

Ecumenical Indigenous Peoples Network (EIPN)

Ecumenical Indigenous People's Network

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Contribution to project outcome

An overall aim of this project is to encourage and empower the global Ecumenical Indigenous Peoples' Networks to take their rightful place as important actors of the ecumenical mission movement. It is not possible to over-emphasize the desperate situations facing Indigenous Peoples worldwide. Their continuing subjection to colonial subjugation, to socio-political oppression, economic exploitation, suppression through militarization, forced displacement in conflict torn areas must be stopped. The on-going impact of the so-called *Doctrine of Discovery* that deprives Indigenous Peoples of their sacred lands through resource extraction, ecological catastrophe, land grabbing, and human trafficking leave their communities utterly devastated with psycho-social consequences that have decimated and continue to traumatise Indigenous peoples both now and for generations to come. These are the true stories of Indigenous Peoples and their territories. The project is therefore integral to the WCC's work to bring healing and transformation to the whole ecumenical movement, embodying the full reality and integrity of Indigenous life. Integral to the healing of Indigenous Peoples and for the transformation of oppressive institutions and relationships is the provision of safe spaces and opportunities that enable and make possible reconciliation. Such healing is imperative for both Indigenous and non-Indigenous peoples, and reconciliation between the two groups is necessary especially in the context of ecumenism

Activity output indicators

Through this activity the following outputs will be achieved:

IP Spirituality and Reconciliation Conference & IP Reference Group

The Indigenous spirituality and reconciliation conference is the WCC's intentional commitment to strengthening the IP networks by providing opportunities and spaces for Indigenous Peoples to gather and consider what reconciliation and healing mean for them. It will involve intentional effort to enable dialogue and sharing between Indigenous and non-Indigenous peoples. Key agendas will include a review of reconciliation processes in various global contexts to inform on-going work, and strengthening ecumenical Indigenous networks as active dialogue partners with member churches promoting fuller participation of IP in the life and work of the WCC.

Primary audience

Member churches, regional and national Indigenous networks, ecumenical bodies and partners, theological seminaries and students, clergy and ministry leaders, mission agencies, IP regional networks, IP youth networks, state agencies, UN and civil society agencies.

Planned activities and events for 2018

The IP Spirituality and Reconciliation Conference is planned to be held in late June-July in Tonga for 4 days. Participation is open but up to a hundred is expected. As this gathering was agreed by the IP Reference Group at its meeting in Manila in May 2017, the group is expected to be actively involved in the planning of the gathering as well as being present at the event. The event will be a good opportunity for finalising plans for the UN Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues and an analysis of the World Mission conference, particularly the Indigenous Youth pre-conference. It will also be an

opportunity to celebrate 70 years of WCC ecumenical engagement in the Pacific region.

Events

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| June-July | Indigenous Global Spirituality & Reconciliation Conference (+ IP Ref Group) WCC 70th Anniversary | Tonga |
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Indigenous Peoples Programmes

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Contribution to project outcome

The project highlights the centrality of Indigenous concerns and issues to the WCC Pilgrimage of Justice and Peace. Here significant focus is given to advocacy, empowerment, and leadership development for Indigenous youth and women. Indigenous Peoples' rights, cultural identity, and traditional life style are fundamental to their human dignity and struggles for survival. Political and humanitarian actions and strategies are key aspects of the IP programmes and this project is key to addressing the on-going realities of marginalisation and exploitation that Indigenous Peoples suffer. Attention to Indigenous youth is particularly urgent especially if there is to be hope of strengthening Indigenous ecumenical participation and leadership into the future.

Activity output indicators

Through this activity the following outputs will be achieved:

Ecumenical Indigenous Youth Network (EIYN) launch

Young Indigenous Theologians School

The struggles to survive in Indigenous communities around the world are most starkly evident amongst the younger generations who are vulnerable to racist bullying in schools, domestic violence, sexual abuse, human trafficking, substance abuse and addiction to name a few. Current research shows a high level of suicide amongst Indigenous youth as a common experience for Indigenous communities around the world. It is therefore absolutely crucial and urgent that ecumenical programmes like this are resourced to give the necessary support and affirmation for Indigenous youth as they struggle for healing and wholeness under extremely dire circumstances. In that spirit, the Ecumenical Indigenous Youth Network will be launched as a pre-conference gathering in Arusha Tanzania.

Sadly, the continuing acts of atrocity and dehumanisation to which Indigenous peoples and communities are subjected come from actors that include Christians and churches who are directly or indirectly complicit. Therefore the Ecumenical Indigenous Youth Network will be looking ahead towards General Assembly 2021 by initiating a global ecumenical Indigenous young theologians' school as a critical forum for engaging Indigenous youth in theological reflection and discourse. This will be an intentional study group that will focus on producing an Indigenous theology of the *Oikos* that adequately articulate earth-centred Indigenous spirituality and theologies from the margin. This resource will contribute to the WCC Working Group on Climate Change and work on sustainable development that will shape the WCC the pilgrimage of justice and peace into the future.

Primary audience

Member churches, ecumenical bodies and partners, Indigenous Youth, Indigenous Theologians, Theological students and seminaries, Indigenous human rights advocates and activists.

Planned activities and events for 2018

Given that the World Mission conference is characterised as a Younger Mission Leaders' Conference, the *Ecumenical Indigenous Youth Network* (EIYN) aims to make its mark through its pre-conference gathering and throughout the conference itself, in collaboration with Geti and ECHO. As an ecumenical network, EIYN also looks ahead and is keen to play its part in the pilgrimage of justice and peace now and into the future. The EIYN pre-conference will bring together up to 50 participants in Arusha in March.

Events

| Date | Name | Venue |
|-------------|---|--------------|
| Early March | IP Programmes: Ecumenical Indigenous Youth Network (EIYN) pre-WMC gathering | Tanzania |