

# The Peoples of the World Foundation

## *Education for and about Indigenous Peoples*

### Annual Report 2015

#### **Indigenous Peoples' Issues: 2015 in Review**

Many indigenous peoples' issues reported widely by the mainstream media focused on environmental issues. Probably the one that received the most attention in North America concerned the Keystone XL pipeline construction project. It had been opposed by many indigenous groups whom it would have affected and was, ultimately, vetoed by the US President. Pope Francis advocated for the involvement by, and representation of, indigenous peoples in matters relating to global climate change. Internationally, *COP 21* in Paris closed out the year by acknowledging, to some extent, indigenous peoples' concerns, yet falling short of their expectations.

Following indigenous peoples' traditions of representing future generations, 15-year old Emelin – a young Maya Mam woman – defied the advice of her Guatemalan town's mayor from two years earlier and, instead of just "going home," ended up addressing the United Nations on the importance of educating indigenous girls. "Perhaps I could be a president for... my country" she said afterwards. One person who would, undoubtedly, agree with that is Malala Yousafzai; a second is Muzoon Almellehan. Those two teenaged girls were reunited after Almellehan's (Syrian) family resettled in the United Kingdom. In a year that saw mass Islamophobia-based reaction against the

plight of Syrian refugees, coupled with the impotence of the world's political leaders to solve the cause of that crisis, the hopes of educationally-marginalized girls the world over appears, now, to be in the hands of teenaged girls.

One world leader stood out in 2015 for the political representation of indigenous people. Before Evo Morales was officially sworn in for his third term as President of Bolivia, a traditional indigenous ceremony was held – acknowledging his own indigenous heritage. Bolivia's southern neighbor, Argentina, experienced a different fate. Outgoing President Cristina Fernandez de Kirchner prevented incoming President Mauricio Macri from taking office inside the *Casa Rosada*. It wouldn't have made any difference to events outside the building; no indigenous Argentines would have been crying "Mauricio." Instead Macri spoke of promises that few believe he can keep.

In a year when more indigenous communities lost their traditional lands to exploitation by large corporations, the Global Platform of Indigenous and Community Lands launched its online, interactive map, *LandMark*, to become the *de facto* source of the global status of indigenous land rights. In northern Peru one indigenous woman, Acuña de Chaupe, fought against one large, multinational mining corporation that was trying to take away her land, the Yanacocho Company,

and won. She was awarded the title, *Woman of the Year*.

Further north in Belize, the *Caribbean Court of Justice* ruled that 38 Maya villages have rights to their traditional lands, and that the Belizean government must now officially demarcate, register and protect those lands.

## Highlights

In 2015 we completed our second documentary, *Peoples of the World: The Maya*. We released the official trailer and set the release date for early 2016. We also announced the subject of our third documentary, *Peoples of the World: The Andes*. It will be our first documentary to be filmed in Ultra High Definition. No release date has yet been set; for the first time we are inviting collaboration on this documentary project.

Our assignments took us back to South America where we continued our work in the Andean region.

## Assignments

In 2015 we returned to South America, visiting Argentina and Bolivia. This assignment was mainly pre-production research and location scouting for our next documentary, *Peoples of the World: The Andes*.

## Our Web Portal

In 2015 we began formally implementing our “tic-tac-toe” strategy for the future of our Web portal. “Tic” represents the behind-the-scenes work necessary to keep our portal up to date with information technology developments in order to future-proof it. “Tac” represents the content of our portal. In order to be useful, content must be rich,

relevant, organized and structured. “Toe” represents design — the user interface to, and user experience of, the content that our visitors see.

*Tic*. 2015 was a “tic” year. We successfully performed a major technology refresh of our Web portal, most of which was invisible to our visitors.

*Tac*. Helping to fulfill the second part of our mission — “education about indigenous peoples” — we published our monthly photo-essays. Each month a photograph is featured along with an essay relating its context to current events that affect indigenous people. The photo-essays are linked from our Web portal home page at:

<http://www.peoplesoftheworld.org/>

We also published *2016: A South American Calendar* – our seventh, annual Indigenous Peoples Calendar. The calendar is available for free download from our Web portal at:

<http://www.peoplesoftheworld.org/calendar.jsp>

In 2015 we also published new photo-ethnographic articles about the K'iche' and Yucatec Maya peoples. They are available on our Web portal at:

<http://www.peoplesoftheworld.org/text?people=K'iche'>

and:

<http://www.peoplesoftheworld.org/text?people=Yucatec>

*Toe*. In 2015 we re-designed our contact page. The process of contacting us via our online contact form is now much simpler and more efficient. We also re-designed our limited-edition, fine-art print donation page. That process is also much simpler and more efficient as a result.

## Social Networking

Throughout 2015 we continued to regularly update our Facebook page with announcements and news stories about, or affecting, indigenous people at:

<http://www.facebook.com/pages/The-Peoples-of-the-World-Foundation/243657765700765>

## Resources

Our Web portal continued to help fulfill the second part of our mission — “education about indigenous peoples.” It received 640,000 page views in 2015, up by 48% from 2014.

Our resources were used by Non-Governmental Organizations, non-profit and media organizations, students and educators around the world.

## Programs

In 2015 we accepted Alejandro Rodríguez as Spanish Translator in our *Internships* program. Mr. Rodríguez is currently translating our documentary, *Peoples of the World: The Maya*.

## Finances<sup>1</sup>

Donations in 2015 were significantly lower compared to 2014, falling by 42%.

Table 1 below shows a summary of our 2015 balance sheet (data are in US\$).

Income	\$ 640
Expenses	(\$ 442)
Balance	\$ 198

Table 1. 2015 balance sheet.

We acknowledge the contributions of our donors, our directors – who personally funded our operating costs – our advisors, interns and others who contributed their time, energy and resources in 2015.

## Plans for 2016

In 2016 we will release our second feature-length documentary, *Peoples of the World: The Maya*. It will be available for online, on-demand rental and purchase. We will also make our first documentary, *Peoples of the World: Southeast Asia*, available for online, on-demand rental and purchase. Both documentaries will be translated into Spanish.

Our monthly photo-essays will be re-named as the opinion editorial articles that they have become over the past few years.

We will publish our eighth, annual Indigenous Peoples Calendar.

2016 will be a “Tac” year. We will add significantly to the content of our Web portal, while also making minor updates to its information technology platform and re-designing parts of its user interface.

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<sup>1</sup> Financial data appearing in this report have not been audited by a Certified Public Accountant.