

# WE ARE ALL CHILDREN OF THE EARTH.

A report on the first two Wisdom Councils held by the Alliance for Intergenerational Resilience in collaboration with Vancouver Island University and the Indigenous Studies Program, University of Western Ontario.

November 2022.



*The painting on the front cover is called "Interconnections". It is by Carmin Bear-Bloomberg, an emerging Cree artist and one of the youth panelists on the wisdom councils.*

"This painting is a visual representation of my reconnection to culture. Titled Interconnection, this spirit painting symbolizes the interconnection between all beings... the roots connected to spirit, fire, ancestors, land, community, and my Woodland Cree culture. Finding my way... all elements are important in understanding who I am, where I come from and where I'm going... my journey."

- Carmin Bear-Bloomberg.

We are deeply grateful to our Earth Mother who nourishes and sustains us every day. In particular we acknowledge our human, and more than human ancestors as well as all the seen and the unseen beings who are of the lands and waters from which these Wisdom Councils have been hosted. This includes the traditional lands and waters of the: Cowichan Tribes, Vancouver Island; The Anishinaabek, Haudenosaunee, Lūnaapéewak and Chonnonton Nations of the Deshkhān Ziibi territory, South West Ontario, Turtle Island / Canada; the Ngāi Te Rangi, Ngāti Ranginui and Waitaha tribes of the Tauranga Moana, Aotearoa / New Zealand; and the Gàidhealtachd (the Scottish Gaelic speaking cultures of the Highlands and Islands), the Doric peoples of the North-Eastern region, the people of Shetland, Alba/Scotland.

Central to this ongoing project are the Wisdom Council participants, whose voices come through in this report and are part of this ongoing intergenerational resilience work:

### **Wisdom Council One: The Language of the Land participants**

A special thank you to our two youth participants Emily (Dene, Tsimishan & Scottish descent) and J (Nêhiyaw/Cree Nation), for your courage and sharing; as well as to our more seasoned panellists:

Hēmi O’Callaghan, Te Arawa (Tapuika and Waitaha)  
Kiamaia Ellis, Ngāi Te Rangi (Ngāi Tūkairangi and Ngāti Tapu)  
Christina Nuku, Ngāti Ranginui, Ngāti Porou  
Danielle Alphonse, Cowichan tribes  
Megan Saulnier, mixed European and Mi’Kmaq  
Kikila Perrin, Vancouver Island.  
Lewis Williams, Ngāti Rangi, Tauranga Moana, Aotearoa.

### **Wisdom Council Two: Climate Crisis and Multigenerational Resilience**

Danielle Alphonse, Cowichan Tribes, Vancouver Island  
Hillary McGregor, Whitefish River First Nation, Ontario  
Dionovan Grosbeck, Chippewa of the Thames First Nation, Ontario  
Carmin Bear-Bloomberg, Maskwa Nêhiyaw (Bear Cree), Peter Ballantyne Cree First Nation  
Bethany MacLeod, Outer Hebrides, Scotland in the Gàidhealtachd  
Ian Tait, Shetland, Alba/Scotland.  
Makere Stewart-Harawira, Waitaha Taiwhenua ki Waitaki iwi, Aotearoa  
Ullrich Kockel, Franconian, Albingian, New Scot/Alba  
Wahsayzee Deleary, Oneida Nation of the Thames and Chippewa of the Thames, Deshkaan Ziibi territory, Southwest Ontario.  
Lewis Williams, Ngāi Te Rangi ki Tauranga Moana, Aotearoa

## Introduction

The unpredictable, rapidly changing nature (and breakdown) of our social, economic, and ecological landscapes has for many youth – both Indigenous and no longer Indigenous to place – created a sense of urgency regarding the state of our planet and their futures (Williams, 2022). Identifying the root causes of these globally experienced challenges to lie in ongoing forms of colonialism and human disconnect from people and place, the Alliance for Intergenerational Resilience (AIR) and collaborators, initiated Wisdom Councils between Indigenous Elders, Knowledge Keepers, and youth to explore what can be done.

As part of this growing dialogue, this report focuses on the two virtual Wisdom Councils held during 2021 and 2022. The first council brought together First Peoples from Tauranga Moana (Te Ika a Maui/North Island, Aotearoa/New Zealand) and Coast Salish territory (Turtle Island/Canada), while the second council brought together Indigenous peoples from the Gaelic speaking Western Isles, and Shetland (Alba/Scotland), and Coast Salish and Deshkan Zibi territories (Turtle Island/Canada).

Geographically dispersed, we recognize that the everyday realities and localized knowledges of Wisdom Council (WC) participants are made up by very different cosmological-cultural-ecological contexts. Each of the participating territories; however, have been colonized and each are at different stages in the resurgences of their Indigenous knowledges and lifeways. While the Indigenous Peoples of Aotearoa / New Zealand and Turtle Island / Canada were the recipients of external colonization via the expansion of the British empire, less recognized has been the experience of internal colonization by Alba's Gàidhealtachd (the Scottish Gaelic speaking cultures of the Highlands and Islands), (Mackinnon, 2017). Here cultural genocide occurred through the forcible removal of Gaels from their ancestral lands. Shipped to Turtle Island and Aotearoa, many subsequently became agents of imperialism in the external colonies of Canada and New Zealand (Williams et al., 2016). Our WCs seek to work across and through these entangled identities, simultaneously in ways mindful of cultural-power locations within colonizing structures, while ultimately digging underneath identity politics to revitalize Indigenous place-based knowledge systems and lifeways and related worldviews of interconnectedness as a grounded response to our seemingly intractable planetary challenges.

Furthermore, in each country the resurgence of Indigenous and traditional lifeways inevitably tends to conflict with state structures of capitalist accumulation. While the implementation of the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples (UNDRIP), within Turtle Island/Canada and Aotearoa/New Zealand holds significant potential for Indigenous resurgence and broader planetary healing, Indigenous knowledge continues to be extracted from Indigenous cultural-environmental contexts by policy makers (McGregor, 2021). While broader constitutional reform is inevitably required in each country, we regard these WCs as an important step in

garnering Indigenous, intercultural and intergenerational conversation and innovation towards supporting Indigenous-led intergenerational resilience and planetary healing.

The emerging story of these WCs narrated here (see the section Wisdom Council Stories) has been written by Chantel Jamieson, (as part of her Head and Heart Indigenous Research Fellowship award (Summer 2022) at the University of Western Ontario), in collaboration with Lewis Williams and Danielle Alphonse, the initiators of these public conversations. Chantel was not part of the Wisdom Councils (WC), but rather brings fresh eyes and perspectives to the work as a young Anishinaabe kwe. Therefore, this narration, while an interweaving of the voices of WC members, also represents key themes that in the first instance stood out to Chantel - from her particular vantage points as a younger Indigenous woman - as a result of her review of the WC videos.

For Indigenous peoples throughout the world their traditional stories are not just stories. Rather they hold important scientific ethical principles for guiding human conduct. Having been passed down orally through generations, stories have a critical place within Indigenous societies. The teachings contained within these stories tell us how Mother Earth can provide for us and how we can provide for Mother Earth. We are given many gifts by Mother Earth; plants and animals are used for medicine and food. Without the teachings that are given to us within these stories, we would not know how to utilise these gifts. Not only that, but the connection and relationships that are passed down in these stories are a crucial guide to how we should carry ourselves in this world. They teach us how to be healthy and balanced in every aspect of our lives. Stories bring light to the responsibilities that we must protect our lands and waters to ensure they stay beautiful, healthy, and thriving for future generations to come.

We hope you will enjoy the stories in this booklet!

## **A Few Thoughts from Chantel Jamieson, Indigenous Head and Heart Research Fellow**

Aaniin, Waabshka Omiimii n'dizhnikaaz. Mishiikenh n'doodem. G'Chimnissing n'doonjibaa. Anishinaabekwe n'daaw. My name is Chantel Jamieson and I am 21 years old. My spirit name is White Dove. I am Turtle Clan from Beausoleil First Nation. I grew up in my community which is an island surrounded by beautiful waters. I learned my language, Anishinaabemowin, everyday in school. However, I moved off my reserve when I was 12. I no longer was taught my language and I felt very disconnected from everything that was important to me as a young Indigenous person. It was very hard for me to celebrate my culture, language, and identity during this time period. This disconnect is something that I am still healing from. It has been great working on this project as it has also helped me on my healing and reconnecting journey.



When I first watched both Wisdom Council videos, I was in awe of the knowledge held by all of the participants. It inspired me to connect more with my surroundings – wherever I am. Not only that, but how important my language is to this personal connection with the land. I am filled with a new passion to continue my journey of learning and speaking Anishinaabemowin. In the videos, I was also reminded of the humility that is necessary throughout all stages of life and how important it is to keep myself in that learning space of listening and learning. Miigwech (thank you) for everything that was shared in these WCs. I hope that I did well with weaving this knowledge together.

## **The inspiration for the Wisdom Councils and how we went about them<sup>1</sup>**

Our approach to creating an interregional dialog was directly prompted (and inspired) by two global events, each of which has had on-going catastrophic effects. The first was the 25th meeting of the Convention of the Parties (CoP25) in 2019, which deteriorated into haggling over carbon emission reductions by the most privileged and culpable of nations. This eventually went down in history as “a missed opportunity” to really make a difference (Kabia, 2020; Ray, 2019). Less than two months later, the COVID-19 pandemic erupted afflicting millions around the globe, replicating the neo-colonial hierarchies regarding those the disease inhabited and whether they received treatment. Countries shut down border crossing, and the frenetic whirl of travel became a trickle. For a time, CO2 emissions plummeted (Henriques, 2020) and the Earth stilled — prompting many to begin searching for a deeper meaning of this catastrophic event. The pause produced a profound opportunity, for those who took it, to align with Mother Earth’s deeper pulse of “self-correction.”

Around this time, Lewis and Danielle were discussing how AIR might respond to the global state of our human disconnect. Danielle remarked that it was almost impossible not to notice that just as human-produced carbon emissions have relentlessly attacked the lungs of *Papatūānuku* (The Earth Mother) over decades, the recipients of nature’s counter-attack have been the lungs of the (human) perpetrator (D. Alphonse, personal communication, March 12, 2020). This coincided with Lewis’ reading about and considering the need for integrating Indigenous thinking and life ways into Euro-western radical movements.

Knowing the significance of Indigenous ceremony and circle — not as performance, but rather as opening the doorway between ancestors and the living, and a means to creating spiritual growth related to the land (Little Bear, 2009) — Danielle and Lewis sought to centralize these within the approach to a collective conversation. Rather than choosing often-used academic and technically

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<sup>1</sup> This section is an excerpt from the forthcoming chapter by Williams, et al (2022) listed in the references section of this report.

oriented terms such as “panel” or “symposium”, which tend to communicate rationalist Western approaches to knowledge, we decided on the words “Wisdom Council” to communicate Indigenous and participatory values regarding how we come to know and value what counts as knowledge.

This approach honours the generationally and culturally-situated nature of knowing and emphasizes wisdom — the result of experiences that we have integrated into the heart of who we are — over rationalist ways of knowing. As a result, the two WCs actively voice the teachings that must be brought forward by healers from all places, through connecting with our responsibility to share and support Mother Earth. While from an Indigenous perspective this healing is partly located in traditional language, above all it centers compassion for all relations (beings). Therefore, our invitation to prospective members included the following:

Through COVID-19, Mother Earth has sent yet another clear and potent reminder. It’s time to come home, to live in our best integrity with all the other kin — human and more than human — who are also part of the only home we have. As children of *Papatūānuku* (The Earth Mother), we humans are part of a large family — our humble place is as the *Pōtiki* or youngest. In Te Ao Māori, the Māori world, it is said, that the *Pōtiki* however, also often has a special gift for the future. Well, let’s apply that gift — let’s bring the hearts and minds of our human generations together, in Council (Wisdom Council Letter of Invitation, 2020, 2021).

We intend to create a space of depth and receptivity nurturing our interchange and enabling to emerge whatever is in the ‘mix’ as a result. Participants are asked to “engage the energies of the heart, head, and hand (spirit, mind, and practical doing)”, and each virtual gathering to “bring together the wisdom and insights of Elders with the different generational experiences and insights of younger people” (Wisdom Council Letter of Invitation, 2020, 2021)

Another key aspect of our methodology is to engage participants who are “Indigenous to place”, or on an active journey of reconnecting to their Indigenous roots, as invited council members. This is because, within AIR’s vision of Indigenous-led intergenerational/multi-generational resilience, our strategy is to privilege Indigenous epistemologies, lives, and peoples of a place while opening up pathways for those no-longer Indigenous to place, to simultaneously learn the Indigenous legal laws of the land and deeper their own epistemological cultural skins on interconnectedness (Williams et al., 2017; Williams, 2022). Once the Indigenous epistemological foundation is firmly established, it is our vision to invite these other perspectives into the WCs.

Wisdom Council (WC) participants, were aged between 16 and 76 years, representing Indigenous peoples from Aotearoa/New Zealand (Ngāi Te Rangi, Ngāi Te Ranginui, Te Arawa & Ngāti Porou iwi, Tauranga Moana; Waitaha taiwhenua ki Waitaki); Turtle Island/Canada (Coast Salish, Nêhiyaw/Cree Nation, Dene, Tsimishan & Scottish, Cree and Metis, Mi’kmaq/ Vancouver

Island, Anishinaabe, and Deshkhana Ziibi/SW Ontario); and Alba/Scotland (Outer Hebrides and Shetland). Indigenous identities also comprised Two Spirited and *takatāpui* (LGBTQ2S+) participants.

The First Wisdom Council, the *“Language of the Land”*, asked participants to respond to the question *“How do you experience the language of the land?”* Held a year later, the second, *“Indigenous Intergenerational Resilience in Times of Climate Crisis”* asked: *“What are the Indigenous and traditional perspectives and practices that can strengthen intergenerational relationships and resilience in these times of climate crisis?”*

Our circle was opened with an acknowledgement to the land and ceremony by an Elder, after which council members took around 10 minutes to respond to the questions posed. Our second WC also included a public audience who then responded to the Council as well. The findings presented here are those most relevant for an Indigenist approach to social-ecological resilience and innovation, taken from direct responses of the panelists to the questions posed for each Wisdom Council, and dialogue emerging between participants as a result.

## Wisdom Council Stories

Kia ū ki tou kāwai whakapapa  
Kia mātau ai  
Ko wai koe  
E anga atu rā koe ki hea

Hold on to your ancestral stem  
That you might know  
Who you are  
And what direction you are heading in.

(Mead & Grove, in Hakopa, 2019, p.5).

Through Chantel’s distillation of the WC participant’s conversations, our “story map” represents five key themes of planetary healing emerging from the wisdom councils: **1)** Indigenous knowledge as practices of celebration and mutual flourishing; **2)** Embodied ways of listening to the land; **3)** The importance of Indigenous languages for informing our conduct as human beings; **4)** Carrying the old ways forward; and, **5)** The importance of humility in breaking down separation and building connection. In the first instance, this report is a collection of stories as told by WC members around these themes.



## ***Theme One: Practices of Celebration and Mutual Flourishing***

Kinship relations are often the basis of Indigenous knowledge and practice for many nations. This

“With the medicine garden, I felt like I had purpose – I was doing something, I could see it and each time I did, I felt more connected. I was doing what my people have done for thousands of years” Emily in *Language of the Land* (AIR, 2021).

value is implicit throughout both Wisdom Councils. Megan Saulnier, a mixed European and Mi’Kmaq participant, explained in “*Language of the Land*”, how she began to create medicine gardens as a way to staying connected with creation throughout the COVID-19 pandemic. Megan reflected on her feelings while working on her medicine garden: “*It’s really beautiful to see that you have a relationship with the plants just like you do with a person or with an animal and it grows over time*” (Megan in AIR, 2021). Megan further explains how a sense of humility is needed when working with the plants and medicines gifted to us, as there is always more to learn.

It can be extremely difficult for many Indigenous youth who find themselves disconnected from their language and their homelands to build a relationship with the land. However, this is something that can be done by working with a medicine garden. Emily, an Indigenous youth participant from Vancouver Island in “*Language of the Land*”, speaks about how she did not grow up learning her language and so she had trouble answering the question, “*What does the language of the land mean to you?*” To her, the language of the land is building a reciprocal relationship with the land – how the land provides for her and how she can provide for the land. She has built this relationship through medicine gardens. The sense of warmth and purpose that Emily felt with her medicine garden is a great example of the kinship relations that underly much of the Indigenous knowledge and values discussed throughout both WCs.

By strengthening our relationships with all of creation, human and non-human, we begin to find our purpose and responsibilities as children of Mother Earth. There is a responsibility to protect and care for Mother Earth and part of this includes celebrating the knowledge and traditions we carry as Indigenous people. The internal flourishing of identity and culture is mirrored as the plants in the medicine gardens begin to also grow and flourish with the care that is put into them.

## Theme Two: Listening with Mind, Body and Spirit

“Weweni bizindan” –  
Listen carefully in  
Anishinaabemowin

To begin the process of responding to the changes happening in our environment, we are called to listen, not with just our ears, but with our whole being – mind, body, and spirit. J, a youth participant from Flying Dust First Nation, shared that they were able to experience the language of the land through gardening and being outside

in nature. The importance of being able to sit with yourself and be present with Mother Earth as a way of connecting with your mind, body, and spirit is highlighted with what J shared:

When I go for a hike, I always like to find a spot to sit down and just stare into the open, look at the nature, listen to the birds, enjoy the scenery and the natural beauties that Mother Nature has to offer us. (J in AIR, 2021)



By sitting down and listening with our entire being, we can begin to recognize problems in our environment and determine appropriate solutions. There are examples of using Indigenous knowledge to find better ways to approach problems within our environments. In the “*Language of the Land*”, Kia Maia and Hēmi (Māori participants from Tauranga Moana) spoke about the invasion of *Te Awanui* (the

name for the largest body of water in the Tauranga harbour) by the Asian Paddle crab as a result of climate change and warming seas. They told of the use of harakeke (an Indigenous species of flax) baskets to catch invasive crabs. Harakeke has medicinal properties — touching it and feeling it has a calming sensation. They were able to find this solution by listening to an auntie’s teachings — knowledge was passed down and they listened with more than just their ears to what solution was needed. They wove baskets with the harakeke and used them to trap the crabs — which are aggressive in nature. The crabs tended to settle down once they were in the baskets. The intergenerational knowledge demonstrated here also reminds us to be thankful for our elders and knowledge keepers — for the time shared, and for their willingness and happiness to take care of us.

Kia Maia emphasizes the importance of being able to observe the changes that are happening in the environment so that we can fulfill our responsibilities as caretakers of the Earth. In order to do this, we need to be able to listen – with our whole being – to what our non-human relations are telling us. Kia Maia tells us about *maramataka*, the Māori (lunar) calendar, to demonstrate the importance of this:

Maramataka tells us when to go fishing, what types of animals are around at certain times of the year, the best times to place trees and vegetables. Maramataka has always been a Māori guide for us and if we are going to be able to keep using a maramataka, we need to start observing more and listening to what is happening in our environment to better understand climate change. (Kia Maia in AIR, 2021)

She highlights the quickly changing environment and that we need to “*better understand maramataka into the future*”, which connects back to the importance of being able to utilize all six senses — to hear, to see, to feel, to smell, to taste, and the spiritual sense. To learn and speak the language of the land is to listen to what the environment is telling us — to be able to see through different lenses in order to help us respond to climate crisis challenges.

### ***Theme Three: Language as a Direct Reflection of the Environment***

“Language connects us to the land and land connects us to language” – Bethany in *Indigenous Intergenerational Resilience in Times of Climate Crisis* (AIR, 2022)

Many WC members explained how using their Indigenous language helped them to connect with their spirit, with their surroundings, and with their ancestors. In the second WC, “*Indigenous Intergenerational Resilience in Times of Climate Crisis*”, Bethany, a participant from Alba, spoke about Doric as a language that is both a direct response to and interaction with the north-east Alba landscape:

The way we speak and words we use are such a vital way to connect with our emotions, and when learning another language, these deeper thoughts aren’t accessible to you.

We don’t just lose words and sounds, we lose worldviews. (Bethany in AIR, 2022)

With our Indigenous languages, we are able to connect in a much deeper and grounded sense to the lands and waters that we come from. There are many Indigenous communities from around the world that have experienced language loss as a result of colonization. In the first WC, “*Language of the Land*”, Hēmi speaks about the importance of recovering our languages as it allows us to know where we belong and where we go. Our languages contain teachings about how to work with our lands and waters to nurture, to nourish, and to grow, as children of Mother Earth. Danielle Alphonse, a participant belonging to the Cowichan Tribes, words the importance of language revitalization very beautifully, we must “*bring back harmony and peace to her (Mother Earth) through bringing our language to life, bringing life to our spirit, and helping her connect to who she is*”. For Danielle, learning her language and speaking these words out loud, she is helping her spirit grow and light up the path set forward by her ancestors.

In “*The Language of the Land*”, Chrissy, a Māori WC participant, explains that “*when you acknowledge that there is a language of the land and you acknowledge your connection to it, you have an innate responsibility to ensure that the land remains beautiful for future generations.*”

By acknowledging our reciprocal relationship with the land, we are reminded to continually give thanks for all that it provides for us. Our journey of recovering our languages and traditional practices have taught us how to take better care of the place in which we are – our bodies, our spirits, our kin, our waters, our lands. With our Indigenous languages, we come to understand how our ancestors thought and how they existed on our homelands. The teachings and knowledge contained within the language, as it is deeply rooted in the land, contain the key to approaching climate-crisis solutions. By continuing to collectively heal and revitalize the connection that our language gives us to the land, we begin to see the path forward more clearly.

### ***Theme Four: Carrying the Old Ways Forward***

“In order to be here as long as we have been here, you have to adapt to what comes at you next, what issues you have to face” –  
Dionovan in *Indigenous Intergenerational Resilience in Times of Climate Crisis* (AIR, 2022).

Youth participants in “*Indigenous Intergenerational Resilience in Times of Climate Crisis*” gave their thoughts on the constantly evolving world around us. They spoke about how culture and knowledge-transmission methods need to evolve as the world evolves. With all this change, young people are struggling to connect or re-connect with their Indigenous knowledge and language. Bethany speaks about the importance of youth connecting to their culture in ways that they feel comfortable so that, “*they can feel like it is theirs*”. Youth need to feel like it is okay for them to carry knowledge and teachings so that they can continue to pass it on to future generations. Bethany reflects that:

It can be a scary thing to hand the torch over to younger generations and trust them to preserve what is sacred about that while also allowing it to go through them and into the next generation and then evolve and change again. (Bethany in AIR, 2022)

However, this is something that must happen. If our culture is not growing, changing, and adapting, then it is not alive. We cannot be stagnant. Dionovan, an Anishinaabe participant from Chippewas of the Thames First Nation, reminds of this in the quote at the beginning of this section. It can be very difficult to navigate contemporary modern contexts of culture and different communities will have different approaches to this. We all have different individual and unique needs that change as the environment around us changes. Dionovan further explains that a key to this is having a solid foundation – ‘*a strong sense of identity and strong ties to our communities*’. Knowing who

we are and where we come from will allow us to practice the humility necessary for this adaptation to take place. We are also looking to our Elders to connect with and build relationships with our youth. There needs to be a path built and maintained to pass on and deliver important information, stories, teachings from Elders to our new generations. The answers on how to approach contemporary inter-generational knowledge transmission will not come easily but being present with each other and working together – having active and on-going conversations – will allow us to find them.

## ***Theme Five: Breaking Down Separation and Rebuilding Connection***

A large underlying theme throughout the conversations that took place in both WCs is the practice of humility. Humility needs to flow through all relationships – human to more than human, generationally, and interculturally. Caring for Shkaakaamikwe (Mother Earth) is not something that can be done by anyone peoples alone. It is not just the job of Indigenous peoples. Rather, this is collective work that should be informed by the place-based knowledge of Indigenous peoples.

In this regard, while facilitating the discussion of the second Wisdom Council, ***“Indigenous Intergenerational Resilience in Times of Climate Crisis”*** Lewis Williams made the point that it is important to ‘*get rid of the colonial narrative of not having enough time to figure out how to incorporate Indigenous knowledge and perspectives into the climate solutions that are needed*’. Lewis’ remarks in turn prompted Kikila Perrin, who as an AIR board member had assisted with the WC organization, to pose the following question for Wisdom Council members, *“What advice do you have for the way settler communities can support Indigenous knowledge and Indigenous governance on the territories in which they live?”* Hillary, an Anishinaabe participant from Whitefish River First Nation, responded by explaining that it can be difficult for people who are no longer Indigenous to place to connect respectfully on the lands that they are on. Settlers or people no longer Indigenous to place who wish to do this must take time to learn about the communities present on the land on which they find themselves. He highlights the truth that *“these are the people who have taken care of that land for many generations.”* He also mentions how learning traditional place names may be a helpful tool when learning about communities, leaders, territories. It is essential that a personal connection is developed with the territory. This personal connection helps because ‘just hearing about something is different than experiencing it for yourself’.

We want to recognize and build the connectivity that everyone should have with Mother Earth. This is described by Dionovan, in the same WC:

We need to view Mother Earth not as an object or as a possession, not as something that can be owned, but as family which is exactly what she is referred to as – as a mother,

someone that provides for us, nurtures us, and also teaches us. Without Mother Earth and her gifts, we would not have all that we know. (Dionovan in AIR, 2022)

The greatest tool we can carry with us is humility – to accept that we are never going to know everything and that most times, all that we have to give is our time. Be prepared to listen, learn, and adjust. By doing this, we begin to break down the separation from the Earth seen in the settler perspective.

## Conclusion

While our first two wisdom councils have involved peoples still Indigenous to place (Indigenous Peoples) our intention, once the indigenous knowledge and protocols of the Wisdom Councils are firmly established, to include the perspectives of those no longer Indigenous to place. In this way we aim to strengthen intergenerational resilience (connectivity and knowledge transmission within and between human and more than human life) in ways that centre Indigenous realities and are culturally inclusive. This is in alignment with the AIR statement on Eldership available at [www.intergenresil.com](http://www.intergenresil.com).

We regard the key themes written about in this report as a 'dip in the ocean' - i.e., an initial conversation around the issues, joys, and challenges of cultivating multi-generational resilience in these times of great challenge. These are conversations which need to be revisited and deepened. In this context one of the most urgent issues, and one which emerged from the recent Wisdom Council on climate crisis and multi-generational resilience, is the issue of how Indigenous knowledge is taken forward and adapted by Indigenous youth to meet today's complex challenges. In this regard, AIR has decided to run a series of talking circles for Indigenous youth for the purpose of exploring some of the challenges they experience as younger Indigenous people when it comes to carrying the traditional knowledge forward that has been handed down to you from their Elders. We are especially interested to learn how the processes and challenges of Indigenous intergenerational knowledge transmission might impact the ways in which Indigenous youth might go about addressing climate and ecological crisis in your communities. We look forward to this next step in our project and keeping interested folk and supporters of this project updated!

We will find the way forward together – “With your basket of knowledge and my basket of knowledge, all together, our people will be well” – Kia Maia in *The Language of the Land*, (AIR 2021).



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## Figures

Figure 1. Harakeke / New Zealand Native Flax. Source: <https://www.facebook.com/TeAraEncyclopedia/posts/2828487947184490/>

**"Just as we connect with ourselves, who we are, where we come from and where we are each going, it is important to remember our relationship and responsibilities with Mother Earth.**

**'What we do to Mother Earth we do to ourselves'**

**-Chief Seattle"**

