



MISSION REPORT TO WASHINGTON DC

JUNE 20 TO 22, 2023



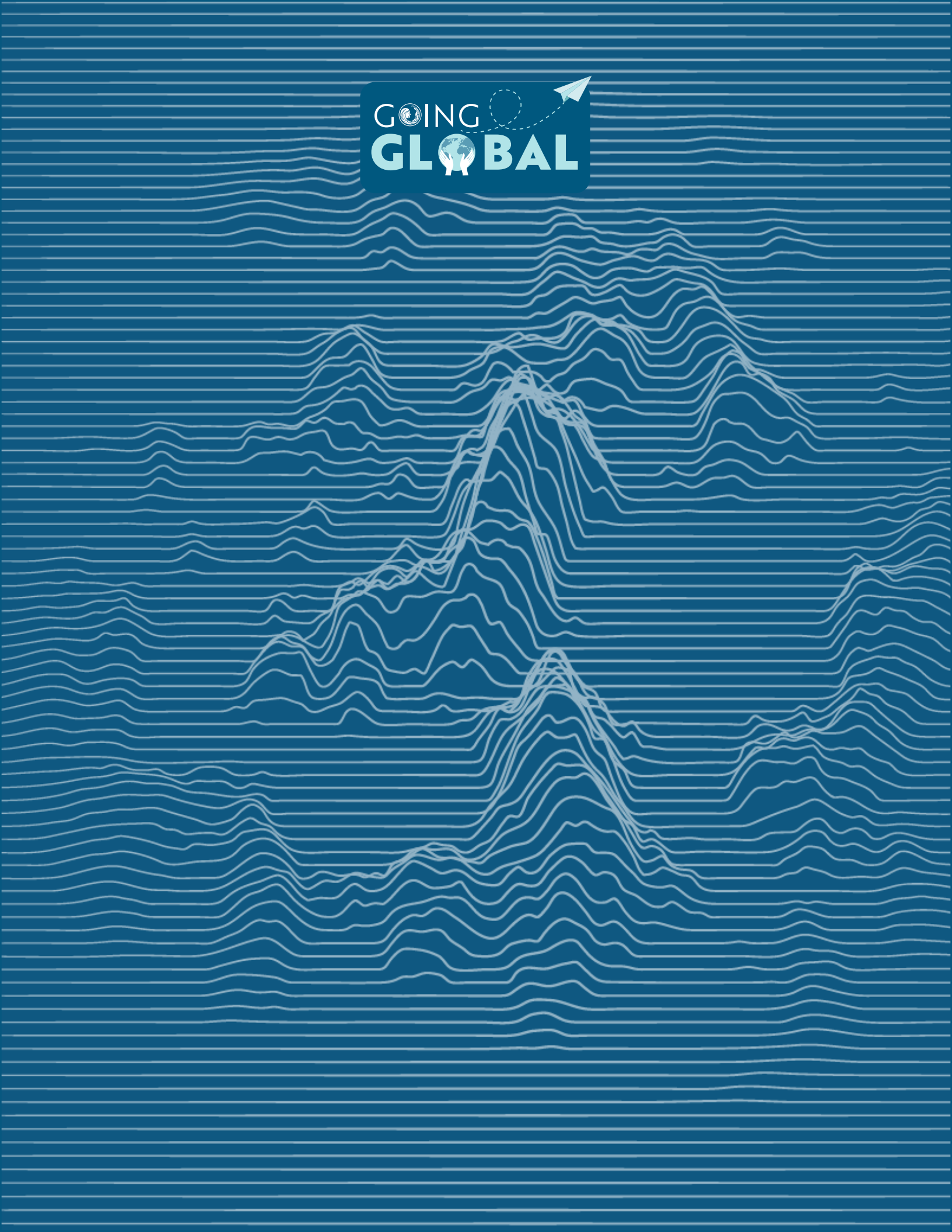


TABLE OF CONTENTS

OVERVIEW	4
BACKGROUND	8
ITINERARY OVERVIEW	12
TUESDAY JUNE 20	13
WEDNESDAY JUNE 21	14
THURSDAY JUNE 22	23
CONCLUSION	24
SOCIAL MEDIA POSTS.....	27

OVERVIEW

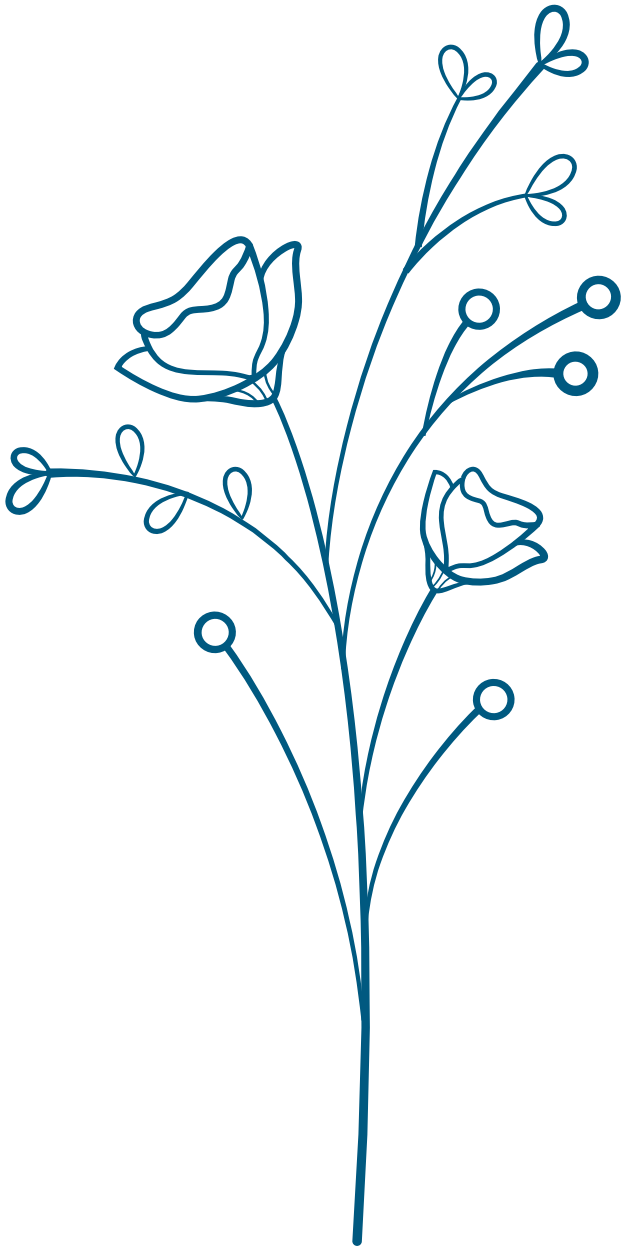
From June 20 to 22 2023 NWAC attended the 53rd General Assembly of the Organization of American States (OAS) held in Washington DC.

Participants:

- Ms. Lynne Groulx, CEO – The Native Women’s Association of Canada (NWAC).
- Ms. Tania Molina, International Director – The Native Women’s Association of Canada (NWAC).

Objectives:

- To participate as a member of the civil society to the 53rd Regular Session of the General Assembly of the Organization of American States (OAS).
- To network and strengthen relationships with 71 permanent observers’ countries and 43 member states.
- To promote the Native Women’s Association of Canada (NWAC) for greater exposure and recognition of the work we do to support Indigenous women, girls, Two-Spirit, transgender, and gender-diverse people (WG2STGD) in Canada.
- To work on the implementation of The POETA DigiSpark Empowering Indigenous Peoples through Digital Skills Project in collaboration with the Organization of American States (OAS) and the Trust for the Americas.



BACKGROUND

The 53rd regular session of the General Assembly of the Organization of American States (OAS) was held at OAS headquarters in Washington, DC, the theme was "Strengthening a Culture of Democratic Accountability with the Promotion, Protection, and Equality of Human Rights in the Americas."

The Organization of American States is the world's oldest regional organization, dating back to the First International Conference of American States, held from October 1889 to April 1890 which established the International Union of American Republics, and later created the inter-American system, the oldest international institutional system. As stated in Article 1 of the Charter, the aim of the OAS is to create among its member states, "an order of peace and justice, to promote their solidarity, to strengthen their collaboration, and to defend their sovereignty, their territorial integrity, and their independence."

The OAS includes 35 independent states of the Americas and forms the main political, juridical, and social governmental forum in the Hemisphere. The Organization is built upon four main pillars which strengthen its strategic vision:

- Democracy.
- Human rights.
- Security.
- Development.

THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY

The General Assembly held annually is a forum where policies are discussed, debated, and then set to govern the OAS bodies. In last years meeting held in Lima, Peru, NWAC participated in a meeting to discuss the progress of the American Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous People and on the Plan of Action of the American Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous People.



ITINERARY OVERVIEW

TUESDAY JUNE 20

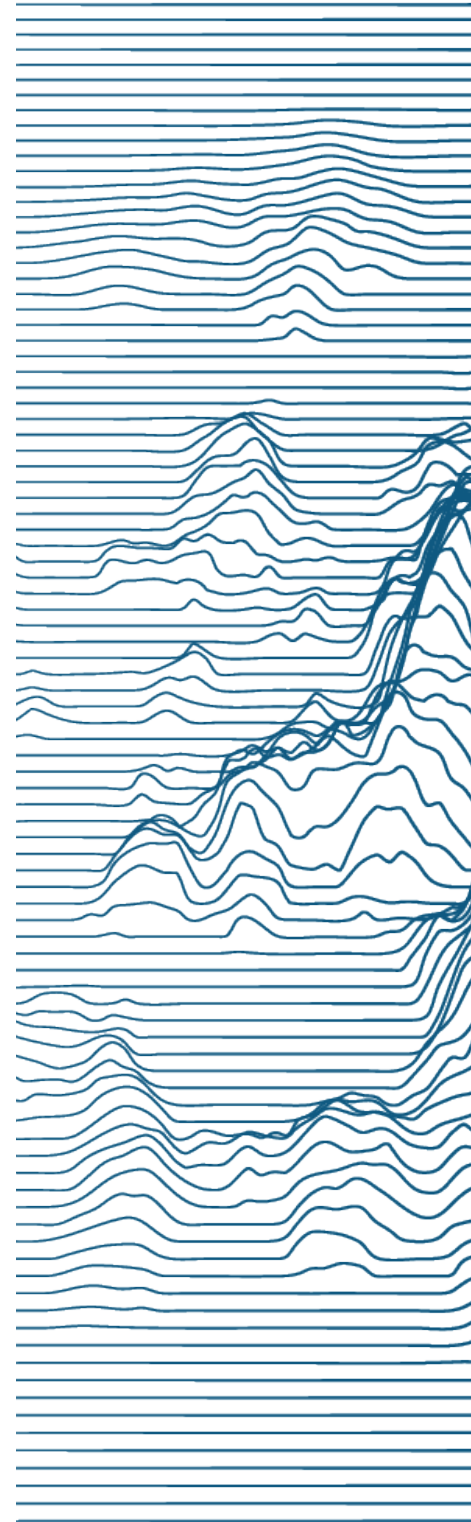
- Arrive in Washington DC.
- Meeting with Francisco Lainez, Senior Security Advisor at the OAS.
- Meeting with Romel Gonzalez, General Coordinator for the Regional Indigenous and Popular Council of Xpujij.

WEDNESDAY JUNE 21

- Opening Session – 53rd Regular Session of the General Assembly of the OAS.
- Meeting with Hugh Adsett, Ambassador and Permanent Representative of Canada to the Organization of American States.
- Meeting with Juana Herrera Arauz, The Minister of Women in Panama.
- Meeting with Luis Almagro, the Secretary General of the OAS (Organization of American States).
- Meeting with Linda Eddleman and Carlos Escalante, from The Trust for the Americas.
- Exclusive interview with NTN 24 Network.
- Meeting with the United Nations Information Center of Washington DC.

THURSDAY JUNE 22

- Meeting with Romel Gonzalez from the Abya Yala Indigenous Coordination Coalition.
- Meeting with Vital Voices.
- Vital Voices side event.
- Meeting with LGBTQIA+ organizations.
- Meeting with Luis Alonso Reyes and female entrepreneurs.





TUESDAY JUNE 20

The NWAC team arrived in Washington DC on Tuesday before meeting with Ambassador of the Government of El Salvador, Francisco Lainez, the Senior Security Advisor at the OAS.

MEETING WITH FRANCISCO LAINEZ, SENIOR SECURITY ADVISOR AT THE OAS

In the meeting NWAC CEO, Lynne Groulx shared information about The Social and Economic Innovation Centre. She described the beautiful building as a foundation for our organization's financial stability and security with the aim of creating a stable source of funds to pay for the work of serving Indigenous women and gender-diverse people without interruption. She explained that the building includes an artisan boutique, an Indigenous café, a rooftop garden, culturally inspired meeting rooms and gathering spaces available for rent, and one of the most extensive collections of Indigenous art in Canada.

During their meeting, Francisco Lainez congratulated Lynne Groulx on the work she is doing with NWAC and invited her to be one of the potential speakers at an event for women entrepreneurs.

Additionally, Francisco Lainez proposed several avenues for Lynne Groulx to enhance her involvement with the OAS. One of these avenues involves a program focused on youth, particularly young entrepreneurs, which the OAS is currently implementing. He expressed a desire for Lynne Groulx to participate in a similar program specifically tailored to Indigenous women.



FRANCISCO LAINEZ

Francisco Lainez has a background as an international diplomat, former Secretary of State and Minister of Foreign Affairs in El Salvador, as well as a member of industry and non-profit boards, and a CEO in the pharmaceutical field. Currently, he holds the position of Senior Security Advisor at the Organization of American States.



MEETING WITH ROMEL GONZALEZ, GENERAL COORDINATION FOR THE REGIONAL INDIGENOUS AND POPULAR COUNCIL OF XPUJIL

During this meeting, Romel Gonzalez and Lynne Groulx discussed how the coalition can join forces with NWAC to advocate for the rights of Indigenous people in Latin America.

Romel Gonzalez invited Lynne Groulx to a special event in October, where 500 Indigenous women will gather in Mexico.

The Regional Indigenous and Popular Council of Xpujil is an intercultural organization with a gender focus that fights for participatory democracy, autonomy and the integral management of natural resources, the management and execution of integral projects for the good living of the inhabitants of the region of Calakmul through the revaluation and strengthening of capacities and local knowledge.





WEDNESDAY JUNE 21

OPENING SESSION – 53RD REGULAR SESSION OF THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF THE OAS

NWAC CEO, Lynne Groulx attended the opening session of the general assembly where its principal powers were discussed. She also attended the exposition about Doris Stevens by artist Marite Vidales.

Doris Stevens (born Dora Caroline Stevens, October 26, 1888 – March 22, 1963) was an American suffragist, woman's legal rights advocate and author. She was the first female member of the American Institute of International Law and first chair of the Inter-American Commission of Women.

MARITE VIDALES

Marite Vidales is a Costa Rican-born Washington, DC-based painter with a career that spans over 30 years. She received her BFA from the School of Fine Arts at the Universidad of Costa Rica in 1987 and completed Graphic Design studies at the University of Centro America in 1983.



MEETING WITH HUGH ADSETT, AMBASSADOR AND PERMANENT REPRESENTATIVE OF CANADA TO THE ORGANIZATION OF AMERICAN STATES

Hugh Adsett is the Ambassador and Permanent Representative of Canada to the Organization of American States. Lynne Groulx met with the Ambassador to talk about NWAC as an organization and the work it does for Indigenous women and gender-diverse people.



MEETING WITH THE MINISTER OF WOMEN IN PANAMA

Lynne Groulx met with the Minister of Women in Panama, Juana Herrera Arauz.

Dr. Juana Herrera Arauz is the first Minister of Women of the Republic of Panama. She has a broad professional background in medicine and has held leadership positions in gender organizations.

During the meeting, Lynne Groulx spoke to the minister about her upcoming mission to Panama, where she intends to collaborate with the nation in addressing significant developmental challenges faced by Indigenous women.





This collaboration aims to improve the well-being of Indigenous women and have a positive impact on their families, communities, and nation as a whole. Lynne Groulx also mentioned that she had recently established a Letter of Understanding between NWAC and the Central American Integration System (SICA,) during her trip to El Salvador. Therefore, the purpose of this mission is to strengthen the bond between NWAC and the eight nations comprising the SICA.



The objectives of this visit encompass various aspects. These include promoting trade opportunities and economic growth, engaging with Indigenous Peoples in the region to exchange knowledge and culture, and holding meetings with equal counterparts from Heritage Canada, Global Affairs, and similar organizations dedicated to women and gender equality in the remaining seven member states

MEETING WITH LUIS ALMAGRO, THE SECRETARY GENERAL OF THE OAS



Lynne Groulx met with Luis Almagro, the Secretary General of the OAS (organization of American states). During their conversation, they discussed the current human rights situation in Canada and the positive impact that the project POETA DigiSpark will have on Indigenous women and gender-diverse individuals.



LUIS ALMAGRO

Luis Almagro is a career diplomat and was Foreign Minister of Uruguay from 2010 to 2015 and has extensive regional and international experience. In addition, he was elected Senator in the national elections in Uruguay in October 2014. Mr. Almagro was also Ambassador to China for five years, after occupying senior diplomatic posts in the Foreign Ministry of his country, and in the Embassies of Uruguay in Germany and Iran. In 2014, Foreign Policy magazine named him a Leading Global Thinker, one of ten decision-makers in the world who have been granted this international distinction. Almagro is a lawyer and speaks Spanish, English and French.

POETA DIGISPARK

This initiative launched between The Native Women's Association of Canada (NWAC), the Organization of American States (OAS) and the Trust for the Americas, is a new program to provide hundreds of Indigenous people with the digital skills required for high-demand jobs in the tech industry.

The Empowering Indigenous Peoples through Digital Skills Project aims to enhance the livelihoods and opportunities of Indigenous People in communities across Québec, British Columbia, and Alberta.

The project which includes a combination of on-site and online training in digital and life skills for 350 participants, will begin in October 2023, with the first participants expected to graduate in December of this year.

MEETING WITH LINDA EDDLEMAN

Lynne Groulx met with Linda Eddleman from The Trust for the Americas, to discuss the POETA DigiSpark project. Carlos Escalante, the Communication Specialist at The Trust for the Americas was also in attendance.



LINDA EDDLEMAN

Linda Eddleman is the Chief Executive Officer (CEO) of The Trust for the Americas. Under her leadership, the Trust expanded operations to 24 countries and created alliances with over 1,000 organizations in Latin America and the Caribbean.

From 2009 to 2010, Ms. Eddleman also served as Senior Advisor for the Secretary General of the Organization of American States (OAS). She brings expertise in public-private partnerships, technology for development, competitiveness, and economic opportunities. A recipient of the Medal of Honor of Distinguished Service from the Ministry of Defense of Colombia, Eddleman is a member of the Council on Foreign Relations and was recognized by the Washingtonian Magazine as one of the "100 People to Watch."



EXCLUSIVE INTERVIEW WITH NTN 24 NETWORK

Lynne Groulx was interviewed by NTN24 News Network to talk about the POETA DigisSpark project to empower the historically marginalized Indigenous population in Canada, with a focus on women and gender diverse individuals, through training and content on digital skills, complemented with life and technical skills content.

MEETING WITH THE UNITED NATIONS INFORMATION CENTER OF WASHINGTON DC

Lynne Groulx convened a meeting with Brenden Varma, Anne Musotsi, and Mirian Masaquiza Jerez to gather insights on their research studies and projects concerning Indigenous communities.

Lynne Groulx also provided details about NWAC's recently established Social, Cultural, and Economic Innovation Centre, designed to establish a base for the organization's stability and protection. The centre aims to ensure uninterrupted financial resources to support the efforts of Indigenous women and gender-diverse individuals.

Lynne Groulx also disseminated information about the National Inquiry into the Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls.



THURSDAY JUNE 22



MEETING WITH ROMEL GONZALEZ FROM THE ABYA YALA INDIGENOUS COORDINATION COALITION

Lynne Groulx again met with Romel Gonzalez, this time in his capacity as General Coordinator of the Abya Yala Indigenous Coordination Coalition. During their interaction, they explored the potential for a future exchange of experiences focusing on healing workshops.

MEETING AT THE VITAL VOICES HEADQUARTERS

Lynne Groulx met with Marina Alva, Issue Advocacy Vice-President and Marina Pisklakova-Parker, Senior Director of Gender-Based Violence from Vital Voices. Also in attendance were Tanya Stockdale-Morineau, Program Assistant for the Global Network and Regional Engagement Team at Vital Voices Global Partnership, and Zoë Dean-Smith, Senior Vice President.

MANIRA ALVA

Manira Alva brings over 25-years of multi-genre media experience, gendered-policy formulation, and political strategizing to the Vital Voices leadership team. As the Vice President of Issue Advocacy, she oversees a number of fellowships focused on building the capacity of women leaders in political office and advocacy. She is committed to changing the narrative and culture regarding women and public leadership.

MARINA PISKLAKOVA-PARKER

Marina Pisklakova-Parker has helped train others to become counselors, created psychological and legal counseling programs for survivors of intimate partner or family violence, and struggled to ensure just representation for survivors in court.

TANYA STOCKDALE-MORINEAU

Tanya Stockdale-Morineau is a Program Assistant for the Global Network and Regional Engagement team at Vital Voices Global Partnership, focusing primarily on both Latin America and the Caribbean (LAC) in addition to Francophone Africa. She contributes regional and linguistic expertise on both regions for the VAV Urgent Assistance Program.

She evolved her passion for participating in global efforts empowering women through various experiences, particularly while working in Oaxaca, Mexico, at a local nonprofit supporting women in rural communities.

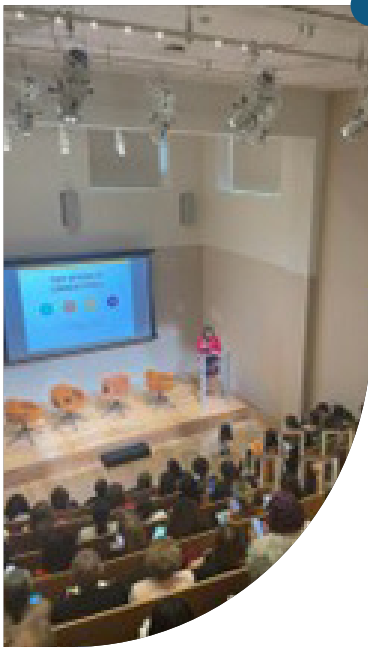


VITAL VOICES



Vital Voices invest in women who are taking on the world's greatest challenges. They are driven by the universal truth that women are the key to progress in their communities and nations cannot move forward without women in leadership positions. It provides connections, increased capacity, a peer network, financial support, skills training, and increased visibility for their work, which ranges from gender-based violence and climate justice to economic inequities and political disempowerment, and more.

During this meeting, Lynne Groulx and representatives from Vital Voices explored different ways in which they could collaborate as both organizations share a common objective of supporting and empowering women.



VITAL VOICES SIDE EVENT

In the side event to the 53rd OAS General Assembly, the CIM (Inter-American Commission of Women) presented the main results of its work in fostering women's leadership. A dialogue took place between high-level women in the region, who discussed the transformations of current concepts and models of political leadership, as well as the expansion of the notion of democracy to include the experiences and contributions of women. The event included panels on "Impacts of the Visibility of Women's Leadership in Politics: Towards New Concepts of Democracy and Leadership" and "The Role of Women Leaders in Crisis Management, the Promotion of Peace and Security."



MEETING WITH THE LGBTQIA+ PEOPLE

Lynne Groulx had the privilege of engaging with various LGBTQIA+ organizations across the Americas. During these interactions, she conveyed our organization's identity and the impactful work we are undertaking to support women and gender-diverse individuals.

MEETING WITH LUIS ALONSO REYES AND FEMALE ENTREPRENEURS

Lynne Groulx met with Luis Alonso Reyes, a businessperson from El Salvador who introduced her to remarkable female entrepreneurs who were running diverse businesses, actively contributing to the development of their respective Central American nations. Additionally, Lynne Groulx had the chance to gain insights into Luis Reyes' personal experience as a businessperson. She took the opportunity to promote NWAC, an organization dedicated to promoting entrepreneurship and social development, to Luis Reyes during this conversation.



CONCLUSION

NWAC is going global and at the 53rd General Assembly of the Organization of American States (OAS) we were able to share our international initiatives and to discuss vital topics like economic opportunities for Indigenous people and the empowerment of women. At the event we worked on the implementation of the POETA DigiSpark Empowering Indigenous Peoples through Digital Skills Project, in collaboration with the Organization of American States (OAS) and the Trust for the Americas and gained international media attention for the project.

Our CEO, Lynne Groulx was also able to share the news of our groundbreaking letter of understanding with the Central American Integration System (SICA) further highlighting and strengthening our international reputation to advocate for the rights of Indigenous women, girls, gender-diverse people, and their communities on the global stage.

Over the course of the three-day event, NWAC CEO, Lynne Groulx was able to meet with government officials and OAS delegates to discuss the vital work that NWAC undertakes. She shared our common interests and goals; progress we have made with the building of our Social and Economic Innovation Centre and gained insights during discussions and updates on the American Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous People

and on the Plan of Action of the American Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous People. She was also able to speak with Minister of Foreign Affairs, The Honourable Mélanie Joly, about NWAC's work to go global in our advocacy for Indigenous Women and Gender-Diverse+ Peoples, including our work with SICA.

Only eight civil society organizations were invited and approved by the permanent council of the OAS for the 2023 General Assembly Sessions and NWAC was one of them. As the only organization from Canada, NWAC was able to represent our interests and those Indigenous women, girls, Two-Spirit, transgender, and gender-diverse (WG2STGD) people of whom we serve.

Our CEO, Lynne Groulx was able to network, strengthening international connections and was invited to attend other events such as when Francisco Lainez asked her to be a potential speaker at a conference for women entrepreneurs, and when Romel Gonzalez invited her to a special gathering of Indigenous women in October, to be held in Mexico.

Every time NWAC actively participates at international events such as these, we continue to ensure Indigenous voices in Canada are heard, keeping the issues that matter the most to our communities at the forefront of international discussion and policymaking.

SOCIAL MEDIA POSTS



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