

# Cultural Survival

## Indigenous Peoples' Rights

<https://www.culturalsurvival.org/our-values-and-principles>

### Mission Statement

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At Cultural Survival, our staff and board came together over a series of months to build and manifest what we believe are the core values of our organization, as we act both internally with members of a team, and externally with our wider kin, partners, donors and members, partner organizations and stakeholders. Developing this list of values and principles has been a multi-stage process that engaged Cultural Survival's full staff, leadership, and Board of Directors over a period of months.

We center, value, and promote the self-determination of Indigenous Peoples to freely determine their political conditions and pursue their own forms of economic, social, and cultural development, especially with regard to their own ways of life, their cosmovisions, and the integrity of their lands and territories. Towards the realization of self-determination, we advocate for the Free, Prior, and Informed Consent of Indigenous Peoples to be upheld in all decisions that affect them.

At Cultural Survival, we work towards a vision that centers, promotes, and values the cosmovisions of Indigenous Peoples as a core tenet of our work. We understand Indigenous cosmovisions as diverse ways of thinking, living, and being in a relationship with and knowing the world. These cosmovisions are as diverse as there are Indigenous Peoples on the planet, and they operate on systems of ideas and practices that define each community's beliefs, values, and customs, as well as their relationships with Mother Earth.

Trust is a value that allows us to operate in reciprocal relationships with those around us, in which trust is an antecedent to action. Cultural Survival places trust in our community partners, in our funders and donors, in our team members, and in our leaderships.

Humility is a value that allows us to understand that there are greater forces outside of our organization and outside of ourselves as individuals. We allow ourselves to be guided by the wisdom of our ancestors and those who have laid the groundwork before us. We acknowledge our limitations and our weaknesses while always working towards improvement.

Indigenous Peoples across the globe are extremely diverse. Amongst our partners, within our team, and within individuals, we represent an array of diverse cultures and ways of understanding the world. We respect and acknowledge the diversity of Indigenous Peoples, geography, race, ethnicity, sexual orientation, gender, ability, language, religion, spirituality, age, experiences, viewpoints, and cosmovisions.

We consider community, collectivity, and collaboration to be fundamental ways of life. This extends to our vision of land stewardship, our relationship with life on earth, and our interdependence. We value and respect collective rights as defined by the UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples, in addition to individual human rights.

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We respect the feelings, wishes, rights, identities, and traditions of others, with particular consideration and recognition of the self-determination of the communities we work with and their unique processes of decision-making. Respect is an essential aspect in every interaction we engage in.

We believe in the inherent dignity of all human beings and lifeforms. However, we recognize that the reality we live in has not been equal for all. We condemn racism, misogyny, and all forms of violence and oppression, and seek equity for all. We inform our idea of equity through Indigenous cosmovisions. We recognize that external forces have disrupted the balances of community relations, gender relations, relations with nature, and cultural relations, and our programs seek to support work that heals this balance in alignment with Indigenous cosmovisions.

We are accountable for our words and our actions. We are accountable to our communities, our elders, and our youth, to generations in the future and to our ancestors of the past. We believe that honesty, consistency, and communication are core to accountability.

Informed by our sense of community and trust, we harness empathy and value acting in solidarity with others. Solidarity is an opportunity for collaboration, sharing, reciprocity, and working in collective towards a common objective. At the same time, it helps us build good relationships with others in the long term. It is a service towards a common interest or movement based on knowledge and empathy for a cause.

### Land Acknowledgement

We acknowledge that we are headquartered on [Massachusetts land](#), in Cambridge, MA, and we thank the past and current Indigenous stewards of this land.

Cultural Survival advocates for Indigenous Peoples' rights and supports Indigenous communities self-determination, cultures and political resilience, since 1972.

Cultural Survival envisions a future that respects and honors Indigenous Peoples' inherent rights and dynamic cultures, deeply and richly interwoven in lands, languages, spiritual traditions, and artistic expression, rooted in self-determination and self-governance.

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