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# GROUP 4:

# INDIGENOUS YOUTH LEADERSHIP

Expanding Indigenous  
Rangatahi (Youth) Worldviews  
by Building Global Citizens  
Through Exploring  
Indigenous-to-Indigenous  
Global Exchange  
Opportunities

# OVERVIEW

Indigenous exchange is not a new concept. For thousands of years, Indigenous communities around the world have been connecting, collaborating, sharing, learning, and trading together. Now is no different; however, the advancement of technology and access to real-time information is making us more connected than ever before.

As part of building bilateral strength between Aotearoa and Canada, we consider it imperative to continuously challenge our countries to traverse new pathways of working, thinking forward, and creating space for Indigenous advancement through intentional action. We must be diligent in creating opportunities to meet the demands of the future.

In this report, we will explore why creating opportunities for rangatahi/youth through Indigenous-to-Indigenous global exchange is imperative to building globally astute Indigenous citizens now and for future generations.



# THE REALITY

Indigenous youth make up a large majority of Indigenous populations in Canada and Aotearoa, New Zealand, with 50% of Māori rangatahi under the age of 25 and 17% of Indigenous youth in Canada between the ages of 15-24.

This demographic is expected to drive Indigenous growth globally. For this reason, Aotearoa, New Zealand, and Canada need to take intentional action and create space for rangatahi/youth to thrive as active Indigenous global citizens.

When we consider the social and cultural norms of Indigenous communities, there are often strong ties to family and community. While this is important in the development of youth, the concept of travelling abroad is not as prominent as it is in non-Indigenous families. For this reason, the importance of supporting and promoting exchanges for the benefit of rangatahi/youth, is expected to introduce positive intergenerational opportunities for Indigenous communities.

One of the key systemic barriers for global exchange programmes, which is not limited to Aotearoa, New Zealand and Canada is financial investment. Access to financial support is often limited, which then requires programmes to be self or partially funded. This can significantly impact the quality of the exchange, the frequency and the value that is created through global collaboration, let alone Indigenous-to-Indigenous global collaboration.



## The Importance of Indigenous Exchanges

Māori and Indigenous Peoples on Turtle Island have long been connected by a shared association with the Pacific Ocean, a sense of solidarity, and shared experiences as Indigenous Peoples. People-to-people exchange and trade between the South Pacific and the Americas has been celebrated since early history. For example, the presence of the Kūmara (sweet potato) in Aotearoa/New Zealand with its origins in Peru.

Our research and anecdotal evidence shows that Indigenous-to-Indigenous exchanges shift the perspectives of Indigenous families on the importance of travel, even years after it takes place. It creates a ripple effect that not only impacts the lives of those who participate but also the family and community who surround them. Other positive impacts include:

- Community and relationships
- Culture and ceremony
- Connections with place
- Confidence building
- Cross-cultural sharing, understanding, and unity

# DISCUSSION

## Why Rangatahi / Youth?

Rangatahi are our present and our future, and they represent the majority of Indigenous populations in Canada and New Zealand. With such young Indigenous populations, rangatahi have a key role to play in creating movements of change for building and participating in opportunities where they are at the centre, as active participants in designing, experimenting, and adapting their surroundings.

As we move towards a more globally connected world, we must advocate for and provide opportunities where rangatahi can navigate their own Indigenised pathways.



# Indigenous Exchanges - SOAR

We have chosen a SOAR framework as a helpful strategic framework that focuses on strengths and seeks to understand the whole system by including the voices of relevant stakeholders. A summary of our findings is detailed below:

## Strengths

- Rangatahi/Youth are our present and future.
- Opportunities alongside the implementation of UNDRIP (potential links to Article 36).
- Truth and Reconciliation and the 94 Calls to Action (potential links to Calls 7, 19, 44, and 66).

## Opportunities

- Create future leaders to lead their own community development.
- Advance youth employment, developing soft skills through lived experiences.
- Investing in Indigenous futures by empowering them today.
- Consideration of what post-Covid opportunities look like.

## Aspirations

- Create space at the table.
- Bridging into other Indigenous communities.
- Removing systemic barriers.
- Recognition of the importance of youth roles.

## Results

- Strong confident rangatahi / youth.
- Specific Indigenous-to-Indigenous rangatahi / youth opportunities.
- Leverage and enhance existing cultural exchange programmes.
- Economic benefits for Indigenous economies and beyond.





# RECOMMENDATIONS

- **Pilot Programme:** to support an Indigenous-to-Indigenous Global Exchange Pilot Programme through INDIGI-X with a specific focus on Indigenous rangatahi/youth with both Aotearoa, New Zealand and Canada (establish in 2022 and commence in 2023).
- **Funding:** to invest in the mobilization of the Indigenous-to-Indigenous Global Exchange Pilot Programme.
- **Extend Existing Partnerships:** to utilize Aotearoa, New Zealand's and the Canadian Government's resources to create a dedicated, ongoing space for rangatahi/youth to participate in existing international Indigenous opportunities.
- **Sector Leadership:** to recognize the importance of the role that the public/private sector plays in bilateral trade and look at specific roles for Indigenous change makers. That the public and private sector recognize their role in creating Indigenous change-makers - create space on your boards.

# CONCLUSION

When we offer opportunities like these to our young people, we expose them to new ways of thinking and advocating, and offer a glimpse of the possibilities of making real changes in the world. By opening the doors for our youth, we are quite literally offering them a seat at the table – which Indigenous Peoples as a whole have been fighting for, for decades. Investing in our futures is investing in our youth.

Through the implementation and strengthening of cross-cultural exchanges for Indigenous rangatahi/youth, New Zealand and Canada would become leaders in amplifying global initiatives on the economic, social, and cultural development of Indigenous Peoples.







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