



Minister's Advisory Council on
Indigenous Women

Giving Voice

Year 1 Report and What
Communities Want us to Know

Recognition.

The Minister's Advisory Council on Indigenous Women gratefully acknowledges the financial support for Giving Voice of the Province of British Columbia through the Ministry of Indigenous Relations and Reconciliation, Socio-Economic Partnerships Branch the Ministry of Public Safety and Solicitor General, Office of Crime Reduction and Gang Outreach and the Ministry of Forests, Lands, Natural Resource Operations and Rural Development, Regional Operations.

The Minister's Advisory Council on Indigenous Women also would like to acknowledge all the project coordinators and First Nations Health Directors who shared their knowledge and insight into the development of the project report template.

Contact MACIW@gov.bc.ca for more information.

References.

- Cover photo: Coming of Age Ceremony project, Victoria, BC.
- Indigenous Social Determinants of Health diagram: First Nations Health Council and adapted for Giving Voice.

Disclaimer.

No part of this report shall be reproduced without permission. All pictures are copyright and belong to the project recipients.

Published January 2021 on the traditional unceded lands of the Coast Salish peoples.

Table of Contents

- Message from the Chair Page 6.
- About the Minister's Advisory Council on Indigenous Women Page 8.
- Meet Council Members Page 12.
- Giving Voice Year 1 Projects Page 21.
 - Overview
 - Background
 - Giving Voice Interactive Map
- Key Findings Page 33.
 - Ceremonies and Healing on the Land
 - Sensitive Topics
- Indigenous Social Determinants of Health Page 43.
- Reflections from Project Recipients Page 46.
 - Environmental
 - 1) Access to Housing: Indigenous Women Experiencing Homelessness, Victoria
 - 2) Self-Determination: Wearing the Spirits of our Ancestors, Campbell River
 - 3) Belonging to the Land: Kelly Lake Cree Cultural Camp, Tomslake

➤ Cultural Page 65.

- 1) Connection to Community: Prevention Awareness and Empowerment, Mission
- 2) Revitalization of Languages and Laws: Heiltsuk Haida Women's Gathering, Bella Bella

➤ Social Page 75.

- 1) Lateral Tolerance: Grandmothers Change Agents – Addressing Colonization and Lateral Violence, Lax kw'alaams
- 2) Self Esteem: Beauty Within – Women's Wellness, Fort Nelson

➤ Economic Page 83.

- 1) Prioritizing Needs: MMIWG - Ne Tseke Ustani ~ The Women Who Have Died, Prince George
- 2) Increased Decision Making: Tiniglsla – Rising from the Ground in the Early Sunshine, Bella Bella

➤ Healing Page 93.

➤ Healing forward

➤ What communities are telling us



Barb Ward-Burkitt.

Message from the Chair

On behalf of the Minister's Advisory Council on Indigenous Women (MACIW), I am pleased to present the Giving Voice 2019 to 2020 Year 1 Report.

In Canada today, half of all women are victims of violence. But Indigenous women are three times more likely to be victims, and these violent situations are eight times more likely to end in homicide. In 2015, the Native Women's Association of Canada estimated that there are more than 4,000 murdered or missing Indigenous women and girls across Canada, and in 2010 it was estimated that one-quarter of all cases to date had occurred in British Columbia. Many Indigenous women and girls continue to experience the inter-generational impacts of residential schools and colonization.

MACIW strongly believes that Indigenous communities know how to heal themselves, and in this spirit, launched Giving Voice.

“Giving Voice represents a “paradigm shift” in terms of community-led healing.”

These inspiring projects are community-led, community-mobilized and “give voice” to issues of violence within Indigenous women’s lives and communities.

The women of MACIW raise their hands to community champions who led Giving Voice projects, and to leaders who continue to advocate for an end to violence against women. We know that by working together, respectfully and in partnership, we will make a difference for all women.

A handwritten signature in black ink, reading "Barb Ward-Burkitt". The signature is written in a cursive style with a horizontal line underlining the name.

Barb Ward-Burkitt, Chair, Minister’s Advisory Council on Indigenous Women

About the Minister's Advisory Council on Indigenous Women.

The Minister's Advisory Council on Indigenous Women (MACIW) was established in 2011. Its mission is to strengthen the quality of life for Indigenous women in B.C., and it envisions a world where all Indigenous peoples live free from violence and are healthy, sustainable, and self-determining.

MACIW honours Indigenous worldviews and works from a holistic perspective of women. When it speaks of women, it is inclusive of children, family, community, nationhood, wellness, justice, land, and water. MACIW draws inspiration from the UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples, from the Truth and Reconciliation Commission's Calls to Action and from the National Inquiry into the Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls Reclaiming Power and Place.

MACIW is comprised of up to 10 members, including one position for an Elder and another for a youth. The Minister of Indigenous Relations and Reconciliation appoints members based on criteria of experience, diversity, and regional representation. MACIW advocates for the well-being of Indigenous women by:

Providing advice and support to the Minister of Indigenous Relations and Reconciliation and offering guidance and direction that is rooted in Indigenous worldviews. These are MACIW's principles:



Meet the Council Members.



Name	Nation	Position	Term
Barb Ward-Burkitt	Fort McKay First Nation	Chair	2012- Present
Coreen Child	Kwakiutl First Nation	Vice-Chair	2014 - Present
Lauren Brown	Haida Nation	Member	2019- Present
Dr. Lorna Williams	Lil'wat	Member, Elder Representative	2014 - Present
Sarah Robinson	Fort Nelson First Nation & Sauteau First Nation	Member	2017 - Present
Raven Lacerte	Carrier First Nation	Member, Youth Representative	2017 - Present
Patricia Barkaskas	Metis	Member	2018 - Present
Monique Gray Smith	Lakota/ Cree	Member	2018 - Present



Barbara M. Ward-Burkitt, Chair

Barbara Ward-Burkitt, Wahiyow Cawapata Scoo, is a member of the Fort McKay First Nation and is currently the Executive Director of the Prince George Native Friendship Centre. She has been active in the Friendship Centre movement since 1972. Ms. Ward-Burkitt sits on many local, regional and provincial working groups and committees.

She completed her Master of Education from Simon Fraser University and her First Nations Design and Technology course from Emily Carr Institute of Art and Design. Ms. Ward-Burkitt also holds her Provincial Instructor's Diploma from the Vancouver Community College, her Native Adult Instructor's Diploma from the B.C. Ministry of Education, Skills and Training and is a certified True Colors facilitator.

Ms. Ward-Burkitt and her husband have been proudly raising five of their grandchildren. Ms. Ward-Burkitt was invested into the Order of British Columbia in 2010.



Coreen Child, Vice-Chair

Coreen Child is from the Kwakiutl (Kwagiulth) First Nation and carries the ancestral Kwak'wala name 'Yakawilas, the place where property is given. She is a descendant of many high-ranking Kwakiutl chiefs and their families and has worked at all levels in service for her community, including Chief Council. Yakawilas carries a diploma in Indigenous child and youth care, in language revitalization, and a Bachelor of Education specializing in Kwak'wala language learning.

Yakawilas serves on many boards and committees and has extensive work experience at the community, regional, provincial and national levels. Coreen is renowned for her many gifts of traditional dancing, singing and teaching, and she continues to play an active role as a cultural leader and educator amongst the Kwakwaka'wakw communities.

Yakawilas and lives with her husband and three daughters in their home community of Tsaxis, near Port Hardy on northern Vancouver Island.



Doctor Lorna Williams, Elder Representative

Lorna Wanosts'a7 Williams is a member of the Lil'wat First Nation of Mount Currie. She is the chair of the First Peoples' Cultural Foundation. Doctor Williams has extensive experience in the area of secondary and post-secondary education as professor, First Nations education and linguistic specialist. She chartered new grounds while working at the Ministry of Education, where she designed programs that included Indigenous worldviews and a focus on decolonization.

Doctor Williams received her Doctorate in Education at the University of Tennessee in Educational Psychology. She co-directed a documentary film series called *First Nations: The Circle Unbroken* and has written children's books, teachers' guides and developed Lil'wat language curriculum. Doctor Williams was invested into the Order of British Columbia in 1993 in recognition for her work in education and the Order of Canada, Officer in 2019 for Indigenous Languages and Education.



Sarah Robinson

Sarah Robinson is a citizen of the Fort Nelson First Nation and the Saulneau First Nation in Treaty 8 territory. She was born and raised in Prince Rupert and now lives on the west coast of Vancouver Island in the Toquaht Nation's small community of Macoah with her husband and an array of animals and is a proud stepmother and auntie.

As Principal at Rainwatch Consulting, Sarah provides advice and support to numerous Indigenous organizations across Canada. In early 2017, she spoke about "Indigenous Women and the Story of Canada" at the #WalrusTalks National Tour kick-off event in Whitehorse. She is an Action Canada Fellow and an enthusiastic napper. Find her on Twitter @sarahc_robinson.



Raven Lacerte, Youth Representative

Raven Lacerte is a proud member of the Carrier First Nation in northern BC and belongs to the Grizzly Bear Clan. She is the co-founder and Youth Ambassador for the Moose Hide Campaign, a national grass-roots effort to end violence towards Indigenous and non-Indigenous women and children. Raven is also a member of the National Steering Committee for the 4R's National Youth Movement.

Raven is a hunter and a practitioner of traditional Indigenous cultural and ceremonial activities. Raven is currently completing her bachelor's degree in political science at the University of Victoria.



Patricia Barkaskas

Patricia M. Barkaskas was born in Alberta and is Métis. She is the Academic Director at the Indigenous Community Legal Clinic, Peter A. Allard School of Law and a tenure track Instructor at Allard Law at the University of British Columbia. Patricia practiced child protection, civil, criminal, family, and prison law, and has produced Gladue reports for all levels of courts in British Columbia.

Patricia has worked closely with Indigenous peoples in their encounters with the justice system and worked for residential school survivors as an historical legal researcher for the Indian Residential Schools Settlement Agreement. Patricia's research focuses on clinical legal education, decolonizing and Indigenizing legal education, exploring the value of Indigenous pedagogies in legal education, experiential learning in law, and Métis law.



Monique Gray Smith

Monique Gray Smith is of Cree, Lakota and Scottish ancestry. She has been running her business, Little Drum Consulting since 1996. Her career has focused on fostering paradigm shifts that emphasize the strength and resiliency of the First Peoples in Canada. Monique's strong understanding of education has led her to work in varying capacities both provincially and internationally in support of children.

Monique's first published novel, *Tilly: A Story of Hope and Resilience* won the 2014 Burt Award for First Nation, Métis and Inuit Literature. She has several more books including the Canadian best seller *Speaking our Truth: A Journey of Reconciliation* that is used to educate the hearts and minds of both young and, not so young readers.

Monique's healing journey spans over 27 years and she is well known for her storytelling, spirit of generosity and focus on resilience. She is also the proud Mom of twins.

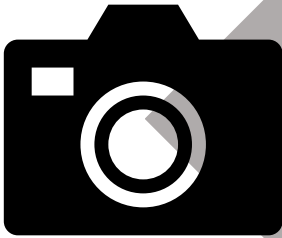


Lauren Brown

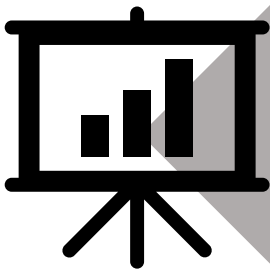
Lauren Brown is from the Haida Nation and resides in a remote and isolated community on Haida Gwaii. She has been the Health Director for the Skidegate Health Centre since for 2003 during which time she led the transition of the Centre from the Skidegate Band Council to an independent society, the Xaaydaga Dlaang Society.

Lauren was also a Board member of the First Nations Health Directors Association from 2010-2018. She completed her BSN, UBC and recently graduated with a MA, Royal Roads University with a speciality focus on Health. She is currently enrolled in a Haida Language mentorship program to learn the Haida Language.

Giving Voice Year 1 Projects (2019 to 2021).



Overview



Background



Location of Projects


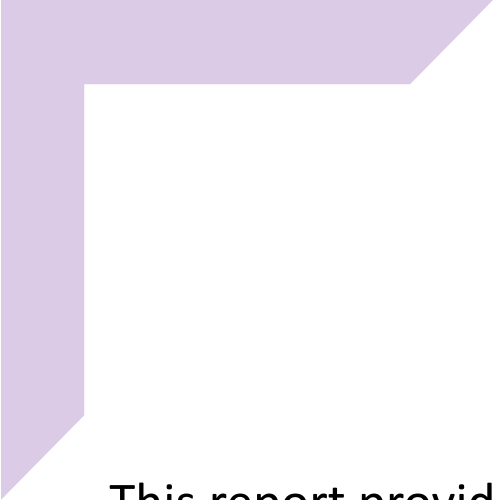
Overview.

Indigenous women are more likely to be killed by a stranger than non-Indigenous women. In response to these alarming statistics, in 2013 MACIW launched Giving Voice. This program promotes healing from gender-based violence by providing safe spaces for women and girls to speak about issues of violence and create community-based solutions, both on and off reserve.

According to the Statistics Canada Juristic Article: Violent Victimization of Aboriginal Women in the Canadian Provinces (2009), Aboriginal women were almost three times more likely than non-Aboriginal women to report having been a victim of a violent crime, and are significantly more likely to report the most severe and potentially life-threatening forms of violence.

“I want people to know, that change starts with us.”

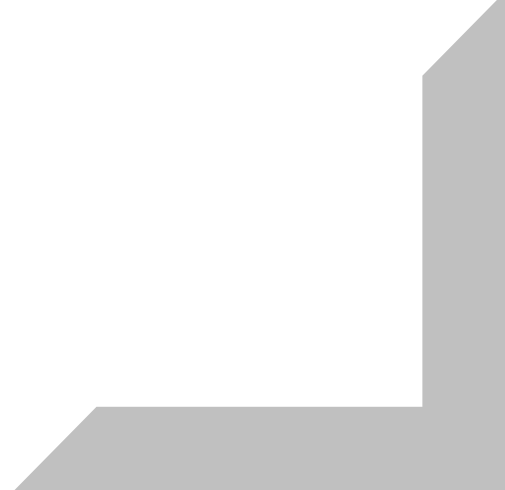

Rinelle Harper,
Stopping Violence Against
Indigenous Women Advocate



This report provides a short summary of both the successes and the lessons learned following the Year 1 projects that supported 53 projects between 2019 and 2020.

MACIW's Giving Voice program draws inspiration from the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples.

A video called "Giving Voice: Stopping Violence Against Aboriginal Women & Girls" is available to view on Youtube.



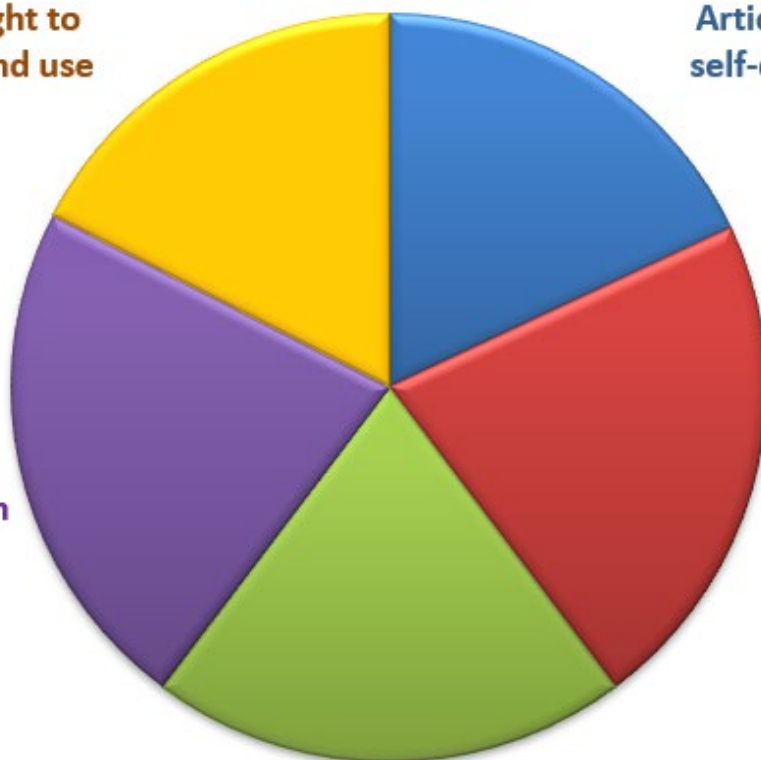
UNDRIP ARTICLES TOUCHED ON BY YEAR 1 PROJECTS
AS DISPLAYED AS A PIE CHART.

**Article 25: Right to
relationship and use
of lands**
17%

**Article 3: Right to
self-determination**
18%

**Article 22.2:
Protection of
Indigenous women
and children**
22%

**Article 11.1: Right
to cultural
traditions and
custom**
22%



**Article 21.1: Right to good socio-
economic/health conditions**
21%

As shown in the diagram, Giving Voice projects touched upon five of the key articles of the UN Declaration.

The pie chart shows that 17% of the projects aligned with Article 25 – the right to relationship and use of land. 18% of the projects touched upon Article 3 –the right to self-determination. 22% of projects captured the spirit of both Article 22.2 regarding women and children and Article 11.1 regarding culture and customs and Article 21.1 – the right to good socio-economic health conditions that is only one percent lower.

The following are some quick Year 1 facts:

YEAR 1 QUICK FACTS	
Total number of projects:	54
Total funding allocated:	\$536,000
Total Number of Participants	2000+
Timeline:	2019-2020

Background.

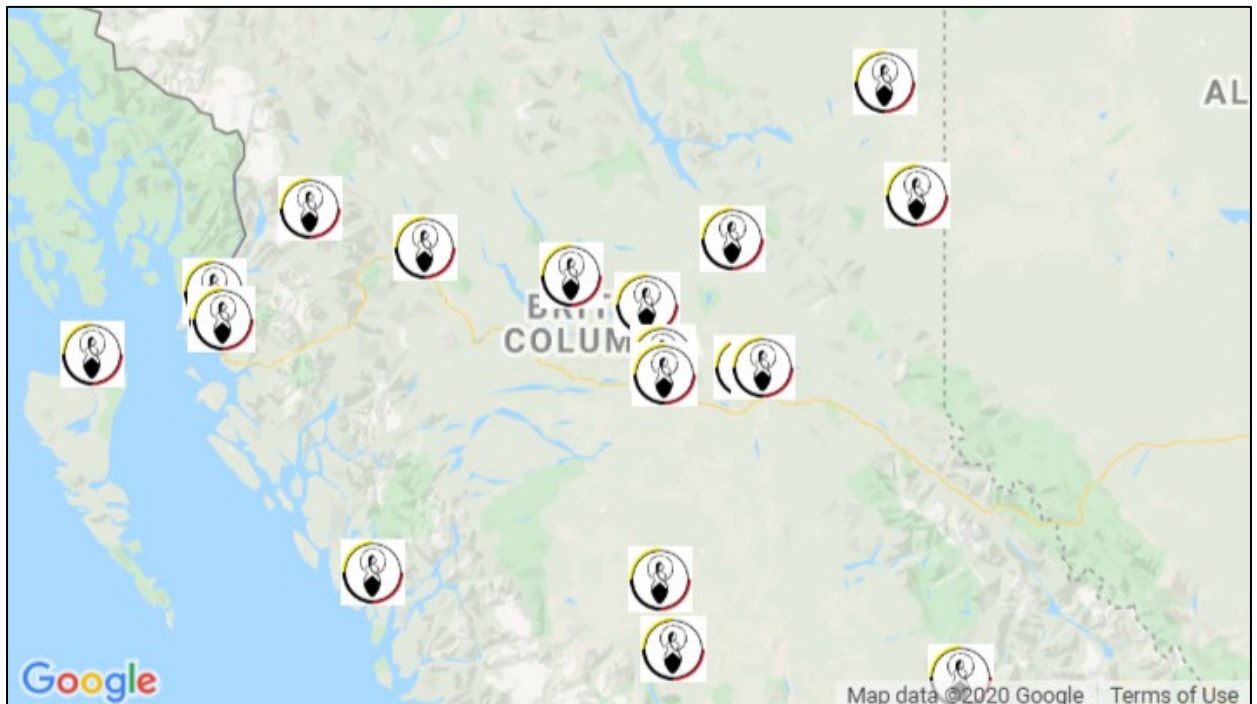
A key goal of the Giving Voice program is that all Indigenous people and organizations should be able to apply for funding regardless of capacity or their geographic location. To achieve this goal, the following criteria were included:

- The Calls for Proposals were distributed through fax and email.
- Applications could be submitted by email, fax, online, video or phone.
- Remote and rural communities were included.
- Applications were open to First Nations Bands; Indigenous Friendship Centers, Indigenous non-profit organizations; and Indigenous on and off-reserve (urban or rural) groups.

Key consideration was given to projects that touched on Murdered and Missing Indigenous Women and Girls, language revitalization, and land-based healing. Projects that spanned multiple reserves, involved communities with limited access to services, and included representation from diverse communities, such as off-reserve and Métis were key considerations.

Giving Voice Interactive Map.

Click on the map to see the locations and titles of projects.



It is important to note that many projects took place on the lands and traditional territories of the people and the points identified on the map only show one point that may represent a larger geographic area.

Whatever the project's physical location, most projects were open to their extended community both on and away from their reserve.

Giving Voice 2019-2020 Locations and Project Names.

Ahousaht, Haahuupchumis (Giving and Receiving Teachings)
Atlin, The Taku River Tlingit First Nation Matriarch
Barriere, Xyemstem re Nuxwenxw (Respect the Women)
Bella Bella, Heiltsuk and Haida Women's Forum
Bella Bella, Our Women are Strong as Cedars
Bella Bella, Tiniqlsla - Rising from the Ground in the Early Morning Sunshine
Burns Lake, Community Gathering of Women
Burns Lake, Tseke Hulhtus
Burns Lake, Women's Empowerment Circle - Giving Voice to Women
Campbell River, Homalco Rising
Campbell River, Wearing the Spirits of Our Ancestors: Capote Making as a Path Towards Holistic Healing
Chilanko Forks, Tsidedel Tsiqi Najedint'l

Cranbrook, ʔaqámnik pałkiy
D'arcy, Bringing the Community Together
Delta, Safer Communities
Deroche, Open Community Dialogue - Finding Solutions to Address Violence Against Women at the Community Grassroots Level
Fort Nelson, Beauty Within and Women's Wellness
Fort Rupert, Uma-Noble Woman
Fort Saint John, Family and Youth Program
Fort St James, Igniting Our Authentic Self Through Adventure
Good Hope Lake, Seasonal Events
Ladysmith, Girl Talk + Weaving Our Voices
Lantzville, Mental Health and Wellness Series Workshops
Lax kw'alaams, Grandmothers' Change Agents: Addressing Colonization and Lateral Violence
Lytton, Domestic Violence Prevention Cultural Workshops
Masset, Rebuilding the Trust
McLeod Lake, Wellness Series

Merritt, "We have a Voice to Give...Hear Us"

Mill Bay, Malahat Strong

Mission, From The Inside Out

Mission, Prevention, Awareness and Empowerment

Mount Currie, Our Songs, Our Voice

Nemiah Valley, Nenden seyats'i hant'ih: Potato Mnt. Retreat

New Aiyansh, Under our Wing

North Vancouver, My Story - Our Stories

Vancouver, Soaring Eagles: Connection to Community Services, North

Powell River, łasəm q^wayεgən (Being of Strong Mind)

Powell River, Sharing Voices for Powell River Métis

Prince George, Listening to Our Spirit Voices: Honouring Traditional Ways of Healing

Prince George, Tseke Ustani: The Women who have died

Prince Rupert, Awakening the Warrior Woman Within

Smithers, Matriarchs on the Rise

Prince George, Listening to Our Spirit Voices: Honouring Traditional Ways of Healing

Prince George, Listening to Our Spirit Voices:
Honouring Traditional Ways of Healing

Prince George, Tseke Ustani: The Women who have
died

Prince Rupert, Awakening the Warrior Woman With-in

Prince Rupert, Gitmaxmak'ay Safe Space Series

Smithers, Matriarchs on the Rise

Telegraph Creek, Tahltan Giving Voice Initiative

Tomslake, Beading Blankets, Hides and Bonding for
KLMSS Ladies

Tomslake, Kelly Lake Community Healing Workshops

Vancouver, Indigenous Women Raising Voices for
Change

Vancouver, Women Leading Learning and Sharing

Vanderhoof, Kitchen Voices

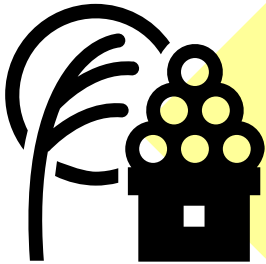
Victoria, Coming of Age Ceremonies- Urban Children
and Mothers

Victoria, Giving Voice - Indigenous Women
Experiencing Homelessness

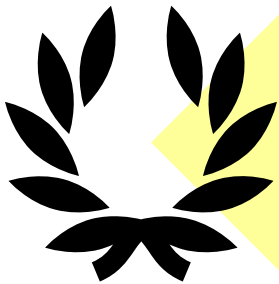
Victoria, Kamaskawisechik Iskwewak - Métis
Women's Trauma Informed Empowerment

Victoria, Renewing Our Spirit

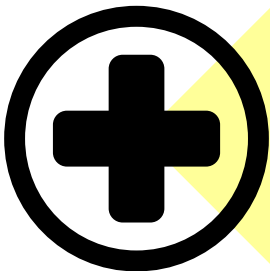
Key Findings.



**Ceremonies and
Healing on the Land**



Sensitive Topics



**Indigenous Social
Determinants of
Health**

Key Findings Explained.

Once their project was completed, each Giving Voice recipient provided a report. A report template was co-developed with a small group of project coordinators, who incorporated MACIW's Guiding Principles, and the knowledge that Indigenous communities know how to heal themselves.

The MACIW wishes to thank the coordinators contributions and inspiration in the development of the project report template.

One of the goals for the project reports was to understand how the Giving Voice program helps communities in their work to end gender-based violence. To that end, their reports offer insight and contributes to a deeper understanding of the visions and work communities are undertaking to end violence.

Unlike a healing model specific to one topic, Indigenous community-based healing is guided by a community's key priorities and is designed using a holistic approach that delivers healing that includes individuals, families and entire communities.

Quote: “We would like you to know that programs like these are valuable to the mind, body and spirit of our community members.”

Project Coordinator

Ceremony and Healing on the Land.

The importance of ceremony and land-based activities for healing was a common theme amongst the Giving Voice projects. The most popular method of healing involved ceremony, such as using cedar and sage for cleansing, drum songs, and special recognition protocols.

Another popular activity that strengthened participant's connection to the land, was harvesting or land-based activities such as hunting, gathering medicines and spending time outdoors on the lands where their ancestors once lived.

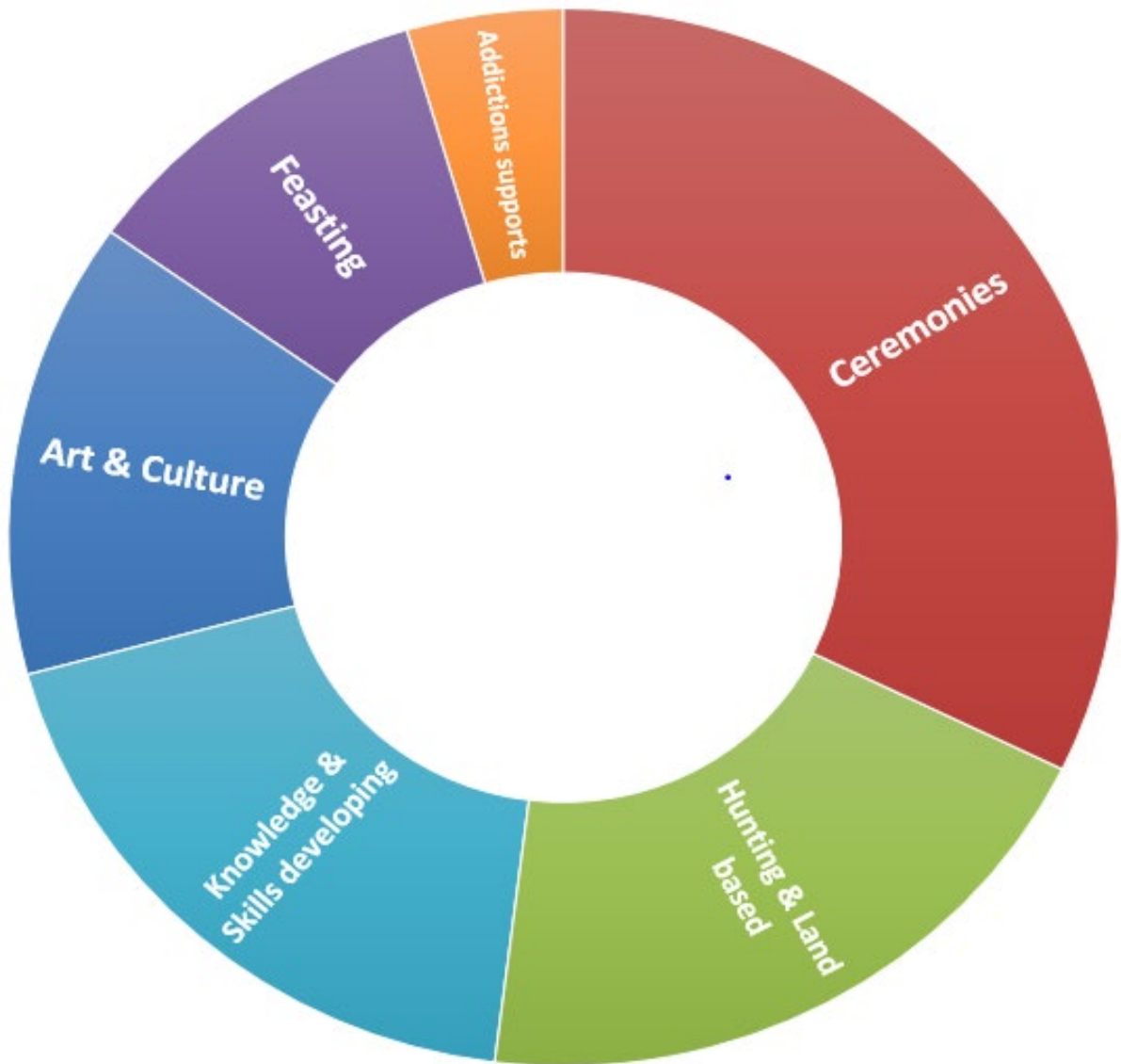
Many of these activities incorporated the local language of the nation both as a way of reclaiming identity, world views and a sense of pride.

Connections to the land helps strengthen a person's identity, which is a preventative factor when it comes to gender-based violence. Elders and individuals who once lived on the land shared their land-use and ecological knowledge with project participants, many of whom have limited opportunity to benefit from these kinds of experiences.

Quote: “The connections made with Elders, hearing their stories and watching the faces of young people realize their story is not a new story was a proud moment. “

Project Coordinator

Healing Methods.



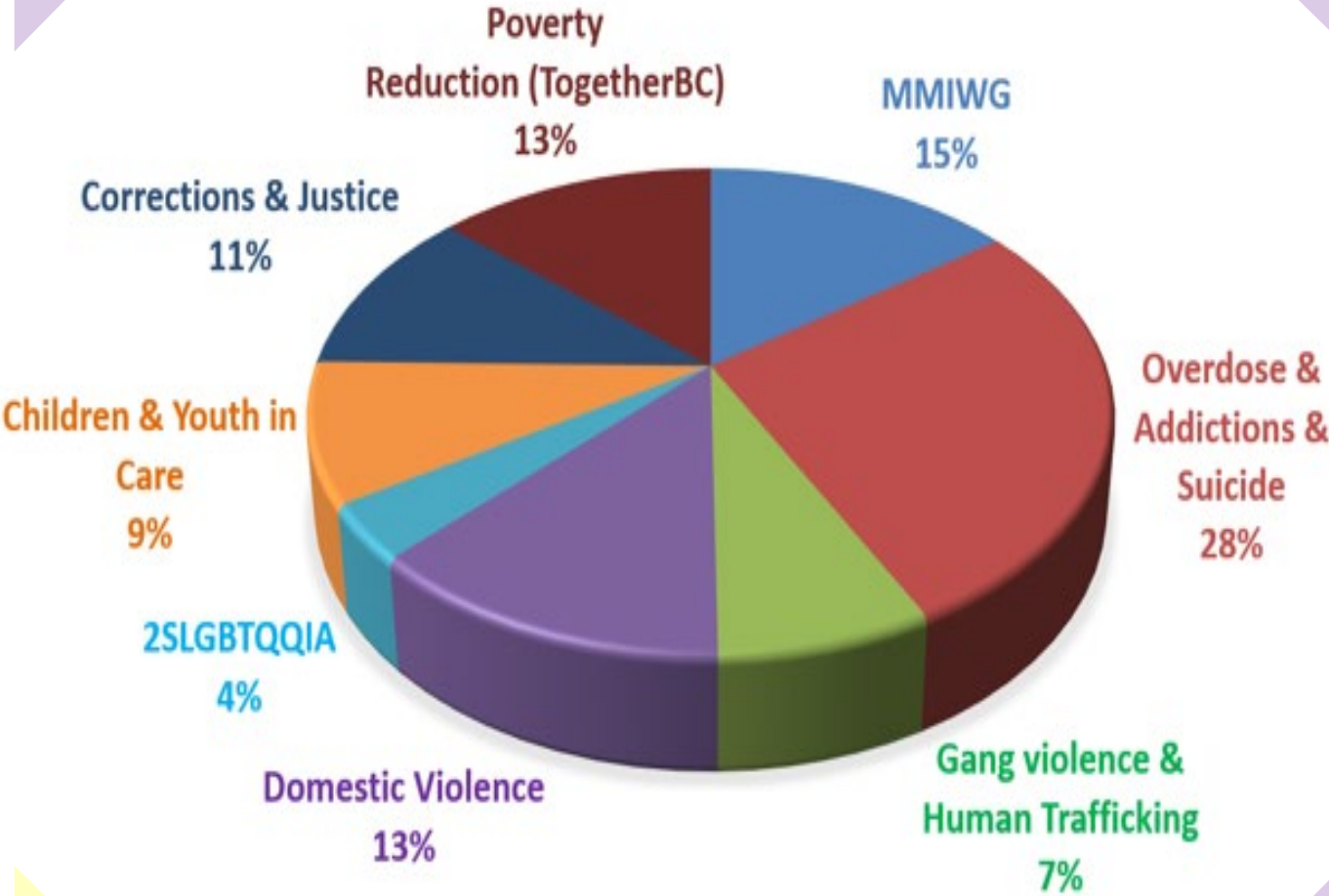
This circle diagram shows different project activities and their effectiveness to support healing. From the most used to the least used are, ceremonies, hunting & land based, knowledge sharing & skills development, art & cultural, feasting, and addictions support.

Sensitive Topics.

Project organizers have knowledge and experience that is deeply rooted in community-driven healing. Many projects “gave voice” to sensitive topics faced by Indigenous people and communities.

The most common topics addressed included overdose, addictions and suicide. In 2016, B.C.’s Provincial Health Officer declared a public health emergency in response to the overdose crisis. Due to the intergenerational trauma experienced as a result of the residential school system; loss of land, culture, and language; and the break down of families, Indigenous communities have been particularly hard hit.

Pie Chart of Priority Areas for Communities.

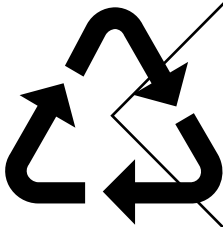


This pie chart shows in order from the highest percentage of projects to the least that touch on priority areas that communities are facing which are: the overdose & addictions & suicide at 32%, the MMIWG (missing and murdered Indigenous women and girls) at 17%, domestic violence at 15%, corrections & justice at 13%, children and youth in care at 11% and 4% 2SLGBTQQIA (two spirit, lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, queer, questioning, intersex and asexual).

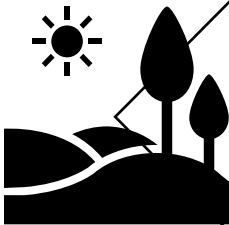
Quote: “Violence against Indigenous women and girls persists, and we need to look at policing and poverty. “

Project Coordinator

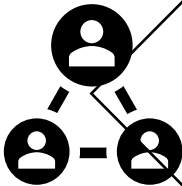
Indigenous Social Determinants of Health Categories.



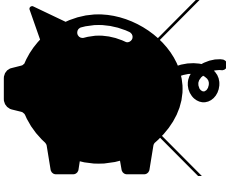
Environmental.



Cultural.



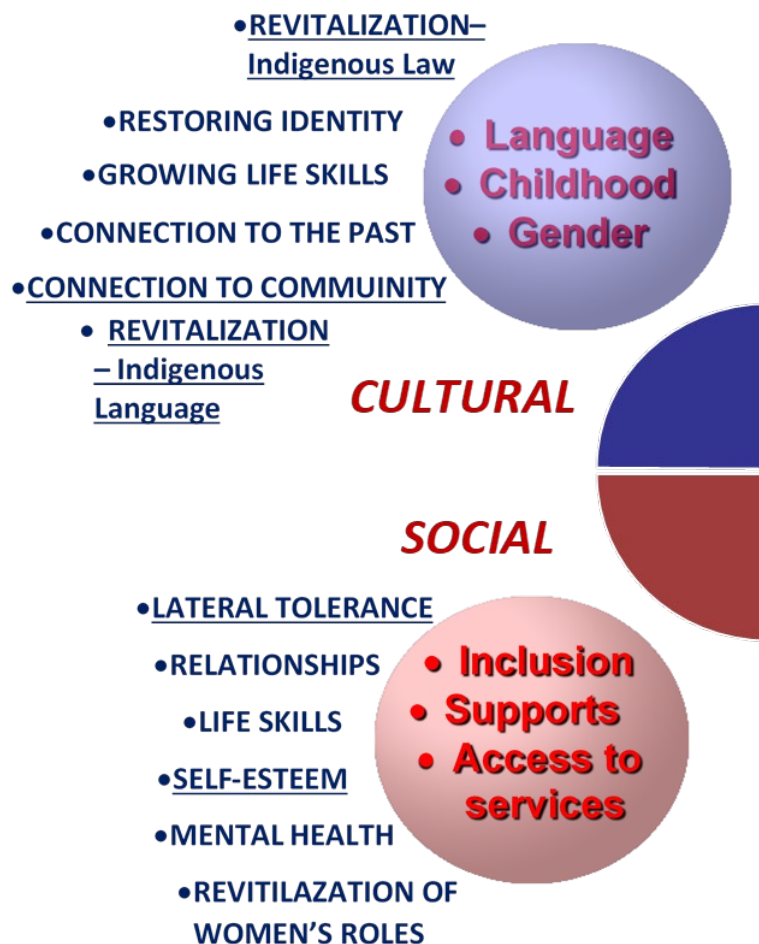
Social.



Economic.

Indigenous Social Determinants of Health.

For both on and off-reserve, the Indigenous Social Determinants of Health (ISDH) are what influence the health and well-being of individuals, families and communities. The ISDH are divided into four broad categories: Environmental, Social, Cultural and Economic.



The Giving Voice program used the strategies listed in blue, within the four categories as touch points to show which determinants the projects impacted. The diagram below depicts the four categories along with the strategies used by Giving Voice projects.

The diagram shows the ISDH in four separate circles with each quadrant representing the cultural, environmental, social and economic categories.






Reflection from Projects Recipients.

The following stories illustrate how Giving Voice projects impact the health and well-being of individuals, families and communities. They are presented using the Indigenous Social Determinants of Health categories.

These stories and photos were provided by the project coordinators and attendees and are in their own words.



Environmental.



1. Access to Housing: Indigenous Experiencing Homelessness, Victoria.

2. Self Determination: Wearing the Spirits of our Ancestors, Campbell River.

3. Belonging to the Land: Kelly Lake Cree Cultural Camp.

1. Access to Housing: Indigenous Experiencing Homelessness, Victoria.

The Indigenous Women Experiencing Homelessness project was part of a larger project led by the Aboriginal Coalition to End Homelessness (ACEH). According to the Point-in-Time count (2018), 33% of people experiencing homelessness in Victoria self-identify as Indigenous. Of the 33%, 40.3% of those identify as female compared to only 30.2% in the non-Indigenous category.

ACEH has been helping Indigenous women who are homeless or at risk of being homeless to find housing along with Indigenous cultural supports that promote healing and self-determination. An emerging need was identified to “conduct research on the real-life safety situations, of the women who are in violent relationships exacerbated by addictions – and how to improve engagement, support and safety”. Here are the highlights of their project.



Picture of two women standing side by side looking at the ocean.

Quote: “Participants opening up to share their life stories, struggles, resources and encouraging each other along the way.”

Project Coordinator

More than 30 participants that included women, youth, young mothers, women at risk and women living in poverty engaged in group discussions to help identify barriers and challenges to their safety, ways to improve their engagement and supports.





Picture of young girl holding stripped bark and feathers for cultural use.

The land is healing: "I'm now housed and safer and I'm recovering well from heavy drug use and from my last very abusive relationship. I've got some new friends and connections since the past year" - Juanita

Quote: “As a result of hearing from the women, and their expressed need to have an Indigenous woman involved in outreach and support, the Aboriginal Coalition was successful in obtaining funding for a women’s housing advocate who can address safety in a comprehensive manner.”


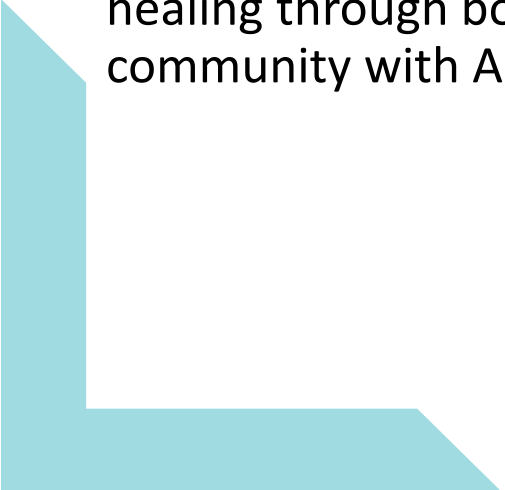
Monique Huber Indigenous Street
Community Advocate.

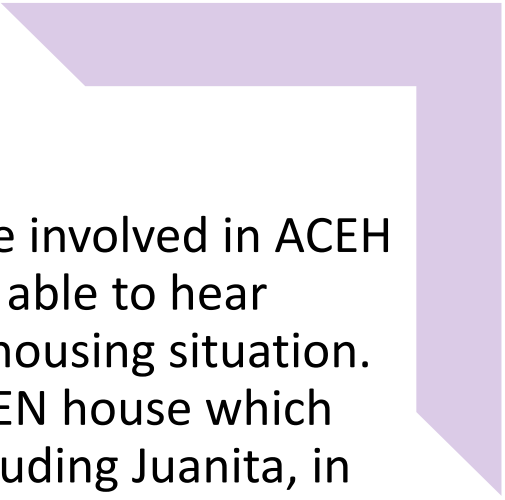
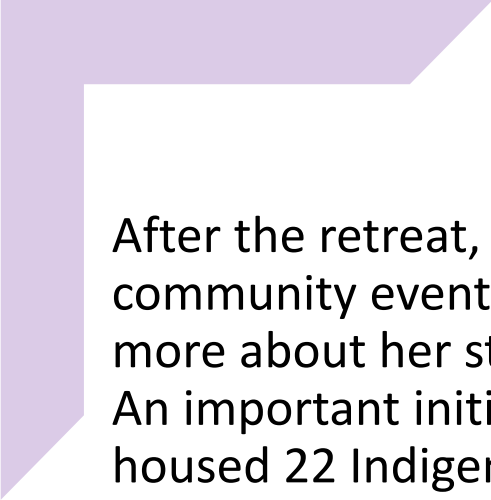


In a welcoming and culturally safe environment, activities included a meal, focus group, survey, cultural activities all with the support of an elder and facilitator.

The outcomes were compiled into a report that was co- developed with participants and helped inform the Coalition's programs and services for new housing.

The ACEH first met Juanita (pictured above) at our Giving Voice Indigenous Women's Retreat "Culture is Healing" in June of 2019. At the time, she was just coming out of a violent relationship and struggling with her addictions. At the retreat, she was able to discuss some of her biggest hardships and found healing through both the land and the new community with ACEH.





After the retreat, she became more involved in ACEH community events where we were able to hear more about her story and current housing situation. An important initiative is our SPAKEN house which housed 22 Indigenous women, including Juanita, in culturally supportive housing for women fleeing violence. Over the past 10 months, the ACEH has seen Juanita make tremendous strides in her journey toward sobriety and independent living.

A video called [Culture is Healing](#) is available on YouTube.



2. Self-Determination: Wearing the Spirits of Our Ancestors: Capote Making as a Path Towards Holistic Healing, Campbell River.

North Island Métis is a Métis Nation B.C. Chartered Community located in Campbell River, B.C. We were founded in November 1996 to represent the interests of Métis people residing in northern Vancouver Island, from Campbell River to Port Hardy.

Quote: “One of the things we would like to do is create Métis specific cultural safety training and curriculum.”

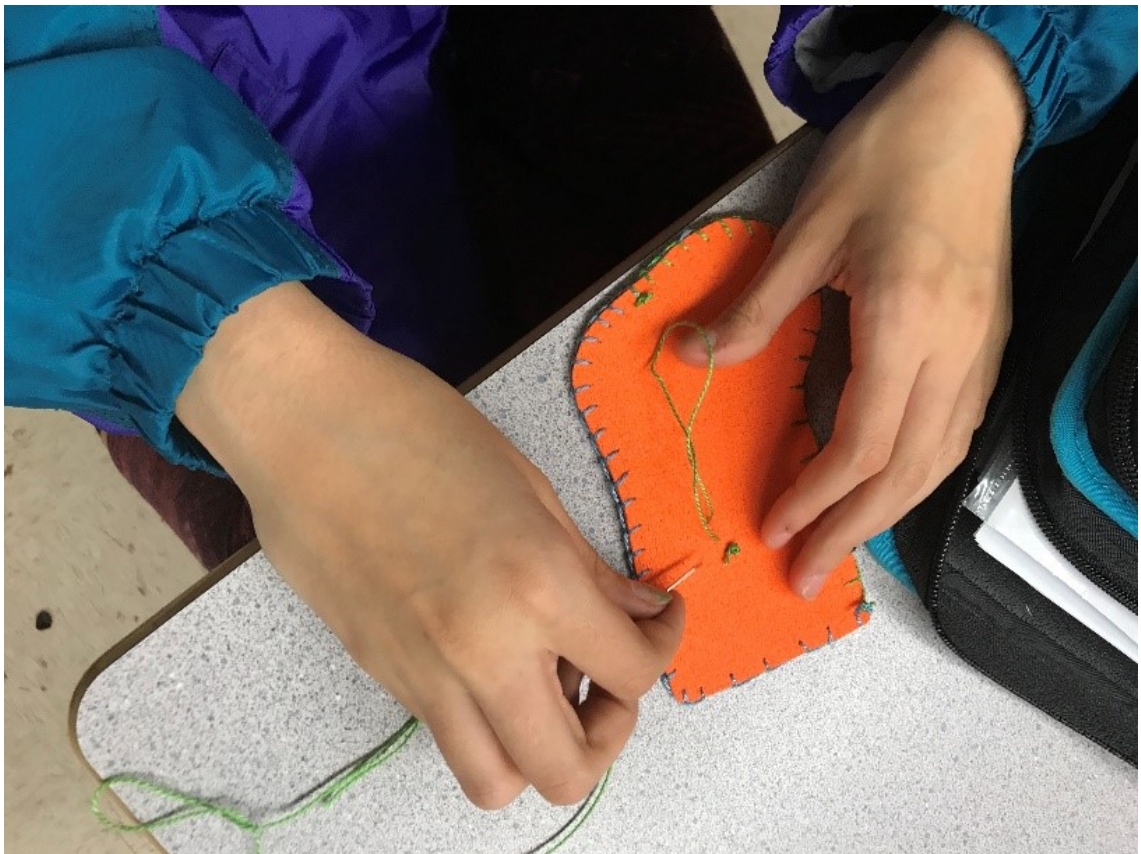
Project Coordinator

The Métis are a displaced people, a community removed from our land and our cultural traditions through government policies. We used this grant for our project called Weaving the Spirits of Our Ancestors, to uphold our rights to self-determination and continue the process of regaining our traditions. A significant part of that is understanding women's roles in the family and community.

Women are the ones that weave families together and make them stronger . Women are the backbone of the Métis Nation. They organize, keep culture and pass down traditional knowledge from generation to generation. Capotes, a symbol of Métis culture, and the making of the capote is a return to a part of our lost history. A capote is warmth and protection against the elements; a way to be on the land comfortably.

Quote It was truly a community coming together and sharing knowledge and building our capacity to live in a future where we no longer worry about violence against Indigenous women.

The Wearing the Spirits of Our Ancestors project, consisted of providing workshops for Métis community members that centered on different aspects of capote making. The workshops covered three topics – beading, blanket stitching, and traditional Métis women’s roles. In the workshops, we regained a sense of balance through rebuilding our community ties by providing gathering circles where we shared our knowledge and traditions. We created a space to teach our community about healthy women’s roles in the past and for our future.



Picture of hands sewing a craft item.

This work counters the effects of generations of trauma and allows us to begin the process of healing from colonial oppression, of which violence towards women is a large part.



Picture of women sitting on chairs in a circle, some holding drums.

This grant made it possible for us to make a space where we built positive self-esteem and our sense of belonging as resilient Métis people who are able to move forward together in a good way.

3. Belonging to the Land: Kelly Lake Cree Cultural Camp, Tomslake.

Our relationship and connection to our lands is key to reconciliation. Our project involved a cultural camp that we experienced with our Elders and knowledge keepers and our partners such as the people at Jasper National Park and others who also learned from participating in the camp.

The park was, and still is, the original homeland of our ancestors. Several of our people are buried in the park and there are many known artifacts in the area that are pre-contact. We want to protect those areas in a meaningful way, one that respects our ancestors and our future generations so our young ones will know their history.



Picture of respected and loved Elder Evelyne Belcourt making bannock.

Quote:

kêhtêhâyak
means Elders

Nehiyawin
is our language

We are very proud of our Elders and Women Helpers, helpers at ceremonies who serve our nation for our participants' safety and for our people. It really was a beautiful experience to bring back our experiences with our culture and our Cree ways to be able to heal through intergenerational traumas we experienced for the last 113 years with our displacement and removal from our homeland.

The cultural genocide we faced until the last family left in 1911 and through the traumas our families experienced through the residential era. Nêhiyawêwin which is what we call our Cree language was heard through storytelling, visiting and ceremony and placed a lot of importance ensuring the Giving Voice Project occurred.



Picture of men building sweat lodge.
Our Sweat Lodge is sacred.

Quote:

Nêhiyawêwak ôta mistahi
nâpêwak êkwa iskwêwak
kâ-atoskcik. miywâsin kâ-
pihtamihk tahto-kîsikâw.

Means the Cree work a
lot, equally the men and
the women.

All of our elders and some of the staff are fluent in Cree. We were unique in that you heard a lot of Cree in our Camp! It was a great way to learn the language, in our homeland at Jasper! Our ancestors were present in spirit listening to us during the sweat lodge ceremony and we knew they were happy!

We are a family and the visitors that arrived at the camp become our family members. This is Wahkohtowin, our kinship is important to us. Nehiyaw perspectives were explained and shared throughout the camp to all who attended.



Picture of man tanning beaver hide.

Quote:
ᐱᐸᐸᐸᐸᐸᐸᐸ wâhkôhtowin
means our Kinship laws
towards one another

Cultural.

- REVITALIZATION–
Indigenous Law
- RESTORING IDENTITY
- GROWING LIFE SKILLS
- CONNECTION TO THE PAST
- CONNECTION TO COMMUNITY
 - REVITALIZATION
– Indigenous
Language

- 
- Language
 - Childhood
 - Gender

1. Connection to Community: Prevention Awareness and Empowerment, Mission.

2. Revitalization of Languages and Laws: Heiltsuk Haida Women's Gathering, Heiltsuk Women's Council.

1) Connection to Community: Prevention Awareness and Empowerment, Mission.

Mamele'awt Qweesome Housing Society received the generous Giving Voice grant and provided a youth wellness program titled Prevention, Awareness and Empowerment to the off-reserve youth living in the Mission housing complex named St'at'xwaya.

The youth program supported youth ages, 10-16 years old, over a period of 10 weeks. The youth discussed various topics including Social Media, Bullying (including Cyberbullying), Safety in Relationships, Healthy Boundaries and Consent, Suicide Awareness and how to be a resource for friends and family.



Picture of Mamele'awt Qweesome
Housing Society Logo

One major theme that was highlighted throughout this program was connection to community. Every week the youth would work together with some traditional learning strategies and other skill-building activities that educated the youth about healthy behaviors, life skills and self-esteem. The youth not only worked together but individually to learn to positively express their emotions and feelings about these challenging topics through interactive educational videos (provided by the Indigenous Wellness Program “Ask Auntie”), activities, and discussions. Working individually is just as important as connection to one’s community as it strengthens and benefits others as well. The youth were thrilled every week to come together and challenge themselves and strengthen their relationships amongst each other.

Quote: “Seeing the youth
grow
was amazing...!”

Project Coordinator

Additionally, the youth were always engaged and excited to attend the program, waiting at the door early and eagerly for the program to start. Having a space of their own created a mini community and the youth were able to build lasting relationships.

In the end, the program was successful as the youth had the continued desire to keep connected and have a safe place to learn and have discussions. MQHS's hopes to continue to help our youth in the ways this Giving Voice grant enabled us to do in the areas of prevention, awareness and empowerment.



Picture of housing society's building.

2. Revitalization of Languages and Laws: Heiltsuk Haida Women's Gathering, Bella Bella.


The Heiltsuk Women's Council is a group of committed and active Heiltsuk women who strive to support and uplift others in the spirit of sisterhood. A key phrase we hold close to heart is: "Our children are watching". Over the years, we have organized workshops for women and men to create balance and have explored ways that our community can provide support to women and children who are ready to leave abusive relationships.

Today, we strive to create opportunities for Indigenous women to experience conferences and workshops that engage our women with the goal of fostering personal growth through empowerment, independence, raising awareness and leadership, all of which strengthen in our communities the traditional roles of women.



In 2018, we were invited by the Haida Women's Council to participate in a workshop entitled: Haida/Heiltsuk Women's Dialogue Sessions. We are excited to report that the event was successful and well attended. We continue to believe that together we can grow stronger and help build leadership capacity for women in both nations and build a women's' alliance between our nations.


Our project brought Haida and Heiltsuk women together in Bella Bella as a "call to action" to plan our next conference.





Quote: “Our project was a “call to action” development of ideas and approaches to take for the next Heiltsuk Haida Women’s Gathering...”

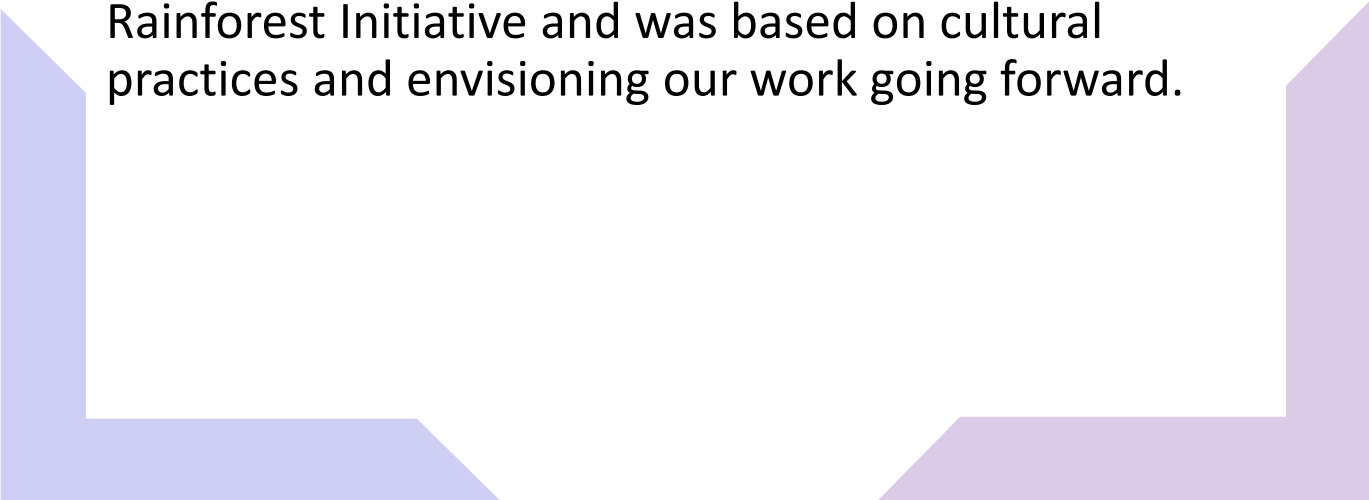
Project Coordinator

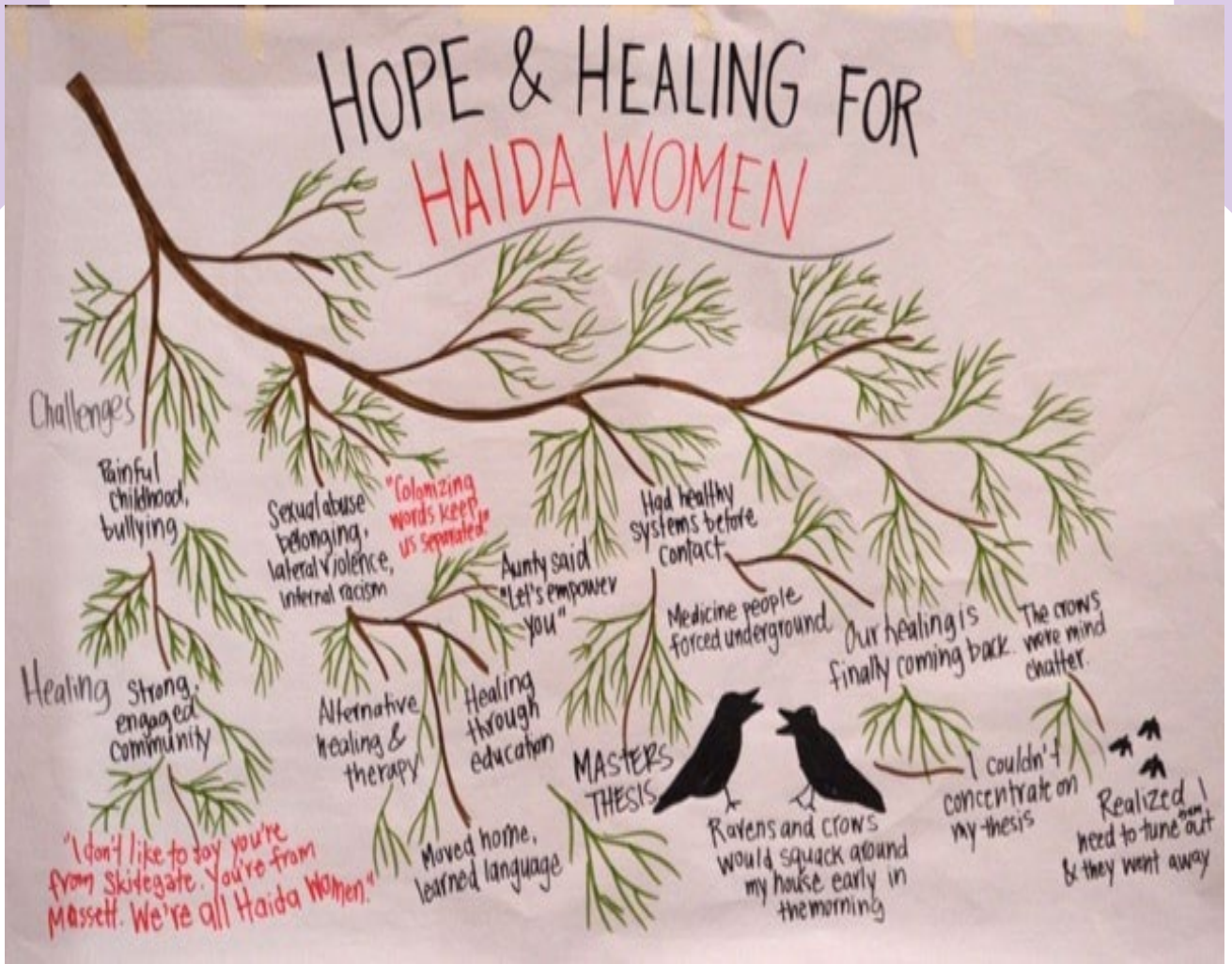


Delegates included women and youth from Haida Gwaii and Prince Rupert, the Great Bear Rainforest region, and delegates from Kitkatla, Bella Coola and Klemtu, and our own community members.

We are pleased to say that this planning work was well attended, and workshop topics such as identifying common interests and the importance of the revitalization of our language and practices through women's songs and dance help strengthen our alliance and form the agenda for our next conference.

This planning work was supported by two traditional healers and coaches and linked to the Great Bear Rainforest Initiative and was based on cultural practices and envisioning our work going forward.





Hand drawn picture from Haida and Heiltsuk Women's 2018 gathering

Social.

- LATERAL TOLERANCE

- RELATIONSHIPS

- LIFE SKILLS

- SELF-ESTEEM

- MENTAL HEALTH

- REVITALIZATION OF WOMEN'S ROLES

- 
- **Inclusion**
 - **Supports**
 - **Access to services**

1. Lateral Tolerance: Grandmothers Change Agents-Addressing Colonization and Lateral Violence, Lax kw'alaam.

2) Self Esteem: Beauty Within – Women's Wellness, Fort Nelson.

1. Lateral Tolerance: Grandmothers Change Agents – Addressing Colonization and Lateral Violence, Lax kw'alaam.

Our project was led by grandmothers who drew on our traditional world view to lean and celebrate who we are as Tsimshian people. Our nine Tribes had systems that allowed for our survival. We had our Ayaawl and Adaawl and our Melsk. We had our laws, traditions, values, beliefs, stories and truth telling that taught our people and held our tribes together through our Matrilineal and Hereditary System.



Picture of Tsimshian grandmothers.

To learn about colonization and its impact - for example, lateral violence - we used the cedar tree that we used for building our long houses, mats, dug out canoes, totem poles, masks, boxes, and many other items. Its seed, the Acorn, represents our connection to the land and our ancestors.

We held on to our knowledge and our traditions, which colonization had displaced, but we can re-learn our ways again. This time, incorporating our learning into mainstream society, our way.

We also had a skit that helped us give voice to some behaviours that were never part of our traditional ways of being but as a result of colonization such as Indian Residential School, we learned be afraid, how to hate, to be angry, to hurt and some learned to hurt others and hurt themselves. As a result of all the trauma, heartache, brokenness, grief, addictions, and abuse, lateral violence and conflict became a part of normal life.


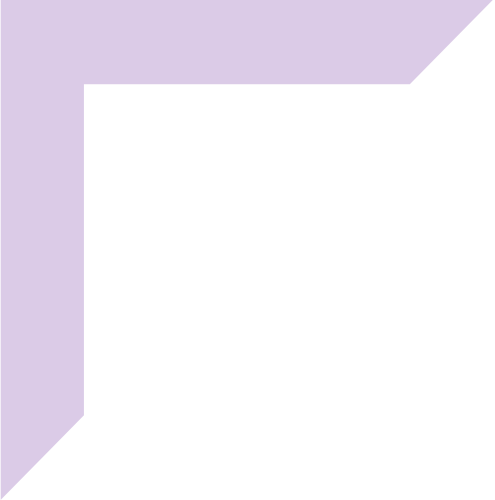
The heart of the tree is called the “Heart Wood” and represents the Child and Family, surrounded by the parents, grandparents, aunts, uncles, siblings, extended family, clan, crest and tribe. It represents love and belonging.

Our Giving Voice projects showed us we are not staying stuck in how the past has hurt us so we can focus on our children’s children and be there to teach the knowledge and values of our traditional ways and keep it going.

Heart of the Cedar Tree



Picture of a heart used as a symbol by the Tsimshian peoples to represent the heart of the cedar tree.



“Resiliency and change
are all around us and we
are resilient.”

Project Coordinator



2. Self Esteem Beauty Within – Women’s Wellness, Fort Nelson.

Fort Nelson First Nations is an urban community located 7 kilometers south of the town of Fort Nelson in the northeastern corner of British Columbia. Fort Nelson First Nation Justice Department hosted the Women’s Wellness Weekend September 21 & 22, 2019. This weekend featured “Healing Through Traditional Art” with learning and practicing traditional arts from some of the most talented and experienced artisans in our community. These included fish scale arts, ribbon skirt making, eagle feather peyote stitch; moose hide dreamcatchers and make your own spa kit.

“Success is connecting vulnerable women to support systems and having engaging community events and activities”

Project Coordinator

The crafting was complimented with conversation and activities geared towards sharing, growing and healing that reinforced the role of women in our community.

After completing the Women's Wellness Weekend, all the ladies who participated received a mini photo shoot with a photographer including professional hair and makeup. For many of the women this was their first time accessing professional beauty and photography services that boosted and strengthened their self-esteem.



Picture of elder with young girl.

Economic.



1. Prioritizing Needs: Murdered and Missing Indigenous Women and Girls: Ne Tseke Ustani~The Women Who Have Died, Prince George.


2. Increased Decision: Tiniglsla – Rising from the Ground in the Early Sunshine, Bella Bella.

1. Prioritizing Needs: Murdered and Missing Indigenous Women and Girls: Ne Tseke Ustani ~ The Women Who Have Died, Prince George.

Women are the backbone to our identity that is largely defined through our relationship with the land. The idea behind our project was to draw attention between the violence against women (two murdered women from our keyoh (Community)) and the violence against our customary Indigenous systems, the extended family and the keyoh in general.





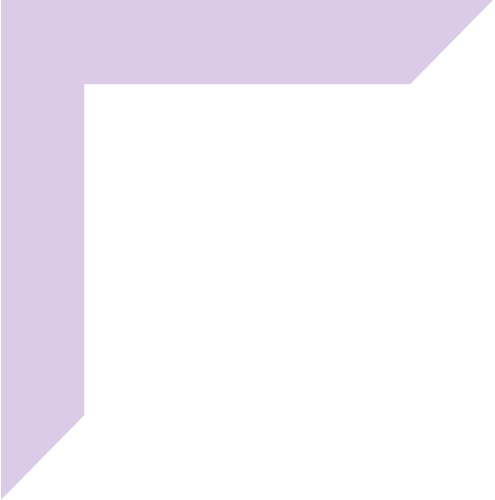
Picture of Shauna Sam's cross.



We hosted the project in partnership with the BC Government's Victim Services and Crime Prevention, the BC Family Information Liaison Unit along others community members.



The Seven Sacred Laws of Respect, Courage, Humility, Honesty, Love, Wisdom, and Truth are guiding principles that create a balance not only on the land but also within ourselves, guiding our interactions with the spirits around us. According to our lived experiences, the shared experiences of the impact of colonial violence began with the disrespect and violation of the Seven Sacred Laws.







To heal the Dakelh keyoh we must reaffirm our identity to our lands, families and culture and those of our two missing women. Our project focused on healing the women's hearts and the men's disconnection to her strengths and roles in our communities.

We did this on the land, being in ceremony and reconciling our relationships with the land such as offering tobacco, songs of thanks and appreciation. We sent love to the land and began our healing journey of restoring the balance within ourselves, our keyoh and in so doing, we also restored balance to the young women's Spirits who were murdered.





Quote: “Ending violence against Indigenous women will happen when greater society understands and addresses systemic colonial impositions on our people and land”

Project Coordinator



Our healing will transcend the imbalances and trauma held in our minds when we can journey our imbalanced thinking the short distance from our minds to our heart. Our project gently brought this knowledge back to the people by gathering to feast and grieve for the women we have lost in the rumbles of colonial violence. This awareness inspires the Dakelh peoples to get out on the land and experience the healing power of our cultural beliefs. Only in this way can we begin walking that 17-inch journey from our head to the heart which is known as the Sacred Pathway.



Picture of Stephanie Erickson,
R.C.C Author


2. Increased Decision Making: Tiniglsla – Rising from the Ground in the Early Sunshine, Bella Bella.

This project created a lot of awareness about topics that no one wanted to discuss such as mental health issues, suicide ideation, sexual abuse, physical abuse, poverty, loss of identity and social structure.

We face these ongoing issues daily and it is intergenerational. We are a remote community in the north central coast with limited professional resources, however, we have our local resources such as the land and the sea that we can draw from, this is what made our program such a success.




Paddlers sitting in a dug out canoe holding their paddles up.



We had all ages participate: youth, adults and Elders. We developed relationships in the community with the victim services worker, Kaxla Child and Family Services, social development and both hereditary and political leadership

This initiative bloomed into a community initiative which was inclusive from the beginning to the end and the most amazing part about it all was listening to the stories of trials and tribulations, the hurts, the isolation, the grief, the loss. We began with 14 interested participants which quickly grew to 31 then we finished with approximately 43.



It is amazing to witness the strength and the power that paddling in the canoe and singing traditional songs bring to a person and it is very powerful when you witness how culture changes or empowers a group of people and the strength of identity and the pride that it instills, restoring belonging and access to the land.

This opportunity has made a positive difference in our community where we were able to begin the foundations for creating a safety plan that builds our capacity to make decisions. We have a population of approximately 1500 and are an isolated fly in community. We have worked in collaboration and brought a voice and a strength to those who were in need. We were courageous and it has been beneficial.

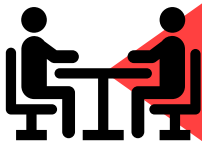
Quote: “We where courageous and it has been beneficial.”

Project Coordinator

Healing.



Healing Forward



What Communities
Are Telling Us

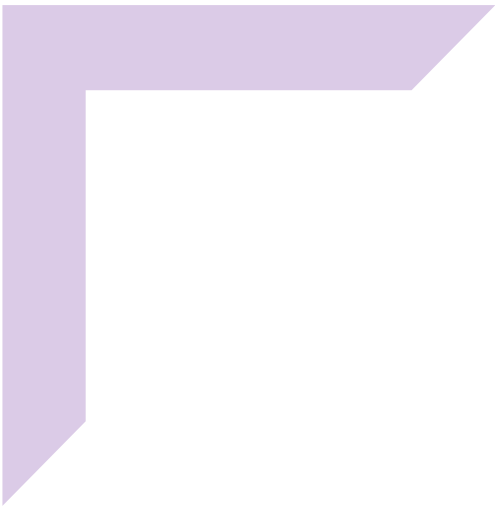

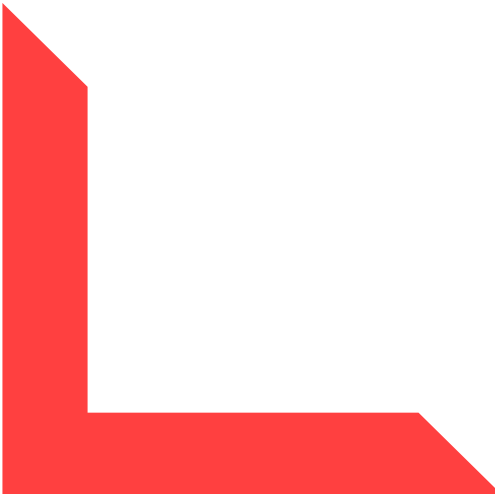

Healing Forward.

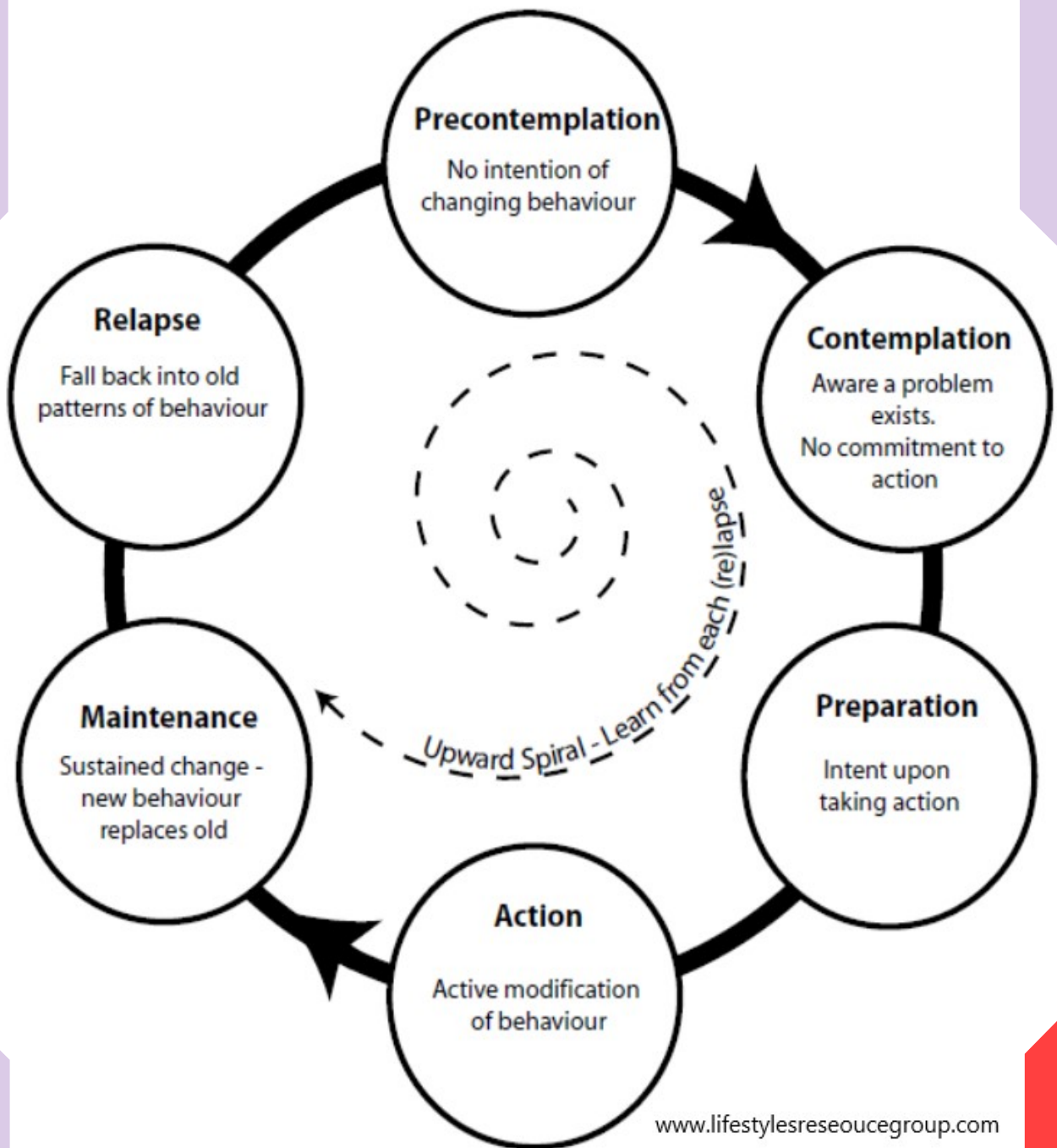
Giving Voice was designed to be barrier free with the aim to make it easier and more efficient for applicants. Although the funding supports were modest, the recipients expressed appreciation and maximized their resources to provide a broad offering of opportunities and experiences for participants. Some of the lessons learned are detailed below.

Quote: “A barrier free process is necessary for transformative change to occur and allows communities to provide healing as they see fit”

Giving Voice Project Coordinator

- Help with transportation was the most needed either for individuals or for group(s) of participants.
- Childcare was another important consideration.
- Communities did their best to provide supports for people with disabilities, however some people with disabilities could not attend because there were just not enough resources to dedicate to their specific needs.
- Many project coordinators reported that participants were uncomfortable discussing family violence and prevention with a member of their community because of confidentiality issues and public shame. People were more willing to take their first steps when working with a partner organization who showed no judgement.

- 
- 
- For rural communities, access to professional services in the areas of counselling, early child development and personal skills development are limited or non-existent. Many participants partnered with local organizations and a significant portion of funding went to hiring professional services such as mental health practitioners and counsellors.
 - Participants were more likely to open up to triggering conversations when they had the support of a one-to-one connection with an Elder, a Healer or a trained counsellor.
- 
- 

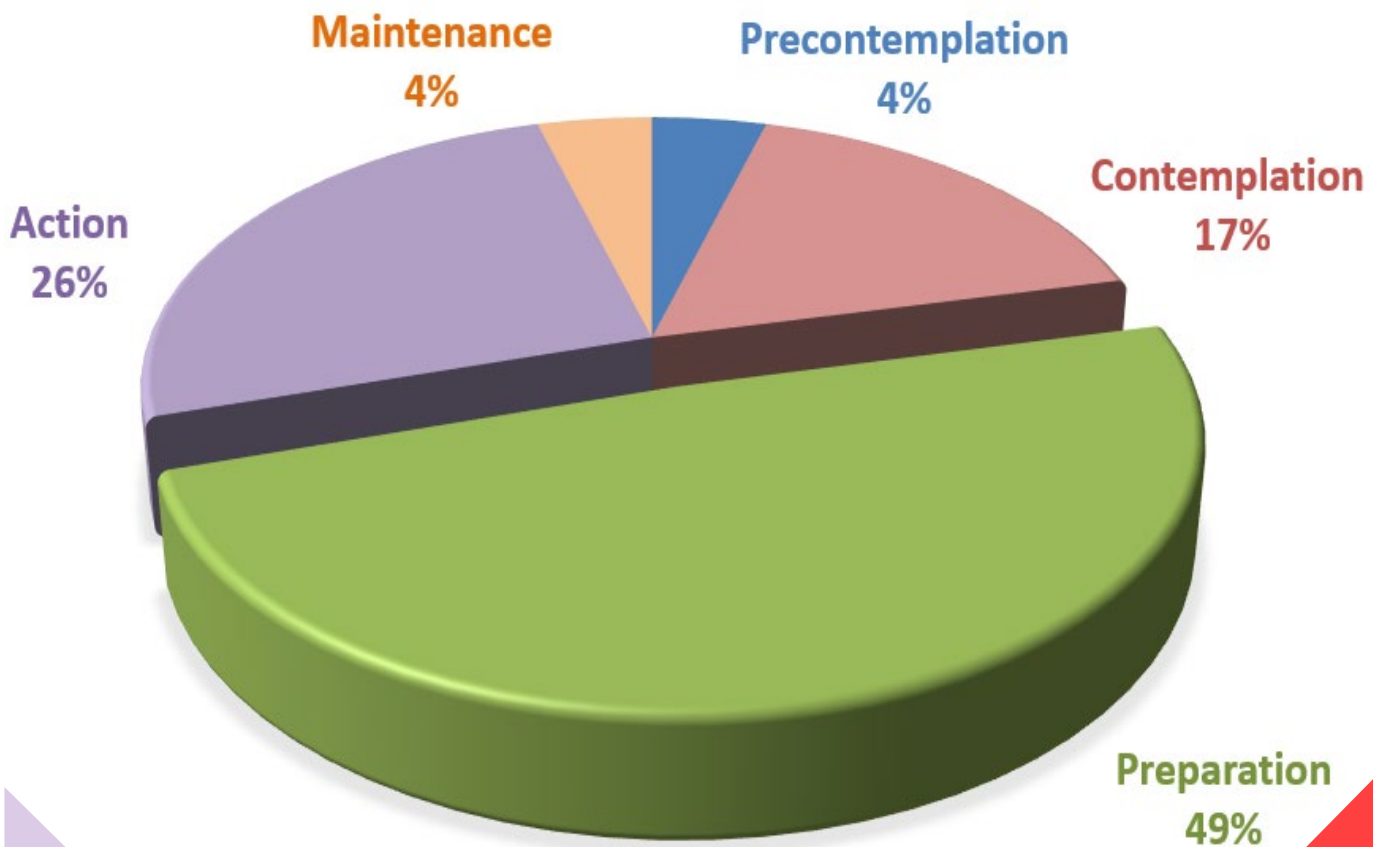


Source: www.lifestylesresourcegroup.com

**CIRCULAR DIAGRAM OF THE STEPS IN THE THEORY OF CHANGE:
PRECONTEMPLATION, CONTEMPLATION, PREPARATION, ACTION,
MAINTENANCE, & RELAPSE**

- Using the steps in the theory of change that were developed to understand behaviour change, Giving Voice asked project coordinators what stage of change they thought their project focused on. Almost half of the projects reported focusing on the Preparation Stage (raising awareness, education and knowledge of how to change), a quarter were Action oriented, and the remaining were in the Pre-contemplation and Contemplation stage.
- Giving Voice echoes that community driven healing is experienced as a journey and is not program based; in other words, healing occurs in community and not programs.
- More focus on healing is needed.
- Year 1 Giving Voice projects were 4% in the maintenance stage, 4% in the pre-contemplation stage, 17% in the contemplation, 49% in the preparation stage and 26% in the action stage of change.

A PIE DIAGRAM SHOWING THE PERCENTAGE OF PROJECTS IN EACH STAGE OF CHANGE.



***WHAT COMMUNITIES
ARE TELLING US...***

A word cloud of terms related to Indigenous success, such as 'dignity', 'resilience', 'First Nation', and 'young mothers'. The words are in various colors and sizes, arranged in a roughly rectangular shape. The words include: services, dignity, Elders, eviction, Inuit, access, resilience, poverty, outreach, healing, First Nation, matriarchs, housing, languages, future-leaders, confidence, ongoing-support, community-driven, RCMP, young-fathers, growth, flexible-funding, judgement-free, young-mothers, Métis, increase-resources, independence, Indigenous-law, respect, prevention, people-at-risk, brave-space, confidential, kindness, restrictions, beneficial, children, abusers, reclaim, healthy, families.

Above is a collection of words shared by participants when asked what success looks like and have a deep meaning to Indigenous communities.



Picture of The Minister's Advisory Council on Indigenous Women's logo:

Woman with braid forming into a halo with colours of black to red to white to yellow and back to black.

“Our project was the beginning of something great for the community and a wonderful start to end violence and build spirits.”

