



## Survey Research Report

### Introduction

An online survey was conducted as a pilot study to better understand awareness of Nia Tero, a nonprofit organization that supports Indigenous guardianship of land, waters and culture. The primary objective of this survey was to explore how familiar Indigenous community members are with Nia Tero and its mission. Since Indigenous communities are among Nia Tero's target audiences, it is important to evaluate whether the organization is known and recognized within these communities.

The research also aimed to gather insight on what Indigenous people from multiple countries consider most important in conservation efforts. By asking respondents to rank priorities such as funding, cultural preservation, and youth programs, the survey sought to identify how community expectations align with the work Nia Tero currently supports. In addition, questions about communication channels provided information on how participants prefer to learn about organizations like Nia Tero, which can guide outreach and engagement strategies.

The following research questions motivated the survey research:

- RQ1: How familiar are participants with Nia Tero and its mission?
- RQ2: What priorities do participants identify as most important for Indigenous communities protecting their lands and waters?
- RQ3: What communication channels do participants prefer for learning about conservation organizations?

### Methodology

The survey was built and distributed using QuestionsPro and consisted of 12 total questions. Of these, one question was a consent agreement (Q1), six questions focused on the core research topics (Q2–Q7), and five were demographic questions (Q8–Q12). In total, 274 people viewed the survey, 49 began it, and 35 completed it. A total of 14 people dropped out before finishing, which left a completion rate of approximately 71 percent. On average, participants spent about three minutes completing the survey.

To ensure participants could accurately respond to the questions, skip logic was applied. Those who did not feel connected to issues around protecting land, water and the environment were

able to exit after the screener question. Participants who did feel a connection continued with questions that explored their awareness of conservation organizations, their familiarity with Nia Tero and their values around conservation priorities. The survey was intentionally designed not to mention Nia Tero at the beginning, determine unaided awareness without leading participants or biasing their responses.

The demographic section asked participants about age, gender, location and Indigenous affiliation. This information helped identify whether respondents represented Indigenous communities, which was a key focus of the research. Collecting these demographics ensured the results could be analyzed with attention to the perspectives of Indigenous respondents, who are among Nia Tero’s primary audiences. The full list of survey questions can be found in the Appendix.

### Sample Description

The survey was available from Sept. 22–24, 2025, and was distributed through multiple channels. The researcher shared it directly with friends and family from their tribal community, the Shinnecock Nation, as well as with Indigenous relatives the researcher connected with over the years from across the United States, Australia and Africa. Invitations were sent through text, email, WhatsApp and Facebook Messenger to about 30 people. On Sept. 23, 2025, the researcher also posted the survey in a Shinnecock community Facebook group with 507 enrolled members, ensuring additional Indigenous perspectives were represented. In addition, the survey was shared with classmates through a Canvas course page, and asked to share the survey via snowballing, which meant not all participants identified as Indigenous.

In total, 35 people completed the survey. Table 1 provides the complete sample demographics.

**Table 1: Sample Demographics (N=35)**

Category	Breakdown	Percent of Sample	Number of People
<b>Age</b>	18–24	23 percent	8
	25–34	9 percent	3
	35–44	43 percent	15
	45–54	6 percent	2
	55–64	11 percent	4
	65+	9 percent	3
<b>Gender</b>	Male	20 percent	7
	Female	80 percent	28

<b>Identity</b>	Indigenous	71 percent	24
	Non-Indigenous	29 percent	10
<b>Location</b>	North America	94 percent	33
	Australia	3 percent	1
	Africa	3 percent	1

Most respondents were female (80 percent), identified as Indigenous (71 percent), and lived in North America (94 percent). The largest age group was 35–44, representing 43 percent of participants. Overall, the sample reflects strong Indigenous representation and a concentration of voices from North America.

## Results

A large majority of participants, 93 percent, reported feeling connected to issues around protecting land, water and the environment. Only 7 percent indicated they did not feel connected.

Figure 1 shows how participants’ connection to conservation issues relates to their familiarity with conservation organizations.

		[Q8] Which of these conservation organizations have you heard of? (Select all that apply.)					Row Total
		Conservation International	Land Trust Alliance	The Nature Conservancy	Nia Tero	None of these	
[Q7] Do you feel connected to issues around protecting land, water, and the environment?	Yes	4	11	20	3	14	37
	No	0	0	0	0	0	0
Column Total		4	11	20	3	14	37

Figure 1. Cross-tabulation of participants’ connection to conservation issues and their familiarity with conservation organizations.

Among those who felt connected, recognition of conservation organizations varied. The Nature Conservancy was the most familiar, with 38 percent of participants identifying it by name. The Land Trust Alliance followed at 21 percent, and Conservation International at 8 percent. By contrast, Nia Tero was the least recognized, with only 6 percent of respondents reporting familiarity. Notably, 27 percent indicated they had not heard of any of the organizations listed.

These results suggest that while participants strongly identify with environmental issues, their awareness of specific conservation organizations is limited, particularly for newer or less widely publicized groups such as Nia Tero.

## Importance of Indigenous Communities in Conservation

When asked how important it is that nonprofits working in conservation are led by or work directly with Indigenous communities, a majority of participants indicated this was a top priority. Nearly 58 percent said it is “very important,” while another 21 percent said it is “important.” A smaller share, 16 percent, were neutral, and 5 percent considered it “slightly important.” No participants said it was “not important.”

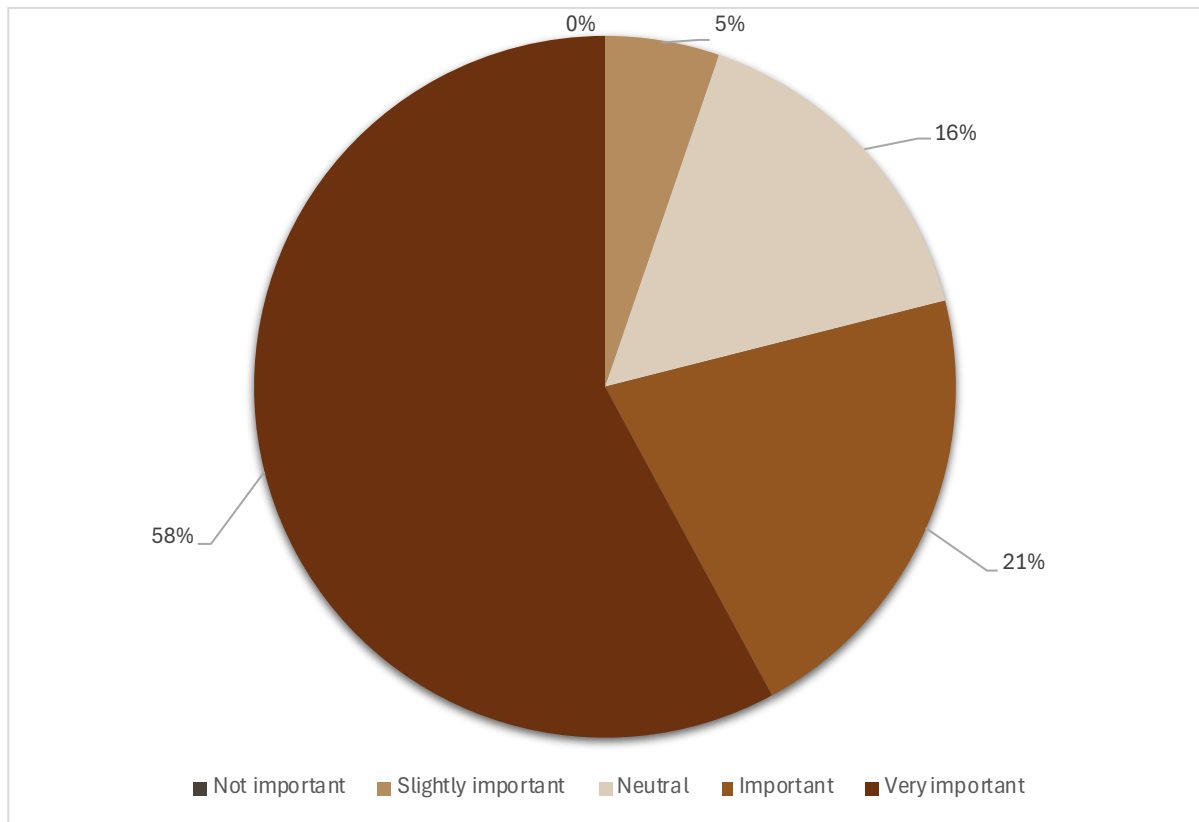


Figure 2. Participants' views on the importance of Indigenous leadership in conservation nonprofits.

While the strong majority of the sample surveyed supports Indigenous leadership, the neutral and slightly important responses reveal an untapped audience. Among the participants, 16 percent reported being neutral and 5 percent indicated it was only slightly important. These results suggest there is space for Nia Tero to focus on awareness and engagement strategies that explain “why” Indigenous-led conservation matters. Reaching people who may be undecided or less convinced could be a critical step in broadening support for their mission.

## Familiarity with Nia Tero

The survey results show that awareness of Nia Tero among participants is limited. A strong majority, 82 percent (28 people), reported they had never heard of the organization. Smaller portions of respondents expressed varying levels of partial awareness. Nearly 9 percent (three

people) said they had heard a little about Nia Tero’s work, while 6 percent (two people) were unsure if they had heard of the organization. Just 3 percent (one person) had heard the name but did not know what the organization does. Notably, none of the respondents identified as active followers of Nia Tero.

This distribution suggests that while Nia Tero is engaged in global conservation and Indigenous partnership work, its visibility remains relatively low within this sample of primarily Indigenous participants. The absence of any self-identified active followers highlights a gap in sustained engagement. At the same time, the small group who had heard a little about Nia Tero represents an entry point, these participants could become more engaged if given targeted outreach, storytelling, or opportunities to connect with the organization’s mission.

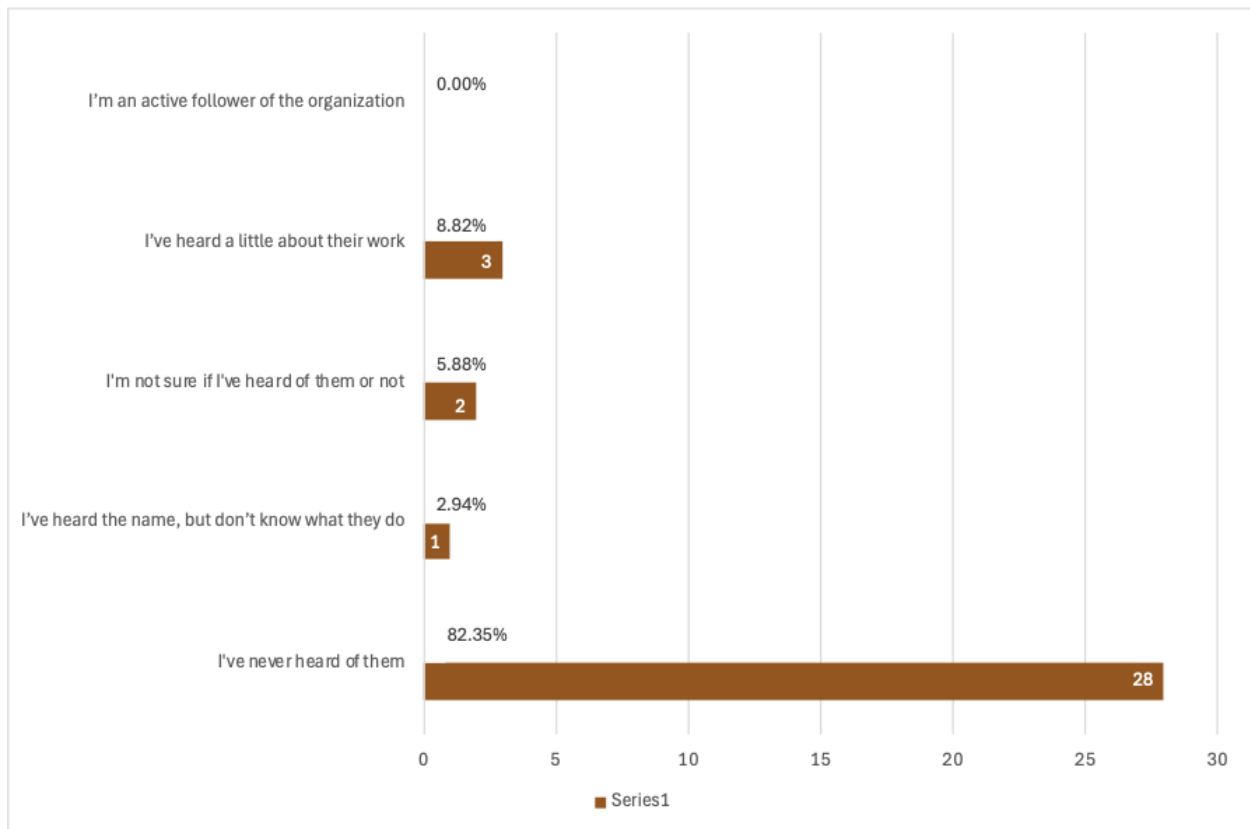


Figure 3. How familiar are you with Nia Tero?

### Preferred Communication Channels

When asked about the best ways to learn about conservation organizations such as Nia Tero, participants most often selected social media, with 24 percent choosing this option. Community events were the next most popular at 18 percent, followed by word of mouth at 14 percent and email or websites at 13 percent. Traditional media such as print, broadcast, or online outlets accounted for 12 percent, while 10 percent selected advertisements. Fewer participants identified local leaders (9 percent) or “other” responses (1 percent) as preferred sources.

The strong showing for community events is especially important. It suggests that if Nia Tero participated more frequently in Indigenous community gatherings or hosted in-person events of their own, they could strengthen engagement with audiences who value relational, place-based interaction. While digital outreach through social media is clearly essential, this finding shows that offline opportunities are equally valuable for connection and trust-building.

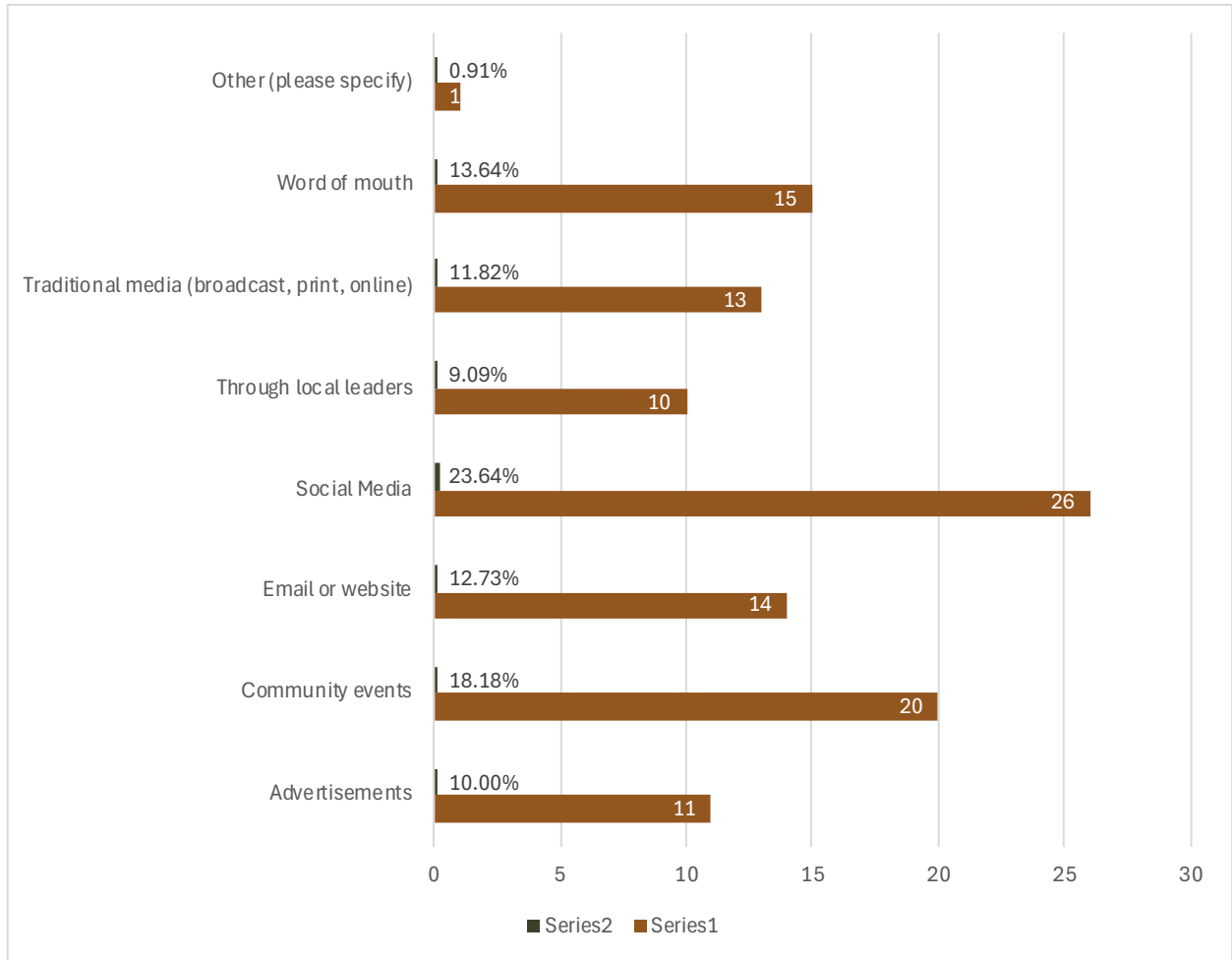


Figure 4. What is the best way for you to learn about conservation organizations like Nia Tero?

One respondent also used the “other” option to write in “my wife.” While not highly informative, it does highlight that informal, relational networks play a role in how people learn about organizations, even in unexpected ways.

## Conclusion

The results of this pilot study suggest that while many participants feel strongly connected to conservation and believe Indigenous leadership should play a central role, awareness of Nia Tero remains low. Despite 71% of the sample being from Indigenous communities, more than 80 percent of respondents said they had never heard of the organization, confirming that visibility and outreach among key audiences are critical challenges. The majority placed a high level of importance on Indigenous involvement in conservation work. This shows that Nia Tero's mission is aligned with participant values, even if its name and work are not yet widely recognized.

One limitation of this research was the survey design itself. For example, the skip logic for the question asking Indigenous respondents to share their community affiliation was set up incorrectly, meaning those responses were not collected. The survey sample leaned heavily toward Indigenous participants from the United States. While this provided valuable insight into the Native American audiences, it also means the findings cannot be assumed to reflect a wider Indigenous audience or the broader conservation-focused community.

Still, the results point to several takeaways. Based on a SWOT analysis:

- **Strengths:** The belief that Indigenous communities should be central to conservation efforts resonates widely.
- **Weaknesses:** Nia Tero is not yet well known among Indigenous communities or the general public.
- **Opportunities:** Hosting or participating in more community-based events could increase visibility. Outreach to audiences who are neutral or only slightly engaged with conservation issues may also expand awareness.
- **Threats:** Larger, well-established conservation organizations may dominate the conversation, making it difficult for smaller, Indigenous-led or collaborative groups like Nia Tero to gain attention. In addition, low awareness could prevent Nia Tero from securing broader funding or partnerships needed to sustain its work.

Future research could focus on testing strategies for raising Nia Tero's visibility among Indigenous and non-Indigenous audiences. For example, surveys could explore the impact of specific outreach methods like community events, digital storytelling, or partnerships with other organizations. Understanding how to engage those who are currently neutral about Indigenous-led conservation could also reveal important opportunities for growth.

## Appendix

### Research Questions: How familiar are you with Nia Tero and its mission?

1. **Do you feel connected to issues around protecting land, water, and the environment?**
  - a. Yes
  - b. No

*(If “No,” the survey ends. If “Yes,” continue to Q2.)*

2. **Which of these conservation organizations have you heard of? (Select all that apply.)**
  - a. Nia Tero
  - b. The Nature Conservancy
  - c. Conservation International
  - d. Land Trust Alliance
  
3. **What is your level of interest in the Land Back Movement?**
  - a. No interest
  - b. Slightly interested
  - c. Neutral
  - d. Interested
  - e. Very interested
  
4. **How familiar are you with Nia Tero?**
  - a. I've never heard of them
  - b. I've heard the name, but don't know what they do
  - c. I've heard a little about their work
  - d. I know who they are and what they do
  
5. **How important is it to you that nonprofits working in conservation are led by or work directly with Indigenous communities?**
  - a. Not important
  - b. Slightly important
  - c. Neutral
  - d. Important
  - e. Very important
  
6. **Please rank the following types of support in order of importance for Indigenous communities protecting their lands and waters (1 = most important, 6 = least important).**
  - a. Funding
  - b. Policy advocacy
  - c. Technical support/training
  - d. Cultural preservation
  - e. Storytelling/media
  - f. Youth programs
  
7. **What is the best way for you to learn about organizations like Nia Tero?**
  - a. Social media
  - b. Community events
  - c. Through local leaders
  - d. Email or website
  - e. Word of mouth
  - f. Other (please specify)

**Demographic Questions:**

8. **What is your age?**

- a. 18–24
- b. 25–34
- c. 35–44
- d. 45–54
- e. 55–64
- f. 65+

9. **What is your gender?**

- a. Female
- b. Male
- c. Non-binary
- d. Two-Spirit
- e. Other (please specify): \_\_\_\_\_

10. **Do you identify as Indigenous?**

- a. Yes
- b. No

*(If they do not identify with being Indigenous, they skip questions 11.)*

11. **If yes, please share your Tribe, Nation, or Indigenous affiliation:** Fill in the community you are from.

12. **Where are you currently located?**

- a. North America
- b. Central America
- c. South America
- d. Pacific Islands
- e. Europe
- f. Africa
- g. Asia
- h. Australia
- i. New Zealand
- j. Other (please specify): \_\_\_\_\_