

**DECOLONISING KNOWLEDGE: THE ROLE OF LANGUAGE AND THE CASE
OF THE GREENBELT MOVEMENT IN KENYA**

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>>RINGA HĀPAI: Kia ora koutou. Karakia tīmatanga. Whakataka te hau ki te uru. Whakataka te hau ki te tonga. Kia mākinakina ki uta. Kia mātaratara ki tai. E hi ake ana te atakura. He tio, he huka, he hau hū. Tihei mauri ora. Tēnā koutou. A karakia in te reo as part of the opening. Get ready for the westerly and be prepared for the southerly. It will be icy cold inland and icy cold on the shore. May the dawn rise red-tipped on ice, on snow, on frost.

Today I'm delighted to be chairing this panel with wonderful Professor Elelwani Ramugondo and Professor Eddah Mutua around gender and decolonisation in Africa. Just a few housekeeping things before we get into it. Some of you who may have already been on a few of these sessions will know we have a community code. I'm going to read it out to give you a chance to think about it. Our ten days together is a time to learn, to share and support one another. We have crafted this community code to facilitate open and respectful communication. So as part of that, this is no surprise; being curious, open and respectful, making generous assumptions, keeping things within the vault of the session. One person, one mic, no cross-talking. Speaking from our own lived experience. None of us are everything, but together we can surely learn a lot. Let's make space, let's be -- we can't be articulate all the time, but let's also not take ourselves too seriously, right? So I'll just give you a second to look at that community code because that's what we'll be following as we go through.

So in line with that, when we do have an opportunity, which we will at the end, for pātai, questions and kōrero discussion, we really want you to join in. The benefit of this is really through discussion. So what I would like you to do is use the Q&A at the bottom of your Zoom. If you look down there's the Q&A, there's two little chat bubbles. Feel free to put your questions in as they come to you, and at the end we're going to leave enough time to go through some of those questions. Of course we might not go through all of those questions, I will pick out some of the key questions, and we have the lovely Hannah who will be moderating the questions and the lovely Laura who's doing all our slides. So as we go through, put your questions in and also there is an opportunity at the end, the questions will be kind of captured and recorded so you can kind of look at the answers later on.

Unfortunately we're not able to provide closed captioning for today, so what we're going to provide instead is an opportunity, potentially, to have some kind of script of the conversation as we go through. And please, if you'd like that, Hannah's going to put an e-mail in the chat that you can e-mail to request that. So apologies for that and that's the option that we have available for us today.

So without further ado, let's get into it. I'm so delighted to say jambo bwana to Eddah and Elelwani. I'm just going to read their introductions, and I have to say it's very heart-warming. So Professor Elelwani Ramugondo and Eddah Mula Mutua, both of whom are professors, this is what they say: "We introduce ourselves using the ethno-autobiography that encourages personal and cultural self-exploration and honours multiples stories. Our academic credentials do not state who we are culturally, who we are in relation to others. Instead, these credentials glorify ways that the western educational enterprise works to decentre us from our real presence, the presence of our being, our ancestors and our interconnectedness and balance with the land, nature, the living, and the living dead. As such, we prefer first and foremost to give credit to our indigenous presence. We are daughters of the African soil, mothers to children who cannot deny their Africanness because it inhabits in their mothers. We are spouses to men who do not get in the way of our Africanness and efforts to engage in ground-up theorising and praxis. Our lives are shaped by African experiences. Wherever we are we endeavour to centre this presence through our efforts to decolonise Eurocentric logics. We ground our sense of being as learner/teachers, we bring to the classrooms and the ivory towers of the academy questions, memories, wisdom and knowledge that we continue to draw from or learn from our teachers located outside of the classrooms at the University of Cape Town and St Cloud State University. We are honoured to speak at this gathering where the spirit and memory of the indigenous presence is real. Sawubona. We see you, we value you and we respect you.

So without further ado I'm going to hand you over to the beautiful Eddah and Elelwani and looking forward to hearing what you have to say and the questions and answers afterwards. Kia ora.

>>PROF RAMUGONDO: Kia ora. Thank you, Sam, for that beautiful introduction and from Eddah and I we also extend our deep gratitude to the organising committee, including Ilsa Emery-Whittington, who played a critical role in bringing us together. During our engagements in preparation for today Eddah and I discovered ourselves as sisters from different mothers and for that we are truly grateful.

So Sam, you would have noted that we have refined our title for engagements today to "Decolonising knowledge: The role of language and the case of the green belt movement in Kenya". And Laura, if we can move to the second slide.

So that's our order of engagement that you see, and we start with an invocation followed by some theoretical framing, which involves attending to the meaning of decolonisation, speaking from within and without disciplines and thereafter attend to two fallacies within the canon. We then conclude with two case studies, one of which will be brief from the University of Cape Town, South Africa, and the other more extensive that Eddah will share.

Now we'll move to invocation. This is addressed to past and present colonial oppressors. Here we go. You have succeeded in forcing us to follow your religions, to speak your tongues, to wear your garb, to build as you do and to ingest and inject only what you produce and profit from. The more we observe that your dominant ways are not sustainable for life itself and Mother Earth in all her splendour and mystery, the more we shall continue to resist.

Now in attending to the meaning of decolonisation, it is important to distinguish between what decolonisation means for indigenous populations, and what it might mean in the western academy. So for decolonisation from indigenous perspectives, we draw from Waziyatawin and Michael Yellow Beard from their work, which many of you will be familiar with, "For Indigenous Eyes Only". For these indigenous decolonial scholars, decolonisation refers to the intelligent, calculated and active resistance to the forces of colonialism that perpetrate the subjugation and/or exploitation of our indigenous mind, bodies and lands, and is engaged for the ultimate purpose of overturning the colonial structure and realising indigenous liberation.

Decolonisation within the academy, on the other hand, and for many, is centred on the survival and ability to thrive for indigenous populations, black people and other minority groups within the academy. This perspective often falls into the unfortunate trap of assimilation, often driven by the inclusion diversity and equity discourse which, as many of you find, can also become an industry.

For our conversation today we are not going to focus on this perspective, but one advanced by fellow decolonial scholars but few. For a start, Sandew Hira, a Surinamese colonial scholar illustrates that key to decolonising universities is clearly articulating the difference between Eurocentric epistemology and decolonial epistemology. Hira argues that central to Eurocentric epistemology is the ability to produce lies or untruths as

objective knowledge. This is because key to Eurocentric epistemology is the production of ideas and concepts that enable us to understand the world, both natural and social, in a manner that requires that one should never judge what those concepts mean when confronted with lived experiences. By extension, this means that we can understand reality without ever needing to judge it. And it is in this separation between the knower and their judgment of reality that allows for the production of knowledge -- of lies as knowledge.

Decolonial perspectives, decolonial epistemology, on the other hand, while also interested in understanding the world, it's also intent on exposing lies. And to drive this point home, Hira uses the concept of "discovery" as an example. The notion of discovery is strongly embedded within the narrative of science and western civilisation as the triumph of humanity, even when everywhere explorers learned that all over the world from Europe what is called discovery has a counter-narrative from indigenous people and is called "occupation" as it should. Always accompanied by extractivism. Yet the lie of discovery continues within western civilisation and knowledge production.

Now marrying perspectives from indigenous populations and those from within the academy, Shose Kessi, Zoe Marks and I have proposed and, in line with Latin American decolonial scholars, who have introduced the notion of decoloniality. That decolonising should be understood as a verb, that entails a political and normative ethic and practice of resistance and intentional undoing, unlearning and dismantling unjust practises, assumptions and institutions as well as persistent positive action to create and build alternative spaces and ways of knowing.

We already see here that there is a possibility for indigenous perspectives and those from the academy to complement each other. But for that to happen there must be mutual alliances between those who speak within the academy and those who speak from outside of it and from outside of the disciplines. This allows for fallacies within disciplines, within the canon to be identified, dissected and transcended.

We will now attend to two such fallacies, and the first one is disciplines can save or uplift humanity. And it is perhaps true that many of us are attracted to the academy for its promise to serve humanity with corporate branding for most universities highlighting their ability to deploy their very best minds to resolve societies intractable problems.

Yet the western university has always preoccupied itself with the classification and hierarchisation of knowledge predicated mostly on control; control of societies in Europe and beyond. This since the adoption of the idea of the university in Europe anchored on

theology, medicine, law and the arts, starting with the university of Paris during the early 13th century.

The classification and hierarchisation of knowledge, however, does not stop at the level of disciplines, it extends to human beings. Michel Foucault, or Michel Foucault if you want, in his seminal work "Discipline and Punish" makes the observation that in the ability to characterise, classify and specialise, disciplines distribute and hierarchise along a scale and around a norm individuals in relation to one another, and if necessary disqualify and invalidate. Foucault has argued that academic disciplines in their origination, that is rooted on the establishment of the modern prison and penal system in 18th century France, as well as their function, serve to sustain the mechanisms of societal control. Here is where we ask key questions: Social control on whose behalf and to what end?

Answering both these questions is beyond the scope of our conversation today, but what we can say with some certainty is that disciplines and professions, by extension, are often obsessed only with themselves, with their own survival. Lewis Gordon calls this disciplinary decadence, which akin to Sandew Hira whom I referred to earlier, refers to failure to appreciate reality, which sometimes takes the form of recoiling from it. The disciplinary decadence, according to Gordon, is the phenomenon of turning away from living thought, which engages reality and recognises its own limitations to a deontologised or absolute conception of disciplinary life. The discipline becomes, in solipsistic fashion, the world. This is how disciplines begin to behave like religions, and academics within begin to act in concert like disciples. Here, questions that disrupt the status quo will not be tolerated. Society, that is human beings, are reduced to data points, never to question but available for control.

Now without attending to questions that emerge from the living who may have concerns that may be different to those of the academy, how then do we continue to pretend that disciplines are here to serve and uplift humanity? But wait, it gets worse, and this takes us to the second fallacy: That the colonial languages are indispensable for knowledge production.

This belief that colonial languages are indispensable for knowledge production is not only dangerous, but is simply not true. Why dangerous? We have to invoke the idea of genocide. Raphael Lemkin, a Polish lawyer who witnessed the genocide of his own people, Jewish people across Europe, as Hitler was in the quest of expanding Nazi Germany, describes genocide as a phenomenon which does not necessarily mean the immediate destruction of a nation, except when accompanied by mass killings of all members of a

nation. It is intended, rather, to signify a coordinated plan of different actions aiming at the destruction of essential foundations of the life of national groups with the aim of annihilating the groups themselves.

Lemkin lists culture as one of the eight tools of genocide and language is a key aspect of culture. Language serves as a powerful vehicle through which culture is transmitted from one generation to the other. Culture begins to die when its custodians can no longer use their own languages. Ngũgĩ wa Thiong'o takes this idea of death by stifling language further and contemplates not only over the present but the future. What future is there to talk about without current imagination?

The idea of genocide through stifling language from Ngugi is based on the fact that by forbidding oppressed people to speak their own languages, repressive regimes aim to starve their imagination. These regimes do not want the oppressed to think or imagine the possibilities of a different future.

In thinking about Tiriti futures and anti-racism, therefore, Eddah and I wish for all of us to also dismantle the fallacy that colonial languages are indispensable in knowledge production. We share with you some of our work and I will present very briefly emerging work from South Africa, University of Cape Town. This is work we have conceptualised as centring African languages to decolonise curricular. And Laura, we can now share that slide, thank you.

Now this slide that we're sharing now presents the team which represents disciplines in health sciences, humanities and education. While the site of the work is the Faculty of Health Sciences, the different disciplines are deployed to help us figure out how to centre African languages to decolonise disciplines within health sciences. And in the Faculty of Health Sciences we produce rehabilitation therapists and these include audiologists, speech and language therapists, physiotherapists, occupational therapists, nurses, doctors, and all kinds of medical specialists. And central to our work is using African languages as a critical aspect of decolonising curricular in health sciences, as I said. And we do this by inviting voices from within and outside of health science disciplines. I really just would share as far as that and we can engage further in Q&A. But I will now hand over to my sister Eddah.

>>PROF MUTUA: Thank you everyone. Good evening to you, good morning for me. As my sister Elelwani said, I am very pleased to be here. We are very pleased to be here to share ideas that pre-occupy us a lot in our professional life and our normal life as well.

I want to use the case of a very special woman, as many of you know, professor Wangari Maathai and the green belt movement to really unpack this idea of decolonisation, decolonising knowledge. One of her favourite phrases for me is when she described women as foresters without a diploma. And think about, take a moment and think of what she meant, how do we unpack this, what sort of theoretical lenses do we need to do to unpack the notion that the women that she worked with are foresters without a diploma.

I want to express that decolonisation when we think, when we think of decolonising knowledge and the role women that play, first thing that comes to mind is to ask the question, why Wangari's work comes to mind at the mention of decolonisation. Why does it, why does it come to mind, and how does it sort of address some of the issues, the theoretical issues that Elelwani raised in our introduction.

Wangari's work not only earned her a Nobel peace prize, but it changed how we think about environment, how we need to change our discourses and the kind of languages that we need to embrace in order to take care of the environment as well as to plant the future. Without saying, this work reveals the primary expressions of colonialism which is the exploitation and destruction of the environment and indigenous people's relationship with the land, whether we are talking about soil, vegetation, animal, rock, boulders, language, spirituality, knowledge systems, that is the -- looking at Wangari's work reveals all this and the exploration of colonialism and how this disconnected indigenous people from what they have always known.

Quoting Kremer and Jackson-Paton in their book "Unlearning Decolonisation and Whiteness", when we think about the environment, of course most pressing to us and everyone in these times of climate change is the objectification and commodification of nature. We are in danger of being reduced to something that can be bought or sold. In this small act we are resisting the ridiculous notion that the world is devoid of spirit, presence and intelligence of indigenous people.

Wangari's work again evokes those provocations and interventions that the colonised can get into in order to resist the forms of violence that come with colonisation and new colonisation. The green belt movement, the women coming together in communities, hanging on despite the violence from all quarters of society, the government, for example, the Police, what they are doing. What Wangari brought to the forefront is that we can always have some intervention, however violent it may be, and still move and still get ahead and do what is right in resisting colonialism.

Wangari's work is also key in challenging what Elelwani talked about, the challenges, it challenges western and modern scientific systemic side-lining of African knowledge. Going back to the exploration foresters without a diploma, right there, how did the women become that? How did they become these foresters? And the irony, the sarcasm in it, as Wangari uses, this expression, "oh right, so you -- the foresters, you are trained at the University of Nairobi and you claim that the women can plant trees?" And Wangari responds by asking the women "do you know how to plant, to grow food, you know how to plant maize, you know how to plant potatoes, you know how to plant beans?" The women say "yes", and she says "the same way you plant your food is the same way we are going to plant trees." And right there they became foresters without a diploma.

That in itself is so key and exciting to know that the language that we -- the way indigenous people use their language to communicate amongst themselves, to understand, and especially when they understand their circumstances, that in itself can change. And Wangari's work just shows that very keenly in ways that she is out there and gets all of us to think about dismantling all this logics that get people to think that they do not know what they have always known in their lives. Women being made to believe that oh they can't plant anything, yet they feed everybody in the nation, they feed everybody on the continent, and a well-trained person says no, you cannot do it.

But Wangari gets that, challenges that and advances, helps us through a rhetoric. She advances the understanding of environmentalism and African rhetoric in making that a reality. But most of all what she does is to centre African epistemologies, and the way she does that helps to draw attention to her cause, that ultimately achieve this immense global impact that continues even after she is gone. Many years her spirit continues and even as the world suffers, experiences climate change, her work is even becoming more prominent in helping us to understand the ways that it privileges the power of the marginalised in presenting these alternative approaches to knowing.

Last but not least, when we think about Wangari Maathai's work and why it comes to mind the mention of decolonisation is the fact that it gets us to think about the role of social movements and their capacity to resist epistemic violence, environmental justice, political dictatorship, etc, etc.

The way the green belt positioned itself and presented its membership and its ideals as a tool to dismantle colonialism, to dismantle oppression, to dismantle political dictatorship is important, because it shows that once people have given power, and meant to recognise their power and they are able to have the opportunity to walk into their power,

good things can happen. But most of all it is just really a persistence and resolve to keep a cause going which really shows us the successes and difficulties in undoing of colonialism, and especially when it is done at grassroots, at the grassroots level.

How then with all this now that we have an idea of how Wangari unpacked the notion of foresters without a diploma through the activities of the women, how then do we see them as custodians of knowledge and as participants in decolonising knowledge? Earlier on in our introduction we said that we both continue to learn from people that will never be in the classrooms that where we teach in the ivory towers of the academy. But we have these women who have the wisdom, and the healing presence, and the presence of connection that defies, that remind us as academics that regardless of whatever route we take, we can never allow ourselves to be disconnected from this presence, from land and from one another. And it's for this that it is important that we take a look at the activities, what the women of the green belt movement did that really shows us some of the ways they have been decolonising knowledge even though they are not in a classroom.

First, it is the fact that their activities turn the gaze to nature, to land and because they want to reclaim the meaning of the past for the future. Their gaze has to be on the land, because that is where life is. And once we are able to see what they are doing with the land, planting trees, then they give us a meaning of the present and the future. They are reminding us to not forget to connect with the past and not to disconnect ourselves from who we are, because that is what shapes what tomorrow will be.

I like the fact that the activities of the green belt movement, regardless of the difficulties that they faced from the then government of Kenya, they continued to do their work which we are here presenting and sharing, and that is how they got us to think about centring the union with nature in order to defy this commodification and objectification of the land, the environment and to work towards the future.

You may be aware of the fight that Wangari Maathai and the green belt movement put in order to stop the public park in downtown Nairobi from being turned into some concrete jungle. She fought, she fought and she won. And that in itself showed us that once we centre union with nature, we have this union with nature, we are not going to allow the environment our land to be commodified.

Thirdly, the activities of the green belt movement show us how the use of language and I connect this to what is happening, the work that Elelwani is leading in South Africa, the use of languages -- sorry, the use of language, of storytelling, song and dance allows,

allowed these women to communicate amongst themselves. They told stories, they spoke in their own languages, they sung, they danced, that form of communication amongst them.

And also how they communicated that to the rest of us helped to change our perceptions of the relationship that humans have with nature. Planting trees, saving the rivers, putting up with Police beatings when they went to protect their sons that had been taken in as political prisoners; they still used language of storytelling, of dance and song to change our perceptions. They sung, they sat under trees, they danced when they could dance, they cried and all this really got us to see this deep relationship that humans have with nature.

The activities as well-utilised these proactive ways to identify local problems and other local solutions like humanisation and don't commoditise it. The women were smart, they were very clever and very witty in the ways they went about doing their things. They were witty in the way that they worked in their communities to challenge how they were perceived as not having adequate knowledge, university diplomas that could allow them to take care of their environment.

They were able to identify the problems that they were facing simply because they were connected to the land. They saw that their children did not have enough to eat. They saw that the rivers were dry. They saw that when the rains came, the rivers, the streams would be and the soils would be carried away. They were aware of the environment and that their observations, their experiences every day determined gave them a pathway to seek solutions, own solutions to their problems. They did not have to wait for an NGO to come and fix their problem passing, they didn't have to wait for the government, but they knew organising will get them to where they needed to be.

And that is something important to the rest of us to think about really how are we able, how do we see, do we observe what is around us, that motivates, that is motivating enough to get us to take action. Is that something that we have to do, whether we are in the academy or in whatever profession that we are in. And here is this work, Wangari's work and the green belt movement, women, telling us, yeah, every day can be what we do every day can be a decolonising, a decolonising moment.

Green belt movement and its activities does great in acknowledging that indigenous people have always had ways to deal with problems and especially the environment when they understand what the problem is. And that is what they did, they understood it. And that again, all these activities which really enhance on, speak to how the women took upon themselves to decolonise knowledge; prioritising diverse modes of organising to address

and make this basic needs for survival, clean water, healthy soils, shelter, food, security, peace and many others is what really matters. That is the power of prioritising, organising. It is the power of taking that, making that, having these very proactive ways of doing things in very unassuming ways and that really matters.

What can we learn, what can we all learn together from Wangari Maathai's work with the green belt movement? How do we plan the future? I know I did not go into deep detail to this women's work. I am sure many of you are familiar with her work. But really for purposes of our conversation today is just to look at how, you know, just to see how she gave us the picture of how decolonisation looks like and how it can be the everyday life if we really pay attention and remain connected to nature and our surrounding.

We want to conclude by getting us to reflect about decolonisation as a journey of self-discovery and about remembering connection and relationships, and that knowing this is a continuous process. How do we engage our bodies? Decolonisation is not -- yes, it is about dismantling oppressive structures, but it's also really considering how we engage our bodies through critical self-reflection so that we can come up with new ways of addressing the present reality in order to plant the future.

So this small video, that really gets us to tell us that every moment can be that moment to decolonise if we choose to be a hummingbird and that is really how we engage ourselves. So let's take a look at this 2 minute and then we can all go for a discussion together. Thank you.

(Video played). "We are constantly being bombarded by problems that we face and sometimes we can get completely overwhelmed. The story of the hummingbird is that this huge forest being consumed by a fire. All the animals in the forest come out and they are transfixed as they watch the forest burning and they feel very overwhelmed, very powerless, except this little hummingbird that says I'm going to do something about the fire.

So it flies to the nearest stream, takes a drop of water and he puts on the fire and goes up and down, up and down, up and down as fast as it can. In the meantime all the other animals, much bigger animals like the elephant with a big trunk could bring much more water, they are standing there helpless and they are saying to the hummingbird "what do you think you can do? You're too little, this fire is too big. Your wings are too little and your beak so small you can only bring a small drop of water at a time."

But as they continued to discourage it, it turns to them without wasting any time and tells them 'I am doing the best I can', and that to me is what all of us should do. We should

always feel like a hummingbird. I may feel insignificant, but I certainly don't want to be like the animals watching as the planet goes down the drain. I will be a hummingbird, I will do the best I can."

>>RINGA HĀPAI: Wow, thank you so much Eddah and Professor Ramugondo. I have to say the comments have been buzzing with appreciation and resignation of what you're saying and the comments you're making. So I'm just kind of -- I've got pages and pages of notes here and I'm just trying to think about how we proceed. There's a few questions here I want to go to.

I guess I just wanted to make a comment before we go to the questions around the framing of decolonisation of knowledge in particular and in particular the fallacies that you talked about, which I'm sure resonate a lot in Aotearoa New Zealand as well as other colonised nations, where, you know, you talk about how there's a -- the fallacy, for example, of the discipline being required to uplift humanity and a role of language in particular, there's been a journey in Aotearoa in particular of the role of language.

And Eddah, in terms of your relationship with nature, what a lovely video to finish with because it's so empowering and uplifting that we can all do our bit. The question is, not do we have a role, but what role are we choosing to have. That's what I'm leaving the session with.

So I'm just going to go to a few questions. There's one here from Melissa, I'm going to read it out to you and she says, "is it an alternative approach to knowing or a prior approach to knowing which they are just going back to, would you agree that ie the way that colonised countries are now starting to approach appreciating and respecting the environment is something that indigenous countries have always done and yet still are not credited for thinking?" I don't know if you want to respond to that, I can see you nodding.

>>PROF MUTUA: Yeah. That is -- thank you for the question and good observation. Yeah, and that is -- it's the idea of just turning this gaze and, you know, where I live in Minnesota, I see the same things, the Lakota people, the Indian communities around the Midwest. And one of the things that we see, you know, super foods, berries, blueberries and all that. The indigenous people always had that, you know, it was taken away from them, they were given fried, you know, food stamps, you know, and everybody else went to eat the good food.

Yes, I agree, all this knowledge has always been in the custody of indigenous people, and it was destroyed. And yes, perhaps this is the time to learn from them, when the coloniser can be a learner if they want to and know that they are not knowing, they are

not all knowing, there are some things they do not know that they can learn from indigenous people.

>>RINGA HĀPAI: And I wonder as well, Eddah, if that links to what Elelwani was saying around, you know, the fallacy of colonial language being indispensable to knowledge, you know, when the use of food, because it wasn't necessarily portrayed in a certain language or a certain way, it was considered not to be valid knowledge, you know, or knowledge that wasn't worthy of exploration and following through with.

I have a question as well in terms of a systemic level for Professor Ramugondo. And this is from somebody who says "thank you very much for this profound presentation. I work in a westernised education institution but I am passionate about allying with indigenous colleagues and decolonising institution and celebrating indigenous knowledge. The institution I work at often claims to want to incorporate indigenous peoples into the institutional framework, but fundamentally these two ways of thinking and ways of sharing knowledge are not compatible. The institutional inclusivity ends up being a box ticking exercise for diversity KPIs. It's so frustrating. What is your experience of this type of situation and how would you suggest approaching existing institutional frameworks to make a real difference?"

>>PROF RAMUGONDO: Yeah, I mean it's a very important question. It's a question that we, in the academy, always grapple with. And for us to be honest, it takes courage and to say that in fact celebrating indigenous communities, populations, knowledges, it's not what indigenous populations are looking for. They're not waiting for recognition, you know, theirs is a reclamation of lands and the dignity, and health, because most times and in line with what Eddah is describing, where she finds herself in Minnesota, you actually are facing communities that are dying off, and there has been examples of populations that were completely eradicated.

And I think for all of us it's important to know that the ultimate end point for systemic racism which is anti-black and anti-indigenous, the ultimate purpose is death in the advancement of profit. But in the end it's not only indigenous populations that suffer, it's everybody who's not part of that global elite. And I think Covid has brought along many lessons for us if we are willing to interrogate closely, and I think in many ways it may be too early to speak out, because there are consequences for calling out power, for naming genocide what it is when we witness it.

But I am hopeful that that time will come. There are many of us who begin to see the signs when we walked into rural places and we saw how indigenous populations were

coping in the midst of Covid, whereas in the so-called suburbia people were scrambling for help to come from the academy. And we have a chance, I think, to reckon with the futility of what we have created and, you know, realise that the indigenous populations don't need us as much as we need them.

>>RINGA HĀPAI: And it's really interesting because it's also about the whole rescue mentality, you know, let's go in and rescue, you know, we know -- you know, we as in the colonisers -- know better. And this is the whole delegitimising the knowledge, the indigenous knowledge and the generations of knowledge that are ongoing; but of course with the removal of the language, to cut that knowledge off to, cut the storytelling, to cut the intergenerational knowledge sharing, and it's a key feature of white supremacy essentially.

We're unfortunately running out of time, it's already 8 o'clock and there's so many wonderful comments to say thank you to you both. I have to say I am so -- it's just been such a pleasure to work with you before this and now with my own history of my family in Tanzania, it's just so wonderful to work with you both.

I'm just looking at how we're going to close off now. We do have the Q&As that have been done have been noted, so we will share those, and there is an option for sharing the captioning, so please e-mail through as you need to. I'm really sorry that we don't have time to answer them but we will pass the questions on and hopefully we can get some responses to you. So any final comments from you Eddah or Elelwani before we close for today?

>>PROF MUTUA: New Zealand, I was there two years ago and honestly I just -- I really felt that indigenous presence in there and I hope one day Elelwani and I can come and visit you.

>>RINGA HĀPAI: And you have to be sure to visit me without a doubt. We'll hold another conference.

>>PROF MUTUA: Yeah, or you visit, all of you come to visit us in Africa.

>>RINGA HĀPAI: Definitely.

>>PROF MUTUA: That would be good, yeah.

>>RINGA HĀPAI: Thank you so much.

>>PROF RAMUGONDO: Thank you.

>>RINGA HĀPAI: Thank you. So we're going to close today. Thank you everybody for your questions, thank you so much for your comments. We want to just thank all our partners who've allowed this to happen, this wonderful event. You can see them all here. It was amazing to share this time and this space with you, so I'm just going to close with a karakia.

Kia whakairia te tapu, kia wātea ai te ara, kia turuki whakataha ai, kia turuki whakataha ai.
Haumi e, hui e, tāiki e. Tēnā koutou everybody, stay safe.