Indigeneity is a Native-led Program within Bioneers that promotes Indigenous approaches to solve the earth’s most pressing environmental and social crises. We produce the Indigenous Forum within the Bioneers Conference, original media, educational curricula and catalytic initiatives to support the leadership and rights of First Peoples, while weaving networks, partnerships and alliances among Native and non-Native allies.
# INDIGENEITY PROGRAM

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CARA ROMERO *(Chemehuevi)*  
Co-Director

Cara Romero is a non-profit leader, communicator, change-maker and award-winning artist. She brings special expertise in working directly with tribes, and in producing cultural events and gatherings. Prior to joining Bioneers in 2011, Cara served as the first Executive Director of the Chemehuevi Cultural Center and was an elected member of the Chemehuevi Tribal Council from 2007-2010. She served as the Chair of the Chemehuevi Education Board and the Chemehuevi Early Education Policy Council. With degrees in Cultural Anthropology and Fine Art Photography, Cara has won numerous awards for her photography, including the Southwest Associations of Indian Art’s Best of Classification award (twice) and has been published in National Geographic and is widely collected by public and private institutions worldwide.

ALEXIS BUNTEN *(Unangan/Yup’ik)*  
Co-Director

Alexis Bunten is a researcher, writer, media-maker, and curriculum developer. After receiving a BA in Art History, Alexis returned to Alaska, where she worked at the Sealaska Heritage Institute and the Alaska Native Heritage Center. Subsequently, Alexis earned a PhD in Cultural Anthropology at UCLA. She has published widely about Indigenous and environmental issues in academic and mainstream media outlets. Alexis has won several awards for her work from the National Science Foundation, Ford Foundation, MacArthur Foundation, Bristol Bay Native Corporation, and others. Her 2015 book “So, How Long Have You Been Native? Life as an Alaska Native Tour Guide” won the Alaska Library Association Award for its originality and depth. Her follow-up anthology, “Indigenous Tourism Movements,” was published by the University of Toronto Press in 2018.
DAISY ROSALEZ (La Tribu coca de Jalisco)
Special Programs Coordinator

Daisy Rosalez is a program manager, United States Air Force Staff Sergeant, and student. Daisy's work at Bioneers focuses on supporting Indigenous-led cultural programming, cross-cultural communications, media-making and the use of technology to bridge intergenerational and intercultural gaps. She first attended Bioneers as a scholarship recipient of the Native Youth Leadership Program, and returned as an intern, which evolved into a staff position. Daisy graduated from Foothill College with honors in 2019, where her leadership was honored with Club of the Year. Daisy is currently an undergraduate at Williams College attending remotely and working towards a bachelor's degree with a concentration in Cognitive Science. In the coming months following the completion of her active duty service commitment at the Buckley Airforce Base in Colorado, she will be moving to Williamstown, Massachusetts to live on campus and focus all of her effort on her education.

High Honors 3.96 GPA
Airmen of the Quarter for Headquarters Air Reserve Personnel Center
Dear Friends of Indigeneity:

The Indigeneity Program would not exist without your participation, support and investment. We are so grateful for the platform Bioneers provides to amplify the voices of Indigenous leaders. We work tirelessly year round to bring recognition to the critical role Indigenous Peoples have to play in regenerating the planet.

We are gratified to share with you our program accomplishments in 2020. At the time we write this letter in January 2021, we are still collectively experiencing the global pandemic. We lost so many loved ones and elders in 2020, but we weathered the storm and have come out the other side wiser, more experienced, skillful and ready to tackle our country’s biggest challenges.

When the pandemic struck, we immediately pivoted our work to support Native communities that were hit hardest. Historically it has always been the pattern – “first and worst” - and ongoing structural inequalities ensured it. We rapidly organized to gather knowledge about what was happening in real time by carrying out the only comprehensive survey of COVID-19 impacts in Indian Country. We were able to share this information with caring donors who helped us to establish a regranting fund. We called it “Indigigiving,” and it enabled us to distribute nearly $200,000 in aid to over 100 Indigenous individuals and nearly 50 Native-serving organizations across four continents with a focus on the Southwest. You can learn more about our early response to COVID-19 in Indian Country and read the results of our survey here.

We are so proud to share that we thoughtfully pivoted all of our programming throughout 2020 from in-person to virtual, as we stayed home with our families. We maintained an online lifeline to the youth we serve through our annual Native Youth Leadership Program, and Intercultural Conversations initiative. We developed and offered two trainings to cultivate allyship. We helped to Program a Virtual Bioneers Conference which featured...
23 Indigenous presenters who shared their wisdom in Keynote talks and Indigenous Forum panels. We made media and curriculum about Native concepts and issues aligned to Common Core standards for middle schoolers, high schoolers, and lifelong learners alike.

We are also able to initiate and deepen several very exciting new projects:

- We grew our catalytic initiative to save Mother Earth tribe by tribe through the adoption of Rights of Nature policy that is upheld and enforceable by national and international sovereignty law, with major outcomes to come in 2021.

- We developed the first season of a webisode series about Indigeneity that is currently being licensed for distribution on PBS and beyond.

- We recorded “indigeneity Conversations,” a series of broadcast TV shows, podcasts and online videos with Indigenous leaders sharing their experience and advice on the most pressing issues facing Native and all Peoples today. The series will begin airing in early 2021.

We are already so excited about what’s to come in 2021. The rising of Indigenous leadership and the mainstreaming of the recognition of the vitality of First Peoples are unprecedented. The space is opening for so much more to happen now that when Bioneers began this work in 1990.

We hope you enjoy learning more about what we accomplished in 2020. For a deeper dive, we invite you to explore our website to find all of our media, stories and curriculum on our website. It is a treasure trove of hundreds of videos, blogs, articles, radio shows, podcasts, and curricula for you to learn from Indigenous wisdom - gathered from generations of living in place-- at the heart of the Indigeneity Program’s mission.

If you are inspired by our unique and valuable work, please consider supporting Bioneers and the Indigeneity Program in 2021 and ongoing.

Sincerely,

Cara Romero and Alexis Bunten
Indigeneity is a Native-led Program within Bioneers that promotes Indigenous approaches to solve the earth’s most pressing environmental and social crises. We provide the public, professionals, leaders across many issue areas, and our extensive networks with authentic, easily accessible tools for understanding and teaching contemporary Indigenous issues and illuminating pathways for engagement.

We also mobilize special catalytic initiatives, which include the multi-year “Tribal Rights of Nature” movement, and our 2020 “Indigigiving” regrant program in rapid response to COVID-19 impacts in Indian Country.

We prioritize cultivating future leaders through our annual Native Youth Leadership Program, and the Intercultural Conversations Initiative, providing life-changing experiences that introduce youth to new ideas, role models, and each other to form lasting relationships.

Since its inception, Bioneers has been fundamentally shaped and guided by Indigenous knowledge, participants and partners, the original “Bioneers.” Bioneers’ Native-led Indigeneity Program invites ally-ship to support the leadership, rights and cultural survival of First Peoples. The program expands the reach of Indigenous knowledge and approaches to solving environmental and social crises.

Our work includes a mix of live events, media production, curriculum development, and catalytic initiatives to support the leadership and rights of First Peoples, while weaving networks, partnerships and alliances.

We help produce the annual Bioneers conference, and the Indigenous Forum within the conference. We adapt these presentations and events into radio shows, TV broadcasts, online videos, media collections, articles, blogs and books. We support youth through cultural exchanges and curriculum.

Your funding is the reason we can do this critically important and unique work. We do not take corporate funding, and you – our Bioneers community – are vital to our ongoing success. Now more than ever, the leadership and voices of Indigenous Peoples can and must help shape the wellbeing of our communities and planet for future generations.
INDIGENEITY’S IMPACT

- Amplifies Indigenous voices and campaigns
- Educates students and lifelong learners
- Provides opportunities for youth leadership
- Connects Indigenous leaders with each other and allies
- Advances Rights of Nature in Indian Country
- Leads progressive environmental and social change
- Advances movement building across sectors
## INDIGENEITY PROGRAM OUTCOMES
**BY THE NUMBERS, 2020**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>MEDIA AND CURRICULUM</th>
<th>INDIGIGIVING COVID-19 RELIEF</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>8 Indigeneity Videos</td>
<td>$172,409 raised and redistributed</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13 Blogs</td>
<td>109 families received mini grants</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4 Discussion Guides and Curriculum Bundles</td>
<td>49 organizations received grants</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1 Radio Show - No More Stolen Sisters, Stopping the Abuse and Murder of Native Women and Girls</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>1 Podcast - Hello My Other Self with Ilarion Merculieff</td>
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<tr>
<th>RIGHTS OF NATURE</th>
<th>NATIVE YOUTH LEADERSHIP PROGRAM</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Developed Training Workshops</td>
<td>203 Participants</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Completed Training Toolkit</td>
<td>12 Partners</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Established Working Group</td>
<td>10 Virtual Events</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>250 COVID relief gift bags</td>
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<tr>
<th>VIRTUAL BIONEERS CONFERENCE 2020</th>
<th>TECH FOR NATIVE YOUTH</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>23 Indigenous Presenters in the Indigenous Forum</td>
<td>60 students awarded tech devices, accessories and support for internet</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2 Indigenous Keynote Presenters</td>
<td>31 Chromebooks awarded</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>114+ self-identified Indigenous participants</td>
<td>28 iPads awarded</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>81 distinct tribal affiliations</td>
<td>40 mini-grant awards of $350 for accessories or internet connection</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Conference Scholarships for Native Youth and Chaperones</td>
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| INTERCULTURAL CONVERSATIONS                                                         |                                                                                               |
|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|                                                                                               |
| 41 Students                                                                        |                                                                                               |
| 9 Facilitators                                                                     |                                                                                               |
| 14 Virtual events                                                                  |                                                                                               |
The Bioneers Indigeneity Program is the go-to source for accurate and contemporary information about Indigenous science, media, and curriculum for social change.

The Indigeneity Program has cultivated a rich repository of original videos, transcripts and audio recordings showcasing youth, elders and leaders from around the world who have shared Indigenous approaches to environmental, human rights, and social justice issues.

Our media reach thousands of people each year to share Indigenous perspectives and worldviews. Across all of Bioneers media shared in 2020, Indigenous themed videos were 2 out of our top 3 most watched among our diverse audiences!

From Dr. Tieraona Low Dog on greening medicine (2001), to Chief Oren Lyons on the Indigenous roots of American Democracy ((2003), Robin Kimmerer on the teachings of grass (2014), Tom and Dallas Goldtooth on the intergenerational art of grassroots organizing (2016), Casey Camp on the Rights of Mother Earth (2019) and so many more, our website is the only place to discover such a wide array of Indigenous ideas and solutions to social and environmental justice issues we face together.

VIDEOS RELEASED IN 2020

- Returning Indigenous Lands: A Metaphor
- Indigenous Matriarchy: Living Within the Natural Laws
- Why Indigenous Activism Matters
- Circle of Life
- Borderlands
- Honoring Women: Reclaiming Coming of Age Ceremony
- From Alcatraz to Standing Rock and Beyond: On the Past 50 and Next 50 Years of Indigenous Activism
- How to Be a Good Ally
INDIGENEITY MEDIA

In 2020 we produced the first 3 episodes “Indigeneity Conversations,” a 6-part pilot series for broadcast TV and other platforms to be completed in the first months of 2021. We produced two video shorts and an opener for a webisode series of shorts called “Indigeneity.” The “Indigeneity” webisode series presents an accurate portrait of the Native American Experience by tackling stereotypes, exploring contemporary issues, and celebrating Indigenous contributions to the US.

Hosted by Native American media personalities, Ariel Tweto and Julian Noisecat, the series brings a virtual classroom to the world, combining truth, traditional knowledge, humor, animation, and personality to present important educational themes in Indigenous Studies.

The series will be released to the public in 2021 and will be a cornerstone of our broader educational content. It’s especially unique as Native-produced media representing Native voices in their own words and perspectives. The programs are for both Native and non-Native audiences.

Indigeneity blogs and social media serve as an important public repository for sharing our program’s activities, and highlighting the accomplishments, campaigns and stories of Indigenous-led partner organizations. The majority of the content for our blogs in 2020 was provided to us by our Indigenous partners, who look to Bioneers as a trusted source to share news and ideas.

INDIGENEITY EPISODES- SEASON 1

- Episode 1 - What do you call us?
- Episode 2 - Native American Diversity
- Episode 3 - Stereotypes
- Short 1 - The Real Pocahontas
- Short 2 - Tribal Sovereignty
INDIGENEITY LEARNING

INDIGENEITY PROGRAM ARTICLES AND BLOGS

- No More Stolen Sisters: Stopping the Abuse and Murder of Native Women and Girls
- We’re a Culture, Not a Costume: Fighting Racism in Schools
- The Path Home: Restoring Native Lands and Traditional Knowledge
- Indigenous Women Rising: Upholding the Hoop of Life
- Value Change for Survival – All My Relations
- Nature’s Phoenix: Fire As Medicine
- Mending the Earth: One Team and Everybody Wins
- From Bows and Arrows to Laptops: Marrying Traditional Knowledge with Web Technology
- Beloved Community: Hello, My Other Self
- Becoming Fully Human: The Covenant of the Original Instructions
- Youth on the Frontlines of COVID relief on the Navajo Reservation
- Help Support COVID relief to Indigenous Communities

To support the use of Bioneers’ original content in the classroom, we’ve developed discussion guides and curriculum bundles aligned with common core standards for grades 9-12+. Our curriculum offers educators an invaluable toolkit for optimizing the educational potential of evergreen Bioneers media.

We created our first educational study guides in 2015 on topics including “Biocultural Conservation in the Amazon” led by Chief Almir (Surui Tribe), and “Survive and Thrive” based on the teachings of John Mohawk (Seneca).

Since then, we expanded these efforts through the establishment of the “Indigeneity Learning” curriculum. Each curriculum bundle includes an original piece of media featuring Indigenous experts, a discussion guide, lesson plan, scripted slide deck, discussion, activities, assessments, additional readings, and standards.

We conducted a “pilot run” of our curriculum with students from across the US each year. Student feedback consistently shows significant learning and emotional growth among students of all backgrounds. Students demonstrate a more sophisticated understanding of Indigenous topics, an increased ability to empathize, and a greater ability to articulate complex issues from a cross-cultural perspective.

In 2020, we developed four curriculum bundles on the topics of “Water is Life,” “Alcatraz,” “Borderlands,” and “Honoring Women.” Each curriculum bundle includes teacher instructions, activities, assessment, and additional materials for a week of instruction aligned to the lesson’s theme. We also created a training for students of all ages to learn about Allyship with Indigenous Peoples. These curricula can be accessed free of charge on our dedicated Indigeneity Curriculum webpage. In 2021, we plan to add four more curriculum bundles to the collection.

This body of work represents a unique opportunity to bring Indigenous-created curriculum into both formal education and non-formal learning environments.
Rights of Nature is a global movement to protect nature (rivers, mountains, and entire ecosystems and the life forms supported within them) by recognizing its legal rights. Just as humans and corporations are considered to “have rights,” this legal strategy grants rights to nature itself. These frameworks turn the existing property rights-based paradigm upside down and offer a powerful basis and strategy to conserve lands and communities. They also offer a radically different worldview: the right of nature to exist, persist, flourish and evolve.

At its core, Rights of Nature reflects Indigenous worldviews. While the Western philosophical system is underpinned by the ideology that humankind is separate from nature and has dominion over it, Indigenous worldviews conceive of humans as a part of nature, with an obligation to maintain its balance and the intrinsic right to life of all beings.

Rights of Nature Tribal Governance is a legal expression of Indigenous worldviews and deep knowledge of natural systems. The Rights of Nature vision is to legally protect threatened lands and the peoples, wildlife, and ecosystems they sustain from human destruction. This movement has the potential to fundamentally shift the paradigm from a domination- and extraction-based relationship with nature to a more sustainable and regenerative future for every living being. At this time, it’s the last stand for many lands and landscapes, and it’s urgently critical to protect lands and landscapes.
Rights of Nature governance offers a new legal and philosophical toolkit to prevent the destruction of Indigenous lands and cultures, while strengthening tribal sovereignty. With tribal sovereignty comes immunity from lawsuits.

When U.S. federally recognized tribal nations adopt Rights of Nature frameworks into tribal constitutions, they cannot theoretically be sued by a corporation attempting to violate these rights. It is only when a tribe’s governing council authorizes an action or policy pursuant to tribal law that the tribal immunity waiver can go into effect on a nation-to-nation basis as decreed by law and treaty.

One reason we undertook this project is that it has very high leverage. When tribes adopt these governance structures, it directly affects what people can do “upstream and downstream” outside of Indigenous lands.
Many years of research, preparation, field work and a pilot project have led to this critical moment in history:

- Bioneers’ Indigeneity Program Co-Directors possess over 30 years collective experience managing tribally-led initiatives.
- Since 1990, the annual Bioneers Conference has gathered Indigenous peoples in a unique cross-cultural setting and become a major node of connection. At our 2020 virtual conference, Indigenous participants came from over 100 US and worldwide tribes with over 180 leaders in attendance.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>2006</th>
<th>2017</th>
<th>2018</th>
<th>2019</th>
<th>2020</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>In 2018 Bioneers Indigeneity Program Co-Director, Cara Romero, introduced a <em>Rights of Nature Tribal Governance</em> campaign to her tribe. This process has resulted in replicable methodology for up to 160 other tribes to amend their constitutions.</td>
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<td>In 2017, Bioneers’ Indigeneity Program staff initiated a 24-month <em>Rights of Nature</em> pilot project that included four workshops in 3 states, hosting leaders from over 25 tribes and developing strong partnerships with Native organizations.</td>
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<td>Starting in 2019 and ongoing, tribes have requested direct technical and legal assistance from Bioneers to integrate <em>Rights of Nature Tribal Governance</em>.</td>
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<tr>
<td>In 2020, we launched Year 1 of a four year strategy to support tribes that want to adopt <em>Rights of Nature</em>.</td>
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FOUR-YEAR PLAN TO BRING RIGHTS OF NATURE TO INDIAN COUNTRY

Following our 2-year pilot program, in 2020 we launched Year 1 of a four-year plan to bring Rights of Nature to Indian Country. As a part of this strategy, our team developed a toolkit and training workshop to support tribal leaders and grassroots organizers.

In 2021, we are establishing a “Working Group” of tribal leaders, organizers and attorneys to vet and advise on our approach as well as provide a solid legally sound basis for how to integrate federal Indian law, tribal law and Rights of Nature law, which has never been done before. We will organize workshops to train grassroots tribal liaisons to organize Rights of Nature for tribes that wish to explore adopting Rights of Nature. These trainings are designed to build capacity within local tribal frameworks, unique histories, languages and cultures.

In 2022-2023, we’ll continue to expand our outreach across the US, and support the legal work that needs to take place for each tribe so that no tribe will be stopped due to a lack of money. We’ll scale these materials and practices to a national scope of interconnected networks of tribes, while seeking non-Native allies in specific bioregions to advance these laws both on Native lands and beyond. And we’ll tell the stories using multi-media throughout the process to educate tribes, policy makers, activists and the public.
INDIGIGIVING:  
COVID-19 RELIEF IN INDIAN COUNTRY

When COVID-19 reached North America, we knew that it would disproportionately impact Indigenous communities, given ongoing structural inequalities. We rapidly organized to gather impact as it was happening so that we could help mitigate the suffering, harms and death.

Most of our efforts have been focused on Tribal Nations in the Southwest, whose citizens are in such dire need and danger. Other giving has focused on partners across Turtle Island, to Amazonia, and international Indigenous communities.

We decided that our strategy would be to reach the hardest hit communities through grants to organizations doing on the ground aid, and to individuals that might not otherwise be reached by NGOs engaged in COVID-19 relief. In short, we reached out to our vast network by phone, asked who needed help, and how we could reach them.

INDIGIGIVING COVID-19 RELIEF
AT A GLANCE

► $172,409 raised and redistributed
► 109 individuals received mini grants
► 49 organizations received grants

Since we began this endeavor we’ve been blessed to be able to regrant over $165,000. With gifts ranging from $599 to families to larger gifts to partner organizations, we’ve carefully vetted each recipient through personal contact or on the recommendation of trusted Bioneers partners. Our contributors have helped support the lives and health of hundreds of individuals, prioritizing elders, and children. We are deeply grateful for our kind donors’ understanding, generosity and fierce compassion during this challenging time.

We view this effort as one more step to “decolonize” philanthropy. We know that these funds have made an impact on health and safety, as well as on peoples’ mental health and well-being. It is an honor to work in partnership with our generous funders and transform our philanthropy into practical justice and compassion in action, while we also work to change the structures and systems that generate such harms.
Delivering these items to their homes was essential in keeping these families safe.

While others may be giving in a similar and decolonized way, yours by far, is more substantive, direct, and impactful. So kudos to all the hard work you and your team have done — my giving would not have mattered as much otherwise!!!

She is over the moon grateful and said she deeply needed this help. Tears of joy and gratitude on all sides.

Thank you for your thoughtfulness, kindness and sense of love. Thank you!!!

I’m just so very grateful for all you’ve shared with me and my community. The individual checks went to traditional practitioners, craft folks and people who aren’t always the 1st in line for ‘assistance’.

I know they are so appreciative of your generosity. Thank you! Thank you! Thank you!

I also want to take a moment to express my deepest gratitude to the anonymous donor ... this most generous gift. I hope that she will truly know and wholly take in that she has helped change many people’s lives through her humanitarian outreach, kindness and generosity, including mine.

Having survived a sea of so much darkness, being able to be a part of such a wonderful gesture has been a life raft for me too. Being able to be a part of this experience created such a positive feeling for me too. I have not felt anything remotely near this wonderful in over two years...
Indigenous wisdom has always been central to Bioneers’ mission to address real-world issues practically and holistically. Over the past 31 years, we have met this commitment by featuring and amplifying the voices of Indigenous leaders to connect people from all over the world with authentic Indigenous wisdom, practices, movements and struggles in the larger context of the re-indigenization of all of us.

INDIGENOUS EVENTS AND SPEAKERS AT THE BIONEERS CONFERENCE

Indigeneity had a major presence in the 2020 Bioneers virtual conference. The conference featured 28 Indigenous speakers in keynote talks, panel discussions, and interactive sessions throughout. We recorded all the keynotes and panels to leverage them into media.

We believe that real change takes all people. Since its inception, Bioneers has prioritized the creation of a space that nurtures cross-cultural dialogue and understanding among all peoples. We open the floor for cross-cultural discussion with a diverse audience, and we let people know what they can do where they live, as well as culturally appropriate ways for non-Native allies to get involved with Indigenous issues.

In addition to our broad audience, Bioneers is viewed as a place to learn about movements and ideas in addition to and beyond our Indigeneity program.

Tribal leaders, activists and youth also look forward to the annual conference as a place to convene, learn, plan and spend time together. This tradition continued in 2020 as over 100 Indigenous conference goers with 81 distinct tribal affiliations attended the virtual conference.
I deeply appreciated the clarity and comprehensiveness of the content, as well as the heart and wisdom presenced by all of the presenters. It was clear that a great deal of thought, reflection and conversation went into creating this workshop.

- Attendee of the “Introduction to Indigenous Allyship” Workshop

I really enjoyed this conference and the diversity of information, presenters and subject matter covered. I felt the entire community presence and the support of ideas, conversations and innovation. I also felt the hope and enthusiasm, which were greatly appreciated, and frankly needed, given the times. I felt both connected and enriched, both professionally and personally. Thank you for the gathering, the many years of effort, and the hope for the future. [MOU6]
Jeannette Armstrong and Marlow Sam were beyond belief uplifting and life changing.

- Attendee of the Council Talking Circle: Prayer & Action - Healing Ourselves, Our Relations, with this Earth

SATURDAY DECEMBER 5

Opening Ceremony with Ilarion Merculieff
Democracy for the First Time with Oren Lyons
If Women Led the World: Midwifing the World Anew with Tia Oros Peters
One Earth: Integrating Climate Action and Biodiversity Conservation into a Blueprint for a Livable Planet with Angela Amanakwa Kaxuyana
Sacred Medicines, Creativity, Evolution & the Paradigm Shift with Katsi Cook
Council Talking Circle: Prayer & Action - Healing Ourselves, Our Relations, with this Earth with Jeannette Armstrong, Marlowe Sam, Paloma Flores, Ilarion Merculieff, Pat MCCabe, Jerry Tello
Introduction to Indigenous Allyship with Alexis Bunten and Cara Romero

SUNDAY DECEMBER 6

Indigenous Voices for Decolonized Futures with Cutcha Risling Baldy
The Power of Matriarchy: Intergenerational Indigenous Women's Leadership with Cara Romero, Casey Camp-Horineck, Crystal Echohawk, and Naelyn Pike

SATURDAY, DECEMBER 12

The New Deals We Need Now: Green, Red and Blue with Sikowis (Christine Nobiss) and Julian Brave Noisecat
The Power of Words: Indigenous Writers Workshop with Manny Lieras, Tommy Orange and Traci Sorrell
Being a Good Ancestor: Post-Petroleum Agriculture and the Just Transition with Winona LaDuke
Community Conversations: Arts, Culture Shift & Movement Building with Lyla June

SUNDAY, DECEMBER 13

BIPOC Leaders Share Food Sovereignty Strategies with Rowen White
Fighting for the Rights of Nature with Guy Reiter
ORGANIZATIONS REPRESENTED BY INDIGENOUS LEADERS AT THE BIONEERS 2020

- American Indian Child Resource Center
- Brazilian Coordination of Indigenous peoples in the Amazon (COIAB)
- Center for Humans and Nature
- Data for Progress
- Great Plains Action Society
- Honor the Earth
- Illuminative
- Menikahnaehkem
- National Compadres Network
- Native Women’s Collective
- Sierra Seeds
- Seventh Generation Fund for Indigenous Peoples
- The Spirit Aligned Leadership Program

“I loved the women in first nations communities conversation, I loved hearing about the racial inequality, I loved that there was so much space allotted to women’s voices, particularly women of colour.”

- Attendee of the “Power of Matriarchy” Panel
It’s essential for Native youth to have the opportunity to connect with a diverse range of Indigenous role models, as well as to connect directly with the larger movement of movements that Bioneers embodies. Research shows that Native youth are more likely to succeed if they have: 1) a supportive system of peers and role models; 2) mentoring; and, 3) a desire to give back to their tribes and support Native communities. Each year, the NYLP works closely with cultural exemplars to guide participants in cultural activities led by positive youth and adult role models in the Indigenous Youth Art Space.

The NYLP offers scholarships to Native youth to participate in all aspects of the Bioneers conference as well as a carefully curated “Native Youth Leadership Track” tailored to their unique interests, talents and needs.

In 2020, the Native Youth Leadership moved to virtual programming. Normally, the Native Youth Leadership Track takes place over 3 days at the annual Bioneers conference in October. After the pandemic arrived, our team quickly learned that Native youth faced a number of challenges related to isolation and lack of technical devices and internet access. We also realized that with online programming that we could support more youth than ever.
We began our programming in July to provide youth with as many opportunities as possible to connect with peers and mentors. We curated 10 events between July and December 2020 that ranged from talking circles to cultural presentations, leadership skills, storytelling and more.

In addition to our curated Native Youth Leadership events, youth participated in the Virtual Bioneers Conference, despite Zoom fatigue. They demonstrated what a lifeline our programming provides them.

**2020 NYLP EVENTS**

- **July 29:** [Kumeyaay Cultural Sharing](#)
- **August 5:** Mapping the Camino Indigenous with the Wishtoyo Foundation
- **August 22:** Fighting Racism in School
- **September 26:** California Indian Days – San Francisco History, Truth and Present
- **October 26:** Navigating the College Application Process with College Horizons
- **November 17:** “Something Else” Presentation with Daisy Rosalez Foothill College
- **November 23:** Thanksgiving from an Indigenous Perspective with authors Danielle Hill and Alexis Bunten
- **November 26:** Indigenous Comedy Night
- **December 12:** Indigenous Writers Workshop
- **December 19:** Solstice Storytelling with Sunny Dooley

*Something that I really enjoyed this year was being able to have some sort of Bioneers conference. I also liked how I could get the links to the conference programs afterwards so I can just look at it whenever I want to, or go back or show it to someone which is really great. Just being able to have the Bioneers conference was something to look forward to and something to enjoy.*
Working closely with our partners, we recruited over 200 participants to the program. While we maintained our longstanding mandate to prioritize urban Indian youth in the greater San Francisco Bay area, moving online allowed us to reach more youth than ever from across the US and even one Indigenous youth group from Siberia!

**2020 NYLP PARTNERS**

American Indian Child Resource Center  
Baikal Buryat Center for Indigenous Cultures  
College Horizons  
Friendship House  
Mashpee Wampanoag Tribe/ Wampanoag Trading Post & Gallery  
Na’ah Illahee Fund  
Rez Refuge  
San Jose Native Youth Empowerment Program  
San Francisco Unified School District Indian Education  
Strong Family Health Center  
Sunrise Ecological and Education Design Services  
Wishtoyo Chumash Foundation
YOUTH COVID-19 RELIEF

Collaborating with our partners, we recognized that Native youth in our network were disproportionately affected by COVID-19. Many of their families had contracted COVID-19. Many of them did not have access to personal protective equipment. And, many of them were cut off from their peers and education due to lack of technology devices and the cost of internet access. We told their story to [MOU7] and were able to put together COVID-19 relief gift bags with PPE, snacks, and health and beauty products for all of our participants thanks to the generous support of caring sponsors.

To confirm what we learned by talking to our partners, we surveyed the Native youth, their parents and organizations that support them. We learned that:

- 75% of families are experiencing some form of food insecurity.
- 90% of families are having difficulty accessing necessary supplies (gas, medical equipment, school equipment, safe water, etc.).
- 40% of Native youth do not have access to reliable technology to keep up with their education and connect with the world.

We brought this data to our partners at Google Earth Outreach, who generously supported us to distribute technology to Native youth.

2020 TECH FOR NATIVE YOUTH INITIATIVE

- 60 students awarded tech devices, accessories and support for internet
- 31 Chromebooks awarded
- 28 iPads awarded
- 40 mini grant awards of $350 for accessories or internet connection

“It gave me hope to keep striving and made me set goals on how to contribute to my tradition/community.”

- Native Youth Leadership Program Participant
THANKING OUR GENEROUS SPONSORS FOR THE 2020 NYLP GIFT BAG

- Tote from Patagonia
- Socks from Bombas
- Masks from Black Ice
- Masks from Christie Dawn
- Water Bottles from Lifestraw
- Metal straws from Eco Village
- Reusable silicon storage bags from Stasher
- Fair Trade Organic Coffee from Cafe Mam
- Soap from Dr. Bronner
- Clif Bars from Clif Bar
- Perfume, face and body scrub, bubble bath and shower gel from Lush

“...It was nice to meet new people and interact with others during such an isolating time and to hear how everyone was going through these difficult times together.

-Native Youth Leadership Program Participant
INTECULTURAL CONVERSATIONS

We believe that youth inherently possess the knowledge of what matters in life. Youth who connect across cultural boundaries grow up to become more empathetic adults, able to draw connections between ongoing environmental threats and systematic structures of oppression.

INTRODUCTION

Intercultural Conversations (IC) is an annual educational exchange between a diverse group of 40 Native and non-Native youth who come together to address critical issues facing Indigenous and all peoples.

OVERVIEW

2020 marked our 4th year and cohort for the Intercultural Conversations initiative.

Intercultural Conversations (IC) is an educational exchange between Native American and non-Native youth who come together to address critical issues facing Indigenous and all peoples. IC fosters future environmental and social justice leaders through talking circle discussions and in-person cultural exchange. Based on the evidence that exposing youth to cross-cultural issues and contexts will provide a foundation for leadership, IC provides a platform for diverse youth across America to learn together through facilitated discussions and accompanying Native American Studies curriculum.

In 2020, we partnered with 5 groups:

- The New School, Atlanta, GA
- Rez Refuge, Fort Defiance, AZ
- Bishop O Dowd, Oakland, CA
- American Indian Child Resource Center, Oakland, CA
- Bogolusa High school, Bogolusa, LA
INTERCULTURAL CONVERSATIONS VIRTUAL GATHERINGS

FEBRUARY
• "Introductions" Virtual Talking Circle

MARCH
• "Circle of Life" Virtual Talking Circle

APRIL
• "Alcatraz" Virtual Talking Circle

MAY
• "Borderlands" Virtual Talking Circle

JUNE
• "Alcatraz" Virtual Talking Circle

JULY
• Open-Ended Virtual Talking Circle
• Kumeyaay Cultural Sharing

AUGUST
• Fighting Racism in School

SEPTEMBER
• California Indian Days – San Francisco History, Truth and Present

OCTOBER
• No programming

NOVEMBER
• Thanksgiving from an Indigenous Perspective
• Indigenous Comedy Night

DECEMBER
• Bioneers Conference
• "The power of the Native Vote" Talking Circle
• Solstice Storytelling with Sunny Dooley

2020 INTERCULTURAL CONVERSATIONS PARTICIPANTS

► 41 Students
► 9 Facilitators
► 4 Bioneers Staff
► Average age: 16 Years Old

Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, we shifted our focus to an “all virtual” program with monthly gatherings from February - December.

Despite the pandemic and not being able to come together in person, the IC program was transformative for student participants. Together, facilitated talking circle discussions built upon participants’ inherent assets and engaged their multiple intelligences (e.g. interpersonal, visual, kinesthetic, etc). Instead of being treated as passive learners, youth participants were engaged as change-makers, supportively encouraged to work through cognitive dissonance through active listening based in Indigenous ways of learning (pedagogies).

One participant’s reflection demonstrates the transformative power of our pedagogical approach, “I really appreciate the relevance of the topics that we’re talking about, especially seeing current events from an Indigenous perspective. For example, it was a whole new thing for me to learn about the 2020 election from an Indigenous perspective. Coming from California, I also liked the local connections [of the themes and curriculum]. I really appreciated the talk about the [1969-70 American Indian Movement’s] occupation of Alcatraz. Overall, I enjoyed the connection to relevant events, but also the local connections to where I live and like, and how I can be more like aware of Indigenous things in my own area.”
Through this process, youth participants experienced profound personal development in their ability to empathize with others, understand complex issues, and communicate cross-culturally. One of the Navajo youth facilitators observed, “In going forward with some of the programs that I’m involved with, I want to continue to give the youth those opportunities for growth. And just so happens, a lot of them are alumni of the Bioneers Intercultural Conversations program.”

Native youth enhanced and developed leadership skills by being placed in the role of expert based on their personal experiences. Non-Native youth learned how to be good allies on Indigenous issues. All participants learned how to understand intersectional environmental and social justice issues critical to the future health and well-being of the planet.

We are so grateful to the generous partners and sponsors of our youth programming, which is intimately tied to our media work, curriculum development and outreach. We feel incredibly privileged to support and witness the Native and non-Native youth we work with as they develop into leaders. Over the years, we have cultivated and watched as they developed networks that lead to real outcomes to make the world a better place for peoples of all backgrounds, plants and animals who share it.

On a scale of 1-10, how would you rate intercultural conversations overall? (1 = terrible. 3= okay not too good, not too bad. 5 = best program!)
If you are moved by what we accomplished in 2020 and want to see our groundbreaking initiatives flourish, we invite you to support our game-changing work at the highest level you can. We thank each and every one of you who already support this sacred work. Together, we will amplify Indigenous solutions to restore, revitalize and regenerate our planet for the ecosystems and people that depend on it.

email: natives@bioneers.org
BIONEERS.ORG

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