



**A report back on Changing Tides:
An Action Plan to Dismantle White
Supremacy, Settler Supremacy,
and Anti-Indigenous Racism at
West Coast LEAF (2022-2025)**

Introduction

After two years of considered work with a circle of cherished Indigenous Advisors, West Coast LEAF launched Changing Tides: An Action Plan to Dismantle White Supremacy, Settler Supremacy, and Anti-Indigenous Racism at West Coast LEAF (2022-2025).

We developed this Action Plan with the goal of helping transform the entire organization, and embed those changes beyond a single, one-off project. After three years, we are sharing our first external report about our journey. The goals are big, complex, and necessary to dismantle white supremacy, settler supremacy and anti-Indigenous racism within our non-profit structure that is governed by colonial laws like the *Charities Act*.

In this first public report, we have committed to share how we have stretched, stumbled and become stuck in a lengthy and ongoing process. No goal has been checked off and achieved. Instead, we have made steps, gained insights, experimented and failed, and experimented and succeeded in small and big ways. We hope by sharing this publicly that we can honour those who have guided and mentored us, and allow Indigenous people to get a better insight into the organization. We want to hold ourselves accountable as an organization to continue this work and resist the forces that are seeking to undermine the struggles for Indigenous justice, sovereignty, and self-determination.

In this report back, you will see the plan goals and the corresponding actions the organization took up. We have also shared where more work remains.

We respectfully acknowledge that West Coast LEAF's office is located in Vancouver on traditional, ancestral, and unceded Coast Salish homelands, including the territories of the xʷməθkʷəy̓əm (Musqueam), Skwxwú7mesh (Squamish), and sə́lilwətaʔt̓/Selilwitulh (Tsleil-Waututh) Nations.

Organizational development, learning, relearning and unlearning

As predominantly settler-led organization, on the unceded homelands of the ʷməθkʷəy̓əm, Skwxwú7mesh, and səlílwətaʔ/ Selilwitulh Nations, develop organizational process to identify and implement local knowledge and protocols to adhere to as appropriate and with consent to transform our relationship with the people of land that we predominantly work on to address ongoing settler and white supremacy within our work.

Relevant calls to action

UNDRIP: Article 4, Article 5, Article 22.1

TRC Calls to Action: 43

MMIWG Calls for Justice: 10.1 i., 15.2, 15.8

- **Decolonizing fundraising practices.** Developed staff learning and held discussions on decolonial approaches to fundraising. This work focuses on shifting from practices that conflict with our values and our Changing Tides commitments. We are working on raising knowledge on ethical, community-centric, and decolonial fundraising principles across the organization and with the Board of Directors.
- **Developing a practice to allow smudging in our office space that framed it as a right and important cultural practice to our landlord.** While there remains some resistance and requires pre-planning with the building, we are better prepared to be able to offer this in the future. The public legal education team and operations team documented the process.

Continue to implement and develop ongoing learning on reconciliation, decolonization, white supremacy, settler supremacy, genocide and anti-Indigenous racism to deepen organizational capacity for transformation for staff, board and volunteers and within West Coast LEAF.

Relevant calls to action

UNDRIP: Article 2, Article 15.1 and 15.2, Article 22.1 and 22.2

TRC Calls to Action: 27, 57

MMIWG Calls for Justice: 10.1 i, 15.2, 15.3, 15.4, 15.5

- **Develop stronger practices within our Operations team to support and encourage one another and help each other with work, or even to encourage each other to put down and deprioritize work and operationalize pushing back against white supremacist urgency culture.** Developing boundaries is creating more supportive culture and change in approach to the work. Feeling more able to put work down or draw stronger boundaries around our capacity to prioritize relationships and doing the work in a way that resists white supremacist urgency and perfectionism.

- **Strengthening media practices to challenge settler colonial and white supremacist narratives.** We've been researching decolonial media practices and challenge anti-Indigenous racism, settler and white supremacy in media narratives and practices. Our learnings will help us build stronger internal protocols for engaging with media, developing community-centered partnerships, and reframing issues in our messaging and media practices.
- **Across the organization working towards actioning a global/internationalist approach to recognizing white supremacy, settler-supremacy and developed a position statement on Palestine.** We have developed new relationships and pushed back on genocide denial. There has been a recognition of the need for internal learning to happen on internationalist movement alignments and what it looks like to be truly decolonial. Work on drafting our statement, coming to alignment as an organization, and developing a communications plan was substantive and a real struggle.
- **Actively seeking workshops and learning on topics that foreground a decolonial stance.** In seeking out training on trauma-informed practice, selected and participated in a series with Dr. Denise Findlay, Gathering Our Medicine that approaches trauma-informed learning in a way that strengthens and deepens how we centre Indigenous and community-led visions and approaches to family well-being.

Develop and implement accountability processes and protocols that guide our commitments to reconciliation, decolonization and anti-Indigenous racism that is visible and accessible to all who engage or may wish to engage with our organization.

Relevant calls to action

MMIWG Calls for Justice: 10.1 ii, 15.3, 15.4, 15.7

- **We're reimagining our fundraising practices through our Changing Tides commitments, moving away from donor-centric practices that reinforce white supremacy culture.** This includes revisiting our gift acceptance policy, developing wise practices around stewardship and relationality, and grounding our fundraising plan in frameworks like Trust-Based Philanthropy, Decolonizing Wealth, and guidance from The Circle on Philanthropy and the Indigenous Advisory Circle. This shift challenges norms that prioritize donor interests over community accountability, leading us to reassess partnerships, end misaligned funding relationships, and build greater transparency with donors. While this is long-term work, we're already seeing early change as decolonial values become the foundation, not the add-on, of how we fundraise.
- **We reviewed our communications practices through a decolonial, anti-white supremacist, and anti-settler colonial lens.** We have audited our website, email practices, and social media presence, and have begun shifting our language and narratives to be more rooted in our commitments. Our website saw a major overhaul in 2022–2023, including a prominent land acknowledgment and related content updates, though there are still gaps where our language can better reflect decolonial values. On social media, we developed a social media strategy that prioritizes decolonization goals, uplifts Indigenous creators, calls to action, and days of significance, while assessing how we build relationships online.

Commit to allocating money and resources in each annual budget to ensure that we can appropriately compensate and support the Host Nations and urban Indigenous community to centre solidarity in our organizational practices.

Relevant calls to action

UNDRIP: Article 5, Article 21.2
MMIWG Calls for Justice: 15.7

- **Supporting Indigenous vendors through purchasing and also developing template invoice and receipts vendors can use with us so we can document purchasing and flow funds into the community.** We have been able to purchase Indigenous goods from youth project participants, and also support them to engage with other non-profits for ordering in the future.
- **Structuring grant budgets to always include specific lines for protocol and ceremony to ensure we can include Elders and Knowledge Keepers in the work we undertake.** Through this we are making sure this process is not an afterthought for the wrapping of a project but something threaded through the work.
- **Re-structuring events to include decolonial best practices, including reassessing vendors, venue, partnerships, etc. to emphasize values-alignment.** While limited this year, this re-structuring will be a main factor during event re-envisioning in 2025-2026 onwards. This action will have lasting and important impacts on our event structures, as well as how we navigate fundraising and partnerships with sponsors and community. Prioritizing relationship building, both in relation to events and event volunteer recruitment, is an important piece of the decolonizing work that will be long-term and involve many team members.

More work to do and reflections on organizational development, learning, relearning and unlearning:

- » These are long-term goals that require ongoing work and attention. Especially when we are pushing against very ingrained colonial mindsets and practices. It can feel easier to revert into what feels safe and known versus pushing into unknown terrain. This requires being attentive in ways that can feel overwhelming, disorientating and frustrating.
- » We have also surfaced tensions within the organization about what and how something becomes a shared and actioned understanding of a value like decolonization.
- » Documenting learnings so they can be shared and embedded within the organization is an ongoing struggle.

Strategies and Projects

Strengthen WCL's approaches to addressing anti-Indigenous racism and centring decolonial practices, cultural safety and humility in our projects and strategies for Indigenous people and communities to be able to participate as fully as they choose.

- **Honouring the wisdom of late Musqueam Elder Doris Fox to focus on the underlying simple truth of why we do this work.** For deep love and care and reminding ourselves that the right time is now and that we are the right people to do this work. This is not always easily accessible within the day-to-day struggles in our work and takes conscious effort to make visible in what we do.
- **Developing new administrative processes, forms, and best practices to ensure that we can best honor participants via financial support, while still meeting internal and external financial needs.** These external needs include government and audit reporting requirements. This is relevant to both payments and offering a variety of financial support methods including honoraria, stipends, pre-paid cards to facilitate travel expenses, MOU payments, and expense reimbursements.
- **Redeveloping work and ways of working, and rethinking foundational concepts in the work (e.g. "consent"), in a way that centres Indigenous knowledge and guidance.** Through this work trying new ways of scaling projects so that a lack of grant funding doesn't keep us frozen and stuck in inaction. Also expanding communication and advocacy strategies beyond reports to include two documentary video projects with community partners, centred on amplifying their stories from lived experience.
- **We are experimenting with project structures that enable research work to be embedded within relational and advocacy-focused coalition work.** Through this coalition-embedded structure, we have offered several options for connection and input to the project so community members can participate in the project (or not) to the extent they wish. This will also ensure coalition members can connect with and carry project learnings to their communities.

Relevant calls to action

UNDRIP: Article 3, Article 4, Article 15.2, Article 21.2, Article 22.1, Article 22.2

TRC Calls to Action: 27

MMIWG Calls for Justice: 10.1 i, 10.1 ii, 15.1, 15.2, 15.4, 15.5, 15.6, 15.7

Align our projects and strategies with advancing the TRC, Calls for Justice and UNDRIP for systemic change.

- **With Program Staff Developing a review process before starting projects and work plans to identify relevant calls to action our work is aligned with and can be amplified.** There is more to do in terms of developing evaluative stances and check-ins about how to deepen this work.
- **As part of developing our style guide, we researched templates and methods staff can use to consistently highlight the TRC Calls to Action, MMIWG Calls for Justice, and UNDRIP in our communications.** While we currently reference these calls to action where possible, the approach varies depending on the program and issue.

Relevant calls to action

UNDRIP: Article 1, Article 40

TRC Calls to Action: 43, 44

MMWIG Calls for Justice: 5.3, 5.13, 15.1, 15.3, 15.4, 15.5, 15.6, 15.8

Develop and deepen relationships with Indigenous community organizations, individuals and Nations particularly organizations focused on addressing gender-based discrimination to be in ongoing dialogue and mutual learning.

- **We engaged in a strategic litigation planning process that involved thinking through how we conduct litigation so that it is grounded in relationality and advances our values and commitments under the Changing Tides plan.** The legal team identified strategic goals including building and deepening our relationships with Indigenous organizations, working with Indigenous organizations as part of intervenor coalitions, integrating UNDRIP into our legal submissions, and educating ourselves on Indigenous laws and legal orders. In support of these goals, legal team members have sought out relevant professional development opportunities. They attended the Indigenous Legal Orders Conference in 2024 and 2025.
- **Striving and struggling to actualize values-based approaches into our work.** This included more sustained and deeper relationships with partners and prioritizing process rather than rushing to results.

Relevant calls to action

UNDRIP: Article 9, Article 21.2, Article 22.1, Article 22.2

TRC Calls to Action: 50, 57

MMWIG Calls for Justice: 5.3, 5.13, 10.1 ii, 15.3, 15.4, 15.6, 15.7

More work to do and reflections on Strategies and Projects:

- » At times wanting to enact our work without mistakes can create stuckness and a hesitation to experiment or try new processes. This can at times hold us back.
- » Shifting policies and practices to be more people-centred does require more time and sometimes it can be unclear how to balance this labour with limited resources.
- » The structure of non-profit funding can feel at odds with being relational and moving at the speed of trust. Trying to work with different scales of change or ways to embed this work into existing roles and projects is something to continue to experiment with.
- » Trying to create consistency in approach across projects with different teams, funders and partners can sometimes lead to varying levels of engagement with the Action Plan, more work needs to be done to set a shared base level of engagement.

Hiring, Recruitment, Orientation and Retention

Prioritize Indigenous people within West Coast LEAF leadership positions including: staff positions, board roles, and other leadership roles as they arise, to center Indigenous voices and increase representation. We recognize the importance of creating spaces and processes that do not tokenize and recognize the increased demands on Indigenous people in social justice work.

Relevant calls to action

UNDRIP: Article 4, Article 15.2, Article 17.3
MMIWG Calls for Justice: 5.3, 5.13, 10.1 ii, 15.6, 15.7

- **Developed and utilized a job posting process that prioritizes locations where we can be sure to reach Indigenous and candidates who are under-represented in the organization.** Working to develop internal practices that ensure this becomes a shared standard practice across the organization.
- **Increasing the budget in partnership agreements to include increased access to Knowledge Keepers and Elders in projects.** Building on prior practices to resource access to culture and well-being as a key support, the program team has been striving to increase the budget to make this more fulsome. We have also built in flexibility to support the unique cultural practices of each partner.

Develop an orientation pathway into the organization that brings people in our reconciliation, decolonization white supremacy, settler supremacy, genocide and anti-Indigenous racism work and begin participating in.

Relevant calls to action

UNDRIP: Article 2, Article 9, Article 15.1, Article 15.2, Article 22.2
TRC Calls to Action: 27, 57
MMIWG Calls for Justice: 10.1 i, 10.1 ii, 15.2, 15.3, 15.4

- **Structuring onboarding in a way that is more aligned with trauma-informed practice.** Improvements have included offering more space or options to customize the orientation to each person’s learning styles/needs, offering more breaks and option to chunk out the orientation in more pieces, checking in more throughout/after an orientation, clearer onboarding emails, etc.

More Work to Do on Hiring, Recruitment, Orientation and Retention

» This goal area requires a more focused approach moving forward.

Plan glossary

Transformation goal

We use the term transformation goal to focus on the need for deeper change that will change our organization and our relationships with the people and the land. We also acknowledge that this is about beginning the journey to dig deep and evolve and the goals will not bring us to the end of this transformation.

Emergent strategy

Drawing on the powerful work of adrienne maree brown, the action plan uses the language and knowledge of emergent strategy to guide our actions to move towards our transformation goals. brown defines emergent strategy as “as the way we make moves towards justice and liberation in right relationship with each other and the planet, in right relationship with change, and learning from the great teacher of nature,” (Resist, 2017). The core principles of emergent strategy (brown, 2017) include:

- Small is good, small is all (The large is a reflection of the small)
- Change is constant (Be like water)
- There is always enough time for the right work. There is a conversation in the room that only these people at this moment can have. Find it.
- Never a failure, always a lesson
- Trust the People (If you trust the people, they become trustworthy)
- Move at the speed of trust
- Focus on critical connections more than critical mass—build the resilience by building the relationships
- Less prep, more presence
- What you pay attention to grows

Some of the emergent strategies above will be taken up, some will be put down and new ones will emerge as we reflect and grow along the way.

Impact

We use the term impact to hold the space to understand how our actions are experienced and what shifts emerge. This can include outcomes such as money spent in community, numbers of people involved, resources developed, but it can also include things such as stories of changing relationships, new ways of approaching the work, important and difficult conversations held and so forth.

Strategies and projects

We use the term strategies and projects to mean our work that intersects with community. This includes things such as funded projects, but also how we engage members and donors, host events and so on.