

Policy Template

Inclusion of Indigenous Peoples and Perspectives

Non-profit Organizations

Purpose:

- We recognize a history with Indigenous peoples that has been characterized by colonial oppression, multiple forms of violence, and relationships that would understandably result in mistrust and/or fear on the part of Indigenous peoples towards non-Indigenous people and organizations. Further, the prioritization of a Eurocentric worldview (and dismissal of Indigenous worldviews) has resulted in inequities in community development work and a loss of valuable Indigenous contributions.
- The knowledge, perspectives and contributions of Indigenous People is both valued and needed by Human Services and Community Development organizations such as ours.

We view reciprocal relationship and collaborations that include Indigenous community members as essential to our work.

- Given the realities of colonization, we recognize that equity – and the inclusion of Indigenous people within our organization – mandates the intentional building of relationships and trust.
- We stand in solidarity with Indigenous peoples to advance equity and justice. Their inclusion within our organization is considered foundational in our work towards equity and inclusion.

1. Community Partnerships

POLICY: We commit to the provision of time, resources and evaluation to support the development and ongoing maintenance of Community Partnerships with Indigenous Organizations / Groups in order to identify mutual benefit and capacity building. Our priorities in this regard are:

- Respectful, reciprocal relationships which inform each other and identify opportunities to improve our services through the value and inclusion of Indigenous perspectives
- Address service gaps for Indigenous Peoples
- Open pathways to employment and program inclusion for Indigenous community members
- Improve allyship to Indigenous organizations / community. Amplify voices and work of Indigenous organizations

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2. Staff / Board Training, Education and Learning

Supporting Information / Overview Truth and Reconciliation Commission Recommendation #57

We call upon federal, provincial, territorial, and municipal governments to provide education to public servants on the history of Aboriginal peoples, including the history and legacy of residential schools, the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples, Treaties and Aboriginal rights, Indigenous law, and Aboriginal–Crown relations. This will require skills based training in intercultural competency, conflict resolution, human rights, and anti-racism.

Although non-profit organizations such as ours do not meet the strict definition of public servants in that we are not government employees, we are contracted by various levels of government and of all parties named in the TRC Recommendations, most closely ‘resemble’ this public servant group.

POLICY: We resolve to, rather than wait for government to provide education, seek out such education on our own in the form of Indigenous-led courses, in-services, workshops and self-directed learning in order to ensure that our organizational culture is understanding and inclusive to Indigenous peoples.

Procedures:

- a) We will identify and promote multiple Indigenous-led training, education and self-directed learning options for staff (and board members)
- b) Annual staff evaluations will explore what learning options have been accessed by staff
- c) We will ensure that learning outcomes from the education and training activities are sustained through changes in policy and practice in organizations.

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3. Recruitment

POLICY: We commit to ensuring that Indigenous Peoples have equitable access to employment, training and advancement within our organization and are participating at the board and leadership level.

Procedures:

- a) All external job postings will be communicated to Indigenous Community Partners.
- b) Where Indigenous representation is lacking in a department we will actively seek out Indigenous candidates to fill positions (specify in promotion of posting, messaging to Community Partners).
- c) In cases where suitable Indigenous Candidates are offered positions, we will offer references from current Indigenous staff to help build trust and confidence with the candidate.
- d) As part of regular HR process improvement we will review recruitment and hiring practices from an Indigenous lens from drafting job postings, assessing applicants, interviewing candidates to onboarding, orientation and mentorship of Indigenous employees.



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4. Indigenous Educators / Elder Honorariums

POLICY: As part of our ongoing commitment to Indigenous-led learning, our organization seeks to include Indigenous perspectives and Indigenous people within the territories upon which we operate. We recognize this knowledge sharing as invaluable to our work - and we will ensure that we learn and adhere to appropriate protocols around honoraria and compensation for teachings in order to demonstrate our genuine value for these opportunities.

Procedures:

1. The organizational representative / staff who engages with the Elder / Indigenous Consultant to make the request is responsible for,

- a. *contacting their supervisor in advance to ensure that protocol is understood and that honoraria/gift costs are approved, and
- b. providing tobacco (if appropriate) - the organization will compensate this cost
- c. providing gifts/honoraria cheques (or ensuring that e-transfer of honoraria is provided in a timely manner, ideally, the day of the Elder/Indigenous Consultant's participation - but within 3 working days at most.

*Honoraria / gift approval process: (To be addressed well in advance of the engagement date)
Submit a written recommendation and rationale for the honorarium / compensation amount which clearly considers and articulates,

- Required travel, meal, accommodation costs, etc.
- In-Person or virtual participation and specific time commitment (including any travel time)

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Additional Elements for Organizational Development / Consideration

Decolonization:

There are a number of important considerations around the concept of decolonization including origins, intent and impact. Decolonization is ultimately about Indigenous Peoples and their experience with 'settler colonization' (a colonial occupation that doesn't end). While decolonization is a word that gets applied in many different ways its original intent to serve Indigenous Peoples matters.

It is important that the concept not be appropriated for settler benefit as opposed to Indigenous sovereignty and land repatriation. These concepts and considerations are well articulated by authors Eve Tuck and K. Wayne Yang in their 2012 article / essay 'Decolonization is Not a Metaphor' and we have included some critical excerpts below;

"The absorption of decolonization by settler social justice frameworks is one way the settler, disturbed by her own settler status, tries to escape or contain the unbearable searchlight of complicity, of having harmed others just by being one's self. The desire to reconcile is just as relentless as the desire to disappear the Native; it is a desire to not have to deal with this (Indian) problem anymore.

Settler harm reduction, like conscientization, is not the same as decolonization and does not inherently offer any pathways that lead to decolonization.

Decolonization specifically requires the repatriation of Indigenous land and life. Decolonization is not a metonym for social justice.

We want to be sure to clarify that decolonization is not a metaphor. When metaphor invades decolonization, it kills the very possibility of decolonization; it recenters whiteness, it resettles theory, it extends innocence to the settler..."

– Tuck and Yang 2012 Decolonization is Not a Metaphor



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Decolonization Continued:

For non-Indigenous people, decolonization is an ongoing process and committed effort to learn more about colonization and the continued impacts of oppressive colonial policies and structures on Indigenous Peoples (such as the Indian Act) so that we can 'centre' Indigenous perspectives and needs.

Our extremely disproportionate benefit from occupation of these lands and participation in political systems that oppress Indigenous Peoples illustrate a need for restoration of balance and fully exploring our relationships with Indigenous Peoples, cultures and the lands we occupy.

Decolonization actions can also be directed to supporting organizations, initiatives and political action which support Indigenous sovereignty and repatriation of Indigenous lands.

Indigenization

Inviting and Including Indigenous Voices and Perspectives

Indigenization has been described as “a collaborative process of naturalizing Indigenous intent, interactions, and processes and making them evident to transform spaces, places, and hearts.” It can be argued that such work can ONLY be accomplished authentically through the guidance of Indigenous knowledge keepers and the inclusion of Indigenous people and perspectives within an organization. Indigenization seeks a shift in the ways that institutions include:

- Indigenous perspectives, values, and cultural understandings in policies and daily practices,
- Indigenous ways of knowing within the heart of the organization, which informs our work ,
- Indigenous cultural protocols and practices in the operations of our institutions.

Indigenization is an ongoing journey towards respectful, collaborative relationships and inclusion that helps ensure Indigenous people see themselves represented, valued and welcome in this workplace culture. We acknowledge and embrace that Indigenization does not just support Indigenous people but strengthens our work and moves towards the long overdue restoration of trust and relationships while disrupting the ongoing impacts of colonization.

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One thing that's not talked about is the intergenerational trauma that's also had to happen for settler people to be complicit in such a violent history.

– Nikki Sanchez, TEDxSFU 2019



References / Resources

[Indigenization, Decolonization and Reconciliation – OpenText BC](#)

[Decolonization is Not a Metaphor – Tuck and Yang](#)

[National Centre for Truth and Reconciliation](#)

[Royal Proclamation – A Recognition of Sovereignty – Indigenous Foundations UBC](#)

[The Royal Commission on Aboriginal Peoples Report 1991](#)

[Land Back - What You Can Do](#)

[21 Things You May Not Know About The Indian Act – Bob Joseph, 2018](#)