



# BRIDGING BORDERS



Sister Laura Vicuña Pereira Manso, along the Jaci Paraná River, in the Karipuna Indigenous territory, where she works with Brazil's Indigenous people who have been fighting to protect their land for generations.

**CJI AT 70:**  
A LEGACY OF  
GLOBAL SOLIDARITY



## THE COLLECTIVE **STRUGGLE** FOR THE **AMAZON:** **DEFENDING** INDIGENOUS LAND, **LIFE**, AND **RIGHTS**

By Sr. Laura Vicuña Pereira

I come from a humble family of migrant parents who hid their Indigenous identity throughout their lives due to discrimination. Working directly with Indigenous peoples, witnessing the devastation of the Amazon, and seeing the

commitment of the Church – especially grassroots church communities – helped me to claim my Kariri Indigenous identity.

My people were Indigenous displaced from their traditional

territory, so they had to redefine their way of being and coexist in a society that denies diversity.

My late mother – a simple yet wise woman and a great leader in the church and in social circles – taught



## **CJI AT 70: LIVING A 'FAITH THAT DOES JUSTICE'**

This is a momentous year for us at Canadian Jesuits International (CJI) as we celebrate our Platinum Jubilee.

Seventy years ago, in September 1955, CJI was incorporated under the name The Canadian Foreign Jesuit Mission.

Previously known as the Darjeeling Mission Service, it was established in 1947 by what was then known as the Jesuits of Upper Canada Province, in response to an invitation by the local church to serve in northeast India. Over time, the Jesuits' missionary work evolved from sending missionaries to international partnerships with local Jesuit initiatives, and in 1995, CJI was adopted as the new name, reflecting a commitment to reciprocity, mutual responsibility and social justice.

Today, CJI and its Jesuit partners in Africa, Asia, and Latin America are united in their commitment to the Society of Jesus' Universal Apostolic Preferences established in 2019: Showing the way to God; walking with the excluded; journeying with youth; and caring for our common home.

Our projects and advocacy initiatives, including this year's fall education and advocacy events focusing on "Women at the heart of justice" (see page 7), reflect these priorities. When we prioritize working

with people who are excluded and marginalized, it is there that we find women, who often bear the brunt of poverty, forced displacement, and violence. But it is also among women that we find actors for change, defending their families and their land, and protecting our common home.

It is fitting that CJI is marking a milestone in the same year that the Society is celebrating the 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the 32<sup>nd</sup> Jesuit General Congregation, which issued Decree 4 – a landmark declaration that the mission of Jesuits is "the service of faith, of which the promotion of justice is an absolute requirement." In other words, faith and social justice were to be the focus of all Jesuit life and activity. A key outcome was the call for a preferential option for the poor, with a focus on serving the most vulnerable, including refugees and forcibly displaced persons.

Historians say that Decree 4 marked a turning point in Jesuit history, permanently shaping the Society of Jesus's mission, identity and image within the church and wider society.

Today, CJI continues to uphold the legacy of a "faith that does justice" alongside its loyal supporters and friends by walking in solidarity with the world's poor and marginalized.

## The **vision** & **mission** of CJI

The **vision** of Canadian Jesuits International is a world of peace, justice and integrity of creation, transformed through active commitment and finding God in all things.

The **mission** of CJI is to love and to serve by working with people struggling for social justice and dignity in the world. Together with Jesuit and other partners, CJI responds in solidarity, through awareness-raising and advocacy in Canada and supporting partnerships in the Global South.

To learn more about Canadian Jesuits International or to make a donation, please contact us at:

70 Saint Mary Street  
Toronto, ON M5S 1J3

Tel: 416.944.8727  
(while working remotely)

Toll Free (within Canada & USA)  
1.800.448.2148

Email: [cji@jesuits.ca](mailto:cji@jesuits.ca)

**JENNY CAFISO**  
Executive Director

**TESS SISON**  
Editor

**STEFANO MAERO**  
Design

 [canadianjesuitsinternational.ca](http://canadianjesuitsinternational.ca)  
 [facebook.com/canadianjesuitsinternational](https://facebook.com/canadianjesuitsinternational)  
 [instagram.com/canadianjesuitsinternational](https://instagram.com/canadianjesuitsinternational)  
 [@wearecji.bsky.social](https://twitter.com/wearecji.bsky.social)

# FROM DESPAIR TO **HOPE**: AGRICULTURE PROJECT HELPS **SOUTH SUDANESE** WOMEN

By Nahum Osman, SJ

In the heart of Cueichok Payam, a rural village in South Sudan where the land is dry and life is uncertain, Deborah Awat Makur rises every morning with a sense of purpose. It wasn't always this way.

A widow and a mother of eight, Deborah's life was marked by hardship. Last year, her husband was murdered, which left her struggling to provide for her family.

Thankfully, Deborah found support from the Multi-Educational and Agricultural Jesuit Institute (MAJIS), which provides basic education and training in agriculture and animal husbandry. MAJIS is part of the Jesuit Eastern Africa Province's Sowing Seeds Project, which Canadian Jesuits International supports.

Deborah recalled a time when crops depended solely on the rain, and all her family could eat were seasonal vegetables. Martha Nyacam Makur, who lives in Rumbek Centre, said that during the dry season her family used to survive on dry okra, pounded and cooked into a sauce.

Like many in their communities, they knew nothing about irrigation and sustainable farming techniques. After joining MAJIS, they learned how to grow vegetables such as sukuma (collard greens) and tomatoes, even in dry season. They received better seeds and learned how to make compost from groundnut leaves and cow dung to enrich the soil.

Deborah's garden brought nourishment and income to her family. Last year, she earned two million South Sudanese pounds (\$549Cdn) from her garden, enough to provide healthy meals for her children and send four of them to St. Peter Faber Primary School.

The impact has been the same for Martha, who has six children and is the breadwinner in her family.

Their journey is not without challenges. Despite her earnings, Deborah still is unable to send two of her children to school. Access to water remains an issue. "We suffer from chest pains from pumping the borehole and carrying watering cans," she said.


Deborah and Martha are determined to keep going. The demand for vegetables is high in Rumbek, giving them a steady source of income. "I cannot imagine where I would be now, as a widow with eight children, without the support of MAJIS," said Deborah.

The impact of MAJIS goes beyond agriculture. The Jesuits provide essential services including free medical treatment, and food assistance.

For Martha, the program has been an empowering experience. "It has encouraged me to be hardworking and strong. We have learned about the power and value of women. We have been taught how to overcome challenges we once thought were insurmountable."

The stories of Deborah and Martha testify to the resilience of South Sudanese women and the transformative power of community-driven initiatives. Through hard work, support, and a vision for the future, they and many others are rewriting their destinies, one harvest at a time.

*Nahum Osman is a Jesuit from Sudan. A newly-ordained deacon from the Eastern Africa Province, he is pursuing a Sacred Theology Program at Regis College in Toronto.*

 Martha Nyacam Makur and her daughter tend to vegetables in their family garden.



Emmanuel Loboka/AOR

# FEATURED PROJECT PARTNER: **INDIGENOUS RIGHTS CENTRE (CEDIAC)**

In Chiapas, Mexico, a Jesuit-led initiative is training Tsel'tal people in the Indigenous normative system, as well as leadership skills, to strengthen their communities. It means following traditional practices of governance, including conflict resolution.


The initiative combines a diploma course in Indigenous normative system, coordinated meetings among social, political, and church actors, and youth-led actions to strengthen access to justice within the community. In a region deeply affected by violence and institutional breakdown, these efforts help restore the social fabric by reaffirming Tsel'tal values and traditions. The Indigenous People's Rights Centre (CEDIAC) leads this work, with support from Canadian Jesuits International.

Community response has been positive. Reconciliation officials, many with prior experience, say the training has given them new tools and renewed confidence. Young participants describe the workshops as transformative, motivating them to take on leadership roles and share their knowledge. Church leaders and institutional allies recognize the Tsel'tal normative

system as a legitimate and effective model of justice and social harmony. The project looks to the future with a clear goal: to consolidate and expand the Tsel'tal normative system across the region. Continued training, new modules, and strengthened alliances with grassroots and academic institutions will deepen its reach, says CEDIAC. They see the work as planting seeds of peace and autonomy that are taking root.








International

 Indigenous youth are trained in peacemaking using the Tsel'tal Indigenous normative system.



CEDIAC

Highlights of Indigenous Rights Centre's impact for fiscal year 2024-2025:

-  80 local community leaders, including youth, are being trained as reconcilers.
-  930 community members participate in region-wide community assemblies.
-  Tsel'tal women are assuming more prominent roles in decision-making and community leadership.
-  2,000 community members are indirectly benefitting from the application of traditional justice systems, and conflict resolution methods.
-  Access to healthcare is improving in Tsel'tal communities through the integration of traditional knowledge with modern medical practices.



📷 Giving is a powerful act that can transform lives: Jesuit Refugee Service, a CJI partner, provides Syrian refugee children in Lebanon with a safe space to learn.

## THE SACRED ACT OF GIVING

By Madeline Lunney

I've thought a lot about the transition from need to possibility. What shifts the conversation to possibility is someone's willingness to give, and often the need is for material resources. As a fundraiser, I enjoy creating the opportunities for people to step up and give.

When we give – of our money, time, trust – we say *this world is still worth believing in*.

In every project I've worked on, whether in Canada or in the Global South, the people closest to the need already know what to do. They are ready. They have the plan. They live the courage, sometimes they live the desperation and often they live the pain of loss, due to poverty, discrimination, war and human-made disasters not of their making. To get beyond the plan to the action, material resources are needed.

Giving is about more than just logistics. Giving, when it comes from love, is more than charity. It's an act of faith. Of resistance. Of communion.

To give is to love. We give not to fix something broken, but to say we belong to one another. We refuse to be indifferent.

Giving lets others do what they are already prepared to do – what they are called to do. It turns readiness into reality.

Donors are not separate from the work. A gift is what you can give. It need not be a grand gesture, but it is a sacred act of love.

In *We Are Together*, Fr. Jorge Serrano, SJ, writes that fundraising is not about persuading people to part with money. Rather, it is about helping them find their place in something meaningful.

In Jesuit tradition, fundraising is a form of spiritual conversation. We begin where the other person is – listening to their story, their longings, their values – and inviting them into a broader vision.

The shift is subtle but profound: from strategy to solidarity, from transaction to transformation. And it demands that fundraisers like me trust in the broader mission, not just the project or campaign that we are representing now.

Fr. Serrano calls this work “a spiritual ministry.” This isn't just language for religious audiences. It's a reminder that inviting others into mission is sacred work: work that builds community, restores meaning, and demonstrates love in action.

Scripture names love as the greatest of all gifts. I've come to see that real, life-enabling giving is one way love is made visible.

*Madeline Lunney is the Donor Relations Coordinator of Canadian Jesuits International.*

## ↗ The collective **struggle** for the **Amazon**: **Defending** Indigenous land, **life**, and **rights**

| continued from cover page |

me that “*we are all the church; we are all equal, and therefore we must fight for a just world and a more inclusive church.*” I learned how to work and promote community life, uniting faith, and service to the poorest of the poor – God’s favourites.

Working with Indigenous peoples for over 25 years has broadened my perspective on their reality, the challenges they face, and the alternatives they seek to have a full life for all. I speak from my experience of living in the state of Rondônia, in the Brazilian Amazon, and working with the Karipuna people in the last seven years.

From the perspective of Indigenous peoples, the struggle for life, land and rights is a systemic issue. The Brazilian state is not interested in fulfilling its constitutional duty to demarcate, protect, and monitor Indigenous lands to ensure the physical, cultural, and territorial existence of Indigenous peoples. Backed by economic and political sectors with self-serving agendas, the Brazilian state is doing everything in its power to make Indigenous lands available to the market, particularly the agro-industrial sector, mining companies, and land grabbers. The historical enemies of Indigenous peoples are legitimized by the state’s failure to comply with the Federal Constitution and public policies on territorial oversight and protection.

The Amazon is a symbol of a woman, a feminine force with a fragile ecosystem that is vulnerable to predatory systems. Her sacred womb, her waterways, her forest rich

in biodiversity, in its flora and fauna, and her network of villages that lived in a way that guaranteed the continuity of this living ecosystem have all been devastated. This ecosystem is vital for all humanity.

My experience as a missionary is closely tied to the struggles of Indigenous peoples defending their territories and rights. I have learned from simple women, including my late mother and other women, who made it possible for me to voice our struggles in defence of life, land, and rights. I would like to highlight Katiká Karipuna, a strong woman and charismatic woman who inspires her children and her people to continue to resist and fight for present and future generations.

There have been challenges along the way, most of which we overcame with the support of entities and organizations that stood alongside us in our struggle. This collective support enables us to continue fighting, without becoming discouraged and to continue

denouncing ongoing violations of the right to life and land.

The Church in the Amazon is our ally in defending the land and the lives of the people. In the final document of the Amazon Synod, Indigenous peoples stated that “they want the Church to accompany them, to walk with them, and not to impose on them a particular way of being, a specific form of development that has little to do with their cultures, traditions and spiritualities. They know how to take care of the Amazon, how to love and protect it; what they need is for the Church to support them.”

Note: Canadian Jesuits International (CJI) supports the work of Jesuits in the Amazon. This fall, Sister Laura will visit Canada as guest speaker of CJI’s fall advocacy, Women at the heart of justice (See page 7).

*Sister Laura Vicuña Pereira Manso, a Franciscan Catechist nun and a member of Brazil’s Indigenous Kariri people, has devoted over 20 years to championing human rights and environmental justice in the Brazilian Amazon. She is vice president of the Ecclesial Conference of the Amazon (CEAMA).*

📷 Identifying “points of invasion and deforestation” in Brazil’s Amazon forest to report to the UN and other institutions.



Submitted

## AMAZON DEFENDER TO HEADLINE CJI CAMPAIGN

This year's Fall education and advocacy campaign by Canadian Jesuits International (CJI) will focus on women as essential changemakers, placing them at the heart of the global quest for justice, equality, and sustainability.

Under the theme *Women at the Heart of Justice*, the campaign will spotlight women's struggles and raise the voices of those confronting injustice. Around the world, women continue to face systemic exclusion from education, land rights, economic opportunity, and leadership roles. Many women face gender-based violence, displacement, and discriminatory laws that undermine their autonomy and safety.

The campaign will feature events across Canada, with guest speaker Sister Laura Vicuña Pereira Manso – a Franciscan Catechist nun and member of Brazil's Indigenous Kariri people (see page 1). For over 20 years, she has worked alongside Indigenous communities in the Brazilian Amazon, defending human rights and the environment. As vice president



Women at the Heart of Justice will highlight the struggles of women and amplify the voices of those confronting injustice.

of the Ecclesial Conference of the Amazon (CEAMA), she fights against illegal logging and land grabbing, particularly in Rondônia, Brazil.

Sister Laura will also headline CJI's Youth for Others Advocacy Symposium, November 16–18 at Saint Paul University in Ottawa.

Participate in the campaign, visit:

[bit.ly/CJIFallCampaign2025](https://bit.ly/CJIFallCampaign2025)

Learn about the Youth Advocacy Symposium:

[bit.ly/Y4O2025](https://bit.ly/Y4O2025)

## CJI WELCOMES JESUIT LEADERS FOR JUSTICE AND SOLIDARITY

Canadian Jesuits International (CJI) welcomed two visitors in spring: Cardinal Pedro Ricardo Barreto Jimeno, SJ, the Emeritus Metropolitan Archbishop of Huancayo (Peru) and President of the Episcopal Conference of the Amazon, and Fr. Dan Corrou, SJ, Director of Jesuit Refugee Service Middle East and North Africa (JRS MENA).

Cardinal Barreto said the church must support Indigenous peoples in their struggle for Indigenous rights and ecological justice. The Cardinal reiterated the call made by church leaders for wealthy nations to cancel the debt of developing countries. He cited the concept of "ecological debt" owed by wealthy nations to poorer nations suffering from a climate crisis they did little to cause.



Cardinal Pedro Ricardo Barreto Jimeno, SJ

Fr. Corrou underscored the need to respond to the plight of refugees and migrants, noting that while the number of displaced people worldwide is rising, funding is diminishing. He cited the U.S. government's drastic decision in January to cut its aid to NGOs such as JRS.

CJI supports the work of JRS in the Middle East and the work of the Jesuits in the Amazon.

Read more about the visit of Fr. Dan Corrou, SJ:

[bit.ly/FrCorrou](https://bit.ly/FrCorrou)



Fr. Dan Corrou, SJ

Read more about the visit of Cardinal Pedro Ricardo Barreto Jimeno:

[bit.ly/CardinalVisit](https://bit.ly/CardinalVisit)

## JESUIT ECOLOGY ASSEMBLY INSPIRES COMMITMENT

A seven-member Canadian delegation, led by ACJI Executive Director Jenny Cafiso, participated in the Jesuit Integral Ecology Assembly at Loyola University Chicago from June 17–20, 2025. The event gathered 90 delegates from Jesuit ministries and institutions in the US and Canada to build relationships, share knowledge and “accelerate and deepen ecological commitments.” The Assembly concluded with a message of perseverance and joy – encouraging all to face future challenges with steadfast hope, confident that God supports their shared efforts to care for our common home.



📷 (L to R): Juan Camilo Poveda, CJI; Dr. Hilda Koster, University of Toronto; David Havixbeck, St Paul’s High School; Jenny Cafiso, CJI; Andrea Scapinello, Ignatius Jesuit Centre; Caroline Vaast, Loyola High School; and Myriam Bourget, Centre de Spiritualité Manrèse.

## CJI ATTENDS G7 JUBILEE PEOPLE’S FORUM

Canadian Jesuits International Outreach Coordinator Juan Camilo Poveda attended the G7 Jubilee People’s Forum held June 12 to 15, 2025 at Ambrose University in Calgary.

The multi-faith grassroots forum shared insights on justice and restoration and explored issues such as ecological debt and Canada’s fair share, Indigenous and interfaith understandings of Jubilee, equitable economic transformation, and spirituality for activism.

It ended with a march in downtown Calgary urging G7 leaders who were meeting in Kananaskis, Alberta, to address the debt crisis that affect the world’s poorest.

## THANK YOU, PIETER. WELCOME, JUANCA.


All of us at CJI are tremendously grateful to Pieter Niemeyer, who served as our Outreach Coordinator for seven years. His deep commitment to social justice, keen intellect, sense of humor, and compassionate presence have left an indelible impression on us, our partners, and the community of teachers, students, and institutional representatives he worked with.

Juan Camilo (Juanca) Poveda is succeeding Pieter. Juanca brings experience in community engagement, youth advocacy, and social justice education. Juanca has a background in social work and has led programs that support underserved and newcomer communities in Canada.

## LEAVE A LEGACY OF LOVE AND SERVICE

You can **change lives** by leaving a **bequest** in your will, naming Canadian Jesuits International (CJI) as a beneficiary in your insurance policy or giving stocks or bonds to CJI. The **need is great** as the **number of marginalized** men, women and children in the Global South **grows**.

**Legacy gifts** help fund Jesuit projects in Africa, Asia, and Latin America – vital initiatives in **education, ecology, and sustainable development**, strengthening **communities**, forcibly **displaced people** and migration, and **humanitarian action**.

Please arrange your life changing support today at:  
 [canadianjesuitsinternational.ca/planned-giving](https://canadianjesuitsinternational.ca/planned-giving)

Donate online at:  
[www.canadianjesuitsinternational.ca](https://www.canadianjesuitsinternational.ca)

Or mail your cheque to:  
**Canadian Jesuits International**  
**70 Saint Mary Street,**  
**Toronto, ON M5S 1J3**

Call: **1-800-448-2148**  
 Email: [cji@jesuits.ca](mailto:cji@jesuits.ca)

THANK YOU FOR MAKING A DIFFERENCE!

Registered Charitable Number # 11883 3623 RR002