

# Networking for a future that is really ours

*Jorge Huichalaf Díaz\**

*...And that is sad. But you have hair that is the color of gold. Think how wonderful that will be when you have tamed me! The grain, which is also golden, will bring me back the thought of you. And I shall love to listen to the wind in the wheat...*

Antoine de Saint-Exupéry

In the current context in which life develops, paramount in our communities is the creation and maintenance of good relations between the members of the Mapuche people and members of the Chilean society. This relationship must necessarily be established. These are relations based on the principles of peace peaceful coexistence and education for peace.

In addition, the creation and maintenance of harmonious relations with our Mother Earth, Ñuke Mapu is vital, which should be regarded more as a living being and therefore subject to rights. This means that if you incur harmful or damaging relations with our mother that action is considered a crime and you are prosecuted. Justice is served with a remedy that functions as compensation to the damage generated.

For the current stage of Chilean politics this peaceful application is a pressing need that clashes with the interests of big foreign capital infrastructure, which has taken over the basic resources such as water. It is precisely by laws created by expert committees – always betting in the end on economic development corporations at the expense of the enslavement of the people – that citizens become mere consumers with an education from a weak state, with minimal powers to monitor and prosecute those in a position of power. This goes on, as relationships of people with institutions deteriorate. Economy then governs the land and terrorizes the families who always live eaten by debt.

The main wealth of a country is its people. They should achieve higher states of consciousness since that can create good living conditions in harmony with nature and its laws. Nevertheless, building a model of life that allows alternative forms of economic development is a priority to establish acceptable levels of connection with nature and its cycles.

The idea rooted in the collective unconscious – about some distant time when people lived in harmony with nature and observant of its processes, in which crops were full, and brothers lived together in peace and there was no famine – hints at the

possibility of aspiring at least to feed not just our physical hunger; the hunger of the spirit often causes more pain and emptiness in the lives of millions of people every day.

In the American context, two sister nations have already recognized the importance of land as being alive in their constitutions; these are Ecuador (2008) and Bolivia (2009).

As noted by Gabriela Quezada Calderon:

*The unique thing is that both processes share an emancipatory sense since their definition leading all the same to a profound change to which societies aspire. We refer to Good Living or Sumak Kawsay (Kichwa) or live well or Suma Qamaña (Aymara). You can identify that these notions today represent an alternative to development—conceived and proposed as a paradigm for the world—retrieving values such as community, complementarity, Mother Earth and Nature, to allow us to think of another way of living and coexisting. This alternative paradigm is, perhaps as one of its greatest assets, the result of a constant exercise of deliberation; not free of criticism or misunderstanding.<sup>1</sup>*

It is this ability of deliberation that needs to be reclaimed by the people, i.e. people transformed now into conscious citizens thanks to the mediation of the educational process. They can achieve these processes of self from the legislation that seeks to generate changes empowering citizens and reaching levels of harmonious relationships among themselves and with Mother Earth.

For the Mapuche, the concept of good living, küme mogen is that the human being is one with the environment and it is this idea of worshipping the forces of Mother Earth that constitutes the cornerstone of our conception of the world or worldview.

For the Mapuche, being in the state of grace in which we live on earth universal giver of all gifts is so great, that its appreciation can be seen in all our rituals of worship and exchange of goods. Many concepts of collective root lie on ceremonies that could be considered as pagan, such as Nguillatún, as stated by Vicente Paniel Seguel:

In terms of socio-economic organization, secular mode *Trafkintu* exchange was even remembered as an example of Mapuche-market Fair Trade. Following the research by Bernardo Colipán, *Trafkintu* summarizes the development in five main components, namely:

- 1) Pentukún (salutation of loncos leaders and Lofs communities)
- 2) Yeyipún (ritual)
- 3) Misawun (collective meal)
- 4) Trafkintu (exchange of goods)
- 5) Trafkimun (exchange of knowledge)

However, the overall economic connotation Mapuche rites have, for example, translated nguillatún rogativa, strictly speaking, into the following sharing complex: Nguillatun} Ngilla=negotiate + tu=do + n=yes or plural. It is therefore the nodal ceremony of the Mapuche, a consecration of sovereignty, in which communities share food and re-enact a grand allegory, ritual, theater. The communion of secular mode socio-economic life, in its most pristine sense, is a religious ceremony but in its etymological sense, from the Latin re-ligare, meeting.<sup>2</sup>

Clearly the role of education under this new view will be to match the legislation

to allow different sectors including its proposals on the reconfiguration of the main political construct of a people, this is: new laws, legitimate and legitimized laws.

But to achieve this necessary adjustment we should overcome the major obstacle of ignorance. To play with the trust of people while not comprehending the abysmal gaps among the members of our society is very dangerous. In Chile today the authorities have been elected by a very low percentage of the population (about twenty percent), which confirms the lack of reliable political figures and the distance kept by people from the polls.

This is where education plays an important role in the struggle to bring knowledge to people. Overcoming the lack of interest means often to put yourself in the place of people, and to struggle against discrimination of your peers and the education system teachers.

It is the teacher who in pursuit of his/her objectives, tests, tries, improves and constantly reviews his/her procedures to reach better results; considering this is his/her ultimate goal.

HOW TO MAKE LEARNING MORE ATTRACTIVE FOR THE STUDENTS?

What content should be given priority in the search for new citizens needing to be educated?

The priority themes of ecology and sustainable development are essential to correct the wrong way, but to stress the importance of these issues in a consumerist society – where you pay more attention to what is said on television than to thinking in a classroom – is a daily challenge for a conscious teacher.

These challenges can be better faced within a network of friendly support under the supervision of the states. The need for these support networks means a necessary dialogue with market powers that remain attentive to their profits and their checkbooks, when their side tortures, kills and terrorizes the people in debt.

This is our duty today for the future of our children tomorrow, and we can't transfer that responsibility to anyone else. Our children will judge us harshly if we do not take the future in our hands and transform it with passion and responsibly.

It is difficult to try describing the pain of my brothers because of the poverty that surrounds them. Maybe if we can start imagining these communities for centuries living in abundance of food, healing by taking our ancestral lawenes (remedies) made of medicinal plants containing active ingredients needed to heal.

Today plagued by industrial forest plantations slowly turning into deserts, the Mapuche suffer more while seeing their land usurped – by corporate terrorism that breaks perversely the natural equilibrium – than feeling physical pain. We will endure and will continue to defend what's more important till we die.

HOW MANY LITERS OF WATER IS CONSUMED DAILY BY THE EUCALYPTUS TREE?

Tank trucks traveling rural roads, carrying water for communities, is disaster capitalism operating once again: a crisis caused deceitfully for profit. And the media controlled by the same economic power – spreading and demonizing the 'Chilean' conflict, because the conflict is not Mapuche.

If I close my eyes, I see it all like in a dream, I'm not sure if I am only a small child or a dog between the legs of the horses of warriors. They discuss and laugh about

what's coming. The Chilean Army on the other side – the enemy soldiers – winner of the Pacific War, professional, equipped with the best technology to dissuade any movement. Warriors are encouraged; they will meet in the next life; my time is not told yet.

I blink again. I'm in the Ruka of Machi Celestino (the house of the healer), staring at the pupils of his son, huge questions being asked. I'm here because he wants to attend my school near their Lof (communities). I want to meet him and get to know him. The interview is not practical because many other patients wait, people in search of healing everywhere; the fruit of the disease caused by the disorientation of a system that attacks humans.

What would have changed if that possibility opens ways to work?

I feel partly to blame for that child, by his questions that I am not able to answer.

How many entrepreneurs currently take advantage by burning their assets for insurance in the Araucania?

How many times can the Chilean courts repeat the trials and violate the principle of *res judicata*?

The earth continues to express its elementary signals: volcanoes explode, the rivers overflow, fire razes ancient forests above and below the mineral wealth waiting to breathe: disaster capitalism and extractive inexorable law. The market's god smiles!

I hope to travel today, still do not know if it's true or not. I hope to find true pupils with questions, interested and sincere interest in changing. You can't continue to tolerate one more day; these states that strike and shoot at the faces of our children, backing away from our needs.

I close my eyes again, it's policemen's day. A child at school asks me: 'Sir, Why should we make an act of celebration for the police if they kill our peñi (people)?'

I attempted a response on stage. In front of the police officers I've stated: 'Institutions have been created to meet our needs, and sometimes inside these institutions members who commit crimes must be punished. Both the police and the burning trucks advocate violence; taking in their hands the lives of innocent people.' Breathe. I know that one door is closed for me; it does not matter, children need the truth like air, like the sun. A day will come when my people's history will be rewritten and our heroes will re-surface as spring.

Hands clasped hard and hot; human networks can make a difference; awake and conscious people are the hope of millions. Those huge pupils, interested right from the root; then I dare to believe and look my children in the eye to say: 'I'm working to improve this world in which is now our turn to be born and die'.

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1. It is known as Minga or mink'a, a free collective work by residents of a community for the benefit of all. It is a tradition of the indigenous peoples of South America. Usually mingas take place in home improvement activities, road construction and maintenance, waterways and agriculture.

2. Dance groups of men are recruited by lineages. Their wives are those who sing (Tayil). They refer to males in vernacular names (Gui). These are transmitted between men

and women of the same lineage, but while transmission through the male line is perpetuated from generation to generation, the women circulate them by marriage. In nguillatuns then lineages names are sung. The message of these dances refers rather to ideological forms of expression of the principle of patrilineal descent in the context of a religious congregation.

Pantomimes have to do actually with queltehues or tregiles [Southern Lapwing] ... and ñandús [American ostrich] ... but the use with ritual purposes of aspects of its ethology is not exactly totemism – understanding by it, strictly speaking, a metaphor between two differentiated systems; on the side of nature and species differences in the culture of the social-groups – but rather a symbol of the many social relationships designed analogously with that nature which is the model of cultural meanings. The Mapuche have found two birds whose ethology features make them comparable, or equivalent, with the characteristics that define your eyes and your patrilineal kinship groups.

See Rolf Foerster G. and Hans Gundermann K. (1989), “Religiosidad mapuche contemporánea: elementos introductorios” in Hidalgo L., Jorge et al., *Culturas de Chile, Etnografías: sociedades indígenas contemporáneas* (Santiago de Chile: Editorial Andrés Bello), p. 209.

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You can view his complete profile and the organisation he is associated with at: [http://www.learn2change-network.org/?About\\_Us\\_\\_\\_Our\\_Network\\_\\_\\_Activists#anker\\_JoHu](http://www.learn2change-network.org/?About_Us___Our_Network___Activists#anker_JoHu)