

# Tok Blong Pasifik

VOL. 8, ISSUE 2

NEWS AND VIEWS FROM THE PACIFIC ISLANDS



*35th Anniversary Issue:  
Celebrating Pacific Wayfinders*

*IN THIS ISSUE  
Elaine Monds Interview  
North/South Indigenous Links  
The Next 35 Years*



*Changing Current* by Ake Lianga is part of the exhibition, *Pacific Currents*, A cross-cultural collaboration by Solomon Islands artist Ake Lianga and Coast Salish artist John Marston. Drawing from their respective traditions, the artists explore cultural themes from both sides of the Pacific, by means of wood sculpture, painting, lino printing and serigraphy. On November 10, 2010, the opening celebration from 7-9pm at Alcheringa Gallery will also see the blessing of a completed 17-foot ceremonial war canoe. This magnificent work was initiated by Sepik carver Claytus Yambon working together with John Marston during last fall's Hailans to Ailans international exhibition.

Alcheringa Gallery, 665 Fort Street, Victoria, BC  
[www.alcheringa-gallery.com](http://www.alcheringa-gallery.com).

## PPP IS PROUD TO ANNOUNCE OUR 21ST PACIFIC NETWORKING CONFERENCE: *Celebrating Indigenous Knowledge and Leadership - 35 Years of Action and Solidarity* **November 10<sup>th</sup> to 13<sup>th</sup>, 2010 | Victoria, BC Canada**

The Pacific Peoples' Partnership is celebrating 35 years of work with communities and organizations in the South and North Pacific. We are pleased to welcome you, the Pacific Wayfinders and Changemakers to gather and reflect on the exciting innovations taking place throughout the Pacific. Together, we will inspire future directions for renewed partnerships and solidarity action.

This is the 21st Pacific Networking Conference hosted by PPP, to be held from November 10 - 13, 2010 at the University of Victoria and upon the Coast Salish territories. Within the conference, we will examine peace, human dignity, cultural integrity, social justice, and environmental sustainability. Being a landmark year for the organization, we seek to renew old partnerships, strengthen current ones, and unfold new opportunities for the future. Looking beyond the discourse of problems, the conference will provide an interactive forum that profiles community leadership and innovation that has emerged in the Pacific context. As a meeting place, it will provide a unique opportunity for dialogue and exchange between the Indigenous Peoples from all over the Pacific, North and South, together with other civil society actors, academics and organizations. Collectively, the event will serve to inspire renewed partnerships that steer towards horizons of increased local resilience and community wellbeing.

A wide range of cultural celebrations, events and activities have been planned. These include arts and cultural events, such as this special 35th Anniversary Edition of Tok Blong Pasifik; an exhibit featuring Solomon Island Artist Ake Lianga and Coast Salish Artist John Marston at Alcheringa Gallery; a night of films from the Pacific including a screening of "The Land has Eyes"; Showcase of PPP history and testimonials from interns, board members, volunteers, partners and supporters; and an Honouring Feast for PPP champions and supporters.

Honoured keynote speakers include: Dr. Vilsoni Hereniko, Professor of Pacific Studies, University of the South Pacific, and Director of the Center for Pacific Arts in Fiji, an award winning filmmaker; author and playwright. And Chad Kālepa Baybayan, Navigator-in-Residence, 'Imiloa Astronomy Center in Hilo, Hawaii, Pwo (master navigator in the Micronesian tradition).

Delegates, speakers and participants representing the South Pacific, the First Peoples, Métis and Inuit Peoples of Canada, Academia, Students, Faith Based organizations, NGOs and impassioned friends will together chart the re-energized future of PPP's work into the current networks that face issues relevant to our stakeholders. Together we will reflect on the past, celebrate the successes and inspiring innovations of today, and plan for solidarity in our actions for tomorrow.

**Special thanks to our partners:** Canadian International Development Agency (CIDA), Development and Peace, International Development Research Centre (IDRC), University of Victoria, UBC Museum of Anthropology, Centre for Asia Pacific Initiatives (CAPI), The United Church of Canada, Primate's World Relief Development Fund (PWRDF), First Peoples' Cultural Foundation, First Peoples' Heritage, Language and Cultural Council, Rights & Democracy, Alcheringa Gallery, Travel with a Challenge, VIDEA and VanCity Credit Union.



## PACIFIC PEOPLES' PARTNERSHIP

Established in 1975, Pacific Peoples' Partnership is a unique non-governmental, non-profit organization working with communities and organizations in the South and North Pacific to support shared aspirations for peace, cultural integrity, social justice, human dignity, and environmental sustainability by:

- Promoting increased understanding among Canadians on issues of importance to the people of the Pacific islands.
- Advocating for social, political, and economic policy change at all levels.
- Fostering the development of sustainable communities in the Pacific.
- Facilitating links between indigenous peoples of the Pacific islands and Aboriginal peoples of Canada.
- Strengthening relations between Canadian and Pacific island communities and civil society organizations.

### STAFF:

**Executive Director:** April Ingham

**Papua Project Coordinator:**  
Todd Biderman

**Financial Officer:** Susan Albion

**Communications and Outreach  
Coordinator:** Morgan Slavkin

### CREDITS:

**Guest Editor:** Alison Gardner

**Graphic Design:** Justin Biderman

**Front Cover Photo:** Sam Low

**Pacific Peoples' Partnership**  
407-620 View Street  
Victoria, BC, Canada, V8W 1J6  
250 381 4131

[info@pacificpeoplespartnership.org](mailto:info@pacificpeoplespartnership.org)  
[www.pacificpeoplespartnership.org](http://www.pacificpeoplespartnership.org)

# CONTENTS

Tok Tok : Founding a Foundation .....	4
Life Lessons and Island Links Lead to PPP Presidency .....	5
Indigenous Links Across the Pacific .....	7
Roots & Shoots: The earliest PPP connections with Indigenous Peoples .....	9
The Next 35 Years .....	10
Introducing April Ingham, PPP Executive Director .....	11
West Papua: 25 years of action and solidarity .....	12
An Interview with Solomon Islands Artist Ake Lianga .....	15
Elaine Monds Reflects on Her Association with SPFF/PPP .....	16
An Interview with Coast Salish Artist John Marston .....	18
<i>Tok Blong Pasifik</i> Through the Years .....	19
PPP's Portfolio of Projects: A remarkable achievement .....	20
Biche Village on Ngatoke Island, Solomon Islands: A report from the field .....	24
Reflections from an <i>Indigenous Peoples</i> Abroad Intern .....	28
Change-makers: a poem by Janet Rogers .....	29
Pacific Peoples' Arts & Cultural Exchanges, 2009-2010 .....	30
Yan Christian Warinussey: 2005 John Humphrey Freedom Award Laureate .....	31

### ABOUT THE COVER:

"Nainoa Wayfinding" was photographed by Sam Low and reproduced with joint permission of the photographer and the 'Imiloa Astronomy Center of Hawai'i. The 40,000-square-foot Center weaves today's newest astronomy findings and Hawai'i's cultural & linguistic heritage into a compelling story of star exploration. Located on nine acres of lush ethno-botanical gardens in Hilo on Hawai'i's Big Island, the Center features a planetarium, exhibit halls, learning center, restaurant and museum store. For more information visit [www.imiloahawaii.org](http://www.imiloahawaii.org)

# TOK TOK: FOUNDING A FOUNDATION

By Jim Boutilier



Has it really been thirty-five years? More than anyone, I suppose I should know the answer for the simple reason that I was there at the beginning when the **South Pacific Peoples Foundation (SPPF)**, the fore-runner of the **Pacific Peoples' Partnership**, consisted of nothing more than a table and a chair. But while the assets were

modest, the vision was grand: to become the Canadian NGO for the Pacific Islands.

We had some encouragement from New York where an enterprising Australian actress had established the Foundation for the Peoples of the South Pacific (FSP). Elizabeth Silverstein, assisted by her redoubtable "Chief of Staff", Father Stanley Hosie, was eager to open a Canadian branch of FSP to gain access to Canadian funding. A friend of hers from the entertainment industry, Pat Finlay, came from Seattle to meet me and members of the Board that Ms. Silverstein had established in Vancouver. Together, we applied for federal monies and advertised for an Executive Director for FSP Canada even though we had no idea whether we could even pay one. Fortunately for us, Phil Esmonde was willing to take the risk, arriving full of ideas and organizational skills. However, he soon found New York's approach too imperial for his liking and persuaded the new Board to break with FSP and launch SPPF on its own course.

While this took place in the late 1970s and early 1980s, the world was in a Cold War. Most tiny island states had achieved their independence slowly, if unsteadily, by this stage, but they found themselves either entirely ignored or at the heart of this "war" (with French nuclear testing in the Tahitian archipelago and rumours of Soviet submarine activity in the Central Pacific). Consciously or unconsciously, Canadian foreign policy makers assumed that there were either no problems in the islands (after all, paradise must be devoid of problems) or, if there were, Australia and New Zealand would look after these beautiful but fragile polities.

SPPF, however, was undaunted. Fortunately for us, this was a time when there were high levels of social awareness in Oceania – anti-nuclear activism, aboriginal empowerment movements, and the first real hints of environmental networking. Thanks to Executive Directors like Phil and, later, Stuart Wulff, SPPF raised funds, articulated imaginative programmes and developed Canadian awareness of the complexity and cultural diversity of

the South Pacific. It was hard work. Money was almost always tight. One of SPPF's early sources of funding was CIDA, the Canadian International Development Agency, whose funding priorities changed over the years but whose support has remained foundational.

Indeed, SPPF became just what it set out to be, the Canadian organization superbly knowledgeable about and connected with the Pacific Islands. It embarked on a creative new initiative: arranging for Canadian First Nations youth to do outreach in the islands. There are remarkable similarities between First Nations and Oceanic communities and this shift in focus fuelled an internal debate within SPPF, namely, what are the boundaries of Oceania? If the Board supported indigenous activities in Papua, the Indonesian-administered half of the island of New Guinea, was it straying beyond the South Pacific? After much soul-searching, the more inclusive name, Pacific Peoples Partnership (PPP), was unveiled, embracing Canada's Pacific coast on the one hand and parts of insular Southeast Asia on the other.

SPPF/PPP's 35-year history is a monument to vision, indefatigable commitment, Board flexibility and loyalty (to the concept and to one another). It is also a monument to adept, endlessly patient, and breathtakingly conscientious EDs and to an indelible belief that what we were doing was right. What an array of personalities! What an array of ideas! Naming names is always an uncertain strategy, but where would we have been without the Margaret Argues, Elaine Monds, and Alison Gardners of this world; always there, always committed?

And what of the islands? In many ways they are still forgotten, injured in the unforgiving world of globalization. Sadly, a number have been tarnished by coups or deep-seated unrest. But they are wonderfully challenging and accommodating places to be. This was and is the world of SPPF and PPP. What an unmitigated delight to watch over this NGO for all these years. It's been, and remains, a deeply impressive organization with a conscience and a zeal to succeed in years to come.

**Jim Boutilier** - *President Emeritus*

# LIFE LESSONS AND ISLAND LINKS LEAD TO PPP PRESIDENCY

By Eugene Lee



*PPP President, Eugene Lee, visiting the city of Kuching, capital of the Malaysian state of Sarawak, island of Borneo.*

It has been 35 years since the modest inception of the Pacific Peoples' Partnership (PPP). That makes 2010 a monumental year for the organization. As recounted by our founder Dr Jim Boutilier in his "Tok Tok" at the beginning of this issue, PPP started with a chance encounter between him and the founder of a South Pacific organization based in New York. Another chance encounter led me to PPP many decades later.

Joining a venerable organization based in Victoria, BC, was far from my thoughts when I grew up in Edmonton after my parents moved there when I was nine years old. However, a PPP posting on Craigslist looking for Board members caught my interest. Like many people living in the prairie provinces, I was looking to move to the warmer climes of Victoria, and volunteering with a not-for-profit was a way I could meet people. I called the organization and met with Glenn Raynor, then Executive Director. I had done some volunteer work overseas and we saw parallels in issues with my experience. He invited me to a Board meeting at the home of then president Michelle Noulet-Morfitt and before I knew it in 2008, I was a PPP Board member!

Backing up a bit, I was born in northern Borneo in the small country state of Brunei Darussalam. As a child of Chinese and Dayak descent, my family faced four generations of prejudice which we came to accept it as normal there. Though born and raised in Brunei, my family and I were stateless, issued with identification cards stating that we resided in Brunei and nothing more. Even so, these cards were not easily attainable nor was the renewal process easy.

My father worked as a Power Engineer with the Royal Dutch Shell oil company so life was not so hard in Brunei. Climbing over the walls of poverty, my father put himself through trade school to ensure basic necessities as well as a few luxurious items such as a car and a watch. As a young child, I was oblivious to the hardships that my parent's faced as children and how lucky I was to have my necessities met. However, when I was old enough to understand basic economics and we moved to Canada in 1988, my father and especially my mother regularly reminded me how fortunate I was to be in Canada and to have spending money equal to the monthly or sometimes yearly income of many families in developing countries.

The realization that PPP's work in the South Pacific is similar to that of so many organizations working on the island of Borneo has bolstered my understanding of issues facing other island states. In effect, these reminders had changed my viewpoint about different economic systems adopted in South East Asia and how they affect civil society in these countries. For every clichéd story of rule by a totalitarian government, there are stories of injustices from the ignored poor majority. The three countries that make up Borneo are not excused; environmental destruction, corruption, and denial of indigenous rights are among the many failures in social structures hampering development.

In my early teens, I grappled with issues of economic progress at the cost of social progress. The difference between what I had and wanted compared to what people in South East Asia had and wanted was tremendous. My visits back to northern Borneo every few years since immigrating to Canada have opened my eyes to the reality of socio-economic problems, not only in that area but all over the world.

Having Borneo as my birthplace, I am naturally drawn to environmental issues. As new species of flora and fauna are still being discovered, the rate of forest destruction there is faster than ever. Indigenous peoples are no longer native to their land as they are introduced to new religions and integrated into city life. Rapid industrialization has created environmental destruction and social complexities; scientists have predicted food and water scarcity facing the next generation. One Indigenous group that has felt the effects of rapid change is the nomadic Penan. After hundreds of years roaming the forests, the last of this nomadic group has finally settled in an urban area, into a different social and economic structure akin to that of North America. Unless there is a conscious movement to help this group preserve their culture, their native language, art, and spirituality may slowly disappear.

Industrial palm plantations have caused major environmental destruction to the land, water, and air; so much so that scientists working in the area give it another 50 years before most forests are eliminated. In the 1990s, rainforests were burned to clear the land for palm seedlings. The burning covered Borneo in smog, blowing as far north and west as China. In addition, erosion from the plantations suffocates precious fresh water systems with higher than normal concentration levels of nutrients and waste.

My last visit to Borneo in 2007 was the hardest. I traveled from the north to the south, through three countries on four flights and a speedboat ride to reach Tanjung Puting, a UNESCO biosphere reserve. A river separates the destructive activities

on the north side from the organizations working in animal rehabilitation, tree planting, and education on the other. This environmentally sensitive area is also the site of the Leakey Foundation's Orangutan sanctuary led by Dr. Birute Galdikas. I witnessed how interconnected were the positive and negative aspects of life in the rainforest.

For example, the community has a small gold mining company operating in the vicinity, owned by a local merchant and backed by Chinese investors. This company provides a living for some community members; however, the river in which they drink and bathe is being poisoned by mercury from the mines. Desertification is also creeping outwards as the mine expands without a recovery process in the company's plans. The land where the mining occurs is leased from the state without any stakeholder consultations from the locals. Migrant workers from different parts of Indonesia are also competing for jobs. Those unemployed venture into the biosphere to harvest rare old hardwood trees to sell in the illegal market. Out of these trials and tribulations, come grassroots efforts supported by different agencies from around the world, to improve the socio-economic conditions for the local people, educating them to know their rights; improving farming practices so that they can grow their own food; reforestation to improve the environmental diversity and reduce damage by illegal loggers and poachers.

It may look very bleak for Borneo and similarly for many other island states; however organizations such as PPP with a civil society focus are important for the progress of socio-economic improvement and for the education and advocacy outreach they provide in developed countries. More importantly, different NGOs working in development are not only helping but are also empowering the locals with knowledge.

Like many modern aid organizations, they are trying to break the traditional "sob and help" pattern in relief work. In a recent meeting between the Centre for Asia Pacific Initiatives (CAPI) and PPP, Heidi Tydemers (former PPP staff member and current CAPI Program Manager) declared that the locals working with these organizations are tired of being patronized. There may be a lot of doom and gloom in the islands, referring to the South Pacific, but there is also entrepreneurship and innovation. Out of necessity and scarcity, some of the best practices in development and preservation work come from these areas because process intervention by aid organizations is limited. As a long time student of Social Entrepreneurship, I would agree that development work is heading in that direction. Grassroots organizations need help financially to improve socio-economic conditions, but like any new business looking for funding, an investor must have utmost trust in such organizations.

In 2004, Glenn Raynor, a long time volunteer and staff member, became PPP's new Executive Director. A worldly and charming man who has worked in the Philippines, Japan, Indonesia, and in East Africa, Glenn's tenure set in motion a new era for the organization. His tenacity brought in fresh funding, including a

three-year CIDA project grant to work in West Papua, which in turn recruited new supporters and donations. With the monies secured, Glenn hired another long time supporter and volunteer, Todd Biderman as Papua Project officer. The dynamic duo traveled to West Papua to assess the needs of the eventual partner groups, laying invaluable groundwork. Following Glenn's departure for Japan on a Rotary Fellowship in 2009, April Ingham has taken up the ED reins with equal determination to move PPP forward.



*Eugene Lee, Charlene (Qwa`ste`not) George of T'Sou-ke Nation and Claytus Yambon from Papua New Guinea tour the Sooke Potholes Park on Vancouver Island, BC*

Funding issues have been the primary subject of board meetings for the last year and more cuts by all levels of government to partner organizations have brought added worries. April and Todd have faced these challenges head on, trying to fill the financial gaps caused by the economic downturn. Amongst hardship and adversity, we proudly celebrate our 35th anniversary, a feat that very few small NGOs have achieved. PPP's story is one of amazing dedication: a chance idea, a grant application, and a table and chair have been transformed into 35 years of remarkable accomplishments. Among them has been the unique linking of Canada's First Nations experience and that of the Pacific Islanders.

It has been a unique honour and privilege to serve on PPP's Board and as its President since 2009, supporting the "little organization that does!" Stories of dedication and perseverance not only inspire, but also instill unity in those involved. This year's Pacific Wayfinders conference at the University of Victoria will be a testament to the solidarity for the peoples of the South Pacific and the First peoples of North America; a demonstration of many truly committed people who give and have given selflessly in pursuit of a common goal.

# INDIGENOUS LINKS ACROSS THE PACIFIC

By Glenn Raynor, PPP Executive Director, 2004-2009



IPAP Participants with Glenn Raynor, 2002

When I first joined Pacific Peoples' Partnership in the spring of 2004, this 29 years young organization was well known across Canada and the Pacific for its **Indigenous Peoples Abroad Programme** (IPAP). The product of a fruitful collaboration since 1999 with Canada's Department of Foreign Affairs and International Trade, this flagship programme helped craft PPP's unique niche. No other Canadian NGO has North-South Indigenous linking so central to its mission. Indeed everything from the logo created by Solomon Islands artist Ake Lianga evoking North South Indigenous ties across Oceania to PPP's constitution makes this linking the very essence of PPP. IPAP created meaningful opportunities for Aboriginal Canadians to engage in international cooperation in a Pacific indigenous context, sharing knowledge and insights gleaned in their home communities with Pacific counterparts confronting similar challenges. From 1999 to mid 2006, nearly 85 young professionals from Canadian First Nations, Inuit and Métis communities honed their skills during six month placements. IPAP's holistic approach honoured traditional knowledge, values often lacking in mainstream initiatives. In addition to fostering rich learning opportunities, IPAP built a body of knowledge and best practises that continue to inform PPP's work.

In its inaugural year, IPAP participants were placed as far as Siberut Island in the remote Mentawai group of Indonesia and in Sarawak, Malaysia as well as in Fiji and Vanuatu. Subsequent years saw placements in Aotearoa (New Zealand), Rarotonga and Aitutaki, and eventually the Solomon Islands. Participants originated from every region of Canada representing a broad cross section of Canada's First Peoples who served as exemplary ambassadors for their home communities, PPP and Canada. Former participants have since gone on to distinguish themselves professionally and personally in many walks of life, still proudly carrying the lessons learned and experiences gained through IPAP.

Four years after its funding was cut, IPAP remains one of PPP's best-known initiatives and greatest success stories of its 35-year history. However, it's just one of a rich portfolio of past and present initiatives that have fostered North-South Indigenous links at PPP. A proper list including acknowledgements would fill the pages of this edition so a few highlights will have to suffice.

**Pacific Networking Conferences** have been key forums for sharing Indigenous perspectives on international cooperation that respect culture and traditional knowledge. They include delegates from both South Pacific communities and Canadian First Nations to address issues of North and South concern, enriching the work of PPP to achieve better results, while forging enduring links of solidarity and friendship.

Sharing of creativity is another aspect of PPP's Indigenous linking. A recent example was *Hailans to Ailans* in the fall of 2009. The initiative brought contemporary visual and performing artists from the highlands and islands of Papua New Guinea to Vancouver Island. It included an exhibition at Alcheringa Gallery and a dynamic performance at the Wawadit'la First Nations Bighouse in Victoria. Indigenous artists are transcending the post-colonial economic, social and environmental challenges faced by their societies and keeping their rich cultural traditions alive and vibrant.



## Strong Women-Focused Initiatives

**The Fijian ECOWOMAN project**, Women, Science and Technology for a Better Pacific Environment, ran from 1998 to 2001. Bringing together professional and grassroots women to share their respective knowledge and expertise, the project enhanced Pacific women's understanding and use of science and technology to improve their lives and participate effectively in environmental management and sustainable development. PPP and SPACHEE (South Pacific Action Committee on Human Ecology and the Environment) were partners in the establishment of ECOWOMAN, creating holistic, people-centred, environmentally sustainable approaches to science and technology. Women from a diversity of social backgrounds worked together to solve environmental problems in their communities.

A subsequent programme in Fiji that strengthened traditional knowledge in the Pacific and Canada was WAINIMATE (Women's Association for Natural Medicinal Therapy), running from 1999-2003. **WAINIMATE** combined the preservation and enhancement of traditional and western science-based knowledge in forest and environmental protection. It enhanced women's status and offered potential for poverty alleviation through support of a collective of Indigenous women healers protecting culturally and economically significant biodiversity, preserving traditional ecological knowledge and practising traditional medicine. It forged links with Canadian First Nation traditional medicine practitioners through a series of exchanges that included training workshops on governance, intellectual property rights and biodiversity conservation.

A traditional medicine handbook was published and widely distributed. Traditional medicinal gardens were established at health centres with the cooperation of the Fiji Ministry of Health. Due in large part to the intervention of PPP, WAINIMATE was able to secure UNESCO funding for its work in the preservation of Indigenous Knowledge as well as for its success in improving the health of local communities.

Both WAINIMATE and ECOWOMAN benefitted immensely from the participation of IPAP participants as well as exchanges with Canadian First Nations communities. The rich sharing and results achieved through these linking initiatives continue to inform the work of PPP in its 35th year.

---

*Renee and Stephanie with members of the Kotou Nui-Rarotonga*

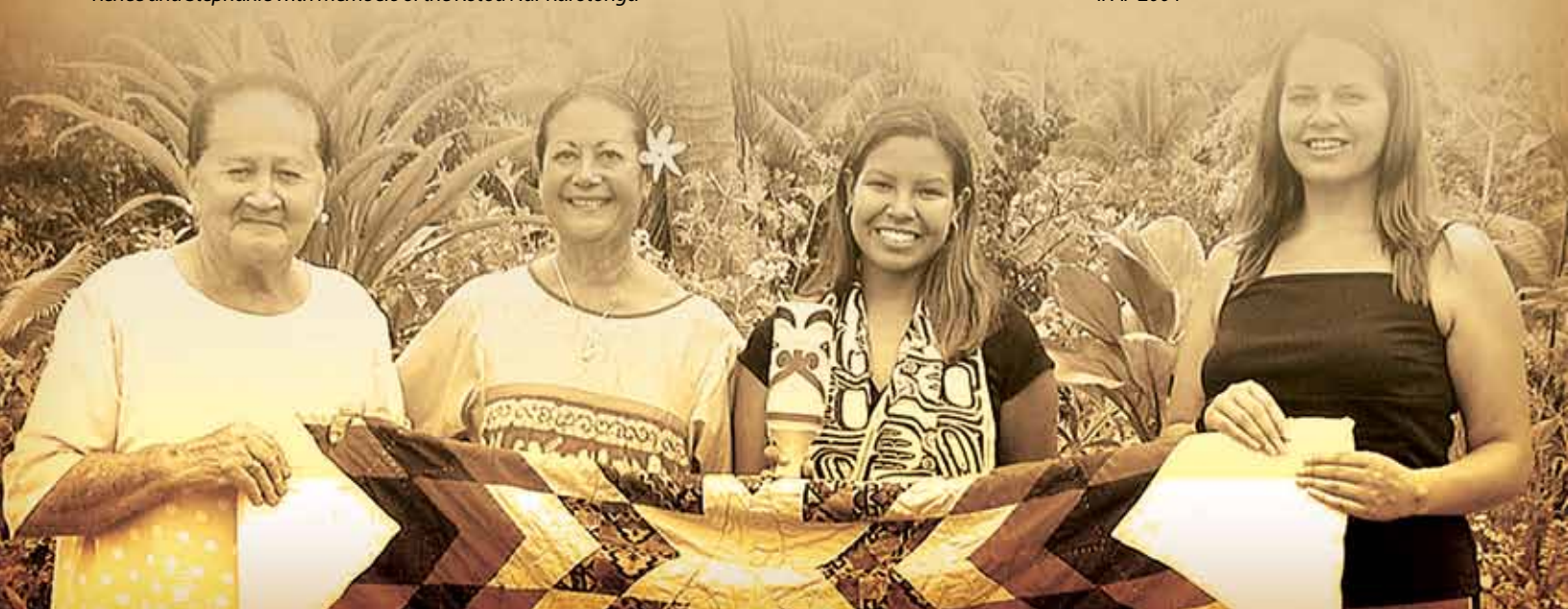
## Environmental Initiatives

A recent programme that owes an immense debt to IPAP is **Shifting Tides: Indigenous Responses to Global Climate Change**. In 2007-2008 it brought together scientists, elders, youth leaders and concerned community members in Rarotonga and across Canada. Coordinated by former IPAP participant Stephanie Peter of the Cowichan First Nation, the delegation included Mona Belleau, another former IPAP participant as its Arctic Canadian representative. Climate change is impacting the Small Island Developing States and the polar regions far more severely than temperate latitudes so it is imperative that people living in these zones engage in informed discussions on adaptation and mitigation measures that address food security along with economic, social and cultural well-being. Shifting Tides sponsored a wide range of forums from large symposia at places like the University of British Columbia to small gatherings in First Nations communities with participation by a broad cross section of leaders, youth and elders. This culminated in a visit to Iqaluit where South Pacific Islanders were exposed to the unique challenges faced by Arctic peoples in the face of rapid and unprecedented environmental changes.

Shifting Tides included a tour by the 37-member Te Korero Maori traditional dance and music ensemble from Rarotonga. Their vibrant high energy shows in Vancouver Island First Nations communities helped spread the message of environmental vulnerability of fragile island environments.



*IPAP 2004*



The project was extensively covered by APTN, the Aboriginal Peoples Television Network, extending the reach deep into Aboriginal Canada. Learning was shared through **Pacific Promises: A Story from the Leaders of Tomorrow**, a children's book co-authored by Cowichan's Stephanie Peter and Deyna Marsh of the Cook Islands Ministry of Environment in Rarotonga. The book presents to children the issues of climate change in Pacific and Canadian Indigenous communities, inspiring them to become strong leaders in these challenging times. As a testament to the unique nature of this collaboration, Pacific Promises will be published by Theytus Books.

PPP's current **Papua Land of Peace: Civil Society Leadership in Conflict Transformation** continues the tradition of creating opportunities for sharing knowledge and best practices of community development, and ending resource conflicts as an essential prerequisite for achieving Millennium Development Goals through its work with Indigenous-led Papuan organizations in Manokwari, West Papua, Indonesia.

These are just a few ways PPP has played a role in forging vital North South Indigenous links over these past 35 years. We owe an immense debt of gratitude to friends and partners across the Pacific, in Canada and beyond for enabling this priceless work to take place.

*Glenn Raynor is currently pursuing a two-year Masters degree in Conflict Analysis and Peace-building in Tokyo, Japan as a Rotary World Peace Fellow. See his report from the Solomon Islands, page 24, as he completes the Applied Field Experience component of the programme.*



## ROOTS AND SHOOTS:

### The earliest PPP connections with Indigenous Peoples

*by Stuart Wulff, PPP Executive Director, 1991-2000*

When Mutang Urud approached PPP in 1999 with the idea of establishing an indigenous internship programme, which would evolve into PPP's IPAP initiative, his choice wasn't arbitrary. PPP had already established a reputation over nearly two decades for effective partnerships with Indigenous Peoples in the Pacific and Canada.

The touchstone for the then-called South Pacific Peoples Foundation's work with Indigenous Peoples, in both the Pacific and Canada, was its role as the principal North American node for the Nuclear Free and Independent Pacific (NFIP) Movement. This Indigenous-led, pan-Pacific network of organizations and Indigenous Nations spearheaded work on a wide range of issues – self-determination and independence, nuclear weapons, economic and social development, environmental, etc. – that also became focal points for SPPF's programming during the 1980s and 90s.

While the strongest connections were first built with Indigenous Peoples in the Pacific, the 1990s provided fruitful opportunities to expand connections with First Nations in Canada. It is illustrative of this development that only three First Nations individuals attended SPPF's relatively small Pacific Networking Conference in 1992, but by mid-decade the conferences had grown to well over 100 participants, with approximately half being Indigenous. A partnership with CUSO during this period enabled SPPF to bring increased numbers of Pacific Islanders to the conference and to then tour them to First Nations host communities throughout British Columbia. We also began to support First Nations individuals to visit with our Pacific partners.

Canada's hosting of APEC's heads of government meeting in 1997 provided another opportunity to expand SPPF's role. SPPF hosted a round table of Indigenous representatives and others to discuss Indigenous rights and Canadian foreign policy. The result was a brief directed to the Canadian government on ways in which Canadian foreign policy could support Indigenous rights. SPPF also facilitated a strong Pacific Indigenous presence at the 1997 parallel conference to the APEC government meeting.

The Indigenous linkage programmes that SPPF/PPP developed in the late 90s and that carried forward – IPAP, Ecowoman, Wainimate, and others – grew from the strong roots laid down in the 80s and 90s, just as today's initiatives will provide roots for future developments.

Stuart Wulff (email: [balta@xplornet.com](mailto:balta@xplornet.com)) presently lives at Beardale Farm on Vancouver Island.



# THE NEXT 35 YEARS

*By April Ingham, Executive Director, PPP*

Pacific Peoples' Partnership (PPP) was born as the South Pacific Peoples' Foundation (SPPF) with a vision to create an awareness programme concerning the development realities and needs of the Pacific Island nations. The mission was fourfold: to build a corps of volunteers willing to share their Pacific experience with others and help in other capacities; to bring Pacific Islanders to Canada to exchange ideas and learn together; to organize Pacific dialogues; and to facilitate funding of development projects in the Pacific.

From its inception in 1975, PPP has employed a collaborative approach in working with partners promoting awareness of environmental, human rights, sustainable community development, and social justice issues affecting peoples of the Small Island Developing States of the Pacific. We have become an important niche actor, linking Aboriginal communities in Canada with counterparts across the South Pacific using participatory strategies that enable them to harness their own creativity to address cultural, environmental, social and economic concerns.

Many significant successes have been realized throughout PPP's life span including its work to assist with the ban on nuclear testing in the South Pacific; advocacy work to free East Timor; the creation of solid links between Indigenous Pacific Peoples north and south; Indigenous youth programs and partnership work with civil society organizations in Papua, Indonesia. PPP's publications and programmes now reach an international audience, with members and supporters in more than 40 countries worldwide. These successes are just a few examples of how PPP, Canada's only Pacific-focussed NGO, continues to meet its mandate and fulfill its vision.

Yet the challenges and opportunities for PPP remain considerable. As a small NGO with limited financial and human resources to contribute, we must continue to examine our mission closely, and determine how to make the most meaningful contribution to the struggles of peoples of the Pacific. Like the tides, times are constantly changing and the foundation for our future funding structure needs a pre-emptive evaluation and redesign as we move into the future.

Over the years PPP's core activities and programmes have been supported through contributions from the Canadian Federal Government, our faith-based partners, the province of British Columbia, our solidarity partners, our own fundraising initiatives and individual donors. While we have been ever grateful to receive this generous support over the years, many of these traditional funding sources for PPP are shifting or drying up all together. The global and local economy, changing social demographics, donor-giving patterns and political will all play a part in the change. Thus, finding money to support core operations is becoming increasingly challenging, if not close to impossible.

PPP has been fairly successful in obtaining grant money for our programmes over the years. While this helps us to achieve our mission, such funds are usually available for limited time periods, are project focussed, and cannot be relied upon. Project funding also has the ability to make our core operations vulnerable, as we focus our energies to manage a project and raise the financial match required to meet the project agreements. Most significantly, this has the danger of keeping our organization and overseas partners focussed on short term project-to-project work, rather than building a solid foundation with a long term vision.

Simply put, PPP needs serious investment and attention at our operations level. We must ensure our future sustainability to fulfill our mission and embrace opportunity. To do this, we must continue the strong collaborative networking, teamwork and leadership between the staff and board, solidarity partners, overseas partners, funders and donors. We must always ensure that our programmes and services are making the best use of resources, further that activities align clearly with our mandate and bring the best value to our partners. We must generate the funds required to achieve both our institutional and program sustainability. This means transforming our organization.

Sustainability is a topic of address within PPP's immediate network of supporters, staff, board and volunteers. We are looking at all possibilities to "self-finance" our operations such as reviewing membership programmes, the potential for fee-for-services, and additional cost-sharing of expenses with partners; product sales; fundraising events; and in renewing our individual donor relationships, long term solidarity partnerships and government relations. Looking far into the horizon, we also plan to investigate the possibility of creating an endowment fund.

Individual donors are more important than ever, allowing us to maintain a modest core for operations while over 80 % of our finances are matched 3 to 1 for work overseas. We need our donor friends to contribute ongoing financial gifts, remember us in their estates, assist us in securing cost savings, and offering volunteer expertise. Let's also look for opportunities to work creatively with solidarity partners, share resources and knowledge to support our overseas partners at a more beneficial level.

In the spirit of viewing challenges as opportunities, PPP continues to respond resourcefully and creatively, fuelled by the commitment of dedicated staff, board, volunteers, local and international members. With the support of all our major partners over the years -- governments, faith-based and solidarity partners, academia, tribal councils, the business community and many passionate individuals -- PPP is still vibrant and essential after 35 years. However, it is time to strengthen our capacity to ensure we continue to meet our mandate and maintain a meaningful reach throughout the Pacific for the next 35 years.

# INTRODUCING APRIL INGHAM, PPP EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

Assuming the role of Executive Director of PPP in August 2009, April Ingham has brought to the role extensive background and experience in the non-profit sector, most pertinently with the First Peoples' Cultural Foundation, public art galleries, the BC Arts Council and the BC Museums Association to the position.

With a lifelong passion for the arts as a tool to connect people and organizations, April has demonstrated dedication to building healthy, vibrant and diverse communities. Her own arts education, enriched with therapy principles, was used in counselling youth, women and families in northern British Columbia where she also held the position of Visual Arts Coordinator for Peace Gallery North in Fort St. John. In this position, she helped to strengthen the region through the creation of multi-disciplinary exhibits like "Respect". This was a game changer for the museum and gallery community and her northern community, one of the first "living exhibits" of Indigenous culture. Such innovative projects led to several arts and museum provincial positions, most notably a three-year government appointment to the BC Arts Council. Here she served on the finance committee which oversaw \$11.5 million worth of arts funding and on the communications committee that created BC Arts Week.

Moving to Victoria, BC, April found herself in a position to work on behalf of Indigenous arts and culture in the province at the First Peoples' Cultural Foundation. As Development Manager, she is credited with being part of the development team for the web-based Indigenous language archiving system, "First Voices".

April then spent three years living in Caribbean gaining valuable insights into the opportunities and challenges facing small island developing states. Once again back in Victoria, she became Production Manager for the nationally broadcast Indigenous arts and culture show, "The New Canoe", organizing film shoots from Maui to Japan and across North America profiling Indigenous artists, cultures, leaders and communities. It was her passion for these stories and peoples that led her to PPP.

The role of Executive Director has been a perfect next step for April, utilizing her diverse skills and life experiences to build PPP's Pacific community connections and ultimately fulfill its mandate. "My 16 years in northern British Columbia coupled with my Caribbean experience have given me a unique perspective into the importance of community, of shared knowledge and partnerships when facing social and environmental concerns," she says. "I appreciate the great honour of picking up the PPP torch. However, the Pacific is vast and challenging; we have much work to do together."

---

*April Ingham (left) with Nadia Kanengi from Vanuatu, recognised as a "SAWA Global Hero" by the Vancouver-based SAWA organization for her grassroots community work in the global south. PPP facilitated her visit with Vancouver Island communities and resource centres*



# WEST PAPUA: 25 YEARS OF ACTION & SOLIDARITY

*Todd Biderman, Papua Programme Coordinator*

Throughout PPP's 35 years, there have been many socio-political and environmental movements that have called for our attention and support. One of the more enduring stories has been West Papua, a land and people still experiencing the effects of a tumultuous colonial transition and struggling for international attention to the 49 years of systemic abuse of their rights, indigenosity, and daily lives.

Papuan leaders worked for self-determination throughout the 1950's. With support and inspiration from Dutch colonial officials who actively administered West Papua from 1898 to 1963, West Papuans raised their national flag and sung their anthem for the first time on December 1, 1961. In the following months, the Indonesian air force dropped paratroopers into the forest interior while the navy landed soldiers along the coastline. Efforts for self-determination were further spoiled by international politicians who, in a series of feints and sleights of hand, allowed control of West Papua to be ceded to Indonesia on May 1, 1963. In 1969, West Papuans were offered what appeared to be an "out" through a proposed vote allowing them to choose between Indonesian [integration] and independence. But this 1969 "Act of Free Choice", better known nowadays as the "Act of No Choice", was no fair vote. It was less an expression of Papuan self-determination than window dressing that allowed the UN to ratify Indonesian possession of West Papua.<sup>1</sup>

Decades of top-down development and military presence have systematically exploited Papua, one of the most resource-rich, biologically and culturally diverse areas of the Indonesian archipelago, while degrading the rights and livelihoods of local communities. Indigenous Papuans live amidst extreme poverty (the highest in Indonesia), while the continual push of large-scale resource extraction projects further undermines their land rights and contributes to deterioration of their cultural worlds, along with their health and economic well being. The prevalence of HIV/AIDS is most acute in Indigenous Papuan communities, mortality and morbidity rates of mothers and babies is the highest in the country while access to education, health care and economic opportunities all score national lows. Of all the threats to the biological and cultural diversity of West Papua, some further argue that "none have a scale, scope, or reach that matches the escalating crisis in global climate change".<sup>2</sup>

Each of the above dynamics prompted PPP to actively engage in calling attention to West Papua, and working with partners around the world towards realising Papuan visions of a peaceful and prosperous society that is socially just, ecologically and culturally sustainable, and politically and economically empowered.

PPP has long supported research into political, social, cultural, ecological and human rights issues in West Papua. Since 1982,

Tok Blong Pasifik (TBP) has afforded opportunities for Papuan scholars, leaders, and other actors to have their voices heard and their experiences communicated throughout neighbouring Pacific islands, Canada, and internationally. These have been complemented by leading analyses and reporting by international partners. Exploring the back issues of TBP, one quickly feels the extent, courage, and perseverance of PPP co-collaborators who have been calling for international awareness, support, and action on West Papua. There is a continually rising flow of creative energy and leadership unfolding in contemporary West Papua, ranging from Papuans in remote areas training to be human rights monitors, for instance, or volunteers at newly-founded organizations in countries across the world who lobby for West Papuan rights.

I was introduced to the West Papuan story in 2003 while I was living and working for two years with Dayak community organisations in the West Kalimantan province of Indonesian Borneo. From the beginning of Suharto's regime in the 1960's through my years there in 2003/4, no less than half of all the forest cover of Indonesian Borneo had been degraded to make way for logging, palm oil and mining concessions, impacting the biological, economic and spiritual sustenance for more than 300 indigenous groups in the mega-diverse lowland forests. A similar fate appears to await West Papua, but on a significantly accelerated timescale. Coupled with Papua New Guinea, the island of New Guinea as a whole represents the largest region of intact tropical rainforest on earth after the Amazon, and has been identified as the most diverse biocultural region in the world.

Within Indonesia, the provinces of Papua and West Papua constitute the largest source of tax and resource revenue in the country. The Grasberg mine alone, operated by Freeport McMoran, paid US\$1.3 billion in taxes to Indonesia in 2009.<sup>3</sup> Satellite imagery with overlaid concession data graphically illustrate these changes, showing three-quarters of the two Papuan provinces already divided into management units and, in many cases, already granted permits for forestry, palm plantation, or mining concessions. Such images however do not capture the whole story. To understand the interconnectedness of people and place, one needs to be on the ground.

My graduate and undergraduate studies were in ethnoecology, understanding the unique relationships, skills, and lifestyles of place-based peoples with the ecosystems in which they dwell and how these embody sustainable and whole communities while also becoming inspirations to inform practices elsewhere. Recognising the interdependence between people and place, between a community and the forest (or other ecosystem) in which they live, is fundamental to any efforts for realising sustainability whether considered at a local or global level.



## PPP IS CURRENTLY WORKING WITH **THREE LOCAL PARTNERS** TO IMPLEMENT THE FOLLOWING PROGRAMS:

PPP is currently working with three local partners to implement the following programs:

The Institute for Research, Analysis, and Development of Legal Aid (LP3BH) is developing a support network to serve women victims of gender-based violence and to develop educational outreach strategies to minimise its incidence. Through community forums and participatory research, it is raising awareness, identifying forms and incidence rates of violence against women in the Manokwari regency, and documenting alternative systems for conflict resolution. More broadly, they continue to work to strengthen Indigenous communities through education, research, legal support and community programs that encourage hope and empowerment.

With deep roots in local communities, the Manokwari Humeibou Environment Foundation (YALHIMO) is using participatory mapping to profile traditional territories, document forest and land tenure systems, along with current ecological, cultural and socioeconomic conditions. They aim to empower the community with tools and skills to negotiate directly with the government and other interests over land use.

The Association for Community Healthcare (PTPS) has initiated training for HIV and AIDS prevention and testing, providing education and support to integrated health service centres across Manokwari regency. Through PLP they are focusing on empowering pregnant women to reduce the risk of Mother-to-Child Transmission of HIV and AIDS. Their strategies reflect a holistic approach to health and community wellness, empowering community members in making informed choices, and integrate themes including gender sensitivity and rights, along with sexual, reproductive, and family health.

*Mpur Wot woman carrying a rain mat (photo: YALHIMO, 2010)*



When Mooi people of Papua's eastern Bird's Head region say that the "forest is our mother", that their "lives and souls are one with the forest", the meanings are rooted in a way of seeing and being where the quality of intimate relations with non-human and human components of the environment is one and the same.<sup>4</sup> For the forest-dependent communities of West Papua, the forest ecosystems constitute the life source of the people, inseparably forming a whole.

I joined PPP in 2004 as a way of engaging in West Papuan, Pacific, and global struggles for justice and sustainability. Through my own experiences in Papua and encounters with local and international supporters, I have come to appreciate the diversity of viewpoints, customs, and cultures, as well as the varied ways these become represented both within Indonesia and internationally. I have immense respect for the grace in which rural peoples' lives, in particular, are woven together in communities that extend to include the ecosystems in which they live, while also holding open space and welcome for those from "outside" as their own sisters and brothers to see the world as they do. Such values permeate, and are also felt in the urban offices of NGOs, churches, and other places of community organising. As part of this community, PPP has been steadily increasing our direct involvement, and finding increasingly more ways to work in solidarity with West Papua.

Beyond TBP feature issues on West Papua<sup>5</sup> and multiple research and networking trips to the region, there have been many significant landmarks along the way. Together with Canadian partners, PPP coordinated the successful nomination of Papuan human rights lawyer Yan Christian Warinussey for the John Humphrey Freedom Award.<sup>6</sup> Mr. Warinussey was recognised for his frontline role as a defence lawyer to those in West Papua's remote regions who would otherwise have no legal representation. As a well-respected community leader, he has played a leading role in the defence of West Papuan human rights campaigners working to expose human rights violations committed by the Indonesian military and paramilitary groups. His subsequent cross-Canada speaking tour and extensive media coverage awakened Canadians to the plight of Papuans at a critical moment in the unfolding PPP's West Papua programme.

In the summer of 2006, PPP coordinated the 6th International Solidarity Meeting (ISM) for West Papua. Also serving as the organisation's 20th Pacific Networking Conference, the ISM brought together delegates from Canada, the USA, Europe, Indonesia, New Zealand, and Australia, along with four respected Papuan human rights leaders. Gathering for three days in Cowichan territory on Vancouver Island, the meeting opened up space to coordinate appropriate approaches, strategies, and actions towards overcoming the widespread marginalisation and threats to West Papuan peoples, and realising peaceful resolution to the crisis in Papua. The meeting also provided a special opportunity for members of the local Cowichan First Nation community to engage directly with Indigenous Papuans, deepening relationships and learning from each other's shared colonial and globalising histories and common community challenges.

The years 2001 through 2006 were pivotal in centering PPP's commitment to West Papua, and formulating strategic planning for continued strengthening of our Papua Programme. Over the next two years, much effort was put into establishing a broader framework for participation and support. This was finally realised in early 2009 with the launch of "Papua: Land of Peace – Civil Society Leadership in Conflict Transformation" (PLP), a three-year initiative<sup>7</sup> through which PPP is working alongside Papuan civil society partners to strengthen their work in transforming the root dynamics of conflict in Manokwari, West Papua, Indonesia. PLP brings forward rights-based approaches to integrate capacity strengthening and education on human rights, sustainable livelihoods, gender equality, and health. The project's title takes inspiration from the West Papua Land of Peace movement, calling for the social landscape of Papua to be free of conflict, embodying values of multicultural diversity and peace.<sup>8</sup>

PPP believes that supporting organisations with strong mandates in Indigenous communities is fundamental to strengthening the rights of Papuans and helping assert their voices into democratic decision-making that directly impacts their well-being. It is also an essential pathway towards building capacity and understanding in these communities to reconcile shifting social-political dynamics with their own needs while ensuring the vitality and integrity of their communities. It builds upon PPP's history of linking Indigenous Pacific communities with Canadian First Nations ones, fostering partnerships to address issues of shared concern and learn from common experience. Values that are rooted in the indivisibility of people and place and that embody the innate wisdom of a community are essential in realising just, sustainable, and thriving communities in Papua, Canada, and elsewhere. We are actively consulting with partners and seeking out opportunities to sustain PLP beyond the current end date of February 2012.

For more than 25 years, PPP has supported Papuan efforts to achieve a just and peaceful resolution to the crisis in their homeland. It speaks to the urgency of the West Papua milieu that when reviewing events over that time span little has changed. In fact, when considering degrees of ecological exploitation and degradation, marginalisation and overall wellbeing of the Indigenous population inclusive of their rights, livelihoods, and education, one could conclude that these have further deteriorated. Following the lead of our partners in action, for PPP this comes not as a point of despair but promise. Carmel Budiardjo wrote recently that "their economic circumstances can only be described as dire...Papuan people are still weighed down by poverty in a land that produces plenty of foreign currency for the national revenue."<sup>9</sup> This epitomises the paradox of West Papua.

Despite, or because of, the challenges there is a steady wave of international attention shining a light on Papuan peoples' struggles. Futures to which programs like PLP aim represent an unwavering collaborative network of individuals and organisations working diligently. Continuing to bring international presence and attention to West Papua in support of local actors is essential towards realising Papua as a land of peace. When PPP reaches our next milestone, we dearly hope that light will shine bright in the land of the morning star.

*PPP takes no official position on the political status of West Papua. We neither endorse independence claims nor Indonesian sovereignty, but support the right and aspirations for West Papuan people to decide their own future.*

- 1 Butt, L. & Webster, D. 2001. "Why West Papua Matters Today". Tok Blong Pasifik 55:2, October 2001, p. 1-3; Kirksey, E. (forthcoming). Freedom in Entangled Worlds. p. 5.
- 2 Frazier, S. (2007). "Threats to Biodiversity." The Ecology of Papua Part II. Andrew J. Marshall and Bruce M. Beehler, eds. Hong Kong: Periplus. p.1199-1229.
- 3,9 Budiardjo, C. "Resource-rich West Papua, but who benefits?". The Jakarta Post, May 14, 2010
- 4 Ingold, T. 2000. The Perception of the Environment: Essays in livelihoods, dwelling and skill. Routledge: London, p.47.
- 5 Three special issues: Tok Blong SPFF November 1986 #17; Tok Blong Pasifik 55:2, October 2001; Tok Blong Pasifik, 4:1, Winter 2006
- 6 Created in 1992, the John Humphrey Freedom Award is given each year by Rights & Democracy. Named in honour of John Peters Humphrey, the Canadian law professor who prepared the first draft of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, the award includes a \$25,000 grant as well as a speaking tour of Canadian cities aimed at raising public awareness of the recipient's work on behalf of human rights.
- 7 Funded by the Canadian International Development Agency (CIDA), with contribution from Development & Peace and other Canadian donors
- 8 Tebay, Neles. 2006. Interfaith Endeavors for Peace in West Papua. Aachen: Pontifical Mission Society.



# SOLOMON ISLANDS ARTIST AKE LIANGA: An Interview with Dan Lepsoe and Kristine Suddaby

**DL & KS:** *What does cultural exchange provide for indigenous artists?*

**AL:** If you live in a city, as I do now in Victoria, Canada, it doesn't take much to distract you from who you are. When I return to Solomon Islands, I go to the bush to absorb its ideas. It speaks to me. It renews me. My people have a special connection with the living things around them. By sharing with other cultures that have similar connections, by seeing what they've accomplished in similar surroundings, it inspires you to dig deeper in your own culture: to ask more questions about things that are no longer being done. You're reminded of your responsibilities.

It's important to get artists talking and working together in the same room. By talking about our experiences and roles in our communities, it gives us confidence in what we're doing. When we exhibit our art together, audiences can more easily appreciate the deep ideas our cultures share.

It's interesting, too, to see how other artists, whose inherited abilities have developed over many generations, approach their materials. For example, we carvers know that wood isn't dead. When you cut down a tree, there's life in it still -- there's purpose. A carver has to respect that. Wood has its own way of telling you how it wants to be carved. You get your hands around it, you feel its energy. But a carver has to understand the properties of the wood too. Like medicine, each type of wood has to be treated right, or it can cause sickness.

**DL & KS:** *On recent trips back to the Solomon Islands, you've made a point of sharing your work with young people. Have your experiences helped you do that?*

**AL:** Without all of the language, art, people, stories and activities particular to where I grew up, I wouldn't be who I am today. But when I was in school, kids were punished for speaking their native language and for making art. Once you take these things away, kids don't have any foundation to build on. The school curriculum should promote the value of traditional knowledge and practices. One way to do this is to involve artists in creating learning materials that do justice to our traditions. I've done a storybook like this. Another way is to have more cultural exchanges. Thanks to the opportunities I've had, it's easier to see how much there is in my culture that I took for granted. Sharing that is my way of making sure kids don't go through the same thing I did.

**DL & KS:** *Where is your work heading?*

**AL:** In preparation for an exhibition in Fall 2010 with [Coast Salish artist] **John Marston**, I'm working on a ceremonial bowl to represent the coming together of our two coastal cultures. Where I'm from, this style of bowl is commissioned from a master carver for important occasions like intermarriage or the appointing of a new chief. It's presented by one community to another. Their intentions are interpreted from the bowl's designs. This bowl will incorporate a bonita tuna at the front. Tuna is a symbol of plenty, used to make offerings of peaceful exchange, like First Nations people in British Columbia use salmon. I'll also include the shark, the most respected crest in my tribe, and birds associated with navigation, fishing, and travel.

On my last trip back home, I discovered that my grandfather was a master inlayer and carver who specialized in bowls like these. In recent years, I've focused mainly on painting and printmaking; this show is helping me reconnect with the art I grew up with.

**Pacific Currents**, a joint exhibition with Ake Lianga and John Marston, opens November 10 at Alcheringa Gallery in Victoria, British Columbia ([www.alcheringa-gallery.com](http://www.alcheringa-gallery.com)).

---

*For Ake Lianga, sharing his culture strengthens his identity.  
Photo by Dan Lepsoe*



# ELAINE MONDS REFLECTS ON HER ASSOCIATION WITH SPPF/PPP

*An Interview with Alison Gardner, Guest Editor*

**AG:** *When did you first become associated with SPPF/PPP?*

**EM:** In the early eighties, I assisted the first SPPF Executive Director, Phil Esmonde, with fundraising advice. Then my art gallery, Alcheringa, became involved in a PNG project which partnered with the organization.

When first working with artists along the Sepik River, I quickly became aware of the enormous needs to be met, particularly relating to health. This lack of resources perhaps struck me more forcibly because of my nursing background. I met a remarkable Australian born woman, Elizabeth Cox, also a PNG citizen, who suggested that we contribute to a project called Marasin Meri or Medicine Woman, enabling village women to be trained at a local hospital to administer medication, particularly malarial treatment, at the local hospital. They then returned to their communities with medicine boxes equipped with drugs and also lotions for skin conditions. SPPF provided the bridge with CIDA to match Alcheringa's donation 3 to 1.

**AG:** *What attracted you to the organization initially? What has kept you such a faithful supporter?*

**EM:** Shared perceptions, aspirations and goals. Because of my long field experience and connections in parts of the Pacific, especially PNG, I have been able on occasion to assist the organization. I believe that it is the power of networking with like-minded individuals that most effectively creates change. My long involvement with PPP has been fueled in part by the opportunity to work with talented and sincere people who possess a wide range of skills.

**AG:** *You have worked with many EDs, Board members and volunteers. How long have you served on the Board?*

**EM:** Randall Garrison invited me to join the Board when he became ED, I think in 1989. I have worked with seven EDs since then. PPP has been fortunate in its leadership, drawn from diverse backgrounds, which in turn has attracted support from equally dedicated staff and volunteers.

Until about five years ago, I was Vice President for most of those years when I really felt that room should be made for new blood. I have remained a Board member to provide knowledge of the past as well the present. I have felt privileged to have served in the company of remarkable people such as Jim Boutillier who with Phil Esmonde founded PPP, and extraordinary women such as Margaret Argue, whose dual experience as staff and Board

chair for so long provided organizational strength to survive many periods of financial turbulence. The strong writing skills and editorial support for Tok Blong Pasifik from Alison Gardner and the energy, drive and vision of Linda Pennells were also important.

**AG:** *Over the years, what have been strategic ways in which your ownership of Alcheringa Gallery has allowed you to lend effective support to SPPF/PPP?*

**EM:** It is very hard for me to separate who does what for whom: there has always been a unique synergy between PPP and Alcheringa. In 1998 after the tsunami struck Vanimo in northeast PNG, some of our clients came to the gallery to see how they could help. The resulting relief drive stretched as far north as Whitehorse and PPP's involvement enabled larger donations to be tax receiptable. Our knowledge of the tsunami area took that aid to individuals on the ground in Wewak where basic medical needs such as crutches and bandages were not available at the hospital despite the millions that had flowed into Port Moresby through World Vision.

We have had the pleasure of sharing the hosting of many South Pacific Islanders during visits to Victoria. Sometimes the primary focus was an exhibition at Alcheringa such the visit of artists from the Torres Strait in 2001 or more recently from PNG for the Hailans to Ailans exhibition in the fall of 2009. Our combined participation provided opportunities for a much richer experience to be offered to the artists. Several years ago, there was a PPP-initiated visit to Victoria of elder artists accompanied by emerging Aboriginal painters from the Balgo region of Northern Australia. These artists gave ceremonial dance performances while in Victoria, by coincidence we were showing their work at that time, allowing them to see their work on display in a gallery in a way they never had before.

For some time, Alcheringa's main PNG aid incentive has been to provide quality carving tools to our artists on the Sepik River. Recently our fund to provide chisels has been expanded by PPP's involvement that provides tax receipts to donors. This combined initiative is still in its infancy but it has the potential to greatly expand the effectiveness of this program. We are also happy to provide space for film nights, silent auctions, information sharing nights, and donate to raffles.



*Canadian First Nations carver, John Marston, accompanied Elaine on her 2009 Sepik River expedition, here seen at Yamok market.  
Credit: Carol Mayer*



Elaine visits with the Dumoi family in Palembang. **Credit:** Carol Mayer

**AG:** *How do you see the dual South Pacific/Canadian First Nations focus strengthening the organization?*

**EM:** I think the dual focus has enormously strengthened PPP's profile in the local area. It was always difficult to 'sell' the needs of the South Pacific to Victorians when there were such overwhelming needs to be met within our own First Nations communities. As a result of exchange visits, it becomes increasingly evident that there is much to be shared between indigenous peoples of the Pacific. The Pacific Ocean seems to be much smaller these days and there is a growing global network of artists, both visual and performing. Some of our artists from the Northwest Coast and PNG now share friendships forged during visits to both regions.

We will celebrate this further during the Pacific Networking Conference. As part of that occasion, the work of Salish artist John Marston, Sepik artist Claytus Yambon and Solomon Island's artist Ake Lianga will appear together in an exhibition at Alcheringa entitled Pacific Connections. Ake's immigration process to Canada as a visiting student was initially assisted by PPP and he is the designer of PPP's logo.

**AG:** *What have been highlights for you during your association with SPPF/PPP?*

**EM:** The Pacific Networking Conferences that were held regularly for so many years and hopefully will gain renewed momentum again. These events bring the South Pacific to life. They inspire and instruct, and the level of social networking is invaluable.

Successful events such as the visit of human rights activist and lawyer, Yan Christian Warinussy, who visited both Victoria and Ottawa in 2005 to receive the John Humphrey Human Rights Award and the subsequent conference in 2006 which led into our current project in West Papua. The Climate Change Project of 2007, and of course Marasin Meri are among many others.

The growing connections between both sides of the Pacific are very exciting, being strongly aided by our present ED April Ingham's strong connections within First Nations communities.

**AG:** *How do you think this seemingly-fragile NGO has survived and accomplished so much over its 35 year history?*

**EM:** The dedication of the Board has sustained the organization through thick and thin, and there has been lots of the latter. I believe the strength and integrity of the Board has been the single constant over all the years. There have also been times in the life of the organization when the Board initiated programming and even temporarily replaced staff. Board skills have inevitably varied as personnel has change but we always seemed to have the skills represented at any given time that were most needed for the tasks at hand. At present, we have an incredibly erudite and well connected group with lots of youthful energy and elder wisdom. Neither do I want to underestimate the faithful band of volunteers, some of whom have donated time and talents to PPP for years.

**AG:** *To create a wish list of three projects or directions you would like to see the organization take over the next five years, what would it include?*

**EM:** No doubt I am biased here but I would like to see projects that further expand connections between artistic communities on both sides of the Pacific. And I would like to see a continuation in some form of our West Papuan Project.

I also believe it is very important to find ways to strengthen advocacy for the work of PPP at the Canadian government level so as to continue our mission without the extreme financial constraints that seem ever present.

---

*Elaine and her team mounted the Papua New Guinea flag on the front of their canoe while journeying up the Sepik River in 2009.*  
**Credit:** Carol Mayer



# COAST SALISH ARTIST JOHN MARSTON

*An interview with Dan Lepsoe and Kristine Suddaby*

**DL & KS:** Does working with artists from other cultures change your own point of view?

**JM:** Absolutely. It has a lot to do with spiritual development. When I really started growing as an artist -- when I rose to the challenge of expressing myself -- was during my trip to Papua New Guinea in 2006\*. I was 27 then, and I'd never discussed my own spirituality with people I didn't know. I wasn't good at talking; I wasn't sure how it would go. Working with other carvers there helped because we shared the spiritual process of creation. In our culture, we believe that everything has a spirit, that everything is connected. As my connections with Sepik people grew stronger, connections to the water and forest started to open up. That's when spirituality leads you in. You have to be willing to experience transformation while you're away from home.

**DL & KS:** You recently hosted a visiting carver from Papua New Guinea, Claytus Yambon. What did you do together?

**JM:** I wanted Claytus to be comfortable, so I asked him, "What does a New Guinean do to relax?" He said, "How about we carve a canoe?" I should have known -- Sepik people work hard! I'd always wanted to carve one, but I'd been intimidated by it. Claytus' offer was a challenge, but in our culture, elders like him are very important, and he'd carved over 70 canoes in his life: I couldn't miss this opportunity. Who ever thought a New Guinean would guide a Salish carver through his first canoe?

**DL & KS:** What did you learn while working on the project?

**JM:** It's not finished yet, so I'm still learning. While together, we communicated through our work. Carvers put a lot of energy into the wood; every time I work on the piece now, I feel Claytus' greatness.

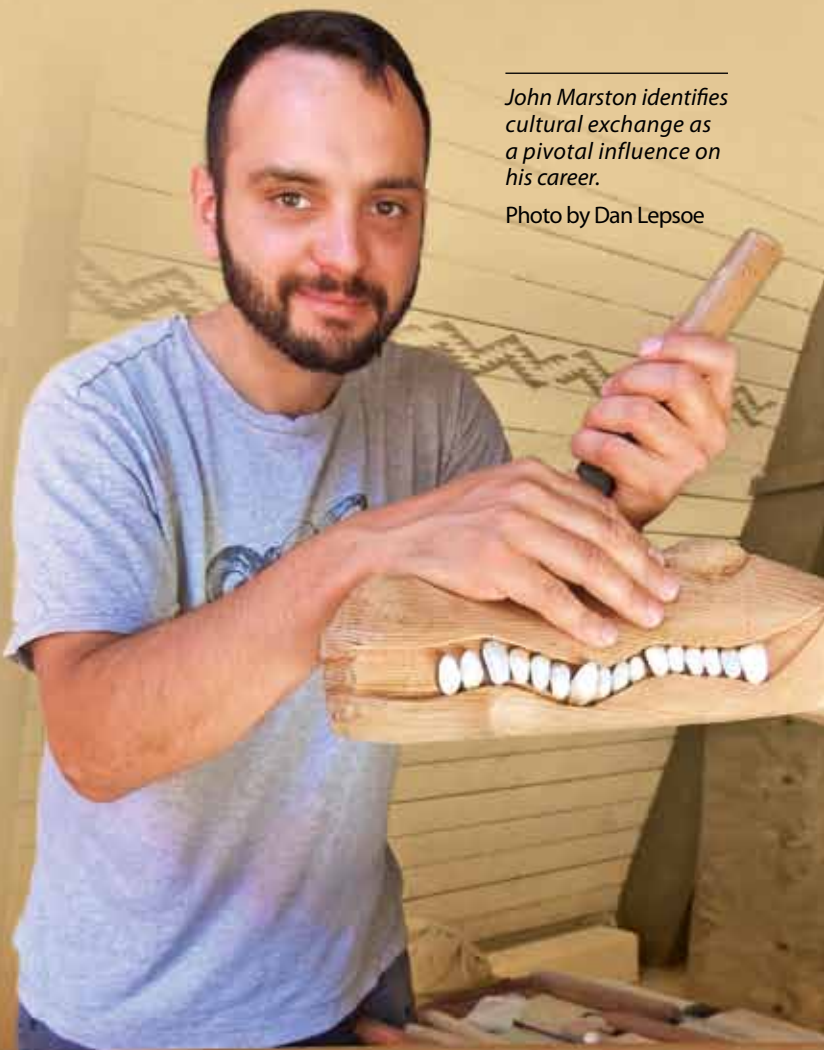
While we worked, Claytus told me what a canoe means on the Sepik River. The first thing he said was, "Every canoe has its own spirit." Then he said, "You have nothing if you don't have a canoe." That was a very profound statement for me, as our people used to rely on the water that way. I learned that Sepik canoes have the same spiritual properties as ours. Carvers here say that a canoe is not a boat, it's a member of your family. You have to take care of it. There are a lot of teachings in that. You would never neglect a tree meant for carving, as the spirit of the tree is still inside. Claytus gave me instructions for finishing the piece, including many tasks needed to bond the spirit to it. As part of this process, Claytus will give it a traditional name -- the spirit's name -- from his tribe. It will stay with the canoe.

**DL & KS:** Should there be more exchanges between Pacific peoples?

**JM:** Cultural exchanges are priceless -- far more valuable than just travel. They not only benefit the individuals involved: they benefit our communities too. The most important thing we can do for visitors from other cultures is to treat them as guests are treated traditionally. We have to learn a lot about ourselves in order to do that: we have to be aware of everything we're doing and why we're doing it.

John Marston is preparing for the exhibition **Pacific Currents** with Solomon Islands artist Ake Lianga, opening November 10 at Alcheringa Gallery in Victoria, British Columbia ([alcheringa-gallery.com](http://alcheringa-gallery.com)). The completed canoe will be part of the show.

\*Documented in the acclaimed film *Killer Whale and Crocodile*, see [www.tinyurl.com/kwcfilm](http://www.tinyurl.com/kwcfilm).



*John Marston identifies cultural exchange as a pivotal influence on his career.*

Photo by Dan Lepsoe

# TOK BLONG PASIFIK THROUGH THE YEARS

By Andy E. Nystrom,  
*PPP Office Assistant and Volunteer*

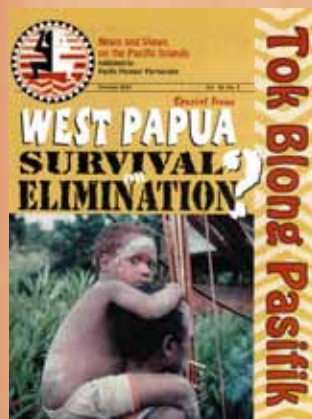
Published up to four times a year, Tok Blong Pasifik first appeared in Spring 1982. Initially the magazine consisted simply of photocopies of articles from various newspapers and journals. However, it wasn't long before original material started appearing, including interviews, editorials, news, articles and book reviews. While most articles have related to external happenings in or influencing the Pacific Islands, there have frequently been articles covering the activities of the South Pacific Peoples Foundation, later to become Pacific Peoples' Partnership. In addition, the format of issues has frequently changed due to advances in publishing software and fluctuations in funding for the magazine, which has always been free.

While the earliest issues had no specific theme, themed issues started appearing early on (see selected list of themes below). Initially the themes were related to location, but other themes have appeared over the years, such as women, youth, and French language. There were two issues produced entirely in French in 1991, and in subsequent issues there were occasional articles in French, the last of which appeared in 1995.

Profiling a wide range of topics over the years, Tok Blong Pasifik is not unbiased nor does it pretend to be so. On the masthead of many issues the Editorial Policy statement actually declares, "As an issues-focused magazine, Tok Blong Pasifik often includes material that is contentious." Encouraging a nuclear-free Pacific, promoting the fair treatment of women, and asking Canadian youth to be aware of issues in the Pacific Islands have been among the many goals of the publication.

Times change and the magazine format may change, but Tok Blong Pasifik will continue to exist as a respected education and advocacy tool to inform readers about events and issues in the Pacific Islands. It has been a worthy voice for many in the Pacific.

## TOK BLONG PASIFIK TACKLES TOUGH ISSUES: SELECTED STORY THEMES



- Ecotourism: At What Price?, Dec 2001/Feb 2002
- Shifting Tides: Indigenous Responses to Climate Change, Fall 2007
- Indigenous Youth + Environment, Summer 2002
- Ocean Development, Management and Conservation, June 2002
- Youth Tok!, March 2001
- Traditional Medicine: Conserving Culture + Promoting Health, Spring 2002
- Indigenous Science: Stewardship of Culture, Environment and Resources, March 2000
- After the Bomb: What's Next for Marshall Islanders? March/June 1997
- Rethinking Tourism: Focusing on the Environment and Culture, Sept/Dec 1997
- The Big Squeeze: The Islands in the New Asia-Pacific, March/June 1998
- East Timor Votes for Independence, Dec. 1999
- West Papua: Survival of Elimination? Oct. 2001
- Making a Difference: Women & Globalization, Sept 1999
- Peace in the Solomons: What Role for Canada? Spring 2004
- The Artist as Cultural Activist, March 1996
- Supporting Community Based Economic Alternatives, Sept/Dec 1996
- Remembering the Marshall Islands, Sept 2006
- Unfinished Agenda: Decolonisation in the Pacific, June 1995
- Land is the Heart of the People, May 1994
- The Commonwealth in the Pacific, Feb 1994
- Addressing the Needs of Disabled People, Nov 1993
- Making Choices: Economic Development and Social Justice, Feb 1993
- Gender & Development Issues in the South Pacific, Aug 1992
- Logging on New Guinea, July 1991
- Don't Make the Pacific a Nuclear Dumping Ground, Summer 1982
- Focus on French Testing, July 1986
- Logging the Solomon Islands, April 1988
- Women's Development in PNG, Oct 1989
- Pacific Promises: A story for the leaders of tomorrow, 2008

# PPP's PORTFOLIO OF PACIFIC PROJECTS, 1982-2010: A REMARKABLE ACHIEVEMENT

*Photos are courtesy of immensely-talented Vancouver-based photographer, Elaine Briere, [www.elainebriere.ca](http://www.elainebriere.ca), a long-time contributor of black and white documentary images from her Pacific travels. These have enriched the pages of many issues of PPP's Tok Blong Pasifik.*

Pacific Peoples' Partnership's activities reflect the changing needs and issues facing peoples of the South Pacific as they struggle to establish peaceful and sustainable communities, livelihoods and futures. We work in solidarity with Pacific islanders by drawing on modest resources available here in Canada. With the support of the Canadian government, church solidarity networks, private charitable foundations and generous donations from individuals, we have built a dynamic array of programmes over the years leading to long-standing relationships of common cause with groups in the Pacific and Canada.

PPP/SPPF has long recognized the commonalities of experiences and struggles shared among Indigenous peoples of the South Pacific and the First Peoples of Canada. Our programmes seek to facilitate links between these two communities in an effort to stimulate an exchange of knowledge, ideas, experiences and strategies that strengthen mutual efforts for change. While our programmes are driven by the needs of people in the Small Island Developing States of the South Pacific, they offer opportunities for First Nations of Canada and Indigenous peoples of the Pacific to explore common concerns and engage meaningfully in international development initiatives. Here is a selection of past programs:

## Rebuilding after the Tonga cyclone (1982-3)



*Tonga Grocery*

The devastation in the wake of Cyclone Isaac triggered SPPF's first Pacific Island project. SPPF fundraising, supplemented by a three-to-one CIDA matching grant, resulted in more than \$40,000 in reconstruction support to Tongan communities in 11 islands of the isolated Ha'apai Group. Village women's groups were the grassroots organizers. They provided the labour and contributed local bush and construction materials. The

women focused on stretching the grant to replace and repair as many cyclone-damaged kitchens as possible. The project contributed to the villagers' success in preventing post cyclone health epidemics in several communities.

## Village health workers in Papua New Guinea (1987- 1992)

The Maprik and Ambunti districts are two of the most populated but poorest districts of Papua New Guinea. The acute shortage of affordable medicine for common diseases, the fragile public health system and the urgent need for health information sparked the Marasin Meri (medicine woman) Program. Maprik Hospital partnered with the Maprik Women's Association to select respected women from remote villages, train them in basic health, and provide them a dependable supply of basic medicines. Marasin Meri also built toilets and did nutrition training. SPPF was a primary fund-raiser for the Marasin Meri Program for several years. CIDA matched SPPF funds, three-to-one.

## PNG fundraising drives (1994)

SPPF supported fundraising by the PNG Integral Human Development Trust. The Trust was creating a new cadre of literacy trainers and co-coordinators. A training-of-trainers program was designed to nurture growing self-sufficiency among local literacy groups and to reduce the cost of central training programs. SPPF also solicited funds for the anti-nuclear and sovereignty initiatives of the Pacific Concerns Resource Centre.

## Vanuatu community response to people with disabilities (1996-98)

SPPF and CUSO co-sponsored a Canadian occupational therapist to work for two years with the Vanuatu Society for Disabled Persons (VSDP). CIDA-funded, this was SPPF's first Pacific placement. Even working flat out, VSDP's small extension team could only make home visits to the hundreds of island villages every few months. It was essential that these visits engage family and community members in care techniques that would foster the maximum quality of life for local people with disabilities. This might mean training villagers to build bush-material walking frames, exploring creative ways of involving the less able-bodied in work tasks and games, or tutoring in simple body-strengthening exercises. Making each home-visit count was the focus of the SPPF-CUSO placement. This involved extensive in-service training, training material development and innovative program design. In addition to community based rehabilitation, VSDP involved the occupational therapist in gaining better public understanding of VSDP services in advocating the rights and potential of peoples with disabilities.



### **A strong Pacific voice at APEC (1997)**

SPPF's network set out to ensure that Pacific Islanders were not marginalized during the 1997 Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation (APEC) Summit and APEC Parallel Conference, the linked gathering of civil-society, being hosted in Canada. In former APEC summits the P - for Pacific - was having an ever-smaller influence on the agenda. SPPF, with funding from the Canadian Centre for Foreign Policy Development, hosted a Round Table on Indigenous Peoples, APEC and Canadian Foreign Policy. The result was a foreign policy paper and recommendations which were forwarded to Canada's Department of Foreign Affairs & International Trade. This provided a briefing on the foreign policy issues that arise from the needs and realities of Canadian and Pacific indigenous peoples.

The Pacific Networking Conference was strategically timed so that Pacific Islanders attending the conference could also participate in the APEC Parallel Conference. SPPF fundraised for their participation and also encouraged other SPPF members and Pacific enthusiasts to attend. Armed with the solidarity, recommendations and active issue debate of the Pacific Networking Conference, the Pacific Islander voice was its strongest ever at the APEC Parallel Conference.

### **Fiji women's leadership in environmental management (1997-2001)**

The Ecowoman project grew from the determination of Pacific women to promote sound eco-friendly science at the grassroots level. Project leadership came from the South Pacific Action Committee for Human Ecology & Environment (SPACHEE), a collective of women in science and technology, representing traditional methods and modern approaches. By working together, they are determined to have urban-rural collaboration that improved their lives and protects their environment. CIDA contributed \$100,000 and the SPACHEE-PPP partnership provided \$60,000 in cash and in-kind contributions. Participatory Rural Appraisal (PRA) manuals and audio-visual training materials were developed. Project communities sought help to get rid of water hyacinth and watercress choking local rivers, bogging boats, becoming safety hazards for swimming children and reducing their edible mussel harvest. Pilot projects explored weaving hyacinth into crafts, feeding it to livestock, and marketing it as a vegetable. The CIDA-PPP project also funded a series of Ecowoman newsletters and the development work on a database of women with science and environment expertise.

*Fiji Woman and Child*

### **CSPOD marine resource project (1997- 2004)**

Numerous challenges face Pacific Islanders in fulfilling their role as stewards of marine resources. Fish stocks are threatened by habitat destruction and over-fishing. The demand for mineral wealth coupled with new technology has pushed mineral exploration under the sea. Islanders struggle to build modern economies without sabotaging cultural and political autonomy. As they cope with these challenges, global warming threatens to submerge low-lying atolls and adversely affect reef and coastal environments.

The Canada-South Pacific Ocean Development (CSPOD) Programme was the largest Canadian development initiative in the Pacific Islands. A 14-year \$28-million CIDA project which started in 1988, CSPOD increased the capacity of selected regional institutions to manage and protect South Pacific marine resources. CSPOD-II started in 1997, as did SPPF's role. Partners were the Forum Secretariat, the Forum Fisheries Agency, the South Pacific Regional Environment Programme and the University of the South Pacific. SPPF/PPP has a lead role in CSPOD's networking and awareness program.

### **Women's traditional medicine network (1998 - 2003)**

The Women's Association for Natural Medicinal Therapy is a women's non-government organization, registered as a Charitable Trust in Fiji, to ensure the promotion, conservation and protection of safe and effective traditional medicine knowledge and medicinal plant resources for women and their families through training, awareness, demonstrations, consultations, networking and research. The WAINIMATE support project combined preservation and enhancement of traditional science-based knowledge with forest and environmental protection. It forged links with Canadian First Nation traditional medicine practitioners through exchanges that included workshops on governance, intellectual property rights and biodiversity conservation. A traditional medicine handbook was published and widely distributed. Traditional medicinal gardens were established at health centres with the cooperation of the Fiji Ministry of Health. Due in large part to the intervention of PPP's work with the collective WAINIMATE was able to secure UNESCO funding for its work in the preservation of Indigenous Knowledge as well as for its success in improving the health of local communities.



## Indigenous Exchanges (1999 - 2000)

The Indigenous Peoples, Indigenous Science and Sustainable Development Project (IPSP) focused on cultivating exchanges and linkages between Canadian and Pacific Island Indigenous peoples for mutual problem-solving. A series of reciprocal visits, tours and discussion forums were held jointly by Canadian First Nations and Pacific Islander groups. Exchanges focused on issues relating to traditional medicine and healing knowledge, cultural sharing and protection, and network-building. Funders were CIDA, Canada's Anglican and United churches and the Indigenous Peoples Programme at the University of Saskatchewan. PPP appointed as coordinator a member of the Ktunaxa First Nation in British Columbia, Canada.

## North-South Indigenous internships (1999 – 2006)

What began as a small pilot project for PPP developed into one of its most successful programs. The Indigenous Peoples' Abroad Program (IPAP) provided opportunities for young professionals from Canada's First Nations, Inuit and Métis communities to engage directly in sustainable development initiatives, sharing skills, knowledge and cultural perspectives with Indigenous counterparts in the Small Island Developing States of the Pacific. See Glenn Raynor's article on Indigenous Links for more information

## Indigenous youth-to-youth activities (2001)

Indigenous youth from the South Pacific and Canada's Pacific Northwest were provided with platforms to share their views on sustaining culture and tradition. Some questioned their identity as Indigenous people. Others struggle with the tensions of embracing mainstream culture on one hand and their Indigenous traditions on the other. Many searched for their present and future role. This CIDA-funded project provided four venues for youth to explore these issues: a youth tour in Canada's Northwest and the South Pacific, workshops on Vancouver Island and the city of Kelowna, cultural evenings, and publication of a youth issue of Tok Blong Pasifik.

### Speaking Out: Indigenous Media Talks Development (2003)

PPP organized a program to send three prominent Canadian Aboriginal journalists to Fiji and Vanuatu for a three week tour. Each journalist produced several pieces for publication and distribution, designed to encourage Canadians to examine the commonalities of experience among Indigenous peoples in Canada and the South Pacific, and to gain a deeper understanding of how communities are addressing challenges creatively.

### Fair Trade: Bad Business or Global Prosperity? (2004-2005)

This public engagement initiative saw PPP conduct a series of consultations about trade and values with a diverse cross-section of people in 15 different communities across British Columbia. An educational resource kit, Trade My Way, was produced to inspire youth to deepen their understanding of global trade, and take informed action to create a more equitable trade system.



*Maori children, New Zealand*

## Shifting Tides: Indigenous Responses to Global Climate Change (2007)

This project was conceived to raise awareness of the impacts of climate change on Indigenous communities in Canada and in the South Pacific. Indigenous communities are particularly vulnerable to the social and economic impacts of climate change due to the nature of their subsistence-based economies and colonial histories. Shifting Tides provided a forum for Indigenous peoples to share their stories and invite fellow Canadians to take action on climate change. In November 2007, an international delegation of Canadian Aboriginal and Cook Islands Maori Elders, Youth, and Scientists took part in a month-long tour that involved visits to Rarotonga in the Cook Islands and various cities in Canada, including Victoria, The Cowichan Valley, and Vancouver, BC; Winnipeg, MB; Ottawa, ON; and Iqaluit, NUN. During the tour, the delegation had opportunities to meet with several Indigenous communities. From these dialogues arose the clear recommendation that Canadians need to take decisive action on climate change now. A web-based climate action kit has been produced to provides tools and resources for the average Canadian to take first decisive steps, [www.climatechange.pacificpeoplespartnership.org/](http://www.climatechange.pacificpeoplespartnership.org/).

Shifting Tides was delivered in collaboration with the Kouto Nui council of traditional leaders in the Cook islands with sponsorship from CIDA and additional financial support from IDRC, the Mountain Equipment Co-op, BC Hydro, Canadian North, The British Columbia Council for International Cooperation, the United Church of Canada and the Anglican Church of Canada.

**Pacific Promises: A Story from the Leaders of Tomorrow (2008)**  
Pacific Promises was originally self-published as a special edition of Tok Blong Pasifik in 2008. The children's book was written by Stephanie Peter and Deyna Marsh with illustrations by Natalie Christensen. Both Stephanie and Deyna were participants in past PPP youth projects and were inspired to write this book for the leaders of tomorrow. One common theme that emerges is the impact of climate change on the social, cultural and economic well-being of Pacific island Indigenous communities in the South Pacific and in the North Pacific. This project was funded by CIDA and Mountain Equipment Co-op.

## One Wave Festival (2008-ongoing)

The annual One Wave Festival links together Indigenous youth and leaders from the North and South Pacific in an artistic and cultural exchange, open to all who wish to engage and experience this rich diversity. The Victoria, BC-based Festival participants and performers draw from a diverse Indigenous arts. Through the different arts mediums, the Festival offers an opportunity for community dialogue with regards to issues of concern throughout the Pacific including cultural integrity, language loss, climate change, pollution, food security, Indigenous identity, effects of colonialism, and racism.

## Papua: Land of Peace – Civil Society Leadership in Conflict Transformation (2009-2012)

PPP is engaging Papuan civil society partners to strengthen their work in transforming the root dynamic of conflict in Manokwari, West Papua, Indonesia. The project is funded by CIDA's Voluntary Sector Fund with matching funds coming from Development and Peace and generous donations from individual Canadians. See Todd Biderman's West Papua Report for complete information.



*Tonga Tapa Making*

## ONGOING PPP PROGRAMMES

### Pacific Networking Conferences

Over the years PPP has presented 21 Pacific Networking Conferences (PNC). These are designed to bring together activists, academics, development workers, decision makers and the general public to address and mobilize around issues of mutual concern including peace, cultural integrity, social justice, human dignity, equality, globalization, environmental sustainability, local governance and indigenous knowledge.

### Cultural Exchanges & Public Engagement

As an ongoing function of PPP's efforts to enhance and strengthen Canadian connections to the South Pacific, we regularly facilitate cultural programmes and host exchanges. Recent examples of this include: Te Korero Maori Dance Tour (New Zealand); SAWA Global Hero Tour (Vanuatu); Hailans to Ailans (Papua New Guinea), and Te Vaka (South Pacific fusion – New Zealand / Australian).

### Tok Blong Pasifik Magazine

Since 1982, Tok Blong Pasifik has featured a rich variety of "talk that belongs" to the Pacific: news, views, debates and insights. Begun in a pre-internet, fledgling-independence, nuclear cold-war era, where communications among Pacific islands was prohibitively expensive and where North-South information flows were virtually non-existent, Tok Blong Pasifik filled a void not only for Northerners concerned about peoples of the region, but also for Pacific islanders themselves curious to hear about neighbouring South Pacific nations. Without losing the vision of its initial mission, Tok Blong Pasifik has masterfully adapted to the communication realities of the 21st century, remaining fresh and relevant as an education and advocacy tool throughout the vast Pacific region.

# BICHE VILLAGE ON NGATOKAE ISLAND, SOLOMON ISLANDS:

*A report from the field by Glenn Raynor, August 2010*



*Biche leaf house.  
Photo: Glenn Raynor*

A year ago I left my position as executive director of PPP to begin a two-year Masters degree in Conflict Analysis and Peace-building in Tokyo as a Rotary World Peace Fellow. The fellowship includes an Applied Field Experience phase, which combines field research with professional development and community service.

For me there was no question that I wanted to be in the South

Pacific but where? I pored over maps and thought long and hard, recalling the fascinating places and impressive partners my work with PPP had introduced me to. Throughout this process the Solomon Islands kept coming to mind. Readers who have visited them know it's impossible not to fall in love with this special corner of the Pacific. Once decided, I looked for a host organization that was supporting biodiversity conservation and the creation of sustainable livelihoods. I discovered The Solomon Islands Community Conservation Partnership (SICCP) is an initiative of the American Museum of Natural History's Center for Biodiversity Conservation in collaboration with local partners and the University of Queensland in Brisbane, Australia.

My thesis research examines how Indigenous communities in particular can leverage stewardship of important cultural and natural assets to achieve economic, social and cultural benefits. I'm also interested in exploring the power dynamics of development from the perspective of grassroots communities. SICCP was an ideal fit. Their mission to create a locally owned and sustainable conservation economy while successfully protecting some of the last pristine areas in the Solomon Islands resonated strongly.

I was particularly attracted to SICCP's Tetepare Marovo Complex "Reef to Ridgeline" project. Situated in the heart of the Melanesian Biodiversity Hotspot, the complex encompasses Tetepare

(the largest uninhabited island in the South Pacific), the Hele Bar Islands, and the Marovo Lagoon, the world's largest double barrier enclosed coral lagoon. It includes a full ecological transition, from pristine coral reefs through sea level rainforests to moss draped montane forests of the 1,000m Vangunu caldera and 885m Mt. Mariu on Ngatokae Island. This combined with a wealth of biocultural knowledge retained by the region's Indigenous stewards have made the complex a candidate for UNESCO World Heritage Status.

Despite this endowment of biocultural wealth, Solomon Islands remains among the poorest of the "Small Island Developing States." The 2009 UN Human Development Report ranks them at 135 out of 182 countries with an HDI value of 0.610 (The Congo trails at 136th with an HDI value of 0.601). Unemployment, particularly among youth under 25 is estimated at over 40%, exacerbating an already volatile situation. It is one of the underlying causes of the violent conflicts that have rocked the country in recent years. Large-scale logging primarily by Malaysian-owned companies has brought environmental destruction, fueled corruption and destroyed the social fabric of many communities. SICCP offers communities a compelling alternative.

In 2007, my host community, Biche, agreed to protect their large area of pristine forest for a period of five years, during which they are attempting to identify alternative income sources. Logging by foreign companies offers little benefit. The last Malaysian-owned company representatives to visit offered a portable sawmill and \$100,000 Solomon dollars (\$7500 CDN) for their approximately 350km<sup>2</sup> of virgin tropical hardwoods. This combined with the devastation they've witnessed in neighbouring villages convinced them that they don't want their lands logged.

Biche is a very traditional village of about 150 people situated outside the protective barriers of the lagoon on the "weather coast" of Ngatokae Island. Their isolation and harsh environment have forged a culture of self-reliance and community solidarity. The current village site is the latest in a succession of migrations that started centuries before in a series of fortified villages on the high ridge above. Nine former village sites are known, their



*Canoe landing on a rocky beach takes skill!  
Photo: Glenn Raynor*

vestiges still visible through the forest above the current site, inhabited for about 200 years. Elaborate stone platforms and stairs surround the traditional leaf huts. Along the small river that provides fresh water, one can still see grooves in the rocks where traditional shell money was carved from fossilized giant clams still found amid fossilized corals and shells suspended in jagged lava rock during eruptions that created today's Marovo Lagoon. Biche is still renowned throughout Marovo and beyond as a village of master carvers. Most work in wood while a few continue the tradition of making stone bowls. In addition to small revenues derived from carving and the occasional tourist who is charged a modest landing fee, their economy remains largely subsistent. People cultivate sweet potatoes, taro, cassava, bananas, papayas and a variety of greens in forest clearings, which along with abundant fish from the reefs and coconuts form the basis of a healthy local diet.

This is the hecha season, the Marovo word for the southeast trade winds that originate off Antarctica in the storm centres

of the southern hemisphere winter. Strong winds and massive swells make access even more challenging. Small open boats or dugout canoes must negotiate between coral reefs and boulders to ride waves into the small rocky beach. Waiting villagers quickly lay out poles to create a makeshift boat ramp, pulling boats to safety while passengers scramble through the surf to shore. A solar-powered VHF radio provides contact with other villages. Alternatively, a three-hour walk through dense jungle or a dug-out canoe ride over rough open ocean skirting jagged reefs brings villagers to the non-profit People First Network's solar-powered internet facility.

It's inspiring to witness the courage and conviction of the Biche community to preserve their language, culture and natural heritage in the face of intense outside pressure. They are keenly aware that what they have is very special. People possess little here but I have never encountered a place with such a level of happiness and well-being that should make them the envy of the so-called developed world.

---

*Stone carvings in Biche. Photo: Glenn Raynor*



**PACIFIC PEOPLE'S PARTNERSHIP** GRATEFULLY  
ACKNOWLEDGES THE FOLLOWING SUPPORTERS:



A place of world arts + cultures



The Primate's World Relief  
and Development Fund



Droits et Démocratie  
Rights & Democracy



University  
of Victoria

Centre for  
Asia-Pacific Initiatives



The Anglican Church of Canada



First Peoples'  
Heritage, Language &  
Culture Council



The United Church of Canada  
L'Église Unie du Canada



# THE PACIFIC PEOPLES' PARTNERSHIP INVITES YOUR SUPPORT!

We are celebrating 35 years of working with Pacific island peoples to support their efforts to create lasting solutions to the realities of poverty, environmental degradation and injustice in their communities and across the region...

You can be a vital part of making a difference today and into the future! The work of Pacific Peoples' Partnership is sustained by the commitment of generous donors across North America and the Pacific. Please help us continue to support the innovative work of our partners as they strive to realize their own vision of social and economic development and change, and to create communities rooted in peace and social justice.

With every donation PPP can seek matching funds from government, church and private project funders. Equally important, individual, community group and company donors make up the strong backbone of supporters which is essential to attract institutional funders.

We invite you to become a sustaining donor of PPP by making a monthly or an annual gift. Your generous support has sustained the work of PPP for 35 years, and we're honoured to continue to work together.

Name .....

Address.....

Postal Code .....

Phone .....

Email .....

## Amount:

☐ \$35.<sup>00</sup>    ☐ \$50.<sup>00</sup>    ☐ \$100.<sup>00</sup>

☐ Other .....

☐ Check if you wish to remain anonymous

☐ Cash

☐ Cheque

☐ Money Order

☐ Visa

Visa No..... Exp .....

Signature .....

*Please address Cheque or Money Order to:*

### **Pacific Peoples' Partnership**

407-620 View St.

Victoria, BC, Canada V8W 1J6

[www.pacificpeoplespartnership.org](http://www.pacificpeoplespartnership.org)

Contact Pacific Peoples' Partnership | 250 381 4131

Please Note: *Outside of Canada, please submit money in US funds.*

Charitable Tax# 11925 4977 RP-0001

# REFLECTIONS FROM AN INDIGENOUS PEOPLES ABROAD PROGRAM INTERN

By Kathleen Graham



Kathleen and her baby

I'm Kathleen Graham, I participated in an IPAP Internship from Sept. 2001 to March 2002. I worked in Pukekohe, New Zealand at the Tainui Maori Trust. I always look back at my experience during my IPAP internship with the fondest of memories. I was only 20 years old, and my internship was my first opportunity to see a different part of the world, and experience the beauty of a Polynesian culture. I started my internship with an unhealthy world-view passed down from the residential school legacy, and through the internship I eventually learned to see my Dene culture as beautiful and unique. I also learned that no matter what country an Indigenous person comes from, there will always exist a common camaraderie because of the Indigenous connection and relationships to the earth and cycles.

The most important thing that I learned though, was to believe in myself and my ambitions. After my internship, I returned to Canada and graduated (with distinction) from the University of Manitoba with a degree in Environmental Studies. I now work

in Yellowknife at the Mackenzie Valley Land and Water Board as a Regulatory Officer, but I know that the most important work that I do...is teaching my 1 year old son to appreciate the beauty and the similarities of our Indigenous cultures.



Above: Ake Lianga, *Countless Catch*

At left: John Marston and Claytus Yambon, *War Canoe*

## Pacific Currents

November 10<sup>th</sup> - December 3<sup>rd</sup>, 2010



A cross-cultural collaboration by Solomon Islands artist Ake Lianga and Coast Salish artist John Marston. Recognized for technical mastery and interpretive skill in their respective traditions, the artists explore cultural themes involving both sides of the Pacific by means of sculpture, painting, lino printing, and serigraphy.

Honouring the 35<sup>th</sup> anniversary of Pacific Peoples' Partnership.

ALCHERINGA  
GALLERY

665 Fort Street, Victoria, BC V8W 1G6 • tel: 250.383.8224 • fax: 250.383.9399 • [www.alcheringa-gallery.com](http://www.alcheringa-gallery.com)

# CHANGE-MAKERS

Pacific hearts split  
like separating cells  
that grow and divide  
fulfilling unspoken  
purposes to find  
itself, and home

North, South love  
covers unseen expanses  
of flesh and land  
blood beats through  
lives defined with  
intelligent politics  
cultural and lawful  
born on the very territories  
that shape  
civil societies

Our connected oceans  
carry pacific passengers  
along liquid horizons  
Change-Makers coming  
bringing messages  
of collective integrity  
based in respectful progress  
the way it was meant to be  
before immigration  
written in words

Young leaders  
look to their elders  
with split-heart  
questions  
knowing traditions  
live in more than one  
realm  
sung in harmonies  
over-lapping memories  
blending and sending  
positive waves  
washing back  
three life-times away

Our warm home lands  
gifted to us to keep  
like promises in the belly  
there is no telling  
how far the line goes  
but we know  
we come  
from difference  
and distance  
travelling on parallel  
paths  
collective actions  
tell of challenges  
overcome with solidarity  
and resolve  
using education and technology  
as tools  
connecting like-minds  
words resonating waves  
on rocks  
repeating our walk  
one generation to the next

Spirit makes it all possible  
we carry on as Pacific Peoples  
spinning so much love  
from one split heart.

## ABOUT JANET ROGERS

Janet is a Mohawk/Tuscarora writer from the Six Nations band in southern Ontario. She was born in Vancouver British Columbia and has been living on the traditional lands of the Coast Salish people (Victoria, British Columbia) since 1994. Janet works in the genres of poetry, short fiction, science fiction, play writing, spoken word performance poetry, video poetry and recorded poems with music.

Her literary inspiration comes from her native heritage, feminism, historical territories, human love, sexuality and spirit. Her first published collection of poems is titled *Splitting the Heart*, Ekstasis Editions 2007 which contains a companion CD of the same name. Her newest collection of poems titled "Unearthed" is due out in the fall of 2011 with Leaf Press.

Janet has collaborated with musicians as a lyricist and has read with dance troupes, creating unique segments of mixed media presentations. Janet's 2<sup>nd</sup> video poem was launched in October 2009 titled "What Did You Do Boy" in support of a spoken word track from her CD *Firewater*. You can hear Janet on the air waves hosting Vancouver Island's only native radio program on CFUV 101.9fm in Victoria called "Native Waves Radio" and is host of a native music column, Tribal Clefs on CBC Radio One's program, All Points West in British Columbia every Tuesday.

[www.janetmarierogers.com](http://www.janetmarierogers.com)

[www.myspace.com/janetrogersfirewater](http://www.myspace.com/janetrogersfirewater)



# PACIFIC PEOPLES' ARTS AND CULTURAL EXCHANGES, 2009-2010

The Pacific Peoples' Partnership (PPP) continues to host ongoing arts and cultural exchanges as part of its public engagement strategy, raising awareness about Pacific peoples and connecting Indigenous peoples from the South Pacific with the First Nations, Métis and Inuit peoples of Canada.



*South Pacific music jam session outside Victoria. Credit: Te Vaka*

Most recently in the Greater Victoria area, we hosted the talented award-winning South Pacific band, Te Vaka from July 26 to 30, 2010. The week consisted of four tremendously successful events

including a Samoan welcoming ceremony on Tsartlip Territory with Chief Wayne Morris and community Elders in attendance, community involvement in two dance and drumming workshops, and a sold out performance at the Victoria Events Centre which also featured local dancers performing the Haka. PPP clearly underestimated the British Columbia following of Te Vaka, having to turn away over 100 people from the concert. All events were highly successful family-orientated cultural gatherings and exchanges. PPP was pleased to gift Te Vaka with a Coast Salish drum painted by Virgil Sampson. Many volunteer hours, lots of business support, a tremendous interest from the media and the assistance of the University of Victoria's Centre for Asia-Pacific Initiatives all contributed to this great success.

Following on the heels of Te Vaka, PPP board members and staff organized our 3rd One Wave Festival to present an evening packed with funk rock, hip hop beats, dubstep and drum 'n' bass particularly anticipated by the youth of Greater Victoria. The energy of our team was complemented to the highest degree by a range of youthful performers from four local groove performance groups, nearly all of whom waved 100% of their artistic fees in support of our mission. This high energy, interactive event was packed by individuals who helped us dream for a peaceful, equitable, sustainable and healthy Pacific, ultimately inspiring a new generation to understand the importance of our connections across the Pacific Ocean. The organizers of this event reached new heights of success securing the solid support of the business community with over 40 donations.



*Hailans to Ailans canoe installation at Alcheringa Gallery. Credit: Alcheringa Gallery*



*TeVaka and local dancers perform a Haka*

## YAN CHRISTIAN WARINUSSY OF WEST PAPUA

In 2005, Pacific Peoples' Partnership was a key partner in the successful nomination that led to the recognition of Yan Christian Warinussy of West Papua (Indonesia) as a John Humphrey Freedom Award Laureate. "Yan Christian's commitment to the people of



West Papua is a moving, powerful example of commitment to human rights in the face of extreme adversity, intimidation and threats to his personal safety," said Wayne MacKay, Chair of Rights & Democracy's Board of Directors and a member of the John Humphrey Freedom Award's international jury. Organized by PPP, Yan Christian also participated in a series of events where he met with Vancouver Islanders from all walks of life during a two-day visit to Victoria.

Today, Yan Christian continues to serve as Executive Director of the Institute for Research, Analysis and Development of Legal Aid, also known as LP3BH, an organization committed to defending the rights of West Papuans through education, research, legal support and community programmes that encourage hope and empowerment. PPP is currently working with his organization on a three-year CIDA-funded project called "Papua Land of Peace - Civil Society Leadership in Conflict Transformation".

“  
YAN CHRISTIAN'S COMMITMENT  
TO THE PEOPLE OF WEST PAPUA IS A  
MOVING, POWERFUL EXAMPLE OF  
COMMITMENT TO HUMAN RIGHTS  
”



*Hailans to Ailans cultural exchange - 2009*

In November 2009, PPP was also pleased to assist Victoria's Alcheringa Gallery with the major international exhibition and cultural exchange "Hailans to Ailans". Our role was to support the visiting artists from Papua New Guinea and engage them in cultural and artistic exchanges with Coast Salish artists of Vancouver Island. We also assisted in presenting a cultural performance night at Wawadit'la or Mungo Martin House at the Royal BC Museum.

We are thrilled to have such opportunities to host and partner in the organization and presentation of such important cultural events in Canada. From recent examples offered here and through all previously held events, the result is a clear legacy of deeper cultural appreciation for all involved.

*Pearls of the South Pacific perform at Ava Welcoming Ceremony.  
Photo by Te Vaka*





“FOUR GREAT WHITES” BY SOLOMON ISLAND ARTIST AKE LIANGA. THIS LIMITED EDITION SERIGRAPH HAS BEEN DONATED TO PPP BY THE ARTIST AND **ALCHERINGA GALLERY** FOR LIVE AUCTION ON NOVEMBER 13TH, 2010 IN RECOGNITION OF PPP’S 35TH ANNIVERSARY