

Other Americas / *Otros Saberes* Report

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The *Otros Saberes* Initiative began with multiple conversations at the 2004 LASA Congress, grew into a specific proposal over the course of 2005, and was formally inaugurated at the LASA2006 Congress in Puerto Rico. Its central objectives are two-fold: to increase the participation of indigenous and Afro-descendant intellectuals in the LASA Congresses and other LASA affairs; to support collaborative research on indigenous and Afro-descendant issues by teams composed of both civil society- and academy-based researchers. The proposal, posted on the *Otros Saberes* link on the LASA website, was well received by five donor organizations, who generously granted a total of \$280,000 to launch the Initiative. We are deeply grateful to these donors: Harvard University, Open Society Institute, Inter-American Foundation, Ford Foundation, and LASA itself.

The Call for Proposals, emitted in March 2006, received a remarkable, indeed nearly overwhelming response of 160 applications. Since we encouraged applicants to write a letter of inquiry before applying, and we responded to each of these letters, May and June were busy months. A seven-member Steering Committee met at the campus of the School of American Research (SAR), in Santa Fe, New Mexico, at the end of June, with the arduous task of choosing seven funded proposals from the pool of 160. In the course of that weekend meeting, we also solidified relations with SAR, and recently have received a strong expression of interest, on behalf of the editor of the SAR Press, to publish the results of the *Otros Saberes* research. Summaries of the seven funded research teams and their projects can be found at the *Otros Saberes* web link; the names of the seven Steering Committee members are posted there as well. Suffice it to say that Committee members—comprising both civil society and academy-based intellectuals—worked wonderfully together,

rose to the challenge, and selected seven outstanding projects on an array of topics (three Afro-descendant and four indigenous) with broad coverage of the Latin American/Caribbean region. As of late August, contracts have been signed with these teams, and their research is underway.

With the first cycle of *Otros Saberes* teams chosen, we are now turning our efforts to the culminating activities of this cycle, and to planning for the next. In the course of the year, each team will receive a visit from either a member of the Steering Committee, or a research associate of the Initiative, to discuss their work and exchange ideas about collaborative research methods. In September 2007, the LASA Congress in Montréal will feature a double session, in which a pair of researchers from each team will present their findings. After the Congress, these *Otros Saberes* participants will attend a two-day workshop, along with other experts on and practitioners of collaborative research, to discuss in greater detail both the substantive results of their work, the methodological challenges they faced, and conclusions drawn. Papers presented during this workshop will serve as first drafts for publications, which each team is expected to generate, both in a form accessible to local actors and as a broadly circulating research finding. We expect also that the post-Congress workshop will yield two papers that reflect critically on this exciting, innovative experience of collaborative research.

Looking to the future, we already have begun fund raising for the second cycle of the Initiative, which will maintain the focus on collaborative research, and propose a new substantive theme. Reports on these efforts will appear in the next *Forum*, and on the *Otros Saberes* site: <<http://lasa.international.pitt.edu/news/otrossaberes.html>>. ■

Otros Saberes Selected Projects

Saberes, parentesco y política en la historia y proyección del Pueblo Mapuche

Main Contact: Claudia Briones -
Universidad de Buenos Aires/CONICET

Saberes Wajãpi: Formação de pesquisadores e valorização de registros etnográficos indígenas.

Main Contact: Dominique Tilkin Gallois -
Departamento de Antropologia e Núcleo de História Indígena e do Indigenismo - NHII/
Universidade de São Paulo

Testimonios afro-puertorriqueños: un proyecto de historia oral en el oeste de Puerto Rico

Main Contact: Jocelyn A. Géliga Vargas -
Departamento de Inglés, Universidad de Puerto Rico-Mayagüez

El derecho al territorio y el reconocimiento de la comunidad negra en el contexto del conflicto social y armado desde la perspectiva del Pensamiento y acción Política, Ecológica y Cultural del Proceso de Comunidades Negras de Colombia

Main Contact: Libia Rosario Grueso Castelblanco -
Integrante del Equipo de Coordinación Nacional y del equipo ambiental del PCN

Saberes propios, religiosidad y luchas de existencia afroecuatoriana

Main Contact: Edizon León - Fondo Documental Afro-Andino, Universidad Andina Simon Bolivar

Desarrollando el Liderazgo Binacional Indígena: Género, Generación y Étnicidad dentro del FIOB.

Main Contact: Odilia Romero Hernández - Asuntos la Mujer-Consejo Central Binacional - Frente Indígena de Organizaciones Binacionales (FIOB)

Comunidad indígena de Tuara en el proceso autonómico de la Costa Caribe Nicaragüense

Main Contact: Edwin Taylor: Instituto de Estudio para la Promoción de la Autonomía (IEPA) de la Universidad URACCAN