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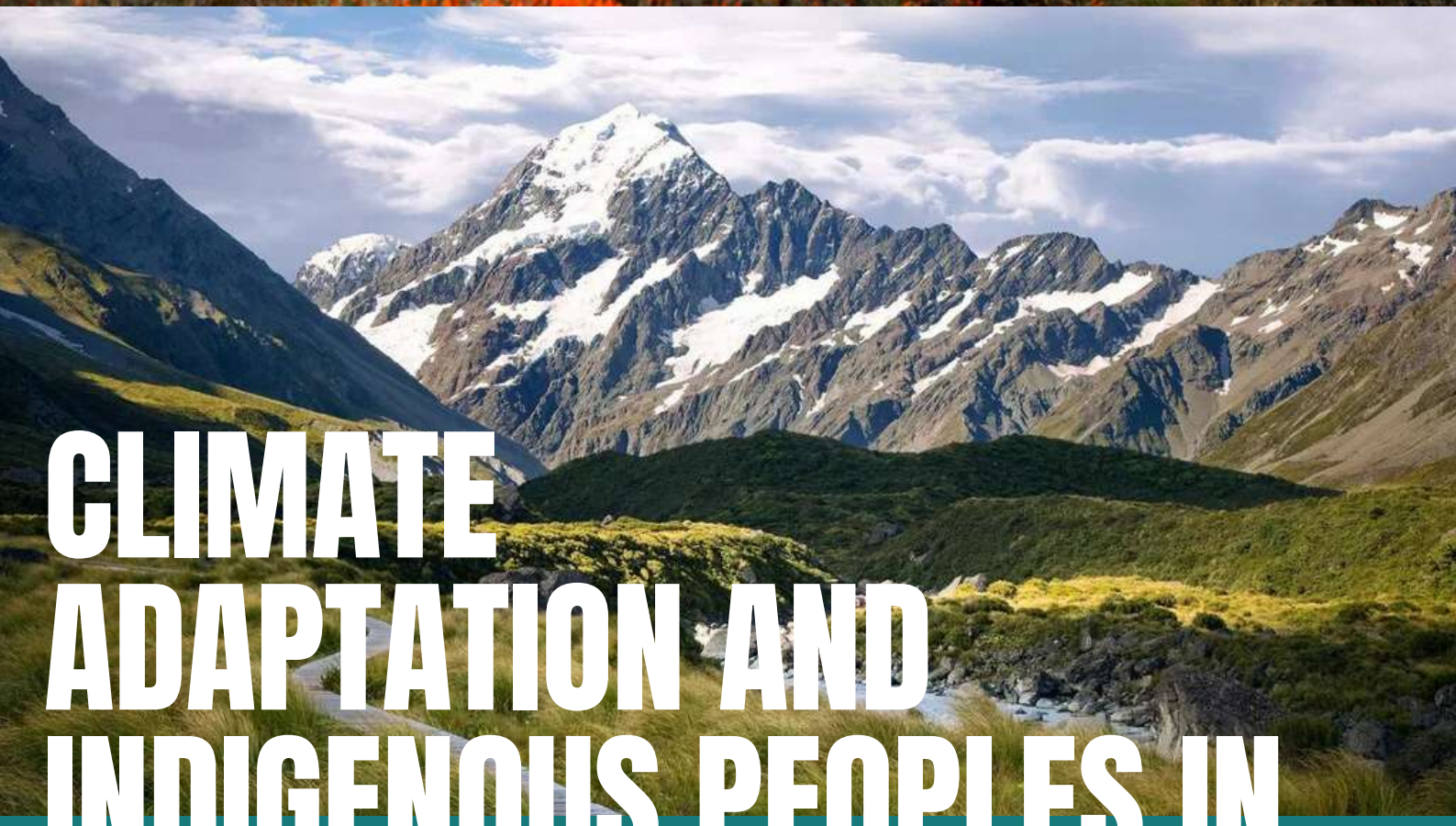


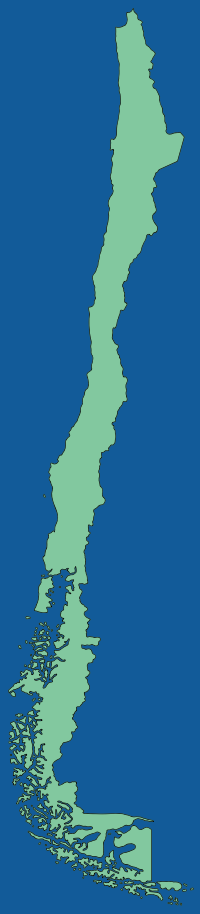
CLIMATE ADAPTATION AND INDIGENOUS PEOPLES IN CHILE AND NEW ZEALAND

Organize: WINDS OF CHANGE

Collaborate: ceus Chile

About Winds of Change

Led by the University of Otago and ran in close collaboration with academics, the Winds of Change programme brings together New Zealand and Chilean postgraduate students to investigate common climate change issues and how sustainable development strategies can be created for the future.



The Winds of Change is a network of future leaders in climate change resilience based in New Zealand and Chile

Aotearoa New Zealand and Chile are neighbours that share similar geography and risks from future climate change. Although separated by nearly 10,000 km, they are linked by the strong Southern Hemisphere westerly winds that circle Antarctica and the adjacent Southern Ocean.

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CLIMATE ADAPTATION AND INDIGENOUS PEOPLES IN CHILE AND NEW ZEALAND

Indigenous people have always had an intrinsic relationship with the environment, that means looking to the cues of the changing natural world around them is not a new phenomenon

Climate migration, climate adaptation, forced relocation, managed retreat. Terminology that is entering the public consciousness, as threats of increasingly frequent severe weather events and rising sea levels become more imminent. Climate migration is often thought of as a distant reality. However, the evidence suggests otherwise. If global warming is kept to an ambitious 1.5 degrees, global sea-level rise is predicted to be between 0.26 - 0.77 metres (IPCC, 2018). This increases substantially in countries like New Zealand and Chile that are situated on active margin of techtonic plates, resulting in shifting land. Vertical land movement means that while some areas of the coast are uplifting, others are subsiding, greatly accelerating sea-level rise in those areas. The anecdotal evidence similarly suggests that action cannot be delayed. In New Zealand, stories of urupā (Māori burial grounds) being washed away along coastlines and near flooding rivers are becoming more common. Matatā New Zealand also made global headlines, as the countries first "managed retreat." In Chile, low rainfall and record-breaking droughts have threatened water reserves.

In New Zealand and Chile, indigenous people face these challenges from their own unique historical, cultural and political context. In both countries, the right of indigenous peoples to self-determination remains to be fully recognised. On the international stage, the fight to have their voices heard and unique vulnerabilities recognised is even more challenging.

We spoke to indigenous people from Chile and New Zealand, to help us understand their unique perspective and why the voices of indigenous peoples can't be lost in the chaos of the challenge ahead. We heard that while climate migration is yet to occur, planning for severe climate threats is already taking place. In New Zealand, we heard how one iwi (tribe) has developed its own planning mechanisms based on knowledge passed down through the generations. In Chile, we spoke to women Mapuche and Rapa Nui, and heard about their concerns and hopes in regards to climate change.

The most profound message was that indigenous people have always had an insitrinsic relationship with the environment, that means looking to the cues of the changing natural world around them is not a new phenomenon. Indigenous peoples have always been adapting to environmental changes throughout the generations. It is within this generations-deep relationship and worldview, that the governments of Chile and New Zealand, and the global community, can learn lessons to help us navigate adaptation to climate change.

Above: Indigenous people from Chile
Left: Indigenous people from New Zealand

COP-27: Who's voices matter?

In the seaside town of Sharm el - Sheikh, Egypt, delegates and negotiators from around the world have gathered for the 2022 climate change conference - COP27. At this annual forum, the 196 parties to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change gather to meet to renew their commitment to deliver on the Paris agreement. A member of our project-group, Gabriela Herrera, was at COP-27 to garner first-hand what conversations were most prevalent.

Like most international forums, large powerful nations typically dominate negotiations. Small nations find themselves fighting for opportunities to influence decisions, much less the indigenous nations that exist within them. This year, 250 COP-27 attendees are cited as being indigenous. At the International Indigenous Peoples' Forum on Climate Change, indigenous peoples carved out a space to strengthen ties and centre the issues and solutions important to them.

Venue, COP27, Egypt.

For two weeks, a busy schedule of activities brought the plight of indigenous peoples to COP-27, drawing on the shared knowledge held by indigenous peoples and discussions of how this knowledge can be harnessed for climate mitigation and adaptation. What was clear from these discussions, is that indigenous people are committed to finding solutions. These events gathered a lot of interest from attendees, however there seemed to be limited engagement with leaders from the countries to which these communities belong or from other major international entities. So, it seems that these voices and perspectives may not have reached the ears of decision-makers.

While a valuable gathering for indigenous communities around the globe, 250 indigenous attendees pales in comparison to the 35,000 total attendees at COP27. More significantly than a lack of numbers, indigenous peoples have few levers to pull with real power or significance. Indigenous people are excluded from decision-making processes, as internationally recognised States hold the sole mandate to be party to United Nations legal instruments.

So while global powers retain substantive decision-making power, the dire situation that indigenous peoples are in drives their continued demand for recognition of their unique context, at forums such as COP-27. Across the globe, indigenous peoples find themselves on the frontline of the immediate threats of climate change such as drought, flooding and coastal erosion. Indigenous peoples inhabit the world's most fragile ecosystems - the Artic, low-lying islands and tropical forests - notably the Amazon. Moreover, their close relationship with land, territory and natural resources means that climate change is putting the physical and cultural survival of indigenous peoples at risk.

The United Nations Permanent Forum on indigenous People's Issues has recognised that climate change will exacerbate the difficulties that indigenous peoples already face, including political and economic marganalisation, loss of land and resources, human rights violations, discrimination and unemployment.

This experience is most apparent for small Pacific nations, whose plight for 'loss and damages' funding has been central to COP-27 negotiations this year. While this could be understood as a willingness from powerful States to recognise an international responsibility to poorer ations at the mercy of climate change, the measure of its impact will be in ongoing commitment to the fund.

Moana Tepano Contesse, a young Rapanui activist attending COP27, comments that if the agreed global temperature increase of 1.5 C is exceeded, some Pacific islands may disappear, losing their culture, their identity, their territory and their unique wealth in the world.

"Loss and damages" discussions are also accompanied by the continuation of the National Adaptation Plan framework, established at COP-16. Chile established its adaptation plan in 2017, while New Zealand only published its plan in August 2022.

And where do the indigenous peoples of Chile and NZ fit into all of this? At this years COP, there was limited representation of these groups. We undertook our own research to identify the value these groups could add to the international stage.

> "It is necessary that we, inhabitants of the Pacific islands, be able to be in decision-making spaces, or that there be some representative of these islands"
> Moana Tepano Contesse

The indigenous people of Chile and New Zealand

Indigenous peoples hold shared values, perspectives, and in the settler colonies of European powers such as England, France, and Spain, this is usually accompanied by a history of violent removal from their ancestral lands, and dispossession of their culture.

In New Zealand and Chile, indigenous people find themselves a minority on lands that their ancestors have inhabited for generations. In Chile, 12.8% of the total population identify as indigenous, the largest group being the Mapuche (79.8%), followed by the Aymares (7.2%) and Diaguitas (4%). Split between mainland Chile and Rapa Nui island, these indigenous cultures are some of the oldest on the planet.

In New Zealand, the Māori people make up a slightly higher portion of 17.1% (875,300) of the total population (Census, 2018). Māori are a diverse people, with each iwi (tribe), hapū (sub-tribe) and whānau (family group) holding their own unique history, traditions and practices.

It is interconnected values like these, among many others, that join indigenous peoples an ocean away and where we may be able to find creative solutions to challenges ahead.

Mataatua wharenui, Whakatāne New Zealand

The Moriori people of the Chatham Islands off of the east coast of the South Island, have developed their own unique culture and identity after becoming isolated from the mainland some centuries ago.

While Chile was colonised by the Spainish conquistadores in the 16th century, the Mapuche people were able to retain their independence and territory for centuries more. It was not until the 1881 bloodie Pacification of the Araucanía, that the Mapuche territory was annexed by the Chile military. The Mapuche were incorporated by force into Chilean citizenship, and today only retain 6% of their ancestral lands.

Māori arrived to Aotearoa New Zealand from their ancient Polynesian homeland of Hawaiki between 700 to 1000 years ago. Since colonization officially began with the signing of the Treaty of Waitangi in 1840, Māori have experienced a loss of land, culture, language and autonomy.

In both countries, indigenous peoples have a shared history of urban migration, linked to loss of culture and erasure of identity. Approximately 75% of indigenous peoples in Chile live in urban centres. Today, this urbanisation poses a challenge - both in terms of retaining their culture, and in having their unique rights recognised by the State.

While there is shared unity in parallels of cultural dispossession, the shared values that existed prior to and despite colonisation are where there is a real synergy between the indigenous peoples of New Zealand and Chile. To make a thorough comparison of these expansive cultures wouldn't be possible within a thesis, much less this short article. There are some key similarities that can be articulated, while acknowledging that summaries barely scrape the surface.

Language is an insight into culture, and this holds true for the Mapuche and Māori languages which demonstrate a deep and intrinsic relationship with the land. For example, "Mapu" - meaning land and "che" meaning people, translates to people of the land. Similarly, Māori refer to themselves as tangata whenua - "tangata" meaning people, "whenua" meaning land. Both cultures also personify the earth as their ancestral, life-giving mother. The Mapuche, refer to ñukemapu or mother earth. Similarly, Māori describe the earth as the female god from which all gods, natural landmarks, and people, descend - Papatūanuku. Māori introduce themselves through a pepeha, which tells the listener which mountain, river and place that they descend from. This is exemplified in the popular whakatauki, or saying: Ko wai ko au, ko au ko wai, I am the water and the water is me.

A sense of community and collective responsibility forms the foundation of indigenous cultures. This is in contrast to notions of individual responsibility that underpin neo-liberal, capitalist systems on which the global economy operates. Connection to place is integral to culture, driven by a reliance on the land. It is likely that this reliance on the land, is what renders the concept of reciprocity or equilibrium to be so central to Mapuche and Māori cultures.

It is interconnected values like these, among many others, that join indigenous peoples an ocean away and where we may be able to find creative solutions to challenges ahead. This is encapsulated in the following statement made by a representative of the Indigenous Caucus on Climate Change, Vairo Ika of the Rapa Nui people:

"Indigenous knowledge is invaluable, sacred and collective. These have been transmitted and guarded for generations... We indigenous consider the physical, emotional, spiritual and socio-economic environment as a whole. But in Chile, and in many places in the world, this has not been recognised, guaranteed or financed by government..."

A moai is a humanoid monolithic statue located on Easter Island.

Why follow the indigenous communities lifestyle for climate change adaptation?

Just as Western culture has developed its system of values from a way of understanding the origin of life and the mission of human beings on earth, the indigenous peoples have also maintained their own ways of relating to nature and to each other.

For many indigenous peoples like the Mapuche and Māori, the earth is the mother. Others have intrinsic relationships the sea, wind, rain, plants, thunder, to name a few examples.

Countless sacred stories support their own visions of the world. Protected by these cosmovisions, the indigenous peoples develop systems of government, cultures and modes of coexistence with nature and the territories. In the midst of diversity, current ancestral practices and knowledge allow a holistic relationship with nature in which rights do not have an anthropocentric source, but, on the contrary, it is nature that facilitates coexistence, but reserves some energies and rights to maintain balance and harmony. To indigenous peoples the concepts of life, energy and spirituality are synonymous. Seeing them separately from science, economics, politics and religion has led us to confusion, disputes and unnecessary abuse. From an indigenous perspective, the truth is that in the cosmos, on earth and in the hearts of plants, insects, rivers and seas there is no such division.

From the Amazon to the Arctic, from the Sahel to the Himalayas, for generations the Indigenous have developed the ability to generate living conditions in harmony and balance with nature, generating food while preserving biodiversity.

Scientists have highlighted that Indigenous people preserve 80% of the remaining biodiversity on the planet, while we occupy only 25% of the earth's surface. Likewise, studies show that, in Latin America, about 35% of the forests are found in territories occupied by natives communities, and controversially, areas protected by the governments are deforested four times faster than neighboring territories, where Indigenous Peoples Indigenous people have security in the collective possession of the land.

Climate migration in the international context

The environmental impacts of climate change currently constitute a serious threat to the rights of indigenous peoples. The increase in rains and droughts is having a severe impact on indigenous food and family supplies. For example, the scarcity of water in the high Andean areas is aggravated by the effects of global warming and the retreat of glaciers.

According to the World Bank, "in 2010 there were around 42 million indigenous people in Latin America, which represents almost 8 percent of the total population of the region." Indigenous peoples are among those who have contributed the least to the problem of climate change, those who offer the most ecosystem contributions in the fight against its effects, and yet they are the ones who suffer its worst consequences.

The indigenous peoples live, for the most part, in rural areas, settled on their territories of ancestral use and occupation. In them they maintain, to a large extent, a subsistence economy that allows them to obtain food and supplies for the construction of houses, transportation, medicines and a series of other resources.

It is important to value the knowledge, practices and institutions of indigenous peoples to guarantee, in the future, the sustainable management of their natural resources. The combination of conserved natural environments with high biodiversity -for the most part- and practical ancestral knowledge on the use of resources is what has allowed indigenous peoples to satisfy their basic needs with quality of life.

The Convention on Biological Diversity already points to indigenous peoples as a model of life that ensures in situ conservation, and it is the maintenance of this knowledge that will allow future generations to know how to live together sustainably in their territories.

Latin America and the El Caribe region

In the Latin American and Caribbean region, the indigenous population is approximately 40 million, which is equivalent to about 6.5% of the total population of the region. Most of them live in rural areas and in extreme poverty with little access to productive resources, in addition to its limited voice and poor political representation.

The most evident impact of this threat are the economical implications (due to climate change) that have even bigger consequences over them. However, what makes them especially vulnerable to climate variability, is the intimate way in which they use and live on the natural resources (Kronik & Verner, 2010).

Latin America, with more than 500 indigenous towns throughout its territory, which ranges from the Patagonia and Rapa Nui to Oasisamérica in the north of Mexico is undoubtedly one of the world's most rich in biodiversity and practices based on nature whose contributions in mitigation and adaptation to Climate Change are multiple, offering a wide and beneficial range of solutions to strengthen global climate action. However, these solutions often do not have the sufficient recognition by some governments in their policies and plans to deal with climate change. For this reason, the region has the opportunity to take advantage of this situation to value the experience of indigenous peoples and find more tools to respond to the effects of climate change.

In this respect, one of the main challenges is to look only at the Indigenous people as those groups in society most vulnerable to consequences of climate change, to add a more related look to learn from his ancestral wisdom and how it contributes to science and society to strengthen the fight against climate change.

A United Nations report says that "traditional indigenous territories cover about 22% of the world's land area and coincide with areas that are home to 80 percent of the most biodiverse territories on the planet". Deforestation, one of the largest sources of global carbon emissions, is associated in these territories with extractive, agro-industrial and large infrastructure activities.

In New Zealand, iwi (tribes) are planning for the effects of climate change

While the government is developing its own plans for climate change adaptation at the national, regional and local level, tribes in New Zealand are developing their own strategies guided by generations-old knowledge of their local area.

A recent assessment of the risks posed by climate change to New Zealand (National Climate Risk Assessment), identified 43 distinct priority risks. Of the four most significant risks identified, two speak to just how crucial it is that communities, particularly those that experience disadvantage, are readying themselves for climate adaptation. Firstly, risks to social cohesion and community wellbeing from displacement of individuals, families and communities due to climate change impacts. Secondly, risks of exacerbating existing inequities and creating new and additional inequities due to differential distribution of climate change impacts. The foundations of addressing these risks were established in New Zealand's first National Adaptation Plan, that the Ministry for the Environment published in August 2022.

The Adaptation Plan emphasises that while all New Zealanders will be impacted by the effects of climate change, Māori will disproportionately experience some of these effects. Māori land, that has either been retained or returned through Treaty settlements, is often on coastal fringes and lowland areas at greater risk of flooding, erosion and sedimentation.

Dotted up and down the coastlines and alongside flood-prone river bends are marae - the ancestral meeting houses of Māori. Often, Marae are situated alongside an urupā, or burial site, that may hold the remains of relatives dating back generations.

The connection that Māori have to whenua, or place, means that erosion of these sites has both a cultural and spiritual impact on Māori as individuals and as a collective. Migration away from these ancestral land carries an emotional, physical and cultural burden.

Throughout many of its actions, the Adaptation Plan proposes partnering with Māori, and supporting iwi, hapū and communities to develop their own adaptation responses suited to their local needs. Crucially, the New Zealand government has acknowledged the strength in community-led initiatives and responses. Solutions lie at the heart of whānau, hapū and iwi, however many remain under-resourced, and are thinly stretched across a range of important issues.

However Māori haven't been waiting for direction from the government. Some have developed their own climate change strategies, including Ngai Tahu, Ngaa Rauru and Te Arawa. Each plan is based on knowledge passed down within the iwi, relevant to their local landscape.

Ngāti Awa are using their ancestral knowledge to adapt to the changing climate

Ngāti Awa is an iwi (tribe) based in the Whakatāne region of New Zealand. Comprised of 22 hapū (sub-tribes), and over 15,000 descendants, Ngāti Awa is far from the largest iwi in terms of population. However what they lack in numbers, they make up for in impact.

Like many other iwi, Ngāti Awa experienced mass land confiscation and social exclusion throughout the 19th and 20th centuries. In 2003, Ngāti Awa agreed to a settlement with the Crown to address historic grievances, including financial compensation for the tribe. This has provided a basis for tribal activity since then.

Ngāti Awa's environmental challenges have been exacerbated by the long-lasting impacts of the Native Land Court and land confiscations. Large swaths of Ngāti Awa land was confiscated in the 1800's. While fractions of this land was returned, it is flood-prone low-lying land that in some places sits less than a metre above the water table.

Left: The Putauaki mountain, and Rangitaiki river (ancestral landmarks for Ngāti Awa)

We spoke to a representative from Te Runanga o Ngāti Awa, who explained how climate change in the Whakatane area is threatening their cultural identity

Whakatāne , New Zealand - Ngāti Awa have inhabited this area for between 600 - 1000 years

Ngati Awa's ambitions for climate action are set out in its Environmental Plan (2019). Within the broader environmental context, this plan outlines a series of actions directly targeted at addressing climate change risks to the local area, and to the Ngāti Awa people within it.

However, being both culturally and practically reliant on the land means that Ngāti Awa has always had an awareness of the climate and its changes over time. The Environment Plan is the culmination of series of documents published over decades prior, which built up an understanding of the risks in the area - including the places most at risk of flooding, coastal erosion and slips. Long before knowledge was recorded in reports and documents, these observations were passed down through oral tradition - through songs and stories. The knowledge and understanding held today, "are the fruits of a way of being, that have been passed down from generations before."

While much of the knowledge held by Ngāti Awa prior to colonisation has been lost, action is being taken to avoid further loss of knowledge. An action in the Environment Plan is to record intergenerational knowledge held by elders in the tribe in regards to natural hazards aand climate change - "Work with our kaumatua and kuia to record stories and experiences of natural hazard and climate variability and change from whānau history (Action 7.1.7)." Other actions in the Plan seek to prepare the tribe for increasingly frequent severe weather events. These include through developing detailed mapping of areas at particular risk and marae preparedness plans to support vulnerable people in the community when there is an extreme event.

In recent years, the Whakatāne region has experienced its fair share of disasters, and Ngāti Awa descendants have been caught heavily in the crossfire of these events. In April 2017, the banks of the Edgecumbe river burst - causing catastrophic flooding flooding to the small town and prompting a full evacuation for 8 days. Edgecumbe township has a social deprivation index of 9 (10 being the most deprived), and the slow road to recovery demonstrates the challenges ahead.

Ngāti Awa was at the forefront of this response, with the community banding together to support the recovery. Ngāti Awa volunteers led the clean up, and provided culturally-safe support to individuals and whānau who had been impacted by the disaster. Ngāti Awa were similarly praised for their leadership in the 2019 Whakaari White Island eruption response.

The Environment Plan, amongst the broader ethos of Ngāti Awa, is underpinned by a rights-based approach. Tino Rangatiratanga, or the right to self-determination, is a right guaranteed under the Treaty of Waitangi. While the governments observation of this right has been poor, tino rangatiratanga drives Māori initiatives outside of government-led, or internationally required, planning instruments.

Ngāti Awa assert that whānau, hapū, iwi, communities and individuals have a fundamental right to respond to what is happening to their place. With rights come responsibilities - for Ngāti Awa mana whenua responsibilities are manifested through acts of kaitiakitanga, or guardianship of the natural environment. From matauranga (knowledge) passed down through the generations, Ngāti Awa have values that they uphold in order to do what is right on their own terms, and emphasised to us the need exercise vigilance in upholding these values.

These basic tenets drive the proactive response to climate change adaptation, amongst other goals to enhance environmental, physical, cultural and spiritual wellbeing. For Ngāti Awa, and all Māori, these aspects of wellbeing are indivisible.

> "...communities and individuals have a fundamental right to respond to what is happening to their place."

Indigenous women in Chile as drivers of change and adaptation in their communities

Vairoa Ika Guldman
COP25, Madrid

Chile has 7 of the 9 criteria for vulnerability to climate change according to the UN, due to its diversity in the territories and their specific conditions.

Climate change, one of the central objectives of the work of the Ministry of the Environment in recent years, from the indigenous perspective is undoubtedly a very sensitive matter. The impacts of this phenomenon on the life of the indigenous communities, the measures of response to deal with it and its implications with the most vulnerable groups within these communities, are points that today they are intensively addressing through their ancestral knowledge, which is expressed in different good practices.

> "And we that don't have land, water or food either. So what do we do? let's develop a project of hydroponic agriculture and off we go self-sufficient and also creating awareness".
> -Indigenous woman from Atacama.

Rapa Nui is an island that is part of Polynesia, which is a group of islands that share a common root, in the so-called Polynesian triangle made up of Hawaii, New Zealand and Rapa Nui.

The extreme events that have been taking place for a couple of years in Rapa Nui, such as large tidal waves, have affected the port and the coastline due to increased erosion, putting at risk part of its material cultural heritage "Moai", which represent his ancestors, his family. In addition, the water crisis continues, which directly affects agriculture on the island.

That is why many Rapanui have gone to study on the mainland, to obtain professional training and improve conditions on the island in a self-managed way. Being women the majority group that is currently studying careers related to the environment.

"As a Rapanui professional, bringing together technical studies and worldview, I try to articulate and create local work that helps the community", says Vairoa, who is Director of the environment of the Rapa Nui municipality.

Interventions and alterations in the environment have an impact on the practices and traditions of all indigenous peoples (their heritage) in that immaterial dimension of their culture, given the close relationship with nature that permeates their entire worldview.

One example among many was provided by the ancestral practice of textiles of the trarikan. This piece is woven on a loom by Mapuche weavers, knowledge that they have inherited for centuries for the collection and processing of natural raw materials, the design and elaboration of each piece, where they are combined cultural, symbolic, environmental, material and historical aspects of their worldview and spirituality. Among these pieces stands out the "blanket tied" or trarikan makuñ, used by the traditional community authorities, such as the ancient caciques or lonko.

Places of expression identified with this tradition are the communes of Cañete, Tirúa, Contulmo and Cholchol. However, pressures on native forest and their biodiversity make their availability a bit harder to access to the necessary plants to make ties and vegetable dyes. In addition, drought is another significant aspect to consider when it comes to water accessibility for the dying process. The use of materials from the earth implies that the energy of this is deposited in the tissues, hence, changes in the natural environment have affected the deeper meanings of this activity.

The clock won't stop ticking, the consequences are imminent. What could happen? What can we do?

When asking indigenous women representing the Mapuche and Rapa Nui peoples about what it would mean for them to have to leave their lands in the eventual future where they would become uninhabitable as a result of climate change, we obtained answers that make us question whether the mitigation and adaptation plans are being fast enough, and whether the global commitments made at the COPs will ever be fulfilled.

Moana Tepano Contesse comments that "for us it would be catastrophic if they took us off our island. Because that's where it all happened. We have the 'Moai', which are the legacy of our ancestors. One of the material legacies. But there is also the language, there is the immaterial that perhaps could be rescued despite not being in the territory, but it is different. I always wonder what would happen if the island sank or was no longer a suitable place to live. Where would they take us? Where would we stay? Because I don't think we would be happy on the mainland. We always depend on decisions at the national level, it is very difficult to know what would happen, we still do not have autonomy over our territory."

If we talk about what we can do, there are many important actions. One of them is environmental education. Vairoa Ika at COP27 mentioned "Imagine we had had environmental education several years ago, the COP would not exist, we would not be here, the climate crisis would not exist."

The worldview of indigenous peoples is diametrically opposed to the way in which the majority of humanity relates to the environment, "in one minute we disconnected from Mother Earth, from nature, from the sea and this happened. It is a huge problem. We are eliminating ourselves as a species, but it is an opportunity for us to say that we are one, that we are part of nature, of mother earth, of the sea, of the oceans, and to be able to work and empower ourselves," Vairoa Ika also comments.

One of the opportunities to progress is to connect with other indigenous peoples, connect with foundations, with organizations that support initiatives that go in the direction of mitigating the climate crisis and also adapting to it.

Moana Tepano Contesse
Rapanui

Meet Rossana

Rossana Huenufil Vivanco, a Mapuche cook, from the Mapuche Toltén town, has lived since her youth in another area of the country called Valparaíso, for multiple reasons, and comments that when you leave your territory "you lose contact with your origin, with your essence, with whom you are. And you are nobody to other people too,' especially when it is a forced transfer. There were (and still are) biases in language, in identity, and she was the victim of a constant feeling of discrimination. She mentions that over time she managed to adapt despite the losses, always remembering her mother's teachings that she said "every place is the right place. Time is showing you why the place was".

After forming a family and settling in the new place, Rossana returned to recover some of the elements that she had lost, she returned to speak Mapudungun (Mapuche language) and meet in community. She comments that she decided to 'practice her culture by force'.

She is currently dedicated to the social kitchen, where she feeds 150 young people and early childhood children in a vulnerable area of the country, where she teaches them ancestral lessons, such as the value of food and food gathering. . She insists that there is still hope and ways to improve.

Rossana Huenufil Vivanco
Mapuche cook

Where to from here?

The preservation of biodiversity and the fight against the climate crisis cannot be addressed without respect for the territorial rights and self-determination of indigenous peoples. The struggle to face the consequences of the human footprint on the climate has indigenous peoples as its main actors. For indigenous groups it is not a fashion, they are not motivated by necessity or by trends in social networks. For them it is simply their way of life. From there they value, respect and welcome all efforts that promote the overcoming of anthropocentric visions, strengthen coordination, articulation and complementarity.

Chile and New Zealand are separated by the great Pacific Ocean, but indigenous communities around the world have a shared perspective and values that are still strong today. These values can help to guide the way that we respond to climate threats, if we center the knowledge systems of indigenous peoples, and amplify their voices in the often crowded international discussion on climate action.

....it is an opportunity for us to say that we are one, that we are part of nature, of mother earth, of the sea, of the oceans....

- Vairoa Ika

In Chile some organizations have already identified the value of learning from indigenous people and have raised awareness for these groups. In New Zealand, the government has identified the importance of genuine partnership with iwi, Māori and communities are we undertake planning for adaptation planning. Whether these actions are given effect to is yet to be seen.

Researched and written by Gabriela Herrera, Paz Olivares and Aroha Leighton. This article was developed as part of the Centre of Asia Pacific Excellence Winds of Change programme, bringing together post-graduate students from Chile and New Zealand to investigate shared climate change challenges and solutions.