

Indigenous Women's Biodiversity Network (IWBN)
"Indigenous Women- Building Relationships, Mentoring, Empowerment"
2016 IUCN WCC in Honolulu, Hawai'i



Lucy Mulenkei is a Maasai woman from Kenya who began her activism as a broadcast Journalist on issues related to environment and development. She is currently the Executive Director of Indigenous Information Network (IIN), an organization that works with Indigenous communities in Kenya, networking on different aspects of environment, sustainable development, human rights, women's rights, among other development projects at the local, national, regional and international levels.

Ms Mulenkei is the co-founder of the Indigenous Women's Biodiversity Network (IWBN) along with Florina Lopez from Panama. Since 1998, they have steered the network together and have trained and mentored many young women.

Ms Mulenkei is a coordinator and member of several Indigenous Peoples organizations, networks and alliances. She is the current Chair of the African Indigenous Women Organization based in the East African Region, an organization that provides African Indigenous Women an opportunity to be visible at different levels.



Yeshing Juliana Upún Yos is a Mayan Kaqchikel woman from Guatemala. She is beginning her career in law and is an advocate of Indigenous Peoples and women rights. Her focus has been on the collective rights of Indigenous Peoples, especially as they relate to natural resources and sustainable development with a focus on biodiversity conservation based on traditional knowledge. In addition she has also worked on the following issues- Mayan Peoples rights and Maya Women rights; Maya development, communal management of lands and bio-cultural territories, forests, biodiversity and management of collective areas by indigenous people; the Kaqchikel Volcanic Chain; and climate change

Ms Yeshing is currently a coordinator for Indigenous Peoples Rights of Sotzil Association based in Guatemala. Sotzil has undertaken numerous technical and political activities relating to indigenous peoples and their collective rights at a local, national, regional and international level. Her experiences demonstrate her commitment to indigenous peoples, their spirituality, traditional knowledge, language, culture, and identity.

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Polina Shulbaeva is a Selkup woman from Central Siberia (Russia). The population of the Selkup people is not more than 3,500 people in the world. She is currently the International Indigenous Forum on Biodiversity (IIFB) regional coordinator of Indigenous Peoples of Russia and Eastern Europe. She is also currently working at the Center for Support of Indigenous Peoples of the North (CSIPN) and is the Director of the Legal Information Center called Swallow.

Since 2000, Ms Shulbaeva has focused on issues relating to the protection of the environment, indigenous rights, access to food, customary and sustainable use of biodiversity, and traditional knowledge systems for sustainable development.

Ms Shulbaeva is a member of an Expert Group- "Aborigine Forum" Indigenous Peoples of Russia, where she shares her knowledge as an expert on indigenous traditional knowledge and the UN Convention on Biodiversity.



Malia Nobrega-Olivera is a Native Hawaiian woman from Hanapēpē Valley, Kaaui, Kona, Kaua'i. She is currently the Hawai'i inuiākea School of Hawaiian Knowledge, Director of Strategic Partnerships and Community Engagement. One of her main programs is called Loli Aniau, Maka'ala Aniau (LAMA) (Climate Change, Climate Alert). Recently LAMA has partnered with others to sponsor the 'Aimalama conference and community workshops that aim to empower our community and strengthen our ability to be kilo (observer) that use traditional methodologies like Kaulana Mahina.

Ms Nobrega-Olivera is a Native Hawaiian educator, kumu hula, salt maker, mom, community organizer, and advocate of indigenous rights at all levels – locally, regionally, and internationally. Her experiences demonstrate her commitment to her people, language, and culture and to indigenous peoples worldwide.

Malia's advocacy work has taken her to various international meetings such as the United Nations Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD) and the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC). More importantly she is committed to being an active member and leader in her local community on Kaua'i and throughout the Pae 'Āina o Hawai'i.

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Noelani Yamashita is a Native Hawaiian woman who currently serves as the Executive Director for Ka Honua Momona International, a Molokai based nonprofit dedicated to being a model of sustainability through education and community based environmental management steeped in Hawai'i's indigenous culture.

Each year, Ka Honua Momona cared for its two 30-acre ancient Hawaiian fishponds by daily mentoring three promising youth, who lead 12 monthly community work days, at which they remove 9 tons of invasive seaweed, an acre of mangrove, and host over 10,000 volunteer hours. Ka Honua Momona has worked on a variety of issues facing Molokai and Hawai'i including but not limited to: early childhood education, cultural practices, climate change, breastfeeding, parental bonding, and sustainable leadership.

Believing we are the change we need, Noelani shifted paradigms throughout her career, from performing the University of Hawai'i's first danced/chanted thesis, to supporting Molokai's first smart micro grid and currently, piloting a shared women's leadership model.

Ms. Yamashita, has been honored as a member of the South Pacific Island Council of Leaders, a Weinberg Fellow, an Americans for Indian Opportunity Ambassador, a Kamehameha Schools' Fellow, Women Leading Change, a Pacific American Emerging Leader, and currently a Pacific Centuries Fellow.



Mueda Nawanat was born as a stateless person in a border province of Thailand twenty years after her parents migrated from Karen State, Myanmar because of the civil war. As a Karen ethnic minority, she struggled for nine years for the right to Thai citizenship, which made her aware of the importance of the law. For this reason, she studied law at Payap University in Chiang Mai, Thailand and is currently the coordinator of Mekong Youth Assembly and legal consultant for the Development Center for Children and Community in Thailand.

In 2009, Ms Nawanat volunteered as a human rights lawyer at the Thai Volunteer Service Foundation and later joined the Development Center for Children and Community Network (DCCN) in 2010 as a Legal Status Consultant for DCCN's Stateless Children Protection

Project, where she worked on protecting the human rights of stateless children and promoted

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community resource management, sustainable development, and improved livelihoods. In 2012, she received a scholarship from Earth Rights International's Mekong School in Thailand to study the impacts of large-scale infrastructure projects, particularly hydropower dams, and how citizens can be engaged in advocating for more equitable development in the Mekong region.

Mueda has founded the Mekong Youth Assembly, a coalition of Mekong youth activists dedicated to promoting the rights of the child and participation of youth in claiming their environmental rights in the Mekong region. The Mekong Region is rich in ethnic and cultural diversity, natural resources, watersheds and biodiversity. The Mekong River, or "Mother River", is much more than just a natural resource. The river is the heart and soul of mainland South-East Asia. Mueda trains and empowers indigenous youth from the Mekong region to get the skills they need to stand up and protect the environment and their communities.



Alisi Rabukawaqa has lived in Fiji for all 28 years of her life and graduated from the University of the South Pacific in Suva, Fiji in 2010 with a BSc Degree in Marine Science. Choosing this as a career path came out of her personal fascination with the marine ecosystem from a young age and wanting to work in a field where she would be out on the reef working, as well as protecting it.

For the last year, Ms Rabukawaqa has worked as the Fiji Program Coordinator for the Coral Reef Alliance, an NGO based out of Oakland, California that has worked in Fiji for over 10 years. To explain CORAL's work in a sentence would be "uniting communities to save coral reefs".

In 2011, Alisi was selected as part of a delegation of 11 which represented Fiji to an International Japanese funded, 2 month program, with 12 other countries, called Ship for the World Youth. It was here that she first experienced international dialogue on Sustainable Development. She realized that the work to protect fragile ecosystems, which were affected by much larger global impacts, needed an approach that could link the global world to the one community whose livelihood and way of life was being affected.

As a conservationist, an important component of her work is the promotion of traditional environmental knowledge and encouraging communities' to first recognize the inbuilt knowledge and systems in place and then using modern technology and science to enhance it, which includes translation scientific conservation principles into a language they understand.

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Mililani Trask is a Native Hawaiian attorney with an extensive background on Native Hawaiian land trusts, resources and legal entitlements. Her work has been cited by the Hawaii Advisory Committee to the U.S. Commission on Civil Rights and published by Cultural Survival and IWGIA Magazines on issues relating to native people and human and civil rights.

In October 1993, Ms. Trask was invited to become a member of the prestigious Indigenous Initiative for Peace (IIP), a global body of indigenous leaders convened by Nobel Laureate Rigoberta Menchu-Tum, the United Nations Goodwill Ambassador to the UN Decade on Indigenous Peoples. Since that time, Ms. Trask has worked in the global arena for passage of the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples. In this respect, Ms. Trask attended and

participated in the United National Global Consultations in Cairo, Beijing, Copenhagen and Vienna as a Pacific Delegate to the indigenous caucus.

Ms. Trask is a founding member and current Chair of the Indigenous Women's Network, a coalition of Native American and Native Hawaiian Women whose work includes community based economic development, social justice, human rights, housing and health.

In 2001, Ms. Trask was nominated and appointed as the Pacific representative to the United Nations Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues to serve a three-year term beginning Jan. 1, 2002. Ms. Trask was appointed to the position by the President of the Economic Social Council of the United Nations and is currently considered an indigenous expert to the United Nations in international and human rights law.