

Participant Biographies

1. Pallab Chakma

Pallab Chakma is an Indigenous rights leader from the Chittagong Hill Tracts of Bangladesh currently serving as the Secretary General of Asia Indigenous Peoples Pact (AIPP).

Pallab has dedicated nearly 20 years of his life to advancing respect and recognition of Indigenous Peoples' rights as enshrined in the UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples (UNDRIP) at local, national, regional and international levels. His experience includes: Co-Chair, International Land Coalition (ILC) Council – steering global advocacy on land rights and tenure security, Executive Director, Kapaeeng Foundation (Bangladesh) since 2014 – defending Indigenous Peoples' rights while strengthening AIPP's regional and international influence. He has a strong academic grounding in mediation, conflict resolution, and international relations. With a clear vision and a commitment rooted in lived experience, Pallab Chakma continues to build bridges between local struggles and global conversations—anchoring Indigenous voices in the fight for justice, land, and dignity.

2. Gam A. Shimray

Mr. Gam A. Shimray is a Naga Indigenous leader from the Northeast part of India. He is currently serving as Asia's Representative to Expert Mechanism on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples (EMRIP) for the term 2026–2029.

Mr. Gam Shimray started working on indigenous peoples' issues in 1993 and became the Convener of the Naga Peoples Movement for Human Rights (NPMHR), an indigenous movement based in Northeast India, in 1998. From 2000 – 2004 he was one of the expert members for Technical and Policy Core Group (TPCG) of the National Biodiversity Strategy and Action Plan (NBSAP), Ministry of Environment and Forest of India. Gam was also holding the position of the National Coordinator of the All India Coordinating Forum of the Adivasi/Indigenous Peoples in India from 1999 - 2005. At the regional and global level, he worked with various indigenous organizations at various capacities before he was elected as the Secretary General of the Asia Indigenous Peoples Pact (AIPP) for the period of 2017 – 2020, in September 2016 and re-elected for the term 2021-2025. His educational qualification includes a Postgraduate Diplomat in development studies that included an essay on differential diagnosis for ending poverty in India.

3. Supriya Rai

Supriya is serving as the Chairperson of the Asia Indigenous Youth Platform. She leads the Asia Indigenous Youth Platform, an organization supported by the Asia Indigenous Peoples Pact (AIPP) that unifies and empowers Indigenous youth across Asian nations to defend their rights and ancestral lands. She is the Vice-President of the Youth Federation of Indigenous Nationalities, Nepal (YFIN), focusing on localized human rights and native community representation. She champions the integration of Indigenous youth into global policy, heavily advocating that they "must have a seat at the table" where environmental conservation and climate decisions are made. She belongs to the Rai

Indigenous community in Nepal. She holds a Masters degree in Indigenous Education and Development.

4. Durga Mani Rai

Durga Mani Rai is a human rights lawyer, advocate, and development professional with over 22 years of experience promoting the rights of Indigenous Peoples, human rights, social justice, and inclusive development in Nepal. He currently serves as Program Coordinator at the Lawyers' Association for Human Rights of Indigenous Peoples (LAHURNIP), where he leads programme implementation, legal advocacy, strategic litigation, and research. Throughout his career, he has engaged with Indigenous communities, government institutions, civil society organisations, and international partners to advance Indigenous Peoples' rights through legal advocacy, policy reform, and improved access to justice.

He has contributed to law and policy reform processes, provided legal and policy support to Indigenous communities and government institutions, and represented Indigenous Peoples before national courts, United Nations human rights mechanisms, and other international accountability mechanisms.

He holds a Bachelor of Law and a Master's degree in Sociology from Tribhuvan University, Nepal

5. Muhammad Syukron Anshori

Muhammad Syukron Anshori is a prominent Indonesian academic, researcher, and human rights advocate specialising in indigenous peoples' rights, environmental issues, and communication studies. He currently serves as the Research & Communications Officer at the Asia Indigenous Peoples Network on Extractive Industries and Energy (AIPNEE). An alumnus of the Diplomacy Training Program (DTP), his background also includes leading community-level advocacy as the former Head of the Media and Information Unit for Aliansi Masyarakat Adat Nusantara (AMAN) Sumbawa Chapter, Indonesia's premier indigenous rights organisation.

7. Colin Nicholas

Colin is the Founder & Coordinator of Centre for Orang Asli Concerns (COAC) in Malaysia in 1989. COAC supports the community in human rights advocacy, assists community members in court cases, and builds the community's capacity in lobbying and advocacy. COAC's work with the Orang Asli was recognised when it was awarded the United Nations Malaysia 'Organisation of the Year' award in 2011 – for its “quiet, yet determined and sensitive manner in which the centre has worked with unwavering integrity and independence in a critical area for Malaysian development.”

Colin was also a founding member of the Chiang Mai-based Asia Indigenous Peoples Pact (AIPP), with which he remains involved in various national and regional programmes. Colin Nicholas was a participant in the inaugural DTP training, held at the University of Sydney in 1990. Since then, he has accumulated over three decades of experience and service to Indigenous rights work in Asia.

8. Prabindra Shakya

Prabindra Shakya is a human rights and community-led development activist belonging to the Indigenous Newar community of Nepal. He has been engaged in promoting and protecting the rights of indigenous peoples and marginalised communities for almost two decades now. Thereby, he specialises in human rights advocacy in the contexts of impacts of development finance, business operations and international investments as well as in the conflict resolution and peacebuilding processes. For the past five years, he has also been supporting Indigenous and other communities in the design and implementation of community-led energy and development solutions across Nepal and beyond.

Prabin is currently the Convenor of Asia Indigenous Peoples Network on Extractive Industries and Energy (AIPNEE). He also leads the Community Empowerment & Social Justice Network (CEMSOJ) in Nepal, which he founded, and has previously worked with different human rights organisations in the country. He has extensive working experience at global, regional and national levels with the Secretariat of United Nations Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues, Asia Indigenous Peoples Pact (AIPP), Coalition of Human Rights in Development, Manushya Foundation and International Centre for Transitional Justice (ICTJ), among others.

9. Robie Halip

Robeliza “Robie” Halip is a prominent human rights defender and Indigenous leader from the Philippines. She belongs to the Kalanguya and Kankanaey Indigenous Peoples in the Cordillera region. She currently serves as the Executive Director of the Right Energy Partnership with Indigenous Peoples. She works to promote indigenous self-determination, cultural preservation, sustainable development, and just and equitable renewable energy transition. She has represented Indigenous Peoples at global and regional platforms and supports community-led initiatives that advance inclusive and sustainable development.

Earlier she also worked at Asia Indigenous Peoples Pact (AIPP) in various capacities. She also served as the global coordinator for the Indigenous Peoples Major Group (IPMG) for Sustainable Development and coordinator for the Indigenous Navigator project in the Philippines, Kenya, and Tanzania.

She serves on the Board of Trustees for the Forest Peoples Programme and the Asia Indigenous Peoples Network on Extractive Industries and Energy (AIPNEE).

10. Matcha Phornin

Matcha Phorn-in (also spelled Phornin) is a prominent Thai/Lao feminist, human rights defender, and educator. She dedicates her work to advancing human rights for indigenous, ethnic minority, and LGBTIQAN+ communities. Born in the Isan region of Thailand, she identifies as an indigenous lesbian feminist. She is the founder and executive director of Sangsan Anakot Yawachon Foundation. It empowers young indigenous people particularly stateless, women, children and LGBTIQAN through feminism, human right education and collective leadership development along the Thailand-Myanmar border.

Her work focused on combating gender and social injustice while fighting for human rights, land rights, economic justice and climate and environmental justice, supporting marginalised, undocumented, and stateless refugees in conflict and disaster-prone border villages, advocating for LGBTIQAN+ rights, the right to family and marriage equality.

The BBC recognised her global impact by naming her to its 100 inspiring and influential women list in 2023. She served as the board president for the Asia Pacific Forum on Women, Law and Development (APWLD) association and a former President of the ILGA Foundation. In late 2025, she was appointed to the Global Environment Facility (GEF) National Steering Committee (NSC)— the governing body of the UNDP-implemented GEF Small Grants Programme (SGP).