

Join us as we speak to Francisco Timias who is the Director of Territory for the Shiwiar nation. He oversees the protection of virgin rainforest in Ecuador - a place untouched by outside development and host to incredible biodiversity and beauty. Kayla Vandervort is the Project Coordinator for the **ACASJAE program** which exists to revitalise Shiwiar ancestral gastronomy. Through a combination of natural plant medicines and understanding the nutritional value of the plants around them, the Shiwar tribe is building up resilience to help face the health challenges that are occurring during these times.

Join Francisco and Kayla as they share:

- the respect and reverence they give to Nature
- what it's like to live in a small community far away from the city
- · how the women of the tribe hold a special relationship with the jungle
- the food program and how important nutrient rich soil is
- instilling a respect for Nature in all children
- how indigenous people have been discriminated against
- why they want to reach out to those who care about preserving Nature to help protect this area of the Amazon.



Terra: Welcome everyone. Thank you so much for joining us for today's Indigenous Wisdom for the Earth call. Today I'm here with my co-worker Suzi and I am Terra from Network Relations and the host of the series.

Our guests are from the Shiwar Nation. They are Kayla Vandervort and Francisco Timias and I would love if the two of you could do a little self-introduction and tell us more about your land and the projects that you're working on.

Francisco: My name is Francisco Timias. I am from the community Juyuintsa that is in the province of Pastaza in Ecuador. My community is located by the river Cononaco and we have around 70 habitants of men, women and children. The community is in the middle of a primary forest within a virgin rainforest where we have the task of protecting the environment and preserving the living rainforest. Since I was a young boy, I decided from a young age to live in this rainforest, live with my community in harmony with Nature and to keep preserving what little we have left in the world.

Our community was founded in 1999. Since the foundation we have been fighting so that there isn't contamination in our territory from the extractor activities, like oil, as we have felt threatened by the oil businesses, so we have always dedicated ourselves to defending the resources in our territory.

Kayla: I'll go a little bit into detail here. There was a time when the government had projects that would have involved some of the land and that the land was not recorded by title as in who owns this land and so the Shiwar, it was part of their ancestral lands. They had to really kind of make sure, "Hey you know people live here." And so, the foundation was to say hey you know it seems like this open green part of the Amazon is up for grabs but really there's people that live here and are protecting it and so the community was formed in 1999 based on this.

Francisco: (Translated from Spanish) We as a community, we are preserving our reserve, for example the areas that are around our community where we are taking care of the Amazon Rainforest, where we will continue our mission.

Our vision as indigenous people who are living in the rainforest - our first objective is to have our Nature under conservation. We don't want what has happened in the rest of the Amazon, for example that there has been a lot of deforestation. We don't want to experience this threat, so we have always been fighting to keep our forest as it is.

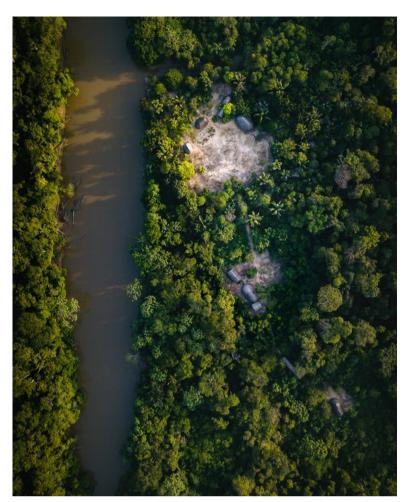
Kayla: The land that they're protecting is 40 000 hectares. They really wanted to make sure that they have this vision for the purpose of taking care of the land and conserving it. They have seen what deforestation has done to other communities and other nationalities that surround them and they're always reminded of what they don't want to see happen in their territory.



Francisco: (Translated from Spanish) We as Shiwar, we are less known in the world. We aren't as recognized as other organizations or nationalities, so we have made a call to the world to let them know what we are bringing to the forest and also to have an exchange with the world.

Kayla: The Shiwar, he said, is a nationality that's a little less known to the world. But we want to make the call out and let people know that this is an area, a part of the world that they can support and have that type of culture so that we can share the knowledge and spread this act of conservation not just in the Shiwar nation but also around the world.

Francisco: (Translated from Spanish) And furthermore, well, I haven't lived much in the city, but part of the Shiwar nationality has been going in and out of the city. So we have seen the comparison of living in the city and living in the rainforest.



Photograph courtesy Shiwar Nation

It's very different. For example, in the city there is a lot of contamination and a different way of eating, but in our community, we have a different way of living and of eating, that has more nutrition and is healthier. So we are working on this.

Kayla: So Francisco is mentioning how the community is mostly isolated but he has also spent time.... (sounds cuts out....explains that everything changes from the diet that they eat here in the city versus what they eat in the territory. In the territory they eat very, very literally organically what's there. They don't eat anything from the city. They have no sugar at least from the city. They have caña in their territory. And they hunt for their own food, they produce their own food and that's what his people have grown up on. And so when they go to the city it's always this kind of drastic change.

I'll tell really quickly a side story, another woman in the community and I were talking and I asked her. Have you been to the city of Puyo?" and she said, "I've been there a couple times but the first time I went the city just smelled so bad to me and the food which is so gross to me and I would really rather just stay where I am. And the air is fresher, the food is also more tasty and I just feel so much better being out here."



And so something that's happening here in Ecuador, a lot of communities have this pressure from the outside world to go to the cities, go to get an education and become something that's not necessarily representative of their lifestyle from where they grew up. And to hear that there's people like Francisco and his family and other people in this community saying, "We just couldn't accustom to the city lifestyle." It's very interesting.

I'll just explain really quickly, so the <u>association of ACASJAE</u> is an acronym that means... that stands for the Association of the Conservation of the Environment in the Ecuador and the Amazon with the Shiwar and the community of Juyuintsa. Acasjae is also a Shiwar word which also means you're jealous and so this is a really interesting name that they chose because it's kind of a reflection of their personalities and they're also saying, "Hey you guys are jealous that we have all this abundance."

Kayla: Are there any questions that you guys might have?

Terra: Suzi did you have something and you want to go first?

Suzi: I do but why don't you go first and I'll follow up.

Terra: I guess I'm thinking two different things. What is it like to... the biodiversity in such a natural untouched virgin rainforest, what is that like?

Francisco: (Translated from Spanish) Well, as I have lived here and in the world of Nature, first, you have to respect Nature, protect it. Because for us indigenous living in the jungle, Nature is our market, it is our house, it is our medicine, where we attract medicine, it is very practical to live. Because you don't need to go out to the market to buy or to bring back products which is very easy. We make our own things if we need them, if you need something you plant Chinese potato, yucca, bananas, a variety of local products. And furthermore, if you want to eat fish, you have to go fish in the river, or go hunt in the forest and bring back to your family.

So it is a practice, we don't do this just to do it, we do it to live, to have a connection. And also to respect Nature and be careful because if we start destroying, we won't have what we have had. So we always respect Nature as a part of us because we have a connection to her.

Kayla: So Francisco explains that to live in such an untouched virgin area means that they have to respect this land (sound cuts out intermittently) that they have to take care of it, because of they don't take care of it they won't have the means to survive and live. (Sounds continues to cut out) for indigenous people (inaudible) food forest (inaudible) own home and also their own medicine.



Nature he says is what you do (sound cuts out again)... everything I can do with lots of respect. Every action that they do for anything living they also have to show some form of virtual usually in their culture.

It's their songs. Different songs that they're singing while in their gardens or also when they're fishing or hunting which shows respect to the land for saying thank you. Thank you for giving permission to give us life and to live well.

Terra: Yes I absolutely love that. It's such an honor to meet someone protecting the rainforest and please thank him and his community for protecting this precious, precious land. We're so overjoyed to hear that it exists and that there are people who live in community and reciprocity with the land as opposed from the more westernized version of land is a commodity. It's not. It's a part of us and we need to treat it with the respect so just to hear this story is so beautiful and amazing and we are so grateful for that.

Kayla: I can share really summarizing a little bit of the activities that we've been working with and I'm more just like the voice of what they're doing. I'm not necessarily heading it, but I'm kind of also just helping manage it.

And so we there's two kind of focuses that we have been working on, that ACASJAE works on. The first are their ancestral... is their intestinal knowledge and so some things that they're working towards to possibly teach to other people down the line would be the ancestral bio construction of a typical Shiwar home. They have a very unique technique of weaving (word in Spanish) is a palm leaf called Tokiya which they use to create their houses. And they also are masters at creating canoes. They're also masters at ceramics and also ancestral medicine.

And then recently what we've been working on is permaculture and so we could technically say that the way that they live and the way that Francisco has just already mentioned, they are naturally permaculture practitioners. And so Francisco one day told me that he was really interested in learning more about permaculture and what he can do to bring that to his community. And so we reached out to a network here in Ecuador called the "Red de Guardian" which is the "Network of the Guardians of the Seeds" and last December this... is yes in December, they were able to come out to the territory and certify members of the communities that they can start to become their own permaculture specialist and that is based on the topics that I just mentioned and we're also looking to see if we can improve on techniques like soil management, starting a seed bank, thinking about clean water and just in general permaculture design.

With the management of soil they have their ancestral techniques where they do like a little bit of burning of the land to clear it out and also fertilize the land but we've also thought about reviving the technique of (word in Spanish) which is black soil.





Photograph courtesy the Shiwar Nation

And that will help regenerate a little bit of ancestral techniques which remains way, way, way back like their ancestors of ancestors in the Amazon. And then we also have a really interesting project focused on seeds and so in the Amazon technically it won't necessarily be seeds but we'll be creating a plant nursery and experimental gardens where we are augmenting the diversity of biodiversity in the crops that they're consuming.

So for one example in his community they have seven varieties of yucca and here where we live right now in Puyo most people know that there's two varieties of yucca, like the white one and the yellow one.

But in his community he says that there's seven, all different shapes and colors and so through our permaculture class we learned that we can we can continue making more genetic diversity of the produce and if we want to recuperate that, if we want to experiment, maybe create more just as our ancestors have done so long ago not only to regenerate the diversity in the forest which makes it more resilient but also generate diversity nutritionally for the community so we can also make ourselves more strong.

Terra: Yes that's amazing. I love that. I was watching in the video which I will also share with our network how there's a closed canopy and how that has helped retain the soil nutrients and the variety of plants and types that can grow. And then how that all... the video is also about the use of the foods for medicine... for certain vitamins. I remember watching, at one part, about a chef who was saying that the green version of one of the fruits or something had more vitamin c and to eat it at that time. So I'd love to know more about that part of your program.

Kayla: Yes, so they are masters at their own ancestral gastronomy, but we wanted to take it another step further and so we invited a professional chef in slow food, and he came to the community so that we could look at produce that exist in the community that they didn't normally think that they would make into food or maybe create a certain plate. And so, I didn't know this, but you can actually eat papaya when it's green and it's not necessarily like the normal fruit that we see that's orange. And so we found a green papaya, it actually ended up being the favorite recipe of the community.



And the chef really it's a plus that he is teaching new ways of creating recipes, combining what traditionally was used mostly for medicinal plants into gastronomy and so that's like the level up that we're including into the community right now. So it's... there's already the history of using plants for medicine but now there's also the nutrition aspect of it which is amazing that that's being introduced and further increases the wisdom and knowledge.

Terra: That's beautiful and I saw that there had been some covid that had come to the area and I believe the video was back in the summer, so what has transpired since then? Has it improved? Has the situation stabilized?

Francisco: (Translated from Spanish) The covid situation in our territory, in the first wave, people got it, but this second time people have really lost their fear of it. The first time people were in panic because they said that this illness was deadly. But us as indigenous, we have faced another illnesses like malaria, we have faced other illnesses other than covid and we have treated ourselves with our medicine. It is different for us living in the jungle because we have another type of air that is healthier,

I can't say 100% healthy but it is healthier than the city. So comparing the community in the jungle and that of the city, in the city they don't have a way of treating themselves with plants, they don't have a lot of knowledge of the jungle, so that's why people there have more fear. We are seeing that people are still getting infected at the national level, covid hasn't ended. But in our territory, it is calm, there isn't any big alarm, there isn't any covid or symptoms, people are ok now.

Kayla: So Francisco says that as you see in the video this did happen back in July, but since then really everything's pretty normal right now. (Sound cuts out) ...virus. They did have some symptoms (inaudible) ...but because they have their medicinal plants and also I think because of their diet they live you know pretty much or their gastronomy and what they eat is also based on eating to be strong even before the pandemic they've just been living more resiliently. So once the symptoms passed it hasn't come back again and now, we're in January and everyone just kind of lives normally there. The only thing that's really affecting their community right now is the fact that because of the city there's still people that are... that have the disease. They're living in close quarters; they don't have the same fresh air that they have out there.

I think all of these factors have to do with the reason why their community has been more resilient to covid than maybe people who live in the city or in a city type of environment. And really the only thing that they're suffering right now is not necessarily the physical effects of covid, but really just the the other offset effects of the lack of education that's happening right now and sometimes a lack of transportation that's been cut off because of covid. Things like that.



Terra: Yes, I saw in the video that you were talking about food diversity for resilience which I thought was brilliant and that that really plays a role in keeping their immune system strong and resistant and just the way they live naturally with the land and eating the fresh fruits where you know western world we process food, we live in cities and stuff and that does certainly adds to it absolutely. I know Suzi wants to ask some questions, so Suzi would you like to go ahead and jump in and ask one?

Suzi: Yes, okay well I mean there's lots of different questions that I would like to ask. I'm really aware of the people who will be listening to this who have been exploring permaculture, have been exploring forest gardens and how they can be creating their relationship with Nature in such a way as they're honoring and listening to Nature in their gardens. I think it's really beautiful to hear it talked openly that part of the way of working in honor with the forest is to be singing that relationship of gratitude and I really, I'd love maybe if you would be interested to speak into what that feels like in that kind of connection as part of Nature and with the voice and with those either traditional songs or that kind of the sound.

Francisco: (Translated from Spanish) Well the gardens and the songs, this is very connected to the women and their activities not as much for men as for women. Both men and women have respect for the land because the land produces the crops for us.

In our mythology, the women can sing but men cannot sing to the gardens because this is very sacred for the women. In the mythology of the Nunkui, if there isn't a Nunkui on Earth than a good crop cannot be cultivated, like yucca or sweet potato or potato, so all of these crops are related to the Nunki song in which the women.

For example, the women have their own gardens, so each garden depends on how the woman treats her crops and how she cultivates. So us as men respect the work of each woman. Of course we help the women to build their gardens but women have their own songs like Nunki to bring a good crop, it's a process. This part of the process is for the women and I respect that.

Regarding our activity as men, I have dedicated myself and been raised in the community from a young age to respect the women even if I don't know too much about them, I see what they do, and I respect it.

Kayla: So Francisco is talking about how in the garden it's actually a very feminine activity in their cosmo vision of the Shiwar they have a deity which is called Nunkui. Nunkui is a god of the Earth or the soil and in order for them to have a successful produce with their crops women sing to Nunkui. They sing to her to give her respect and homage to know the gifts that she gives to this world and they sing to her so that she can give them permission and garden a certain space. He says if they don't sing to Nunkui the consequence could be that maybe their produce won't be as great as they were expecting and it's really up to each woman who maintains their own garden for each family the way they treat their garden, the way they sing to Nunki, the way they respect Nunki, they will show in the results of what they grow.



And he says that men also highly respect this practice. He also respects his wife who does this in her own garden as well. It's all very connected singing to Nunkui they do this not only just for their crops and their gardens but they also sing to Nunki when they're making their ceramics because they take the clay also from Nunkui and Nunkui also if you sing to her she presents to you where to find the best clay to make ceramics. And in their culture the clay that they make... that they use to make ceramic for, is mostly used for Pinin which is like a plain bowl.

I'll show you an example. This is a very big part of their culture because Nunkui gives them the sacred permission to not only grow yucca and also give them clay to make these pottery.

Suzi: Wow that's gorgeous!

Kayla: And this is from his community from a woman named Mayda and so this is used to drink chicha and chicha comes from yucca and they drink chicha 24/7. It's kind of like their staple food. It's a fermented yucca drink but it gives them energy. It's like a life source and that's also all comes back to Nunkui and giving her that respect.

Suzi: I am so glad I asked that. Could you say (to him) I'm really, really grateful that he would... and both of you to talk into that because that feels... that feels really rich and I'm really grateful for that.

Francisco: (Translated from Spanish) As we've said we've been working only recently for 20 years but we are inviting people who would like to collaborate with us on any of the projects that we are working on in the community and showing them that we are not only talking but we are actually doing things and of course you all are welcome if you would like to come to our community and see the reality and how we live. The doors to our community are open to anyone who would like to come and see.



Photo courtesy Shiwar Nation



Right now it's just the pandemic that is stopping this but everyone is invited to come and visit our community to see what we are talking about today.

Kayla: Franscisco is mentioning how anyone is welcome to come see the reality of the community, come visit, see their way of life. Also just to have that exchange with people who have sustainable innovative ideas that they can bring to the community it's also highly welcome. (Sound cuts out) The doors are open, you're welcome to come and of course you two are invited.

Suzi: Thank you so much. In terms of that education, I think I have two questions that that makes me think of... though I've got loads more. But the first one is I'd love it if you could talk a little bit about the black soil and also the relationship between the kind of culture of the soil of the plants and the culture of our bodies. And his you know... and some of the thinking around that I would be really interested in and then I'll ask the other one in a minute.

Kayla: So I'll answer the questions about the black soil. This actually... this topic actually came up when we started doing the permaculture class in the community. It's an ancient technique in the Amazon that was created who knows how long ago, but the Amazon soil is naturally actually very clay-like. It's not you this rich black soil that just naturally it's there. It's actually that naturally clay-like so people in the Amazon centuries and generations ago they did a whole system where they would take organic matter usually from dry wood, where they would burn it but not to ashes, but burn it into carbon. I'm forgetting English right now... but carbon. And so with that carbon they could actually break that down into like a carbon powder and then with that they can mix it with organic matter which is a mixture of dry leaves, a mixture of compost, a mixture of possibly compost from animals as well and then with that mixture they really create a very nutrient-dense fertile soil that they can use in their gardens.

And so this is an initiative that we're kind of recuperating. We spend actually a good amount of time during our course looking into it and it's not that they don't know how to farm in in the community, but there's sometimes plagues that can happen, sometimes produce doesn't come the way they want it to and so this technique is really to put even more strength into the soil and to see things just become even better.

Francisco: (Translated from Spanish) Black soil for us is first of all a matter of knowing and doing. For us, black soil allows us to make a charcoal to grow our crops. So you put the black soil and it's like it gives more strength to produce more crops.

Our ancestors used this in a different way, but we also burn the charcoal and use the black soil to produce in our gardens where we grow Chinese potato or potatoes or these crops that are more special where the women plant.



So that is how we are always doing it in our gardens with the carbon and we have also learned through Permaculture that the carbon is good for the soil and this makes it stronger to produce any crop.

Kayla: He just still mentioned what I mentioned but he also is saying that it convinced them to produce soil that gives them more strength. The Shiwar have a very strong vision. Their way of life is based on being strong everything that they do (inaudible) give them more of that strength, of that energy (cuts out again). And is there a way in which your... because what I'm conscious of is that there must be so many different flavors and tastes and information of the plants that is their medicine, is their wisdom, their power in the in the leaf forms, in these different forms and the relationship between that. Their ancestral traditions and the gut like what helps them strengthen.

Suzi: So I don't know if I've got a good question on that but I would really love to hear that... just a little bit more about that feeling of the medicine and the perfume of all of these tastes.

Francisco: (Translated from Spanish) In the aspect of eating, in our way of life, the flavors are very different than in the city. For example, you arrive in our community and the Chontacuro o Mayon well for us, it's like a chocolate more or less. It's one of our favorites and for people who don't know it maybe the taste is bad but for us it's very good.

Kayla: I'm just going to explain what he said real quick. So he's explaining that the flavors in the jungle where they live is very different than what the flavors are in the city, For example one of the things that they crave a lot, especially women and men, is Chontacuro o Mayon a grub that is harvested in palm trees. And when you cook them over a fire it actually has a very kind of like fatty taste to it. It's a huge delicacy in in the Amazon. And for them they would relate that to someone's desire to want chocolate in the city.

Suzi: That's slightly mind-blowing for somebody who eats a lot of chocolate. Maybe is it there was something else that he was wanting to say just then?

Francisco: (Translated from Spanish) In our way of eating we don't have too many flavors, because we are used to this. For example, for fish you have to take a leaf and wrap the fish in it and then put it over the fire, but you have to take one that has flavor. So, you just put a little salt and with the leaf and maybe cook with yucca or plantain, so we don't have to add many flavors. So that's why when people from our community go to the city, the flavors are already processed here so that's why it's very difficult for our people to go live in the city.

Kayla: So he's explaining how generally speaking there's not that many, I guess flavors that they use in the Amazon, but they do use certain things like certain plants that help give flavor for example he talks about a really traditional dish called this is a dish that traditionally has some typical protein in the leaf that they wrap around the protein.



It could be fish. It could be that's something that they hunted and they can add another type of leaf that gives another flavor is given when it's cooked with vapor over fire. And so all these elements cooking with fire, cooking with plants, cooking also with ceramics, things that are very natural forms of cooking. Not using modern pots, not using gas stove that the flavors change because using all these natural elements when you're cooking.

Suzi: Thank you. That's really evocative. It's really lovely to hear. I want to check in with Terra because I know I've got... there are two things I'm curious about. One was I was wanting to know about some of the rights of Nature and your safety and protection. And the other is what you might be interested to say to children. But I want to check in with Terra on time.

Terra: That's okay, go ahead.

Suzi: Yeah? Okay so I'll say them both at once because then... so I'd be very interested in understanding about how their Nature is protected in both in law and the kind of rights of Nature that you would like to see. And also I would be very interested to hear if you could just speak to the children, to my children, what would you want to tell them about how to take care of biodiversity.

Francisco: (Translated from Spanish) We have been the first community here so since we arrived. I arrived very young with my father and my father founded the community. So my father, even though he did not have education, he laid out the rules for all of us in the family. So we have rules that say we have to respect certain areas.



Photo by Mark Fox for the Shiwar Nation

There are areas to put our gardens, areas where you can hunt, the rivers are free, but you do have to respect the sacred areas. The sacred areas are the lagoons, the salt flats, the most beautiful birds that are in danger of extinction like the parrots and the toucans. The toucans are very special because we take their crowns to use. So we respect and every year we have a meeting with the leader of the community and we change leaders every year.



We are always talking in these meetings about protection and we are also aware of threats that can arrive, and we have thought about how to take care of things. Kayla has been with us many times in the community, so she knows how it is there. At this time, we are working on something more serious, we are mapping out our community, the watersheds, the sacred places, very ancient trees that are 500 or more years old. In reality no one can imagine what it is like in the forest. So we respect each other because if there isn't respect there isn't life.

Kayla: So the number one rule for conserving in the territory is respect to Nature. And so with that as a very clear rule they designated certain areas. Some of the areas for creating their gardens, some areas for hunting, some areas that are sacred, some areas that are intangible and making sure that these areas are respected for the designations I should mention also that in their areas I think a lot of people from outside know that (sounds cuts out) but their way of hunting on the land is very respectful (cuts out again) a mom that's having a baby or a mom that might be pregnant so they always also respect the way the life cycle that the animals have to make sure that they can be able to reproduce and with that they protect the trees, they protect the palm trees, they protect the food that the animals eat so they can be able to eat and also reproduce.

It's all a life... it's all a cycle in the end that they have to protect, and he says that every year they have a change in directive in their community but even though they change every year they always have a conversation annually about what they're protecting, kind of analyzing the situation if there might be any threats that are coming into their land. And at the moment basically to make things a little bit more profound they've decided to do a territory mapping project.

And so this will just help visualize to the people outside of their lands that they have these sacred places, they have these notifications, they have this respect for the land and that people live there. I'll ask him about the other questions.

Francisco: (Translated from Spanish) For children both boys and girls, which we have both of, I have 4 children - 3 girls and 1 boy. Regarding our way of living, I think that education is changing very quickly, when we are talking about Western education, and furthermore the education that our ancestors knew, they were architects and total sages. We build our own houses with our own architecture, so if we focus on Western education it changes a lot. I have thought about children's education that is also changing in the aspect of our language that is Juyuintsa.

So for me, I have to give my son this education in what I am doing, I talk about life, about how to take care of Nature, about conservation, how to live, how to hunt, how to create a trail, how to build a house, what wood to use. So all of this is a process that children also have to learn because if we don't pass on these teachings that we have as parents then it might get lost. Also with women, like my wife, she has to dedicate to the teaching of ceramics and attending to the garden, knowing the different types of yucca.



So all of this belongs to teachings that we don't forget, because if we forget we won't have the strength to live in the community and then we would be part of Western life. We have our own connectivity in the way we are living.

Kayla: Francisco has four children. He has three girls and one boy himself, so education is a topic that is very close to his heart on. Especially with this message of how do I transmit the knowledge that was passed on to me to my children so that they can also live and protect this land.

He explains that education in the western... the western lifestyle changes so rapidly, but the ancestral education that he grew up with which includes how to hunt, how to treat the land, you know everything that we've talked about in this conversation, those are ancestralizing education that hasn't changed for generations and generations. And it's what's kept them able to live and survive and have a way of life for their best well-being.

He says that their ancestors are... were wise people and that he also needs to be like his ancestors and be someone who is a model for his children. It's one thing to just say something and teach them just by word but he also has to teach them by showing them how to do things in person and so he feels like it's his obligation as a father to teach his knowledge to his children and make sure that they are also protective of that knowledge.

Because if he does not transmit that, that they will lose the strength from this ancestral knowledge that needs to be passed down to protect the land. And without that strength, the land won't be protected and they'll lose that strength that energy that we've been talking about in this entire conversation. Life force it'll be lost if it's not taught to children how to protect.

Suzi: Thank you very much, so much. I think I need to turn over to Terra now, but I am really so deeply grateful to hear those things. Thank you.

Terra: Yes absolutely everything we've talked about is so valuable and so important and we're so honored that you've spent the time. I'd like to have you come back another time and tell us how you're preserving the knowledge and the history and then more about the ceramics and that absolutely gorgeous piece of jewelry that he's wearing. I think there's a tiger on it. I was like, "Oh my gosh, did they make that?"



Francisco: (Translated from Spanish) This was a gift to my daughter from someone who makes artisanry here in the Amazon. She is dedicated to making bracelets, earrings, necklaces like this one. Here in the Amazon a lot of the women make a lot of this jewelry. He says it was a gift and it was made by another woman in the Amazon who lived closer to Puyo. From the Kichwa Nation in the Amazon.



Terra: We just lost the audio on the very end there and I hope... I didn't quite catch it but know I'm so grateful for that. Was there any last thing that he would like our network or the western world to know that he really feels is important to communicate for us to understand at this time?

Francisco: (Translated from Spanish) In this time we indigenous feel discriminated against from the Western world. I don't really want to talk about governmental politics but in reality, there is a lot of discrimination and they say no one lives here but in reality, us indigenous people exist and we have lived here for thousands of years, before the country of Ecuador existed. We are descendants of our ancestors who have lived here for many years. We are less known people, I am not discriminating against other people but there are people who are running around in the world talking about environmental protection and about the villages and nationalities but in reality we have never accomplished as a community having our own territory that we are preserving so we want to make a call to the world that we too are indigenous people who are living here and we want to make ourselves known and that people know the reality that we are living.

Also politics here in Ecuador is very bad against our communities so we are always fighting against the state because sometimes the state doesn't respect our communities. There isn't much support for our communities so we are making an effort to look for alliances with people who can support us in our initiatives, help us in our community projects and we want to make ourselves visible. We can't be in the dark where no one can see us and they are saying in the news that the Amazon exists but the Amazon is being discriminated against and is experiencing higher rates of deforestation, so we don't want this to happen. We want to protect the Amazon so that it is the most protected and the most sacred, and the indigenous people we want to be respected by the world because the big businesses and capitalists are crazy right now and they don't feel for Nature, they don't feel the life that exists in Nature.

There are a lot of lives that exist here. Maybe in 20 years there won't be what there is now and there will be more and more devastation. So we are asking the world to help us, the activists all over the world to be our allies. All of this would be a big help for us, to not be so threatened and to live life in peace and share our nature with the world.

Kayla: So Franscisco mentioned that (sound cuts out) have been discriminated against. They continually always have... Oh those people, there's no one that lives over there in that part of the (sound cuts out... chance to know the reality in that part of the world (interference on sound) ... the outside world is... want to say we want everyone to be able to get the chance to know the reality... (inaudible)

Terra: You're cutting out so much I can't quite make out what you're saying. Is there any way to get closer to the mic maybe?



Kayla: Oh sorry can you hear me better now?

Terra: Yes thank you.

Kayla: I can briefly go over what he said again. So he's saying that their community has been discriminated not just in the Amazon but in general indigenous peoples and in the world especially where he lives, where their community is very isolated, they're constantly kind of have been brushed off like that no one really lives out there. The attention to this part of the land is not very great, but he wants to make it known that yes there are people that live there. There are people protecting it, that people are protecting ancestral knowledge, there are people protecting and conserving the land.

Although they are being discriminated against they don't discriminate to other people around them. And he wants people to get to know the reality of of where they live and it's like I said before open doors to any alliances, anyone wants to visit and get to know what it's really like to live there and looking for people who align with the same vision that they have and align the same message that they have. And that the world the outside world is shadowing their energies right now. The energy the life force that they protect they they say that this this modern world which has forgotten about conservation or doesn't respect conservation it's shadowing the energy, shadowing the strength of the forest and where they live. So they look for alliances that can kind of open up that shadow and break away.

Terra: Yes and please let him know that there is a growing group of people who care about the values that he holds and what they're doing and yes we're two of them right here, but yes I completely agree with everything and I hope that this call... the reason I have these calls is to bring this knowledge and open people's minds and hearts and become more involved and want to protect and we're so grateful that you've taken the time. We're so honored to speak to you and just yes just so much gratitude. Thank you so much. Suzi you might want to pick up because I'm losing my voice here.

Suzi: Well I want to say thank you to Terra for the way that she does hold this space so that what we don't hear in the mainstream news is able to be represented from communities. From people speaking, sharing with each other and I would be really happy to stay on the call afterwards and just sort of say some different networks and communities that it might be fun for you to explore but I think it's really exciting this feeling of how there are so many people around the world moving with exploring permaculture of their own landscapes and the forest guides of their own landscapes and I think it's incredibly exciting to feel what's coming.

Kayla: Thank you so much for the invitation it was also a really great surprise to get this message from you guys and hold this space to be able to share what's going on in realities of what it's like here.

Terra: Thank you so much we really appreciate you being here.



