for me and I hope that each of you, as indigenous brothers, can make your own reflection, your own evaluation of both the positive and the negative things and in this way be able to correct many mistakes that are being made, many of them sometimes even involuntarily, and that has been the case not only in a meeting, or in an interreligious dialogue, but in other aspects of life, be it in health, in politics. There are people who want to do good things and sometimes due to ignorance they do not do them so well, because they take actions that come from their thoughts and no, they have to listen to the other person, what is it that we are feeling and what is good for us, how we want to be treated, how we want to participate.

Rosa Delia Quizhpe expresses: - In these difficult moments I feel that we must unite our spirits and that through this conversation we all unite. I say that we unite our spirits through music, each one with their instruments and thus also our group, where there are different forms of expression, everyone can manifest themselves through their words, through the positive vibrations that each of us unite to raise to the universe all our zest for life, gratitude for health and life, also prayers so that the Universe conspire for us and for all our people, for all our brothers and sisters at URI so that we can be enjoying health because we have a long way to go.

We also have many medicinal plants and thanks to them we have survived, and we have coped with COVID-19. In each of the towns we have a large number of knowledges of our medicine, we have different ways, methods and different materials that have helped us to be healthy, to be good in our health and in our spirit.

I ask that we all unite because these are the difficult moments in which we cannot even be physically together but our spirits, our positive vibration, will rise and help us so that we can be enjoying health in all our peoples and in the entire world.

Perhaps as a Counselor I am not oriented to be able to do things well, but every day I raise my prayers to the God in whom each one believes, that is why we are here, different religions, each one will have their way of reaching the Almighty, being greater, to God, to Jehovah or whatever name has. That is my job every day in our SAMAY Cooperation Circle, in our family and in our community. We join together to make these requests because from so far what else can we do, I am unable to do activities outside because at this time it is quite difficult and complicated to be in the streets.

Through these Conversations I have met more people, we have joined more spirits, more energies, we have joined more to go much further, because unity is strength. We all know that because the word has power, each one of us has spoken. You have listened our criteria, our presentations, and there is also a vibrant word to process and to continue growing. Through dialogues and conversations, you have known our culture, the cultures of our brothers and sisters in different places, so that has been worthy. These series of conversations that have been done throughout this year are plausible, thank you very much, brothers and sisters.

Rosalía Gutiérrez, moved, intervenes: - I'm still surprised, I didn't think we were going to finish the year, nor did I think we were going to sustain it with so much spirit. At the beginning I was a bit reluctant because I had past experience ZOOMing was to fight, to argue, but I believe that these meetings came to energize us and lift our spirits. When one starts with an activity it is like a child crawling, he falls, he gets up, but we built that child together, we made him walk, if one day someone was missing, the other was there to cover, we all participated horizontally, nobody took the floor as a speaker, but we took it to share, as a family.

Father Dolan was a precursor priest in indigenous people dialogue with religions, when many indigenous people did not want to have anything to do with religions, others are still angry (because of this), but Father Dolan said that to work for peace we have to have a dialogue and here we are many indigenous people who do not profess religions but live our cosmovision, making dialogues with religions. The important thing is that we are the ones who are on this dialogue path.

Sofía Painiqueo states: - URI must have a long life because there are many young people who are becoming integrated and the fact that our conversations are also a contribution to URI will make us feel very happy, even more committed to everything that embraces the spirituality.

Salette Aquino says: - I owe URI the opportunity to meet with my brothers, that is an incredible thing because I live in a country where we have 305 different ethnic groups with 180 languages and I did not know that indigenous world until I came to URI.

Every time I listen to an indigenous brother, I am happy and many times I even cry because I see so much wisdom because I feel so small in front of all the brothers. In recent times I have been working to convey the truth that I knew. We are just organizing a Circle here in Brazil, which in principle will only be of the native indigenous peoples, but later we will also have people from the black community so that the struggles come and in this way we thus add.

Enoé Texier expresses: - I am very happy today to see how one cycle ends to start another, a cycle that inspired you, Sofía, Raúl and later, all those who joined in each of the talks to expose their practice, their tradition ... that's how we have come this far completing a cycle.

It is a moment in the history of humanity in which your cosmovision is key, hence the Regional Coordination that is proposed and will undertake the task of recording and transcribing these 10 conversations to then be able to make a bilingual online publication so that the world is nourished with this knowledge. I encourage you because I believe in you, and I believe in the power that your cosmovision has for all the people who inhabit this Mother Earth in the present.

Francisco Morales expresses: - This is a different stage, I particularly believe that this is the moment, because the world is showing that indigenous culture and its thinking are today one of the healthiest ways to live, it will depend on us to find one strategy to move forward.

I am committed to working in that sense and I want us to take the new Links Program as a great achievement that we have had in the Region, because it is a regional program that we must all take as a flag for indigenous peoples in order to work on identity and recover the values of our cosmovisions and our ancestral values”.

María Eva Cayu shares: - In each of the meetings throughout these months I learned a lot, about the coincidences that we have with different countries on spirituality, which reflects unity even if it is virtual. I am going to leave nothing more than a concept:

Spirituality, is the most important thing for a person, so those who do not have it are in time to turn to doing things well, to be in contact with their cosmovision, to respect it, to sow, of eating from our gardens, of not cutting down the trees as in so many countries are doing and forgetting that they are our brothers too.

Martha -a participant- adds: - I also agree with union, I like that, the spirit unites us through all this. I missed evangelical worship today because I wanted to participate and I love all these things, to be able to listen and feel others.

Victor Rey thanks saying: - I give thanks for this space in which the culture of our ancestors has been greatly promoted. What is happening now in Chile with the drawn up of the new Constitution is interesting. It is the fact that what stands the most for the people that are going to draft it, is the importance given to the indigenous peoples and what is important for them, like the subject of water, the subject of the environment, feminism and above all youth. Those are the axes that today are moving our societies in Latin America. I think that in the Chilean case we must also see the importance of incorporation of the original peoples in the new Constitution and in some way, I believe that this space in URI and these dialogues have been able to foster knowledge that is so important for our own culture.

Richard comments: - With globalization we are all blended, but Westerner is concerned with having, Eastern with being and the original peoples with being present. I do not have a Western origin, my family is from the Middle East, I am from a minority people without a State, dispossessed, victim of a genocide as Syrian People and we are also raising the flags to be recognized. It was necessary to leave out lands and emigrate everywhere. In wanting to create mono-cultural states, the brutal nationalisms ordered to remove the different, when traditionally -especially in the Middle East- peoples with different languages, with different religions, and cultural diversity coexisted. All this was aimed to be to be destroyed from a bad conception of modernity, so we continued working, defending and supporting, and above all, I feel identified with the struggle of the indigenous peoples of America. I am an atheist, I come from a place where there is struggle, where books defend inequalities and oppressions, which is the opposite of spirituality, I recognize spirituality, I believe in the universe as a whole, that there is a superior God above, it is nature, and we are like drops of water flowing into a sea, but I don't like the concept of religion or something written like a rock for all times.

Sofía Painiqueo concludes: - We must encourage our circles of native peoples to become close. We must also find a way to encourage them to participate, tell them that young people need them, they need what we have in our journey as much as culture, as peoples, as URI family. That is what we want to build, it is what we want to deliver for the formation of our children, of our young people. This training does not mean that young people are going to function as we tell them, but that they need knowledge and if we do not pour it, if we do not deliver it or put it on the table, they are not going to be firm, they are not going to have a base.



WE are a global community-based network made up of people connected through Cooperation Circles (CC) that are the heart of URI.

The CCs are self-organized groups with a varied number of members, from a minimum of seven people to tens of thousands, representing at least three religions, spiritual expressions and diverse indigenous traditions that unite their action to face the most pressing problems lived in their communities. We envision a world of peace, sustained by interconnected communities, committed to respecting diversity, non-violent conflict resolution, and social, political, economic, and environmental justice. We value the voices of those who recognize and appreciate others and act for the good of all living. As interdependent people rooted in our particular traditions, we are united for the good of the human community, we thrive to build cultures of peace and equity, to heal and protect our Earth and all living things.

The URI Principles (PPPs) constitute the code of ethics that guides our actions:

1. The URI is a bridge-building organization, not a religion.
2. We respect the sacred wisdom of each religion, spiritual expression and indigenous tradition.
3. We respect the differences among religions, spiritual expressions and indigenous traditions.
 4. We encourage our members to deepen their roots in their own tradition.
 5. We listen and speak with respect to deepen mutual understanding and trust.
 6. We give and receive hospitality.
7. We seek and welcome the gift of diversity and model practices that do not discriminate.
8. We practice equitable participation of women and men in all aspects of the URI.
9. We practice healing and reconciliation to resolve conflict without resorting to violence.
10. We act from sound ecological practices to protect and preserve the Earth for both present and future generations.
 11. We seek and offer cooperation with other interfaith efforts.
12. We welcome as members all individuals, organizations and associations who subscribe to the Preamble, Purpose and Principles.
13. We have the authority to make decisions at the most local level that includes all the relevant and affected parties.
14. We have the right to organize in any manner, at any scale, in any area, and around any issue or activity which is relevant to and consistent with the Preamble, Purpose and Principles.
15. Our deliberations and decisions shall be made at every level by bodies and methods that fairly represent the diversity of affected interests and are not dominated by any.
 16. We (each part of the URI) shall relinquish only such autonomy and resources as are essential to the pursuit of the Preamble, Purpose and Principles.
17. We have the responsibility to develop financial and other resources to meet the needs of our part, and to share financial and other resources to help meet the needs of other parts.
18. We maintain the highest standards of integrity and ethical conduct, prudent use of resources, and fair and accurate disclosure of information.
 19. We are committed to organizational learning and adaptation.
20. We honor the richness and diversity of all languages and the right and responsibility of participants to translate and interpret the Charter, Articles, Bylaws and related documents in accordance with the Preamble, Purpose and Principles, and the spirit of the United Religions Initiative.

Members of the URI shall not be coerced to participate in any ritual or be proselytized.

MAY PEACE PREVAIL ON EARTH!