

Indigenous Evaluation Network – Conceptualized

Activities

Monday, May 1, 2023

Public Narrative: These activities seek to showcase the importance and value of First Nations, Inuit and Métis evaluators; drawing attention to the critical role of Indigenous evaluators in Indigenous evaluation and innovation.

Collective Impact: The Indigenous Evaluation Network seeks to amplify the importance of, and voices of First Nations, Inuit and Métis evaluators and the value they bring to their programs, research, and Indigenous communities. The network will invest new resources into, and support innovation in Indigenous evaluation. In turn, improving Indigenous-led program sustainability, community success, and capacity-building activities for Indigenous evaluators and program service providers across Canada.

Timing: The Indigenous Evaluators Network will be launched on the last day of the inaugural Indigenous Evaluators Summit, on February 24, 2024. Here, the network will receive its name through a naming ceremony.

Rationale: Three Indigenous Evaluators Gatherings held between March 2021 and January 2022 conceptualized the Network. These meetings were also the first standalone gatherings of Indigenous evaluators and program providers across Turtle Island. At the first meeting, the 80+ attendees identified a need for a coordinating body.

The subsequent two sessions formulated the ***Conceptualization of Activities*** to prioritize the work that an Indigenous Evaluation Network would undertake. A fourth meeting was held with a Think Tank, which supported the planning for the first Indigenous Evaluators Gathering. Given the position of TRC and its continued implementation over the past four years, and the endorsement of these gatherings and think-tanks, a larger voice must be formulated to support communities in mastering the skillsets of evaluation to benefit their community membership.

Purpose: The Indigenous Evaluation Network will enable new, emerging, and experienced Indigenous evaluators and Indigenous program service providers to connect, network, build

capacity, engage in mentorship, and expand the field of Indigenous evaluation by providing a central resource and hosting networking opportunities for the benefit of Indigenous communities.

The Indigenous Evaluation Summit is the Networks' first order of business. The Summit serves to launch the Network as an independent entity. On the last day of the Inaugural Indigenous Evaluation Summit, the Indigenous Evaluation Network will receive its name through a naming ceremony. The First Nations birthing ceremony will be Anishnaabe and Nêhiyawak because this Network's Grandmothers speak Ojibway and Cree endorsed by Inuit and Métis supporters. The Summit is a not-for-profit exercise, so any "profits" remaining from the Summit will go directly to support the Indigenous Evaluation Network. An audited ledger will be made available publicly for the Indigenous Evaluation Summit.

Use of Language: The preparation of this *Conceptualization of Activities* was dominated by First Nations evaluators' participation in the Gatherings and Think Tanks. While this is a reality of the landscape in Canada, it is not an excuse. When the Network takes office, it will develop its own work plans that are inclusive of Métis, Inuit and First Nations distinctions-based activities and actions.

Land, Language, Culture, (Community) -- Overarching to guide and inform all the activities and actions.

- Create a graphic of the overarching guides and the four aspects of self.
- Take in the Sweatlodge, Naming Ceremonies, and Thanksgiving from Spiritual; and envision a seasonal circle diagram showing and sharing the times we set out to do these ceremonies.

| Timeline | Pillar | Activities | Lead | Implementation |
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| <p>1-2 yrs 3-5 yrs 6 – 10 yrs</p> | <p>Spiritual</p> | <p>Sharing Place</p> | <p><i>Government Foundation Fundraising ...</i></p> | <p><u>Words from our Youth:</u> To start this work first by working within Indigenous Language and its translation – this will open a better understanding of what is being asked of community.</p> <p><u>Words from our Gatherings:</u> Evaluation is so crucial to us, and our ancestors have taught us all these ways; and the western is starting to understand that now.</p> <p><u>Words from our Elders:</u> Sweat lodge ceremonies are Indigenous ways of evaluating and spirits well if I said what shall I do this summer, should I go see my granddaughter in the Eastern Doorway, and what they will answer, the conductor will put down the medicine.</p> <p>Holding communities in our hearts and with us as we look into our spirits, these are the ways we come together as Indigenous evaluators and program services for Indigenous Peoples (that want to evaluate their work).</p> <p>Having a place to share, an Academic Lodge, an independent Lodge, to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Talking Circle to start -- this along with smudging with medicines and a Blessing from an Elder. Starting with a brief teaching on the importance of the Four |

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| | | | | <p>Medicines, the Four colours in indigenous culture. And then presenting all with Tobacco to honour this work together. Now we can speak and share our knowledge together.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Sweat lodge ceremony—if in person -- prayers for guidance, support, good energy for evaluations, healings for community, for Elders and youth to come together to share knowledge and nurturing. Now we can come together to pray and ask the spirits to support us as we walk together to complete evaluations that support communities. ● Naming ceremonies - for Elders and youth. These guide youth and adults in their life journeys to help them to know their purpose and paths in life. ● Thanks giving ceremony - to thank Creator, Mother Earth and Helpers with this work. |
| | | <p>Evaluation as a Sacred Undertaking</p> | | <p><u>Words from our Youth:</u> Share these teachings and show communities the potential and the importance of unfolding in some heavy issues that we are dealing with right now -- making it clear that the voice of communities matters and can be heard by evaluation.</p> <p><u>Words from our Elders:</u> Strengthen this Indigenous network across Turtle Island.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Talking Circles to keep the process going. It so important to keep the dialogue going -- creating stronger ties. ● Obtain community input in any future evaluation process. Do survey monkeys, small focus groups, phone surveys (targeted) to get input on what they would like to see in their community for evaluations. ● Help community to understand what evaluations mean and how evaluations can assist with community issues such as substance use, mental health issues, |

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| | | | | <p>medical conditions, recovery groups such as Sober Squad and A.A., N.A., Talking Circles, community healings, community support, community events, community pride, housing needs, skills building for jobs, recreational programs for youth and adults and other similar community needs.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Evaluations can help with publishing and sharing of information and/or models with other indigenous communities across the U.S., Alaska, Hawaii and Canada. |
| | Social-emotional | Elder / Youth Connections and Guidance | | <p><u>Words from our Youth</u>: Keep the engagement going – involving youth is a real opportunity for the youth to get some great work experience.</p> <p><u>Words from our Gatherings</u>: Continue to engage youth and support their growth and reaching their potentials.</p> <p><u>Words from our Elders</u>: We need to support the mentoring of the youth partnering them with Elders.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Input on this conceptualization of activities from Elders and Youth Council - commitments, purpose, compensation, contexts, etc.; and description of our group and potential benefits. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> This task was completed by December 2022. A council of Elders and Youth reviewed the draft document, and their input revised some content, and their input is now noted throughout the entire document as Words from our Youth and our Elders. Important we are connected with all kinds of people on the emotional level and what kind of gatherings and collaboration can we do together. It is so important to work on the mental stability and the work that has been done. This is where |

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| | | | | <p>the Youth and Elders get together and our way of life so crucial to help with that, we need good minds, and we need to move forward in good health.</p> |
| | | <p>Network Environment for Indigenous Evaluation</p> | | <p><u>Words from our Youth:</u> All of the ideas here are loved by all, and can be made with fun, social and a cross cultural learning experience.</p> <p><u>Words from our Elders:</u> The document can reflect the circle teachings. All working together in the circle for one cause.</p> <p><u>Words from our Gatherings:</u> Thinking about opportunities to gather in the Network, such as annual and seasonal and how we take care for one another and opportunities for connecting and healing in a space and time to belong and recharge and rejuvenate as a collective.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Regularly convene a group to stay in contact with each other to share resources, information and models for use across Indigenous lands. ● Recruit young people to help train them for Indigenous Evaluations for future generations. ● We need a document that shows where we work, what we do and our respective areas of expertise so we can share with each other when needed for our respective work. ● Youth led virtual space is ideal, such as Teams chat, or a Discord server, etc. |
| | Physical | <p>Land Based Teachings</p> | | <p><u>Words from our Youth:</u> Land and Language go hand and hand. Gifts of the land through language. And through the seasons.</p> |

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| | | | | <p><u>Words from our Elders:</u> Maybe a on the land mini gathering of Indigenous spiritual teachers, land-based teachers, star teachings from the local nations.</p> <p><u>Words from our Gatherings:</u> Through trial and error this pandemic taught us all how to take care of ourselves, our families and communities; there are amazing examples of those communities that took hold of the reign in the health and well-being of their people. Rama started their own Farm; grown without pesticides and their main goal is to bring healthy foods to their people and to sell to other communities. Engagement of the outside, on their terms.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Utilize spiritual and cultural leaders to teach about land and how important land is to our Indigenous Peoples. ● Have spiritual leaders teach about how important it will be for adults and youth to learn how to survive with the upcoming climate changes that are coming. ● Have Chiefs, Tribal Leaders and Managers learn about Emergency Preparedness to be ready when disasters strike our communities. It was clear, many of our communities were not prepared for this virus that came to our Indigenous communities. Our people need to be ready for floods, fires, earthquakes and possibly tsunamis. ● Help to teach our communities how to have food sovereignty and/or to have community gardens for Elders, youth and families. We can teach how to share food with each other again. Teach our warriors how to hunt, fish and trap for survival. |
| | Mind | Mentorship | | <p><u>Words from our Youth:</u> All this is so exciting, building up our youth. Bringing about balance in all four sectors of the medicine wheel. Love it!</p> |

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| | | | | <p><u>Words from our Gatherings:</u> Virtual space lead by Youth for Youth.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Building capacity with Youth and Elders to foster an interest in evaluation. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Establish the Terms of Relationship for Youth and Elders participating in the Network as leadership. – Youth and Elders will decide how to guide us moving forward. ● Develop a mentorship program for Youth and Elders with goals and objectives. Then, set up a plan for measuring progress. Youth can help with developing food sovereignty and emergency management as they are our next leaders. |
| | | <p>Consensus Building -- Collective Strength</p> | | <p><u>Words from our Youth:</u> Mino Bmaadziwin. The Good Life. What we all strive for. Beautiful.</p> <p><u>Words from our Elders:</u> Star teachings, this is happening each time for each moon, each grandmother has that responsibility of gifting, today is a full-moon, there is a teaching about a fish and sucker moon, it is our responsibility to learn about the water and the sucker moon is the cleanser of the water and our responsibility to relate to them and we talk about the water and a new moon, new teacher, and star beings, next new moon is a flower moon, to have new teachings, to learn of the 13 moons and those responsibilities.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Develop programs that involve entire communities and tribes to work together in unity for a common purpose. For example, community gardens, emergency preparedness, education on substance use and mental health issues, education on trauma, utilizing Indigenous Health Indicators to help communities to work together while using traditional practices such as fishing and/or canoeing to work for their food. |