IV PLANETARY GATHERING MEXICO
2019
“LET UNION BE ALL IN OUR HEARTS. LET OUR HEARTS BE JOINED AS ONE”
¡BIENVENIDOS A MÉXICO!

PÁTZCUARO. MICHOACÁN
Centro de Investigación y Estudios Transmodernos (CIET), a university with the mission of forming a healer in each house.

Cherán, an inspiring indigenous P’urhepecha’s town were politicians, Police and cartels were expelled of the city in 2011. Since then, they have established a system of self-government based on Councils...
¡Fuerza Guerreres!
Strength Warriors!

The gathering started with a ritual in P’urhepecha’s tradition.

We ask the elements, the forest, the cardinal points, the spirits, our hearts, our ancestors, and our souls to be there, to share the space and to get strength for our lives and our paths.
“Butterflies, eagles, seagulls,
fire flow,
the trees cover us,
the water listens to us,
we walk and we want to connect.
We search.
Our ancestors arrive,
they speak to us,
they tell us to be attentive”
(Lyric from the Ecoversities’s rap song)
Some organization to put a bit of structure... just a bit!
Some structure was conceived at the beginning of the gathering. We made some sharing spaces agreements; we allow ourselves to be involved in the activities proposed, to be aware of each other, including the nature and every part of the space.

In addition, we recognized ourselves in our demands and our times, the need to work together, to weave. Also, to rest, and to digest every part of the gathering for our lives, our challenges, our warriors paths.
Projects Fair

We had the opportunity to share our projects, our narratives, our agreements, how are we trying to change education, and what are we doing to change the world.
“The entire experience was extremely textured, the initial part of the trip was to raise some funds that would allow me to go to take part in this experience. Having the grace and blessing of a community that sees the worth in having me go is a humbling experience as I still as from time to time deal with self-doubt, so this intention at its initiation saw the magic of community and how little bits of resources pulled together to make things happen.

Getting eventually to Mexico, Meeting everybody, I experienced some social anxiety, as the number of people present really overwhelmed me, however connecting with each person in my own time and space made me really have some deep connections and meaningful conversation around works that are very dear to my heart, such as liberation, children as people, spirits, education and more. Having Mexico as the setting, the narratives of struggles, liberation, food, and land, especially those with policing as state apparatus of oppression is scary, more so to hear all stories from real live people from their various different lands, and coming to the conclusion that we are all under the same bureaucratic capitalistic demonic curse. We all have realized this and we have chosen to act upon the sensitivity we have to this dying world by creating and connecting to indigenous, natural, regenerative ways to allow us to begin re-imagining a tomorrow.”

Chevanni Davids, South Afrika
We had a lot of time (never enough) to recognize our bodies, our minds, our ideas, our fears, our insecurities, our souls in hugs, in our eyes and into the beautiful world.
Cherán is the town of the indigenous P’urhepecha’s people that has a beautiful example of organization, resistance, and other ways of understanding live, education, and the land. Their political model is an example for other territories that want’s to live with their own traditions.
Sharing conversations about education, life and organization...
what can be said about this place that we are in
where you me and everything try to form a we
the logic of language doesn’t indicate peace
but perhaps in ihsan we can be born again

let’s stick to mujaawarah far away from dialogue
muthannayat and groups, the secret is in the mix

the revolution is ongoing
inside of us it is ongoing
it has many fields (squares)
not only in Tahrir

Beirut, Soor, Khartoum
the situation is overflowing
Cheran, Chile, and Ecuador
we all play a role

and in Gaza every week
hope is returning

Dina Bataineh, Taghmees, Jordan
More inspiration

“My heart defends the forest”
Some people from the town shared their paths, some of their ancestral knowledge. We shared education approaches, healing, art, among other...
Some people visited the forest, others the mountain and others the city that was full of art...
“The next day we went into the city of Cherán, from the 100 participants, I was lucky to have lunch with Manish who shared how he was able to turn around the logic of the capitalist economy in India, and offer gift economies instead at his own university Swaraj. Luckily enough, I was sitting down to Ana, an incredible and inspiring Romanian friend, who was able to set up an Alternative University in Bucharest. We spoke about 4 hours straight sharing stories and dreams we both had, I am very grateful for this new connection, I feel support for my own project with Ana, we are now sharing documents, ideas, and life about the transformation of education around the world. The reality is that any encounter was meaningful, people who come to the gatherings are activist, educators, wizards, we all want to help construct a new world which is not full of greed, hate and violence, but one where community primes and learning is a pleasure and not a jail. This is the reason coming to the gathering is like coming home to family, we are all warriors of the same cause”

Francisco Morejon, QILAS, Ecuador
Let’s make art... let’s make a rap song!
“What inspired me of the Ecoversities gathering in Ciet Mexico was the growth and numbers of people who attended this year. This was my fourth gathering and this was the biggest and most diverse Ecoversities gathering in my experience. This year was the most intentional programming that I saw held for young people and children, one day there was a writing workshop for kids and as I walked passed these young people writing, they were focused and engaged; it was a beautiful sight. Followed by this was hearing the finished product of these young people writing that was integrated with adult voices for a 38 minutes hip hop song. What inspired me about this particular project was the organic approach of this project, when Julian who was co-creating the song, asked me to write a verse, I hesitated for a minute but then I did it and then I got excited at writing and found myself engaged in this project a few minutes into writing, feeling like those young people I saw earlier in the week writing for the same project but the project had grown over the days in this organic ways”.

Brandon Hay, The Black Daddies Club, Toronto.
“Here in ecoversities sharing our paths
nesting much love and receiving much,
much more.

This is our art,
to dream and
without knowing why
We find each other
To walk together through the pain
Of living and fighting this cruel system.

United with joy
we stand with courage
warriors in the little school of love”

Aquí en ecoversidades compartiendo
nuestro andar anidando mucho amor y
recibiendo mucho más

Ese es nuestro arte es el de soñar y sin
saber por qué se da el encontrar.
Acompañan el dolor contra el sistema
expolitador.

Unidos con alegría nos paramos con
valor guerreros y guerreras en la
escuelita del amor.

(Originally in Spanish)
We are art
We are magic
how are you feeling?
baffled. better. believing... wanting to remember. the wisdom of children like the wisdom of trees and stones, whispers loudly, can you hear it?

where’s baby sufi mama?
here...

where’s baby sufi?
with faith and gratitude... release.

did you understand... they’re finally living in peace?
i will no longer hold in silence that which poisons me. i will say it fiercely with love, a cacophonous whisper....

Palestina presente!
no peace without justice and dignity.

Dina Bataineh, Taghmees, Jordan
Playing
During the days we had the opportunity to share with kids, we went to play, to see birds, to see how they draw life, how they protect and care for each other, and nature in ways that we should not forget.
Cooking, sharing spaces, activities, life....
We co-created activities
We co-created spaces
We co-designed projects
We co-held each other
We co-appreciated each other
We faced many challenges during the week, challenged our structures, our lifes, our ways of being and interacting with the planet....
While I was still at the IV Ecoversities Gathering, it was often challenging to put into words what I was feeling and thinking. And that's the way it is so far. Undoubtedly, the Meeting crossed me at different levels and provoked numerous reflections on my role in my community and what can effectively be done to collaborate with the transformations we want to see in the world...For me, the most obvious purpose of our experience in Mexico was to connect with the Emerging and Emergency. Look at what is not ready, for what is not done or unconstructed yet in us and in the world. And that necessarily put me in the face of who I am and who we are..

The time and richness of perceptions and demands, in different dimensions, remains one of the greatest challenges in the present, but also dynamo to continue materializing and sharing dreams. The certainty that we are together and holding hands in this search and achievement makes everything much more stimulating and real”

Nelson Vilaronga, Ecoversity of the Circus
“During the days we spent together, I completely lost my sense of time, which made me think of the meaning of “time”. Maybe I lost sense of the modern way of defining time, the linear term that defines it from left to right and days with numbers. In the gathering I was more rooted to people, land, stories and my story, as if my gravity increased to what is connected to nature and our nature. With gravity and connection, time slows and goes with our pace, I created harmony with time instead of struggling and running after an illusion of time”

Reef Fakhouri, Taghmees, Jordan
“This year with the presence of Black and African people from the Diaspora at the Ecoversities gathering in Mexico, I found it was it was refreshing to include race when speak at the gathering about the intersections of oppressions that is happening on a global level and not feeling out of place or worried that no one in the space will quite get where I am coming from when space was introduced to the dialogue. In the Ecoversities gathering over the years, I have been one of the few Black folks in the space and sometimes the only Black man directly involved in the gathering over the entire time, which at times can feel isolating. Even though they maybe some Black men in the space at previous gatherings, our geographic locations on this planet and experience with how our Blackness has been taking up sometimes shapes our positionality.

Talking with a Black woman who was visiting the Ecoversities gathering for the first time, who was coming from California and does work around African Religion and spirituality. Her and I shared rooms and we were able to check in at the end of the day of the gathering or chat about Black life”

Brandon Hay,
“You know, I can only say that my multiple stories and my most profound experiences at this Ecoversities had happened at the fire place.

It was about very sincere personal conversations with the people. The magic of relations and talks, practices behind each of us, and the fireplace to me was the most opening one a catalyst of exchange of many stories, like the one we had that night that led to the queer space or the one that we had with Yeyo and Brandon about masculinities and feminisms.”

Nikolay Oleynikov, Free Home University.
“I was deeply touched by the final activity of sharing ‘death’-related stories. To me it was the most vulnerable moment of the gathering. It allowed me to reach a spiritual depth and touch I had not experienced at a gathering before. It was inspiring to listen and translate simultaneously from English to Portuguese. It felt as if I was experiencing it twice, as listener and as messenger or translator”

Karim-Yassin Goessinger, CILAS, Egypt
HEALING AS A CENTRAL PART OF THE GATHERING
“This Tomorrow needs medicines and the Tezmascal is one of those key and important medicines, the ritual of this medicine is really powerful as it recognizes the female element in power, the alchemy of earth, air, fire, water and ether creates a magic that is impossible to write in language, the importance of theses natural indigenous medicines are in humanity’s healing”.

Chevanni Davids, South Afrika
Different healing practices from all over the world shared to everyone in the gathering. Here, a Temazcal for children.
“Four years ago, and during my first visit to Mexico, I tried to experience temazcal, but I ran out of it in less than 5 minutes. I am claustrophobic, fear completely controlled me and I thought that I will not be able to make it, but deep inside I felt that I missed out on something. This time in CIET, I really wanted to try the experience again, with the help of my friends Dina and Maru and the healer I was able to enter the temazcal and stay for the whole ceremony. Inside, I cried for a bit and felt fear but I survived. I don’t claim that I got over my fear of closed dark places, but I realized that the idea of fear kills more than fear itself and blocks us from trying, maybe now I know how to deal with some of my fears with the importance of having people around”

Reef Fakhouri, Taghmees, Jordan
RECOGNIZING TRAYECTORY. GRADUATION DAY FOR HEALERS IN CIET
During Ecoversities we were invited to the graduation of many healers that had come in a long path of learning how to help to heal the spirit, the body, and the soul.
Ancestral learning trajectories were recognized.
DÍA DE LOS MUERTOS
After a day-long workshop led by artists Kate Morales, Daniela Brasil, and Nikolay Oleynikov, the 100-headed international group brought to the common altar their ancestors, including the ones that formed us politically and otherwise. Who informed our paths, and inspires us to keep on fighting for a better future no matter what. What we are doing now, we are doing because of they’ve practiced what they’ve preached: Paolo Freire, Berta Caseres, Marielle Franko, subcomandanta Ramona and Joe Strammer, Micha the cat and nonna Mimma, Nastya Baburova and Stas Markelov - presente!
“It was no surprise that the subject of death was present throughout the week. The organizers of the gathering had intentionally chosen the dates to coincide with el Día de los Muertos. There was space created to share stories about our relationship with death and grief. We created artistic renditions of our deceased ancestors (of origin and choice). Together, on October 31st we built a most spectacular collaborative altar in the Michoacán style honoring it all. Not surprisingly, the co-creation had its challenges. Many Mexicans had different ideas about the holiday, what it means and the rites involved in honoring our dead. Many altar-builders had very specific ideas about the way it should be done and what should (and should not) be included”

Aerin Dunford, The Emergence Network, Oaxaca, México.
Ayotzinapa 43 students. Most of the activists in Mexico strongly reject to believe that they are dead. Nevertheless we brought them all up, but off altar!
my life is my message.
Absolute Freire
SHARING WISDOM TO TAKE IN OUR HEARTS TO OUR LIVES. TO OUR PROJECTS. TO SHARE WITH THE WORLD ...

Everyday, every conversation had so much wisdom from everyone’s experience and paths
“From this experience I take away the narratives, methodologies, and pedagogies of people I have met and how they have woven and embraced their indigenous practices and legitimized them through their continuous practice and recreations such as Pedagogy of Aloha and the Agile Learning Centre. The diligence and courage to be resilient when dealing with resistance left me in awe, such is the story of the “Zapatismo”. Another key takeaway is the role of women in healing and liberation and the parallels of these elements globally. This experience has better equipped me in defining the ends on the initiation of our ecoversity in South Afrika and the role of our ecoversity to our community and the world, I am very grateful to have been a part of this journey”.

Chevanni Davids, South Afrika
“I’ve returned to Egypt with the intention and confidence to set up an Ecoversity in the Western Nile Delta (in the province of Beheira) along the Nubaria arm of the Nile. I had contemplated this step for the last three years and now feel encouraged to take it, to prepare for it and to execute it. I feel strengthened by the alliance to reach out and to request support, guidance and collaboration from other Ecoversities Alliance members. I also return from the gathering with more trust in online learning and am considering to incorporate it in a new study programme I’m conceptualizing. As for the residential component of the learning journey I’m envisioning, the gathering restored my faith in the importance of the martial arts - mindfulness training, breathing manipulation and body postured-, and the culinary arts - cultivating, harvesting and communicating with/through food. The gathering consolidated my understanding of regenerative practice. It has encouraged me to claim, return and work the land”

Karim-Yassin Goessinger, CILAS, Egypt
“The most important reflection for me, the gold nugget, that this last gathering left me was to witness the immense variety of creative proposals that from all corners of the planet are dreaming, flourishing and exercising other ways of learning.

During the meeting and in the days after the meeting, there was evidence in my head and in my heart that the Learning Revolution is underway and irreversible... I found in the vast majority of the participants the clarity that there is not only one method to accompany the learning process, that wisdom is there in the world available for all of us, and that is not about teaching, it’s about helping one another how to learn”

Yeyo Beltrán, México.
“Ilkhara kheir”
“shit is good /bless”

More and more challenges to come....
Are we practicing what we say?

“Throughout the gathering I was thinking a lot of our elder Munir Fasheh’s saying “Ilkhara kheir” which translates to “shit is good /bless”. The challenges we had in the space allowed for the contradictions to emerge on the surface; between what we say and what we practice. Unfortunately, we talk a lot about self-care and the care of the group, and this time our shit was there in front of us but we didn’t know how to deal with it, to care about the space and the people we are sharing it with as a first step to care about nature and our well-being wasn’t present to a certain extent.

Shit allowed me to connect with my feelings and see clearly that more work needs to be done on the roots and not on the branches, allow for more stories to be shared, marginalized voices to be heard without struggling and ideas to emerge without the control of the unaware frames. How to keep this space a welcoming learning one from the youngest to the eldest”.

Reef Fakhouri, Taghmees, Jordan
Where do I go with all this shit?

I have faith. I believe in the spirit of *mujaawarah* in its infinite forms and the strength of the fabric it allows us to weave in order to hold in space, time, and beyond. I believe in the wisdom of keeping *mujaawarah* as free of the taint of modern, colonial, and capitalist relations as possible, in a world that is drowning in their folly. This is what I fight for and struggle against.

I remember, there is no justice in burying a wrong, just like so many bodies choking on untold stories. I re-member, there is no place for hurt that breeds anger... share it, channel it, spread it thin to dissolve... release.

The wisdom of children, like the wisdom of trees and stones, whispers loudly....

Tod@s presente!

Dina Bataineh, Taghmees, Jordan
Thank you to CIET’s team, Cherán, Gerardo, Josefita and Pedro for hosting us 🥰🥰
A poem in video from the gathering
https://drive.google.com/file/d/1g5ddAf dy26NP9Xlb kem73WwdK Gk2XD A E/view