

Illichian Thought in Action

Dana L. Stuchul, Madhu Suri Prakash

We hope you are well and flourishing. We wish to share with you just one example of Illich's thought-in-action.

For more than two decades, *Universidad de la Tierra en Oaxaca* has been at the center of alternative ways of learning. *Unitierra* is today more active than ever. The current, weekly seminar (offered continuously for 15 yrs), "Paths To Autonomy Under the Storm," illustrates *Unitierra's* current focus. The one-hour documentary "Re-learning Hope: The Story of *Unitierra*," produced by Kelly Teamey and Udi Mandel, further documents Illichian hope manifested.

Additional examples of *Unitierra's* beautiful and enduring initiatives include:

- With 1,500 courageous women, in marginal urban neighborhoods, *Unitierra* has facilitated learning about cultivating food for the family in the backyard. Together, *Unitierra* is working to create the structures for supporting the people in achieving self-sufficiency in water.
- Seeking new ways of healing, *Unitierra* co-created a cooperative of young men and women who are producing alternative healing remedies. With the *temazcal* of *Unitierra Huitzo*, new kinds of healers are employing wellness practices, while mentoring community healers.

- To address the horrors experienced by their children following police aggression
http://www.democracynow.org/2016/6/22/struggling_for_our_lives_gustavo_esteva), the people of San Pablo Huitzo sought *Unitierra* support for organizing community gatherings—replete with games, films, art activities and more—to support children and their families in healing their collective trauma.
- Recognizing the long-term threat of GMO seeds and other corporate agribusiness encroachments, *Unitierra* began the campaign “No Corn, No Country,” (*Sin maíz, no hay país*) that included: a museum exhibition, numerous print publications, multi-media productions and many other activities. This initiative transformed into a national movement, led by *campesinos* and activists, who continue to organize ways to protect native seeds. In Oaxaca, *Unitierra* supports “The Oaxaca Space to Defend Our Corn,” a group mobilizing to protect and to promote maize—from the place of its origin.
- “Reflection in Action” gatherings, rooted in the numerous social movements of Oaxaca, continue to generate new initiatives and new knowledge.

These are just a few of the stories of *Unitierra*'s work within communities. The number of people learning increases daily. More and more new people join to find together ways to resist and to construct a different society. *Unitierra Oaxaca* supports Indigenous communities throughout southern Mexico claiming their dignity, as learners

return to serve their communities.

But the horror of the current violence in Mexico—a facet of the violence erupting all over the world—has created great hardship in the efforts to maintain *Universidad de la Tierra*. **Your support, now, is imperative for this work to continue.**

- To create alternative ways of living, learning, healing and more—in community.
- To construct more *cisternas*. To establish more backyard gardens. To host more skill- and knowledge-sharing workshops.

IF you are moved to act in support of Indigenous peoples who are co-creating the better world we all know is possible—even in the midst of horror—please contact the Center for Convivial Research and Autonomy of California, affiliated with a sister organization, Unitierra Califas. (ccra@mitotedigital.org)

In making this call to support *Unitierra* in diverse ways, we also invite our readers to bring to our attention other initiatives for creating Illichian solidarities. Too, we stand with indigenous groups of both the South and the North—all imploring us to take the path prophesized by the Anishninaabe—to heal our broken relationship with earth, with our places, together.

Very gratefully,

Dana L. Stuchul, Madhu Suri Prakash