



# WORKING IN GOOD WAYS

A framework and resources for Indigenous community engagement

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Heard and shared by  
Nicki Ferland, Anny Chen, Gerardo Villagrán Becerra

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## Kinanâskomitin, maarsii, miigwetch, bantíox, chaltumay, pagrachu, gracias, thank you.

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Finally, we are grateful to the communities who have welcomed us, opening their hearts and homes and generously sharing their wisdom and worldviews with us. We continue to learn from and with you every day.

With all our love and gratitude,

Nicki, Anny, and Gera

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# FOREWORD

BY CHRISTINE CYR, ASSOCIATE VICE-PRESIDENT (INDIGENOUS)

The Community Engaged Learning team has given us a gift.

I must admit that when I sat down to review the framework, I was prepared to edit with a critical lens and provide pages of constructive feedback. Imagine my surprise when I immediately realized that I was reading a thoughtful, thorough, and brilliant work of love. And that I couldn't find anything to critique! It was obvious that years of careful practices and authentic love of community were the backbone of this work.

My colleagues, Nicki Ferland, Anny Chen, and Gerardo Villagrán Becerra, have demonstrated their leadership and their commitment to our communities by using honesty, humility, and humour to guide us through ethical approaches to doing our work.

First, this framework tells us **why** working in good ways with communities is important. The authors do this by sharing firsthand experiences of building successful relationships, mistakes they have made, and advice by people who have paved the way. They remind us that in order for our community relationships to be authentic, we have to let go of ego, we have to clearly understand our roles and responsibilities, and we have to be prepared to do "the work before the work."

Second, this framework tells us **how** to work in good ways with community. It leads us through deep reflection about our motives and our previous or planned practices.

It gives excellent resources to grow our literacy about Indigenous peoples and communities. And it gives us practical strategies so that we can actualize our good work.

We all learned at a young age how to build friendships, but have we applied those principles to our work?

This framework reminds us to show up; that trust and vulnerability matter; that real relationships take time (sometimes years); and that while we will absolutely benefit from these genuine relationships, our focus should be on what we can contribute rather than what we will gain.

I am an Indigenous woman and I have been working in Indigenous communities for over 30 years, and each time I read the framework, I learn something new. I realize that there was a better way that I could have done some things. Going forward, I now have the tools to do things in a better way.

This should be the "go-to" guide for anyone and everyone who wants to work in and with Indigenous communities.

Thank you to Nicki, Anny, and Gera for being community champions and for giving us this incredible gift.

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*Christine Cyr is Métis from Winnipeg. She is the Associate Vice-President (Indigenous), Students, Community, and Cultural Integration at the University of Manitoba.*





# INTRODUCTION

## Build relationships, not just partnerships

As we learn more about white supremacy, colonialism, and Indigenous sovereignty, there is a growing recognition that we need to change how we do our work in community engaged learning—a need to rethink what it takes to partner with Indigenous communities and how to know if we’re doing our work in a good way. Part of that work is acknowledging that universities are colonial institutions, which follow and perpetuate a western logic and ultimately serve settler and colonial motivations, often at the expense of Indigenous students, faculty, peoples, and land.

It’s time to move beyond typical community engagement models and instead embrace a framework that focuses on building and taking care of our relationships. *Working in Good Ways* shares learnings from consultations with Anishinaabe, Cree, Kichwa, Maya, Mapuche, and other Indigenous community partners in Manitoba, Belize, Ecuador, and Chile, as well as Indigenous and non-Indigenous practitioners, community members, and learners from the University of Manitoba and wider community.<sup>1</sup>

### Terminology

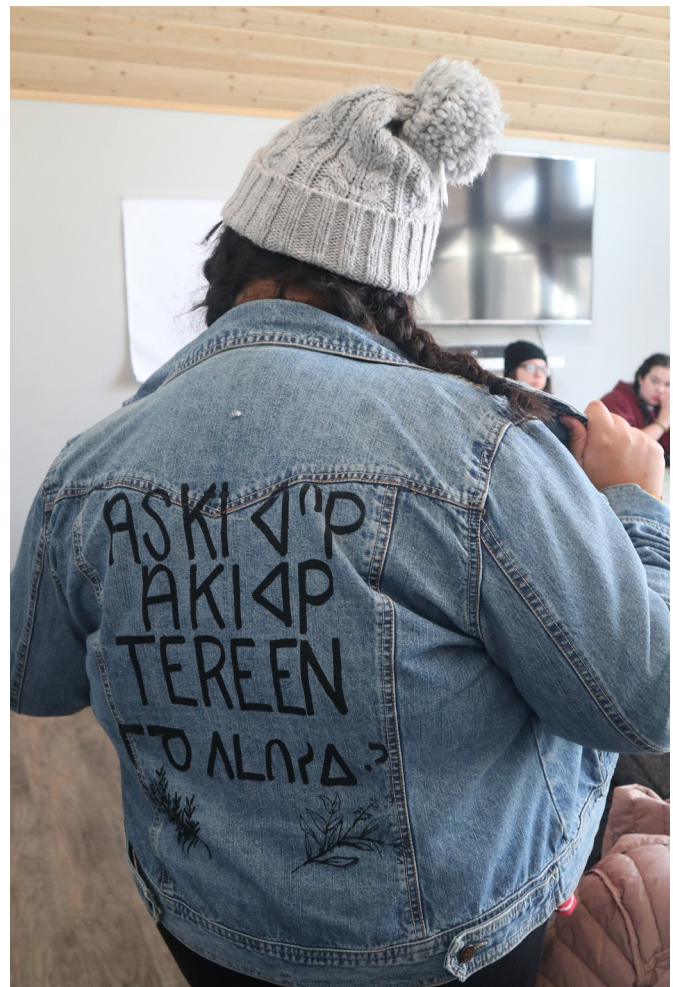
We use the term Indigenous throughout the framework as an imperfect term to refer to the collective of original peoples across the Americas. Whenever we have shared learnings from a particular community or person, we have named specific nations. It’s crucial to ask about preferred terms, so that we can respect the terminology and self-designations of the communities with whom we work.

“The word Indigenous is something that academia needs as a category and concept for research. However, to work in a decolonial way requires naming each nation, each community, each language.”

—Natalia Reyes Bustamante, Simpatizante Mapuche (translated from Spanish to English)

**“The other who is not *originario* is always and already part of colonization. If you work for the government, a public institution, you are a colonizer.”**

—Mariano Calfuqueo Curin, Mapuche (translated from Spanish to English)



<sup>1</sup> Community Engaged Learning primarily consulted with our own community partners. You can read more about our approach to the consultations in the appendices.

## Seven principles for Indigenous community engagement

Seven principles emerged from these conversations about how universities could work in good ways when partnering with Indigenous communities for community engaged learning



**Literacy:** Developing and maintaining basic knowledge and understanding of Indigenous histories, cultures, and experiences and using that learning to meaningfully support Indigenous self-determination and challenge colonial systems and practices.



**Reflection:** Engaging in reflective practice to develop critical self-awareness, including knowing who we are and where we come from, what motivates us to work with Indigenous communities, and how we learn, work, and relate to the people and communities with whom we want to work.



**Relationship:** Building personal, whole relationships that precede, sustain, and outlive programs and formal partnerships, and which stem from a capacity and willingness to honour Indigenous relationality and engage in relational accountability.



**Reciprocity:** Ensuring that communities experience mutual benefit, ownership, and relational accountability, beyond basic remuneration, project resourcing, and following community protocols.



**Protocol:** Following nation- and community-specific practices to demonstrate respect for Indigenous ways of knowing, being, and doing, and our willingness to grow beyond our own personal practices and institutional policies and procedures.



**Humility:** Recognizing communities as the experts in our partnerships and being ready to contribute our gifts, as directed, in ways that support the vision and goals of the community.



**Collaboration:** Working in ways that work for Indigenous communities, including creating partnerships where the community has comparative or greater power in deciding what kind of work needs to be done, why it needs to be done, and how it should be done.

## Taking care of our relationships; relational assessment

To flourish, community engaged learning partnerships with Indigenous communities require conscious care and effort. One important way of showing this care and effort is to pay attention to our relationships and assess their well-being—a practice that the office of Community Engaged Learning is calling relational assessment. In contrast to student assessment and program evaluation, which typically focus on learning outcomes and program impacts, relational assessment focuses on the health and quality of the relationships that underlie a partnership.

Here are some principles for relational assessment that were shared by community partners and practitioners:

- › Communicate to build trust
- › Pay attention by visiting
- › Nurture diverse relationships
- › Grow and evolve relationships and assessments together

Read more about these principles and related practices in the Relational Assessment Guide.

### Why should we practice relational assessment?

Integrating relational assessment into our work can help us identify areas of strength and weakness in a partnership, reflect on the way our partners perceive our work, recognize the points at which relationships evolve, and most importantly, inform our approach to cultivating and caring for meaningful and ethical relationships with Indigenous communities.

Through relational assessment, we can build mutual trust, create a safe space for sharing gratitude and difficult feedback with each other, and ensure a process for responding to that feedback and growing together. Relational assessment can also bring everyone back into relationship when we are feeling overwhelmed by the work. Dedicating time and effort to relational assessment demonstrates care for our community partners, and the more that we engage in relational assessment, the more meaning, motivation, and benefit we will find in the practice.

## How can we practice relational assessment?

Relational assessment is an ongoing process that begins with the work before the work, guides our steps through the stages of forming, maintaining, and closing partnerships, and continues in the relationship after the work. As with all aspects of the community engagement process, relational assessment should centre the community's perspectives and approaches and, ideally, be community-led.

Use the Relational Assessment Guide to support the planning and facilitation of relational assessment in your partnership. The guide shares four principles for relational assessment and suggested assessment questions for each stage of the pathway for Indigenous community engagement. These questions will help you assess the health and quality of your relationships through personal reflection and in conversation with your partners.



Here are some questions we can ask ourselves and our partners to assess our relational assessment practices:

- › How has our relationship changed over time?
- › How has the way we communicate with each other changed?
- › Are our usual methods of relational assessment still working for us?
- › What do we want to get from relational assessment at this point?
- › Who should be involve in relational assessment at this stage of the partnership?
- › What does taking care of our relationship look and feel like right now?

## Building structures that last: systems change

Working in good ways with Indigenous communities often means encountering institutional barriers and improvising workarounds to address policies and procedures that may be irrelevant, inappropriate, or harmful. Some common institutional barriers faced by practitioners and community partners include:

- › restrictions on approved expenditures, particularly expenses related to community protocols, ceremony, gifting, and visiting;
- › delayed payments for goods and services;
- › requirements for written documentation, reporting, and administrative paperwork; and
- › inflexible work schedules.

We need to go beyond changing our own individual practices and start to address the norms by which our teams, departments, faculties, and institutions think and work. If we are experiencing barriers and obstacles due to university systems, it's likely that others are experiencing similar challenges. Instead of developing individual workarounds or other ways of overcoming institutional barriers that only apply to our partnerships, we should advocate for new policies and procedures that alleviate these burdens and stop these harms for all Indigenous community members that interact with our institutions. In this way, we can work towards transforming institutional systems and making community engaged learning more just and equitable for Indigenous peoples, communities, and land.

**“Work to make a better future for our kids. Don't pass the buck.”**

—Elder Keith Anderson, Rocky Cree



## Why accept responsibility for systems change?

In universities, community engaged learning operates within and despite complicated networks of policies and procedures, which are designed to make work more efficient, consistent, and secure. For example, most projects involve a financial system to process funding, revenue, and payments; a risk management system to oversee safety, liability, and insurance; and an educational system to direct student learning within and outside the institution. Universities, as colonial systems, are designed to protect and benefit the institution, not communities, so without critical and thoughtful resistance, these systems will uphold, reproduce, and worsen the harms and oppressions that Indigenous communities already experience at a societal level.

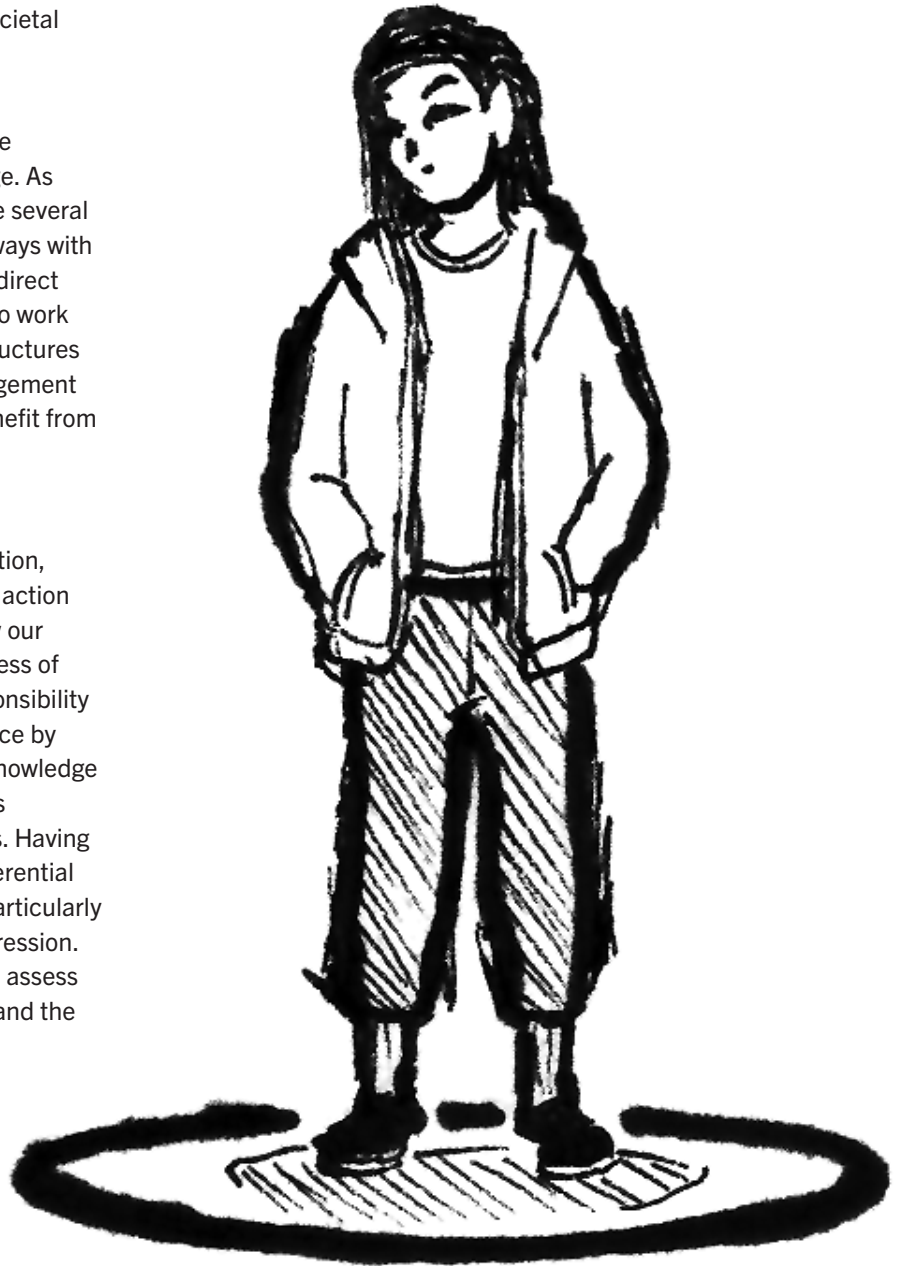
When working towards reciprocal and collaborative partnerships with Indigenous communities, then, we have a responsibility to advocate for systems change. As discussed in the chapter on Collaboration, there are several practices that we can implement to work in better ways with Indigenous partners. However, in addition to those direct actions within our own partnerships, we also need to work towards permanent, institutional changes to the structures that put up barriers to Indigenous community engagement and limit the ways Indigenous communities can benefit from our work together.

## How can we create systems change?

Each of us, as practitioners representing our institution, has the responsibility and power to take immediate action within our own circle of control, whether that is how our project runs or how we supervise students. Regardless of our role within an institution, we also have the responsibility and power to take action within our circle of influence by informing and encouraging decision-makers to acknowledge and address the barriers and harms that Indigenous communities face when partnering with universities. Having said this, it is important to recognize the power differential that exists between practitioners and leadership, particularly for practitioners who have lived experiences of oppression. When pushing back against power, it's important to assess the potential risks and repercussions for ourselves and the community and be strategic in our advocacy work.

## Circle of Control

Use the Circle of Control in the Practitioner Workbook to reflect on your own circles of control and influence and identify where you have responsibilities and opportunities to change your practices and advocate for systems change within your institution.



# “Build structures that outlast the people working in these structures.”

—Gladys Rowe, Swampy Cree

## Turning a workaround into policy change

Whenever we create a workaround, we should document the new process, including why it is necessary and how it helps. The documentation needs to explain why the current institutional process doesn't make sense for the community, the steps we took to create a process that prioritizes the needs of Indigenous communities, and how the new process benefits other stakeholders, including students, the department, and the institution as a whole.

Next, we can share this new process, including the rationale and benefits with our supervisors, and ask if this new way of working could be implemented at the departmental level. We should ensure to explain both the ethical reason behind the new process and the ways in which it can make everyone's work easier and more efficient. If the new process is related to a university goal or recommendation, it is also useful to make that connection for people.

From there, we can take a grassroots or organizational change approach – or both. In the grassroots approach, we can share within our community of practice; after all, if we find a process to be a barrier, it is likely that fellow practitioners do as well. In the organizational approach, our supervisors can bring the new procedure to university leadership, who can in turn implement it across other departments. Adoption and widespread support across departments will create greater immediate benefits, as well as a precedent that advocacy committees and working groups can use as leverage for wider institutional changes, which often take a much longer period of time.

Regardless of whether we experience success or meet resistance, it is useful to document, reflect on, and share our systems change work with supportive colleagues and leadership. Through this sharing, we can build communities of practice with whom we can organize, learn, and increase our capacity to address barriers to change.

### Here are some questions we can ask ourselves when we are trying to work towards systems change:



- › What institutional systems do Indigenous communities have to navigate in order to partner with us? What are the barriers and supports that they experience?
- › If the community experiences some of these systems as barriers, what can we do to support them and who can help us to make these changes within the university?
- › Who are the people or offices within our institutions that are responsible for listening to community feedback and advocating for these changes?
- › How can we modify our work processes to better document and communicate institutional barriers encountered by Indigenous community partners?



# HOW TO USE THE FRAMEWORK AND RESOURCES

As we learn more about white supremacy, colonialism, and Indigenous sovereignty, we know that we need to change how we do our work as educators. Many, however, don't know where to start.

The framework and resources are perhaps most obviously a guide for practitioners of community engaged learning<sup>2</sup> on how to begin this work -- how to develop our literacy, reflect on our roles, build relationships and reciprocity, listen to community, and work in good ways. We hope that these resources will help those who have limited experience and connection to start building those connections in a good way.

The framework and resources are also a reference point to which more experienced practitioners can return again and again. As practitioners, we wrote the framework and resources to help us learn, remember, and check whether we are working in good ways. In reading and reflecting on the principles and practices, we hope that the framework and resources will become part of our normal approach to relationship-building, program development, education, and assessment.

While this framework was developed for the context of Indigenous community engaged learning, practitioners and educators may find this resource helpful for their work in other forms of Indigenous community engagement, as well as whenever universities engage and work with the wider community.

## How should these resources be used?

The framework is organized into an introduction, eight chapters, and an appendix, which reframe partnership and assessment, highlight the importance of the work before the work, present seven principles for working in good ways

with Indigenous communities, and share resources and tools to better understand and support Indigenous community engagement.

The first chapter on the work before the work highlights an often-overlooked stage in the pathway for Indigenous community engagement, where we put in the time and energy to ensure we are ready to work with Indigenous communities and have built a foundation based on relationship and trust.

The remaining chapters focus on the seven principles, and while the framework may start with literacy and end with collaboration, the principles are not meant to be read in a linear or prescriptive way. Instead, each principle is interdependent, dynamic, and practiced simultaneously throughout all stages of partnership – from the work before the work, through forming, maintaining, and closing partnerships, and into the relationship after the work.

We invite readers to read through the entire framework, jump between chapters to learn more about related principles, and return to the chapters where you felt like you could challenge yourself to do better and engage more deeply with the practices, questions, and resources.



<sup>2</sup> For the purposes of this document, we are defining practitioner as a staff or faculty member, typically non-Indigenous, who uses the pedagogy of community engaged learning in their teaching and learning work with students.

## Chapters

Each chapter includes the following features to help us understand what the principle means, why we should use it to guide our work, and how we can integrate the learnings into our practice.

**Visual art:** Throughout the framework, you will find comic strips, infographics, and spot illustrations that bring to life the stories and practices shared in the consultations. Each chapter begins with an art piece that illustrates a central story or practice from the principle. Before turning the page, take a moment to engage with the art and reflect on what the chapter may hold.

**Quotes:** Direct quotations from the consultations share community voices and show the diversity of nations from whom we received learnings and teachings. Individuals and collectives were given the opportunity to be named and to share their nation or ethnic background.

**Stories:** Practitioner and community stories share the ways that people have implemented and experienced the principles outlined in this framework, including the mistakes we have made and how we overcame them, giving you a chance to learn from our experiences.

**Systems changes:** To ensure long-term change and better support the implementation of this framework, practitioners, faculties, and universities will need to advocate for structural changes, some of which we have identified at the end of each chapter. Practitioners are encouraged to reflect on where they can take action and have influence using the Circle of Control in the Practitioner Workbook.



Look for this icons at the end of each chapter to find systems changes that support the principle.

**Questions:** We have included questions for practitioner reflection and partner conversation at the end of each chapter. Take the opportunity to pause and reflect on the principles and practices and your experiences in Indigenous community engagement.



Look for these icons at the end of each chapter to find questions for individual and group reflection.

## Supplementary Resources

Expand your knowledge and understanding of the principles and practices with the supplementary resources provided in the appendices, which include different articles, books, videos, websites, toolkits, and more.

### Practitioner Workbook

The workbook is available as a separate resource, and shares learning exercises that will help you reflect on the principles and engage with the practices, including literacy homework, reflection worksheets, mapping exercises, and more.



Look for this icon at the end of each chapter for a brief description of the related learning exercise.

### Relational Assessment Guide

The relational assessment guide is available as a separate resource, and provides question banks to help you assess the health and quality of your relationships and engage your partners in assessment conversations. The question banks are not meant to be exhaustive, but rather a starting point from which you can draw inspiration for assessment within each stage of Indigenous community engagement. Together with your partners, select, adapt, and create assessment questions and activities that will be relevant, productive, and appropriate for the community and the context in which you are working.

### A note about experiential learning

Engaging with the framework and resources is not a replacement for experiential learning. In order to truly develop our capacity for working with Indigenous communities, we must be present in community so that we can learn from experience, relationship, and even through our mistakes. The expert in any form of community engagement is always the community partner. In cases where the community's ways of working and relating conflict with this framework, you should respect and honour the perspectives and approaches of your partner.

# THE WORK BEFORE THE WORK

Many people make the mistake of proposing collaborations and partnerships with Indigenous people and communities without having first built a foundation for working in good ways.

We can build this foundation by doing the work before the work, which involves:

- › developing literacy in Indigenous content,
- › engaging in critical self-reflection, and
- › building relationships with Indigenous people and communities.

The work before the work will look different with each Indigenous community, but the partners and practitioners that were consulted agreed that doing the work before the work is crucial for working in good ways.

## Developing literacy in Indigenous content

Developing literacy in Indigenous content<sup>3</sup> means developing our capacity and willingness to engage with and learn from Indigenous peoples, pedagogies, and knowledge systems. We need to then go beyond learning by meaningfully supporting Indigenous self-determination and challenging colonial systems and practices, within and beyond our partnerships and in community-directed ways.

Indigenous partners identified three key areas of literacy development:

- › the history of colonization and ongoing colonialism in Canada and within the Indigenous communities with whom we are building relationships,
- › Indigenous resistance and resurgence, both historic and present-day, and
- › community-specific histories, cultures, experiences, and ways of living, relating, communicating, and working.

You can read more about these different areas of literacy development in the chapter on Literacy and find a homework guide in the Practitioner Workbook.

## A cautionary note on pan-Indigenous approaches

The histories, cultures, and identities of all Indigenous communities are unique and even groups or individuals within the same community may be different from each other. The work before the work is not something we can do once; rather, it's a foundation that needs to be rebuilt each time we engage with a new person, group, or community. We must be ready to be adaptive and work in diverse, community-led ways.

## Engaging in critical self-reflection

Engaging in critical self-reflection is a central practice for developing self-awareness about ourselves and how we are connected to Indigenous peoples and land. It is particularly important to recognize our positionality within a settler colonial state and our roles and responsibilities as treaty beneficiaries. As long as we live and work on Indigenous land, our relational accountability to Indigenous peoples, communities, and land will continue to exist.

Indigenous partners identified several key areas of critical self-reflection, including:

- › knowing who we are and where we come from,
- › knowing how we may be perceived and being ready to earn people's trust rather than expecting it outright,
- › knowing our motivations and capacity for working with Indigenous peoples and communities,
- › knowing how we relate, communicate, and work with others and developing our capacity to adapt and feel comfortable with Indigenous ways of knowing, being, and doing,

<sup>3</sup> Literacy in Indigenous content is a phrase coined by a participant of the Summer Institute, which supports UM staff and faculty in integrating Indigenous content into their programs and courses. The Summer Institute is offered by Dr. Cary Miller, Department Head of Native Studies, and funded by the UM Indigenous Initiatives Fund and the Faculty of Arts.



- › recognizing and challenging anti-Indigenous racism and settler colonialism in ourselves and others, and
- › anticipating and managing our own culture shock and debriefing needs.

You can read more about this self-work in the chapter on Reflection, and start to build awareness of your own positionality by engaging with the Relational Introduction learning tool found in the Practitioner Workbook.

**"Relationship-building often takes a long time and has no guaranteed outcomes, but even if there is no institutional recognition, the work before the work still needs to be done."**

—Anny Chen, Canadian-born Chinese

### Building relationships with Indigenous people and communities

Building relationships with new people and communities can be a daunting task, particularly when we are engaging with Indigenous communities for the first time. However, it is only through relationship-building that we can earn trust, create shared understandings, become familiar with each other as potential partners, and possibly receive an invitation from Indigenous communities to work together.

Many of the practitioners with whom we consulted started their partnerships with significant relationship-building periods -- spanning weeks, months, and even years. There is no definite time period in which a trusting relationship will be built and, perhaps even more challenging to acknowledge, there is no guarantee that a partnership will emerge. Regardless, partners and practitioners shared a strong belief that relationships sustain partnerships, and strong, collaborative, and reciprocal partnerships can only arise under conditions of trust, shared understanding, and Indigenous self-determination.

It is our responsibility as community engaged learning practitioners to put time and effort into building relationships and trust, and hopefully demonstrate through our actions that we are capable and committed to supporting the vision of Indigenous communities in the way that they want to be supported.

**Here are some relationship-building practices that are particularly relevant in the work before the work:**

- › **Be present in community and spend time with people.**  
Step 1: Show up!<sup>4</sup> Go to community events, turn up to rallies, and value and practice visiting. If our partners are too far away to meet regularly in person, we can spend time with them online, call them, and engage with their social media.
- › **Develop personal and whole relationships.**  
Share who we are as a people outside of our role and work at our institutions. Have fun and build friendships. When we're lucky enough to be in community, we should spend quality time with community members in ways that have no direct benefit to our work.
- › **Be humble and helpful.**  
Do the work that needs to be done, whether that means washing dishes, putting away chairs, finding funding, or typing up minutes. Be generous and giving, use our power, privilege, and resources to extend supports to the community, and follow through with any commitments that we make.
- › **Be respectful and adaptive.**  
This means managing our prejudices and culture shock when we are interacting with people and collaborating with communities, rather than requiring people to adapt to our needs.
- › **Assume institutional accountability.**  
Regardless of our personal motivations, we will likely be perceived as a representative of our institutions — another person in a long line of people — so, be ready to take responsibility for hearing and addressing institutional harms.

You can read more about relationship and relational accountability in the chapter on Relationship.

<sup>4</sup> This short call to action is from an Instagram story posted by AYO! (Aboriginal Youth Opportunities).

## Why should we do the work before the work?

Doing the work before the work strengthens our capacity for working with Indigenous peoples, our relationships and partnerships with Indigenous communities, and the work that communities and universities do together.

## We should do the work before the work because it's necessary, it's possible, and it's good to do.

Indigenous communities have asked us to do this work, and we should only work with Indigenous communities if we are committed to working in Indigenous-led ways. Both Indigenous and non-Indigenous practitioners have put in the time and energy and shown us that the work before the work can be done, and those same practitioners have experienced stronger relationships, partnerships, and collaborative work.

The absence of literacy in Indigenous content, critical self-reflection, and relationship-building often results in disinterest on the part of the potential Indigenous community partner, one-sided communication and effort, and lack of access to people and information. When a project is already underway, the absence of the work before the work may also impose university-directed goals and ways of working and result in limited benefits or even harmful impacts for the community. The good news is that even if we have already been working with Indigenous communities for a while, we can revisit the work before the work at any time.

If we find ourselves resisting the work before the work, we need to pause and reflect on our motivations for working with Indigenous communities, so that we can understand why we are reluctant to engage in work that Indigenous partners have identified as necessary.

**“It's easy to do terrible, damaging, and violent work. Work that matters builds relationships, takes time, and leaves a place better than when you entered it.”**

—Niigaan James Sinclair, Anishinaabe

## Questioning our role mid-project

There is a lot of interest, pressure, and money to work with Indigenous communities and though it is an important and well-funded area of study and work, this doesn't mean that we are ready or that we are the right person to do that work in a good way. If we have not yet started working with Indigenous communities, we should have discussions with mentors and peers to work through the critical reflection questions at the end of this and other chapters, particularly in the chapter on Reflection, and find our right fit for community engaged work.

If we are questioning our role in a partnership that is already underway, it's important to reach out to our partners to hear their perspectives and together determine the best path forward. Our partners may see value where we feel doubt. After Nicki Ferland joined Community Engaged Learning, Anny Chen considered whether her Northern Manitoba program might be better facilitated by her Indigenous colleague. She brought her concerns to her Elder Keith Anderson (Rocky Cree) who shared with her the importance of the time she had spent with the community—“You've been here,” he reminded her. “You've put in the time.”

As with any other situation in Indigenous community engagement, we should not be making important decisions without the guidance and leadership of our partners.



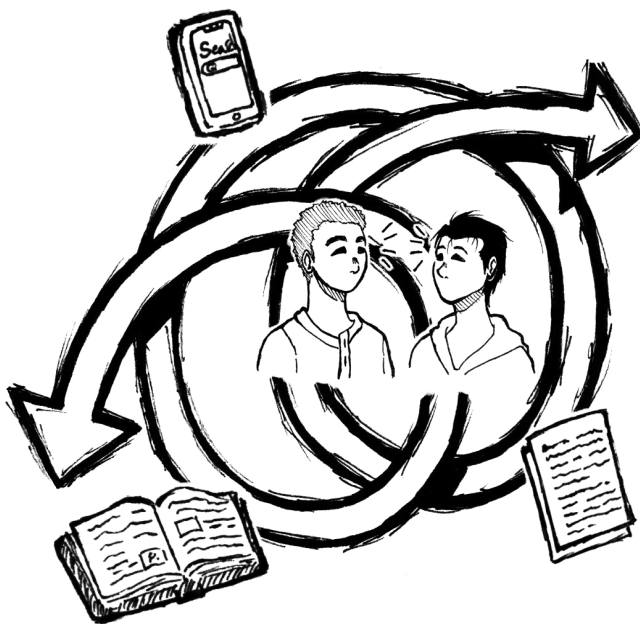


## Systems changes that support the work before the work

Here are some of the changes that universities, faculties, and practitioners need to make to our systems in order to follow the spirit and practices of the work before the work.

- › Include dedicated time for relationship-building within project plans, position descriptions, and work portfolios.
- › Provide sufficient funding to support relationship-building, including the ability to share gifts, show gratitude, and give back to community with no strings attached, as well as funding for travel if needed.
- › Develop and implement critical approaches to professional development, particularly in providing opportunities for staff and faculty to learn about anti-racism and anti-colonialism and develop their literacy in Indigenous content.
- › Fund and hire Indigenous mentors and advisors for Indigenous community engaged learning.
- › Develop policies and procedures that support flexible work hours for working in and with community.

Use the Circle of Control in the Practitioner Workbook to reflect on your own circles of control and influence and identify where you have responsibilities and opportunities to change your practices and advocate for systems change with your institution.



### Practitioner Reflection



- › What is your motivation for working with Indigenous people and communities?
- › What do you know about the community with whom you want to work? What do you still need to learn?
- › How do your beliefs and values align with settler colonialism and how are you challenging them?
- › How might people perceive you in the community? How can you earn trust?

### Partner Conversation



- › What are some opportunities for me to build relationships and trust?
- › What is important for me to learn about the community?

### Tool: Relational Introductions

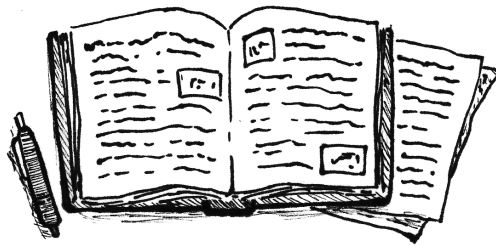
Use the self-reflection worksheet in the Practitioner Workbook to explore your identity, migration story, and connection to Indigenous peoples and land.

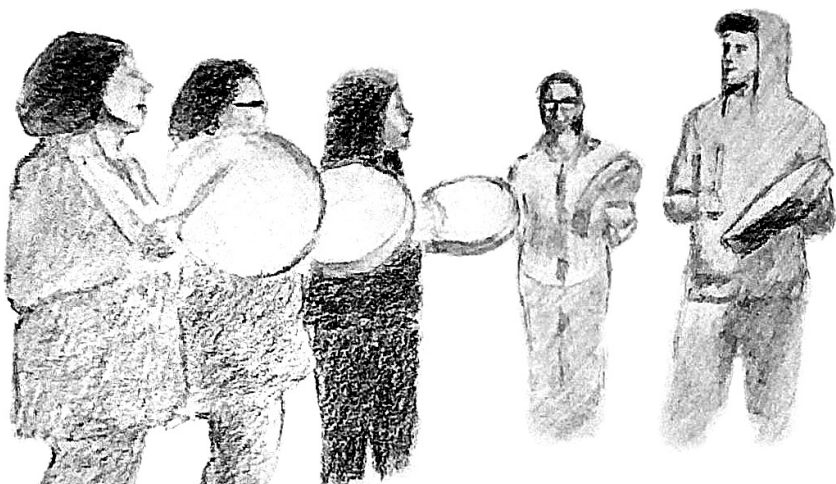
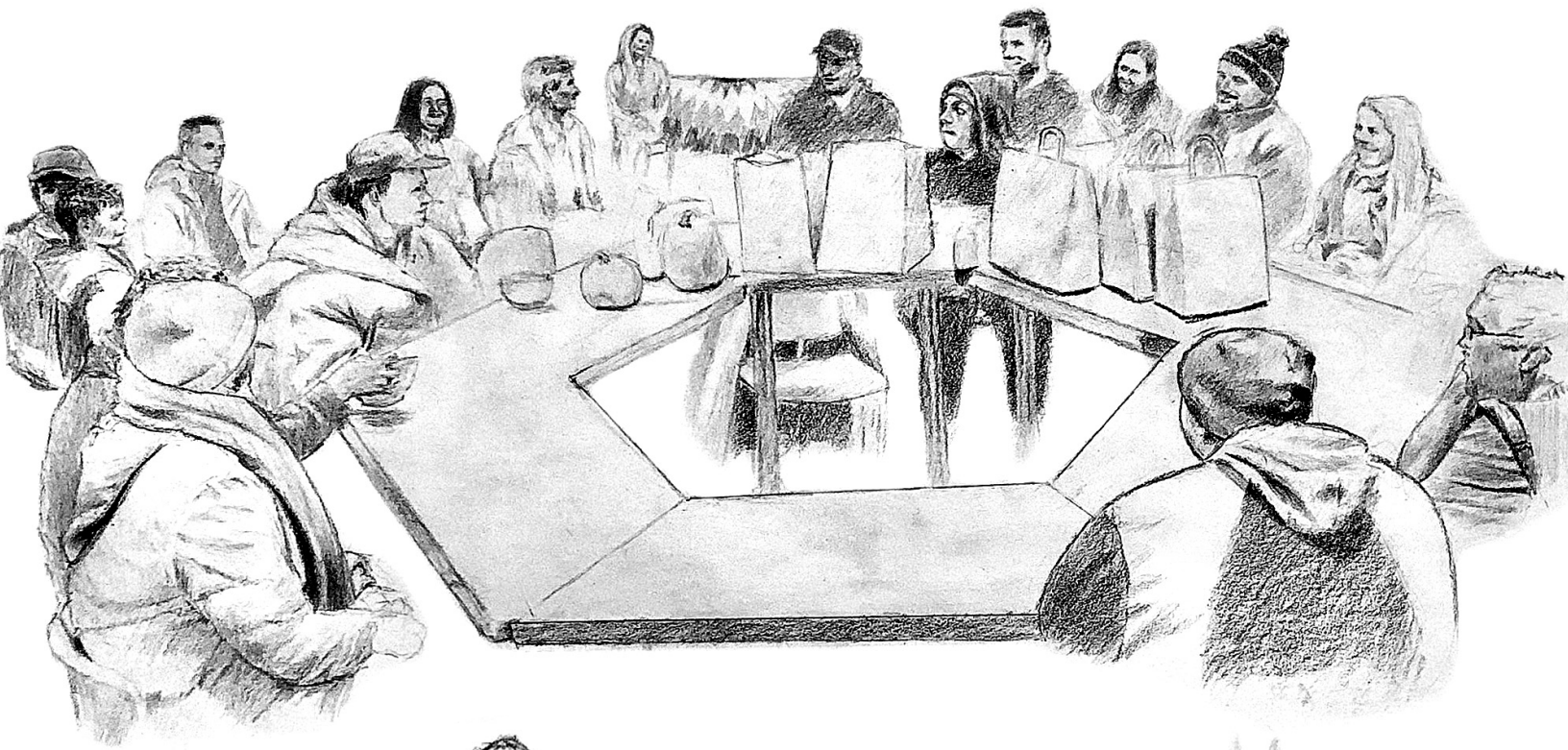
### A note on linear timelines

The work before the work doesn't happen only at the beginning of partnership development, over a finite period of time, nor in a straight line. Literacy, Reflection, and Relationship are principles that inform all stages of a partnership, and at any point we may find that we need to return to the work before the work to strengthen the foundation for our relationships.

# LITERACY

Developing and maintaining basic knowledge and understanding of Indigenous histories, cultures, and experiences and using that learning to meaningfully support Indigenous self-determination and challenge colonial systems and practices.





**"When I first started working with the University, I was tasked with a primarily Indigenous program portfolio. This made me feel pretty uncomfortable because I knew that I didn't have the training, experience, or relationships to be doing this work.**

**"Luckily, I did have good experiences working and learning in community, so that summer, I started going to Meet Me at the Bell Tower every week. Showing up helped me to learn through experience how young Indigenous people were organizing their communities and people were taking care of each other. Not long after, I was grateful to be invited to help out with some new projects. These relationships and the shared work that came out of them have become a big part of my life both in terms of what I have learned and gained, but also in terms of the relationships and responsibilities that continue.**

**"This work of showing up, building relationships, and learning from community has mostly had to happen on my own time. While we should advocate for more university recognition and support, there will always be a personal responsibility in this work that we need to acknowledge and be willing to meet. I've learned how important it is to show up and get to know people, and also how important it is for non-Indigenous people to be willing to learn and work in Indigenous spaces, from Indigenous people, and in Indigenous ways."**

**—Anny Chen, Canadian-born Chinese**

**Illustrated by Jason Iwunze  
Graphite pencil on vellum cartridge paper**

**“When we talk about colonialism, we often think about a period. But, actually, it’s more like a frame, a way of looking at the world. Colonialism is a way of thinking that continues today. You see it operating in all kinds of ways. Those very same assumptions, that underlying logic, could be at the foundation of our engagement with Indigenous peoples, and that is what we have to avoid.”**

—**Filiberto Penados, Yucatec Maya**

If we are interested in developing relationships and partnerships with Indigenous people and communities, it is our responsibility to educate ourselves about Indigenous histories, cultures, and experiences, as well as settler colonialism, anti-Indigenous racism, and strategies for changing and dismantling systems that oppress and harm Indigenous peoples. This literacy in Indigenous content<sup>5</sup> is something that we will always need to maintain, so that we can meaningfully support Indigenous self-determination and challenge colonial systems and practices.

### **Why develop and maintain literacy in Indigenous topics?**

Valuing and cultivating our literacy in Indigenous content helps us to be as anti-racist and anti-colonial as possible in our interactions and our ways of working. Literacy provides us with a foundation for better understanding and adapting to the different ways that Indigenous communities work with and relate to others. Literacy also helps us to contextualize the contemporary experiences of Indigenous peoples within the history of colonization and ongoing colonialism in Canada.

Personal literacy, however, does not negate the ongoing racism and colonialism within universities, which we need to continually challenge in all areas of our work. Developing our literacy will also help us in this regard, making us more capable of believing Indigenous experiences, recognizing injustice, and amplifying the changes and solutions that Indigenous communities want.

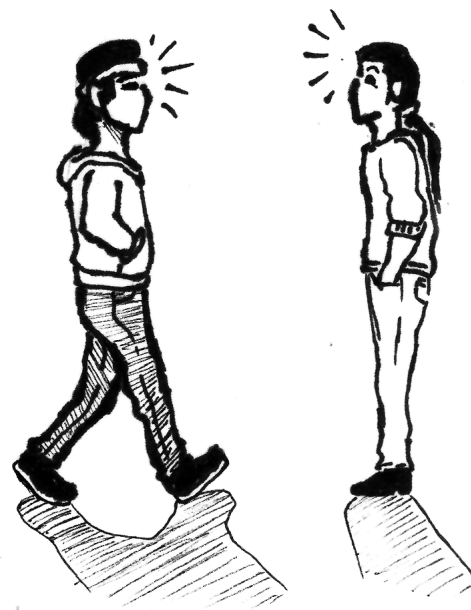
Developing familiarity and literacy gives us a framework through which we can understand what we see, hear, and feel while in community, and repeated engagement will give us the sense of trust and belonging that allows us to repair any missteps that we may make. On the other hand, lack of Indigenous literacy often results in increased stress and anxiety about Indigenous community engagement. We may feel worried about saying something offensive or doing the wrong thing, and this may prevent us from developing

meaningful relationships or engaging with Indigenous communities at all.

Neglecting our responsibility to develop and maintain Indigenous literacy will also dramatically increase the work of our Indigenous partners and colleagues, who then have the added task of ensuring we have a basic understanding of widely available information. We can demonstrate our commitment to working in good ways by engaging in self-directed learning and making use of the remarkable number of educational resources and opportunities that Indigenous people have already produced. Our effort to develop literacy in Indigenous topics shows that we are trying!

**“We had to do a lot of education. That was strenuous on us.”**

—**Delia Monias, Cree**



<sup>5</sup> Literacy in Indigenous content is a phrase coined by a participant of the Summer Institute, which supports UM staff and faculty in integrating Indigenous content into their programs and courses. The Summer Institute is offered by Dr. Cary Miller, Department Head of Native Studies, and funded by the UM Indigenous Initiatives Fund and the Faculty of Arts.

## How can we develop our literacy in Indigenous content?

### Seek out Indigenous teachers, spaces, and sources

Prioritize Indigenous knowledges, scholarship, and pedagogies, seek out Indigenous writing, art, and media, and find Indigenous groups, spaces, and events that welcome non-Indigenous participation. If we don't actively seek Indigenous media, the bulk of our learning will come from news media and public narratives that often perceive and portray Indigenous people in stereotypical, fearmongering, and oppressive ways. Centering Indigenous teachers, spaces, and sources is a way to demonstrate our commitment to developing literacy.

You can find suggested Indigenous media sources in the appendices.

### Learn through experience and in the community

How we learn matters, so it's particularly important to demonstrate our readiness to learn in Indigenous ways -- from hands-on experience, in relationship with community, through story and observation, from the land, in ceremony, and more. In this way, we avoid privileging academic knowledge and start building relationships even while we are still learning. Though we will undoubtedly make mistakes when learning through experience, during the consultations, several people reflected on the value of learning from those mistakes and developing the humility and resilience necessary to move forward and continue working in good ways.

There are many opportunities to learn in community, such as events hosted by Indigenous departments within our institutions or Indigenous groups and organizations in the community. Check out the Indigenous community engagement guide in the Practitioner Workbook, which shares good practices for engaging in campus events.



**"If you can do it in the community, it's better." —Cree educator**

## Making space for Indigenous participation

When we take part in Indigenous events and groups, we need to have humility about our access and ensure that we are not using up resources or displacing Indigenous people. When in community, we need to ensure that we centre and make space for Indigenous participation, even if that means we can only observe. It's important to challenge our privilege and access so that we don't displace Indigenous peoples. This is particularly important when it comes to ceremony.

One Indigenous practitioner shared troubling experiences they had observed at a sweat lodge ceremony, where non-Indigenous people entered the lodge before their Indigenous relatives. "I've seen our lodges fill up with non-Indigenous folks and Indigenous people be left out in the literal cold. They're seated in sacred doorways, taking up space, and leading our songs. Our teachers want to create an inclusive and welcoming space where everyone is invited into the lodge, Indigenous or not, and we obviously want everyone to be a part of the circle -- eventually. For now, we need to make sure that Indigenous people have a place in the circle. The challenge is that some people have more access; they have access to our songs, to our sacred bundles, and to transportation."

It is a privilege to know about ceremonies, to have the relationship, transportation, and resources to access them, and to think favourably of them -- as part of the colonial project, Indigenous people were Christianized and ceremonies outlawed. Before taking up space, we need to ask ourselves as non-Indigenous people: Who should enter first? Who belongs here? Who needs access to these spaces? Whose place would I be taking? If needed, we should sit out and ensure equity can happen.





**“It’s different, our culture, and it’s different from Cross Lake, how we do things. We have our own ways. A norm for us is not the norm for other communities.”**

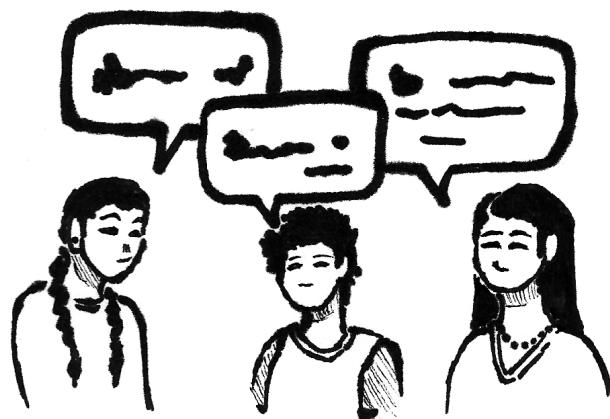
**—Cree community partner**

### Avoid pan-Indigenous approaches

Pan-Indigenous approaches, where we treat all Indigenous communities as though they are the same, are incompatible with cultivating and demonstrating literacy in Indigenous topics. Many distinct Indigenous nations and groups originated from and continue to live on the territories now known as the Americas. It’s important to take the time to learn about nation- and community-specific knowledges, histories, and experiences. Different historical experiences and small distances separating nearby communities can result in major social, cultural, and political differences between communities and even between people or groups within the same community.

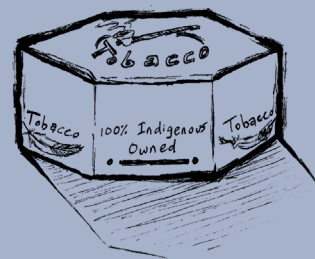
The Cree Nation, for instance, has several dialects, including Plains Cree, Swampy Cree, Woodlands Cree, Rocky Cree, and more. In turn, there are multiple communities that speak each of these regional dialects, and even communities sharing a dialect can have significant cultural and other differences between them. A good example is Cross Lake First Nation and Norway House Cree Nation. Though these two communities are only 115 kilometres apart, they are culturally and politically distinct.

Developing nation- and community-specific literacy helps us to avoid the embarrassment and harm that can come from ignorant, pan-Indigenous approaches. For example, one common reality is that community members may hold different religious and spiritual beliefs – some people might be Christian while others follow a more traditional spirituality. Understanding these nuances will change how and when we approach certain community members, the protocols we follow, and the kinds of gifts we might bring, and ultimately set the tone for that relationship.



Early in Nicki Ferland’s career, she was consulting with several communities in northern Manitoba and learned through experience that sometimes it’s best to simply ask what’s appropriate:

“Each community had been approached early, informed of our visit, and was expecting us. We had prepared gifts and pouches of tobacco for the people we were meeting. Everything had gone smoothly during our first three community visits. In the final community, we said our hellos and sat down to chat. I wasn’t super comfortable passing tobacco at this point, but I tentatively held out this nice hexagonal box of organic tobacco while my colleague thanked the liaison. Our contact took the box, paused, then replied, ‘Thanks, but I don’t smoke.’ She likely knew what the tobacco signified, but she was gently chiding us, reminding us that it wasn’t appropriate to pass tobacco to some people in this community. To this day, the memory of that feeling in the pit of my stomach is an important reminder to do my homework and learn the history, culture, and protocols for each community.”



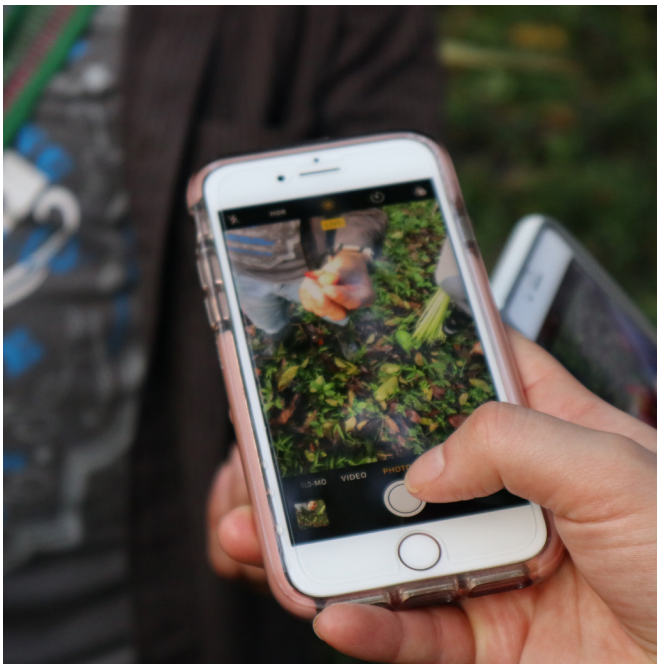


## Systems changes that support literacy

Here are some of the changes that universities, faculties, and practitioners need to make to our systems in order to follow the spirit and practices of Literacy.

- › Widen opportunities for students, faculty and staff to learn about Indigenous perspectives, e.g. through courses/new curricula, service-learning, research projects, workshops, lectures, events, etc. (UM Strategic Plan 2015-2020).
- › Include dedicated time for developing literacy in Indigenous topics during regular work hours and within project timeframes.
- › Recognize and value Indigenous knowledges, and properly remunerate community expertise.
- › Develop and implement meaningful Indigenous education for all students, staff and faculty—particularly, education that foregrounds the non-academic, lived expertise of Indigenous community members .

Use the Circle of Control in the Practitioner Workbook to reflect on your own circles of control and influence and identify where you have responsibilities and opportunities to change your practices and advocate for systems change with your institution.



## Practitioner Reflection



- › How do your implicit biases about knowledge and education impact what and how you are learning?
- › In what ways are you developing your literacy about Indigenous topics and learning about community engagement?
- › What do you know about Indigenous histories, cultures, and experiences in Canada and what do you still need to learn?
- › How are you ensuring that you recognize distinct nation- and community-specific histories, cultures, and customs in your learning?

## Partner Conversation



- › What would we like to know about each other, our cultures, and our communities or institutions?
- › Are there community members, teachers, mentors or guides that I should connect with to develop or supplement my community-specific literacy? How can I show my gratitude and ensure they are properly remunerated?

## Learning Tool: Literacy Homework



Find general and community-specific homework questions in the Practitioner Workbook to support you in developing your literacy in Indigenous content.

## Lifelong learning

Maintaining our literacy in Indigenous topics is an ongoing and lifelong responsibility. All cultures are dynamic, including Indigenous cultures, and we need to keep ourselves educated about the changing contexts, protocols, and visions of the Indigenous communities with whom we work. Keep reading, keep listening and sharing, and keep showing up for the community.

# REFLECTION


Engaging in reflective practice to develop critical self-awareness, including knowing who we are and where we come from, what motivates us to work with Indigenous communities, and how we learn, work, and relate to the people and communities with whom we want to work.





“It's called visiting, which can include information, storytelling, or sometimes even complaining—but it's almost always around food, home, and surrounding a sense of gift-giving. When there's laughter and teasing, that's when I know things are really humming, because my students are clearly making engagements with the community then.”

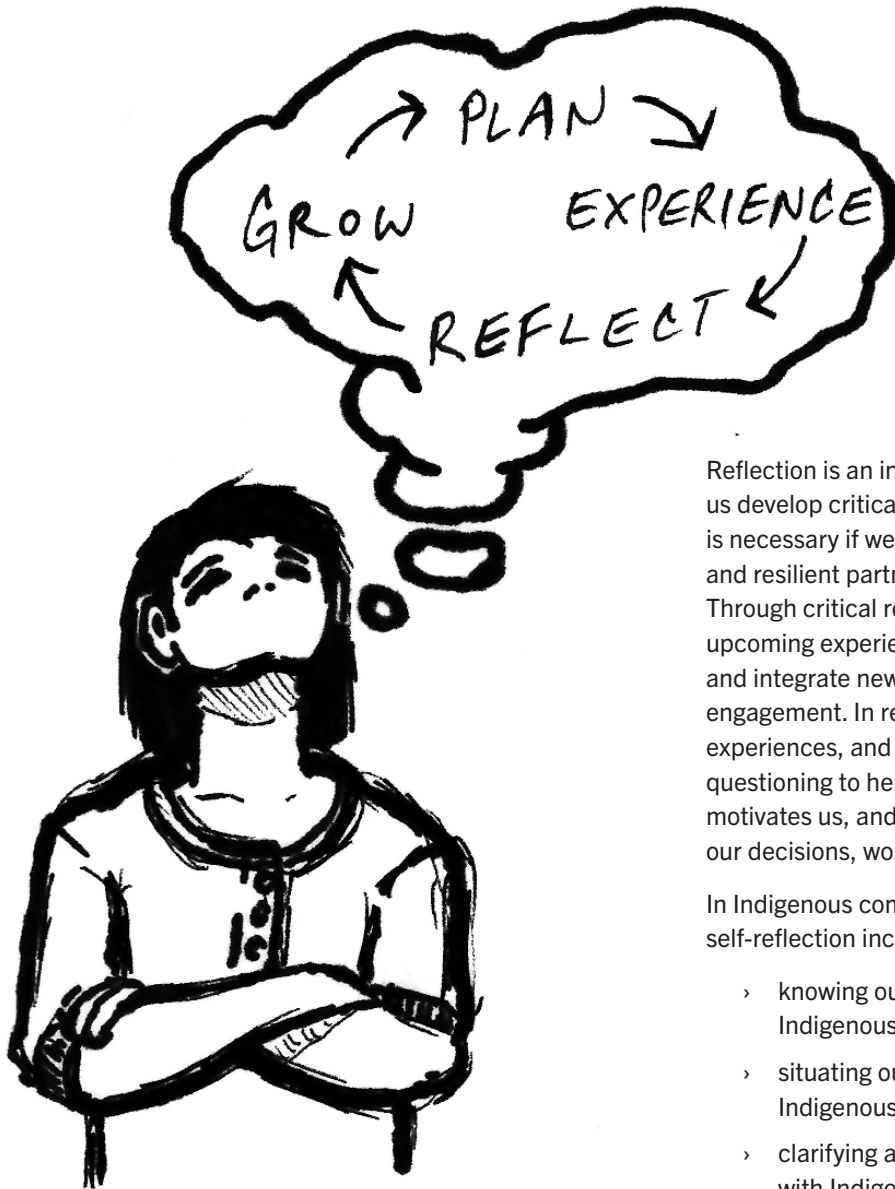
—Niigaan James Sinclair, Anishinaabe

Illustrated by هزيم - Hazim Ismail - 

Fine-tip marker on rice paper, in digital collage format with stock imagery.

“When meeting people from other cultures, it’s common to feel gratitude for the opportunity to learn. If we refuse to acknowledge our whiteness, if we don’t learn our own ancestral, migration, and cultural stories — then it is likely that we will either wrongfully adopt Indigenous culture as our own or reciprocate and perpetuate the dominant Canadian whiteness that we have grown up in, which is a culture that actively oppresses Indigenous peoples.”

—Anny Chen, Canadian-born Chinese



Reflection is an integral and ongoing practice, which helps us develop critical self-awareness. This self-awareness is necessary if we want to become trustworthy, effective, and resilient partners for Indigenous communities. Through critical reflection, we are able to anticipate upcoming experiences, take part in them, and then reflect and integrate new learning as we prepare for our next engagement. In reviewing and analyzing our observations, experiences, and interactions, we can use reflective questioning to help us learn more about who we are, what motivates us, and how we impact others, as well as inform our decisions, words, and actions.

In Indigenous community engagement, key areas for critical self-reflection include:

- › knowing our story, particularly in relation to Indigenous peoples and lands,
- › situating ourselves in settler colonialism and anti-Indigenous racism,
- › clarifying and confronting our motivations for working with Indigenous people and communities, and
- › recognizing how we learn, work, and relate to others and our readiness to adapt to Indigenous ways of learning, working, and relating.

## Why should we engage in critical reflection?

The ability to openly and honestly share our story, positionality, and motivations is a determining factor in earning trust and building relationships with Indigenous people and communities, and the only way to develop this deeper self-awareness is through critical reflection. Sharing our story demonstrates knowledge about migration and colonialism, marking non-Indigenous arrival on Indigenous lands; knowing our positionality reveals settler colonial power structures and where we sit in them; and naming our motivations creates room for honesty and critique.

Critical reflection also helps us to develop awareness of our biases and prejudices, particularly when it comes to settler colonialism and anti-Indigenous racism. This includes obvious problems, like stereotypical beliefs, misconceptions, or overt racism, but it also includes implicit biases about the right way to learn, work, or relate to others, what we consider to be knowledge and expertise, and how we measure success. Acknowledging our biases and prejudices allows us to recognize and resist when they are present in our thoughts, conversations, and relationships, and to expose ourselves to new ways of thinking.

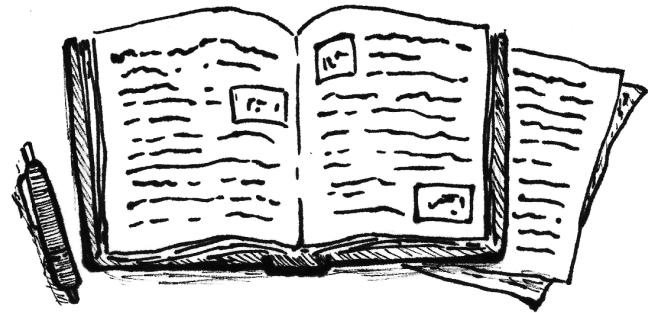
The self-awareness we develop through critical reflection also helps us to cultivate the resilience and cultural humility that is pivotal when trying to stay in relationship with Indigenous people and communities. In other words, we need to build our capacity to listen through discomfort, respond to distrust with relationship-building, and accept critique and community expertise with humility. This is particularly important for those of us whose identities are accorded more power and privilege by society. Indigenous practitioners and community partners shared the importance of having the courage to show up and try, and the humility to fail, learn, and try again.



## How should we engage in critical reflection?

### Create space and time to regularly engage in self-reflection

Critical self-reflection can take place before, during, and after engagement opportunities. Constant self-reflection is especially common during the early stages of engagement, as we try to understand our new position within the community and process new experiences, and often continues as a regular mindful practice that supports our efforts to learn through observation and adapt to community approaches. In self-reflection, we rely on our own observations, judgement, and knowledge to make sense of new information, and we benefit from the ability to reflect at our own pace with no immediate impact on others or their perception of us.



### Resisting settler colonial ways of working

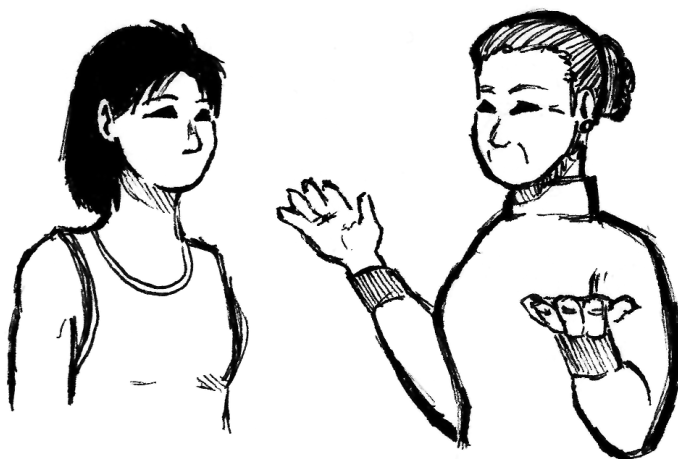
Developing a critical self-awareness about how we learn, work, and relate to others is particularly important in Indigenous community engagement. Learning how to work in ways that work for the community will largely come from our capacity to observe, reflect, and adapt, so learning how to learn in Indigenous ways, such as from observation and experience, is key. This self-awareness allows us to notice the differences in others' approaches, be mindful in how we react and respond, adapt whenever possible, communicate any challenges, and ask for support when we are having difficulty. Without this critical self-awareness, we are likely to arrive with and impose settler colonial ways of working onto the community.

## Seek community engagement advising and find a community of practice

It's important to establish support circles with Indigenous and non-Indigenous colleagues with whom we can prepare for and debrief our Indigenous community engagement experiences, as well as take part in conversation, advising, and peer-learning. If we are unsure where to turn, our first step is to start building relationships, particularly with other practitioners at our institutions, and offering our support and help by demonstrating interest in their initiatives, showing up to campus events, and contributing to their work. Many universities also have an office or centre dedicated to Indigenous achievement or community engagement, which may be a good place to start.

## Engage in reflection and assessment with our partners

Our non-Indigenous and settler colonial perspectives often obscure and ignore other ways of knowing, which may cause us to misinterpret our experiences, reinforce our biases, stereotypes, and prejudices about Indigenous people, and make harmful assumptions and decisions. To challenge our default perspectives, we should be having regular conversations with Indigenous colleagues and partners where we can question or confirm what we think we know and ask for their perspectives. In emerging or formalized partnerships, conversations that focus on reflection and assessment should happen regularly as a project or partnership team, on a formal and informal basis. You can use the Relational Assessment Guide to create your own assessment conversations with your community partners.



## Recognizing and remunerating Indigenous labour

Regardless of whom we turn to for Indigenous community engagement advising, it is crucial to respect the contributions of our colleagues and partners and ensure that they are properly remunerated for their time and expertise. Many Indigenous staff and faculty members are expected to provide advising and consultation on numerous Indigenous topics, with no adjustment to their regular workload. This is even more likely to be the case for Indigenous community partners, who may not be getting paid for their university engagement work at all.

A good practice is to reflect on whether colleagues are getting paid to engage in a reflective discussion when community counterparts are expected to do so for free, and to then respond by having a discussion about remuneration and appropriate supports. We need to recognize the emotional labour of reflection and assessment, show gratitude, and remunerate accordingly.





## Systems changes that support reflection

Here are some of the changes that universities, faculties, and practitioners need to make to our systems in order to follow the spirit and practices of Reflection.

- › Include dedicated time for reflection and sharing in project timelines and work hours.
- › Include critical self-awareness and the capacity to engage in critical reflection and receive and respond to feedback, particularly in relation to racism and colonialism, in job descriptions and interview questionnaires.
- › Develop and implement critical approaches to professional development, particularly in providing opportunities for staff and faculty to learn about anti-racism and anti-colonialism and develop their literacy in Indigenous topics.
- › Increase the number of Indigenous faculty and staff as a percentage of the University's employee population (UM Strategic Plan 2015-2020), including Indigenous mentors and advisors for Indigenous community engaged learning.

Use the Circle of Control in the Practitioner Workbook to reflect on your own circles of control and influence and identify where you have responsibilities and opportunities to change your practices and advocate for systems change with your institution.



## Practitioner Reflection



- › Who are you and where are you from?
- › What biases and prejudices do you have about Indigenous peoples and how are you challenging your biases and anti-Indigenous racism?
- › How do you benefit from settler colonialism?
- › Why do you want to work with Indigenous peoples and how will you benefit from this relationship?
- › How do you prefer to work and relate to others, and how do your preferences compare with Indigenous ways of working and relating?
- › How will our presence and involvement impact the community in good and bad ways?
- › With whom, and in what ways are you debriefing and sharing what you've learned?
- › Are you using this framework in a good way—with a genuine desire to develop meaningful relationships, listen and support community visions, and work in humble ways?

## Partner Conversation



- › How can we make time to engage in reflection with each other?
- › What methods of reflection do we want to use?
- › Is there anything that you think will be hard to share with each other? How can we make it easier in the future?

## Learning Tool: Relational Introductions

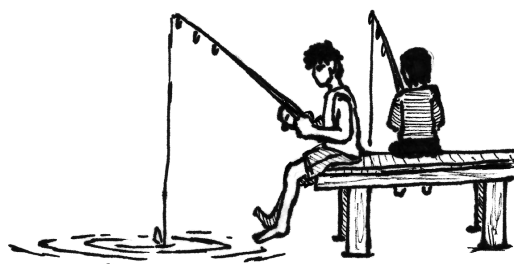


Use the self-reflection worksheet in the Practitioner Workbook to explore your identity, migration story, and connection to Indigenous peoples and land.



# RELATIONSHIP

Building personal, whole relationships that precede, sustain, and outlive programs and formal partnerships, and which stem from a capacity and willingness to honour Indigenous relationality and engage in relational accountability.





BARNEY

**"It took me a couple years to understand what the mamas (Kichwa midwives) mean when they call me their son. At first, I thought it was a way of referring to younger people, like when older strangers in Canada call you son or daughter. But that's not what they mean at all. They actually think of me as their child and, so far, that has meant two things.**

**"It means that they care for my safety and wellbeing—making medicines for me every time I get hurt or sick in the community, making sure that I eat enough and stay hydrated, teaching me how to walk in the rainforest and calling me out whenever I do silly things like jumping off waterfalls. At the same time, it means that I have a responsibility to care for them as my mothers, so they have no problem loading me with their bags to carry during long walks, expecting me to make sure that they are comfortable and safe when we travel outside the community, and asking for help whenever they come across unexpected expenses—like sickness or emergency repairs to their facilities. This is what our relationship looks like—that and a whole lot of teasing! "**

**—Gerardo Villagrán Becerra, Latin American**

**Illustrated by Liv Barney  
Digital illustration**

# “Relationship—being together—is the ceremony.”

—Elder Keith Anderson, Rocky Cree

Relationship is the heart of Indigenous community engagement, the fundamental principle of this framework, and a core element of each stage of engagement. Developing our literacy in Indigenous topics; reflecting on our story and ways of learning, working and relating; researching and respecting protocols; and cultivating and practicing humility ensure that we approach and build relationships with Indigenous partners in a good way. Making sure that our partners guide, direct, and benefit from our work together nourishes trust, respect, and relational accountability – key elements of a healthy relationship. Advocating for different approaches to and funding for relationship-building, maintenance, and accountability demonstrates a determined commitment to prioritize whole relationships.

The kinds of relationships that we create with Indigenous communities and prospective partners will likely be different than the typical “professional” partnerships that we’ve experienced in the past. “Professional” relationships often take place during regular work hours, come with firm boundaries about what’s appropriate to share and discuss, and inflexible assumptions about how we should relate to each other. Community partners shared that more typical

“professional” partnerships sometimes feel transactional in nature – an exchange of services or resources – rather than partnerships based in relationship.

In the consultations, partners and practitioners used words like “love,” “family,” and “lifelong” to describe their relationships with each other. Working in good ways with Indigenous communities requires a willingness to take a different approach to community engagement – one that values and demonstrates our capacity for real, caring, personal relationships.

It’s important to note that not all partnerships will become personal in nature, require long periods of relationship-building, or be lifelong. We will have different kinds of relationships with different community members, and in a few lucky cases, our relationships may naturally progress beyond the project or partnership. Follow the community’s lead – don’t try to force a friendship or family relationship on partners – but be ready to engage in a long-term relationship if that’s what the community wants or expects.

## All Our Relations

Relationality and relational accountability are core values that form the foundation of many Indigenous worldviews. They inform how Indigenous peoples understand, relate to, and interact with each other, the natural world, Indigenous knowledges, and more. The term “all our relations” – a common refrain in prayer, ceremony, and greetings – describes a relational Indigenous paradigm that recognizes that all things in the natural world are related and that we are responsible for our relationships with the whole of creation.

## Wahkotowin<sup>6</sup>

The teaching of wahkotowin is embodied by the practice of kinship naming. Kinship naming creates a social family, which builds cohesion and safety and comes with an expectation of reciprocity and an obligation to care for each other. Kinship looks like the large networks of kookums and aunties who help care for and raise children, vast constellations of biological and social cousins, informal adoption into family and community, and ceremony that re-establishes relationships – all of which expand community beyond the western and colonial conceptions of individual nuclear families.

Historically, kinship relationships helped semi-nomadic Cree peoples survive on the land. The teaching of wahkotowin is still rooted in land-based philosophies and ways of life and is a reminder of the kinship that exists between humans and the natural world. Without our relationship with the land and each other, we would not survive.

<sup>6</sup> We are grateful to Elder Albert McLeod (Woodland Cree and Scottish) for sharing this teaching.

# “Relationship building is so critical. Trust has to be built.”

—Adrienne Carriere, Métis

## Why should we build community-led relationships?

Relationships should precede and outlive our programs and partnerships, but they also sustain our collaborations. We heard from partners and practitioners that having strong, personal relationships makes the work more fulfilling. They talked about the importance of spending time together, being part of community life, and staying in touch. These actions show partners that we care about them and help to build trust and heal past harms, which are particularly important knowing universities’ long histories of extractive research and exploitative engagements.

When Anny Chen started working in northern Manitoba, she and her students were met with a lot of distrust due to the community’s previous experiences with universities and colonial institutions. Community members directly questioned the point of the partnership and student program, how short a time they were spending in community, and whether there would be any benefit for the community. Rather than denying concerns or becoming defensive, it’s important to listen to people’s concerns and then put in the time and effort through repeat visits, relationship-building, and long-term, community-led collaborations to prove that we will work in a different way.

Putting time and effort into relationship-building also helps us, and by extension the institutions that we represent, be better partners to Indigenous communities. Many of the challenges experienced in university-community collaborations could be mitigated if we took the time to build trust and relational accountability with our partners and demonstrated respect and humility in the ways that we worked. When trust, respect, humility, and relational accountability are present, community partners can communicate openly with us and are more likely to believe that we will address any challenges and barriers that are brought up. You can read more about working in ways that work for community in the chapter on Collaboration.



## How can we build community-led relationships?

### *Building relationships before partnerships*

#### **Advocate for institutional support for relationship-building.**

There are many challenges and barriers that we will face when trying to build relationships before partnerships, particularly when working within institutional expectations for project timelines, outcomes, and funding limitations. We need to take on the burden of explaining the importance of the work before the work to our supervisors and funders when partnering with Indigenous communities and asking for the money, time, and other resources that are needed to work in good ways.

**Take time to build relationships and earn trust before proposing partnerships.** Multiple community engaged learning practitioners committed significant amounts of time to relationship-building prior to approaching the community about a partnership.

Darrien Morton (African) spent six months getting to know community leaders before he asked them to collaborate in his graduate-level research.

Javier Mignone (Latin American), a professor and practitioner in the department of Community Health Sciences, took several international trips to meet with a community “before the work began” and also reminded us that not every community or practitioner is going to be the right fit.

Another Cree practitioner spent two years attending community events, getting to know individuals and organizations, and strengthening relationships before community members started to connect with her.

## Honouring Indigenous relationality

### Be present in community and spend time with people.

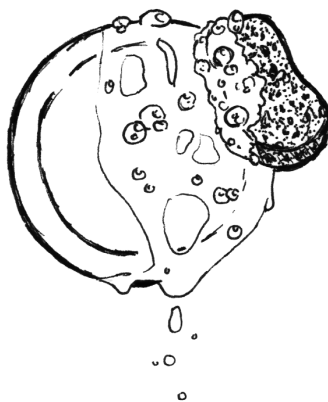
Step 1: Show up!<sup>7</sup> We should keep updated on community events and attend as many as we can. We can also practice visiting: bring a box of tea or some snacks and just sit with folks. Community members aren't typically paid to go to community events or talk to you, so whenever possible, we should show up on our own time. When we're lucky enough to be in community, it's important to spend quality time with community members in ways that have no direct benefit to our work.

**"Presence is ethical and helps people to develop their knowledge and understanding of each other. Presence helps us be accountable to community." —Darrien Morton, African**

**Be respectful and adaptive.** We need to listen, observe, and learn, so that we can adapt the way that we work and communicate to the ways of the community. This also means managing our prejudices and culture shock when we are interacting with people and working in ways that work for community, rather than expecting people to always adapt to our comfort level, reactions, and needs.

### Be humble and helpful.

Do the work that needs to be done, whether that means washing dishes, putting away chairs, finding funding, or typing up minutes, and "be willing to do the work without asking for anything in return" (Cary Miller, Anishinaabe). Be generous and giving, use our power, privilege, and resources to extend supports to the community, and follow through with any commitments that we make. Provide unconditional resources and support that aren't contingent on a partnership.

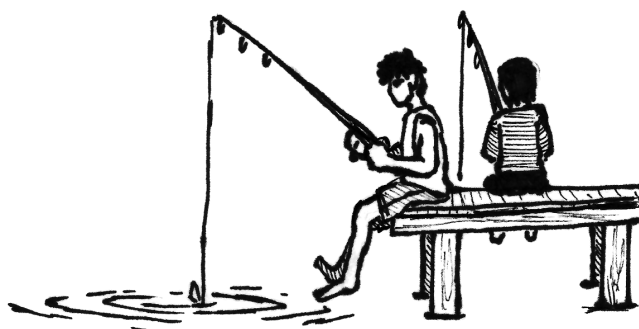


**Develop personal and whole relationships.** We must be prepared for the possibility that our professional relationships may become friendships, or even family relationships, and that communities may expect our connections to be lasting, or even lifelong. If we want to work with Indigenous communities, we have a responsibility to work in relational ways. This can be challenging within university spaces, where institutional protocols and "ethics" may conflict with community expectations and protocols for building personal relationships and working in relational ways with Indigenous community members. Let's give ourselves permission to have fun and build friendships, and share who we are as a people outside of our roles and work at our institutions.

In one community that was consulted for this framework guide, Nicki Ferland developed relationships with two special community members, Caroline and Jake, that have lasted for years. The friends keep in touch over phone and social media, give each other gifts, and visit as often as possible, despite the 1000 kilometres that separate their homes. They continue to support each other personally and professionally, nourishing their friendships and budding family relationships – Nicki considers Jake a grandpa and Caroline an auntie or second mother.

**"Don't go back to your hotel room; go fishing, ski-dooing, play volleyball."**

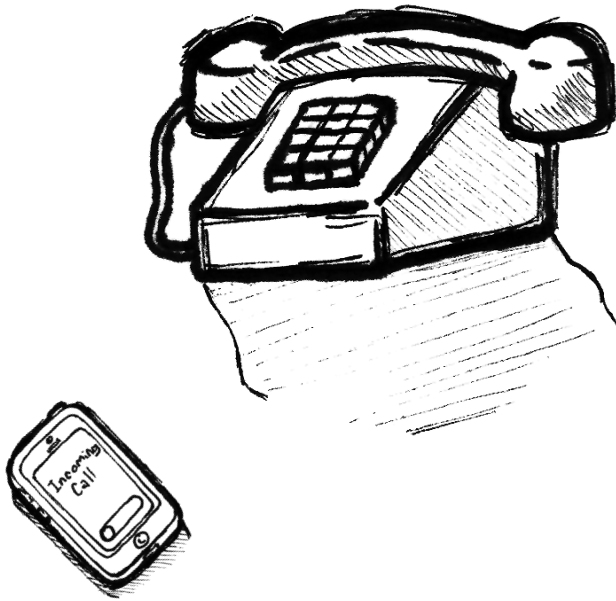
**—Desiree Morriseau-Keesick, Anishinaabekwe**



<sup>7</sup> This short call to action is from an Instagram story posted by AYO! (Aboriginal Youth Opportunities).

**Maintain communication between visits and projects.**

Whether physically or remotely, we need to make time to keep in touch with our partners and other community members on a regular basis. It's particularly important to maintain communication with community partners between projects. It can be difficult to maintain relationships with remote and international community partners with whom we might only have one in-person visit per year, especially if we're busy facilitating student programming when we're onsite. If our partners are too far away to meet regularly in person, we can spend time with them online, call them, and engage with their social media, and continue to advocate and search for institutional support for relationship-building.



**“Keep in touch. Visit – by phone is alright too. If you just show up here now and next year, we’ll forget about you. Keeping in touch shows that you’re thinking of us.”**

—Elder Jake Fortin, Dene

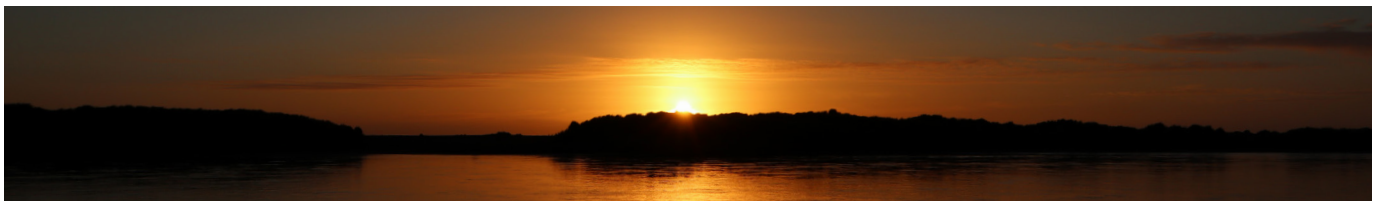
***Engaging in relational accountability***

**Assume institutional accountability.** Regardless of our personal motivations, we will likely be perceived as a representative of our institutions – another person in a long line of people – so, be ready to take responsibility for hearing and addressing institutional harms. Several communities that were consulted had longstanding conflicts with the same practitioner. The practitioner didn't listen to community wisdom, imposed their own flawed ideas against guidance, and then left unceremoniously when things fell apart without addressing any of their conflicts. The resulting hurt, distrust, and frustration became something that new partners had to experience, manage, and resolve during their own relationship-building periods.

**Assess relationships on an ongoing basis.** Relationship-building is an ongoing and lifelong process. We need to pay attention to changes in levels of trust, quality, involvement, and frequency of communication with the community and put in the time and effort needed to build and rebuild healthy, trusting, and caring relationships.

In reflecting on his experiences of relational accountability with community, Gerardo Villagrán Becerra shared the following memory:

"One of the most beautiful moments I've shared with community partners is also one of the hardest. During a debriefing meeting the community confronted me about a significant delay in the payment our institution makes to the community in exchange for room and board for our students. I had to sit there and listen silently as eight very strong women took turns expressing how this delay had impacted their work, relationships, and the finances of their collective. They said, 'We don't work as a corporation. We work as a network of friends and family.' So basically, they were saying to me: get your act together—we expect better from friends and family."





**Provide personal support.** Relational accountability means taking personal responsibility for the relationship and for each other, including supporting people's basic and emotional needs. Partners and practitioners shared the following real examples: helping partners achieve personal goals, supporting their businesses, and ensuring that everyday needs are met so that partners and community members can participate fully, which might include buying groceries, providing a cell phone, giving car rides or supplying bus fare, and more. We should only promise what we can deliver and then do what we say we will do. We also need to inform ourselves about Indigenous-led efforts for resurgence, self-determination, and sovereignty, and provide personal support in these areas as well, particularly as they relate to our partners' lives and work.

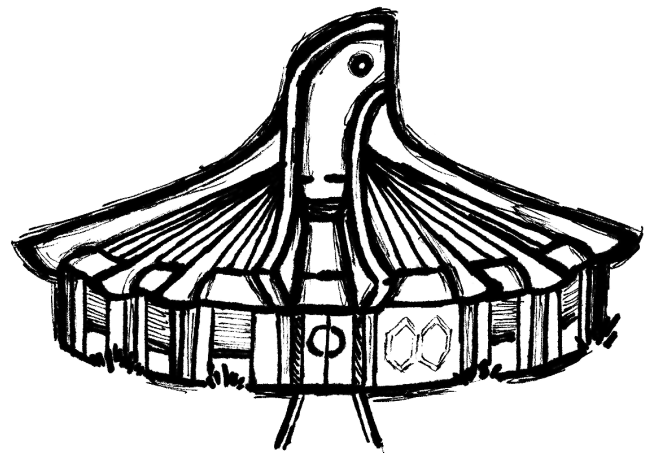
**Practice gratitude on an ongoing basis.**

Gratitude can be shared verbally or through practices such as visiting and gifting. One community engaged learning practitioner learned from her predecessors how important it would be to demonstrate gratitude when working with community. As soon as she arrives in the community, she makes rounds to visit friends, family, and partners with small, thoughtful gifts.



**“Working in a bad way is making lots of promises and never following up. You see this a lot in Native communities.”**

—Elder Jake Fortin, Dene



**Follow through on our commitments.** Once we've entered into relationship with Indigenous communities, we have a long-lasting responsibility to show up for community even after formal partnerships have ended. During the consultations, Elder Albert McLeod (Woodland Cree and Scottish) helped Community Engaged Learning understand the depth and lasting nature of relational accountability expected of us when they asked, “Where were you when Thunderbird House's roof was damaged? You have to be there to help. The relationship doesn't end when the project is over... Follow up!” Relational accountability continues even after we have completed our projects or closed our partnerships. If we want to work with Indigenous communities and live up to our responsibilities as treaty beneficiaries, we have a responsibility to maintain our relationships, follow through on our commitments, reach out when challenges come up, and respond to calls to action as part of the relationship after the work.





**“We have many experiences of people coming to our communities to study something. They leave and we never hear from them again.”**

**—AMUPAKIN, Kichwa  
(translated from Kichwa to Spanish to English)**

**When parting ways, say goodbye properly.** Even when parting for the year, it’s important to demonstrate gratitude, spend time reflecting with partners and community members, address any conflicts that we may have with community members, and say goodbye properly. At the end of her stay, the same practitioner visits everyone again to say goodbye and share thank you cards and more gifts, and also organizes a feast for partners and friends to celebrate the end of the program year together.

If a partnership is ending, it’s important to talk to our partners and the community members, so that we can hear how they would like to close the partnership, including any protocols or ceremonies they would like to take place. One practitioner shared the experience of feeling surprised and overwhelmed when the community wanted to celebrate their relationship at the close of a partnership. She and the local coordinator had mistakenly thought that the community wouldn’t want to do anything to mark the occasion, but she realized that she should have spoken to the community members themselves.

When parting, we also need to be honest about the reasons why the partnership is ending and whether we will maintain the relationship or be returning to the community. It’s important to remember that because of our relationships with Indigenous communities, goodbyes may actually mean “see you again.” If we are certain we cannot maintain the relationship, though, it is better to be honest and upfront.



### Systems changes that support relationship

Here are some of the changes that universities, faculties, and practitioners need to make to our systems in order to follow the spirit and practices of Relationship.

- › Include dedicated time for relationship-building and maintenance within project plans, position descriptions, and work portfolios.

- › Recognize, support, and provide sufficient funding for the relationship-building that takes place before, during, beyond, and outside of formal partnerships, including funding for gifting, regular visits, and relational accountability, even after the close of a partnership.
- › Value and support personal and lasting relationships.
- › Set expectations for relationship-centered approaches in job descriptions, posts and hiring processes.

Use the Circle of Control in the Practitioner Workbook to reflect on your own circles of control and influence and identify where you have responsibilities and opportunities to change your practices and advocate for systems change with your institution.

### Practitioner Reflection



- › What is your relationship to the Indigenous land where you currently live and work and to the people whose land you are occupying?
- › How are you accountable to your Indigenous partners and when does your accountability to a community partner end?
- › What are your personal or professional boundaries and are they culturally appropriate? How will you communicate or challenge these boundaries?

### Partner Conversation



- › What is important to each of us when it comes to building our relationship?
- › How do we feel about our relationship? Are there times when our relationship feels stronger or weaker?
- › How can we continue to strengthen our relationship? e.g., trust, communication

### Learning Tool: Going to a campus event



Explore the Practitioner Workbook and find good practices for engaging in Indigenous events on campus.

**“When you create a relationship with a community, it’s a lifelong relationship. You are connected to that interviewee, family, and nation for life. Once someone shared their life with you, you have a duty to share your life with them. You take your kids there, you bring gifts, and you never forget them.”**

— Niigaan James Sinclair, Anishinaabe

## The relationship after the work

The fifth and final stage on the pathway for Indigenous community engagement is the relationship after the work. This often neglected stage reminds us that our relationship with the community continues even after a partnership has ended.

During the consultations, Niigaan James Sinclair (Anishinaabe) reminded us: “When you work with Indigenous peoples you’re not just drawing upon them for the duration of the project or partnership, it’s forever. It’s family. When people give you knowledge, they’re making you family. If you leave after someone’s shared something with you and never come back, you are no better than the mines, oil companies, and governments who come in, exploit Indigenous communities, and leave them worse off than when they arrived. The world would be better off if you never contacted them.”

We can maintain our relationships through regular communication and frequent visits with former partners and community members, who we may now consider friends, or even family. This helps us avoid the harmful and extractive nature of past community-university partnerships that would end abruptly after the close of a project.

Our relational accountability with communities will also continue after formal partnerships have ended. We might be called on to provide support when the community is faced with a challenge, invited to collaborate on a new initiative, or be expected to follow through on commitments and dreams shared during the partnership, and these calls may come in either our personal or professional capacities.

The relationship after the work also brings new roles and responsibilities. Like the work before the work, this stage brings another a period of critical self-reflection, and asks us to reflect on our relationships and work in the community, find opportunities to give recognition to ourselves and our teachers, learn from our experiences, and do better in the future. This includes sharing what we have learned

with others, documenting and sharing feedback and any harms experienced by our partners, taking action within our own circles of control and influence, and advocating for institutional recognition, support, and funding for Indigenous community engaged learning, personal relationship building and lifelong relational accountability.

The final stage is also a time for embracing broader roles and responsibilities as settlers and guests on Indigenous lands – by continuing to support Indigenous-led efforts for resurgence, self-determination, and sovereignty. In this way, our ongoing work and learning become a living tribute to the relationships we have built with community and the good work we have done together.

**“One person who worked here still invites me to her place. I really like her and it’s really nice to have a connection with her.”**

—Caroline Brayley, Cree



# RECIPROCITY

Ensuring that communities experience mutual benefit, ownership, and relational accountability, beyond basic remuneration, project resourcing, and following community protocols.





**"Reciprocity resembles a circle in which two parties indefinitely care for one another, without an end point in mind."<sup>8</sup>  
Rather than thinking of reciprocity as an exchange -- a line bouncing between two points -- "imagine a circle continuously moving and ensuring balance to maintain symmetry."**

**—Marla Robson, Cree-Anishinaabe**

Illustrated by Brooklyn Rudolph-Nicholas  
Acrylic paint, on stretched canvas

**“Reciprocity is an act of community. It is grounded on a sense of interdependence, a commitment to each other, and respect for each other’s dignity.”**

**—Filiberto Penados, Yucatec Maya**

Reciprocity builds through relationship, communication, and action and exists when people feel like there is a significant and meaningful practice of shared respect, influence, gratitude, generosity, support, and opportunity. Ultimately, reciprocity can only be defined and experienced by the people in a relationship, and in this context, the Indigenous communities with whom we work.

Reciprocity is something that we must work towards at individual, community, and institutional levels. As practitioners and representatives of our institutions, we need to pay attention to reciprocity between the university and the community, between ourselves in our professional roles and the community partners, as well as between students in their academic roles and community members who are co-educators in their learning experience. Students and practitioners also need to be ready to engage in reciprocity on a personal level, both in our personal relationships with community members and with Indigenous communities and nations.

Given the history of extractive research and harmful community collaborations, it is particularly important to work towards a reciprocity of position, rules, and opportunities:

A reciprocity of position would mean recognizing the sovereignty and expertise of Indigenous people and communities, and creating the opportunity for people to hold formal and informal positions and receive remuneration and resources to support their work. Unfortunately, as Michi Saagiig Nishnaabeg scholar, Leanne Betasamosake Simpson writes about her own journey through academia, some universities are in fact moving in the opposite direction: “when I first held a tenure track position in an Indigenous Studies Department, there were two Elders on faculty, both women, who had gained tenure on the basis of their expertise in Indigenous Knowledge, not on western credentials. Fifteen years later, the same university has no tenured Elders, only Indigenous and non-Indigenous academics primarily hired on the basis of western credentials.”<sup>9</sup>

## WHAT DO WE VALUE?

Art by Yan Wu

Elders are equivalent to PhDs.

It's institutional and lateral violence not to pay knowledge keepers! How is expertise and experience valued?

85% of knowledge keepers in communities and organizations don't have degrees, but value life experiences.



<sup>9</sup> Simpson, L. (2017). *As We Have Always Done: Indigenous Freedom through Radical Resistance*. University of Minnesota Press. P. 56.

A reciprocity of rules would mean that Indigenous communities have access to comparable power and influence in the partnership and project development and are not subjected to greater barriers or restrictions than their postsecondary counterparts. For example, Gerardo Villagrán Becerra engages in collaborative budgeting with his community partners. “We all know exactly how much money is coming in and we all decide together how it is going to be spent. Other than our travel costs, the community and I have equal say in deciding how much money is used for program supplies, like food and tools, and how much the community keeps as their net profit. This process takes a lot of time, patience, and willingness to listen, but is the only way to distribute power in a more fair and concrete way.”

A reciprocity of opportunities would mean striving for Indigenous communities to experience as much recognition, wealth, and experience as the students, practitioners, and institution. Early in the consultations, Community Engaged Learning asked an international community partner what reciprocity would look like for them. The partner replied that it would mean that their youth have the same opportunities to travel and learn in other countries, just as the University of Manitoba students do. That conversation was an eye opener for the staff team and, along with similar feedback from other community partners, led to the start of a community exchange program through which community partners can take part in international programs free of cost and receive additional supports to allow them to make the most of those experiences.

### Why should we prioritize reciprocity?

When it comes to reciprocity, often the assumption is that communities will automatically benefit from postsecondary partnerships through the academic or volunteer work of our students, staff, and faculty; the limited funds that we spend in community; or the short-term and precarious employment we might provide. In reality, Indigenous communities often see little tangible benefit from their partnerships, while universities benefit greatly and rely on the involvement and support of Indigenous communities to fulfill their education, research, and community service mandates. Community partners know this to be true, such as in the case of the Julian Cho Society. During their post-trip presentation, two Q’eqchi’ Maya youth volunteers, Roberto Kus Jr. and Ambrose Che Jr. introduced the University of Manitoba as a partner whom Julian Cho Society supported with their educational goals, rather than seeing the university as a partner who supported the Maya community.

**“Fundamentally, students need to understand that the academy is more about building the student’s experience and academic learning, and the emphasis is on the student’s interests as opposed to the community’s interests.”**

**—Cristina Coc, Q’eqchi Maya**

As the primary beneficiaries of community engaged learning partnerships, we have a responsibility to work towards a sense of reciprocity with partnering communities. We must recognize, value, and properly support, remunerate, and express gratitude for the contributions of community partners, without whom we could not do our work. Striving for reciprocity honours Indigenous ways of being, knowing, and doing, and supports and strengthens our relationships and capacity for Indigenous-led collaboration, while a lack of reciprocity will maintain colonial and paternalist power structures and result in minimal benefits, and even harm, to partnering communities.



## How can we work towards reciprocity?

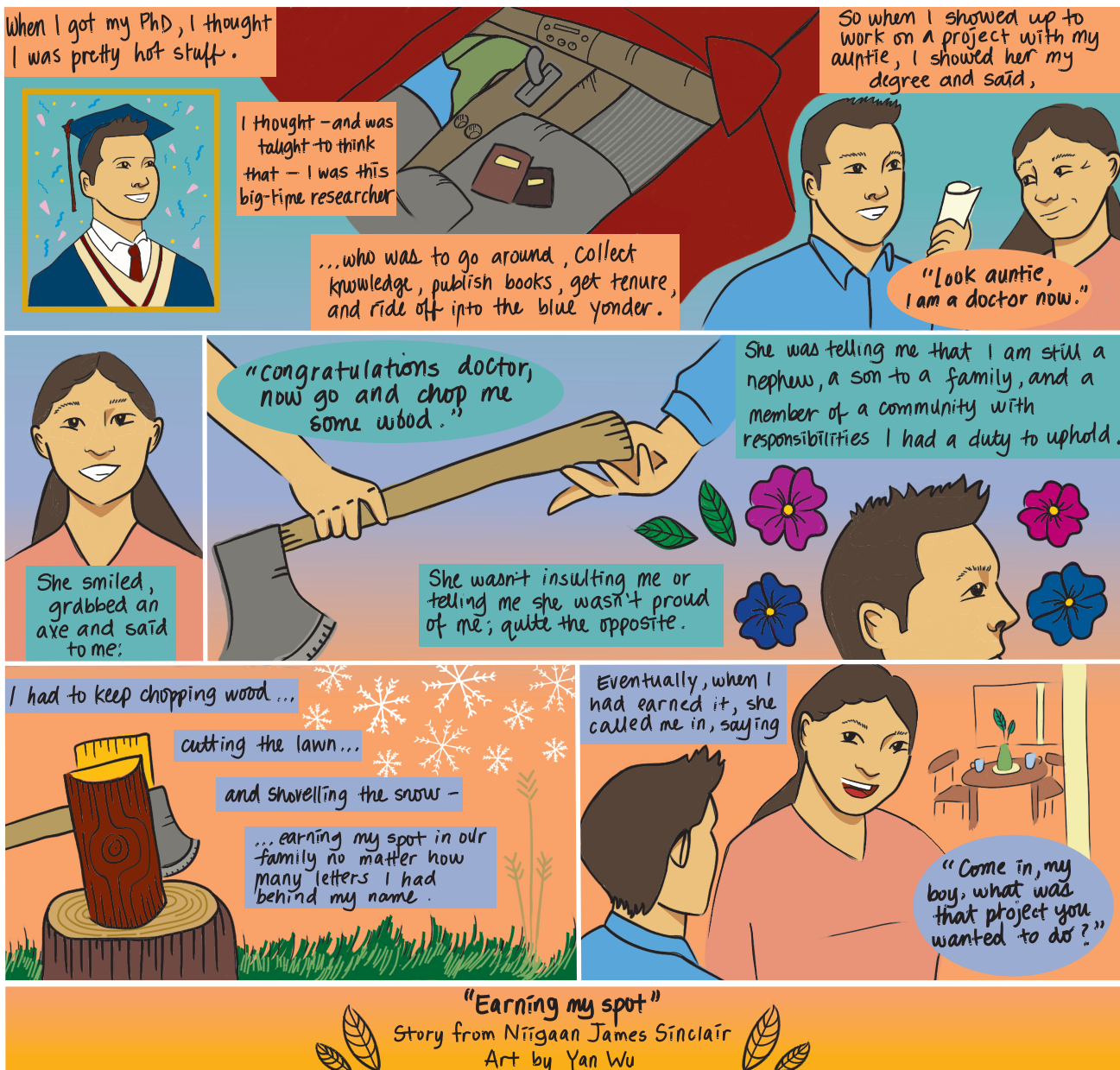
### Share first and share often

When we work with Indigenous communities, we need to look for every opportunity to contribute, share resources, express gratitude, and extend opportunities – even before we have received anything tangible in return. Practically, this might look like being the first to give a gift, bringing food to share at a meeting or community event, inviting people for a visit, or finding funding and resources for the community. Even still, it may not be possible for us to reciprocate for all that we, our students, and our institutions have and will gain from our work with community. “Communities have

always given more than they receive” (Filiberto Penados, Yucatec Maya), which means that reciprocity will always be something we strive towards.

### Engage in relational accountability

When we enter into relationship with Indigenous people and communities, we are entering into an agreement to take care of each other. Engaging in reciprocity invites us to see ourselves as part of the communities we work with and, as such, to become accountable to them in both personal and professional ways. You can read more about institutional accountability, gratitude, and following through on our commitments in the chapter on Relationship.





## Design for community benefit

During the consultations, a Cree community partner asked, “What is the benefit for us?” Reciprocity and community benefit should be a priority discussion with community partners early in relationship-building, throughout program planning conversations, and a topic that the project team returns to on a regular basis. The question of how communities will benefit may not be openly posed by Indigenous community partners due to past experiences where raising concerns resulted in partnerships abruptly ending and what little resources the community may have been promised disappearing. It is our responsibility, whether we initiated the partnership or not, to ensure that community benefits are explicitly discussed.

**“Most of the time the volunteers we receive don’t know anything. The only reason we receive them is because they pay us, and supposedly they make us happy with that but there is no real benefit to us, nothing concrete that we can feel.”**

— AMUPAKIN, Kichwa  
(translated from Kichwa to Spanish to English)

## How can we work towards reciprocity?

### Share first and share often

When we work with Indigenous communities, we need to look for every opportunity to contribute, share resources, express gratitude, and extend opportunities – even before we have received anything tangible in return. Practically, this might look like being the first to give a gift, bringing food to share at a meeting or community event, inviting people for Indigenous community partners should not have to wonder as to how they will benefit.

### Extend real opportunities

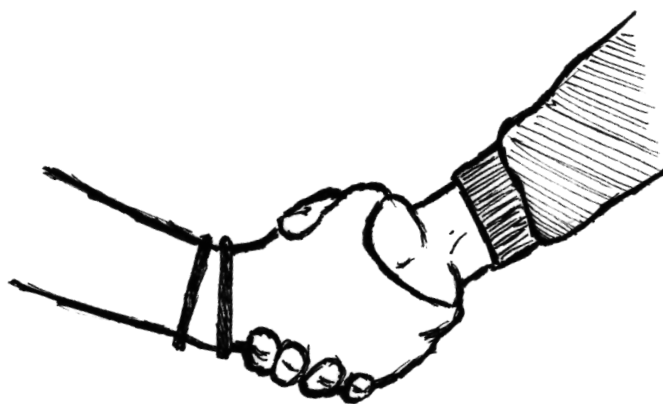
Future benefits, such as increased public awareness or policy change, can only be realized through long-term, or even lifelong, commitments to Indigenous communities. It is important to also share the range of possibilities with partnering communities, as they may have had more

limited engagements with other institutions. Mama Antonia Shiguango (Kichwa) reflected, “We have only asked for benefit in economic terms but not in other ways in which it could exist or happen because no one has ever presented other options” (translated from Kichwa to Spanish to English).

In many cases, partners have tangible ideas for reciprocity that the university could deliver on. For example, Q’eqchi Maya partner Cristina Coc approached Anny Chen with the idea of bringing two Maya youth on an exchange to Canada. Cris sat Anny down and shared the life story of these two youth, and at the end Anny felt the responsibility to bring this request to her supervisor and secure funding for the proposed exchange. Roberto Kus Jr. and Ambrose Che Jr. came on a three-week visit to Manitoba, which led to new relationships with AYO! (Aboriginal Youth Opportunities) and their involvement in a Maya youth camp two years later, when Michael Redhead Champagne and Kakeka Thundersky visited with University of Manitoba students to support youth programming for Sounding of the Conch Shell.

### Share and divest our power and wealth

“Never forget because we come from the university, we are seen as powerful, more so than we might feel we are” (Javier Mignone, Latin American). We need to acknowledge and share our institutional power and privilege and use them to the benefit of our partners. This includes moving resources to the community, restructuring the hierarchical power dynamics, and sharing the benefits and products of our work. During the consultations, Michael Redhead Champagne (Ininew) talked about the idea of a “privilege potlache,”<sup>10</sup> where we use our institutional privilege to shelter and protect our partners and community members from the harms or challenges of working with the university. This might look like intervening when we notice anti-Indigenous racism, challenging problematic policies and procedures, or even completing bureaucratic paperwork required by our institutions.



## Reciprocal travel opportunities

Indigenous communities should benefit from the best reciprocal travel opportunities available to them. Travel opportunities benefit the community when they lead to experiences, knowledges and skills that support or align with community goals. As outsiders, it isn't our place to decide what those experiences, knowledges and skills should be, nor what kind of opportunity would best support the goals of the community.

For example, when Gerardo Villagrán Becerra approached community partners in Ecuador and Chile about reciprocal travel opportunities, he assumed that they would want to visit the University of Manitoba on a south-to-north exchange. He learned, however, that the University was not a place where partners felt they could acquire the experiences, knowledges, skills, and most importantly the relationships they hoped to gain through a travel opportunity. Ultimately, we supported the communities in a south-to-south exchange to each other's territories to build networks of solidarity that extend beyond their individual partnerships with our office.



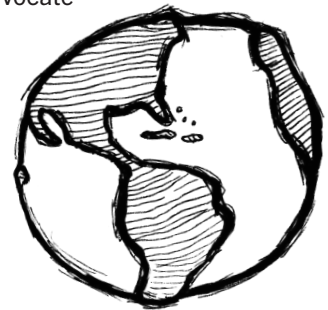
## Systems changes that support reciprocity

Here are some of the changes that universities, faculties, and practitioners need to make to our systems in order to follow the spirit and practices of Reciprocity.

- › Allocate resources for reciprocity in addition to payment for services rendered and community contributions.
- › Involve community partners in defining terms of reciprocity in partnership agreements.
- › Consult with Indigenous community partners to determine how to implement reparations and decolonization.
- › When promoting Indigenous achievement at the University of Manitoba, recognize the contributions of Indigenous students, staff, faculty, alumni and community, and provide compensation in some form when the request is beyond the normal expectations of service (Indigenous Senior Leadership Report 2019).
- › External Relations to identify Indigenous external relations officer within External Relations whose focus is to coordinate various aspects of fundraising for Indigenous spaces, bursaries, scholarships, new programs and other needs as they arise (Indigenous Senior Leadership Report 2019).

- › Explore the possibility of offering jointly authored, multi-disciplinary, graduate theses (UM Strategic Plan 2015-2020).
- › Establish a development grants program to seed community-based research in partnership with First Nations, Métis and Inuit communities (UM Strategic Plan 2015-2020).

Use the Circle of Control in the Practitioner Workbook to reflect on your own circles of control and influence and identify where you have responsibilities and opportunities to change your practices and advocate for systems change with your institution.



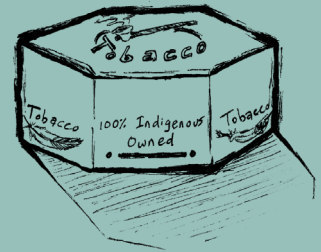
<sup>10</sup> The potlache is a giving ceremony or gift-giving feast practiced by Indigenous peoples in the Pacific Northwest.

## Conditions for reciprocity to exist

Reciprocity is more than following protocols, remunerating partners, and resourcing communities and projects. Alone, these actions do not achieve reciprocity, but they are necessary in creating the conditions where reciprocity can be experienced. Properly remunerating and resourcing our projects will mean that partnering communities can properly support our students, and we can avoid further exploiting community partners.

### Protocol

Protocols must be honoured in order for reciprocity to be experienced. For example, in some Indigenous cultures, passing tobacco is a common protocol when inviting a knowledge-holder to share their teachings. While passing tobacco honours protocol, it may not fulfill the principle of reciprocity for every Indigenous partner or guest. To achieve reciprocity, other conditions may need to be met, such as following through with other protocols or commitments and providing remuneration and resourcing, as well as taking other actions that create a sense of care, generosity, gratitude, support, opportunity, or more. Exactly what creates a sense of reciprocity will differ depending on the situation and can only be defined by the people in the relationship.



### Remuneration

The consultations revealed that there is often a significant amount of community work that goes unrecognized and unsupported in university-community partnerships. Though partners and community members may experience personal satisfaction and perceive short- and long-term benefits, it is unfair for staff and faculty to be paid to do work that their community counterparts are expected to do for free. Instead, we need to assess the amount of work being asked of community partners, whether the work will be added on top of their normally workload, and adequately compensate community members for their knowledge, experience, and time. This means providing honouraria, funding overtime work, or funding and hiring for dedicated positions in the community. As one practitioner reminded us, we shouldn't "offload responsibilities" onto the community.



### Resourcing

Universities are the primary beneficiaries of community engaged learning, which means that we are financially responsible for properly resourcing partnerships with Indigenous communities. In addition to remunerating project collaborators, resourcing also includes things like budgeting money and time for following community protocols, such as gifting and feasting; housing, feeding, and transporting ourselves without displacing community members; and bringing medicines and other supplies to share, so that we don't divert resources from the community.

The key thing to remember is that all of these resources are necessary components for a visit or student program. For example, when visiting First Nation communities with boil water advisories, it's good practice to buy enough water to replace what we will use as a group, or even more to leave for community use. Clean water is something many people from urban centres in Canada take for granted, but unfortunately, the reality is that dozens of Indigenous communities still do not have access to potable water. Ensuring we cover costs like these is basic resourcing, and therefore do not fulfill the responsibility of ensuring that our partners experience reciprocity and benefit in real and tangible ways.



### Practitioner Reflection

- › How do you practice reciprocity in your personal relationships with community partners?
- › What have you assumed were acts of reciprocity but weren't? What will you do going forward?
- › How should the university practice reciprocity at the level of the institutional partnership?
- › How have you benefited from this partnership? How has the community benefited? Who has benefited the most?



### Partner Conversation

- › Will reciprocity—a balanced circle—ever exist between a settler, capitalist institution and an Indigenous community given their unequal access to power and resources?
- › What would community engaged learning with Indigenous communities look like if universities moved beyond the transactional model of reciprocity in their engagement with Indigenous peoples and communities?
- › What do we want reciprocity to feel and look like between us?
- › What basic conditions need to exist before we can practice reciprocity?
- › In what concrete ways are we practicing reciprocity in this partnership, both at a personal and institutional level? What more can the university do?



### Learning Tool: ...but is it reciprocity?

Explore the Practitioner Workbook and draft a community proposal that prioritizes community benefit and defines the terms of reciprocity.



# PROTOCOL

Following nation- and community-specific practices to demonstrate respect for Indigenous ways of knowing, being, and doing, and our willingness to grow beyond our own personal practices and institutional policies and procedures.





Kaiya D

**"Every year, the Sayisi Dene would meet the South Indian Lake Cree in spring to make birch bark canoes. The two communities would form an assembly line, with some community members making the frames, while others prepare the bark, heat the spruce gum, spread it over the seams, and more. At the end of each canoe assembly season, the two communities would share a great feast to honour each other and celebrate their work.**

**"At the end, when all the canoes were made, they had a big feast and then they parted. Before they parted, they line up all the canoes, and they say their goodbyes. Then the Dene went north and the Crees went back to South Indian."**

**—Elder Jake Fortin, Dene**

**Illustrated by Kaiya Ducharme  
Digital painting using Procreate**

**“If you don’t know the protocol, ask. If we don’t know, we’ll help you figure it out.”**

**—Métis community partner**

Protocols are Indigenous ways of being, knowing and doing that guide behaviours and expectations for how people should participate in and contribute to community. Protocols are not one-size-fits-all; rather, they are nation- and community-specific governing systems that reflect the values, beliefs, and ways of life of a community and their relationship with each other, the land, and others with whom they share that land.

Settlers often confuse or equate Indigenous protocol with ceremony. While Indigenous ceremonies certainly have protocols, such as specific ceremonial diets and attire, community protocols also extend to what settlers might consider day-to-day interactions. Indigenous communities often have formal and informal protocols in place for initiating and building relationships, showing gratitude, addressing conflicts, parting ways, and many other situations.

Protocols often differ between communities and may even differ amongst members of the same community, so it is important that we avoid taking a pan-Indigenous approach. Becoming familiar with the protocols of one person, group, community, or nation does not mean that we will know how to work and relate to other groups, so we need to be prepared to do the work of familiarizing ourselves with the protocols of each new relationship. This is a necessary part of preparing for Indigenous community engagement and developing literacy in Indigenous content, which you can read more about in the chapters on the Work before the Work and Literacy.

### **Why should we follow community protocols?**

Historically, universities and researchers have often failed to recognize the importance of following community protocols when working with Indigenous communities and on Indigenous land. Because of this history, acknowledging and following protocol has become an important marker of respect and trustworthiness for Indigenous communities. Whenever we fail to learn about and follow community-specific protocols, we are demonstrating to the community that we believe settler ways of working are not only the right approach, but also the only approach to working together. Whenever we use a pan-Indigenous approach, we are demonstrating our lack of regard and recognition for

distinct and sovereign Indigenous nations. If we carry these colonial attitudes, we should not expect to be trusted or even welcomed in any Indigenous community.

When we recognize and follow protocol, we demonstrate that we have done the work before the work of learning about community values and ways of working and are now approaching the community with respect and humility. Engaging in protocol also shows that we can respect the Indigenous ways of knowing, being, and doing and that we are willing to move and grow beyond our own personal and institutional protocols. Rather than perceiving community protocols as a hindrance, we should instead try to understand that engaging in protocol is what makes collaboration and consultation between Indigenous communities and universities possible.

### **Conflicting values and beliefs**

Indigenous protocols might sometimes be challenging to follow or understand for people who relate to the world through a non-Indigenous worldview.

During the consultations, an Indigenous practitioner shared his experience bringing gender queer students to an Indigenous community that observes ceremonial protocols related to dress (requiring female-bodied participants to wear skirts even when they are masculine or non-binary, for example). Dietary choices (like vegetarianism or non-celiac gluten free diets) are another common area where tension may exist between non-Indigenous value systems and Indigenous protocols.

These tensions are inevitable in the context of intercultural collaboration, so it is our responsibility as community engaged learning practitioners to prepare ourselves to understand differing values, beliefs and practices and create strategies to navigate any conflicts safely and respectfully—in ways that honour the community and our own values and beliefs.



## Commonly overlooked protocols

### Initiating communication

One commonly overlooked set of protocols involves how to properly initiate communication with Indigenous nations, schedule a meeting with a community, or receive permission to visit and work on Indigenous land. Failure to research and engage in these protocols reflects settler ignorance and lack of respect when it comes to Indigenous sovereignty, governance, and protocol. People often assume there are no protocols in place for visiting Indigenous communities and lands, despite knowing that there are many protocols in place for visiting other nations, such as when we cross the border to the United States of America or engage in international relations as diplomats or researchers.



During the consultations with a Cree practitioner, we heard a story about a graduate student who was conducting environmental research in reserve communities without band permission. Despite knowing about the principles of ownership, control, access and possession (OCAP) and being aware of the expectation to notify Chief and Council of their visit, the student took samples from ditches and other water sources without consent. This story demonstrates a general lack of respect for community protocols, as well as a serious misunderstanding about the community's relationship with land.

Similarly, there are different ways to engage with Indigenous communities. In some First Nations communities, we might be expected to contact Chief and Council or the Band Office, but an Indigenous organization might want us to present the project to the Executive Director or Elders' Advisory Circle. In some Métis communities, we may be referred to a Métis Regional Office or Métis Local, while Maya communities in the Toledo District of Belize might direct us to the Maya Leaders' Alliance and give us their community engagement framework. The crucial thing to remember is to ask the community which governance structures they have in place and want us to recognize and follow.

### Saying goodbye properly

Another commonly overlooked set of protocols has to do with saying goodbye properly, whether temporarily or more permanently. Saying goodbye to an Indigenous community partner requires that we honour the knowledge, time, and relationships that we have shared with the community. Although each community will have its own distinct protocols, the Indigenous community partners who were consulted identified feasting and gift giving as common and well-received protocols for parting in a good way.

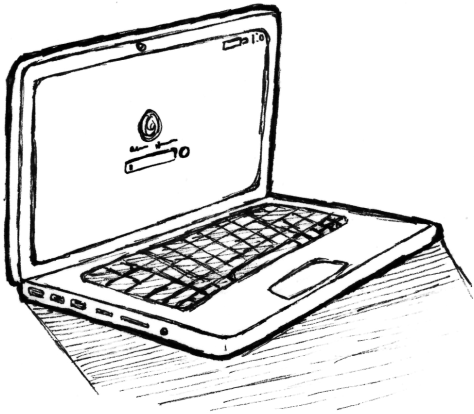
It is important to note that even when we say goodbye, an important condition of working with many Indigenous communities is relational accountability. This means that we have lifelong responsibilities in reciprocating all that we have gained when engaging with Indigenous communities and saying goodbye doesn't mean that we won't need to follow through on those responsibilities if the community should call upon us. You can read more about this topic in the chapters on Relationship and Reciprocity.



## How can we ensure we are following protocol?

### Do our research

Make sure we do the work before the work and develop our literacy in community protocols, specifically for the people and communities that we will be working with. This might involve secondary research, like reading and watching educational videos, but it's also important to talk to practitioners and community members to get firsthand information about living practices.



**“Most people underestimate the complex politics of the Métis Nation. There are protocols—who you can speak to and when—that are just as important as First Nations protocols.”**

—Laura Forsythe, Métis

**“Some people don't know how to be in community but community members are guiding implicitly.”**

—Darrien Morton, African

### Learn through observation, experience, and relationship

Learning through observation, experience, and relationship are important ways for us to recognize and follow community protocols. When invited, show up to community events, take part with humility, and observe how community members conduct themselves. Follow the lead of community members and people with more experience than us. If we are unsure about how to behave, ask questions without being intrusive or imposing our needs onto community members.



Remember not to centre ourselves and our own experiences – if we want to join the community in a ceremony, for instance, but don't know or understand the protocols, it might make sense to just observe, rather than take up time and space to have others explain it to us during their ceremony.

After a teaching has been shared with us, acknowledge the time and knowledge that was gifted to us—demonstrate gratitude and reciprocity for the work that others are giving to educate us. Giving gifts and sharing food are often appreciated!



## “People should seek mentorship—talk to people who have walked the path.”

—Filiberto Penados, Yucatec Maya

### Find a mentor or cultural interpreter

One of the best ways to familiarize ourselves with a community’s specific protocols is to work with a cultural mentor or interpreter – someone or several people who agree to take on an educative role in the project. Cultural mentors and interpreters can be Elders or knowledge-holders, but they can also be local staff, community members, youth, or more experienced colleagues.

Regardless of whomever becomes our mentor, remember that they are sharing their knowledge, experience, time, and energy for our benefit, which means we now have a responsibility to reflect on and engage in reciprocity. Make sure to demonstrate our gratitude on an ongoing basis and remunerate people appropriately for their work and expertise. You can read more about gratitude and remuneration in the chapters on Relationship, Reciprocity, and Collaboration.



### Learn from our mistakes and keep trying

We are bound to make mistakes as we learn about protocol, even when we should know better. The important part is how we overcome those mistakes.

During the consultations, Nicki Ferland and Anny Chen showed up empty-handed to a large meeting in a northern First Nation community. The group immediately teased them, asking, “Where are the doughnuts?” They made it through the meeting and on their way out, the community members invited them back in for a lunch of homemade moose stew and freshly baked bannock. Nicki and Anny gratefully accepted, and over food, the group dynamic changed - people shared more personally, telling stories about their work, life, and experience with the university.

Both Anny and Nicki felt a sense of relational accountability after experiencing the generosity of the community. When Nicki returned a few months later to share back some of the early findings, she brought along coffee and a big box of doughnuts for the meeting and was glad to stay for the lunch-hour fish fry.



“In my experience, community lets you know when you’ve messed up. It’s up to us to learn from our mistakes, and then do better. Don’t let the embarrassment or discomfort of a mistake keep you from working on your relationship with the community. Acknowledging that we’ve messed up, and then fixing it, shows that we care.”

—Nicki Ferland, Métis



## Systems changes that support protocol

Here are some of the changes that universities, faculties, and practitioners need to make to our systems in order to follow the spirit and practices of Protocol.

- › Include dedicated time to learn and apply protocols within project timeframes, from initial communication and engagement to parting ways.
- › Provide sufficient funding to support gift giving and feasting, protocols (e.g., tobacco) and other cultural expenses.
- › Develop and implement training for students, staff and faculty on Indigenous engagement principles, such as the principles of ownership, control, access and possession, and develop means of monitoring and enforcing those principles in community-university collaborations.
- › Provide oversight of partnerships with Indigenous communities and opportunities for Indigenous community engagement advising to ensure protocols are followed.

Use the Circle of Control in the Practitioner Workbook to reflect on your own circles of control and influence and identify where you have responsibilities and opportunities to change your practices and advocate for systems change with your institution.

### Practitioner Reflection



- › What relationships and activities are part of your Indigenous community engagement, and what community protocols might govern these interactions?
- › How can you learn about community protocols, and are there any protocols that guide those learning interactions?

### Partner Conversation



- › Does the community have any protocols I should follow in our work together?
- › What do I need to know and do in order to respect and follow community protocols?

### Learning Tool: Protocols for Indigenous community engagement

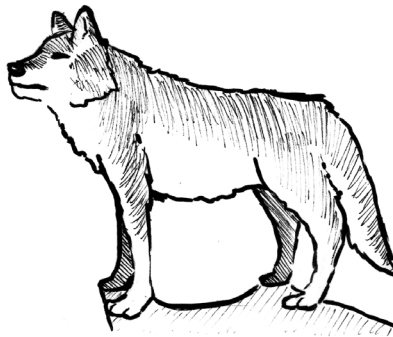


Explore the Practitioner Workbook and find a worksheet that will help you identify the protocols that govern different areas of your community engagement.



# HUMILITY

Recognizing communities as the experts in our partnerships and being ready to contribute our gifts, as directed, in ways that support the vision and goals of the community.





Koyun D

**“Early in the consultations, I was on a program trip in Belize and had the chance to sit down with Pablo Mis and Filiberto Penados to talk about assessment.**

**"When I questioned whether our five-day program working with youth to celebrate and value Maya foods and food tradition was having any impact, Pablo was quick to remind me that we play a very small role in a much larger movement. He said that we are only one speck, one message that values Maya ways amongst a bombardment of other messages that value things like Coca Cola. Rather than measuring whether our annual project was changing youth perspectives on Maya foods, he said that we should instead measure the alignment of our project to the broader goals of the community, and strive to be one of many small actions that moves community visions forward.**

**"Reflecting on what he said, I imagined the speck in a river -- are we flowing with the water? are we a log that's sticking up and changing the water's movement? are we a little pool off to the side, taking time away from the actual work? or are we a dam stopping the river entirely?"**

**—Anny Chen, Canadian-born Chinese**

**Illustrated by Kaiya Ducharme  
Digital illustration using Procreate**

**“You’re not here to come as experts, you’re not coming to serve, in the most colonial sense, the underprivileged. You’re coming to learn and take from an experience, and have a mutual, reciprocal exchange of experiences from a community and from people.” —Cristina Coc, Q’eqchi Maya**

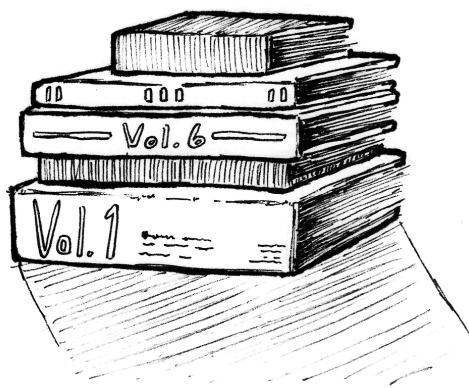
Working from a place of humility is critical when collaborating with Indigenous communities. Indigenous communities are the experts in community engaged learning – not only capable of finding solutions to their own challenges but also the central teachers we are asking to support the educational work of our institutions.

**“Going in to ‘fix’ is the wrong approach.”  
—Elder Wally Chartrand, Ojibway, Key First Nation**

The expertise of Indigenous communities extends beyond limited settler understandings of what constitutes Indigenous knowledges, such as hunting, fishing, foraging and trapping. Along with these important knowledges, Indigenous communities also hold expert knowledge in governance, education, economic systems, sustainability, healthcare, and many other disciplines.

Our humble role, then, is to see ourselves as helpers and learners, to listen and support the visions of Indigenous communities, and to challenge white supremacy and settler colonialism in ourselves and our institutions so that we can engage with Indigenous-led work, worldviews, and approaches.

As Sympatizante Mapuche Natalia Reyes Bustamante shared, “It means not coming into a community thinking that you can teach or help because you have read a lot of books and know a lot of things” (translated from Spanish to English).



### **Why cultivate humility in Indigenous community engagement?**

Approaching Indigenous communities with humility is one of the best ways to demonstrate that we are committed to working in good ways. Universities exist within a hierarchy of knowledge, power, and control and have been built through a history of exploitative research with Indigenous and other oppressed communities. Indigenous communities therefore have good reason to distrust us—to ignore our calls and emails, to take their time before opening up to us, to demand guarantees, and to refuse to work with us.

**“It’s hard to let people in.”  
—Agnes Contois, Skownan First Nation**

We need to recognize the risk that Indigenous communities are taking every time they collaborate with us, do the work of uncovering and addressing the harms that our institutions have caused, and find ways to heal and rebuild community members’ relationships with the institution. Some harms that communities had experienced included unfulfilled promises, unfinished projects, non-reciprocated partnerships, exploitation of local resources, and abandoned relationships.

When we have earned enough trust to form community engaged learning partnerships, we must then have humility about our contributions and responsibilities throughout the partnership and project. This requires us to re-think the discourse of service that has become commonplace within Indigenous community engagement and challenge saviour and charity mindsets that privilege settler knowledge and practices and diminish Indigenous ways of being, knowing, and doing. Instead, we need to value the mutual exchange of knowledge, experience, and resources that actually happens and ensure that partnering communities receive comparable recognition for their contributions.



## How can we practice humility in our community work?

**Know how we can contribute, but let the community determine our role**

Communities don't need universities to come save or serve them; in fact, that way of thinking furthers dependency, imperialism, and the perception that communities can't take care of themselves. Approaching our partners with humility means that we come into partnerships ready to discuss and clarify the goals and needs of the community and our roles and responsibilities within that work. We should also be ready for our roles and responsibilities to change over time and with the different people with whom we will work, reflecting the differences in history, cultures, and goals.

**“It’s kind of a knowledge exchange; you come here to share your knowledge but are you willing to learn from our culture at the same time?”**

**—Elder Grant Queskekapow, Cree**

**Know that we will need to learn and that we will need help**

Part of knowing our place is acknowledging when and where we lack knowledge and experience, and recognizing that we have much to learn from the community. We need to be humble about the scope, depth, and limits of our own capacity, be ready to learn and develop our own capacity to work with Indigenous communities, and create space for Indigenous expertise to lead and guide the work.



**“She showed up every day, didn’t enforce but led by example. She didn’t push her agenda. Good work has influence. It changes you, motivates you, and inspires you.”**

**—Chris Brayley, Cree; Howard Dumas, South Indian Lake Cree Nation; and Brian Trewin, Northern Manitoba**

**Teach only if we are invited**

We also need to know when our knowledge and expertise is wanted and should be shared with community. This means shifting from our usual role as teachers to that of learner and community member whenever we are in the community—and only teaching and guiding if we are invited to do so by the community. Q’eqchi Maya partner, Cristina Coc, shared experiences of people coming to her community for community engaged learning and research. Rather than listening and learning from the community, Cris reflected, “Some visitors assume that the Maya people have no knowledge, that they are not experts, that they are not capable of taking care of themselves, and so they ‘need’ these visitors to teach them. For example, in one case, a researcher wanted to teach the farming community how to farm.”

Unfortunately, Indigenous communities often become the targets of “capacity-building” initiatives. Before engaging in capacity-building work with Indigenous communities, it is important to critically reflect on who is assumed to hold capacity and who will be the true beneficiaries of the capacity-building. Too often, capacity-building is code for building capacity for colonial ways of working that push the community in the direction of capitalist, settler society. For example, an Anishinaabe youth shared their critique about university bridging programs, calling them “an assimilation tactic to take kids from these communities to the city.”

The practice of teaching only if we are invited comes with a responsibility to build upon the existing knowledges, skills, and ways of life of the community in a way that strengthens its self-determination, and to do so only when requested by the community, using the approaches and methods that the community prefers.

## Listen twice as much as we speak

The consultations showed that listening was a skill strongly valued by community and necessary for working in good ways. We need to demonstrate to the community that we know it is not our place to lead, but rather to listen and ask questions to ensure we know the best way to learn, work, and relate with Indigenous partners and community members.

Listening is particularly important when it comes to identifying project goals and designing for community

benefit. We need to listen to partnering Indigenous communities, so that we can understand their vision and align our work with community goals. When we fail to listen and co-design with community, we fall into patterns of paternalism and colonialism that impose external outcomes onto Indigenous communities, which often results in wasted resources, non-Indigenous priorities, or even direct harm. You can read more about designing for community benefit in the chapter on Collaboration.





## Cultivate resiliency and humility to stay in relationship

Demonstrating humility in our community engagement work will require showing that we understand why there is distrust and that we are ready to respond with acknowledgement, patience, and gentleness. It means that we know and accept that we will need to earn the trust of the community and that we commit to listening through our discomfort and building the necessary resilience to carry on the work of fostering trusting and reciprocal relationships.

### Be humble about who did the work and why it could be done

Universities often have colonial frameworks for how we produce, claim, and share our work, which overemphasize the value of independent work and quick successes and diminish the importance of collective work and slower processes.

Approaching community engaged learning with humility requires that we make explicit to students, administrators, and partnering communities that we play a small role and often will make a limited impact in the shared and intergenerational work of Indigenous healing, resurgence, and reclamation. We need to have humility about our impact, recognize the unseen labour, and share the credit for what is accomplished.

## Systems changes that support humility

Here are some of the changes that universities, faculties, and practitioners need to make to our systems in order to follow the spirit and practices of Humility.

- › Formally recognize and support collective approaches to teaching, learning, and working.
- › Create policies and procedures that enable collective and community ownership of resources and project outcomes and outputs.
- › Recognize, value and remunerate the expertise and scholarship of Indigenous communities.

Use the Circle of Control in the Practitioner Workbook to reflect on your own circles of control and influence and identify where you have responsibilities and opportunities to change your practices and advocate for systems change with your institution.

## Practitioner Reflection



- › What do you still need to learn? What will you need the community to teach you?
- › How are you ensuring that you are not acting in the role of the expert?
- › How has this relationship, partnership, or project impacted or benefited you?
- › How have you impacted the community in positive and negative ways?
- › Who is making this project possible? What role do you play?

## Partner Conversation



- › Am I listening? What does it look and feel like when I'm listening?
- › What do we need to learn from each other? What support do we need from each other?
- › Who has experienced negative or unexpected impacts, and how can we mitigate them?

## Learning Tool: Practicing humility

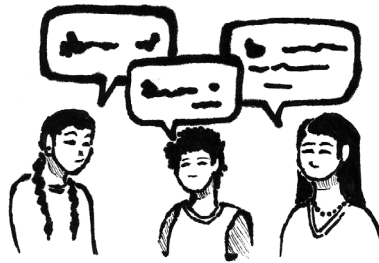


Explore the Practitioner Workbook and find a worksheet that will help you identify your gifts, your role in the community and project, and the positive and negative impacts you may have.



# COLLABORATION

Working in ways that work for Indigenous communities, including creating partnerships where the community has comparative or greater power in deciding what kind of work needs to be done, why it needs to be done, and how it should be done.





"Every time I visit the community and take a walk through their medicinal gardens, I am reminded of the biggest lesson I've learned during my time working with Indigenous communities. It was my first year as a CEL coordinator and I wanted to make a real difference in the lives of the Kichwa community members with whom I was partnering for the first time. Since the theme of that year's program was climate change, I thought, "I should do my research and get in touch with people who understand the Amazon context both at a scientific and cultural level. I shared this concern with a local collaborator and he referred me to the German International Cooperation (GIZ), who had been working on a climate change resilience strategy in the region for a few years. I really enjoyed working with GIZ because they knew how to communicate with me: they replied to my emails in a timely manner and shared reports and statistics with me so that I could better understand their work. I remember feeling so proud of myself for finding an evidence-based way to support the community. That year, our office used USD \$1,500 to finance the construction and transportation of a giant stainless steel raised bed, designed to protect hundreds of seedlings from flooding and other climate change related threats.

"Last year, during my fourth yearly visit to the community, I went to find the raised bed. It took me a while to find it, which is strange since I know the gardens very well and it would take heavy machinery to move it. After a few minutes I realized that the bed hadn't moved but was now covered by a mess of branches and weeds. In the four years since we purchased the bed, the community has used it once or twice -- most likely to avoid hurting our feelings. The thing is, Kichwa communities just don't use raised beds. They grow plants in chakras, which are sustainable micro ecosystems of companion plants, carefully designed as self-contained vegetal communities where each plant helps the others grow and give nutrients back to the soil. No amount of reports and statistics are going to change this traditional technology—because it works! So, the lesson I learned and will never forget is that the community always knows best. In retrospect, I should have given the USD \$1,500 directly to the community. That would have been the way to ensure that the funds made a real difference in the community."

—Gerardo Villagrán Becerra, Latin American

Illustrated by Yan Wu - 吴燕霓 - Wu Ya Ni  
Gouache, pencil crayon, mixed media paper

**“Pillars of the colonial system are money, greed, and control of resources—that’s what holds it up. What are the pillars that hold up Indigenous communities? They are built on cultural and spiritual pillars. These communities will last because their strength comes from the ancestors.”**

—Elder Norman Meade, Métis

Collaborating with Indigenous communities “takes a determined commitment” to address a long history of harm and exploitation on the part of settler society and its institutions (Gladys Rowe, Swampy Cree). Universities have been implicated in this history from the start. In light of this history, collaboration with Indigenous communities requires sharing power and letting go of control, so that the projects become a shared vision that centre the goals, timeframe, assumptions, and knowledge of communities (Filiberto Penados, Yucatec Maya).

In Indigenous community engagement, the term collaboration is often tokenized and used to misrepresent Indigenous consent, support, and participation in non-Indigenous projects. Indigenous communities often have little opportunity to share meaningful input or challenge settler interests in these so-called partnerships. In contrast, Indigenous-led collaboration requires concrete processes and structures to re-distribute the power that is currently held by universities. True collaboration means that Indigenous communities have comparative or greater power in deciding what kind of work needs to be done, why it needs to be done, and how it should be done.

### Why should we work in Indigenous-led and collaborative ways?

Working in good ways means honouring communities’ visions of the good life, even when it differs from our own. This includes making serious efforts to ensure that communities benefit from their partnerships with us, but it also includes choosing to work in ways that work for the community, even when it’s less convenient, goes against policy, or doesn’t make sense to us. If we don’t make a “determined commitment” to support Indigenous-led collaborations and work in Indigenous-led ways, the process and outcomes of our work will simply uphold the status quo that benefits settler society and institutions at the expense of Indigenous lives.

For example, the idea that we have to change our behavior while interacting with others in a “professional” setting is not



widely accepted by Indigenous communities for whom work, family, and life do not exist as separate spheres.

Collaborating with Indigenous communities requires us to challenge western preconceptions and expectations about what it means to work together, step out of our comfort zones, and modify or create new ways of working that prioritize Indigenous visions of the future. Communities in Latin America shared that they work from a place of trust and the social philosophy called “*el buen vivir*,” which stands in opposition to economic models that only seek to maximize profit (Daniela Contreras Rojas, *Mujer de la Abya Yala*, translated from Spanish to English).

**“Never forget—because we come from the university, we are seen as powerful, more so than we might feel we are. Like it or not, we are the colonizers.”**

**—Javier Mignone, Latin American**

### How should we collaborate with Indigenous community partners?

#### *Using critical, anti-oppressive, and anti-colonial approaches*

**Resist the saviour complex.** Indigenous communities don't need outsiders to come save or serve them. This charitable approach is self-serving and wrongly positions universities as experts while reinforcing the illusion that communities can't take care of themselves. As one South American community partner shared, "When someone comes here to talk to me about service, it makes me feel bad." Resist this narrative in all areas of our work, including the language we use to refer to partners, how we describe our work, and the claims we make about our role and impact.

**Avoid victim blaming.** Recognize that any challenges Indigenous communities may face are legacies and impacts of the colonial project. We need to face the truth of our own complicity or active participation in the ongoing oppression and exploitation of Indigenous peoples, and begin to work in solidarity to repair harms and support Indigenous sovereignty.

**Embrace strength-based approaches.** When we enter community as non-Indigenous people, we bring our own worldviews, cultural understandings, biases, and prejudices. We need to recognize when we are using deficit-based approaches and therefore imagining challenges where they don't exist or imposing settler colonial visions of a good life onto Indigenous communities. Instead, we should be looking for the strengths and striving to understand that Indigenous

people themselves already hold the knowledge, values, and relationships to carry out their community visions.

**Share and divest our power and wealth.** Making a determined commitment to work in good ways with community means redistributing power, control, and resources. We must advocate for institutional recognition, support, and funding for relationship-building, Indigenous-led collaboration, and reparations, and challenge university policies that limit the power and control of Indigenous partners.

#### *Cultivating diverse relationships*

**Work with the whole community.** Engaging with different kinds of people and sub-communities will help ensure that we don't miss important voices and perspectives. Try to build relationships with people of different genders, life stages, and community roles and anticipate that more people will be involved than we expect.

In some cases, we may need to work with our partners to overcome bias and prejudice that comes from within the community, such as ageism, sexism, homophobia and transphobia, and ableism, so that we can implement this practice fully.

**“If you haven't engaged people in the community, they don't feel they have usefulness.”**

**—Elder Wally Chartrand, Ojibway, Key First Nation**





**“Find a person in the community—  
an in-between, middleperson.  
Connect with an Agnes: someone  
who knows who’s who, who’s  
connected to the community.”**

**—Agnes Contois, Skownan First Nation**

**Work with people who are close to the situation.** Work with local Indigenous organizations and Indigenous community members who still live in the community. Remember to involve people whom the institution may understand to be beneficiaries and not power-holders or decision-makers.

#### *Designing for community benefit*

**Align our work with community goals, rather than imposing our own goals on the community.** Conversations about how community benefits must start early and be central in partnership discussions. Communities will only benefit from our work together if we are intentional in designing for community benefit. As one community partner shared, when we approach communities, the question should be, “What are your needs? Do we have the means and resources to meet your needs?” – not asking them to help meet our goals.

**Design for community ownership of the project and outcomes.** Borrow from the research context and familiarize ourselves with the principles of ownership, control, access and possession (OCAP). In community engaged learning, this might look like sharing or giving the rights of the curriculum or program design to the community, including a community contribution in the program fee or sharing program profits, and involving community partners in hiring staff and interviewing students.

**Anticipate and reduce the harms or burdens of working with the university.** Universities are colonial institutions that reproduce settler colonial society, so it is crucial to anticipate how the university's involvement and work could negatively impact the community and minimize or stop those harms. This includes challenging anti-Indigenous racism and white supremacy, as well as finding or creating appropriate work-arounds for university-imposed barriers, particularly financial and administrative barriers that cause delays in resourcing and remuneration, and then documenting our experiences and work-arounds so that we can champion new policies and procedures that work better for community.

#### *Supporting good communication*

**Be open and consistent in our communication.** Stay in touch with community members outside of our project and follow up with any responsibilities. Be honest about any challenges.

**Use communication methods that work best for the community.** Some people prefer to meet in-person, talk on the phone, or communicate over email. Others want to text or engage through social media.

**Use language that is accessible and appropriate for the community.** Become familiar with the everyday language of the community and adapt our way of speaking and listening. Whenever possible, learn and use the community's first language, and if that isn't possible, work with an interpreter to provide translation.

**“Communicate clearly. Openness  
is great. Communities need some  
background about university systems,  
project proposals, can and can'ts,  
and roles.”**

**—Charlene Lafreniere, Métis**



**“The work begins before the work. For example, when you show up, say hello, and you shake somebody’s hand, the work began 10 minutes ago, last night, or last year. How you approach the work, how you are dressed that day, the tone that you have, your choice of what time and place you caught a person at a certain time of the day, what gift you offered to begin with – all those things are the actual work. The work begins way before that. And, the work certainly doesn't change just because you have a PhD or worked in a community for 25 years; it continues.”** —Niigaan James Sinclair, Anishinaabe

*Working in ways that work for the community*

**Work on the community's schedule.** Monday to Friday, 9-5 doesn't work for a lot of communities, so we may need to work evenings and weekends. Work at the pace of the community, which might mean taking time to build relationships first, doing fewer things more completely, or acting quickly to address urgent issues or take advantage of positive momentum.

**Listen twice as much as we speak.** Listen to the community about what work needs to be done, who it should involve, and how it should be done, and follow their guidance.

**Make decisions with the community.** Making meaningful decisions together requires more than just including or consulting with the community. Share power in program planning, coordination and budgeting, so that communities have decision-making power, or even final say. When working with many community members or as part of a collective, understand that consensus and community decision-making processes can take a long time.

**Be flexible.** Make our proposals, projects, and reporting as flexible as possible. Be ready to compromise.

**“People who let the work be changed and influenced by the communities you’re partnering with, who are flexible, are working in a good way.”**

— Charlene Lafreniere, Métis

**Do the work that needs to be done.** Have a conversation about collaboration to determine everyone’s needs, capacity, and roles. Clarify how we can best support the partnership and project and then do whatever the community needs. Be prepared for work that is unexpected. Do not offload work on the community without providing proper resources and remuneration. If there is significant work expected from the community, provide funding to hire a dedicated person.

**“Those two women work in good ways. They organize and prep everything from out of town. You don’t need to do anything for them.”**

—Caroline Brayley, Cree



# “I’m embarrassed about how long it takes the university to reimburse community members.”

— Lisa Mendez, settler

**Properly resource people and pay them on time.** The most common frustrations shared in the consultations were the delay in paying people for their time and work or reimbursing for their expenses and the amount of paperwork required to facilitate payment. Many community members support community engaged learning on their own time, which makes it completely inappropriate to allow them to incur expenses as part of our institutional work. Make sure to discuss preferred payment methods and timeframes with partners, discuss these needs with university administrators, and make the necessary arrangements so that we can pay people in ways that work for them and pay them on time.



## Systems changes that support collaboration

Here are some of the changes that universities, faculties, and practitioners need to make to our systems in order to follow the spirit and practices of Collaboration.

- › Provide funding to support community-initiated and community-led projects that is not conditional upon alignment with the strategic priorities of the university or burdensome reporting requirements.
- › Provide sufficient funding to ensure partners and collaborators receive comparative wages, insurances, and other benefits.
- › Develop partnerships and projects through community invitation and based on community goals.
- › Review faculty/school tenure and promotion guidelines to ensure that the value of developing effective partnerships and the time involved in carrying out community-based and international research are recognized (UM Strategic Plan 2015-2020).

Use the Circle of Control in the Practitioner Workbook to reflect on your own circles of control and influence and identify where you have responsibilities and opportunities to change your practices and advocate for systems change with your institution.

## Practitioner Reflection



- › What does it look like when you consult and involve Indigenous communities? What does it look like when you are engaging in Indigenous-led collaboration?
- › Which individuals and groups do you collaborate with in the community? Are there particular reasons you work with them and not others?
- › Is your approach to collaboration ignoring or excluding some community members? How can you know if your approach is not working well for some community members?
- › What are some barriers that might prevent you from engaging in Indigenous-led collaboration with your partners, and what can you do about them?
- › Have you formed relationships with community members of different genders, ages, and other demographics?

## Partner Conversation



- › Who should be involved in this project?
- › Who is getting paid to do this work and who isn't? How can we make this more equitable?
- › How should we approach decision-making, and what major decisions do we want to make together?
- › Are there any university processes and policies that are creating barriers for the community and our work together? Which ones can we change immediately and which ones are longer-term system changes?

## Learning Tool: Mapping diverse relationships



Explore the Practitioner Workbook and identify and map the diverse relationships that sustain your partnership.

# APPENDICES

## About Community Engaged Learning

This document was prepared by the office of Community Engaged Learning (CEL) at the University of Manitoba. CEL offers experiential programs and workshops where students learn about community engagement while gaining experience working with diverse communities in Canada and abroad. In recent years, CEL has focused their programming and relationship-building on work with Indigenous communities across the Americas.

### Nicki Ferland

Nicki is a Two-Spirit<sup>11</sup> Métis woman who benefits from skin colour and cis-gender privilege. She lives in Winnipeg—a historic and contemporary Métis settlement—with her Michif wife and their daughter. Nicki grew up in two Red River Métis parish communities built by her ancestors: buffalo hunters, farmers and leaders. Both of her parents are descended from scrip-bearing Métis families. She has a mixed rural and urban upbringing that has strongly influenced her own identity and cultural traditions. Nicki is heavily involved with the Métis Nation in Manitoba as well as a large ceremonial community.

After graduating with a degree in Human Rights, Nicki worked with a consulting firm in Winnipeg owned and operated by Métis women. She designed and conducted many qualitative research studies and consultation projects with First Nation and Métis people, communities, and organizations across Winnipeg and northern Manitoba. She was mentored in Indigenous research methods by queer Métis and Cree individuals. In the past decade, she has

made mistakes and learned many lessons about Indigenous community-based research and community engagement, which she applied to CEL's approach to the consultations (read more about the methodology in the appendices).

Nicki also develops curriculum and facilitates anti-racism training and Indigenous education workshops that are grounded in a Métis paradigm and pedagogy. She believes that education should transform society and contribute to social, economic and environmental justice. She is also committed to urban Métis land-based education, which establishes Métis place in historical and contemporary urban society, and helps Métis and other learners explore their cultural identities and relationships with land. She is currently completing a Master of Education in Indigenous land-based education at the University of Saskatchewan. In her work with CEL, Nicki facilitates a land-based education program in relationship with the large and diverse urban Indigenous community in Winnipeg, including two-spirit elders, young knowledge holders, and gifted, radical youth. Without their guidance and collaboration, the program wouldn't be possible.



<sup>11</sup> Two-spirit is a contemporary term used by North American Indigenous people whose gender and sexual expressions do not fit within Eurocentric gender and/or sexuality binaries. The term is inclusive of Indigenous people who identify on the LGBTQ+ spectrum as well as those who do not use these labels.

## Anny Chen

Anny is a Canadian-born Chinese woman, educator, and child of immigrants and refugees. Anny was raised by her maternal family and grew up in a multigenerational and multilingual household. Her family came to Canada as refugees from Laos, sponsored by Mennonite Central Committee, and settled in Spence neighbourhood, where Anny began her public school education and integration into Canadian culture. After learning with and from Indigenous communities as an adult, Anny is finding her way home again – to her own cultural heritage, language, and peoples.

Two transformative learning experiences led Anny to her work in community engaged learning – her time volunteering and working with Katimavik, a national youth volunteer program, and her M.Ed in Adult Education and Community Development (OISE), which helped her develop a more politicized understanding of her cultural identity and her role as an educator, as well as learn about the importance of collective work and change. Anny finds purpose in education work that helps people learn about themselves, find a sense of belonging, and discover their roles in community.

In her work with CEL, Anny has been supported by her relationships and partnerships with urban Indigenous community organizers and members in Winnipeg, Anishinaabe partners and youth in Skownan First Nation, Maya communities in Belize, and Cree and Dene community members in Leaf Rapids. Through these relationships, the stories that people share, and the time spent visiting, laughing and eating together, Anny continues to learn about the love and humility that is needed when we are building relationships across cultures and trying to support the visions of Indigenous communities.



## Gerardo “Gera” Daniel Villagrán Becerra

Gera is a community-engaged educator and Latin American philosopher of liberation currently living in Treaty One Territory with his wife and daughter. He was born in southern Mexico and raised in the US-Mexico border. When he was 18, his parents decided to move to Canada to take him and his siblings away from the violence growing across the US border due to US demand for illegal drugs and exploitable bodies.

As a community engaged educator, Gera’s work incorporates art-based and decolonial pedagogies that invite and provoke students to recognize the ways in which modernity, capitalism, and coloniality condition their experiences of the world and limit their capacity to engage authentically with Indigenous and non-western perspectives.

Having completed an MA in philosophy at the University of Guelph, Gera’s approach to community engaged learning is informed by philosophical concepts, themes, and approaches to inquiry. The way he thinks about community engaged learning was crucially shaped by the time he spent learning from and working with Williche and Mapuche communities on the Island of Chiloé (Chile) as part of a Global Affairs Canada internship. This experience gave him the opportunity to participate in the creation of an Indigenous-led intercultural school, reflect critically on his identity as a Latin American person and Global South migrant, and to realize that poverty in Latin America and other Global South regions is not the result of underdevelopment, but rather the condition that makes wealth possible in the Global North.

Gera’s work at CEL, scholarship, and approach to fatherhood has grown out of the teachings, love, and support he receives from the communities he has come to see as family: the AMUPAKIN collective in Ecuador and MICA collective in Chile.



## About the artists

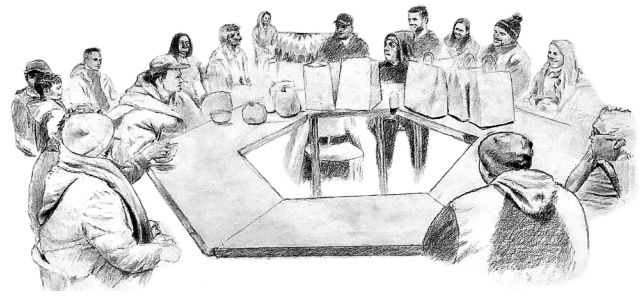
### Nicki Ferland (she/her)

My name is Nicki Ferland, I am a Two-Spirit Red River Métis fiber artist. Through the medium of quilted raw edge fabric collages, I create landscapes, portraits, and story quilts that explore Métis history, culture and identity. Through my art, I seek to strengthen my own relationship with land, urban and other, and with the handiwork of the matriarchs who came before me.

#### **Artist Statement - Cover**

Quilted raw edge fabric collage made from tulle, cotton and batik fabric, and clouds sculpted from the cotton rescued from an old bottle of Tylenol

This landscape was inspired by remembered scenes pieced together from backwoods canoe trips on various Manitoba waterways. I wanted to create a scene that evokes a journey, because Indigenous community engagement is a journey – it takes time, courage, intention, and lots of planning. There are visual cues throughout the landscape that describe the framework: five stepping stones represent the five stages on the pathway; seven cattails and seven trees represent the seven principles. Other symbols allude to principles and practices: jack pines adapt to the wind and their environment in the same way we should adapt to the communities we work with; the different trees represent an interdependent ecosystem of the diverse relationships that will ultimately benefit our collaborations and enrich our lives; the sky depicts a sunrise on working together in good ways and, simultaneously, and a sunset on our old, not-so-good ways of working.



### Jason Iwunze (he/him)

My name is Jason Iwunze, I am a pencil artist from Nigeria. I came to Canada for my education and completed my degree in Economics at the University of Manitoba in 2019. I have enjoyed drawing since childhood. My artworks are mostly hyper realistic.

#### **Artist Statement - Literacy**

Graphite pencil on vellum cartridge paper

This artwork depicts scenes from the 'Meet Me at the Bell Tower' community gatherings that happen in Winnipeg's North End. The aim of the work is to capture the spirit and the events that take place during these weekly gatherings.

### Hazim Ismail (dia/they/them)

My name is Hazim Ismail, I am a Bugis-Malay, Chinese discard studies scholar and queer anthropologist currently residing in Tkaronto. My experiences as a nonbinary, queer, displaced, stateless, former refugee informs and is informed by work in community, academic, and artist spaces. My current role is as Program Officer for Rainbow Railroad, overseeing the Private Sponsorship of Refugees Program, as well as serving on the Planned Parenthood Toronto board.

#### **Artist Statement - Reflection**

Fine-tip marker on rice paper, in digital collage format with stock imagery.

For this work, I tried to draw parallels between Niigaan James Sinclair's words on what makes a community visit an engaging one, with my own memories of visits to my family home. A structure where people inhabit is not necessarily a home until enriched with laughter and a connectedness to our ecologies beyond its wooden or concrete walls. Visits can be part of this, and an engaging visit is one that breathes relationship into spaces. I like contrasting our social and personal perceptions (the people chatting, the scenery outside the window, the flowers from outside) with 'real life' photos to explore how they shift how we relate to what the photo was perhaps originally trying to convey (just another kitchen, dining setting).

### **Liv Barney (she/her)**

My name is Liv Barney, I am a Diné (Navajo) artist who creates work that often takes the form of paintings and relates to my Indigenous identity or the Southwest United States. I have a passion for the arts because in addition to representing parts of myself, it can bring communities together and tell people's stories. To date, my work has been published multiple times in Indigenous focused publications put forward by titles such as Red Rising Magazine, Native Realities Press, and Michigan State University Press. Additionally, I have been a part of group exhibitions at galleries, had a solo show, and been a live painter at multiple events. I share my art through social media, too, as a way of adding to the Native presence and voices in current society and the creative world.

#### ***Artist Statement - Relationship***

Digital illustration

My illustration depicts one of the practitioner quotes about a person's relationship with Kichwa midwives, who are also known as "mamas." It's meant to show the organic development of relationships and how people come to support each other. The series of drawings are representative of specific points from the person's story about how he and the mamas care for each other: medicine, food, carrying the mamas' bags, fixing facilities, and teaching him how to navigate a rainforest. A winding rainforest path acts as the visual glue in the illustration to connect the various acts of care, as well as representing the area the mamas are from. The nature path is also representative of relationships in how there are many ways they can grow and flourish.

### **Brooklyn Rudolph-Nicholas (she/her)**

My name is Brooklyn Rudolph-Nicholas and I'm a Cree mixed media artist from the Pimicikamak Cree Nation. I'm an enthusiast of art and creating artwork that echoes and represents my Cree Heritage. I have created art pieces since 2016 and gave them as gifts to significant others in my life. The art pieces created are inspired by Marie Zorniak who passed away suddenly to Cancer. Marie Zorniak motivated and positively influenced me to use my art to showcase and bring awareness to my Cree heritage. I have performed at a live painting event at Manito Ahbee Festival (2016) and won the Manitoba Aboriginal Youth Achievement Award for Artistic Performance in 2016. I have also won a Scholarship from Manitoba Institute of Trades and Technology for my art. I was the youngest artist to participate in the Indigenous Artwalk launched by Downtown Winnipeg BIZ (2016). My artwork has been displayed at the Alt Hotel in Winnipeg, MB, as well as the Manitoba Museum (Red River Heritage Fair 2016). Follow me on Facebook @PimicikamakArtist and Instagram @brooklynrudolph.

#### ***Artist Statement - Reciprocity***

Acrylic paint, on stretched canvas

My artwork depicts reciprocity between Indigenous communities and institutions. In my painting, two figures represent an Indigenous community partner and an institutional partner. These two come together, striving for balance. Their struggle to achieve reciprocity is depicted in the asymmetrical circles created by their hair and arms. The eagle sits with the community and represents the love that the community shares with everyone around them and the teachings they pass on to the university. The wolf sits with the university and passes on a beautiful and meaningful lesson about humility, teaching us about living free from arrogance and thinking of others before yourself.



### **Kaiya Ducharme (she/her)**

My name is Kaiya Ducharme, and I am a young, Métis, self-taught visual artist and musician studying at the University of Winnipeg, aspiring to achieve a career in the arts. My many interests include photography, digital art, impressionist acrylic paintings, realism, and much more. I love to create bright and colourful pieces that evoke distinct interpretation and emotion. I have created many large-scale pieces of famous guitar players for the Windsor Park Collegiate guitar room and commissioned pieces for several members of my community.

#### **Artist Statement - Protocol**

Digital painting using Procreate

For this piece I decided to digitally create a scenic portrait of birch bark canoes resting on a peaceful spring river shoreline. Although there are no people in my piece, the traditional Cree blanket and birch bark baskets filled with dried meat and berries implies the presence of the Sayisi Dene and South Indian Lake Cree coming together to celebrate with feast. I did not want this piece to be limited to a specific time period as this story never specifies when the meeting of the two communities happened and I think there is beauty in the unknown.

#### **Artist Statement - Humility**

Digital painting using Procreate

For this piece, I digitally created a portrait of a river flowing and changing while experiencing different stages and obstacles. The flowing river meets a fork and is separated into two paths. The first path meets a dam which stops the river's flow and the second is a clear flowing stream. I included a stick in the mud that forces the river to flow around it and bright rays of sunlight shining through the trees. I wanted the river to appear very fast-paced and unstable to demonstrate how partnerships may seem at times.



### **Yan Wu - 吴燕霓 - Wu Yan Ni (they/them)**

My name is Yan Wu, and I am a self-taught artist born on Treaty 1 (Winnipeg, Manitoba), currently residing on Treaty 5 (Leaf Rapids, Manitoba). I primarily use gouache, watercolour, pencil crayon, and am dipping into digital art. As a new artist, I am exploring various styles and mediums. Common themes in my work involve navigating what being a Chinese/Asian non-binary person means to me. More recently, my work is inspired by Chinese folk art, nature, bright colours, anime, and graphic novels. If you would like to keep up with my art journey or hire me for future projects, you can find me on Instagram @wyan2222.

#### **Artist Statement - Collaboration**

Gouache, pencil crayon, mixed media paper

Using the author's reference pictures, I used gouache to illustrate an unused garden bed in the middle of a Kichwa chakra. Focusing on the beauty and health of their chakras, the garden bed is seen to be a foreign object as the viewer peers in through cacao leaves.







## Centering relationships: our approach to the consultations

Community Engaged Learning (CEL) used a relational approach for its consultation strategy, which recognized that research brings people together (Wilson, 2008) and highlighted “the imperative to develop reciprocal and respectful relationships in the research endeavor” (Johnson, 2008). We worked with the Indigenous communities and organizations with whom we consulted to ensure that the consultation strategy met community- and Nation-specific strengths and Indigenous research methods; followed culturally-appropriate codes of conduct and protocols; and honoured Indigenous ways of knowing, being, and doing. CEL adjusted research methods, as needed, based on community needs and context, and made appropriate community-specific modifications that demonstrated respect, reciprocity, and responsibility (Wilson, 2008). This approach means that the Indigenous community partners and University practitioners that we consulted helped us identify additional informants and resources, establish the question set, and further develop our methods. This was as simple as asking: who we should talk to, what we should talk to them about, and how we should talk to them.

The consultations and literature reviews prioritized Indigenous voices and centred Indigenous knowledges (Berry, 2012). CEL travelled to communities to connect in-person with consultation participants. Johnson (2008)

states, “Building a research relationship, creating a whānau [extended family relationship] around a shared interest, requires showing your face (he kanohi kitea) to the community.” CEL observed community-specific protocols before entering communities and individual protocols during each interview. Consultation participants were passed tobacco and/or given a small gift, as appropriate. To recognize and honour the knowledge and insights that community members shared, CEL distributed individual honoraria or made a community contribution, as deemed appropriate and decided on by participating communities and individuals. The budget also included food for consultation participants or community feasts.

CEL aimed for “kitchen table” conversations with Indigenous community members (Smith & Smith, 1981; Johnson, 2008). As a slower, more informal and non-invasive method, a kitchen table design prioritizes respectful and reciprocal relationships before the research. The semi-structured “interview guide” replaced set questions in favour of thematic discussion topics. The desired outcomes for each conversation were established in the introduction to the project and consultations, but participants were encouraged to follow their own agendas. CEL hoped to capture a variety of perspectives and narrative accounts of good and not so good ways of working with communities, from engaging

communities and establishing partnerships, to determining outcomes, developing and implementing community engagements, and closing projects.

Following sometimes lengthy introductions, consenting participants were recorded using digital audio recorders to back up our notes. In cases where recording was neither appropriate nor convenient, only written notes were taken. We worked closely with an Indigenous review committee, comprised of Indigenous community partners, staff, and faculty, who provided useful advice, guidance, and expertise to the analysis and drafting phases.

The draft framework was widely circulated among consultation participants for review and feedback. In some cases, we were able to return to communities to share-back what we learned and gather more input. Johnson (2008) affirms, “This sharing is a crucial aspect of maintaining the ongoing relationship. By returning their stories, and hearing their feedback, the dialogue continues.” All quotes and stories used in the framework were transcribed and sent to consultation participants for review and approval. CEL only attributed quotes to a person, organization, or community when we had their specific consent in writing, and all consultation participants are listed in the acknowledgement section.

Consultation participants were invited to the launch of the framework and were provided with final copies of the plain language framework (electronic and/or hard copy). According to Martin and Mirraboopa (2003), “reporting is culturally regulated through respect of protocols to others, such as asking permission, using preferred language, terms and expressions, with the ultimate aim of maintaining relations.” Our methodology and approach to the consultations demonstrates that CEL strongly believes, as Johnson (2008) states, that “establishing and maintaining relationships is more important than any other aspect of the research approach.”



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# SUPPLEMENTARY RESOURCES



## Explore

### **Indigenous Resources by the Centre for the Advancement of Teaching and Learning, University of Manitoba**

A list of resources covering a broad range of Indigenous topics presented on a turtle map. The resources are a great starting place for developing literacy in Indigenous topics.

<https://centre.cc.umanitoba.ca/indigenous/>

### **Groundwork for Change**

A website that gathers and shares information to help non-Indigenous/settler peoples grow relationships with Indigenous peoples that are rooted in solidarity and justice. The site is meant to support people who are asking questions and looking to learn more in ways that are respectful of, and useful to, Indigenous Peoples.

<http://groundworkforchange.org>

### **Culture and protocol by the University of Manitoba**

Information about cultural protocols for engaging elders and planning ceremonies compiled by the Indigenous community at the University of Manitoba.

<https://umanitoba.ca/indigenous/culture-and-protocol>

### **Developing Cultural Awareness by ClinEdAus**

An Australian-based website sharing cultural awareness resources and videos for the context of Indigenous health care.

<https://www.clinedaus.org.au/topics-category/developing-cultural-awareness-152>

The following are western community engagement resources that can be adapted for an Indigenous partnership context.

### **Navigating community-campus research partnerships by Carleton University**

A tool and training video developed by Community-First Community Campus Partnerships Working Group to help navigate community-campus research partnership.

<https://carleton.ca/communityfirst/2018/video-navigating-community-campus-research-partnerships-introducing-a-tool-to-help-the-process/>

### **Templates for community partnership agreements by Carleton University**

Three templates and conversation guides (basic, guided and structured) for Community Partnership Agreements, which help guide initial conversations between faculty and community partners who are engaging in academic civic engagement projects. The agreements help all parties establish their expectations about a project in more detail. They can additionally be used as a teaching tool to get students thinking about ways to create reciprocal partnerships.

<https://www.carleton.edu/ccce/community-partners/community-partnership-agreements/>

### **Community Engagement [Self] Assessment Tool by Nexus Community Engagement Institute**

Individual or group assessment tool for community engagement practitioners.

[https://www.ripleffect.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/02/CEAssessmentTool\\_Fillable-SavableFINAL.pdf](https://www.ripleffect.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/02/CEAssessmentTool_Fillable-SavableFINAL.pdf)



## Read

### **“Do You Really Want to Know Why I Can’t Hold Space for You Anymore?” by Gesturing Towards Decolonial Futures**

This poem lists the reason why it is emotionally and physically costly for Indigenous, Black, and racialized people to hold spaces for other people to learn about their complicity in systemic harm. Read the poem once and pay attention to the different kinds of responses it evokes in you. After you have read the poem once, read the instructions that follow for the second part of the exercise.

<https://decolonialfutures.net/portfolio/why-i-cant-hold-space-for-you-anymore/>

### **Building Trust Before Truth: How Non-Indigenous Canadians Become Allies by Animikii**

Settler guide to Indigenous allyship with reflection questions.

<https://www.animikii.com/downloads/building-trust-before-truth-how-non-indigenous-canadians-become-allies.pdf>

### **Framework for Research Engagement with First Nation, Metis, and Inuit Peoples by the Rady Faculty of Health Sciences, University of Manitoba**

This framework for research engagement was developed by Manitoba First Nation, Metis, and Inuit health researchers and for those involved in Manitoba First Nation, Metis, and Inuit health research.

[https://umanitoba.ca/faculties/health\\_sciences/medicine/media/UofM\\_Framework\\_Report\\_web.pdf](https://umanitoba.ca/faculties/health_sciences/medicine/media/UofM_Framework_Report_web.pdf)

### **Indigenous Writes: A Guide to First Nations, Métis & Inuit Issues in Canada by Chelsea Vowel**

Vowel, C. (2016). *Indigenous Writes: A Guide to First Nations, Métis & Inuit Issues in Canada*. Highwater Press.

31 accessible short essays that explore the Indigenous experience from the time of contact to the present, through five categories – Terminology of Relationships; Culture and Identity; Myth-Busting; State Violence; and Land, Learning, Law, and Treaties.

### **“On Critical Humility” by Warren Cariou**

Cariou, W. (2020). *On Critical Humility*. *Studies in American Indian Literatures*, 32(3), 1-12. [doi:10.1353/ail.2020.0015](https://doi.org/10.1353/ail.2020.0015).

Through storytelling, Warren Cariou defines humility as an openness to learning, a mode of listening, a way of showing respect. Critical humility means speaking truths that are bigger than the speaker or the listener. Cariou concludes by responding to the question, what does the future of critical humility look like?

### **“Skirting the issues: Indigenous myths, misses and misogyny” by Alex Wilson**

Wilson, A. (2018). “Skirting the issues: Indigenous myths, misses and misogyny.” In Anderson, K., Campbell, M. & Belcourt, C. (Eds.), *Keetsahnak: Our Missing and Murdered Indigenous Sisters* (pp. 161-174). University of Alberta Press.

Through personal stories, Alex Wilson confronts the essentializing narratives rooted in binary constructions of gender and explores the roles of gender self-determination and body sovereignty in undoing systemic oppression.

### **Unsettling Ideas Book Club: Winnipeg Chapter**

A book club intended to engage students, staff, faculty and community in discussions around anti-racism, decolonization and reconciliation. All titles of the book club are authored and/or edited by Indigenous writers, thinkers and academics.





## Watch

### Aboriginal People's Television Network (APTN)

APTN is the first and only national Aboriginal television broadcaster in the world, with programming by, for and about Aboriginal Peoples.

<http://aptn.ca/news/>

### Living in Reciprocity: Black, Brown and Indigenous Solidarities by York University

This webinar/teach-in brings together three influential public intellectuals—Leanne Betasamosake Simpson, Robyn Maynard, and Shama Rangwala—in a conversation about the possibilities for cross-community alliance in the struggles against anti-Black and anti-Indigenous racism.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=nzB4wPaWSFM>

### Indigenous Arts Protocols by the Ontario Arts Council

A tool that highlights the significance of Indigenous cultural protocols in the arts.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=c6VuHJi600Q>



## Listen

### CBC Radio: Unreserved

Public broadcast radio sharing Indigenous headlines, community, culture, music, and conversation.

<http://www.cbc.ca/radio/unreserved>

### Fireside Chats by the Indigenous Student Centre, University of Manitoba

All are welcome to join these talks on Indigenous Knowledges. Fireside Chats are a long-running series that provide an opportunity for all to learn from Elders and Knowledge Keepers.

Follow the UM Indigenous Student Centre on social media for event updates: <https://www.facebook.com/IndigenousStudentCentreUofM>

### Indigenous Scholars Speaker Series by the Office of Indigenous Engagement, University of Manitoba

These talks highlight the research and expertise of Indigenous scholars, while providing new opportunities for students, staff and faculty to learn about Indigenous perspectives and knowledges.

<https://umanitoba.ca/indigenous/indigenous-scholars-speaker-series-schedule>

### Native Studies Colloquium Series by the Department of Native Studies, University of Manitoba

A weekly panel discussing and visiting with some of the best speakers, leaders, and researchers in Indigenous Studies on Turtle Island.

Follow UM Native Studies on social media for event updates: <https://www.facebook.com/UofMNativeStudiesDept>



## Get involved

### Gaa wii ji'i diyaang, University of Manitoba

A working group comprised of Indigenous and non-Indigenous faculty, staff and students walking with and advocating for Indigenous achievement.

[https://umanitoba.ca/admin/indigenous\\_connect/gaawijidiyaang.html](https://umanitoba.ca/admin/indigenous_connect/gaawijidiyaang.html)

### Virtual Sharing Circle by the Indigenous Student Centre, University of Manitoba

A virtual sharing circle hosted by Elder Carl Stone for UM staff, faculty, students, and community.

Follow the UM Indigenous Student Centre on social media for event updates: <https://www.facebook.com/IndigenousStudentCentreUofM>

### Summer Institute on Literacy in Indigenous content by the Department of Native Studies, University of Manitoba

The institute is a 10-week program is intended to increase awareness and knowledge of Indigenous subjects and issues, and build capacity and expertise for delivering Indigenous content across curriculum. It will not only cover the histories, political status, rights and contemporary issues of Indigenous peoples in Manitoba, but also address how to manage discussion of racially sensitive topics in the classroom. Thanks to support from the Indigenous Initiatives Fund, this program is free and open to UM faculty and staff.

UM faculty and staff can access information on the Summer Institute on the UM Intranet: <https://umanitoba.sharepoint.com/sites/um-intranet-arts/SitePages/summer-institute.aspx#schedule>

### CEL Community of Practice by Community Engaged Learning, University of Manitoba

These monthly gatherings offer a space for community engaged learning practitioners to create a network of support, engage in peer-mentorship, and share resources. The agenda is participant-led and will touch on various aspects of community engaged learning.

Email [communityengagement@umanitoba.ca](mailto:communityengagement@umanitoba.ca) to sign up.

### Indigenous Events Calendar, University of Manitoba

Detailed information and registration for Indigenous events across UM campuses. Most events are open to non-Indigenous faculty, staff, and students.

<https://eventscalendar.umanitoba.ca/site/indigenous>

