CASE STUDY 4

Awareness raising: the ‘Indians as Seen by Indians’ project in Brazil

In 1998 a number of researchers, indigenous members of the Golden Eagle NGO and a community leader formed an NGO called Thydêwá to encourage greater respect for indigenous peoples in Brazil and recognition of the realities they face, including discrimination. The initiative was aimed not only at the general public but also at indigenous communities themselves, particularly young people.

Thydêwá has received support from national and international institutions, public and private, as well as awards and endorsements. It has now launched a sustainable intercultural education programme in local schools, in partnership with the Ministries of Culture, Communication and Education.

#### ‘Indians as Seen by Indians’ project

In 2000 Thydêwá launched a project called ‘Indians as Seen by Indians’ (Índios na visão dos Índios), aimed at sharing experiences, strengthening cultural awareness within the seven communities covered by the project to date and improving community members’ sense of citizenship and quality of life. Through the project, indigenous people became their own anthropologists, historians, journalists and photographers and published books, booklets and brochures. The State-sponsored ‘Indian Mobile Phones’ (Celulares indígenas) project trained sixty members of the participating communities to take photographs, videos and recordings and to use computers and the internet. In 2004 each settlement in the participating communities gained access to broadband internet at Indigenous Culture Points. The project created ‘Indígenas Digitais’*,* another project by the same NGO, helps community members to share ideas and information about how they relate to digital media and more broadly to information and communication technologies (ICTs).

The ‘Indians as Seen by Indians’ project has helped to increase self-criticism, self-awareness and consciousness among the indigenous youth about the historical processes experienced by the Indians. It has proved attractive to young indigenous people, who have been able to acquire ICT skills, learn to operate computers, mobile phones, cameras and video cameras, design web pages and navigate around the internet, while doing research and providing information about their own communities, including information about their ICH. The ICT-related projects have challenged discriminatory stereotypes about indigenous communities: the presumption had been that they would be unable to learn ICT skills or that modern technologies would threaten their cultural identity. More broadly, the various projects have helped the indigenous community to build a space for intercultural dialogue and to reduce prejudice, discrimination, violence and injustice.

For further information:

* Convenio Andrés Bello (CAB). 2008. ‘Índios na visão dos Índios, Indios On Line’. Report presented to the programme Somos Patrimonio. Bogotá, Convenio Andrés Bello.
* Book collection « *Índios na visão dos Índios »*, published by Thydêwá through the programme ‘Faz Cultura’: http://www.thydewa.org/downloads1/ (in Portuguese).
* The seventh book of this collection, entitled « *Les Indiens par le regard des Indiens : Truká »*, translated into French (2005, Paris) and distributed by the Committee of solidarity with the Indians of Americas (CSIA) : http://www.csia-nitassinan.org/ (in French)
* <http://www.indiosonline.net> (in Portuguese)