

# CommUnity Conversations

## Global Partners

April 21st, 2020

This event was the third in a series of virtual conversations bringing together third sector organizations and allies to discuss the impacts of COVID-19 on their work. This convening brought together a group of individuals working with or representing global partners from as near as Wisconsin's tribal nations and Puerto Rico, and as distant as Timor-Leste and the Quechua people of Peru.

### Interdependence in a Global World

The local and the global, from neighborhood to nation, are deeply interconnected. Existing inequalities, rooted in economic and political dynamics like colonization and government disinvestment, are being intensified by the COVID-19 crisis. Communities with limited infrastructure and social safety nets are facing significant hardships.

At the same time, stay-at-home orders are also having positive ecological ripple effects. Nonprofits engaged in ecological restoration are seeing renewal and growth that would have previously been impossible. As normal patterns of consumption and production pause, we have an opportunity to reflect on the deep interdependence among communities, organizations, and the places they call home.

### Adapting to COVID-19

Global communities are all facing new challenges in the age of COVID-19, including disruptions in schools, food production, employment, health care, and other critical local service systems. Working globally during this time means helping partner communities adapt to new circumstances and meet emerging needs for support.

For some organizations, this means continuing to build partnerships while other program activities are halted. Some groups, like those working with youth, are moving to a programming-in-place model. Grassroots movements have mobilized to share indigenous food knowledge online. Because internet access is not a given, some communities and nonprofits are exploring lower-tech solutions like activity kits and mailed seed-sharing.

However, attendees also highlighted the losses that remote services fail to bridge. Ecological monitoring relies on direct measurement, which cannot be done online. And many indigenous land- and practice-based traditions have been interrupted by COVID-19. Disrupted ritual practice also destabilizes food production and the critical continuity of cultural heritage.

### Call for Action from the Field

- Even when global partnership as usual isn't possible, staying connected is a meaningful way to move forward.
- Online and low-tech remote support can help bridge social distance, but many communities will still be impacted by the loss of shared practice.



Extension

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