



THÉLÁ:YLEXW AWTXW
HOUSE OF LIFE GIVERS

STRATEGIC PLANNING REPORT

MARCH 2023



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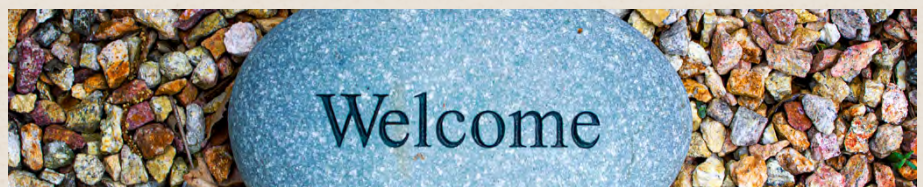
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INTRODUCTION

Q'ep - To Gather

Board members of Thélá:ylexw awtxw (the House of Life Givers) gathered at the The'itseliya building on March 15, 2023 to cover regular business and to carry out strategic planning in a letsemot (unified) fashion.

Main Objectives for the Day

- Thélá:ylexw awtxw 2023:
 - General Update
 - Financial Update
 - Society Update
 - Membership Update
- Board Discussions:
 - Definition of Membership
 - Representation + Voice
- Strategic Planning:
Vision, Mission, Goals
- Other Business as Arises



Report Content

This report covers the **main outcomes of strategic planning**. The nature of the regular business and board discussions facilitated the drafting of the vision, mission, and value statements, and the priority goals. Previous print and online materials facilitated much of the work in this report as well. The report concludes with Recommended Next Steps.



Inaugural Gathering 2018

DECLARATION OF STÓ:LŌ WOMXN

Stó:lō womxn – life givers – are Mothers, Daughters, Grandmothers, Granddaughters, Aunts, Nieces, Sisters, Teachers and Friends.

We treasure the values and traditions that have been passed down for generations; they have sustained us during the many changes throughout history;

We take pride in our culture, heritage and traditions, and we honor and respect our Elders and their teachers;

We are responsible for the health and safety of our children and our families, and we seek to ensure that our children will always be protected;

We believe in the strength of our family ties, and assert our right to retain the love of our immediate and extended families;

We have the right to be respected in spirit, mind, and body, and to live free from sexual, physical, verbal, and emotional abuse;

We have the right to love and be loved, care and be cared for, protect and be protected;

We have the right to be heard and to be treated as partners in our relationships with family and friends;

We have the right to be individuals, to make our own choices, and to pursue our personal goals;

We respect ourselves, and we will be respected;

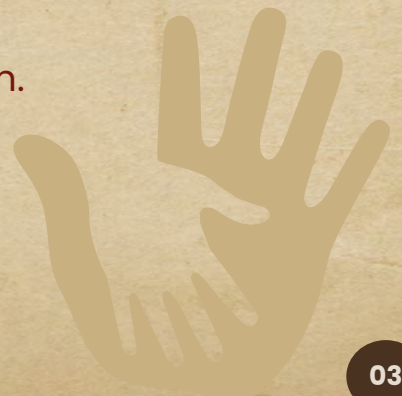
We will teach our children by example, and we will ensure the well-being of future generations of Stó:lō is not jeopardized in any way;

We recognize changes in our society, and we will call upon our strengths to live with these changes in a manner consistent with our traditions and values;

We will maintain integrity and pride in being Stó:lō womxn.



ADAPTED FROM THE DECLARATION OF
NUU-CHAH-NULTH WOMEN (1989) AND ADOPTED
BY THE THÉLÁ:YLEXW AWTXW FOUNDATION, 2023





OUR STORY SO FAR

OUR BEGINNINGS

Angie Bailey, Leslie Bonshor, Rhoda Peters, Wendy Ritchie, Joanne Hugh, Brenda Morgan, Lolly Andrew and Inez Louis gathered throughout 2017 and 2018 to plan for a Stó:lō Women's Gathering. The inaugural annual gathering was September 2018 at Tzeachten Hall.

SEPTEMBER 2018

We intentionally had co-facilitators of the dialogue, one 'Auntie' and one 'young one' – this is our way of mentoring and showing our love. We did a lot of brainstorming and capturing thoughts and ideas of what we wanted to become as a group.

Our guest speakers of our first event were the original members of the Indian Homemakers Association. Dr. Gwen Point introduced us to the Indian Homemakers Association as she recalled from learning from her Auntie Rose Charlie. Rena Point Bolton joined us, and shared her teachings with us, and the history of the IHA. At one point Rena said to us “get on with it, what are you waiting for” – “we didn't wait for anyone, we just did it” “you've got what you need, so get back to it”. Rena's final point, they didn't work that hard for us, for us to let it all go.

THÉLÁ:YLEXW FOUNDATION ESTABLISHED

Théla:ylexw awtxw received this name from the language speakers, Ethel Gardner & Wendy Ritchie. In 2021 we registered as a society, Théla:ylexw awtxw Foundation and have an active Facebook group presence with over 700 members. This is a leadership team that continues as founding members to meet and shape the future of our group.

THE MESSAGE

The message was clear in what we learned from our speakers and each other. As Stó:lō womxn, we want to be organized, we need to bring forward our old ways, we are the strength of our families and communities, we have a rightful place in upholding the rights of our people, and we are the Grandmothers, Mothers and Aunties.

It is the goal of The Théla:ylexw Awtxw

OUR NAME + LOGO



Our Name

Théla:ylexw awtxw translates to "the House of Life Givers". Life Givers hold power to bring forth life. We are the Grandmothers, Mothers and Aunties. We are the strength of our families and communities. We seek to bring back the old ways and occupy our rightful place at the heart of our nations, as Life Givers.

Our Logo

Thank you Carrielynn Victor, Chi:yom, for contributing this beautiful, meaningful logo. The logo is a combing weave in honor of womxn's tools and representing who we are as xwélmexw womxn, and weaving us together.



Inez Louis, 2023

PLÍST
- TO BLESS
HIM, HER, IT



THÉLÁ:YLEXW AWTXW HOUSE OF LIFE GIVERS

The following draft statements were created in the spirit of existing print and online materials for the Foundation, and based on the discussions from the strategy session.

Who We Are

Thélá:ylexw awtxw Foundation, The House of Life Givers is a Stó:lō womxn's non-profit organization dedicated to amplify the voices and leadership of Stó:lō womxn.

Our Intention

We set our intention to pick up where the Life Givers before us left off. We will gather and share our teachings, and take our rightful place in the centre of our community - the heart of our nation - as Life Givers.

Our Vision

Stó:lō families thriving in healthy and united communities where Stó:lō womxn stand in their power as weavers that connect us together.

Our Mission

We are committed to **rematriation in action** where Stó:lō ways of being are entrenched in everyday living and no one is left behind.



OUR VALUES

Spirit-Driven

When one is aligned with the Spirit, one will know what to do.

Rematriation

The act of reclaiming our Snowoyelh and Si:wes to restore living in balance.

Collective Sovereignty

The collective power and supreme responsibility that we carry for living in balance.

Remaining Connected

The desire to carry out the mission with deep, meaningful connection to self, to the Spirit, to the land and water, and to others. This is our social fabric.

Validation

The act of acknowledging and affirming our internal and external experiences so that we may freely validate others respectfully.

Empowerment

The process of becoming stronger, being more confident, and aspiring to hold space in a good way.

Sisterhood

The embodiment of being a good sister by embracing one another with compassion and trust, being bound together by our common interests and experiences, and sharing space even amongst our differences.

OUR VALUES

Language Awareness

The act of exploring, discovering and using language for deeper understanding and respectful relations. Words have power. We choose our words with respect for self and others.

Creative Curiosity

The strong desire to continue learning, discovering and growing as we work to achieve our vision and mission in creative ways.

The Gratitude of Sharing

The acts of kindness where the receiver is thankful for the gift and the giver feels gratitude simply for the exchange.

Accountability

The willingness to be responsible for our attitude, words, and actions.

Integrity

The act of building trust through responsible actions, open and respectful dialogue, and honest relationship building.

Humility

The sincere regard for the reality that we cannot "go it alone" and the courage to turn to others when we do not know, or cannot do something.

Empathy

The willingness to appreciate and understand with compassion.

Resilience

The daring capacity to recover and keep going in the face of adversity and hardships.

DOCTRINE of discovery

OUR CHALLENGES

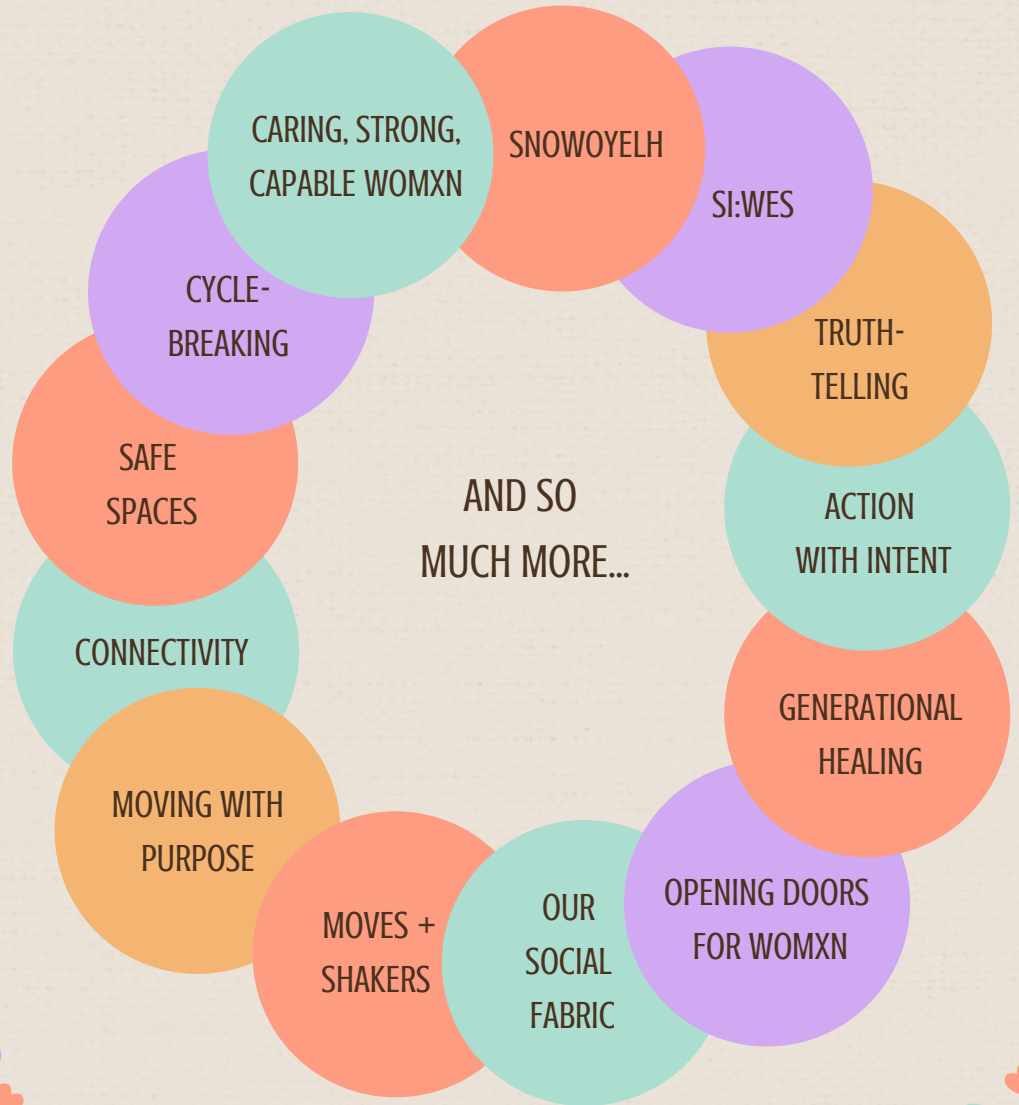
Denial delays rectification. The first step to solve any problem or challenge is to acknowledge that they exist. With this in mind, we present the everyday and systemic challenges that we face as Stó:lō womxn.





OUR STRENGTHS

Mobilizing our strengths allows us to move our deeply rooted value forward and step into our inherent power as womxn. These are the strengths that were identified by group participants and strengths that were observed throughout the session.



ÉYO'
DOING WELL



CELEBRATING SUCCESS

Celebrating achievement is an important part of boosting confidence and honoring the hard work of the people that made it happen. The bright light of successes also helps bring perspective and a well-deserved pause in the rewarding yet arduous work of rematriation.

The successes documented here were noted at the strategy session, but they do not include any recent achievements that were not yet discussed (or were shared prior to this session).

We are living in trauma every single day and we are still here. We still have something to hang on to.
~ Leslie Bonshor

 **WESBITE ACCESSIBLE**

 **POST-COVID REVIVAL**

 **130 REGISTERED MEMBERS**

 **700 FB GROUP MEMBERS**

OUR STRATEGIC DESIGN

Our approach to strategic planning is intended to be clear, dynamic, and fluid. The foundation of our work is our Stó:lō worldview with the added value of best practices and lessons from our experiences. Although milestones and indicators play a vital role in everyday planning, the outcomes of rematriation are not immediately visible, and sometimes, an indicator is the absence of what we see. Below is a sample visual of the concept for consideration that may need further refinement.



MILESTONES
Indicators
of Success

STRATEGY
Actions We
Will Take

OBJECTIVES
How We Will
Achieve It

GOALS
What We Want

**INTENT, VISION,
MISSION, VALUES**
Why We Do This

**STÓ:LŌ
WORLDVIEW**
Our Foundation

OUR STRATEGIC PLAN

Our ancestors were expert planners so we keep their teachings in mind. *Does this honor the teachings of the generations before us? Does this help sustain our future generations? Does this honor the peoples' voice?* These are simple yet weighty questions, but they are also in true alignment with Snowoyelh and Si:wes. Our strategic planning is a reflection of these laws and teachings. Today's reality dictates that our strategic plan must also be evergreen and responsive to changes as we continue to learn, grow, and reclaim our rightful roles as Stó:lō womxn. The following are proposed goals, ideas, and objectives based on discussions at the strategy session.



① LÉTS'E ~ BUILDING OUR FOUNDATION

When asked to consider future goals discussions frequently centered on re-affirming our identity and what we are about, which will greatly inform the scope and parameters of goal-setting.

Key Ideas and Objectives:

- Re-affirm 1) who we are, 2) our intention, 3) our vision, 4) our mission, and 5) our values
- Adopt a draft Declaration of Sto:lo Womxn
- Acknowledge our challenges, strengths, and successes
-
-

② ISÁ:LE ~ MOBILIZATION + COORDINATION

Discussion from the strategy session also centered on designing our structure and synchronizing Foundation activities.

Key Ideas and Objectives:

- Build our structure, roles and responsibilities
- Schedule our annual activities and milestones according to the seasons (and fiscal responsibilities were needed)
- Acquire space and equipment for office work, meetings/gatherings, and storage
- Finalize the Membership Structure
- Create a working draft of Code of Ethics for members
- Continue exploring and experimenting with mediums to spread the word about Thélá:ylexw awtxw Foundation
- Acquire a team member to help "carry the load" - title and description TBD
- Engage in actions and activities that are aligned with the name Thélá:ylexw awtxw
-
-

③ LHÍ:XW ~ RESPONSIVE ACTION PLANNING

As an organization dedicated to amplify the voices and leadership of Stó:lō womxn, it makes sense that our action planning is responsive to the current circumstances for Stó:lō womxn.

Key Ideas and Objectives:

- Develop evergreen systems and methods to be responsive to feedback and input from Thélá:ylexw awtxw activities + engagements
- Explore ways to help people navigate programs + services
- Consider developing a network/directory of professionals
- Promote the "witness role" in our work
- Budget and coordinate a two-day healing retreat
-
-

④ XE'Ó:THEL ~ HALQ'EMEYLEM REVITALIZATION

The reclamation of the Halq'emeylem language is crucial to rematriation because there is a wealth of knowledge and unique cultural expressions embedded within our language.

Key Ideas and Objectives:

- Bring forth more of the language to inform our work
- Utilize the language as much as possible in everything we do
- Make space for learning the language together
-
-



2023 Gathering

MÓYTEL - TO HELP EACH OTHER

5 LHEQ'Á:TSES ~ COMMUNICATIONS STRATEGY

Communication is meaningful interaction. Our communication strategy will be reflective of our Snowoyelh and Si:wes, and based on our lived experiences as well as our roles as Stó:lō womxn.

Key Ideas and Objectives:

- Develop a communications strategy that includes:
 - Our philosophy for communications
 - Methods and role expectations
 - Indigenizing applications, such as promoting the "witness" role and committing to communications through Snowoyelh and Si:wes
-
-

6 T'XÉM ~ PRACTICE SELF CARE HABITS

Self Care is more than action, it is habit ritualized. We promote self care and healing in honor of, and in surrender to, the teaching that healing starts with ourselves and then others will follow. We are the system.

Key Ideas and Objectives:

- Lay Stó:lō worldview as our foundation and take it from there
- Trust ourselves to know
- Make space to support one another
- Carry out our work that is aligned with the Spirit, wellness and growth
-
-



2023 Gathering

SHXW'ÉYELTH - BE IN GOOD HEALTH

WORK-PLANNING

There are nearly endless options for documenting a work plan. Below is only one sample for consideration. One might also consider a graphic visual of the work-plan rather than a table template (or both?).

1 LÉTS'E BUILDING OUR FOUNDATION

OBJECTIVES	STRATEGY	MILESTONES
<p>Re-affirm 1) who we are, 2) our intention, 3) our vision, 4) our mission and 5) our values</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lay Sto:lo worldview as our foundation and take it from there • Trust ourselves to know • Revisit existing materials and engagement outcomes from the inaugural gathering in 2018 • Reflect on the outcomes from 2023 strategy session 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Draft write-up complete (by next board meeting) • Upon approval, generate online and print materials to circulate
<p>Adopt a draft Declaration of Sto:lo Womxn</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Review and adapt the Declaration of Nuu-chah-nulth Women (1989) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Draft write-up complete (by next board meeting) • Upon approval, generate online and print materials to circulate
<p>Acknowledge our challenges, strengths and successes</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reflect on the outcomes from 2023 strategy session 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Draft write-up complete (by next board meeting)

RECOMMENDED NEXT STEPS



Recommended Next Steps for Consideration

- Confirm concepts and contents of this report and make necessary changes
- Document a workplan informed by the approved goals and objectives - consider a graphic/visual format
- Define titles and roles of the Foundation according to the Sto:lo worldviews that are also responsive to changing times for womxn today
- Create a video about the logo, vision, mission, values
- Schedule a retreat for a deeper dive into strategic planning, self care, and team activities
- Hold space to celebrate achievements
- Keep growing the team
- Keep decolonizing spaces
- Keep being intentional in with your cause



Ladies sharing a new song + dance gifted by Carrielynn Victor to the people at the 2023 Gathering



Théla:ylexw awtxw | House of Life Givers

www.stolowomen.com

Find us on Facebook

