



## **Indigenous Resurgence in the Salish Sea Partnership Development Grant**

**Background:** In Spring 2020, Nick Claxton via the UVic School of Child and Youth Care, was awarded a three year academic 2020-2023 Social Science and Humanities Research Council Grant (SSHRCC) for \$198,000 focusing on Indigenous education, Indigenous resurgence, settler-Indigenous relations and environmental education (see below for summary). The grant's Principal Investigator is Dr. Nick Claxton, Assistant Professor Child and Youth Care at the University of Victoria and the Co-Applicant is Dr. Nick Stanger, Associate Professor of Environment Education from Western Washington University. Participants and collaborators to date (from Spring 2019 when the grant was submitted) include the WSÁNEĆ School Board, the Lummi Nation school, Whiteswan Environmental, and the Redfish School of Change. Most of the funds received will be used to support Indigenous community engagement by the WSÁNEĆ and Lummi Nations and to employ undergrad and graduate students from UVic and Western Washington University.

We plan to reach out to other Coast Salish Indigenous community and campus partners by Year Three of the grant and to also apply (by 2023) for a 5-7 year \$2.5 million dollar larger SSHRC Partnership Grant. Core secretariat and administration support for this project is provided through UVic's Child and Youth Care department and Faculty of Human and Social Development. The project manager is Maeve Lydon who also manages the Living Lab Project (which supports the WSÁNEĆ School Board and PEPAKEN HAUT'W ([www.livinglabproject.ca](http://www.livinglabproject.ca))). Maeve also acts as a UVic liaison to the TETÁCES Climate Action Project with Nick Claxton.

Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, we have intentionally started this project slowly and the focus from November- June 2021 will be on planning and partnership building to review the original intent of the proposal and to align with the key goals and needs of the Nation partners. At this point Nick Claxton, and Nick Stanger, assisted by Maeve Lydon are setting up the project systems and reaching out to key partners (beginning with the WSÁNEĆ School Board.) The hope is by Summer and Fall 2021 to be able to do direct community engagement and research in WSÁNEĆ and then Lummi Nation territory.

### **Research Project Overview: Indigenous Resurgence on the Salish Sea: A Collaborative study of Tribal and Settler schools (based on 2018 submission?)**

**Principal Investigator** is Dr. Nick Claxton – Associate Professor of Child and Youth Care@University of Victoria / **Co-Applicant** is Dr. Nick Stanger, Associate Professor of Environment Education from Western Washington University. *The main partnership* is between

the University of Victoria's Faculty of Human and Social Development-Child and Youth Care and Western Washington University's Huxley College of the Environment. **The project secretariat is located in** UVic's Department of Child and Youth Care- Faculty of Human and Social Development with part time support from the Living Lab program manager Maeve Lydon. Core collaborators for this grant include the WSANEC School Board, the Lummi Nation School and Whiteswan Environmental. **Other core partners:** The University of Victoria's Environmental Studies Department and Western Washington University's Salish Sea Institute. The focus for our research is **on four schools:** The ŁÁU, WELNEW Tribal School; Lummi Nation School; the Redfish School of Change and Western Washington University's Environmental Education Program. The goal over three years is to develop sustainable partnerships with a diverse groups of Coast Salish peoples, in addition to existing partnerships with Swinomish, Lummi, and WSÁNEĆ.

### ***Existing Project Summary***

We will look to the knowledge and wisdom of Indigenous community members as they consider connections to land, resurgence, and commitments to place through their own eyes. We aim to understand how colonialism contributes to, or inhibits, an individual's sense of adaptation within new communities, considering it with a view to healing and reconciliation. We wish to support students of participating schools, using participatory action techniques in which community-engaged research helps inform our overall goal of studying the complexity of adaptation in such communities. We are also interested in the emerging relationships among First Nations and tribes occurring across the Salish Sea in recognition of the familial and cultural ties that bind the Coast Salish peoples together with a particular focus on how schools are a nexus for these ties. Despite differing experiences of colonization due to differing settler-colonial governments and treaty processes, similar displacement and Indigenous knowledge challenges are being experienced on either side of the modern border.

We will work with underrepresented communities as collaborators, knowledge holders, and partners. We seek to expand the capacity of all partner researchers from each agency, carefully practicing Indigenous and participatory research methods. This is vital, not least because both universities have had complex historically oppressive relationships with their local Tribes/Nations that, in recent years, the two universities have begun to redress, being committed to acknowledging these past wrongs and looking to heal these relationships into the future. We see our work as helping with this reconciliation through research that will build friendship and solidarity with Coast Salish peoples.

We ask the question: *How does teaching and learning about Indigenous history, sovereignty, and cultural revitalization contribute to Indigenous resurgence in settler and Indigenous learning settings?* To answer this, we need to build partnerships with formal and non-formal learning communities working in and around the Salish Sea. We have four main objectives: (i) to witness and describe how Indigenous and settler-colonial educators teach about resurgence and

cultural revitalization in response to human and environmental degradation and displacement; (ii) to support local educators, using participatory action methods to develop community-driven research and build local capacity; (iii) to inform universities that occupy land in and around the Salish Sea (including settler and Indigenous faculty, students, and administration) about the cultural adaptation and resurgence processes occurring in their region; and (iv) to help foster relationships occurring across the Salish Sea among First Nations and tribes in recognition of the familial and cultural ties that bind the Coast and Strait Salish peoples.

Rarely does such work use an appreciative lens with community-based learning and education as entry-points. The learning processes resulting from place-connectedness and resurgence are integral to Indigenous language survival and subsequently the practicing of Indigenous Knowledge. Yet, both settlers and Indigenous alike are grappling with how language and knowledge adapts, discovering how sovereignty is an everyday lived experience, and practicing cultural ways of knowing.