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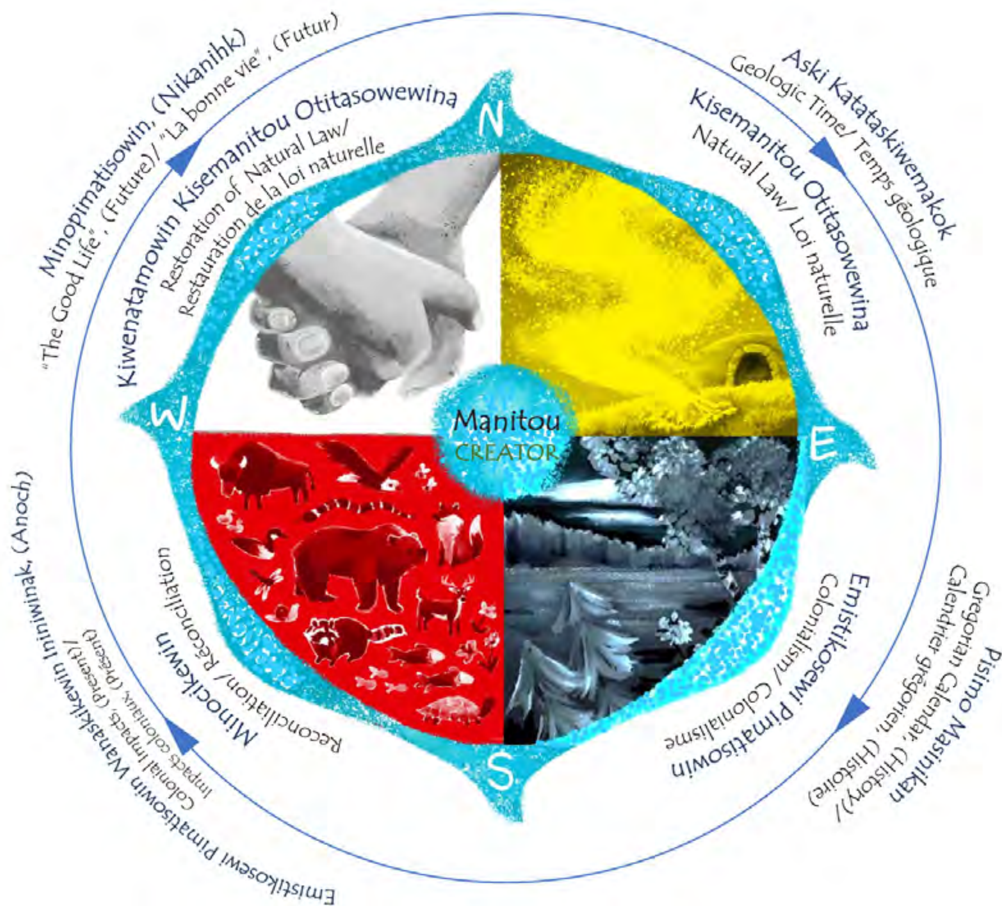

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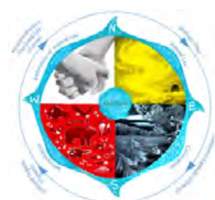

COVER / COUVERTURE
Stewart Hill

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SPECIAL ISSUE / ÉDITORIAL SPÉCIAL

EDITORIAL / ÉDITORIAL

Shifting from Economic Poverty to Prosperity: The Challenge for Indigenous Communities / Passer de la pauvreté économique à la prospérité : un défi pour les communautés autochtones

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Canada's social economy sector portrays the country as trying to be a just society with cracks that the not-for-profit and philanthropy sectors attempt to fill. This social safety net is supposed to catch all people who "fall through the cracks." But does the social economy sector work in Indigenous communities[1] on reserves, or is this social safety net largely unavailable there? This special issue explores Indigenous community development. In the call for papers, we asked, "What is being done, and what is still needed to shift from economic poverty to prosperity in Indigenous communities?"

Le secteur de l'économie sociale au Canada dépeint le pays comme aspirant à être une société juste avec des lacunes que les secteurs sans but lucratif et philanthropique essaient de combler. Ils offrent un filet de sécurité sociale qui est censé attraper toutes les personnes qui « passent entre les mailles ». Mais le secteur de l'économie sociale fonctionne-t-il dans les communautés autochtones[1] des réserves, ou ce filet de sécurité sociale y est-il largement inexistant? Ce numéro spécial explore le développement des communautés autochtones. Dans l'appel à contributions, nous avons demandé : « Que fait-on et que reste-t-il à faire pour passer de la pauvreté économique à la prospérité dans les communautés autochtones? »

The authors who answered the call brought into question the overall impact of the philanthropic and not-for-profit sectors on First Nation communities. Indeed, not-for-profit shelters and community foundations are currently absent from most First Nation reserves, with few Indigenous-led community foundations in existence. Only three self-funded second-stage women's shelters in First Nation communities were found in Canada. Moreover, maps show that no community foundations are available on reserves in Manitoba. Are state-run philanthropy and not-for-profits irrelevant to First Nation communities? Or worse yet, are philanthropy and not-for-profits colonial?

Les auteurs qui ont répondu à notre appel ont remis en question l'impact global des secteurs philanthropique et sans but lucratif sur les communautés des Premières Nations. Actuellement, les refuges et les fondations communautaires sans but lucratif sont absents de la plupart des réserves des Premières Nations, et il existe peu de fondations communautaires dirigées par des Autochtones. D'autre part, au Canada, on n'a trouvé que trois refuges pour femmes de deuxième étape autofinancés dans les communautés des Premières Nations. En outre, d'après les cartes géographiques, il n'existe aucune fondation communautaire dans les réserves du Manitoba. La philanthropie et les organismes à but non lucratif gérés par l'État ne sont-ils pas pertinents pour les communautés des Premières Nations? Ou pire encore, la philanthropie et les organismes sans but lucratif agissent-ils de manière colonialiste?

Canada's not-for-profit and philanthropic sectors espouse equality in a just society where needs are met. To accomplish their goals, the two sectors garner resources through governmental and societal means. These sectors are depicted as "doing good" without there being a sustained critique of their role within the settler state. Is the social economy's present role to usurp more resources for settler communities? Or is it to "do good" for everyone, including those living in First Nations and other Indigenous communities? In extending this narrative—that the social economy should offer help to all—we ask ourselves why research from this sector looks mainly at case studies of successful Indigenous businesses and community projects. Under the circumstances, the inequitable playing field that Canada has set up for First Nation communities, through the Indian Act and Canada Revenue Agency rules among others, is hidden from sight. Thus, the role of the social economy in the settler state is never questioned or

Les secteurs philanthropiques et sans but lucratif du Canada prônent l'égalité dans une société juste où les besoins de tous et toutes seraient satisfaits. Pour atteindre leurs objectifs, ces deux secteurs dépendent de ressources gouvernementales et sociétales. Pourtant, ces secteurs sont décrits comme « faisant le bien » sans qu'il y ait une critique soutenue de leur rôle au sein de l'État colonisateur. Le rôle actuel de l'économie sociale est-il d'usurper davantage de ressources pour les communautés de colons seules? Ou s'agit-il de « faire le bien » pour tout le monde, y compris pour ceux qui vivent dans les communautés des Premières Nations et d'autres communautés autochtones? En prolongeant ce récit—à savoir que l'économie sociale devrait offrir de l'aide à tous et toutes—nous nous demandons pourquoi la recherche dans ce secteur se concentre principalement sur des études de cas d'entreprises et de projets communautaires indigènes qui ont réussi. Dans ces circonstances, les règles du jeu inéquitables que le Canada a établies pour les communautés des Premières

changed. As a result, the social inequities rampant in Indigenous communities are never exposed or dealt with. For example, no strategy led by Indigenous people is in place for dealing with the growing crisis of widespread food insecurity in their communities.

Nations, notamment par le biais de la *Loi sur les Indiens* et des règles de l'Agence du revenu du Canada, ne sont pas évidentes. En conséquence, le rôle de l'économie sociale dans l'État colonisateur n'est pas remis en question ni modifié. Par conséquent, les inégalités sociales qui sévissent dans les communautés indigènes ne sont jamais exposées ni traitées. Par exemple, aucune stratégie dirigée par les Autochtones n'est en place pour faire face à la crise croissante de l'insécurité alimentaire dans leurs communautés.

The rates of food insecurity for Canada's Indigenous people are the worst among developed nations, being three times higher than for other Canadians (FNIGC, 2018; PROOF, 2021). This situation demands immediate action. Food insecurity in Canada is widespread across the majority of First Nations households (51%), with even higher rates for the Inuit in Nunavut (63%), Indigenous communities without access roads (65%), and First Nations people in Alberta (60%) (FNIGC, 2018; Tarasuk, Mitchell and Dachner, 2016; FNFNES, 2021). These rates are getting worse due to COVID-19, climate change and the war in Ukraine. Indigenous people's food insecurity is associated with a shorter life expectancy and higher rates of mental and physical illness, including four times the incidence of diabetes in comparison with non-Indigenous Canadians. When Indigenous people cannot feed themselves, Indigenous food sovereignty is in crisis, as is the case for many Indigenous communities and families. More needs to be done in Indigenous communities to shift from economic poverty to prosperity so that Indigenous people can feed their families. Where is the support from the social economy sector for an Indigenous-led strategic action plan?

Parmi les nations développées, les taux d'insécurité alimentaire des populations autochtones du Canada sont les pires, étant trois fois plus élevés que pour les autres Canadiens (CGIPN, 2018; PROOF, 2021). Cette situation exige une action immédiate. L'insécurité alimentaire au Canada est répandue dans la majorité des ménages des Premières Nations (51%), avec des taux encore plus élevés pour les Inuits du Nunavut (63%), les communautés autochtones sans routes d'accès (65%) et les Premières Nations de l'Alberta (60%) (CGIPN, 2018; Tarasuk, Mitchell et Dachner, 2016; FNFNES, 2021). Ces taux se sont aggravés en raison de la COVID-19, du changement climatique et de la guerre en Ukraine. L'insécurité alimentaire des populations indigènes est associée à une espérance de vie plus courte et à des taux plus élevés de maladies mentales et physiques, y compris notamment une incidence quatre fois plus élevée de diabète par rapport aux Canadiens non indigènes. Lorsque les populations autochtones ne peuvent pas se nourrir, la souveraineté alimentaire autochtone est en crise, comme c'est le cas dans de nombreuses communautés et familles autochtones. Il faut faire davantage dans les communautés autochtones pour passer de la pauvreté économique à la prospérité, de manière à ce que les Autochtones puissent nourrir leurs familles. Où est le soutien du secteur de l'économie sociale pour un plan d'action stratégique dirigé par les Autochtones?

The social economy sector's do-good storyline needs to be challenged regarding Indigenous communities. Unjust, racialized, and colonial laws continue to maintain an unequal playing field and a colonial resource curse for Indigenous communities. The Indian Act persists in making Indigenous people "wards of the state" based on its definition of a person as expressly excluding Indigenous people. Is it right to work within this racist legislation to build economic prosperity? Or does the law need to be abolished like the slave codes of old were? The National Truth & Reconciliation Commission's Call to Action #92 is to "ensure that Aboriginal peoples have equitable access to jobs, training, and education opportunities in the corporate sector, and that Aboriginal communities gain long-term sustainable benefits from economic development projects" (TRC, 2015). But is such an initiative possible under the Indian Act[2], as First Nations communities continue to be undermined and exploited?

Il faut remettre en question le scénario des bonnes actions du secteur de l'économie sociale en ce qui a trait aux communautés autochtones. Pour celles-ci, des lois injustes, racialisées et coloniales continuent de maintenir des règles du jeu inégales et une malédiction des ressources naturelles d'origine coloniale. La *Loi sur les Indiens* persiste à faire des Autochtones des « pupilles de l'État » en se fondant sur une définition de la personne qui exclut expressément ceux-ci. Est-il juste de travailler dans le cadre de cette législation raciste pour construire la prospérité économique? Ou bien cette loi doit-elle être abolie comme l'ont été les codes de l'esclavage de jadis? L'appel à l'action 92 de la Commission de vérité et réconciliation du Canada est de « veiller à ce que les peuples autochtones aient un accès équitable aux emplois, à la formation et aux possibilités d'éducation dans les entreprises, et à ce que les collectivités autochtones tirent des avantages durables à long terme des projets de développement économique » (TRC, 2015). Mais une telle initiative est-elle possible en vertu de la *Loi sur les Indiens*[2], alors que l'on continue à affaiblir et exploiter les communautés des Premières Nations?

Should the social economy sector promote equity of legislation, services, and infrastructure for all communities, including Indigenous ones? If so, the social economy sector has much work to do to support Indigenous leadership. An Indigenous-led strategy is needed to end homelessness, as well as food and water insecurity, in Indigenous communities. This end to homelessness has been operationalized in some non-Indigenous communities by defining "functional zero" as a situation where long-term homelessness no longer exists. As for housing, food and water, funding to end the deprivation of basic needs can and should be met for all communities, including Indigenous ones.

Le secteur de l'économie sociale doit-il promouvoir l'équité de la législation, des services et des infrastructures pour toutes les communautés, y compris celles qui sont autochtones? Si oui, le secteur de l'économie sociale a beaucoup à accomplir pour soutenir le leadership autochtone. Dans les communautés autochtones, une stratégie dirigée par les Autochtones mêmes est nécessaire pour mettre fin à l'itinérance, ainsi qu'à l'insécurité alimentaire et hydrique. Dans certaines communautés non autochtones, la fin de l'itinérance a été rendue opérationnelle en atteignant le « zéro fonctionnel », une situation où, à toutes fins pratiques, l'itinérance à long terme n'existe plus. Comme pour le logement, la nourriture et l'eau, le financement destiné à mettre fin à la privation des besoins fondamentaux peut et doit être assuré pour toutes les communautés, y compris celles des Autochtones.

Indigenous communities are under high pressure to conform to an unsustainable market economy that destroys their territory and traditional culture. Indigenous people are consulted on unsustainable industrial development rather than being asked for an Indigenous-led food security strategy and being consulted on community development. For example, the Canadian government is promoting a Northern Corridor to facilitate resource extraction across Indigenous territories to improve food security and provide jobs and prosperity, when the opposite effect is likely to arise.

Les communautés autochtones subissent une forte pression pour se conformer à une économie de marché non durable qui ne fait que détruire leur territoire et leur culture traditionnelle. On consulte les populations autochtones sur le développement industriel non durable au lieu de les consulter sur une stratégie de sécurité alimentaire qu'elles pourraient diriger elles-mêmes ainsi que sur le développement de leurs communautés. À titre d'exemple, le gouvernement canadien fait la promotion d'un Corridor du Nord pour faciliter l'extraction des ressources dans les territoires autochtones avec l'espoir d'améliorer la sécurité alimentaire et de fournir des emplois et de la prospérité, alors que l'effet inverse est fort probable.

In this special issue, all but one of the articles include Indigenous authors (typically as primary authors), including people of Anishinaabe, Cree, Dakota, and Métis ancestry. Three of the seven articles moreover have lead authors based in Manitoba. The authors typically indict colonial policy as the cause of economic poverty and a limited presence of the social economy in Indigenous communities. They emphasize the uneven playing field resulting in economic poverty in First Nations, but the social economy sector lacks agency in Indigenous communities. First Nations include few or no community foundations, community colleges, not-for-profit training centers, and food banks. Moreover, rather than First Nations people controlling their own land and territories, the Crown holds land and resources in trust under the Indian Act.

Tous sauf un des articles de ce numéro spécial incluent des auteurs autochtones (généralement en tant qu'auteurs principaux), notamment des personnes d'ascendance anichinabée, crie, dakota et métisse. De plus, trois des sept articles ont des auteurs principaux basés au Manitoba. En général, les auteurs accusent une politique colonialiste d'être la cause de la pauvreté économique et de la présence limitée de l'économie sociale dans les communautés indigènes. Ils soulignent une inégalité des règles du jeu qui entraîne la pauvreté économique chez les Premières Nations, où par surcroît le secteur de l'économie sociale manque d'agentivité. En effet, les Premières Nations comptent peu ou pas de fondations ou de collèges communautaires, de centres de formation sans but lucratif ou de banques alimentaires. De plus, au lieu que les Premières Nations contrôlent leurs propres terres et territoires, la Couronne détient les terres et les ressources en fiducie en vertu de la *Loi sur les Indiens*.

Many of these articles focus on housing and homelessness within the context of the Indian Act. The Journal starts with an article by Blacksmith et al. The coauthors ask us to reconsider the conventional philanthropic model by asking, **"Could a philanthropic model that**

Plusieurs des articles de ce numéro spécial portent sur le logement et l'itinérance dans le contexte de la *Loi sur les Indiens*. Par exemple, il y a le premier article du *Journal*, rédigé par Blacksmith et al. Ces coauteurs nous appellent à reconsidérer le modèle philanthropique conventionnel en posant la ques-

aims for community development be enforcing colonial policy rather than providing equitable economic opportunities?" A map of Manitoba's community foundations shows that all of them are in settler-dominated areas—i.e., cities and municipalities—with none on reserves. This article prompts us to consider the colonial roots of inequities for Indigenous people in the Indian Act and requests that the third sector do something about it. Under Canada Revenue Agency (CRA) rules, contributions to all governments except for Indigenous ones are tax-deductible. Yet no organization is actively campaigning or mounting a court challenge against the inequity of the racist Indian Act legislation or CRA rules. This article calls for the decolonization of philanthropy, which requires abolishing the Indian Act.

tion suivante : **« Un modèle philanthropique qui vise le développement communautaire pourrait-il être en train d'appliquer une politique colonialiste plutôt que de fournir de véritables occasions économiques équitables? »** Une carte géographique des fondations communautaires du Manitoba montre qu'elles se trouvent toutes dans des zones dominées par les colons—c'est-à-dire dans les villes et les municipalités—et qu'aucune ne se trouve dans les réserves. Cet article nous incite à réfléchir, par le biais de la *Loi sur les Indiens*, aux racines coloniales des inégalités dont les Autochtones sont victimes et demande au tiers secteur d'agir sur la question. Par exemple, en vertu des règles de l'Agence du revenu du Canada (ARC), les contributions faites à tous les gouvernements du Canada, sauf ceux qui sont autochtones, sont déductibles d'impôt. Pourtant, aucune organisation ne fait activement campagne ni n'organise de contestation judiciaire contre l'iniquité de la législation raciste de la *Loi sur les Indiens* et des règles de l'ARC. Cet article appelle à la décolonisation de la philanthropie, qui doit commencer par l'abolition de la *Loi sur les Indiens*.

The article entitled **"Investing in saving lives: Designing second-stage women's shelters on First Nation reserves"** calls for action to deal with the high risk of violence for Indigenous women. The latter are forced to live with violence due to a lack of funded shelters near them. In Canada, intimate partner violence (IPV) for Indigenous women, at 61 percent, is higher than it is for other women, at 44 percent. The rates of IPV are frightening and, at $7.4 billion in 2009, they are costly, due to higher physical and mental health issues for abused women and their children. Although Indigenous women are at higher risk for IPV, there are only three unfunded second-stage shelters (where women can stay for an extended period) in Canada's over six hundred First Nation reserves. This article concludes that investment in second-

L'article intitulé **« Investing in saving lives: Designing second-stage women's shelters on First Nation reserves »** (« *S'investir à sauver des vies : établir des refuges de deuxième étape pour les femmes dans les réserves des Premières Nations* ») appelle à l'action pour faire face au risque élevé de violence envers les femmes indigènes. En effet, ces dernières sont contraintes de vivre dans la violence en raison du manque de refuges à proximité. Au Canada, le taux de violence à l'égard du partenaire intime (VPI) est bien plus élevé pour les femmes autochtones (61%) que pour les femmes non autochtones (44%). Les taux élevés de VPI sont effrayants et, à 7,4 milliards de dollars en 2009, ils sont coûteux, en raison des problèmes de santé physique et mentale plus élevés pour les femmes victimes de violence et leurs enfants. Bien que les femmes autochtones soient plus exposées à la VPI, il n'existe que trois refuges

stage shelters on reserves is needed to offer transitional homes to IPV survivors, providing them with safety and renewal after their initial stay in an emergency shelter. Research and designs provide a step toward an action plan to protect Indigenous women and stop their abuse—and genocide.

de deuxième étape (là où les femmes peuvent séjourner pendant une période prolongée) dans les plus de six cents réserves des Premières Nations au Canada. Le présent article conclut qu'il est nécessaire d'investir dans des refuges de deuxième étape dans les réserves afin d'offrir des maisons de transition aux survivantes de VPI, en leur assurant sécurité et renouvellement après leur séjour initial dans un refuge d'urgence. La recherche et la conception de refuges constituent une étape importante vers un plan d'action visant à protéger les femmes autochtones et à mettre fin aux abus—et au génocide—qu'elles subissent.

Community-building for youth is profiled in the article entitled **"The Mino Bimaadiziwin Homebuilder Program's impact on sustainable livelihoods among youth in Garden Hill and Wasagamack First Nations: An evaluative study."** This community-led educational project documents how investing in applied education on housing improved multiple aspects of participants' lives. This education program worked despite underfunding and a lockdown caused by COVID-19; in this way, it offered a model of resilience. The article recommends community-based education to resolve the severe housing deprivation and lack of opportunities for youth in remote First Nations communities. However, it acknowledges that, to remedy the housing crisis on reserves by facilitating the financing of homes in Indigenous communities, the Indian Act must be abolished. Before proceeding, we wish to emphasize how much we regret the passing in January of one of the coauthors, Norman Wood, who played an invaluable role in mentoring students and guiding this research.

L'appui des jeunes par leur communauté est présenté dans l'article intitulé **« The Mino Bimaadiziwin Homebuilder Program's impact on sustainable livelihoods among youth in Garden Hill and Wasagamack First Nations : An evaluative study »** (« L'impact du programme de construction de logements Mino Bimaadiziwin sur la sécurité des moyens de subsistance parmi les jeunes des Premières Nations Garden Hill et Wasagamack : une étude évaluative »). Un projet éducatif mené par la communauté montre comment un investissement dans l'éducation sur le logement a amélioré plusieurs aspects de la vie des participants. Ce programme a pu fonctionner malgré son sous-financement et le confinement causé par la COVID-19; il s'est avéré ainsi un modèle de résilience. L'article recommande l'éducation communautaire pour résoudre le grave manque de logements et le manque de possibilités pour les jeunes dans les communautés isolées des Premières Nations. Toutefois, il reconnaît que, pour remédier à la crise du logement dans les réserves en y facilitant le financement de la construction, la *Loi sur les Indiens* doit être abolie. En parenthèse, avant de continuer, nous tenons à souligner à quel point nous regrettons le décès en janvier dernier de l'un des coauteurs, Norman Wood, qui a joué un rôle inestimable en encadrant ses étudiants et en guidant cette recherche.

The article entitled **"Housing and community economic development: The case of Membertou"** provides great insights into housing projects in Membertou, Nova Scotia that focus on the Indigenous social economy. The Indigenous inhabitants of Membertou generated community-controlled businesses, changed the land code, and used locally owned and operated companies for housing construction, which provided training and skills development among band members. It is recommended that there be more Indigenous-led programming to allow for greater decision-making on funding at the community level as a means of overcoming the many obstacles that Indigenous people face.

L'article intitulé **« Housing and community economic development: The case of Membertou »** (« Logement et développement économique communautaire : le cas de Membertou ») donne un bon aperçu de projets de logement axés sur l'économie sociale autochtone lancés à Membertou en Nouvelle-Écosse. Les habitants autochtones de Membertou ont créé des entreprises contrôlées par la communauté, modifié le code foncier, et fait appel à des entreprises locales pour construire des logements, ce qui a contribué à former et à développer les compétences des participants. Il est recommandé de mettre en place davantage de programmes dirigés par des Autochtones afin de leur permettre une plus grande autonomie décisionnelle en matière de financement au niveau communautaire et de surmonter les nombreux obstacles auxquels ils font face.

In **"Our home is native land: Teachings, perspectives, & experiences of Indigenous houselessness,"** Mikaela D. Gabriel explores Indigenous houselessness and urban transitions in Toronto. Such transitions are impacted by the colonial history of displacing Indigenous peoples, dismantling societal structures, prolonging systemic inequities, and maintaining barriers to success (Gabriel, 2022; Absolon, 2010; Eshet, 2015; Patrick, 2014). Gabriel looks at Indigenous perspectives across multisystemic levels, starting with the notions of "housing" and "home" for well-being and security in light of individual, communal, societal, and cultural factors. Her interviews employ a narrative storytelling method as a means of amplifying the voices of Indigenous youth, Elders and traditional knowledge-keepers.

Dans **« Our home is native land: Teachings, perspectives, & experiences of Indigenous houselessness »** (« La terre de nos aïeux est autochtone : enseignements, perspectives et expériences d'itinérance indigène »), Mikaela D. Gabriel explore le phénomène des transitions urbaines et de l'itinérance autochtones à Toronto. Ces transitions sont influencées par l'histoire coloniale du délogement des peuples autochtones, du démantèlement de leurs structures sociétales, de la prolongation des inégalités systémiques et du maintien des obstacles à leur réussite (Gabriel, 2022; Absolon, 2010; Eshet, 2015; Patrick, 2014). Gabriel emploie une approche multisystémique pour explorer des perspectives indigènes, en commençant par les notions de « logement » et de « foyer » pour le bien-être et la sécurité et en tenant compte de facteurs individuels, communautaires, sociétaux et culturels. Ses entretiens font appel à une méthode de mise en récit narrative qui donne la parole aux jeunes, aux aînés et aux gardiens du savoir traditionnel autochtones.

The article called **"Growing community sustenance: The social economy as a route to**

L'article intitulé **« Growing community sustenance: The social economy as a route to**

Indigenous food sovereignty" discusses Indigenous food sovereignty and related issues. The authors' literature review identifies a total of 167 Indigenous food-related social-economy initiatives across Canada, including community gardens and greenhouses, food cooperatives, school gardens and similar social economy initiatives. A number of these initiatives highlight the hope and promise of the Indigenous food sovereignty framework at the local level. This emphasis is relevant and important, but it can obscure the harsh reality of food insecurity in Indigenous communities and the lack of funding for programming to scale up and out as a means of dealing with this crisis.

Indigenous food sovereignty » (« Développer la durabilité communautaire : l'économie sociale comme moyen d'atteindre la souveraineté alimentaire indigène ») traite de la souveraineté alimentaire indigène et de questions connexes. Une analyse documentaire effectuée par les auteurs recense un total de 167 initiatives d'économie sociale liées à l'alimentation autochtone au Canada, notamment des jardins et des serres communautaires, des coopératives alimentaires, des jardins scolaires et d'autres projets similaires. Un certain nombre de ces initiatives illustrent bien l'espoir et la promesse d'une souveraineté alimentaire autochtone au niveau local. Cet état des choses est pertinent et important, mais il peut occulter la dure réalité de l'insécurité alimentaire dans les communautés autochtones et le manque d'un financement qui permettrait aux programmes de se multiplier et se développer afin de mieux faire face à cette crise.

The article **"Accompagnement à l'entrepreneuriat collectif des jeunes Autochtones: un récit d'expérience d'autochtonisation"** ("Support for collective entrepreneurship among Indigenous youth: An account of an experience of Indigenization") looks at the experience of StartUp Nations, a program to support First Nations youth undertaking collective entrepreneurship. This article helps us to better understand how Indigenous entrepreneurial support can be adapted to Indigenous realities rather than repeating Western patterns. The social economy sector needs to offer different supports to meet Indigenous priorities and confront systemic racism in Canada's colonialist system.

L'article **« Accompagnement à l'entrepreneuriat collectif des jeunes Autochtones : un récit d'expérience d'autochtonisation »** se penche sur l'expérience de StartUp Nations, un programme visant à soutenir les jeunes des Premières Nations pratiquant l'entrepreneuriat collectif. Cet article nous aide à mieux comprendre comment l'aide à l'entrepreneuriat mené par les autochtones peut être adaptée à leurs propres réalités plutôt que de répéter les modèles occidentaux. Le secteur de l'économie sociale doit offrir des soutiens alternatifs pour mieux répondre aux priorités autochtones et s'opposer au racisme systémique inhérent au colonialisme canadien.

Together, the seven articles in this special issue show that the social economy sector has much to do to reconcile with Indigenous communities. The articles indicate that the inequities exacerbated by the Indian Act and the Canadian Revenue Agency Act (CRAA) have undermined economic prosperity in

Ensemble, les sept articles de ce numéro spécial montrent que le secteur de l'économie sociale a beaucoup à faire pour se réconcilier avec les communautés autochtones. Ces articles indiquent que les inégalités exacerbées par la *Loi sur les Indiens* et la *Loi sur l'Agence du revenu du Canada* (la *Loi sur l'ARC*) ont miné la prospérité

Indigenous communities. They call for a social economy for Indigenous-led action in Indigenous communities. The high rates of poverty, homelessness, violence, and food and water insecurity require that the root causes of inequity, including the Indian Act and the CRAA, be addressed. In addition, the traumas and deprivations perpetuated by these inequities and other colonial acts of violence require that support for healing be offered.Although the social economy under colonial rule has had limited reach in Indigenous communities, the hope is that this sector will aid in reconciliation and decolonization as a means of sharing wealth and leadership with Indigenous communities so that natural law can prevail and so that their members can lead a better life.

économique des communautés autochtones. Ils appellent à l'économie sociale de seconder les efforts faits par les Autochtones dans leurs communautés. Les taux élevés de pauvreté, de sans-abrisme, de violence et d'insécurité alimentaire et hydrique exigent que l'on s'attaque aux causes profondes des iniquités, y compris la *Loi sur les Indiens* et la *Loi sur l'ARC*. En outre, les traumatismes et les privations perpétués par ces iniquités et d'autres actes de violence coloniale exigent que l'on offre un soutien axé sur la guérison. Jusqu'à présent, l'économie sociale sous le régime colonial a eu une portée limitée dans les communautés indigènes, et on espère que ce secteur contribuera davantage à la réconciliation et à la décolonisation pour en arriver à un meilleur partage de la richesse et du leadership avec les communautés indigènes de sorte que le droit naturel puisse prévaloir et que leurs membres puissent mener une vie meilleure.

The Medicine Wheel diagram, designed by Stewart Hill, on the cover page shows how colonialism has disrupted natural law. For a return to natural law, reconciliation is necessary. The circle represents the cyclical nature of life, which is the basis of natural law. In this Medicine Wheel, the four directions cycle clockwise from east to south to west to north. The eastern quadrant is the spiritual component of all life. In human terms, the baby represents the spirit. As his or her life journey begins, a person is born into this world possessing a spirit. In addition, a new day starts with the sun rising in the east. Moving clockwise, we witness the beginning of a period of rapid physical development, as the individual grows from a baby into a child. In this manner, the southern quadrant represents the physical aspect of human life. In the western quadrant, a person in adulthood experiences the complexities of emotional development as a means to learn how to manage emotions in a healthy manner. Thus, the emotional aspects

En page de couverture, le diagramme de **la Roue de la médecine** conçu par Stewart Hill montre comment le colonialisme a perturbé le droit naturel. Pour un retour à la loi naturelle, une réconciliation s'avère nécessaire. Souvent, le cercle représente la nature cyclique de la vie, qui est à la base de la loi naturelle. Dans cette Roue de la médecine, les quatre directions sont à lire dans le sens des aiguilles d'une montre, c'est-à-dire est, sud, ouest et nord. Le quadrant oriental représente la composante spirituelle de toute vie. En termes humains, le bébé représente l'esprit. Au début de son voyage dans la vie, une personne naît en possédant un esprit. En outre, un nouveau jour commence avec le lever du soleil à l'est. Dans le quadrant suivant, nous assistons à une période de développement physique rapide, alors que l'individu passe du stade de bébé à celui d'enfant. Ainsi, ce quadrant sud représente l'aspect physique de la vie humaine. Dans le quadrant ouest, une personne ayant atteint l'âge adulte fait face aux complexités de son développement émotionnel afin d'apprendre à gérer ses

of human life are associated with the western quadrant. After journeying through the cycle of life and gaining wisdom, the adult becomes an Elder. In this way, the northern quadrant represents the mental aspect of humanity. The Creator, depicted in the inner circle of the Medicine Wheel, remains at the center of life.

The outer sphere of this Medicine Wheel commences with the Spirit quadrant, which shows the natural law era before the coming of the Europeans. The Spirit section follows geological time, while the other quadrants—Physical, Emotional, and Mental—follow the Gregorian calendar. That is not to say that the geological time scale no longer exists today. It does exist. However, currently, we measure time using the Gregorian calendar. Through the latter, the Physical quadrant examines how colonialism has affected Indigenous history in Canada. The Emotional quadrant analyzes the impacts of colonialism on reconciliation. Finally, the Mental quadrant depicts the restoration of natural law which, as the Creator intended, is required to provide a good life for Indigenous people.

The guest editors (Anita Olsen-Harper, Stewart Hill, Myrle Ballard, & Shirley Thompson) would like to thank CJNSER and the Social Science and Humanities Research Council's Aid to Scholarly Journals program for the opportunity to make this special issue possible. We are also thankful to Jorge Sousa for his diligent efforts in realizing this special issue. Sousa and Thompson played a key role in the production and editorial support of the Journal.

émotions de manière saine. Ainsi, les aspects émotionnels de la vie humaine sont associés au quadrant ouest. Après avoir traversé le cycle de la vie et acquis de la sagesse, l'adulte devient un aîné. De cette manière, le quadrant nord représente l'aspect mental de l'humanité. Quant au Créateur, représenté dans le cercle intérieur du cercle d'influences, il demeure au centre de la vie.

La sphère extérieure de cette Roue de la médecine commence par le quadrant spirituel, qui montre l'ère de la loi naturelle avant l'arrivée des Européens. La section spirituelle suit le temps géologique, tandis que les trois autres quadrants—physique, émotionnel et mental—suivent le calendrier grégorien. Cela ne veut pas dire que l'échelle des temps géologiques n'existe plus aujourd'hui. Elle existe bel et bien. Cependant, actuellement, nous mesurons le temps en utilisant le calendrier grégorien. À travers ce dernier, le quadrant physique examine comment le colonialisme a influencé l'histoire des Autochtones au Canada. Le quadrant émotionnel quant à lui analyse les impacts du colonialisme sur la réconciliation. Enfin, le quadrant mental dépeint le rétablissement de la loi naturelle qui, comme le veut le Créateur, est nécessaire pour assurer une bonne vie aux peuples autochtones.

Les rédacteurs invités (Anita Olsen-Harper, Stewart Hill, Myrle Ballard, & Shirley Thompson) tiennent à remercier la *Revue canadienne de recherche sur les OSBL et l'économie sociale* et le programme d'aide aux revues savantes du Conseil de recherches en sciences humaines pour avoir appuyé la réalisation de ce numéro spécial. Nous sommes également reconnaissants à Jorge Sousa pour ses efforts diligents dans la réalisation de ce numéro spécial. Sousa et Thompson ont joué un rôle clé dans la production et le soutien éditorial de la revue.

NOTES

1. "Indigenous communities" refers to the Inuit, First Nations, and Métis, while reserves exist only for First Nations, and the Indian Act focuses solely on First Nations.
2. The Indian Act refers only to First Nation peoples, not the Métis or Inuit.

NOTES

1. L'expression « communautés autochtones » désigne les Inuits, les Premières Nations et les Métis, tandis que les réserves n'existent que pour les Premières Nations et que la *Loi sur les Indiens* ne concerne que les Premières Nations.
2. La *Loi sur les Indiens* ne fait référence qu'aux peuples des Premières Nations, et non aux Métis ou aux Inuits.

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Indian Act Philanthropy: Why are Community Foundations Missing from Native Communities in Manitoba, Canada?

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Keshab Thapa, Mino Bimaadiziwin Partnership
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ABSTRACT

Could a philanthropic model aimed at community development enforce colonial policy rather than providing equitable economic opportunity? This research analyzes the transcripts of 20 public webinars on philanthropy and the Indian Act and maps the 54 community foundations in Manitoba, Canada. All 54 community foundations in Manitoba service only settler-dominated cities and municipalities, with none on Native communities. As community foundations serve only their specific geographical areas, the community foundations in Manitoba effectively concentrate wealth in settler-dominated cities and municipalities, taking away needed resources from Native communities. In excluding the poorest communities in Manitoba, this philanthropic model further entrenches marginalization, poverty, and health risks for Native people on Native communities.

RÉSUMÉ

Un modèle philanthropique axé sur le développement communautaire serait-il en train de renforcer les politiques coloniales plutôt que d'offrir des bénéfices économiques équitables? Cette étude analyse les transcriptions de vingt webinaires publics sur la philanthropie et la Loi sur les Indiens et évalue les 54 fondations communautaires établis au Manitoba, Canada. Ces 54 fondations servent seulement les villes et municipalités des colons—il n'y en a pas une seule dans les communautés autochtones. Comme elles ne desservent que leurs régions géographiques spécifiques, les fondations communautaires au Manitoba concentrent la richesse dans les villes et municipalités dominées par les colons, accaparant des ressources qui pourraient aider les communautés autochtones. Ce modèle philanthropique, en excluant les communautés les plus pauvres du Manitoba, renforce la marginalisation, la pauvreté et les risques de santé dans les communautés autochtones.

Keywords / Mots clés: Indian Act, Native people, Native communities, human rights, community foundations, philanthropy / Loi sur les Indiens, autochtones, communautés autochtones, droits de la personne, fondations communautaires, philanthropie

INTRODUCTION

Community foundations in Canada are a "philanthropic movement working across sectors to help Canadians invest in building strong and resilient communities" (Community Foundations, 2018a, p. 2). Community foundations are endowments or trust funds designed to foster development in the community. Their goal is to "improve the quality of life in our community today and forever" (Community Foundations, 2018a, p. 1) and should support the neediest communities. But do they? This article explores whether community foundations and the third sector meet the needs of Native communities dealing with deficient infrastructure, no hospitals, inadequate housing, unsafe drinking water, and limited bandwidth (Adegun & Thompson, 2021; Hoye, 2020; Palmater, 2020; FNIGC, 2018; Statistics Canada, 2020a; Hill, Bonnycastle & Thompson, 2020). This article asks if community foundations serve Native communities in Manitoba.

In Manitoba, infrastructure and services are significantly worse for Native communities compared with non-Native communities (Blacksmith et al., 2021; Blacksmith, 2021; Joseph, 2018; King, 2019). Interventions are needed. Inadequate roads, houses, health services, water, and food on Native communities lead these communities to rely on philanthropic organizations for necessities that the government fails to provide. Spinu and Wapaass (2020) criticize the structural inequities of Native communities during the COVID-19 crisis:

> Important to look beyond the current [COVID-19] crisis and not lose sight of the broader socio-economic inequalities facing Native communities—particularly remote communities. These include severe housing shortages, limited healthcare services and resources, and poverty—all of which disproportionately put Native communities at risk. If we do not address these inequalities, we will continue to find ourselves treating the symptoms and not the causes of vulnerability to pandemics (para. 2).

Do community foundations address these systemic issues in Native communities? This article discusses the existing barriers and opportunities that community foundations pose for the economic prosperity of Native people in Canada. First, this article explains why the term "Native people" rather than "Indigenous" or "Aboriginal," or "Peoples" is used. Second, the methodology is explained. The results map community foundations in Manitoba to show who benefits from their wealth. Finally, this article explains how community foundations are rooted in Canadian colonial policies and the role of the Indian Act. The Indian Act does not recognize Native people as humans (Government of Canada, 2021) nor Native governments as full governments (Blacksmith, 2021). Webinars on philanthropy in Native communities and the Indian Act are used to illustrate the impact of colonial policies on community foundation development on reserves.

DECOLONIZING TERMS

To apply decolonizing terms, the authors followed the instructions of Dakota leader Orville Smoke. Smoke used the term "Native people in Canada," or identified people by their language group, such as the Dakota, Nehiyew, Anishinaabe, Haudenosaunee, and Dene etc. For a more general term, the authors apply the non-divisive, human-based term "Native people" and Native communities, rather than using the terms of "Indigenous" or "First Nations". Native people is applied to contrast the designation of "not a person" and "wards of the state" status of Indians legislated in the Indian Act, as opposed to peoples. People refers to a group of humans but "Peoples" refers to distinct ethnic groups.

The authors avoid problematic terms imposed by the colonial governments of Canada, Australia, New Zealand, and the United Nations (Blacksmith, 2021). These terms are heavily embedded in the doctrine of discovery and not what Native people call themselves. Application of a blanket term, like "Indigenous Peoples" or "Aboriginal Peoples," in a legal construct is a colonial and divisive approach (Blacksmith et al., 2021). Thus, each of these colonial terms has its controversies and fosters confusion and so will not be applied in this article.

"First Nation" is a confusing term as no Native community has any nation-state powers under Canada's jurisdiction. Also, "First Nation" has no legal definition. Internationally, "First Nations" have no speaking rights in Canada's House of Commons or at the United Nations (UN) and are not considered nation-states. At the UN, "First Nations" can only speak if sponsored by a nation-state endorsed under the UN's definition of "governments." Native people in Canada do not have a seat at the UN. The UN recognizes the colonial state government in Canada but not the Native governments in Canada at any level (King, 2019), whose Native land the Canadian state occupies.

"Indigenous" is a generic term that has been in use for many years. The UN description of Indigenous refers to different interchangeable terms used around the world: "In some countries, there may be preference for other terms including tribes, first peoples/nations, aboriginals, ethnic groups, a*divasi*, *janajati*. Occupational and geographical terms like hunter-gatherers, nomads, peasants, and hill people also exist and, for all practical purposes, can be used interchangeably with *indigenous peoples* " (UN Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues, 2004, p. 2). The UN's terminology of Indigenous is outdated, confusing, and offensive, saying the term "Indigenous" is interchangeable with hunter-gatherers, nomads, or hill people (UN Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues, 2004). In India, Bangladesh, and Nepal, some Native people are called *Adivasi* and *Janajati*, meaning Aboriginal and Indigenous, respectively. The nation-states imposed these terms and their criteria to dehumanize and create division among Native people who had lived harmoniously for generations (AIPP, 2009; Blacksmith, 2021).

METHODOLOGY

The authors considered transdisciplinary perspectives to research how philanthropy has benefited or can benefit Native communities in Canada. We map community foundations in Manitoba. (Blacksmith, 2021). The authors analyzed 22 webinars that featured experts on community foundations and the Indian Act to analyze the impact of colonial policies on community foundation development. Guidance in the analysis were provided by Dakota Leader Orville Smoke and Dakota member Craig Blacksmith, as chief and chief executive officer of Dakota Plains Wahpeton Oyate.

ArcGIS Pro was used to locate the community foundations in Manitoba in relation to Native communities. The authors extracted the postal codes for all the community foundations in Manitoba from the Endow Manitoba website (Winnipeg Foundation, 2022). These community foundations were overlaid with the location of Native communities from Open Data Canada (Natural Resources Canada, 2017) in ArcGIS, version 3.24.3. Analysis of the spatial distribution of community foundations in relation to Native communities was done. The accuracy of key findings from the map was verified via public webinars with a representative from the Winnipeg Foundation.

The authors organized 22 webinars to discuss the state of Indigenous philanthropy in Canada and the United States, considering the role of the Indian Act in community development. Some Native communities are publicly available on YouTube (Indigenous Philanthropy, 2020) and all the webinars are publicly available on Facebook (Mino Bimaadiziwin Partnership Facebook, n.d.). Key messages from the experts promoting Indigenous philanthropy in Canada and the United States were extracted from these webinars. The authors also analyzed how the Indian Act hinders prosperity and self-determination.

FINDINGS

Locating Community Foundations

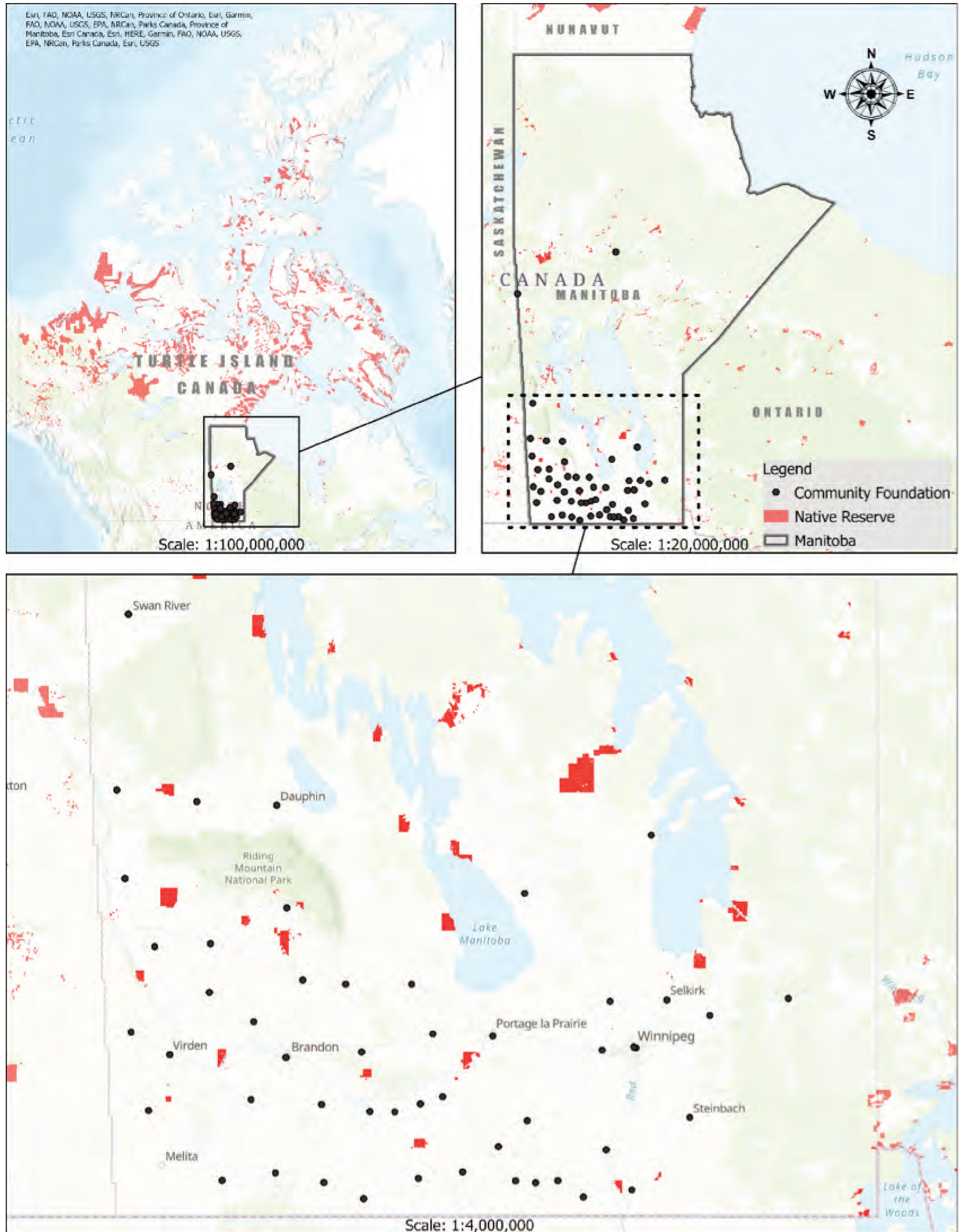
Map 1 juxtaposes community foundation locations with Native communities in Manitoba. Map 1 shows that all the community foundations are off-reserve and in colonial settlements. Manitoba has the largest number of community foundations of any province in Canada yet has none on Native communities. Most of the community foundations operate in southern and western Manitoba, with a few in the Interlake area and one in the northern settler hub of Thompson. As community foundations can only serve the specific geographical area where they are located, these off-reserve community foundations bring their wealth to settler cities and municipalities.

The lack of any on-reserve community foundation in Manitoba was confirmed by Alan Goddard, the Director of Endow Manitoba (Mino Bimaadiziwin, 2020b). Native communities are separated geographically from non-Native communities to enforce federal control (Joseph, 2018), so Native communities do not benefit from community foundations off-reserve. Segregation of Native people from settlers towns and cities is Canada's colonial policy to dispossess Native people from their traditional lands and occupations (Joseph, 2018). Section 49a of the Indian Act enforced the removal of Native settlements to further segregate Native people to remote areas. Section 49a states "an Indian reserve which adjoins or is situated wholly or partly within an incorporated town or city having a population of not less than eight thousand" could be removed without the inhabitant's consent if it was "having regard to the interest of the public" (Indian Act, 1911, s. 49a). This Act was applied to a small group of Dakota Oyate. The Dakota purchased fee-simple land in Portage la Prairie, Manitoba, and prospered in farming and other industries to remain independent of the government treaty, "not recognizing the Crown as a sovereign God" (Mino Bimaadiziwin, 2020). In 1911, the Crown used an amendment to the Indian Act to economically sanction and forcibly remove a Dakota community to an Indian reserve, despite the Dakota purchasing the land title.

In addition to the lack of community foundations on Native communities, Goddard (2020) shared that no Native-led or Native-run foundations exist in settler communities in Manitoba. In the same webinar, Dakota Leader Orville Smoke and Dakota member Craig Blacksmith asserted that the key barriers to successful Native-owned community foundations are colonial policies embedded in the Indian Act and the Income Tax Act.

Canadian charity law is governed by federal tax regulations in Canada. A charitable foundation" is defined as a trust that exclusively operates for charitable purposes funding qualified donees such as registered charities but is not a charitable organization carrying out its charitable activities (Income Tax Act, 2022, sec. 149.1(1)). Charitable purpose has a broad meaning, including distrib-

Map 1: The 54 Community Foundations in Manitoba with none located on Native communities in 2021



Source: Thapa, K, 2022

uting funds to other registered charities for charitable activities. Charitable funds cannot benefit any proprietor, member, shareholder, trustee, or settlor of the foundation. Charitable foundations and charities are established for specific social causes and approved by the Canada Revenue Agency (CRA) to be exempt from tax (Government of Canada, 2006). One must have a qualified donee status issued by the CRA to receive donations. However, most Native communities in Canada have no charities and without qualified donee status cannot receive donations from charities.

Native governments today receive an annual budget from the federal government that has not increased since 1984. Unlike in the settler-run cities and municipalities, Canada froze the annual funding for Indian reserves in 1984, which Orville Smoke and Craig Blacksmith note. Each band signs a contribution agreement with the federal government of Canada to perform government functions for that funding. This annual funding requires they provide water, education, health, roads and infrastructure, and other community development activities. It is impossible for any government or organization to function on 1984 funding levels, yet Indian reserves are subjected to these inadequate funding levels, which the general public is not aware of.

Bridge (2020) identified that the qualified donee mechanism under the Income Tax Act of Canada is a barrier for Native communities. Native governments and organizations need to apply for qualified donee status to receive funding from any charity or funding organization in Canada. Other governments in Canada automatically receive a CRA registration. Unlike every other level of government in Canada, Native reserves are not considered governments by the CRA, creating barriers to receiving and collecting funds. Under the current Canadian government system, without CRA, Native governments cannot receive donations from donors under the rules and regulations of Canada. Every other government but Native governments (e.g., Indian bands, tribal councils) are automatically recognized as qualified donees. Bridge (2020) reveals how Ulnooweg was instrumental in overcoming CRA barriers in 34 Native communities in the Atlantic region while noting that these barriers were discriminatory.

The webinars often show on screen and read verbatim the Indian Act and other government policies to reveal the racist language and meaning. This government statement sums up Canada's colonial rule over Native people and racist laws: "Our Indian legislation generally rests on the principle, that the aborigines are to be kept in a condition of tutelage and treated as wards or children of the State" (Department of the Interior, 1877, p. 14). The Canadian government continues to keep Native people in a "condition of tutelage" by controlling their land and finances through the Indian Act and other colonial policies, including the Canada Revenue Act.

Every government, including local government, is automatically considered a qualified donee except for Native governments, including Native bands and tribal councils. Canada treats Native governments as non-governments, for running charities, which mirrors Native people being treated as wards of the state, not legally being a person under the Indian Act (Indian and Northern Affairs Canada, 1969). The qualified donee rules for charities are unjust, like the discrimination in the Indian Act, which the government acknowledges in its 1969 statement on Indian policy: "Canada cannot seek the just society and keep discriminatory legislation on its statute books" (p. 11).

The National Aboriginal Economic Development Board recommends dismantling the legislative barriers that impede Native communities' control over Indian money, stating: "Indian money should be in the hands of First Nations, not the Government of Canada" (NAEDB, 2017, p. 3). Crown control over Native band revenues is belittling: "The current financial arrangement with Ottawa is similar to having to ask your parents in advance for every dollar that you spend" (Bryan as cited in Bakx, 2021).

Call for fundamental change in philanthropic institutions

Raymond Foxworth (2020) from the First Nations Development Institute in the United States highlighted that philanthropy in the United States is undermining Native priorities. By operating under western values and capitalism, philanthropy perpetuates white supremacy and anti-Native values and needs to shift (Foxworth, 2020). Native people need to be at the forefront of any development in their land and traditional territories, according to the webinar series speakers. Foxworth asks for Native-led community development as "when Indigenous communities are in the decision-making for their community and development, better things happen." Foxworth underlines that the system of philanthropy in Native communities must center on Native communities, their land rights, priorities, needs, leadership, language, and values. Foxworth calls for a fundamental change in how philanthropy institutions operate.

DISCUSSION

Native bands must be on the list of qualified donees maintained by the Government of Canada to receive funding from any donor. A Native band must apply and get approval from the CRA to form a registered charity organization. Until recently, it was almost impossible for a Native band or community to become a qualified donee, which undermined Native people's right to self-determination. This lack of qualified donee status is a denial of the Native government. This lesser systemic Native-specific racism status in philanthropy is similar to Native people's human rights under the Indian Act, which reads: "A person means an individual other than an Indian" (Indian Act, 1876, sec. 12). This designation of First Nations allowed the Canadian government to control their land and assets as wards of the state (Blacksmith, 2021; Joseph, 2018; King, 2019; Lightfoot as cited in King, 2019).

Community foundations in Manitoba amass wealth for settlers through trusts controlled by settlers. These endowment funds are trusts, with interest spent annually, mirroring the Indian Act control by the Crown over Native land and resources. To see whether philanthropic organizations reflect the racism and colonialism of the Indian Act, the role of the Indian Act land trust discussions in the webinars were analyzed.

***Indian Act* as the main barrier to Native people's prosperity**

Rules for community foundation trusts were demonstrated to mirror the Indian Act trust in the webinars. The CRA rules for philanthropy have the same effect as the Indian Act, putting wealth under non-Native control and benefit. The similarities start with the Indian Act legislation being created and enforced by the Government of Canada in a way that "inhibits development on Native reserves." The Statement of the Government of Canada on Indian Policy, 1969, explains the control of the Indian Act land trust by the government undermines Native development on reserves:

> Administrative control and legislative authority are, however, vested exclusively in the Government and the Parliament of Canada. It is a trust. As long as this trust exists, the

> Government, as a trustee, must supervise the business connected with the land. The result of Crown ownership and the Indian Act has been to tie the Indian people to a land system that lacks flexibility and inhibits development. (Indian and Northern Affairs Canada, 1969, p. 11)

The Indian Act is a land trust as Europeans declared that Indians were not humans and therefore could not own the land by European property standards. The Indian Act legalized the continued dehumanization of Native people and made it law. The fact that Native people were never considered human in the first place was made irrelevant and, as supposed beneficiaries, were being taken care of. This colonial policy of the Indian Act matches the views of the doctrine of discovery and *terra nullius*. Pope Alexander VI on May 4, 1493, issued the Papal Bull "Inter Caetera," sanctifying the seizure of "discovered" (McAdam, 2016, p. 2) lands and enslavement of Native peoples. As a direct result of the doctrine of discovery, "colonial laws, policies and outright theft" (p. 2) erased Native people and caused genocide. That the CRA makes Native reserves invisible to philanthropy is another erasure that perpetuates the same harms as the Indian Act and the Roman Catholic Church's decree.

The government and charities are focused on settler communities. Neither are prioritizing meeting the basic needs of people in Native communities. Many Native communities in Manitoba and Canada still lack necessary services- running water, sufficient housing, and access roads. These communities also face underemployment challenges and many other crises due to Canada controlling Native land and the natural resources which include funding.

The *Indian Act* virus: A legal framework mirrored by the CRA

Community foundations and other charities mirror the Indian Act by not recognizing the governments in Native communities and the humanity of Native people. Rather than increasing equity in Manitoba, community foundations are increasing the inequity to keep Native communities underdeveloped and economically poor (Hill, Bonnycastle & Thompson, 2020). This inequity follows the trail of the Indian Act trust over Native lands financing the forcible confinement of 150,000 Native children in Indian residential schools, child welfare agencies, jails to incarcerate Native people, and the Sixties Scoop (Parker et al., 2019; TRC, 2015). Claims by many that Indian residential schools provided a charitable educational service to Native children go against the findings of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission (TRC) (2015). The TRC (2015) found every manner of genocide in residential schools, according to the United Nations definition:

> Genocide means any of the following acts committed with intent to destroy, in whole or in part, a national, ethnical, racial or religious group, as such: (a) Killing members of the group; (b) Causing serious bodily or mental harm to members of the group; (c) Deliberately inflicting on the group conditions of life calculated to bring about its physical destruction in whole or in part; (d) Imposing measures intended to prevent births within the group; (e) Forcibly transferring children of the group to another group. (United Nations, 1948b, article 2)

CONCLUSION

The pathway to the economic prosperity of Native communities in Canada is counter to the existing philanthropic model. The present model discriminates, so community foundations benefit non-

Native communities and not Native reserves. As a result, philanthropy in Manitoba is largely controlled by settlers and benefits settler communities. The existing philanthropic model further entrenches inequality by diverting needed charitable funding away from Native reserves, to non-reserve settlements. Community foundations are solely in non-reserve communities in Canada due to the CRA not recognizing Native governments for automatically qualified donee status.

The community foundation model follows the colonial system, denying Native governments agency, governance, and resources. If philanthropic organizations uphold human rights and equity and meet essential needs in Canada, why is no community foundation or women's shelter on Native reserves in Manitoba? Many reserves are in economic poverty, and 51 percent of people on reserves in Canada are food insecure (FNIGC, 2018). More, not less, philanthropic activity is needed to overcome the systemic discrimination against Native communities.

Community foundations not only should be in Native communities but also should confront the systemic racism against Native communities in the Indian Act. The Indian Act entrenches the marginalization, poverty, and health risks already experienced by Native people in Canada (Hill, Bonnycastle & Thompson, 2020). Why is no charity or other third-sector organization focusing on abolishing the Indian Act, which defines Native people as unequal? As the philanthropic sector does not challenge CRA rules, the philanthropic sector participates in the systemic discrimination of non-Native communities. The CRA regulates the rules for philanthropic organizations, resources, and finances, which blocks wealth from flowing to Native communities. This inequity is similar to the Indian Act land trustee withholding resources and land from First Nations.

By the philanthropic sector not challenging CRA rules, the philanthropic sector participates in the systemic discrimination of non-Native communities. The CRA regulates the rules for philanthropic organizations, resources, and finances, which blocks wealth from flowing to Native communities. This inequity is similar to the Indian Act land trustee withholding resources and land from First Nations. This complicity of the third sector in systemic racism against Native communities needs to be addressed to allow money to flow to Native communities for needed programs. However, settler community foundations or other third sector organizations are not mobilizing to address this systemic racism and continue to benefit from CRA rules where all community foundation dollars go to Manitoba's settler communities.

Systemic discrimination against Native communities and thus Native people by the CRA and the Indian Act is incompatible with a just state. The CRA does not recognize Native governments, which demonstrates CRA and philanthropy institutions' inequitable practices. That no charitable organization in Manitoba challenges the Indian Act's inequity and human rights contravention is a show of support for the CRA's systemic discrimination and the Indian Act's poisoning of the human, economic, and land rights of Native people in Canada.

Outside of Manitoba, Native organizations, such as the Ulnooweg in Atlantic Canada, bring attention to inequities to benefit Native reserves. According to the United Nations (2019), Human Rights Declaration, and the Canadian Constitution statements on human rights equality apply to everyone in Canada, both in Native and non-Native communities. The UN Human Right Declaration is also applicable to the Government of Canada, the CRA, and the philanthropic sector. Nevertheless,

Native communities are discriminated against by the lack of recognition as governments for automatically qualified donee status by the CRA and by Native people's status as "wards of the state" (Blacksmith, 2021). Equality and inclusion in community foundations and the philanthropic sector require dismantling the Crown's systemic barriers, including the Indian Act and CRA barriers. Presently the systemic racism against specifically Native communities is not abiding by the equality statement in Section 36(1) of the Canadian constitution.

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Investing in Saving Lives: Designing Second-Stage Women's Shelters on First Nation Reserves

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ABSTRACT

Most Indigenous women in Canada (61%) experience intimate partner violence (IPV), which is significantly worse than the high rate of 44 percent for other women in Canada. Despite the great risk for IPV, only three unfunded second-stage shelters for more than 600 First Nation reserves exist in Canada to provide First Nation women and their children a safe home. Second-stage housing offers IPV survivors transitional homes for an extended period that provide safety and renewal after their initial emergency shelter stays. This article documents the need for safe, nurturing, and culturally appropriate second-stage shelters for Indigenous women and their families to heal and rebuild. The authors provide two second-stage prototype designs based on domestic environmental analysis and concepts of houselessness, home, and co-housing. We discuss how these designs are one step in an action plan to protect Indigenous women and stop the genocide of Indigenous Peoples by supporting cultural, economic, health, and social development. The literature review and design concepts form an agenda to have design goals for housing IPV survivors that answers the "Calls to Justice for Murdered and Missing Women" and expands this needed service to every reserve.

RÉSUMÉ

La plupart des femmes autochtones au Canada (61%) ont subi de la violence conjugale, avec un pourcentage bien plus élevé que le taux de 44% parmi les autres femmes au Canada. Cependant, malgré ce grand risque de violence conjugale, il n'existe dans le pays, pour plus de 600 réserves des Premières Nations, que trois abris de deuxième étape non subventionnés qui peuvent servir de refuges sûrs pour les femmes autochtones et leurs enfants. Pourtant, l'hébergement de deuxième étape offre aux survivantes de violence conjugale des foyers de transition pour des périodes durables qui leur donnent sécurité et renouveau à la suite d'un séjour initial dans un abri d'urgence. Cet article souligne la nécessité de fonder plus d'abris de deuxième étape qui soient sécuritaires, accueillants et conformes à la culture autochtone pour permettre aux femmes autochtones et leurs enfants de guérir et se rétablir. À ce titre, les auteures présentent deux prototypes de foyers de deuxième étape basés sur une analyse de l'environnement domestique et les concepts de sans-abrisme, de chez soi, et de cohabitat. Elles montrent comment ces prototypes peuvent

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être un pas important dans un plan d'action pour protéger les femmes autochtones et arrêter le génocide des autochtones en général. Ce plan consisterait à mieux appuyer le développement culturel, économique et social de ces femmes ainsi que leur santé. L'analyse documentaire des auteures et leurs prototypes forment un programme d'action comportant des objectifs pour mieux héberger chaque survivante de violence conjugale qui répondraient aux « demandes de justice pour les femmes autochtones disparues et assassinées » et étendraient ce service indispensable à toutes les réserves.

Keywords / Mots clés : second-stage housing design, intimate partner violence, interior design, First Nations, Indigenous women / conception de maisons d'hébergement de deuxième étape, violence conjugale, design d'intérieur, Premières Nations, femmes autochtones

INTRODUCTION

Colonialism in Canada contributes to the higher risk of intimate partner violence (IPV) and other types of violence against Indigenous women compared with other women in Canada (Burczycka, 2017; Brownridge, Taillieu, Afifi, Chan, Emery, Lavoie, & Elgar, 2017). Indigenous women in Canada are seven times more likely than non-Indigenous women to be a victim of IPV and murder and are much more likely to experience sexual violence (NWAC, 2021; Statistics Canada, 2021). The targeting of First Nations, Métis, and Inuit women, girls, and two-spirit people must be recognized as a "race-based genocide" (NWAC, 2021, p. 6) and is influenced by many aspects of colonization. Colonialism and its roles in enacting violence with the Indian Act, the Sixties Scoop, residential and day schools, and further "breaches of human and Inuit, Métis and First Nations rights" (NWAC, 2021, p. 6) lead directly to the current increased rates of violence, death, and suicide in Indigenous populations (NWAC, 2021). A vital paradigm shift is required to dismantle colonialism within Canadian society, at all levels of government, and within public institutions responsible for perpetuating the violence (NWAC, 2021).

Intimate partner violence is inflicted upon women in both anticipated and invisible ways. Most violence against women is IPV, defined as violence by current or former spouses or dating partners. Physical violence is only part of IPV, which encompasses sexual, physical, financial, spiritual, and psychological damaging acts and behaviours (Women and Gender Equality Canada, 2021). Intimate partner violence affects families, and children who witness this violence are recognized in Canada as primary victims. Children exposed to family violence can also carry on the cycle of IPV if it becomes normalized in their family life.

The IPV rate for Indigenous women in Canada is alarming: 61 percent of Indigenous women and girls over the age of 15 have experienced IPV, compared with 44 percent of other women and girls in Canada (Women and Gender Equality Canada, 2021; Heidinger, 2021). Regarding financial violence, 16 percent of Indigenous women (versus 6 percent of non-Indigenous women) have had their partners take money or possessions by force, and 13 percent of Indigenous women (versus 3 percent of non-Indigenous women) were denied access to a job, money, or economic assets by their

partner. In addition, children who witness IPV have twice the rate of psychiatric disorders as children from IPV-free homes (Bender, 2004). The cost to Canadian society from IPV was estimated to be $7.4 billion in 2009 (Department of Justice, 2017). Despite the need for redressing IPV, Canada's police/criminal justice system has not sought the input of Indigenous Peoples (NIMMIWG, 2019; Pauktuutit Inuit Women of Canada & Comack, 2020).

Safety is a human right enshrined in international treaties and conventions, including the United Nations Declaration of Human Rights and the Declaration on the Elimination of Violence Against Women. Even so, violence against women (VAW), especially in remote, northern First Nation communities, is a longstanding public health crisis that has affected overwhelming numbers of Indigenous women (Bonnycastle, Nixon, Bonnycastle, Hughes, & Groening, 2021; Maki, 2019). Violence against women also increased during the COVID-19 pandemic and its associated factors, such as the economic downturns observed in the last two years (Ouedraogo & Stenzel, 2021).

Despite Indigenous women being significantly more likely to experience violence than non-Indigenous women, few or no shelters are available on First Nation reserves (Klingspohn, 2018; Ponic, Varcoe, Davies, Ford Gilboe, Wuest, Hammerton, 2012; Heidinger, 2021). The availability of second-stage housing on First Nation reserves is almost non-existent, let alone psychologically and physically acceptable second-stage housing; this inadequacy has amplified IPV cases. Often, from a lack of victim services and safe housing, women have no option but to return to or remain trapped with abusive partners (Tutty, Ogden Giurgiu, Weaver-Dunlop, Damant, Thurston, et al., 2009; Woodhall-Melnik, Hamilton-Wright, Daoud, Matheson, Dunn, & O'Campo, 2017; United Nations Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights, 2019). Women also tend to decline substandard living options in second-stage housing for the sake of themselves and their children, which continues the cycle of violence.

This article seeks to develop designs for culturally appropriate second-stage housing as discussed in the method. Designing places of residence that validate women who leave abusive households is one of the strongest ways to combat the IPV/VAW epidemic for Indigenous communities. The method is followed by a domestic environmental analysis and concepts of houselessness, home, and co-housing, and finally the schematic concepts for the prototypes. This article then discusses the potential of these prototypes to normalize designs for second-stage housing in every reserve community to provide safe, culturally appropriate homes that empower and heal.

METHODOLOGY

This article provides two second-stage prototype designs based on domestic environmental analysis and concepts of houselessness, home, and co-housing. An investigation of relevant literature, input from Indigenous and non-Indigenous practitioners, and tours of two existing on-reserve shelters led to the design of a one-story and a two-story second-stage prototype.

Literature was consulted regarding themes of second-stage housing (NIMMIWG, 2019; Maki, 2020; Groening, Bonnycastle, Bonnycastle, Nixon, & Hughes, 2019; Hoffart, 2014). Themes of second-stage housing explored included how Indigenous women perceive home (Woodhall-Melnik et al., 2017), and IPV survivors (Bonnycastle, Simpkins, & Siddle, 2016; Christensen, 2018; Thistle & Smylie, 2020; Bowra & Mashford-Pringle, 2021). These themes were incorporated into the design

of the shelter prototypes in hope of improving the healing and empowering effect of second-stage housing for cultural, economic, health, and social development.

Overview of second-stage housing

Second-stage housing is crucial for women who survive IPV. These shelters provide women and their children with long-term security and safety (Maki, 2020; Fotheringham, Walsh, & Burrowes, 2014; Bonnycastle et al., 2021). Women 's Shelters Canada (WSC) defines a second-stage shelter as transitional housing for IPV survivors at risk of post-separation danger and needing additional time and support to heal from trauma (Maki, 2020). A woman ideally can move into a second-stage unit from an emergency VAW shelter; however, waitlists are often lengthy.

Second-stage is a longer-term residency and focuses on developing independence, healing, establishing goals, building community, networking, and participating in in-house programming (Hoffart, 2014; Maki, 2020). Although second-stage housing enormously facilitates women's success in leading the lives they desire, little attention is paid to their vitally important role in aiding women and children in addressing the devastation of IPV. The typical six- to 24-month stay in second-stage housing is crucial to the process of healing from trauma. Second-stage housing fosters women's independence and hope and aids in effectively transitioning back into a means of living well (Tutty et al., 2009).

Current research on second-stage shelters recommends that further improvement and research be conducted to make transitional housing accessible for all women regardless of location. In 2018, the House of Commons Standing Committee on the Status of Women held hearings to assess the state of services in women's emergency shelters and transitional housing for women and children. These hearings were to "ensure that women and children living in urban, rural and remote communities experiencing violence, including Indigenous women, have access to comparable levels of services in shelters and transition houses across Canada that meet their specific needs" (Vecchio, 2019).

Women and children affected by violence in Indigenous communities frequently have no safe spaces or shelters (Vecchio, 2019). Existing on-reserve shelters are rare. In the three instances that they occur, they are severely underfunded, operate above capacity, and are associated with stigma for the women who access them.

Insufficient housing and programming lead to women and children returning to dangerous and abusive environments (Holtrop, McNeil, & McWey, 2015; Vecchio, 2019). In Nunangat, the homelands of the Inuit in the Northern Territories of Canada, 70 percent of the 52 Inuit communities in these territories do not have a safe shelter for women and children, leaving them at high risk (Vecchio, 2019). Indigenous women suffering from violence lack necessary services. Without these services, Indigenous women and their families are at high risk. The need for a safe space, beds, funding, and safety is unmet without adequately funded secondary shelters for Indigenous women in remote and northern communities. Therefore, improving the quantity and quality of second-stage shelters and locating them on reserves is crucial for reducing these gaps (Vecchio, 2019).

Indigenous women affected by violence living in First Nations communities have few options and many barriers to their safety (Groening et al., 2019; Christensen, 2018; NCCAH, 2009). First Nation reserves are typically in rural and remote communities, which experience higher rates of violence than urban communities (Moffitt, Aujla, Giesbrecht, Grant, & Straatman, 2020; Groening et al., 2019;

Peek-Asa, 2010). Although 634 First Nation communities exist in Canada, representing more than 50 Nations and 50 Indigenous languages, only three First Nation reserves have second-stage shelters and only one in Inuit territories, with Nunavut lacking any second-stage housing (Maki, 2020). Many Nations are also isolated and require special access.

Women in First Nation communities are not able to escape their violent situations without second-stage housing due to the lack of formal and culturally relevant support services, unavailable and unaffordable transportation, isolation, gender inequality, lack of victim services, and lack of awareness of violence on survivors and their children (NCCAH, 2009; Groening et al., 2019). Women in rural First Nation communities are underserviced and without public transit or adequate housing (Christensen, 2018; Maki, 2020). Issues are especially pronounced on First Nation reserves due to the housing shortage, resulting in women returning to abusive partners, not having anywhere else to go, or seeking temporary safe spaces (Ponic et al., 2012).

Canada's colonial systems have exploited violence against Indigenous Peoples through control, coercion, and oppression, perpetuating violence including IPV against Indigenous women (OCRCC, 2021). Violence against women and the missing and murdered Indigenous women and girls (MMIWG) epidemic in Canada can be attributed to poverty, racism, and systemic police failures enabled by the colonial history of Canada (Kubik & Bourassa, 2016; Amnesty International, 2009).

A survivor of IPV has likely suffered from houselessness, generational trauma, sexual and physical violence, trafficking, anti-2SLGBTQQIA[1] sentiment, or violence from the child welfare system against themselves or their children (NIMMIWG, 2019). Additionally, colonialism allows for substandard police protection and the investigation of cases involving Indigenous women (OCRCC, 2021; Heidinger, 2022; NIMMIWG, 2019).

Specific to second-stage housing, persisting issues of unceded land and land claims make attaining capital incredibly difficult. This can severely complicate delivering safe spaces on reserve for those fighting IPV (OCRCC, 2021). Colonization and white supremacy have gatekept the right to a welcoming, domestic environment, forcing the bare minimum of shelter, when available, onto the unhoused and those requiring asylum.

Child welfare is also a product of colonization. Child apprehension, from the origin of the residential school system to now, has caused irreparable harm to Indigenous Peoples (Heidinger, 2022). First Nations women and girls are six times more likely to have ever been the government's legal responsibility and are disproportionately placed in the child welfare system (OCRCC, 2021; Heidinger, 2022). Indigenous children are twelve times more likely to be placed in child welfare than non-Indigenous children (NIMMIWG, 2019). White supremacy and colonization are entrenched in the Canadian child welfare system, yet it is the primary contingency on which the responsibility of children involved in situations of IPV falls. The state of the child welfare system leads to high levels of child suicide, deprivation of culture and identity, broken connections with family and community, and compromised security (NIMMIWG, 2019). In an already volatile IPV situation, apprehending children from their mothers furthers the violent acts committed against them.

Benefits of on-reserve second-stage housing

Permanent supportive housing, including second-stage shelter programs, increase the likelihood of

women and their families finding various forms of stability after escaping IPV. (Aubry, Bloch, Brcic, Saad, Magwood, Abdalla, Alkhateeb, Xie, Mathew, Hannigan, Costello, Thavorn, Stergiopoulos, Tugwell, & Pottie, 2020; Hoffart, 2014; BC Housing, 2021). Short-term living options, such as emergency or first-stage shelters, have limited capacity to aid survivors of IPV in stable living (Hoffart, 2014). Women need more time to heal from trauma, which second-stage supportive housing provides (Tutty et al., 2009; Hoffart, 2014).

Structured living, an improved sense of safety, food security, and community formed in supportive co-living are all benefits of women's transitional housing (Aubry et al., 2020, Woodhall-Melnik et al., 2017). Second-stage programs support women and children leaving IPV to heal and become self-sufficient by fostering independent-living skills (Fotheringham et al., 2014; Holtrop et al., 2015; Hoffart, 2014). Work skill development serves to provide survivors with employment opportunities through a post-second-stage program.

One of the most underrated benefits of transitional housing is that these programs allow women survivors of IPV to parent and be close to their children independent of their spouses (Moffitt et al., 2021; Holtrop et al., 2015). Often women make the deliberate decision to enter second-stage programs, providing a comfortable home for their family as an alternative to homelessness or returning to their abuser (Holtrop et al., 2015). Parenting represents hope and positivity for most survivors of IPV when parenting skills programs support the family in second-stage housing. Ensuring adequate spaces in a second-stage shelter for all the women with children prevents family violence and family separation.

Women who find support from second-stage programs are less likely to return to abusive partners or households (Hoffart, 2014; BC Housing, 2021). The return rate of women to abusive situations lessens the longer their stay in a second-stage shelter (Fotheringham et al., 2014; BC Housing, 2021). Hoffart (2014) explains that graduates of second-stage housing often move away from the program's location either to a new location or back to a home community. Indigenous Peoples' roots in communities call for on-reserve second-stage programs.

Similar to second-stage shelters, the Native Women's Association of Canada cites resiliency (or healing) lodges to facilitate the path to healing for women, girls, and gender-diverse individuals (NWAC, 2021). These lodges offer healing services, educational and economic opportunities, and traditional food, medicine, and ceremony to help Indigenous women escape and prevent further violence (NWAC, 2021). Resiliency lodges are to facilitate culture and language programs, mental health and holistic healing, mother and children workshops, support for arts, and and legal services (NWAC, 2022).

The National Inquiry into Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls (2019) included Calls for Justice in its final report demanding that all governments support long-term sustainable funding for Indigenous-led low barrier shelters. These spaces, including second-stage housing, will accommodate Indigenous women, girls, and 2SLGBTQQIA people fleeing violence or experiencing poverty or houselessness (Call 4.7). This Call also states that these instances of transitional housing should be located wherever Indigenous women reside, which includes reserves, and should be appropriate to cultural needs (NIMMIWG, 2019).

Co-housing and community

Co-housing, or co-living, refers to self-managed collective housing that incorporates private and communal spaces (Karadima & Bofylatos, 2019; Ruiu, 2016). Co-housing has been studied for its potential to improve wellbeing among socially vulnerable people, build community, and mitigate loneliness (Carrere, Reyes, Oliveras, Fernandez, Peralta, Novoa, Pérez, & Borrell, 2020; Karadima & Bofylatos, 2019). Co-housing varies from individual versus shared use, which directs how users interact with space, and the interactivity between residents. Transitional housing is recharacterized as cohousing to remove the stigma of women's shelters as homelessness. "Co-housing" implies a permanent living situation or home rather than a temporary place. For survivors of IPV, co-housing provides a balance of autonomy and collective social identity fostering healing, community, and prosperity (Karadima & Bofylatos, 2019; Bonnycastle et al., 2021; Fotheringham et al., 2014; Holtrop et al., 2014).

The social capital benefits of co-housing align with second-stage housing: feelings of belonging, reciprocity, and communal values (Ruiu, 2016). Being housed with others in a similar context contributes to possibilities like parental assistance, group counselling, healing gatherings, and the peace of mind that others sharing your space have comparable objectives (Holtrop et al., 2015; MacTavish, Marceau, Optis, Shaw, Stephenson, & Wild, 2012). Other benefits include feelings of acceptance and peer support (Fotheringham et al., 2014).

Houselessness versus homelessness

Indigenous houselessness differs from the Western definition of homelessness, being the physical representation of a disconnect with self, family, language, land, water, and community (Thistle & Smylie, 2020). Also, the definition of Indigenous homelessness differs from settler homelessness (Thistle, 2017). Indigenous communities have historically become homeless after being displaced from pre-colonial Indigenous lands by settler and government violence and policy (Thistle, 2017). However, we use the term "houseless," because although Canada's genocidal policies undermined education, housing, and land use, land in Canada remains Native homeland, despite the Indian Act's land trust (Blacksmith, Thompson, Hill, Thapa, & Stormhunter, 2021).

Native People have been in Canada for many thousands of years and their culture is deeply embedded in the land. Native homeland remains Indigenous land but requires adequate housing, including emergency, second-stage, social, and private housing, as well as decolonizing policies to stop the genocide. To acknowledge this land remains the Native homeland of Indigenous people, we use the term "houselessness" instead of homelessness, which includes 1) visible, 2) hidden homelessness, or 3) relative houselessness. Visible, official, or absolute houselessness refers to the common idea of humans residing in generally unfit places, such as the street or emergency shelters (Echenberg & Munn-Rivard, 2020; Klodawsky, 2006).

In contrast, hidden houselessness accounts for provisionally accommodated people without ownership or renting a permanent home (Groening et al., 2019; Echenberg & Munn-Rivard, 2020). Relative homelessness refers to individuals or families at risk of losing their homes or living in a shelter that does not meet basic needs (Echenberg & Munn-Rivard, 2020). Though absolute houselessness has the most visibility, most individuals who have either cyclically or chronically been classified as houseless are more likely in the hidden or relative category. Since hidden and relative houselessness is

less visible, those affected are almost impossible to quantify, making the actual houselessness epidemic far worse than recorded (Groening et al., 2019; Echenberg & Munn-Rivard, 2020).

Hidden and relative houselessness includes users of women's emergency shelters and temporary housing (Groening et al., 2019). Due to the lack of dedicated transitional housing and support for permanent housing, women tend to choose informal support to stay housed, such as a friend, family member, or new partner's home (Maki, 2020; Echenberg & Munn-Rivard, 2020). Indigenous houselessness is part of a bigger "disbelonging," which describes the collective experience of being without shelter and being rejected from environments to which Indigenous people are rightly entitled (Christensen, 2018).

Hidden houselessness also refers to the idea that a woman can occupy what is conventionally considered a permanent house or residence without safety. Housing can be a site of danger and abuse, compromising the human right to safe shelter (Ponic et al., 2012; Groening et al., 2019). Houselessness in remote areas, including First Nation reserves, is also more inclined to be characteristic of invisible displacement, resulting in even less attention to its solution.

Hidden houselessness can create a false sense of safety after leaving an abusive partner. However, connections still exist that can lead to a return to danger and insecurity (Ponic et al., 2012). Leaving typically does not end the abusive relationship. Leaving and removing oneself and one's children from an abuser is a process rather than an event.

A temporary shelter does not solve houselessness without leading to a safe, stable home. Overcrowded houselessness is often seen in temporary housing and is unhealthy and unsafe. A lack of safe transitional housing with sufficient space contributes to visible, actual houselessness when users cannot justify staying in discomfort (Thistle, 2017; Mashford-Pringle, Skura, Stutz, & Yohathasan, 2021). Considering that second-stage housing users fall into an invisible category of houselessness, a fundamental step for IPV survivors is to move to a permanent, safe house that feels like home. This realization can achieve newfound independence. The development and programming of second-stage shelters offer hope for a future of stability and a safety net. However, what provides a sense of "home" for IPV in Indigenous communities in a productive and comforting way to promote healing from trauma and economic independence?

Home

The idea of "home" represents a complex array of characteristics and ideals based on attachment and user experience. Home represents a space of peace and belonging. Each person defines a home based on their lived experience (Bowra & Mashford-Pringle, 2021; Bonnycastle et al., 2016; Woodhall-Melnik et al., 2017). Oppositely, anxiety and discomfort can result from unstable or unsafe housing (Woodhall-Melnik et al., 2017).

Individuals displaced due to violence respond positively to spaces that embody structure and stability (Woodhall-Melnik et al., 2017). Destabilization is a crucial characteristic not only seen in cases of IPV and houselessness but in the colonization process as a whole. The destruction of language, tradition, and worldviews destabilizes and weakens Indigenous cultures, and continues to create personal and community trauma (Thistle, 2017). Indigenous second-stage shelter design must create a true sense of home, security, and familiarity as prescribed by Indigenous principles. The

ability to control one's environment is critical since family structure, limited space and control, and a disconnect from one's hometown can significantly change the emotional connection one has with home (Bowra & Mashford-Pringle, 2021; Bonnycastle et al., 2016). The lived experience of women is vital to improving equity and safety in a home environment (Woodhall-Melnik et al., 2017).

The concept of home also conveys refuge, independence, land, culture, and family (Thistle & Smylie, 2020; Groening et al., 2019; Bonnycastle et al., 2016). Home lies in belonging and attachment; "home-making" and "home-searching" attempts to construct or reconstruct a sense of place and belonging past the needs of a shelter (Bowra & Mashford-Pringle, 2021; Christensen, 2018). Home is about more than survival—it is also about achieving *mino bimaadiziwin* (Anishinaabe: a good life as destined by the Creator) (Christensen, 2018). Second-stage housing provides a place to transition to safety, stability, and *mino bimaadiziwin*. Indigenous home-making facilitates closeness with family and community and is holistic for the benefit of emotional and social wellbeing (Bowra & Mashford-Pringle, 2021).

Home in an on-reserve second-stage shelter environment is conveyed by being Indigenous at its core. Symbols, features, and artwork must reflect and accommodate the diversity of Indigenous experience, be welcoming and open to sharing and respect, and encourage Indigenous staffing in its majority (Thistle & Smylie, 2020). A sense of home should surpass the experience of being sheltered to provide the individual or family's relational, social, and cultural necessities, as well as nourishment (Bowra & Mashford-Pringle, 2021; Alaazi, Masuda, Evans, & Distasio, 2015).

For women and their families escaping violence, home represents opportunity. More than providing a means to be clean, comfortable, and safe, a home gives you the ability to make future goals and grow your capacity (Bonnycastle et al., 2016). Getting an education, having better relationships with family and friends, properly caring for children, and practicing sobriety are all associated with home for victims of IPV (Bonnycastle et al., 2016). For these reasons, a temporary shelter or transitional housing should not simulate home. Rather, second-stage housing provides a home that provides a concrete chance to escape the cycle of violence. Home is not immediacy; home is providence.

LIMITATIONS AND OBSTACLES

As discussed, every individual deserves a unique, welcoming place to call home, regardless of financial or psychological status. This article highlights the lack of thoughtfully designed shelters for victims of IPV, on reserve and in general, to provide a home to escape the cycle of abuse (Bowra & Mashford-Pringle, 2021; Alaazi et al., 2015; Maki, 2020). Emergency shelters and transitional housing designs embody minimalism and impermanence, feeling institutional rather than homey (Maki, 2020). The lack of a second-stage housing design narrative impedes building a sense of home that frees survivors of IPV from the cycle of violence (Maki, 2020).

Furthermore, accessing funding for new second-stage housing for on-reserve First Nations is inconsistent. The government-funded Canadian Mortgage and Housing Corporation (CMHC) is Canada's primary funder for social housing development. However, information on funding for second-stage shelters is scarce. The CMHC advertises competitions for transitional and supportive housing, namely, the Co-Investment Fund, Women and Children Shelter and Transitional Housing Initiative. However, funding availability for second-stage on-reserve housing did not qualify for these competitions in the past.

Responding to Calls 4.7 and 16.1 (the Call for all governments to honour Inuit socio-economic commitments defined by self-government and land claims agreements between Inuit and the Crown) in the final report of the National Inquiry into Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls, the CMHC announced two new initiatives on May 2022 (CMHC, 2022). The Indigenous Shelter and Transitional Housing Initiative and the Shelter Initiative for Inuit Women and Children promise to build a minimum of 38 shelters and 50 transitional homes in Indigenous communities (CMHC, 2022). While improving, this process must become more accessible and straightforward for First Nations to progress in the fight against IPV on reserves.

DESIGN CONCEPTS

Second-stage housing should be designed to meet the physical and psychological needs of families escaping IPV. Based on our review of the literature and personal accounts of second-stage housing, we developed a functional design to meet the housing needs of women and children escaping violence. Table 1 summarizes the concepts of spatial design that seek to benefit female survivors of IPV and their children in second-stage housing to give them the work, social, and life supports needed. While second-stage shelters provide residents with a more extended stay than healing lodges as outlined in the NWAC Calls For Justice, and focus on safety from IPV, the functional aspects of the resiliency lodge are implemented in the second-stage shelter prototypes.

Table 1: Design considerations

Need	Design element	Description	Examples
Physical needs	Permanence	Material stability and permanence are critical to the inhabitants of second-stage shelters after long periods of displacement and uncertainty (Woodhall-Melnik et al., 2017).	Affordable design for affordable housing, creating interiors evocative of "home," stability rather than impermanence, sturdiness, trust.
	Flexibility	Co-housing in a second-stage shelter requires a balance between private and public functions, as well as residential spaces that allow for both individuals and large families (Ruiu, 2016).	Flexible floor plan for different living arrangement needs, open plan for easy rearrangement by users, non-fixed furniture.
	Design for rural communities	Specific considerations are to be made for on-reserve and Northern second-stage shelters on a case-by-case basis.	Scattered site shelters to protect anonymity, additional security measures to protect anonymity.
Pyschological needs	Individualization	Opportunities for decoration, flexible furnishings, control over environmental settings, and additional space available for families are all positive examples of these opportunities (BC Housing, 2019). Women and their families crave growth and freedom, a new foundation from which to reconnect and start over (Woodhall-Melnik et al., 2017).	Individual furniture selection, ability to style and decorate individual space, opportunities for flexible common spaces to change as required, additional space in the shelter for private family gatherings, prioritization of personal items.
	Safety and security	Social safety, emotional safety, and physical safety were all equally important to the wellbeing of women in long-term shelters (Woodhall-Melnik et al., 2017).	Privacy walls, security system including cameras, secure entry, making accommodations for users to be safe when outside, consideration for multiple storeys, access to emergency services.

Table 1 (continued)

Need	Design element	Description	Examples
Pyschological needs	Comfort	Long-term housing must be differentiated from short-term housing in how it conveys comfort and consistency to its users with a home-like interior.	Carefully selected furnishings and appliances, space planning for moments of pause and reflection, allocation of space for counselling, and relaxation.
	Facilitating skill building	Second stage housing specific to women is most effective if assisting with children, offering trauma counselling, and educating toward financial literacy (Desai, 2012).	Planning to accommodate activities that enable a sense of self-determination, including classrooms, counselling, therapy, childcare, etc.
Cultural needs	Space for Elders	Available space for shared programming or office space for Elders to meet with individuals or groups of women is ideal for second-stage housing in Indigenous communities and First Nations (BC Housing, 2021).	Designing office-style space for elder meetings, allocating ceremony space so individuals or groups can connect with Elders.
	Ceremony space	Mandatory for Indigenous second-stage programs.	Planning for interior and exterior places for ceremony and gatherings in proximity to communal areas.
	Appropriate aesthetic	In Indigenous housing initiatives, community members were interested in incorporating local heritage and culture into new housing designs (MacTavish et al., 2012).	Colour, form, shape, and symbolism should resonate with the users of the shelter. Art can be sourced from community.

Creating residential units that cater to individual users' needs and reflect their values, personality, and beliefs is essential to a second-stage shelter (Desai, 2012). Customization is also a critical factor in independence, an important goal for second-stage shelters. Shelter residents reported that a sense of control and stability within second-stage housing was a key aspect that aided in healing and comfort while being displaced (Woodhall-Melnik et al., 2017).

Culturally appropriate design is crucial. Housing design should accommodate traditional cultural activities, foster cultural identity, and strengthen family bonds (MacTavish et al., 2012). Holistic healing in First Nation communities is closely tied to the spirit and ceremony. Therefore, space for pipe ceremonies and smudge-friendly design is required for First Nation second-stage housing (BC Housing, 2021). Ceremonial areas are directly connected to building kinship with other survivors to promote healing and reaffirm a sense of safety. The work of local Indigenous artists or carvers in the construction and design of the space supports cultural identity (BC Housing, 2021).

Design prototype

Two prototype second-stage co-housing designs were developed to show the solutions with a single (Figure 1) and a two-storey (Figure 2) version for the social economy to meet a desperate need for women and child safety. This dream of housing women and children fleeing abuse within their community and culture is shown as brick and mortar to transform this situation into a safe and co-housing model.

Figure 1: One story shelter

Both prototypes offer communal and private spaces, floor plan flexibility, safety, and cultural spaces. Both designs contain eight suites that accommodate single residents up to one woman with six children, realizing Indigenous women often have large families and care for many children. The shelter includes living spaces with communal kitchens (Figure 3), teaching rooms with computers (Figure 4), office spaces for program facilitators, dedicated spaces for children and adolescents, shared laundry rooms, and circle rooms for ceremonies and counselling. Safety was considered within all parts of the design, from installing a protected entrance to the open layout of communal spaces for effective surveillance and choice of entry to developing a two-storey shelter to protect residents from intruders.

Second-stage housing is intended for long-term residence and should not follow the blueprint for a typical shelter for the unhoused. Typical shelters often lack private space. The dynamic of co-housing bringing different people from traumatic backgrounds together is to build self-determination, but people may have to work through their conflict (BC Housing, 2021; Ruiu, 2016). As an antidote to shelter design, apartment-style suites in the prototype provide comfort, privacy, and normalcy for survivors (Figure 5). At the same time, women and children living in transitional housing should have

Figure 2: Two storey, second-stage shelter floor plans

Figure 3: Living area interior

Figure 4: Classroom interior

access to various communal spaces for gatherings such as feasts, family visits, group counselling and therapy sessions, aligning with the NWAC's action plan for giving women access to healing, mental health, and cultural support (NWAC, 2022).

Figure 5: Residence suite interior

Flexibility is essential due to the unpredictability of each woman's situation. Choice and respect for boundaries are critical themes for IPV survivors (BC Housing, 2021). Women can enter second-stage programs alone or with multiple children, so planning static residence suites for each woman limits the number of women that can be accommodated (MacTavish et al., 2012). Therefore, prototype suites were planned to have doors or moving walls inter-connecting each suite to create opportunities for room sharing and help women with several children find safety while living together (Figures 3, 5). Shared living space was planned with unfixed furniture to allow options for partitioning and rearrangement.

Incorporating ceremony space allows women to remain connected to their culture, land, and identity (BC Housing, 2021). The prototype's circle room can work for sharing circles, smudge, prayer, and teaching (Figure 6). In rendered views, natural colours and materials that honour the land are used to ground the space, and in a realized project, these aspects would tie to the First Nation where a shelter is located (Figures 1, 2, 4, 6). Around the facility, connection to the land is emphasized with gardens for growing medicines and vegetables.

Figure 6: Circle room interior

DISCUSSION

Ensuring women can stay on reserve while attending a second-stage program is crucial for women's safety, cultural survival, and the Indigenous economy. Victims of IPV, which include women and their children, need a safe living situation and means of financially and psychologically improving their lives and should not have to leave their community and culture to find it. In Indigenous second-stage shelters, the healing comfort of home is as vital for an interior concept as having a relationship with the land and a home community (Moffitt et al., 2020; Kuokkanen, 2011). Escaping violence often requires Indigenous women to heal while being expected to leave their community to care for themselves and their families (Ponic et al., 2012). Women should not be punished for seeking help.

Mandating adequate safety measures for transitional housing is necessary for women staying in on-reserve second-stage housing. A physical dynamic must exist that advocates for self-determination for survivors while allowing women in a vulnerable phase of their lives security and stability. Security can be introduced with applied safety technology and personnel responsible for watching over the shelter and ensuring psychological security factors are planned in the interior. Open areas with views of the exterior are ideal as they allow women choice of entry and the ability to set social boundaries. Comfort is affected by familiarity as much as by security.

CONCLUSION

The severe number of IPV cases in Canada and the likelihood of Indigenous women experiencing IPV shows that Indigenous supportive transitional housing is a life-or-death matter (Heidinger, 2021; Moffit et al., 2020; NWAC, 2021). Nevertheless, the number of second-stage shelters on reserve, even with the new CMHC initiatives, remains disproportionately tiny compared with actual need. Each reserve and Indigenous community needs safe places to house women and their children. Significantly more on-reserve second-stage housing is required to provide safety for women and save lives (NIMMIWG, 2019; NWAC, 2021; Mashford-Pringle et al., 2021). In addition, IPV survivors' successful transition to independent living requires designing these spaces for privacy, security, counselling, and kinship to help them stabilize and heal (NWAC, 2021; Woodhall-Melnik et al., 2017; MacTavish et al., 2012). The support women and their families receive in second-stage housing helps propel them to their best chance at an IPV-free life.

With the social cost to Canadian society from IPV high at $7.4 billion per year in women's and children's mental and physical healthcare, second-stage housing is a necessary investment that saves lives (Department of Justice, 2017). Policy must be created demanding second-stage housing construction. These designs support the call for action by "painting a picture" of these safe, nurturing, and culturally appropriate homes for Indigenous women and their families to heal and rebuild. The design makes these more of a reality. This prototype offers a design to provide a circle of support and wellness around vulnerable women and children for cultural, economic, health, and social development. Modular and adaptable apartment unit design allows for single women and families of up to eight, housing women and their families undivided and safely.

Violence against women continues to be a North American health crisis and is exacerbated by the COVID-19 pandemic (Mashford-Pringle et al., 2021; Moffit et al., 2020). Decolonizing education and policies are needed to prevent IPV, including removing barriers to adequate housing on reserve. Indigenous women are at high risk of IPV due to Canada's colonial genocidal policies (NWAC, 2021; 2022), including the Indian Act, which means Indigenous people need more than adequate housing and second-stage housing to attack the root problem for prevention. Healing and reconciliation require decolonizing policies of land-back and removal of the Indian Act to release the Native homeland from the grip of colonization and genocide (Blacksmith et al., 2021).

Funding accessible Indigenous transitional housing prevents fear, isolation, and continued assault and is therefore urgent. Indigenous survivors of IPV need relief, protection, and improved overall wellbeing. This research is intended to increase awareness of the need for, and provide a vision for, second-stage co-housing on First Nation reserves in Canada.

NOTE

1. The acronym 2SLGBTQQIA stands for two-spirit, lesbian, gay, bisexual, trans, queer, questioning, intersex, and asexual.

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Mino Bimaadiziwin Homebuilder Program's Impact on Sustainable Livelihoods Among Youth in Garden Hill and Wasagamack First Nations: An Evaluative Study

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ABSTRACT

The Mino Bimaadiziwin Homebuilders postsecondary education pilot project built Indigenous youth capacity and houses in two remote Anishinini reserves—Garden Hill and Wasagamack. To evaluate this community-led project, a sustainable livelihood assessment holistically measured the impact on 45 of the 70 (64%) Homebuilder students and the community. The community benefited by gaining three culturally appropriate houses built from local lumber and employment opportunities for Anishinini instructors. A longitudinal survey found five of the six livelihood assets improved statistically and significantly, including satisfaction with social relationships, cultural awareness, income and ability to pay bills, housing safety, and human development. Students reported better relations with their families and neighbourhood. Most (85%) of the 70 Homebuilder students earned postsecondary certificates either in forestry, homebuilding, or both while obtaining a training stipend, which elevated their incomes. These positive outcomes occurred despite project underfunding, COVID-19 pandemic lockdown, climate change events, and inequitable housing policies under the Indian Act. Based on this project's success, we recommend investing in Indigenous-led postsecondary education in community homebuilding projects. However, to attain equitable housing and human rights, a plan is needed to overturn the Indian Act keeping Indigenous people "wards of the state" and their land in trust.

RÉSUMÉ

Le projet pilote en éducation postsecondaire Mino Bimaadiziwin Homebuilder a permis d'assurer la formation de jeunes autochtones et la construction de maisons dans deux réserves anishinini isolées—Garden Hill et Wasagamack. Afin d'évaluer ce projet mené par la communauté, une approche holistique priorisant un mode de vie durable a servi à mesurer son impact sur 45 des 70 étudiants (c'est-à-dire 64% de l'ensemble) participant au projet ainsi que sur la communauté. Cette dernière a bénéficié du fait qu'elle a obtenu trois maisons culturellement appropriées construites avec du bois local ainsi que des emplois pour des enseignants anishinini. Une étude longitudinale

a démontré que, grâce à ce projet, cinq de six atouts liés au mode de vie se sont améliorés de manière statistiquement significative, y compris la satisfaction envers les relations sociales, le savoir culturel, le revenu et la capacité à payer ses comptes, la sécurité en matière d'habitation, et le développement humain. À ce titre, les étudiants ont affirmé que leurs rapports avec leurs familles et leurs quartiers se sont améliorés. La plupart d'entre eux, c'est-à-dire 85% des 70 étudiants participant au projet Homebuilder, ont obtenu un certificat postsecondaire en foresterie, en construction d'habitations ou dans les deux domaines tout en recevant une allocation de formation, ce qui leur a permis d'augmenter leur revenu. Ces résultats positifs sont arrivés malgré le sous-financement du projet, le confinement dû à la COVID-19, des défis soulevés par le changement climatique et des politiques de logement inéquitables dues à la Loi sur les Indiens. Étant donné le succès de ce projet, nous recommandons d'investir dans une éducation postsecondaire axée sur la construction d'habitations dans la communauté qui soit menée par des autochtones. Cependant, pour rendre les droits humains et les droits au logement plus équitables, il faudrait dresser un plan pour supplanter la Loi sur les Indiens, à cause de laquelle les autochtones demeurent pupilles de l'État et leurs terres restent sous tutelle.

Keywords / Mots clés : Indigenous, housing crisis, healthy homes, Native reserves, sustainable livelihoods, Indian Act, First Nations / autochtone, crise du logement, maisons saines, réserves autochtones, mode de vie durable, Loi sur les Indiens, Premières Nations

INTRODUCTION AND LITERATURE REVIEW

Many Indigenous People living on Native reserves in Canada lack adequate housing (Assembly of First Nations [AFN], 2020a; 2020b; Statistics Canada, 2016). Colonial approaches to housing development on Native reserves in Canada have resulted in many negative impacts from overcrowded, unhealthy, and dilapidated houses. The housing crisis on Native reserves negatively impacts the health, education, economic development, and welfare of Native people (AFN, 2020a; 2020b) and contributes to homelessness (AFN, 2020a). Currently, the housing deficit in Canada's Native reserve is greater than 130,000 units, with as many as half a million Indigenous people in Canada having poor or no housing (AFN 2020a, 2020b).

An Indigenous self-determined approach is needed to solve the massive housing problem on Native reserves in Canada (AFN, 2020a; 2020b; First Nations Information Governance Centre [FNIGC], 2020) to "make housing a source of community healing and economic renewal" (Royal Commission on Aboriginal Peoples [RCAP], 1996, p. 341). Solutions by Indigenous People and for Indigenous People are needed for resolving Native reserve housing rather than the problematic federally dictated programs (AFN, 2020a; 2020b; FNIGC, 2020; First Nations Health Council [FNHC], 2020).

This article evaluates a postsecondary education project to build youth capacity and build houses in two remote Anishininiwuk reserves—Wasagamack and Garden Hill—in Manitoba, Canada. This article starts with problematizing colonial language that obscures the role of the Indian Act on housing developments on reserves and Indigenous People. We explain the Indian Act's racist colonial legal levers perpetuating the inhumane housing situation on reserves and the lower educational outcomes for Indigenous People. Canada's on-reserve housing crisis and the failings of colonial

postsecondary education are discussed, considering their impact on northern and remote Indigenous communities.

As an antithesis to these colonizing systems, we tell the story of how the Anishininiwuk from Garden Hill and Wasagamack initiated the Mino Bimaadiziwin Homebuilders (MBHB) project with researchers at the University of Manitoba (UoM). Elders gave the project the name *Mino Bimaadiziwin*, which in *Anishinini* means "a good life as destined by the Creator." This two-year project trained 70 Anishinini youth to build homes in their communities using local materials. We discuss how this project was evaluated to see if it lives up to its name using relevant indicators in a sustainable livelihoods assessment, considering student and community benefits. The longitudinal study results are presented regarding the impact of the project on six sustainable livelihoods of the students. The discussion focuses on what insights the project offers to resolve the multiple crises of housing, education, health, and unemployment in First Nation communities. The conclusion summarizes the project's impact and analyzes its applicability to other communities, offering recommendations.

INDIGENOUS PEOPLE IN CANADA AND THE INDIAN ACT

Indigenous People in Canada were here prior to colonial settlement and the formation of Canada. Over 1.6 million people in Canada identify as Indigenous, making up 4.9 percent of the national population (Statistics Canada, 2016), with diverse cultures, languages, economies, and histories (Nelson & Wilson, 2017). Indigenous People in Canada typically identify themselves by their language, for example, Anishinini, Anishinaabe, Ininiew, Haudenosaunee, Dene, and Saulteaux. This article focuses on the housing problems in a case study with two Anishinini reserves in Canada, with *Anishinini* being the Native language, *Anshininimowin* meaning speaking their Native language, and *Anishininiwuk* being the Native people.

The Canadian government divides Indigenous People into three categories: 1) Indians, 2) Inuit, and 3) Métis (RCAP, 1996). This article focuses on housing on reserve under the Indian Act, but we do not use the term *Indian* except as a legal construct as this label came out of settlers mistaking Canada for India and settlers' ideology of racial superiority. We also avoid the confusing term *First Nations*. The term First Nations obfuscates that Indigenous bands in Canada have no nation-state powers or national sovereignty and are not recognized as nation states by the United Nations (UN) (Blacksmith, Hill, Stormhunter, Thapa, & Thompson, 2021). If the Anishinini and other Native bands were legally sovereign nations in control of land, housing, funding, resources, and education, we would not be writing about the lack of Indigenous control over housing and postsecondary education. We apply the term *Anishinini* when referring specifically to Wasagamack, Garden Hill, and Island Lake people, reserves, and band government and otherwise use the more generic term of *Indigenous* or *Native* when using a term that applies to reserves, bands, or people under the Indian Act in Canada.

The crux of the housing problem lies with the Indian Act and other colonial policies (Blacksmith et al., 2021). The Indian Act enacts racial discrimination to deny Indigenous People in Canada their human rights, land, and resources. The Indian Act is considered one of the most overtly racist laws in the world (Blacksmith et al., 2021). The Indian Act (1876, sec.12) states: "a person means an individual other than an Indian," which continues to legally brand Indigenous People "wards of the

state" (Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada [TRC], 2015). Even Canada's Charter of Rights and Freedoms is inconsiderate of Canada's Indigenous People and their "wards of the state" status and their restrictions to Aboriginal rights within Canadian courts, except for criminal cases: "Aboriginal rights reinforce the State's monopoly on power. First Nations are radically constrained in negotiations for their rights" (King & Pasternak, 2018, p. 13).

Canada's legal denial of Indigenous People' humanity results in genocidal policies, including but not limited to the Indian Residential schools (Milloy, 2017; TRC, 2015). The Indian Act continues to undermine Indigenous People' livelihoods, language, health, education, culture, and housing. Housing needs are not met as the Indian Act severely restricts home financing, with Native people unable to mortgage reserve land through banks. With Indigenous reserve land in a Crown land trust, the only lender is Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation (CMHC) (Zingel, 2020), which severely constrains housing on reserve.

INDIGENOUS ON-RESERVE HOUSING

Housing and infrastructure on Indigenous reserves are in a "state of crisis" due to colonial policies (Hill, Bonnycastle, & Thompson, 2020). The on-reserve housing deficit surpasses $3 to $5 billion (Standing Committee on Indigenous and Northern Affairs [INAN], 2017), with more than 130,000 homes needed. The total infrastructure deficit, including schools, roads, and hospitals, is estimated to be higher, at $45 billion to $50 billion (INAN, 2017). Chief David McDougall from Island Lake calls the housing situation a "ticking time bomb," with 1,500 houses on the waiting list for the cluster of four reserves, including Wasagamack and Garden Hill. The Chief documented 23 people living in a two-bedroom home where "they had to take turns sleeping" (Puxley, 2016).

Native reserves typically lack sufficient housing to meet the human need for decent, adequate accommodation (Hoque, 2018; Standing Senate Committee on Aboriginal Peoples [SSCAP], 2015; Hill et al., 2020). Overcrowding is measured by the National Occupancy Standard (NOS) as the home having "enough bedrooms for the size and composition of the household" (Statistics Canada, 2019, 2020). In 2016, seven percent of Manitobans lived in unsuitable housing, with rates five times higher at 37 percent for Indigenous People living on reserves (Statistics Canada, 2019). Average household size is the average number of persons per household. The average number of family members living in an on-reserve household is 3.7 compared with the national average of 2.5 (Canadian Institute of Child Health, 2021), despite smaller house sizes built on reserve.

House designs imposed on reserves by CMHC typically do not consider the place, family, climate, or culture. The one-house-fits-all designs are too small for large families and too large for single adults and culturally inappropriate (MacTavish, Marceau, Optis, Shaw, Stephenson, & Wild, 2012). As a result, homes deteriorate quickly into unhealthy housing. In Manitoba, 44 percent of households need major repairs to fix defective plumbing, faulty electrical wiring, or structural damage, for example, which is five times higher compared with nine percent overall (Statistics Canada, 2019). Most on-reserve homes (70%) across Canada need some level of repair (FNIGC, 2020).

A home's state of repair, allergens, mold, and crowding are associated with an increased risk of disease on First Nations reserves (Boutilier, 2014; FNIGC, 2020; Kovesi, 2012; Moffatt, Mayan, & Long, 2013; Statistics Canada, 2020; Weichenthal, Mallach, Kulka, Black, Wheeler, You, St. Jean, Kwiatkowski, &

Sharp, 2013). Overcrowding has negative health impacts. Overcrowding is blamed for a 50 times higher prevalence of tuberculosis for Native people living on reserve in Canada than those living off-reserve (Indigenous Services Canada, 2020; Thompson, Bonnycastle, & Hill, 2020) and unacceptable risks for COVID-19 transmission (Statistics Canada, 2020). Multigenerational families create a greater risk of viral exposure to the at-risk elderly group for severe COVID-19 symptoms (Statistics Canada, 2020). One-quarter (25%) of Native people on reserves lived in multigenerational households in 2016 (Statistics Canada, 2016), which is four times higher than off-reserve housing.

Despite the dire need for Indigenous on-reserve housing, the philanthropic sector has not stepped up to advocate and provide temporary shelter to the homeless on reserves or provide youth training to build on-reserve homes (Stormhunter, 2020). One explanation is that Indigenous governments do not qualify automatically for donee status, unlike every other town and government body, which is required to receive any charitable funding (Canada Revenue Agency [CRA], 2017). As a result of government policies, charitable donations bypass Native reserves to other areas (CRA, 2017; Stormhunter, 2020) and the communities and people who need help the most do not benefit from charitable donations. Despite the lack of philanthropic charities, a few pilot programs to assist with community priorities for housing have occurred through university projects.

DECOLONIZING POSTSECONDARY EDUCATION

For the most part, the Canadian postsecondary education system teaches colonial views without considering Indigenous knowledge or needs (Indian and Northern Affairs, 1985; Hill et al., 2020; Olsen Harper & Thompson, 2017; Thompson, Harper, Thapa, & Klatt, 2017). Postsecondary education continues to fail to prepare Indigenous students from remote northern reserves with sustainable livelihoods:

> Remote northern students were (and are) denied, through the school system, the essential preparation for life in their home environment. The traditional material culture was (and is) ignored. No one was (or is prepared for employment in the off-reserve world of commerce and industry. No one was (or is) prepared for gainful employment in traditional ways. (Indian and Northern Affairs, 1985, p. 37)

Education, whether formal or informal, should improve health, happiness, and income, which are all aspects of sustainable livelihoods (Gaudet, 2021; Chambers & Conway, 1992; Mohammadi, Omidi Najafabadi, & Poursaeed, 2021; Snider, 2021). Education aims to boost capabilities and assets (Snider, 2021; Gaudet, 2021; Trade Winds to Success, 2020; Chambers & Conway, 1992) required for normal living and survival during difficult times such as under COVID-19 pandemic or climate change disasters (Snider, 2021; Chambers & Conway, 1992). Life-long learning education provides a way to cope with new situations and continuously improve.

Clearly, the colonial postsecondary education system is not working, with limited enrolment and poor success rates for Indigenous students in Canada over many decades (Statistics Canada, 2016; Gaudet, 2021; Ineese-Nash, 2020). Hill, Bonnycastle, and Thompson (2020) report systemic and institutional barriers to trades and apprenticeship training for Indigenous People. Socially and psychologically safe educational settings should be available and accessible, considering the intergenerational trauma of residential schools, poverty in Indigenous communities, and the racism of

colonial Canada (Deane & Szabo, 2020; Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development [OECD], 2018; Raderschall, Omidi Najafabadi, & Poursaeed, 2020). Raderschall, Omidi Najafabadi, and Poursaeed (2020) discuss the Trade Winds to Success Program as a successful Indigenous model for trades training covering foundational skills, academic preparation, pre-apprenticeship accreditation, and career development, with sufficient lead-time for upskilling to counteract the underfunding of Indigenous schools in Canada.

With limited or no access to the internet for elementary, secondary, and postsecondary students in remote Indigenous communities during COVID-19, their educational opportunities disappeared (Hill et al., 2020). Some communities, including Garden Hill, cancelled their schools in March 2020 when COVID-19 emerged in Canada. The Canadian Radio-television and Telecommunications Commission deemed broadband internet an essential service in 2016, with standards to allow users to stream video at 50 megabits/second download and 10 megabits per second uploads. However, almost 86 percent of households do not have this quality of internet access, with rural and remote communities, including Indigenous communities, being the outlier.

Culturally appropriate education is fundamental to achieving a good life and employment opportunities (Champagne, 2015; Sharpe, Arsenault, Lapointe, & Cowan, 2009; Wakefield, Sage, Coy, & Palmer, 2004). Elders have tried to fill the large hole in the Canadian education system where decolonizing and land-based education should be (Olsen Harper & Thompson, 2017). For example, Elders provided culturally appropriate postsecondary education in Island Lake. Emma and Victor Harper, two Wasagamack school teachers, led a *Nopimink* or land-based course to provide "on-the-land education" in Island Lake for teacher trainees in the 1970s and 1980s through Brandon University (Mino Bimaadiziwin Partnership, 2019a). However, this successful on-the-land pilot project was defunded, despite these Elders wanting to continue and expand this Indigenous postsecondary education to meet all the needs of the community.

Anishinini Elders propose community-led postsecondary education that focuses on the place-based issues, knowledge, and needs of their Anishinini communities. The Elders envisioned a community-led, culturally appropriate education that incorporated land-based, Indigenous knowledge and trades education to address community needs through project learning. Elders envisioned youth learning holistic land-based stewardship to keep "the earth sacred" and their families healthy and housed (Thompson et al., 2017). Similarly, Anishinini youth and Elders of Garden Hill wanted community-based and applied education rooted in traditional and spiritual beliefs, land-based learning, cultural identity, and self-determination to build sustainable, culturally appropriate livelihoods (Michnik, Thompson, & Beardy, 2021).

Community-led postsecondary education provides options to decolonize and address priority issues through community projects (Michnik et al., 2021). As needs and priorities differ across communities based on their situation, educational projects should be responsive and community-led (Michnik et al., 2021). The Anishininiwuk communities and many other Native communities identify the lack of housing and tradespeople as a priority. The Anishininiwuk see local homebuilding education as one of the ways to solve the multiple crises of housing, education, health, and unemployment occurring in many reserves (RCAP, 1996).

MINO BIMAADIZIWIN HOMEBUILDER PROJECT AS A CASE STUDY

The Mino Bimaadiziwin Homebuilder (MBHB) project originated with Anishininiwuk from two fly-in Island Lake reserve communities, namely Wasagamack and Garden Hill, in northwest Manitoba (see Figure 1). The MBHB project was envisioned by Elders Victor Harper, Emma Harper, Norman Wood, and Ivan Harper. The MBHB project was a partnership with Anishinini Elders, education directors, and employment training directors identifying the need for community-led education on trades, which led to a Social Science and Humanities Research Council (SSHRC) partnership grant in 2017 with Dr Shirley Thompson and others at the University of Manitoba. Elders named the Homebuilder project *Mino Bimaadiziwin* to describe cultural, holistic learning in by and for their community to build youth capacity in homebuilding for a good life.

Figure 1: Location of Garden Hill and Wasagamack in Manitoba

Source: Thompson et al. 2012

The Homebuilder education training started in the Fall of 2018 to build students' capacity and homes. No postsecondary education opportunities were available in either community, not even remote learning due to limited bandwidth. The Employment and Training departments agreed to provide the building materials, equipment, and classrooms in each community, but the lack of winter roads was a big impediment. The goal was to design and build two homes with local logs in both Wasagamack and Garden Hill, teaching at each step in the process. Both ATI's Indigenous instructor and local Anishinini train-the-trainers taught the postsecondary education program to students. Jide Oni, the lead author, resided in Island Lake for 14 weeks (intermittently) in the summer and fall of 2019 to conduct the participatory research and administrate the surveys.

Some of the classroom and most of the hands-on education was in Anishininimowin. Most community members in Garden Hill and Wasagamack speak their Island Lake dialect fluently, despite intergenerational trauma from children being forcibly sent to residential schools. Being forced to travel outside of their homes currently to attend colonial postsecondary institutions can be traumatic, being so far away from family, language, food, and culture. Most people return without academic success; Wasagamack education director explained that only 1 in 20 (5%) Anishinini students completed their postsecondary education programs (Mino Bimaadiziwin Partnership, 2019b), due in part to racism, poverty, and homesickness.

Youth from these remote communities want postsecondary education but do not want to leave their communities. Prior to starting the training, Wasagamack and Garden Hill reserves held workshops where a poll of Anishinini youth showed that the great majority wanted to remain in Island Lake to attend college or university due to their encounters with racism in the city and for family reasons (Mino Bimaadiziwin Partnership, 2019b). Rather than colonial education, the youth, Elders, and community leadership wanted a holistic education of trades to build homes combined with land-based and cultural education from Anishininiwuk in Anishininimowin. Anishininiwuk felt this was the best way to build sustainable livelihoods for Anishinini youth in their community (see Figure 2a). A sustainable livelihood assessment was used to evaluated whether this holistic, decolonial education positively impacted the youth (Gaudet, 2021; Chambers & Conway, 1992; Mohammadi et al., 2021; Snider, 2021).

Figure 2: The sustainable livelihood model applied to the Mino Bimaadiziwin Homebuilder (MBHB) project evaluation

SUSTAINABLE LIVELIHOOD ASSESSMENT

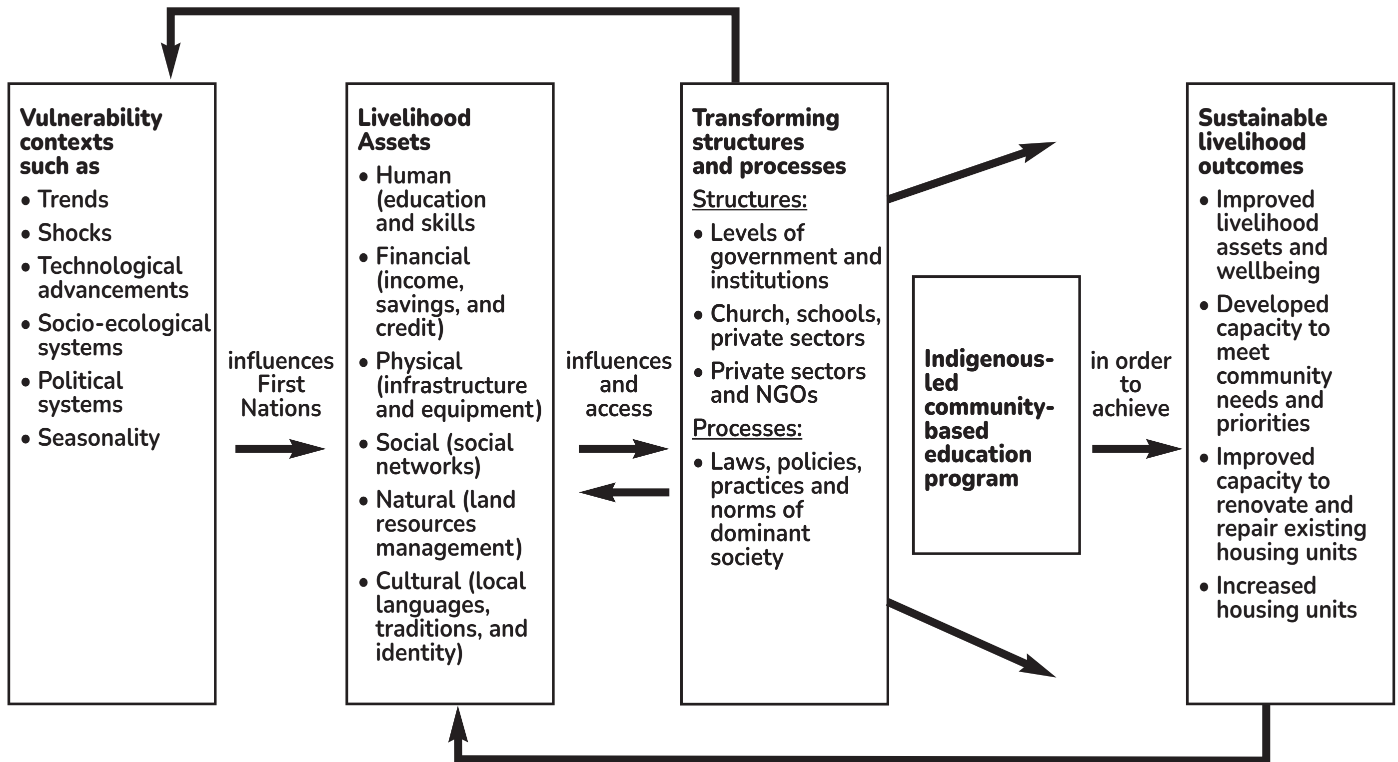
The sustainable livelihood assessment (SLA) provides a people-centred approach to evaluating education holistically. The SLA measures a project's impact on *Mino Bimaadiziwin* or a good living. The SLA assesses a person's or communities' assets. Assets are resources or capitals typically categorized into five areas, namely human, financial, physical, natural, and social, although sometimes cultural, political, or technological assets are added (Snider, 2021; Chambers & Conway, 1992). For Indigenous communities, cultural assets such as the Native language and Indigenous knowledge are very important to their identity and cultural survival (Snider, 2021; Kopp, Bodor, Makokis, Quinn, Kornberger, Tyler, Turner, & Smale, 2021; Forest, 2021). Indigenous project evaluation typically considers cultural aspects (Snider, 2021; Kopp et al., 2021) in addition to the other five assets. Also, typically the projects' impact on the individual as well as the community is considered. Figure 3 shows how the SLA model was revised to consider cultural aspects and measure individual and community-level changes (Chambers & Conway, 1992; Department for International Development [DFID], 2000; Ramirez, 2019).

Figure 3: The sustainable livelihood model applied to Indigenous community-led education programs

Source: Adapted from Chambers & Conway (1992)

The SLA has been applied successfully to evaluate Indigenous youth education programming (Kamal, Thompson, Linklater, & Ithinto Mechisowin Committee, 2014; Kopp et al., 2021). The SLA flexibility allowed researchers to define their livelihood asset categories based on the project's local context and the complexity of livelihoods (Ramirez, 2019; Kamal et al., 2014). The SLA is able to expand to include cultural aspects and multiple scales to include regional, community, and individual levels to analyze a project's impact (Ramirez, 2019; Snider, 2021). The SLA framework is well-suited to monitor a project's changes in a complex sustainable livelihood system where long-term outcomes from a project can be challenging to predict (Ramirez, 2019). Figure 4 provides the analytical framework context for systematically evaluating an Indigenous-led community-based education program or project.

Figure 4: Sustainable livelihood framework for Indigenous-led community-based education program evaluation



Source: Adapted from Department of International Development (DFID, 2000)

APPLIED RESEARCH METHODS

Ethical considerations

The research team worked with the Anishinini leaders in Wasagamack and Garden Hill towards their research priorities and process following the Ownership, Control, Access, and Possession (OCAP) protocol. Only after many workshops and meetings with the two communities did the funding proposal, ethics, and participatory research occur. The chief and council of both Garden Hill and Wasagamack reserves provided a band council resolution in support of this research. The University of Manitoba Human Research Ethics Board approved the ethical protocol, which required informed consent and participants to be at least 18 years old.

Evaluative study design

The study design aimed to measure whether the project moved Homebuilder students towards *Mino Bimaadiziwin* (the good life destined by the Creator) and provided benefit to the community (see Table 1). To achieve this aim, at the start of the project a survey was sent to all 70 Homebuilder students regarding their sustainable livelihoods in the fall or winter of 2018/2019, depending on their start date. All participants completed the survey. A post-training survey was conducted after training in the summer of 2020, with 45 of the 70 youth responding. The post-training survey coincided with the communities being locked down during the pandemic to limit the high risk of COVID-19 transmission in their communities (Thompson et al., 2020).

Table 1: Number of youth Homebuilders participating in post-survey by community

First Nation	Total number of homebuilders	Number of respondents for the pre- & post-program survey
Garden Hill	33	21 (64%)
Wasagamack	37	24 (65%)
Total	70	45 (64%)

To measure the different assets of the students' livelihoods before and after the project, the post-training survey asked all the same questions as the initial survey. In addition, the post-training survey asked 18 additional questions from the Canadian Community Health Survey (CCHS) (Statistics Canada, 2021) on food security and several COVID-19-related questions. These CCHS questions were added in response to the heightened concern about food access and hunger during COVID-19, as the initial survey had only one relevant question about food access and nothing about hunger, food quantity, or food quality.

The post-training survey return rate was high at 64 percent, despite the many barriers. As the communities were under lockdown during the COVID-19 pandemic, researchers could not do the surveys in person. Non-community members were not allowed into each community for more than a year. Also, students were largely housebound for over a year, with only designated emergency response staff allowed to leave their homes. Although this survey was available on Survey Monkey, most homes in these two remote communities have very limited or no internet or computer access. Even phone access was limited as many Homebuilder participants could not afford phones and their families had no landline.

Descriptive and inferential statistics were conducted using STATA v.15. The SLA was applied to holistically measure the educational project's impacts. Homebuilders' human, financial, physical, social, natural, and cultural assets were measured using relevant indicators of Anishinini Homebuilders' livelihoods (Mohammadi et al., 2021; Snider, 2021; Batal, Chan, Fediuk, Ing, Berti, Mercille, Sadik, & Johnson-Down, 2021; Marushka, Batal, Tikhonov, Sadik, Schwartz, Ing, Fediuk, & Chan, 2021; Morse & McNamara, 2013; Ballard, 2012; United Nations Development Programme [UNDP], 2017). The indicators used are education outcomes for human assets; income and ability to pay bills for financial assets; capacity for homebuilding for physical assets and home situations; relations with family and neighbours for social assets; access to forestry resources for natural assets; and Anishiniwuk knowledge and language for the cultural asset (Snider, 2021; Smyth and Vanclay, 2017; Morse & McNamara, 2013). Further, the asset indicators were compared using McNemar's test for paired nominal data with a probability (p) value of < 0.05 level for statistical significance (Nagata, Fiorella, Salmen, Hickey, Mattah, Magerenge, Milner, Weiser, Bukusi, & Cohen, 2016; UNDP, 2017; Ugoni & Walker, 1995). The McNemar test is a non-parametric test helpful to determine if the MBHB program significantly changed participants' livelihood assets.

The Household Food Security Survey Module (HFSSM) measured the household's food security status (Health Canada, 2020; Statistics Canada, 2021). Based on the survey response, each household was categorized as either a) food secure, b) moderately food insecure (quality and quantity of food are compromised due to lack of money to buy food), or c) severely food insecure (meals missed

or food intake reduced, and at the extreme, going day(s) without food), according to the indicators in Table 2 (Health Canada, 2020; Statistics Canada, 2021).

Table 2: Eighteen-item household food security survey

Household food security status	10-item adult food security scale	8-item child food security scale	Household status
Food secure	Zero to one affirmative response	Zero to one affirmative response	Both adult and child in the household are food secure
Moderate food insecure	Two to five affirmative responses	Two to four affirmative responses	Either adults or children in the household or both are moderately food insecure, and neither is severely food insecure
Severe food insecure	Six or more affirmative responses	Five or more affirmative responses	Either adult and/or children in the household are severely food insecure

As no control group was in place in Island Lake to compare the impacts of the Homebuilder's project, we compared their data with available Statistics Canada data for 2016. We compared the averages for Homebuilders' incomes, housing, and education before and after the project with those of their reserve community. We also compared these statistics with the average for all Manitoba reserves and all Manitobans.

RESULTS

Description of the survey sample

The 45 Homebuilders who completed the post-training survey were 20 to 39 years old, with an average age of 27 years. Of these, seven (16%) were female and 38 (84%) were male. This gender composition was reflective of the male-dominated Homebuilder program and the construction trades profession generally (Statistics Canada, 2016). Not only do males dominate the building trades professions, but this gender bias extends to the work-integrated employment training program in the trades (Oloke, 2020). Most work-integrated study or social enterprise education programs focus on construction, trades, and other male-dominated professions, which tend to engage mainly males (Oloke, 2020).

During the project, the Homebuilders built capacity in most of the six livelihood asset categories—human, financial, physical, social, natural, and cultural. The livelihood indicators in Table 3 compare the Homebuilders' statistics with Statistics Canada (2016) data for Garden Hill, Wasagamack, all Native reserves in Manitoba, and Manitobans. These statistics reveal the ongoing structural inequities faced by many Native reserves where people have diminished livelihood assets compared with others. The status of livelihood assets in the remote communities of Wasagamack and Garden Hill is relatively worse off compared with other non-Natives in Manitoba and Canada (Statistics Canada, 2016). Before training, these Homebuilders, on average, fared worse than the average person in the community on education, housing, income, and employment. Table 3 showed that, before training, 82% of the Homebuilders stayed in unsuitable housing, which is 1.5 times higher than the average persons in the Wasagamack (53%). Most of these youth were impoverished and considered at-risk youth prior to training. After training, the Homebuilders fared slightly better in employment,

income, and graduation rates from postsecondary compared with their community. However, these Homebuilders remain underemployed and in poverty during COVID-19.

Table 3: Livelihood situations in First Nation and non-First Nation communities in Manitoba

Categories	Sustainable livelihood indicators	Home-builders before training[1]	Home-builders after training[1]	WFN[2]	GHFN[2]	Manitoba First Nations [2]	Manitoba non- First Nations[2]
Housing situation	Not suitable	82%	76%	53% (13X↑)	55% (14X↑)	37% (9X↑)	4%
	More than one person per room	53%	71%	46% (46X↑)	43% (43X↑)	26% (26X↑)	1%
	Need major repairs	80%	75%	82% (9X↑)	62% (7X↑)	51% (6X↑)	9%
Income status	Median employment/ training income	$4,446	$16,440	$11,499 (3X↓)	$10,693 (3X↓)	$13,909 (3X↓)	$35,488
Education attainment	Secondary school graduation rate	7%	18%	15% (2X↓)	18% (2X↓)	18% (2X↓)	30%
	Post-secondary school certificate/ diploma	2%	84%	11% (4X↓)	12% (4X↓)	19% (2X↓)	44%
Employment status	Employment rate	8%	29%	20%	28%	33%	61%

Sources: [1]Homebuilders' Longitudinal survey (n = 45); [2]Statistics Canada for Wasagamack First Nation (WFN) and Garden Hill First Nation over 18 population (2016).

HUMAN ASSETS AS IMPROVED POSTSECONDARY EDUCATION ATTAINMENT

Human assets grew significantly by advancing education levels with culturally appropriate trades education designed to meet a community need with local resources. An applied Homebuilder curriculum was created to teach forestry, sawmilling, and house construction for building homes (Mino Bimaadiziwin Partnership, 2020). The project-based homebuilding curriculum evolved with the project, bringing together many certificate programs to provide ladders for Homebuilders to have many accomplishments. Homebuilder students learned home design, repair, forest management, logging, sawmilling, house construction, and workplace safety. The project was laddered with many nationally and internationally recognized course certificates (e.g., Red Cross Wilderness First Aid, Home repair, National Lumber Grading Certificate) to immediately increase their employability. This curriculum is published and provided for use to other Native reserves, including York Factory and Roseau River (Mino Bimaadiziwin Partnership, 2019b).

The educational success rate for the MBHB education project was very high. Eighty four percent of the 45 Homebuilders graduated with one or both of the two college certificates of the Homebuilder

project. A third (31%) of interns earned both the Homebuilder and the Forestry certificates (24-month project), with another 22 percent getting the nine-month forestry education certificate only and 31 percent receiving a 15-month Homebuilder college certificate. Few (7 of 45) people explored the project by taking the more general courses, such as the workplace health and safety and job readiness courses but did not continue to get a college certificate. Many Homebuilders graduated with college-level certificates, despite not having a secondary school diploma.

These high completion rates from this community education project contrast with only a few percent of people from these remote communities being successful in big urban educational institutions. Community-based education was considered successful, compared with limited success when training outside the community (Kopp et al., 2021; Gaudet, 2021; Michnik et al., 2021). The community-based Homebuilder education project increased the Homebuilders' postsecondary education rate from two percent at the beginning to 84 percent at the end of the project.

The graduation rate (84%) among the Homebuilders surveyed (n = 45) is almost the same as the overall graduation rate from the MBHB project (where N = 70) of 85 percent. Therefore, our sample was fairly representative of the entire Homebuilder student group. However, our survey sample had a higher representation of students who successfully completed both parts of the Homebuilder project, forestry and homebuilding (31% versus 20%), and fewer people who only received their forestry certificate (22% versus 39%).

The project provided many educational ladders. All Homebuilders (n = 70) obtained at least one certificate from the project. Every participant received workplace health and safety certificates and other certificates, such as the small motor 40-hour course. Also, eight of the 45 Homebuilders surveyed (18%) decided to finish their secondary school education degree through adult education after starting the project. This increased the high school graduation rate from 7 percent to 18 percent among the Homebuilders surveyed (n = 45).

Seventy-six percent of the Homebuilders thought contributing to their community was an important aspect of this project. One Homebuilder talked about how this postsecondary education project connected learning with their environment and community: "I am happy this program is happening in our community. I have been to the college in Winnipeg, and I don't feel connected with the environment and learning. I am happy to recommend this program to other youth in the community because this program has taught me to face my fears."

The Homebuilder project was student-centred and instilled skills and work ethics for personal and professional success. The youth were coached to create short-term and long-term goals and develop foundational skills, including teachings to write a resume, prepare for job interviews, conduct job searches, numeracy, computer use, and funding proposal development. In a youth dragon's den, two Homebuilders won $550,000 to execute their proposed project for the renovations and repairs to rescue the old George Knott school building from demolition (see Figure 2b).

Interns reported learning useful work skills: "This Homebuilder's program is developing good workers from youth." Two Homebuilders and the community instructor from Garden Hill First Nation shared the project's impact at a conference, advising other First Nations to adopt similar programs: "The program changed my perspective about education with a good learning experience and op-

portunities to achieve as many certificates as possible … We need more builders in our communities, and this program is helping to develop good workers from youth."

FINANCIAL ASSETS

Financial assets assessed were Homebuilders' income and ability to pay their bills, as well as the sufficiency of project funding. The training project improved Homebuilders' income significantly to above average for the community. Homebuilders without childcare costs typically received $1,370/month ($1,000 training and $370 welfare), while those with children received slightly more. The income of Homebuilders, on average, quadrupled due to the training project.

Homebuilders' satisfaction with their ability to pay bills and housing significantly changed after training. Table 4 shows the statistically significant improvement in Homebuilders' satisfaction with their ability to pay for housing ($\chi^2 = 6.37$; $p < 0.05$) and bills ($\chi^2 = 5.44$; $p < 0.05$). Initially, 13 percent of the Homebuilders were satisfied with their ability to pay for housing bills, which increased to 20 percent after the training. Also, Homebuilders' satisfaction with their ability to pay all their bills increased from 4 percent to 13 percent after the training during COVID-19. A participant described how the income support from the project improved his wellbeing during the training: "Earning income from the Homebuilders program helped me to be mentally and emotionally stable. I do not have to stress myself thinking about how to cover my bills bi-weekly. I see myself making progress and getting a good job with my certificates to keep my income stable after training."

All 70 students and six train-the-trainers from Island Lake received a $1,000/month training allowance for the Homebuilder project and retained their social welfare status without deductions for the training allowance. Typically, social welfare recipients lose their welfare benefits for their entire family when they take on work, including their families' social housing, subsidized heat and power, and their social assistance income. Keeping their welfare benefits on top of a training stipend was critical for interns to sign up and commit to the program, allowing people to engage in education without losing these necessary benefits.

Homebuilders have many financial responsibilities. All have to contribute towards the rent and hydro bills to help their extended family make ends meet. The female participants with children paid for babysitters to be able to attend classes. Many young men paid child support. One of the Homebuilders described how as a very young grandparent at 31 years of age, his financial responsibilities extended to his wife, children, grandchildren, and siblings:

> I am 31 years, and I am a grandfather already. I got married and had a daughter at 15 years [of age]. My daughter did the same but gave birth at 16. Having my daughter, her baby and my siblings stay with me has increased my household expenses. Most of my siblings do not have full-time jobs. So, I joined the program to improve my income level.

During the Homebuilder project, the Mino Bimaadiziwin partnership tried to develop housing social enterprises in both communities to retain wealth in the community by using local wood for building houses and employing local labour. However, these social enterprises quickly failed, even after obtaining small start-up grants, due to the Indian Act's Chief and Council interference, COVID-19, and the severe poverty of the community, causing people to fight over limited resources.

In the post-training survey, most (71%) Homebuilders reported a lack of job opportunities under COVID-19 lockdown conditions. Garden Hill rehired the Homebuilders to finish their house in August 2020 for three months before a second lockdown occurred in November:

> I got a job with six other people from the Employment and Training and Band as Carpenter. However, I cannot work due to the COVID-19 lockdown. Also, I cannot use my carpentry skills from the housing project due to COVID-19. The lockdown had all non-frontline jobs stopped, including construction and homebuilding work curtailed.

Another Homebuilder explained how the lockdown policies affected their household income during COVID-19:

> I do not have any paid employment or even assistance to get a job during COVID-19. Living on welfare is not enough, and I need support to get a job. I have been looking for work or training programs since COVID-19 started now.

Paying the bills was difficult as already high food prices in the monopoly store increased with COVID-19 (Statistics Canada, 2020). No household of the Homebuilders was food secure (n = 45), with 60 percent experiencing severe food insecurity and 40 percent moderate food insecurity. This rate is 14 times worse than the food insecurity rate for Canadians of one in seven during the same period (Statistics Canada, 2020). Despite a dire need, Homebuilders did not access COVID-19 emergency benefits for fear of losing welfare benefits. Clearly, the threat of being cut off from welfare restricted people's livelihoods and made households food insecure.

As well as the students' finances, the MBHB partnership had to finance the project costs, including the building, travel, materials, and curriculum development. Financing this education project was difficult, with remote communities stretched to the limit with little funding or building materials to assist. Four different proposals from different funding bodies had to be written to cover the different aspects of the project. Each grant proposal had a limited focus, with one paying student training allowances, another, only educational programming, a third, housing materials, and a fourth, management. Limited funding meant the MBHB project shared a full-time teacher between the two communities when several were needed. Also, the project had to use old equipment, which frequently broke down and required replacement parts to be flown into the communities. This underfunding was, in part, due to no support from the province, which, after many meetings, promises, and a few proposals, reneged on funding. Despite the province having the primary role in training, apprenticeship, and postsecondary education, support or funding was not forthcoming.

PHYSICAL ASSETS AS THE CAPACITY TO UPGRADE THE HOUSING SITUATION

In reserve communities, a house is a rare commodity. One house is often shared by parents with their grown children and their spouses and children. One household reported having four families sharing a three-bedroom house. Teaching both forestry and construction programs taught the youth to build homes with local materials.

Most Homebuilders (80%) joined the Homebuilder education project to learn how to repair and build their own homes. Many Homebuilders (75%) reported applying what they learned to repair their homes and help their community, with one youth reporting: "I am able to do major repairs in

my house like fixing dry walls, building stairs for my porch, and help the community build a stage and teepees for gatherings." Another Homebuilder talked about being able to design and build his home: "The Homebuilder project taught me about safety in my environment. And how to build a culturally appropriate house I can live in."

Homebuilders were engaged in designing and building energy-efficient homes with the lumber they felled, sawed, and graded. Many materials still needed to be shipped but could not be due to a short winter road season resulting in a lack of building materials. As Wasagamack and Garden Hill communities are roadless, when the building materials missed the short winter road season and the remaining burned, the project had to be extended for another year. However, having wood for the floors, walls, and roof allowed for some activities and the homes' exteriors to be completed before lockdown ended the in-class part of the project.

Despite learning to build homes, Homebuilders live in poor, overcrowded housing. Initially, roughly half of the Homebuilders (53%) lived with their parents in overcrowded conditions. The remaining (47%) lived independent of their parents in poor housing or sheds needing major repair. After training, those living with their parents increased to 71 percent, a statistically significant change ($\chi^2 = 5.82$; $p < 0.05$) (see Table 4). A youth complained about overcrowding in his family's home during COVID-19, causing exhaustion and insomnia, as he had to sleep in shifts: "My wife, kids, and I are staying with my parents and other siblings in a two-bedroom [home] … I am having insomnia as we take turns to sleep at night. And most times, I don't get to sleep until 4 am."

Table 4: Comparing the sustainable livelihood assets status of Homebuilders during and after the Homebuilder project

Sustainable livelihood assets	Indicators	Groups	Pre-training (%)	Post-training (%)	McNemar test	
					$\chi2$	*p*-value
Physical	Housing situation	Living with parents	53	71	5.82	0.044*
		Living independent of parents	47	29		
Financial	Household income	Satisfied	13	9	0.40	0.527
		Dissatisfied	87	91		
	Ability to pay for housing	Satisfied	13	38	6.37	0.012*
		Dissatisfied	87	62		
	Ability to pay all bills	Satisfied	4	20	5.44	0.019*
		Dissatisfied	96	80		
Social	Family support	Satisfied	31	71	16.20	0.000*
		Dissatisfied	69	29		
	Relationship with neighbours	Satisfied	13	29	4.45	0.035*
		Dissatisfied	87	71		
Natural	Getting a survival job	Satisfied	36	22	2.25	0.134
		Dissatisfied	64	78		

Another Homebuilder talked about how overcrowded homes during lockdown created stress: "We have close to ten persons staying in four bedrooms. But we ensure no visitors." A Homebuilder complained about his house being structurally unsafe: "The last major repair of my house was 12 years ago. The walls are thin, and the floors are falling apart. During COVID-19, when we have to stay at home, I am worried about my family's safety."

SOCIAL ASSETS AS IMPROVED FAMILY AND NEIGHBOURHOOD RELATIONSHIP

The support, teachings, and fellowship of the Homebuilder education created a sense of belonging and mutual respect. Prior to the Homebuilders' project, students reported feeling isolated, with a lack of any youth programs after secondary school. A quarter (25%) of students joined the Homebuilder project to meet new people. The Homebuilder education project organized sporting activities, like volleyball and hockey, and held social gatherings, including feasts. According to one participant, the project enhanced his social life: "The program improved my social life, and I opened up myself to new things."

Table 4 shows the large increase in Homebuilder's satisfaction with the level of support from family ($\chi^2 = 16.70$; $p < 0.05$) and their neighbours ($\chi^2 = 4.45$; $p < 0.05$) is statistically significant. Initially, only 31 percent and 13 percent of the Homebuilders were satisfied with their relations with family and neighbours, respectively. After training, 71 percent and 29 percent of the Homebuilders were more satisfied with their relations with family and neighbours, respectively. Two Homebuilders talked about how the project improved their self-image and cultural pride and built positive relationships.

> This program enabled us to help one another in a friendly environment, doing good to each other and building great relationships with co-workers. Most of all, I am having fun relating with my friends and brothers in the program.
>
> I have been able to talk to people I had never greeted before in this community since the program started. It built my confidence in our ability to work together as youth and contribute to our community's development. I love that we listen to each [other and] watch out for each other during and after work. Now, I have hope that my dream of Wasagamack becoming Was Vegas, like Las Vegas, might come true.

The three-week job-readiness training taught skills for work behaviours, teamwork, and relationship building. Also, the Homebuilder instructors discussed the need for safe and healthy work and learning environments, with anti-harassment, anti-violence, and anti-drug/alcohol policies to ensure workplace safety. These programs tried to be trauma aware and provide support, considering the high suicide rates for Native youth, particularly in remote locations, are very high. Some youth felt that the education gave the youth a reason to live, preventing suicides and bullying, with one stating: "This program is making lives better. Even saving lives." Anishinini Elders regularly talked with them, and the employment and training coordinators supported them.

NATURAL ASSETS AS IMPROVED ACCESS TO FORESTRY RESOURCES AND THE LAND

The MBHB project improved youth Homebuilders' access to natural assets in their communities. Homebuilders logged local forests for housing (see Figure 2b). The Homebuilders' project selec-

tively logged in winter in Anishinini ancestral lands beyond their reserve boundaries to protect their sacred environment. These pristine boreal old-growth forests in Island Lake are sacred to the Anishininiwuk. The spruce-pine-fir forests provide the finest quality of wood for housing and furniture. The Homebuilders' forestry plan reclaimed their resource rights in their ancestral lands, with Manitoba Sustainable Development waiving the "stumpage dues for timber harvested, as this timber for housing is for community benefits" (Mino Bimaadiziwin Partnership, 2019a). The forestry plan is sustainable at less than one percent of the annual allowable cut and prevents other big forestry companies from claiming forestry rights. Normally, the Crown claims all resources throughout Indigenous territories in Canada under the Indian Act (Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada [TRC], 2015; Ballard, 2012; LaDuke, 2002), but not this time.

The Homebuilder program delivered a sustainable forestry management course, sawmilling course, and grading course. Logging was undertaken considering conservation but also safety. A Homebuilder spoke about how the project impacted his understanding of environmental safety: "The Homebuilder program taught me about safety in my environment." Table 4 shows that the proportion of Homebuilders satisfied with getting a survival job decreased post-program under COVID-19, but not statistically significantly ($\chi^2 = 2.25$; $p > 0.05$). Seventy-eight percent of the Homebuilders could not get survival jobs due to being housebound under community-imposed lockdown. Under home lockdown, their band rules did not allow logging for firewood, building docks, fishing, doing carpentry, hunting, or building homes. One Homebuilder talked about his inability to camp, fish, or hunt after the project:

> There is no gathering during COVID-19 such as youth gatherings and elders gathering. I cannot even go hunting or fishing. But some people go hunting and fishing for the community. So, when they go hunting or trapping or fishing, they share anything they are able to catch from the land, which might not be enough to share.

CULTURAL ASSETS AS INDIGENOUS KNOWLEDGE TRANSFER

Garden Hill and Wasagamack communities incorporated local Indigenous knowledge and their Anishininimowin into the Homebuilder project. The Homebuilders' project was community-led, with six Indigenous instructors fluent in the Anishininimowin language hired to deliver certificate courses in sawmilling, chainsaw safety, and homebuilding. Students were able to work and learn in their mother tongue, *Anishininimowin,* which facilitated Anishinini teachings, cultural continuity, and the ability to achieve educational goals (Gillies & Battiste, 2013; McCarty & Lee, 2014; Mmari, Blum, & Teufel-Shone, 2010).

A culturally appropriate design for housing resulted from the design workshops, where Elders and youth shared knowledge on homebuilding, history, and cultural values (Mino Bimaadiziwin Partnership, 2019b). Additionally, Homebuilders visited historic sites in the communities, treaty ceremonies, and youth gatherings. In Wasagamack, an Anishinini Elder taught the Homebuilders how to design and build teepees through cultural and spiritual teachings.

COMMUNITY-LEVEL IMPACTS OF THE MINO BIMAADIZIWIN HOMEBUILDER PROJECT

The program improved community wellbeing by building culturally appropriate housing, employing

local tradespeople as teachers, and developing land-based education that met the needs of the community (see Figure 2b). The Homebuilder program employed Native instructors. Many of these local instructors taught in Anishininimowin and provided cultural teachings. The Homebuilders also had a social component that engaged with the community, having a volleyball, basketball, and floor hockey team, as well as team-building sessions during class. The Homebuilder program endeavoured to work with educators and Elders to ensure this program was a source of community healing, governance (social and economic renewal), cultural development, and self-determination (RCAP, 1996). Homebuilders participated in land-based education, learning about their home environment, particularly in the forestry aspect of the course.

Houses were built in the community, providing a community process to address the housing crisis. Two community-based housing design sessions engaged the Homebuilder students, architects from the University of Manitoba, and community members. Together the workshops and design process identified a culturally appropriate design to maximize the use of local wood and labour resources. The design sessions resulted in *Anishininiwuk*-inspired housing blueprints for both log and timber-framed houses. The design process provided opportunities for cultural and learning exchanges. All houses in Wasagamack shifted as a result of this project to include airtight wood stoves. Benefits were noted at the community level from the logging and sawing of local wood, which was used to build the timber-framed and log houses. In the end, due to building material shortages, the Homebuilder project built three, rather than four, culturally appropriate houses in the two Island Lake communities based on the housing designs developed by the two communities through workshops.

DISCUSSION

The Mino Bimaadiziwin Homebuilder project made a holistic impact on sustainable livelihoods at the community and individual levels. In multiple ways, individuals and the communities benefited from this education project, according to the SLA. Benefits were noted at the community level, with three houses designed and built with local wood. The Homebuilder curriculum was developed and is freely available to give a head-start to any Indigenous homebuilding or forestry program. The project delivered housing education and built houses, despite the COVID-19 outbreak, under-funding, and climate change impacts. This evaluation study demonstrated that this approach is replicable if a community-led postsecondary education project can succeed in two communities as remote as Island Lake (Thompson et al., 2017).

At the individual student level, positive, statistically significant changes to increase the Homebuilders' sustainable livelihoods occurred. The most notable change was in satisfaction with social relations, which were statistically significant for both family and neighbourhood relations. The positive change in participants' social relations suggests that community-based postsecondary education programs can mend relationships, impact students' psycho-social wellbeing (LaRocque, 1994), and increase the ability to establish trusting relationships (Thibodeau & Peigan, 2007; Goodman, Speers, Mcleroy, Fawcett, Kegler, Parker, Smith, Sterling, & Wallerstein, 1998). And while the project improved sustainable livelihoods, the livelihoods of Homebuilders are far below that of settlers. The Homebuilders still experienced deprivation, which reflected the larger reality and poverty of these remote communities during COVID-19. The households of the Homebuilders were found to have 100 percent food insecurity during COVID-19. A Homebuilder reported in the post-

survey having to take turns sleeping in overcrowded, unhealthy housing. Clearly, more needs to be done to deal with the causes of poverty on remote Indigenous reserves in Canada.

The big issues of systemic racism and the Indian Act need to be confronted for Indigenous-led community-based housing education to receive sufficient funding and support. This project was not sustainable due to precarious, one-time research funding that required an inordinate number of proposals and hoops to jump through. Without Indigenous ongoing program funding for community-led education and financing of housing, these one-time projects can only show the possibilities. No clear funded pathway resulted, as the funding programs used have disappeared.

Indigenous-led housing postsecondary education projects in communities are without sustainable funding. To get funding, we had to beg for money from a system based on colonial rule, which was exhausting, demeaning, counterproductive, and a source of burnout. For example, the numerous meetings with Manitoba Education and Trades (MET) and Anishininiwuk required many funding proposal submissions. This was traumatizing to experience the dishonesty of systemic racism. After our partnership successfully jumped through every hoop MET imposed, MET reneged on its verbal funding promises, abdicating its responsibility for trades training and apprenticeship in a game of politics to fund its own Manitoba Construction Sector Council (Prentice, 2021). These colonial politics do not result in Indigenous-led postsecondary programs. And yet alternatives to colonial housing education and home construction are needed. And they require funding. At present, despite the mandate of universities and colleges to work with Indigenous communities, most remote communities lack either in-person or remote postsecondary education centres. Although public universities and colleges subsidize education in settler communities to keep costs typically around $5,000 per year for domestic students, the same applied cost-recovery of $20,000 to $25,000 per student per year for postsecondary on-reserve programming. This two-tiered system shows that the public education system serves settlers but not Indigenous communities.

Earlier, this article identified the racist Indian Act and colonial policies as the crux of the housing problem, which negatively impacted this project. By controlling the land, resources, charitable organizations, education, regulations for grading lumber, and legal authority, the systems all conspire against housing and education on reserve. Even tiny community-led projects, such as the MBHB, are limited by these colonial barriers. The Indian Act barriers to financing on-reserve housing meant many housing materials and equipment were not affordable or had regulatory barriers. The Colonial Crown still controls natural resources on Crown land, requiring forestry permits. As well, the Standard Grading Rules for Canadian Lumber rules for grading lumber required an exceptional workaround to grade Anishinini lumber by a multinational industrial forestry stamp, despite our students being certified lumber graders. Many colonial barriers were encountered that limit Indigenous community-led education projects being put in place, including systemic racism, lack of financing, poverty, and inappropriate regulation.

CONCLUSION

This community-led education project was effective in holistically building sustainable livelihoods at the individual and community levels. Most Homebuilders graduated with college-level certificates (human assets), experienced better ability to pay for bills (financial assets), applied their upgraded

homebuilding skills (physical assets), mended relationships with family and neighbours (social assets), upgraded skills to access resources (natural assets), and expanded Anishiniwuk knowledge (cultural assets) (Chambers & Conway, 1992; Smyth & Vanclay, 2017). At the community level, the project resulted in three houses, employment, and culturally appropriate college education.

The Homebuilder case study documents a model to build back better after COVID-19, relevant to achieving *Mino Bimaadiziwin* in Indigenous and all communities. Students explained how this project: "saves lives," mended families, built homes, and created resilience to COVID-19 impacts. Thus, a community-led education project improves multiple aspects of lives by investing in youth through education and income support. These outcomes occurred despite underfunding, climate change impacts, and COVID-19 lockdown, showing the power of community-led postsecondary education projects to build culturally appropriate housing by and for Indigenous People. However, project funding dictated under colonial funding rules can only show a path but not solve the housing crisis.

To build capacity, homebuilding and education can be done by and for Indigenous People if taught through community house-building projects (AFN, 2020a). Articles 21 and 23 of the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous People (UNDRIP) assert the importance of Indigenous People determining the strategies for improving their wellbeing. Let Indigenous-led postsecondary education implement those strategies. Applied homebuilding education offers a COVID-19 recovery strategy if funded adequately (Walker, Kannan, Bhawra, Foulds, & Katapally, 2021), bringing creative minds to design culturally appropriate homes that are resilient to climate change and net-zero. Investments in community-led Indigenous colleges or universities on reserves provide solid steps toward the good life by building capacity and housing. This will rebuild self-sustenance, cultural pride, and homes. For this to happen, Indigenous postsecondary education programs and housing need adequate financing, support, and delivery by Indigenous agencies to remove the barriers of systemic racism and colonialism.

Capacity building of the Indigenous labour force to meet the on-reserve housing crisis may be possible to start under the Indian Act with sufficient funding to circumvent this systemic barrier. However, to attain equitable human and housing rights, overturning the Indian Act keeping Indigenous People "wards of the state" is needed. This pilot project revealed to researchers how every aspect of Indigenous life on the reserve is impacted by the Indian Act. Indigenous communities face very limited financing for housing metered out by CMHC, barriers to trades education and apprenticeship, and Crown control of Indigenous land and resources despite the severe housing crisis. Recommendations are offered below to move Canada onto a reconciliatory, sustainable path for equitable housing and human rights.

RECOMMENDATIONS

1. This Homebuilder project should be revamped and funded through Indigenous-led colleges and universities to be an ongoing postsecondary program in Wasagamack, Garden Hill, and other interested Indigenous communities in Canada.
2. Funding for Indigenous-run universities and colleges are needed, including funding for adult education centres with computer facilities and support workers for distance and community learning.

3. Indigenous-run apprenticeship training is needed on reserve in both secondary schools and community colleges/universities, with a training allowance for Indigenous student internships in addition to social assistance in regionally depressed economic areas.
4. A shift in colonial government's regulation of forestry and lumber products to remove barriers to Indigenous People using their traditional territory for housing materials.
5. Dedicated funding for the Indigenous People to design and build hundreds of thousands of on-reserve houses is needed to resolve the housing budget in the next federal budget.
6. A clear plan is needed to abolish the Indian Act by 2030 to move towards equality of human and housing rights.

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Housing and Community Economic Development: The Case of Membertou

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ABSTRACT
The purpose of this article is to describe housing and community economic development in Membertou, a First Nation community located in Mi'kma'ki. First, I review how the federal government has not adequately intervened in housing for First Nations communities across Canada. I then present a case of my home community of Membertou and the initiatives that are in place to help solve the local housing crisis and generate community wealth at the same time. These initiatives include the generation of community-controlled businesses and changes to the land code, and new housing initiatives using own-source funding which also incorporate the use of locally owned and operated companies for housing construction and which emphasize training and skills development among band members. In this case study, I use data including community reports, media stories, and in-depth interviews.

RÉSUMÉ
Cet article a pour objet de décrire la situation du logement et le développement économique communautaire dans Membertou, une communauté des Premières Nations située en Mi'kma'ki. Dans un premier temps, j'examine l'inaction du gouvernement fédéral en matière de logement dans les communautés des Premières Nations au Canada. Je présente par la suite le cas de ma communauté d'origine Membertou, ainsi que les initiatives mises en œuvre afin de pallier la crise du logement et tout à la fois générer la richesse au sein de la communauté. Ces initiatives incluent la création d'entreprises contrôlées par la communauté et les changements apportés au code foncier, ainsi que des projets de logements neufs financés à partir de revenus autonomes et qui font appel à des entreprises de construction détenues et exploitées localement tout en mettent l'accent sur la formation et le développement des compétences des membres de la bande. Cette étude de cas repose sur des données extraites de rapports communautaires, de reportages médiatiques et d'entrevues en profondeur.

Keywords / Mots clés : housing, Membertou, Mi'kma'ki, community economic development, land code / logement, Membertou, Mi'kma'ki, développement économique communautaire, code foncier

INTRODUCTION

A lack of adequate, affordable housing has been a serious issue in First Nations communities since their members were forced to move to reserves created by the federal government. Reserves were created by the Crown, and section 18 (1) of the Indian Act states "Subject to this Act, reserves are held by Her Majesty for the use and benefit of the respective bands for which they were set apart, and subject to this Act and to the terms of any treaty or surrender, the Governor in Council may determine whether any purpose for which lands in a reserve are used or are to be used is for the use and benefit of the band" (Indian Act, 1985). Reserves were created differently depending on the part of the country in which they were located. In the Atlantic region, reserves were not created by treaties. The British believed that Indigenous Peoples in this area were headed for extinction and did not feel it was necessary to establish any treaty negotiations with the Mi'kmaq and Maliseet who occupied the Atlantic lands (National Aboriginal Lands Managers Association, 2017a).

The purpose of this article is to describe housing and community economic development in a First Nation community located in Mi'kma'ki. After reviewing various ways the federal government has failed to adequately intervene in housing and discussing why a housing crisis still exists across Canada on reserve, I will present the case of my home community of Membertou, Nova Scotia, and the initiatives that are taking place there to help solve the housing crisis and generate community wealth at the same time. These include the development of community-owned businesses and changes to the land code, and new housing initiatives that also incorporate locally owned and operated companies for housing construction and emphasize training and skills development among band members.

This article's focus on housing in Mi'kmak'ki extends the limited academic literature on Indigenous housing on reserve. Second, this paper contributes to practice, written to provide practitioners and policymakers with an understanding of housing history and constraints, and opportunities as experienced in a First Nations community to achieve affordable housing for all. Third, this case study of an Indigenous development corporation's work of generating and capturing local wealth adds to community economic development literature.

BACKGROUND AND LITERATURE

The Indian Act and housing on reserve

Passed by the Canadian government in 1876, the Indian Act combined all the legislation related to Indigenous Peoples in one Act. The land on which Indigenous Peoples were forced to reside would be protected but administered by the Crown. The government planned to protect First Nations until assimilation was complete, supported with oppressive and harmful policies and practices imposed through colonial rule. Indian agents were hired to work in communities with the goal of assimilating and civilizing the "Indian." In addition to regulating land, the Indian Act placed extensive restrictions on membership, elections, estates, and education. Traditional governance in First Nations communities was not recognized; instead, the Indian Act created and defined the roles and responsibilities of band councils with strict oversight and supervision by the federal government and their local representatives (McMillan, 2018).

The severe restrictions of the Indian Act played a key role in the difference between on- and off-reserve housing since the federal government had control over all aspects of reserves. Leaders and members had no autonomous decision-making power over building or community finances, which denied First Nations the opportunity to make decisions about how to use funds to support their housing (Olsen, 2016). Development was also affected because parcels of reserve land could not be used as collateral as a means to access financing (Standing Senate Committee on Aboriginal Peoples, 2015). Working on behalf of the Crown, Indian agents made all the decisions and ensured that reserves were following the rules in the Act. With no deliberate housing focus in this legislation, members of First Nations communities were required to use mostly their own limited resources to build housing for themselves and their families, while Indian agents allocated some reserve funds to pay for the rudimentary building supplies for reserve members most in need (Olsen, 2016). This replaced the former practice of community members building homes that reflected climate and lifestyle. A loss of knowledge and skills, such as carpentry to build structures other than shack-type housing, followed, along with lost opportunities to learn new housing practices. Members were left with overcrowded homes with no ability to cook or to keep family members warm (Olsen, 2016).

Meanwhile, the federal government passed its first national housing policy in 1935, called the Dominion Housing Act (Bacher, 1993). The new policy would make it easier and more attainable to get a mortgage for a home since the federal government could provide mortgage insurance (Hulchanski, 1986). In 1938, a second and more refined national housing legislation was passed, called the National Housing Act, and this gave access to renovation loans, made housing more affordable, and made improvements to building standards. These programs did not apply to people who lived on reserve, however. The federal government continued its neglectful approach to reserve housing as it had done since the nineteenth century, by using the band's limited welfare and capital funds to provide housing for those most in need of assistance and leaving other band members to mostly fend for themselves with some limited assistance to purchase building materials (Olsen, 2016).

In Nova Scotia, another important policy that negatively impacted housing was centralization. Between 1942 and 1949, for the sake of assimilation and cost efficiencies, the federal government forcefully moved Mi'kmaw people in Nova Scotia to Eskasoni and Shubenacadie as a failed plan to centralize First Nations reserves (Patterson, 2009; McMillan, 2018). Over 2,100 Indigenous Peoples were relocated during this period. Indian agents burned First Nation homes to prevent people from returning to their communities.

This forced relocation "affect[ed] the life of the Mi'kmaq in Nova Scotia more than any other post-Confederation event, and its social, economic, and political effects are still felt today" (National Inquiry into Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls [MMIWG], 2019, p. 277). Without adequate funds allocated to new housing on these two rapidly growing reserves, people were forced to live together, which led to overcrowding and the health and other issues that come with it. Homes were substandard and had no insulation despite the Maritime climate in which they were located (MMIWG, 2019).

After repeated requests to Indian agents to address housing problems on reserve in the 1940s, the federal government introduced major (but still inadequate) programs in the following decade. I high-

light the major ones. For example, in 1958, the federal government introduced the Welfare Housing Program, but limited funding and resources resulted in poor quality housing that was inappropriately designed (Olsen, 2016).

In 1966, the federal government implemented the On-Reserve Housing Subsidy Program (Olsen, 2016), providing subsidies, new building standards, and funding. The program was meant to bring more equality between those who lived on reserve and those who did not. However, the responsibility of housing administration was downloaded to band councils who did not have the experience or expertise to take on this role, and so did not involve a full partnership. Given systemic barriers and decades of colonial rule, many communities did not have the capacity to take on this responsibility or the financial resources to address shortfalls (Devine, 2004). First Nations leadership did not have the resources to create housing management programs and policies, and funds provided were still inadequate to meet the needs of the communities.

In 1996, the On-Reserve Housing Program was established, and remains in place in 2022 (Durbin, 2009; Standing Senate Committee on Aboriginal Peoples, 2015), although not all First Nation communities opted into the program and so remained under the earlier subsidy program (Standing Senate Committee on Aboriginal Peoples, 2015). Under this program, which currently falls under Indigenous Services Canada (ISC), reserves receive funds from the federal government to allocate to different housing costs, from new construction to repair/maintenance of existing stock. Funds can also be used for insurance, debt servicing, management, and planning (Standing Senate Committee on Aboriginal Peoples, 2015). Funding is not comprehensive, however, and "First Nations communities and their residents are also expected to secure funding from other sources for their housing needs, including shelter charges and private-sector loans" (Indigenous Services Canada, 2018, para. 3). Funds to assist with rental payments are also available through this department in the form of income assistance to eligible recipients (Indigenous Services Canada, 2018; Standing Senate Committee on Aboriginal Peoples, 2015).

Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation (CMHC) also provides some funds for housing on reserve. For example, the On-Reserve Non-Profit Housing Program, which began in the 1970s (Devine, 2004), contributes funds for the construction and renovation of affordable rental (social) housing, a Residential Rehabilitation Assistance Program supports building repairs, and a Home Adaptations for Seniors Program provides funding to facilitate aging in place (Durbin, 2009; Standing Senate Committee on Aboriginal Peoples, 2015).

Other more recent significant investments have faltered or also have not been established by and for Indigenous Peoples (Olsen, Merkel, & Black, 2021). The Kelowna Accord was an agreement developed in 2005 between the Government of Canada, 600 bands, and the provinces and territories. The goal was to raise the standard of living for Aboriginal Peoples by providing more services and funding for housing, health, education, and other supports. The government committed $5.1 billion, with about 30 percent of this designated for housing (Durbin, 2009). However, just a few months later, the newly elected Prime Minister Stephen Harper abandoned the agreement. The Kelowna Accord Implementation Act, introduced by Paul Martin as a private member's bill, was passed in the House of Commons but since private bills cannot make the government spend money, there was no change (Durbin, 2009).

The First Nations Market Housing Fund (FNMHF) was created in 2007 to provide market-based housing opportunities to on-reserve members. The FNMHF is overseen by trustees, while CMHC manages its funds (First Nations Market Housing Fund, 2018a). The fund allows on-reserve members to secure bank mortgages for housing. This is needed as the Indian Act prevents on-reserve house ownership.

Individual band policy determines home ownership options for its members, including the allocation of certificates of possession or having the housing remain band owned. The First Nation must meet certain eligibility criteria to be able to offer this program: financial management, good governance, community commitment, and demand for market-based housing (First Nations Market Housing Fund, 2018b). Once approved by the Fund, the First Nation will make arrangements with specific lenders to allow members to apply for a loan. If approved, the First Nation will be the guarantor. The housing being built under this program is not without controversy. Some First Nations are not in a position to meet the program's criteria. A 2012 study reported that only 10–20 percent of First Nations were ready with the proper governance structure to provide market-based housing to members (Government of Canada, 2012). An additional 30–40 percent were anticipated to be ready in the next three to five years (Government of Canada, 2012). In addition, the housing is not affordable to all members. Only a small number of people living on reserve have the income and credit to build their own home, due to the limited economic opportunities on reserve.

Most recently, Canada's National Housing Strategy (NHS), announced in 2017, provides a decade-long plan, along with tens of millions of dollars, and gives priority to vulnerable groups including Indigenous Peoples. The NHS respects the government's "commitment to nation-to-nation, Inuit-to-Crown, government-to-government relationship with Indigenous peoples" (Government of Canada, 2017, p. 4). Having said this, the NHS has been sharply criticized for not including a by-Indigenous, for-Indigenous housing strategy for those who do not live on reserve (Indigenous Housing Caucus Working Group, 2018), and for designing funding programs without adequate input and designated streams for Indigenous communities (Olsen, Merkel, & Black, 2021).

Table 1: Timeline

1876	Indian Act created
1942–1949	Forced and failed centralization of Mi'kmaw people in Nova Scotia
1958	On-reserve Welfare Housing Program introduced
1966	On-reserve Housing Subsidy Program introduced
1970s	On-reserve Non-profit Housing Program introduced
1996	On-Reserve Housing Program introduced
2005	Kelowna Accord developed (but not pursued)
2007	First Nations Market Housing Fund established
2017	National Housing Strategy announced

Overall, research on on-reserve housing repeatedly finds it to be of poor quality and insufficient (Assembly of First Nations, 2012; Standing Senate Committee on Aboriginal Peoples, 2015; Statistics Canada, 2017; Thompson, Bonnycastle, & Hill, 2020). The Assembly of First Nations' (AFN's) National First Nations Housing Strategy estimates a backlog of 130,000 units by 2031 (Assembly of First Nations, 2012). The AFN argues that adequate housing is a human right and should be prioritized nationally, and that government-funded programs have not been meeting the needs of First Nations people. In addition, many communities are finding ways to provide housing with own source revenue but are not able to provide for all those requiring a safe, adequate, affordable home (Assembly of First Nations, 2012). In Atlantic Canada, 1,449 homes are required to address overcrowding, 1,765 are needed to accommodate population growth, 521 are needed due to mold and radon contamination, 759 need to be replaced due to aging, and 53 condemned units require replacement (MacKinnon, DiCicco, & Asyyed, 2016). Poor housing conditions have also received national attention in light of COVID-19; staying at home, physical distancing, self-isolating, and hand washing have been challenging in First Nation communities experiencing crowded conditions and lack of water (Thompson, Bonnycastle, & Hill, 2020).

RESEARCH METHODS

For this research, I use a case study design focused on my community of Membertou. I draw upon technical reports of housing programs, community documents produced by Membertou on topics including local governance and business development, media stories, and local one-on-one interviews with 10 members of leadership and staff working at Membertou businesses. These interviews were conducted for my major research paper required for my Master of Business Administration in Community Economic Development at Cape Breton University. Approval from the research ethics board was obtained, and permission to do this research was also obtained from chief and council. I also bring my own significant knowledge of housing to this case study, given that I have worked as the Tenant Relations Officer in Membertou and am now the Lands Director.

This research presents the case of housing in one community in Membertou, and is not meant to offer "one size fits all" lessons (Standing Senate Committee on Aboriginal Peoples, 2015) or address housing options available to members off-reserve in Cape Breton Regional Municipality (Leviten-Reid, Matthew, & Mowbray, 2019; Leviten-Reid & Parker, 2018).

MEMBERTOU PROFILE

The Mi'kmaq have lived in the Atlantic provinces, parts of Québec, and northeastern Maine for thousands of years. They were the provinces' first peoples. Artifacts have been found in Debert, Nova Scotia, that date back over 10,000 years (Mi'kmaw Spirit, 2020). The traditional land of the Mi'kmaq is known as Mi'kma'ki and includes Nova Scotia, New Brunswick, Newfoundland and Labrador, Prince Edward Island, and parts of the Gaspé Peninsula (CBU, 2021). There are currently 13 First Nations in Nova Scotia, five of which are located on Cape Breton Island, which is known to the Mi'kmaq as Unama'ki—the land of the fog.

Named after Grand Chief Membertou (1510–1611), Membertou is surrounded by the city of Sydney, Nova Scotia. The community originated on the Kings Road reserve, located on the Sydney Harbour, but was forced to move to the current Membertou location in 1926 (Membertou, 2021). Membertou

is one of the five Mi'kmaq communities located in Unama'ki (Membertou, 2021). Surrounded by the CBRM, Membertou is considered an urban community (see figure one). During interviews, leadership noted the band membership is 1400, and 931 of the members reside within the community.

The Crown offered Membertou two parcels of reserve land before they were given the current Membertou Indian Reserve No. 28B, which is 100.9 acres: Caribou Marsh Indian Reserve No. 29 (219.3 hectares) and Sydney Indian Reserve No. 28A (or Lingan, 5.10 hectares). These two areas fall under the same Indian Act and Membertou Land Code, 2019 provisions. Membertou did not purchase this land. It was bought by the federal government and given to Membertou in hopes that the community would relocate to these locations from the original Kings Road Reserve. The community rejected these locations, and although those whom I interviewed did not know the reason for this decision, it is believed that the federal government did not take the two rejected sites back from Membertou because of the complexity of changing land from reserve to non-reserve land (MacDonald, 2019).

Figure 1: Map of Membertou

The five Unama'ki First Nations (Membertou, Eskasoni, Potlotek, Wagmatcook, and We'koqma'k) also own and govern Malagwatch, which is located 118 km from Membertou in Inverness County. This is a rural area of 661.3 hectares. Mi'kmaq community members from Unama'ki have cabins on the land in addition to some residences. This land is under the Indian Act.

CASE STUDY: TIME FOR CHANGE

Community economic development

A major step in housing development in Membertou is rooted in community economic development and changes in governance. In 1995, Membertou leadership made a decision that change was needed so the community could move forward and not depend solely on government funding; it was time to get finances in order and work towards self-sustainability by generating revenue.

Membertou opened its corporate division in 2000 and worked on business relationships. In 2002, Membertou became the first Aboriginal government in the world to receive the ISO 9001:2000 designation. This took a lot of hard work and dedication by leadership, employees, and community. The designation gives partners and clients the assurance that Membertou has the processes and infrastructure in place to consistently deliver quality and therefore increase business opportunities. Nineteen years later, Membertou is dedicated to maintaining the ISO designation.

Membertou also needed to improve borrowing opportunities. Using loans with five-year terms over 20 years resulted in no cashflow and significant interest payments. To improve, Membertou worked with the First Nations Financial Management Board (FMB) over three years to meet all the criteria to receive a Financial Management System Certificate from FMB in 2015. Membertou was the first

in Canada to do so. This certificate allows Membertou to borrow on better terms, saving the community over $140,000 a month in interest charges. As a result, Membertou developed a Financial Administration Law (FAL), which reflects the First Nation's commitment to good governance and good financial practices (First Nations Financial Management Board, 2021).

To work around the major barriers imposed by the Indian Act in its early period of community economic development, Membertou needed to be creative and take risks that have since paid off. For example, Membertou did not have designated lands through the Indian Act, due in part to the long process involved. During in-depth interviews, I was told that when a hotel chain wanted to partner with Membertou to build a facility in the community, the required land designation to provide a lease would have taken too long to obtain, and hotel owners perhaps would not want to wait for this process. As a result, the hotel was built on fee simple (freehold) land owned by Membertou rather than on reserve land. Because of this, the hotel is not tax exempt for anyone including those who are defined as holding Indian status under the Indian Act.

Another example of early risk taking is the two business parks that are located on reserve. Many companies from off-reserve were interested in moving into these spaces. So, to avoid the long process of designating the land through the Indian Act, Membertou was able to use their reputation as a well-governed organization to fill the business parks with companies and organizations from off-reserve and used Buckshee leases as a mechanism. Buckshee leases are informal and do not hold up in court. Buckshee leases occur when the land is not designated, meaning that Indian and Northern Affairs Canada has not approved the leases. Membertou did not want to designate the land or business because of the long process involved in doing so, however. The Buckshee leases introduced risk for both Membertou and business owners and organizations looking to move into this space, but trust and respect was evident among all parties involved. Under the 2019 Membertou Land Code, Membertou can approve its own leases and does not need to designate and seek approval from INAC.

Membertou's Corporate division has been successful in opening and managing several businesses creating own-source revenue and less dependence on government funding, including state-of-the-art convention and health and wellness centres, bowling lanes, and fisheries and geomatics divisions (Membertou Council, 2019). Membertou recently announced the "Eleventh Exchange" retail district, which will be located across the highway from the community on land that has recently gone through the Addition to Reserve process.

Membertou is one of the largest employers on Cape Breton Island, and half of its 500 employees are Membertou members. The other half include members of nearby First Nations communities and both non-Indigenous and Indigenous people from Cape Breton Regional Municipality.

Self-governing initiatives

Membertou has also implemented its own laws and self-governing initiatives. These laws and initiatives are critical to both the community-controlled businesses and housing initiatives the community is able to pursue. Membertou established a Governance Committee in 2010, which consists of the governance coordinator, leadership, employees, members, and anyone interested in governance in Membertou. The committee is part of all law-making in Membertou and leads community

engagement sessions to get feedback from the community, provide education, and answer questions on governance issues. These laws take years of work to plan and implement (Membertou Governance, 2010). As an example, the Membertou Family Homes Law adopted in 2016 was developed by Membertou with input from the community with rules around interest related to an individual family home in the event of death, divorce, separation, etc. Membertou developed its own law to follow the provisional federal rules that are in place for matrimonial real property rights and protections on reserve. As a second example, the Membertou Land Code was implemented by Membertou after a ratification vote in June 2019. This seven-year process has allowed Membertou to take back control of 44 sections of the Indian Act, with the implications of some of these summarized in Table 2. In 1999, Canada ratified the Framework Agreement and passed the First Nation Land Management Act (FNLMA) (LABRC, n.d.), which allows signatory First Nations to have authorization to make laws related to land, resources, and environment. Membertou signed the Framework Agreement in 2012.

Figure 2. 84th Framework Agreement

Table 2. The Indian Act and First Nations with Land Codes

Section of Indian Act	Implications for First Nations with Land Codes
18	The First Nation can decide how to use its land.
19	The First Nation can make decisions about road construction, location, and the creation of lots and subdivisions on reserve, and is no longer decided by the Minister.
20	The First Nation can approve and issue instruments such as Certificates of Possession or Occupation. Approval from the Minister is no longer required.
22–27	"Ministerial approval and rules regarding individual holdings no longer required-as the land code sets out the rules applicable to the use and occupancy of First Nation land, including granting or expropriation interest or rights in First Nation land." (First Nations Land Management Resource Centre, n.d.)
28	The First Nation can issue their own permits and create their own rules under the land code regarding use and occupancy of land.
35	The Governor in Council no longer has the authority to approve the expropriation or use of reserve land on the part of different levels of government or a corporate entity.
37–41	"Surrenders and designation provisions no longer apply. The rules and procedures respecting occupancy of the First Nation land, land use, zoning, etc. are set out in the land code." (First Nations Land Management Resource Centre, n.d.)
4950(4)	The First Nation can make decisions and administer the proper instruments regarding estate transfers and Section 50 (involving intestate) sales of individual holdings.
53–56	The Minister is no longer able to sell surrendered lands or lease designated lands.
57	The First Nation can make their own regulations regarding timber and mineral surrenders.
58	Provisions regarding unused reserve land no longer apply.

Table 2 (continued)

Section of Indian Act	Implications for First Nations with Land Codes
60	Authority of the Governor in Council to grant rights to the First Nation to exercise control and management of reserve lands is no longer required.
61–69	"Capital and revenue … collected, received or held for the use and benefit of the First Nation are transferred to their operations and no longer managed by Canada under the Indian Act." (First Nations Land Management Resource Centre, n.d.)
71	The Minister is no longer able to use reserve land to operate farms.
93	The First Nation can set their own regulations and restrictions regarding removing materials/resources from their lands, including wood, hay, soil or gravel.

Note: This table has been adapted from the First Nations Land Management Resource Centre (n.d.).

During the seven years before implementing the Land Code, the community put in much hard work and commitment. A deep understanding among members of what the Land Code meant for Membertou led to an informed decision at the time to vote. An overwhelming number of community members voted in favour. The Governance committee was creative with the community engagement sessions to entice members to attend sessions, including having meals and door prizes. Membertou organized general community sessions and ones that targeted specific groups such as youth, Elders, women, employees, and men.

This land code has a major impact on housing development and community economic development in Membertou. For one, Membertou is allowed to develop its own land use plan (LUP). An LUP can be described as "a tool to guide existing and future land and natural resources, use, management and protection" (National Aboriginal Land Managers Association, 2017b). By developing an LUP, a First Nation must consider the future use of its natural resources and understand and emphasize what the community values are for the development of their lands. Short and long-range goals are also part of the plan (MacDonald, 2019). Membertou's initial LUP involved extensive community consultation to involve the community in the process to express how the land should be used collectively and for the benefit of all members. Membertou is currently in the process of updating this document; this work is expected to be completed in March 2023. It is important to update regularly as the needs for the community change.

The development of a land code also allows Membertou to administer its own instruments such as leases, permits, certificates of possession, and more. A lease grants exclusive possession of reserve lands for a specific period. A permit is for a shorter period than a lease and does not give exclusive possession. Because of the land code, there is no longer a need to wait for ministerial approval for these to be issued, which can take a long time.

A Certificate of Possession (CP) can be granted to a member giving them the right to possession of a parcel of land. In Membertou, such a parcel is a numbered lot (INAC, 2002). In 2020, Membertou enacted the Membertou Certificate of Possession Law, created under the Membertou Land Code, 2019 to ensure procedures and consistency. This Law allows Membertou to determine the eligibility

and process for granting CP to Membertou members. Membertou created its own CP template which is written in both Mi'kmaq and English. A CP on reserve gives the individual member rights to possession of the land they are issued. Once a member receives a CP, Membertou no longer has an obligation to that land, although it is still owned by the Crown. Membertou no longer has to insure, repair, or have any other responsibility to the lot to which the member receives a CP. Membertou gives an exception to Elders in the community who possess a CP and require repairs and other investments. Elders are permitted to submit a written request to chief and council to review.

Housing development

Both Membertou's community economic development activities and self-governance initiatives have facilitated local housing development. Membertou has several housing options available to its members, which vary in terms of their level of affordability, tenure, and how they are allocated. All the housing options aim to increase supply of good quality housing on reserve, with housing costs geared to household income. A summary of Membertou Housing Development Initiatives can be found in Table 3 below.

Table 3. Membertou Housing Development Initiatives

First Nations Market Housing Fund	Homes are financed from the FNMHF, as well as an approved lender. Mortgages are on Membertou's balance sheet, and members do not have to pay the full cost of the mortgage, with Membertou contributing up to $600/month per house. The mortgage is for a twenty-five-year period and the homes are rent-to-own.
On-Reserve Housing Program	BMO provides access to loans for mortgages so that Membertou can build more housing for members. The subsidy provided by Membertou and the other conditions and characteristics of this program are the same as in the FNMHF.
Home Purchase Program	The applicant applies and qualifies for a loan through one of Membertou's approved lenders. Membertou serves as the guarantor and will guarantee up to a certain dollar figure; anything above requires the member to provide their own equity. Membertou provides a $15,000 grant to the member.
Other Private Member Builds	If a member is approved for a mortgage, Membertou will be the guarantor for the loan up to a certain dollar amount. Approved members will receive a serviced lot and a non-repayable grant.
Housing Lists: Social, Affordable Low Income, and Temporary (apartments)	Rents vary based on a number of factors, including income. Low-income housing is rent-to-own for members for whom other housing programs are unaffordable, but who are employed. Membertou finances the construction and mortgage subsidies themselves. Social housing is rent-to-own for members who are on social assistance and not employed. The Social Department will cover the cost of the rent for eligible clients. Social housing is built using the CMHC Section 95 program.Temporary housing is for those looking for short-term or emergency housing.

Note: BMO, Bank of Montréal; CHMC, Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation; FNMHF, First Nations Market Housing Fund

The first initiative described here is the First Nations Market Housing Fund. Although Membertou can access other programs available from CMHC and Indigenous Services Canada to assist with housing development, the number of homes being built under these programs has not been enough to meet a growing population. In response, in June 2012, Chief Terry Paul set a goal of building 125 homes in five years (Cape Breton Post, 2012) and understood that more housing initiatives needed to be pursued, including through the national First Nations Market Housing Fund.

Membertou is currently building three styles of housing: slab on grade, small split entry, and large split entry; and homes in Membertou have come up quickly since this commitment from Chief Paul.

Beyond financing from the FNMHF, Membertou was able to secure financing through one of their approved lenders and does not require ministerial guarantee. Homes being financed through the FNMHF have higher housing costs than members were accustomed to paying before this initiative started, and which range from $500 to $650 depending on the size of the home. Membertou still subsidizes rental payments, however. Mortgages for this housing are all on Membertou's balance sheet, and members do not have to pay the full cost of the mortgage, with Membertou contributing up to $600/month per house. The mortgage is for a 25-year period for these rent-to-own homes. A lease agreement is signed with Membertou as the owner of the home. Once the mortgage is paid, and there are no arrears, the member can apply for a CP. The rental agreement is no longer valid once the member has been granted a CP, and the member will take over insurance, maintenance, and repairs. By receiving a CP, the band member is given lawful possession of a tract of Membertou land. This is the highest form of ownership on reserve land, but there are differences from off-reserve land ownership related to transferring ownership (since a CP can only be transferred to another band member), using this land as collateral, as well as division of the property in the event of divorce (Alcantara, 2003).

Only a Membertou band member can hold a CP in Membertou, and, if willing to transfer, is limited to sell to another band member or to give the interest back to Membertou. It is up to chief and council to decide if they agree with the transfer and if they want to provide compensation to the transferor. This transfer must be registered in the First Nations Land Registry where all land interests are registered.

Some concerns have been raised among community members about higher housing payments, since members in more deeply subsidized housing are paying significantly less per month (CBC, 2013). However, many members on the community's housing list were interested in the FNMHF option and were willing to pay the higher cost, which remains more affordable than renting off-reserve in the surrounding Cape Breton Regional Municipality. For example, median monthly rent for a two-bedroom market unit in the municipality is currently $795 (Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation, 2021). Applicants for these FNMHF homes provide permission for an internal credit check to be done to ensure no arrears within any Membertou departments and income information to demonstrate ability to make monthly payments.

Overall, housing development via the FNMHF has been facilitated through Membertou's increased community economic development activity and governance initiatives, in different ways. Membertou has generated and captured revenue through increased business activities, securing financing, and subsidizing these mortgages as well as creating local employment opportunities for residents, which in turn allow them to pay higher housing costs. The community also has the authority to make its own laws around use, possession, and management through the Membertou Land Code, whereas the federal government once decided how to manage the land through the rules and regulations of the Indian Act.

In addition to housing built through the FNMHF initiative, rent-to-own homes with higher (also called market-based) monthly costs are also built through the On-Reserve Housing Program with

the same level of subsidy from Membertou and other conditions as in the FNMHF. The market-based housing application list has the lowest number of applicants waiting for a home, but with limited homes built under this program it has a long wait time. Wait time is usually a few years. These are allocated by chief and council based on member's needs.

A third housing initiative is the Home Purchase Program. Membertou started this as a pilot project in 2017 for members who were interested in building their own homes with a mortgage from the bank, independent of chief and council. This pilot turned into a permanent housing option for members. In May 2022, 11 homes have been completed through this program, four are under construction, and more applicants are waiting to start the process. The home purchase program is a turn-key type of initiative where a member can choose from three home styles with minor changes to the house plans allowed. Membertou builds the home, taking care of the construction, paying contractors, and inspections. When complete, Membertou sells the home to the member. The applicant must be employed, have good credit, be approved by a lender for a loan, and be eligible under other criteria required by the lender and Membertou. Membertou serves as the guarantor of the loan and will only guarantee up to a certain dollar figure. Anything above that amount requires the member to provide their own equity, meaning they would have to provide a down payment for the difference in the housing cost and the guarantee limit from Membertou. Membertou also provides a $15,000 grant to the member to go towards the cost of their home. Membertou will provide a CP when the loan has been paid in full. This means that the home is still Membertou-owned until the buyer receives a CP.

The Home Purchase Program would not be considered affordable housing for all members. However, the mortgage payment may be less than what a member would pay off-reserve for an apartment and a financial contribution is provided by the band council. The mortgage payment is determined by the lender and is based on the cost of the home and current interest rates. No monthly subsidy is provided by Membertou, unlike for other housing programs.

Members may be permitted to build their own style of home outside of the Home Purchase, FNHMF, and other programs. The same process for mortgage approval featured in the Home Purchase Program is followed, with Membertou acting as the guarantor. However, the member is responsible for securing contractors and inspections, and a hundred percent-member equity is required, although Membertou will provide a serviced lot. A down payment is required if the home cost exceeds the Membertou guarantee limit.

Despite successful community economic development and the newer housing initiatives described above, more affordable housing options are still required. Different options are available for members, based on level of affordability and need. A distinct application process for this category of housing is for market-based housing in Membertou. Low-income housing is rent-to-own for members for whom the housing programs described earlier are unaffordable, but who are employed. The rents charged to members currently range from $300 to $450 depending on house size, due to a larger monthly subsidy provided by Membertou compared to other initiatives. The three styles of homes are also built for tenants on this housing list. Membertou finances the construction and mortgage subsidies, like some of the higher-cost, market-based homes through the On-Reserve Housing Program.

Social housing is for members who are on social assistance and not employed. The Social Department will cover the cost of the rent for eligible clients. Social housing is built using the CMHC Section 95 program and can also be built using the On-Reserve Housing Program funds. Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation usually allocates funds for one to two homes per year to be built, which does not come close to meeting the number of members on social assistance needing housing. Once again, the three styles of homes are built for social homes, and these are rent-to-own with a CP issued to members once the mortgage is paid. Finally, temporary housing is for those looking for short-term or emergency housing including young adults looking for affordable housing and members moving back to the community who are in need of temporary housing while waiting for other options, such as new housing. Apartments and townhouses currently cost up to $500 per month.

Housing, local employment, and training

The housing built and maintained in Membertou also generates community-based wealth through employment and training. For example, bids are taken from contractors in the community to build new housing. Contractors and sub-contractors for new housing are typically Membertou community members working as individual contractors, who own a business or who are hired as an apprentice or labourer. In addition to carpenters from the community, contracts are put out to tender for plumbing, electrical, heating systems, dry wall, and painting, and community members are selected from the bids that are submitted. By providing these and other employment opportunities, members can make a wage that gives them more housing options and contribute to the local economy.

Importantly, Membertou attempts to address gaps in local skills through programs to train members. In recent years, one project trained a concrete crew. An expert was hired to train the crew and they worked for a few years to construct sidewalks in the community. Since then, training has focused on foundations, drywall, and home repair. Participants are now qualified and skilled tradespeople available for new builds and repairs.

Membertou accesses outside funding agencies for skills development, work experience, and job creation. One is the Mi'kmaq Employment and Training Secretariat (METS), which administers funding from Service Canada to individual First Nations in Nova Scotia (METS, n.d.). This program is managed by Membertou's Native Employment Officer (NEO). Criteria need to be followed to qualify for each program offered. The funding is not for university courses and much of the funding is for trades at Nova Scotia Community College and other private institutions. Membertou also has partnerships with other institutions such as the Native Council of Nova Scotia, Mi'kmaw Economic Benefits Office, and even other First Nations to provide programs and training to its members, and many are related to construction and housing.

Membertou also has an apprenticeship program that provides support and job placement for members who register as an apprentice. In addition, Membertou has a Joint Registration agreement with the Nova Scotia Apprenticeship Agency. This allows Membertou to register apprentices and means the apprentice can work for Membertou or another employer without having to transfer their agreement every time they switch employers. The opportunity to work for several different employers allows an apprentice to gain a variety of skills (Nova Scotia Government, 2002). Many of the new housing contractors for carpentry, electrical, plumbing, heating, etc. will hire registered apprentices through the program and offer them skills and hours to work towards their red seal in their trade.

CONCLUSION

Housing for First Nations continues to be a crisis, with government programs having a long history of failing to meet housing needs and providing safe, good quality homes. In this case study, I have documented how Membertou First Nation is responding to the local housing crisis by using own-source funding to create a range of good quality homes for members. However, even with growth in the number of new housing units and tremendous success with its community economic development initiatives, home builds do not match community need. What is described here is thus a step in the right direction, but more work is required. The Federal Government of Canada needs to provide greater opportunities for on-reserve housing and a more positive future for First Nations communities across the country.

This case study of Membertou shows that providing home ownership opportunities works for my community and can free up the limited funding a First Nation receives for use for members who cannot finance their own homes. Home ownership may not work or be desired for every community, however, and it is key for First Nations to be innovative and seek out options that can provide more housing opportunities for their members.

In terms of replication, the development of a land code and the ability to take back control of sections of the Indian Act have been key to Membertou's housing and community economic development success. This was a long process, for which communities need to be prepared to invest time and resources. Other elements—notably strong community engagement and the building of partnerships with non-Indigenous businesses and organizations—are also important for communities considering following the same path as Membertou.

Beyond this, other First Nations can work to achieve greater community wealth and housing programs by, like Membertou, closely following community economic development principles, including identifying and using local assets to develop business opportunities; starting enterprises and services for local use, incorporating multiple objectives or bottom lines within economic development initiatives (such as the health and well-being of members, and not just job creation); capturing local wealth by fostering linkages across initiatives (such as the use of local tradespeople for housing construction); establishing more autonomous decision-making; and committing to educating and training of members (Enns, 2018).

Overall, though, this case study shows that Indigenous-led programming and decision-making, with adequate government support, is essential to address the housing crisis as experienced by Indigenous Peoples across Canada. Beyond the community level, the federal government, with its current goal of addressing affordable housing needs across Canada by 2030, must allow First Nations communities to be at the forefront of designing housing-related programs and plans, again with sustained and adequate resources as required, in order to ensure affordable and good-quality housing on-reserve.

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Our Home Is Native Land: Teachings, Perspectives, and Experiences of Indigenous Houselessness

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ABSTRACT

Indigenous Peoples are the fastest growing and youngest populations in Canada, yet face persistent housing crises across both urban and reserve settings. While Indigenous Peoples often move to cities in search of employment and education, they are overrepresented among the homeless population. This article, summarizing results from the author's doctoral dissertation, provides a review of housing transitions needs and barriers from the experiences and perspectives of 13 Indigenous Elders/traditional knowledge keepers and youth, employing a narrative inquiry methodology and traditional knowledges interpretive framework. The intersection of Indigenous culture, community, housing transition, supports, and barriers is presented, highlighting the narrative voices, experiences, and perspectives of community members and Elders. Implications for service providers, policy, and future directions are included in this work.

RÉSUMÉ

Au Canada, les peuples autochtones sont le groupe démographique le plus jeune ainsi que celui qui croît le plus vite. En même temps, ceux-ci font face à des crises de logement récurrentes tant dans les villes que dans les réserves. Bien que les autochtones déménagent souvent dans les villes à la recherche d'emplois et d'éducation, ils sont surreprésentés parmi les sans-abris. Cet article, résumant les résultats de la thèse de doctorat de l'auteure, passe en revue les besoins et obstacles relatifs à la transition d'un logement à un autre. Pour ce faire, il recourt à une méthodologie d'enquête narrative et un cadre interprétatif des savoirs traditionnels afin de recueillir les expériences et perspectives de treize personnes autochtones, y compris des aînés, des gardiens du savoir traditionnel et des jeunes. L'article porte sur l'intersection parmi les autochtones entre la culture, la communauté, la transition entre logements, et les appuis et défis pour trouver un logement. Ce faisant, il souligne les voix narratives, les expériences et les perspectives des aînés ainsi que d'autres membres de la communauté. Il traite aussi des implications de cette recherche pour les fournisseurs de services, la formulation de politiques et les directions à prendre pour l'avenir.

Keywords / Mots clés : Indigenous houselessness, Indigenous traditional knowledge, Elder perspectives, youth narratives, Indigenous culture, Indigenous life transitions / sans-abris autochtones, savoir traditionnel autochtone, perspectives des aînés, narrations des jeunes, culture autochtone, transitions de vie autochtones

INTRODUCTION

To say that the Indigenous housing crisis is a modern problem is incorrect; Indigenous Peoples have had a housing crisis for 530 years. Displacement and forced relocation, the construction of reserve systems, and genocide are but a brief list of strategies that have displaced Indigenous Peoples from traditional territories, stolen land, and attacked cultural identity, despite millennia of flourishing ecological stewardship on Turtle Island (Absolon, 2010; Eshet, 2015; Patrick, 2014). Current statistics on on-reserve housing found four times the rate of overcrowding and three times the need for major repairs than the national average (Statistics Canada, 2016). Such conditions are inextricably linked to physical illnesses and economic instability in families (Belanger, Weasel Head, & Awosoga, 2012; Patrick, 2014; Whitbeck, Crawford, & Hartshorn, 2012).

This article will explore Indigenous houselessness and urban transitions from Indigenous perspectives across multisystemic levels, from the very notion of *housing* and *home* to the multifold ramifications of wellbeing and security, by highlighting the voices of Indigenous Elders, traditional knowledge keepers, and youth interviewed. To gather these stories, a narrative oral storytelling method was employed to honour traditions of knowledge transmission; participants were recruited virtually over the COVID-19 pandemic, through community partnership and connective outreach efforts (Gabriel, 2021). Just as Indigenous houseless is produced by the multisystemic impact of history, societal structures, systemic inequities, and enduring barriers to Indigenous success, these narratives will explore the multidimensional (e.g., individual, communal, societal, and cultural) factors that surround urban housing transitions. In total, the narratives of four Indigenous Elders and knowledge keepers, alongside nine Indigenous youth in the Toronto community, were included.

In search of advancing education and sustainable employment, ever-growing waves of Indigenous Peoples seek shelter in cities across Canada. This pattern of urban migration has been documented since the 1950s; from 2006 to 2016, the number of Indigenous People living in an urban centre increased by 59.7 percent (Statistics Canada, 2016). With the majority of the Indigenous population under the age of 24, with a growth rate four times that of their non-Indigenous counterparts, Indigenous Peoples are the fastest growing population in Canada, and these trends of urban migration will only continue (Patrick, 2014; Whitbeck et al., 2012). However, on arrival to cities, a perfect storm of interpersonal ruptures, high housing costs, and systemic racism contribute to barriers in secure housing and stable employment. Despite high hopes for stability, research has documented that for many Indigenous arrivals, survival lies along pathways of transitional housing, substance abuse, and involvement in the sex trade (Braveheart-Jordan & DeBruyn, 1995; Hodgson, 1990; Kirmayer, Brass, & Tait, 2000; Menzies, 2008; Phillips, 1999; Waldram, 1997; Ward, 2008).

Indigenous Peoples are disproportionately represented among the insecurely housed across almost all urban centres in Canada (see Table 1) (Greater Vancouver Regional Steering Committee on Homelessness, 2014; Maes, 2011; Statistics Canada, 2016).

Table 1: Indigenous overrepresentation across Canadian urban centres

City	% Indigenous population	% Visibly homeless
Vancouver	2.2%	39%
Edmonton	5%	51–65%
Winnipeg	4.9%	65.9%
Yellowknife	90–95%	
Montréal	0.7%	16%
Toronto	0.5%	15%

These staggeringly high rates only make sense in the wake and impacts of colonization. This crucial contextualization is strongly maintained by Indigenous researchers (Maes, 2011; Menzies, 2008; Oelke, Thursdon, & Turner, 2016; Patrick, 2014). Thistle (2017) describes how systemic racism and colonial factors are expressed through mental health, housing, and life transition outcomes; however, these become personalized to those navigating street transitions, as opposed to contextualized to a colonial society:

> The observable manifestations of intergenerational trauma in Indigenous Peoples, such as intemperance, addiction and street-engaged poverty, are incorrectly assumed to be causes of homelessness in popular and worldwide blame-the-victim discourses. Obscured behind these discourses are the historical processes and narrative prejudices practiced by the Canadian state and settler society that have produced Indigenous homelessness. Discourse about these processes disappears into myths about flawed Indigenous individuals: mental "illness," substance abuse, recidivism, delinquency, and other myths. (p. 7)

Such pathways become most strongly related to colonization when considering consistent houselessness trends in Australia, New Zealand, and the United States (Peters & Christensen, 2016). Indigenous relatives in Australia have noted that Indigenous houselessness is severely challenged by community and cultural connection, which are integral aspects of wellness from cultural perspectives (Browne-Yung, Ziersch, Baum, & Gallaher, 2016; Dockery, 2010). Historically rooted and persistently present, genocide's gargantuan wounds are witnessed in the wellbeing of communities, health and housing statistics, and, most crucially, in the voices of Indigenous Peoples themselves. Researchers, clinicians, and communities have strived to map out the impact, which has been best described in personal effects as intergenerational trauma, extending and adding multidimensional understandings to modern diagnostic conceptualizations of traumatology (Duran, 2006).

OUR HOME IS NATIVE LAND: INDIGENOUS PERSPECTIVES

While Western-based notions define *housing* and *home* synonymously, interviewed Elders began their discussions by recentering the idea of home for Indigenous Peoples:

> Creation is our home, we get everything from the earth and from creation. So for us, it's not seen as homelessness, it's a complete reverse. We get everything from the earth and from creation. … When I think of homelessness now, it's sad to see somebody sleeping on the street, but in that same notion they're the closest to creation. (in Gabriel, 2021, p. 184)

Traditional Indigenous teachings know that the land is our living, dynamic mother. She provides for the health and wellbeing of her children so long as people lovingly steward to ensure balance. In living closely with the land, flora, and fauna, Indigenous Peoples have traditionally been spiritually connected with the land, a connection that ensured survival, and fostered ceremony, culture, and language**,** "in order to survive that we had to move where the resources were … [we're] a very transient people, so we've always had to move" (in Gabriel, 2021, p. 435). Traditional shelter was made to be mobile to better allow movement to follow seasonal change and migration of herds and resources; these shelters were constructed with spirit and intentionality, something markedly missing from modern housing**,**

> I think that's the biggest part that's missing, traditionally in our dwellings we did [ceremony] at every stage … our spirituality played such a part in it … that type of connection to our home is really missing in that sense. A lot of times today, we'll smudge our homes, but that's usually as far as we go nowadays. (in Gabriel, 2021, p. 185)

Because permanent, structured housing is a predominantly Western construct, houselessness too is "a foreign concept. It's a colonial concept. Because how we see this and how we understand is the Earth is the mother and we're her children" (in Gabriel, 2021, p. 184). While shelter should be provided in outreach supports, Elders detailed that those experiencing housing loss hold a unique relationship to land, "they are living with creation. They have a whole other relationship to creation than we do" (Gabriel, 2021, p. 436). In considering what is commonly described as Indigenous homelessness, the term *houselessness* is much more appropriate; Indigenous Peoples are home on Turtle Island. However, since it is land sovereignty and safe access to housing that has been interfered with by colonial governments, this land relationship is a result of various intersecting housing crises. This distinction is crucial, as *houselessness* helps us to recenter the onus of impact to colonial structures and their persistent presence.

URBAN PUSH

While Elders described traditional patterns of seasonal migrations, Elders in this study noted that movement to cities is due to resource exploitation of their home communities, and subsequent changes to traditional avenues of employment (Ommer & Coasts Under Stress Research Project, 2007). One Elder described the structural and systemic impact that surrounds urban movement:

> [N]ow when our children go to high school, they're dumped in the local cities and local towns. In those local towns have been what I call Woodtick towns. They're towns that were established next to a reservation, so that they could eat off of the Indians in those communities, for monetary resources, labour, and all those other things that take our people outside of our community to be part of that community, whatever that is up there. (in Gabriel, 2021, p. 187)

This Elder shared that on arrival to cities, Indigenous Peoples first sought safety in community, "When I got into the city, we hit the places where Aboriginals would meet and exchange wisdoms on how to survive in a city. Where to survive, where's the cheapest place, where to make money, where to get money" (in Gabriel, 2021, p. 188). Youth in this study described feeling initially intimidated by the city due to the lack of overall Indigenous cultural representation in services and society. Some noted that seeking Indigenous service providers offered familiarity, security, and representation for support in establishing stability. One youth described how cities themselves are Western constructs that require Indigenous youth to learn specific skills:

> The lack of skills that they need to survive out there. The city is not built for us and we're not made to be living in the city. It comes from them [settlers]. That's why they're so good at living in the city, because they've lived in cities for generations, for centuries. It's in their genealogy to live in a city. For Native people, we don't know how to live in a city because it's not designed for us. (in Gabriel, 2021, p. 190)

Elders also described that Indigenous youth entering the city struggle to learn the needed life skills to ensure secure transitions, such as financial budgeting, cooking, and debt management. These skills can improve youths' sense of esteem and autonomy in survival. However, urban immersion often disconnects Indigenous youth from traditional identity and spiritual practices,

> The other part is the adjustment from living on a reserve and living in a remote [community] and then coming into the city centre. There's so much against you. Availability of that fast life and shiny things out there including drugs and alcohol. I'm not saying it's not readily available on the reserve, but it just seems to be a medication for when we're living in the city centres for the time that we're there. (in Gabriel, 2021, p. 408)

Participants identified that many factors, both societal and structural, impacted transitions to houselessness. As described by a youth participant, "You've got to look at the journey of how they got there. Nobody just walks into a shelter" (in Gabriel, 2021, p. 191). On a municipal level, high housing costs and erasure of subsidized housing (i.e., cost of housing, building removal, minimal rent subsidy) limited the available options for low-income families. One youth described that while expensive housing was continually in development, there were shrinking opportunities for housing that low-income families can afford: "I see too many condos going up and I see too many [people with] not enough housing [—all] going up quicker, and I see more and more homeless people. Even children [are] on the street" (in Gabriel, 2021, p. 192). Another Indigenous youth described how previously affordable units were demolished, restricting available options, "I remember … when the Regent Park Buildings started getting [torn] down, a lot of them had nowhere to go because of the long waitlists at the Pan Am Buildings, and they had to turn to living in shelters" (in Gabriel, 2021, p. 192).

The exorbitant costs of living in Toronto were described as being unforgiving for families or those struggling financially. The high cost of living requires all funds to go towards rent or food. Soon, financial savings were depleted, which left them vulnerable to housing loss if any additional costs arose. One youth explained, "If I was in market rent, I wouldn't have a single penny left to do anything to take care of them, to buy them clothes, to feed them properly. Do you understand how hard it is? They don't understand" (in Gabriel, 2021, p. 465). Another youth elaborated on the financial strain of survival for those on social assistance and housing in Toronto: "How are you going to tell someone to save money to get a place when obviously it's next to impossible to get a place because you need credit? You need a reference. You needed things for over 2500, they gave you a box" (in Gabriel, 2021, p. 486).

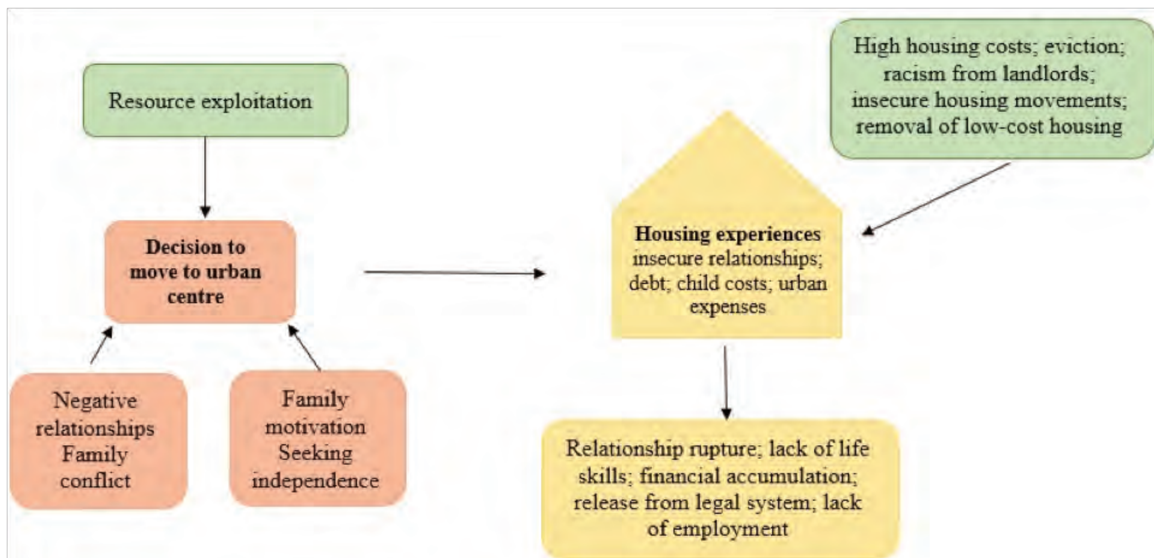
The urban housing market was determined to be unsustainable for many. Market rent was too expensive for employment opportunities, or was insecure due to any number of factors that risked tenant removal. One Elder described how housing intersected with anti-Indigenous racism to create continued insecurity with catastrophic consequences,

> At any given time you can be asked to leave your apartment because somebody's selling the building, or you could be thrown out because somebody made a complaint, or you can not have the apartment because of racism, and any other thing that [may] rear its ugly head when we're looking for places to live in the city. (in Gabriel, 2021, p. 192)

Another Elder described the arrested dreams of intelligent and resourceful Indigenous youth being met with housing barriers on arrival, "How many others are on the streets that come down from their

reserves to Toronto to get their education or employment and find themselves in the same situation, which snowballs into being a homeless person?" (in Gabriel, 2021, p. 425). The personal, societal, and systemic factors that contributed to urban push and decision-making are included in Figure 1.

Figure 1: Reserve migration factors & urban housing experiences



Notes. This graphic is colour coded to reflect the various intersections and systems involved in homeless and housing loss. Those factors outlined include societal systems (green), personal/familial factors (red), and factors directly related to housing security (yellow).

STREETS ARE SAFER

Both youth and Elders in this study described houseless youth seeking shelters for temporary support, but quickly moving to street living which was seen as a safer alternative**,**

> … they're not going to go to these heavy drug induced shelters where there's a lot of violence that occurs. There's violence in youth shelters, but there's a lot more support in youth shelters than there is in an adult shelter. So, a lot of them resort [to] going straight to the street, and they either lose their housing because nobody can get a hold of them or – so this as I said, the transition between their lives and through adult housing is night and day. (Gabriel, 2021, p. 193)

Another Elder described supporting a youth that was navigating academic work while houseless**,**

> That's what I see goes on with some of the homeless people in Toronto, [—] … the fact that they're not comfortable in cities, in any of the shelters that are provided for them. So they'd rather stay on the street. He was determined to stay here. This is downtown Toronto. He was determined to stay and do his schooling and live on the streets as opposed to living on a shelter that was very unsafe for him. And he's not alone. There's a lot of people out there like that. (in Gabriel, 2021, p. 194)

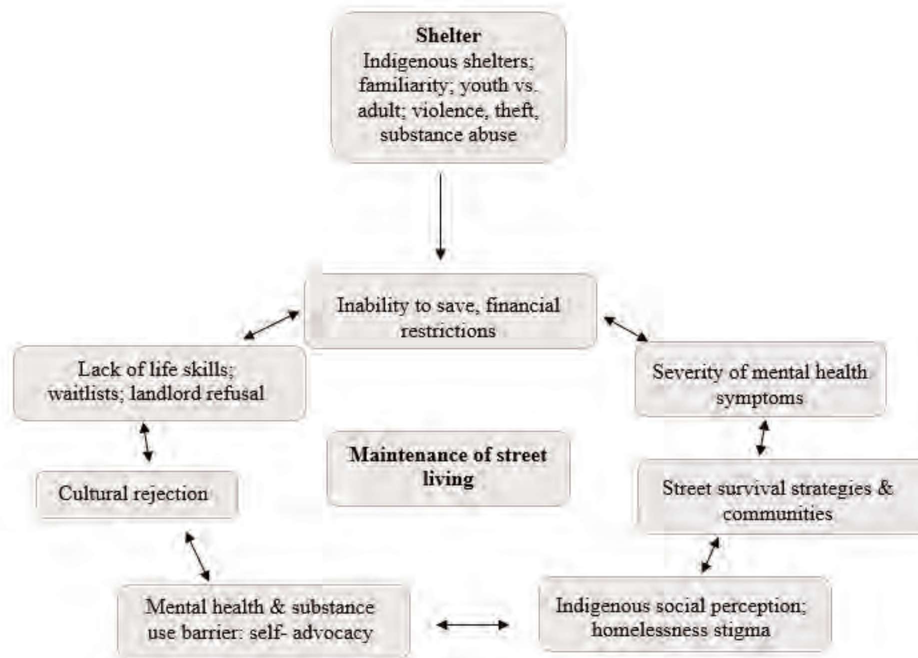
She noted meaningfully supporting houseless community members required engagement, ceremony, and support and acceptance of the client's decision to choose the safest pathway for them

at that stage of their journey. Acceptance and support, however, can be found in street-involved communities as well, which can incur more significant risks that later threaten safe housing transitions. As described by another Elder,

> People try and find belonging. And I know for many people that get involved in maybe gangs, or unfortunately sometimes use sex trafficking, they can be seeking belonging and finding that belonging can be a bit dangerous, or it can have risks involved. And especially with the LGBTQ and two-spirited communities, it sounds like there's actually the rejection, which is that absence of belonging, like seeking belonging and not having it available or having a lot of hostility. (in Gabriel, 2021, p. 196)

These same avenues, in search of belonging, can pose additional risks in later transitions out of houselessness. These pursuits either risk physical harm or further violence. These experiences and reflections are summarized in Figure 2.

Figure 2: Shelter, street transitions, and street living



Identity impact

Elders in this study reflected on their own experiences of housing insecurity, and the impact it had on their sense of self and wellbeing. One Elder described the importance of such lifelong reflection to better understand present impacts, "It's allowing us to look back over our path and where we are today and why those things still affect us" (in Gabriel, 2021, p. 200). This Elder described his experiences of inadequate housing and the innate comparison with that of non-Indigenous peers,

> I think the biggest thing about moving from place to place is not having that sense of belonging, and not having that sense of ownership, and not having that self-esteem, of watching your next-door neighbour get into their brand-new car and drive away and know that they owned a house and that … they have inside facilities … It's always a constant

> looking at the outside world through, I guess, tainted lens, that I would never be able to afford that. My family would never be able to afford to live that way. And I think that gets to be ingrained after a while and then we start to accept that. (in Gabriel, 2021, p. 200)

Over time, and with repetition, this Elder described how such persistent housing insecurity, paired with non-Indigenous housing dichotomies, internalized messages of lower self-worth and identity. This directly impacted housing choices even upon achieving job security**,** "the self-esteem only allowed me to live in those second-rate or third-rate housings, because … that was all we deserved. And I don't think I did it consciously but it was subconscious. Like I said, those kinds of ways are ingrained from childhood" (in Gabriel, 2021, p. 200). Elders in this study described how, through ceremony and healing, a divide began to emerge between the physical structure of housing and the innate worth of the self that lived there. While the shelter itself could be a house or tarp, it was the inside that made it a home,

> although this house is decrepit and it's unsafe, it's still our home and it flourishes from the inside out. It's a safe place for others to come and be here and talk. And, you know, that's the flourishing that I'm talking about and I want to — I want to embrace. (in Gabriel, 2021, p. 201)

While Elders reflected on the longitudinal impact of housing on identity, and recentering home to focus on relationships, these collected stories also highlighted how best to create loving, supportive relationships with Indigenous houseless members navigating vulnerable transitions.

SUPPORTING INDIGENOUS HOUSELESS PEOPLE

Care for those navigating housing loss was primarily rooted in three approaches: deep acceptance, connection to community, and holistic support. Research has shown that Indigenous Peoples have a persistent distrust of Western-based services due to experiences of racism and lack of cultural perspective, understanding, and worldview in their systems of care (Benoit, Carroll, & Chaudhry, 2003; Cochran, 1997; Deane, Morrissette, Bousquet, & Bruyere, 2004; Hudson & Taylor-Henley, 2001; Marshall & Stewart, 2004; Menzies, 2001; Stewart, 2008). A push for culture as treatment is increasingly recommended (Brady, 1995; Dumont & National Native Addictions Partnership Foundation, 2014; Rowan, Poole, & Shea, 2014), which this research unequivocally supports. Elders and Indigenous communities have the methods, medicines, and tools to meet all dimensions of health and wellbeing in a balanced way (Absolon, 2010). In this study, Indigenous workers and knowledge keepers described what core approaches, rooted in Indigenous cultural perspectives, best support interventions and care for those navigating housing loss.

Acceptance

While some cultural teachings have specified protocols and timeframes surrounding substance use and attending ceremonies, those Elders and community youth in this study championed the importance of non-exclusionary outreach and acceptance. All Elders interviewed for this project unanimously supported client involvement in ceremonies, regardless of substance history. Community members described how abstinence-based protocols were akin to rejection, which conflicted with traditional Indigenous teachings of non-judgment, acceptance, and love. One Elder described the importance of this approach**,**

> I think one of the reasons why we're so successful at it is because we don't insert protocol into ceremony. I couldn't care less if you used last night, as long as your intention of going into that lodge is pure. And sincere. And that's all that matters. You know, there's too much imposed protocol on our people as it is from the settlers. We shouldn't be doing it ourselves. Who cares that you're wearing a pair of slacks into a ceremony area. Creator doesn't care. Why should I care? (in Gabriel, 2021, p. 211)

Youth also described how damaging cultural rejection can be to clients, and how it further disconnects them from the support needed for healing: "You can't go to a powwow, they kick you out because you had a few drinks … maybe the person needs to be there at the powwow, need the support of the community. Canceling people out doesn't solve the problem" (Gabriel, 2021, p. 482). Sweat lodge ceremonies, which offer profound physiological benefits, were described by participants as an important culturally based method of supporting detoxification and healing from substance abuse. However, prohibitory protocols based on recent substance use can further compound shame and painful cultural rejection, contributing to increasingly heavy emotional burdens. The enforcement of cultural protocols was seen as an additional barrier that further isolated and disconnected Indigenous Peoples from ceremonies, Elder connection, and community spheres, which in turn could have disastrous ramifications on identity and meaningful supports at a crucial point of vulnerability in life transitions.

Connection to community

Elders that had worked with street-involved youth described that in the absence of culturally rooted and safe community connection, Indigenous youth will seek belonging where they can. Those youth separated from communities and families, such as those navigating foster care, experienced pathways that lead to street transitions:

> We're finding that with CAS [Children's Aid Societies] that those kids have a very hard time once they leave the system to survive on their own. … meaning that the skills to survive as young adults, a lot of times they get in the justice system and sadly then go into the homeless system, you know, in a lot of their struggles. (Gabriel, 2021, p. 439)

As noted previously, the core need for belonging and safety was a foundational wound that led some Indigenous youth to gang involvement or sex work. One youth described how community connection is a protective factor when navigating traumas or discord in family homes:

> I think it gives people … the sense of identity and home almost when they might not have a home. It's grounding … they can come back there and everything's the same. They still have that father figure or friend figure, support system of who they are and they can feel connected somewhere. … getting to experience who you are and see yourself in other people, because you're all from the same sort of thing. I think that that can be really powerful and save a lot of kids from a lot of trauma. (in Gabriel, 2021, p. 509)

Community and cultural engagement proved to offer more than just positive social benefit, but also promoted a positive sense of self-worth, supported Indigenous cultural identity, fostered connection to peers, and helped connect deeply with Elders and community figures. Community-based ceremony, such as the Rites of Passage ceremony, helped celebrate stages of development with community members:

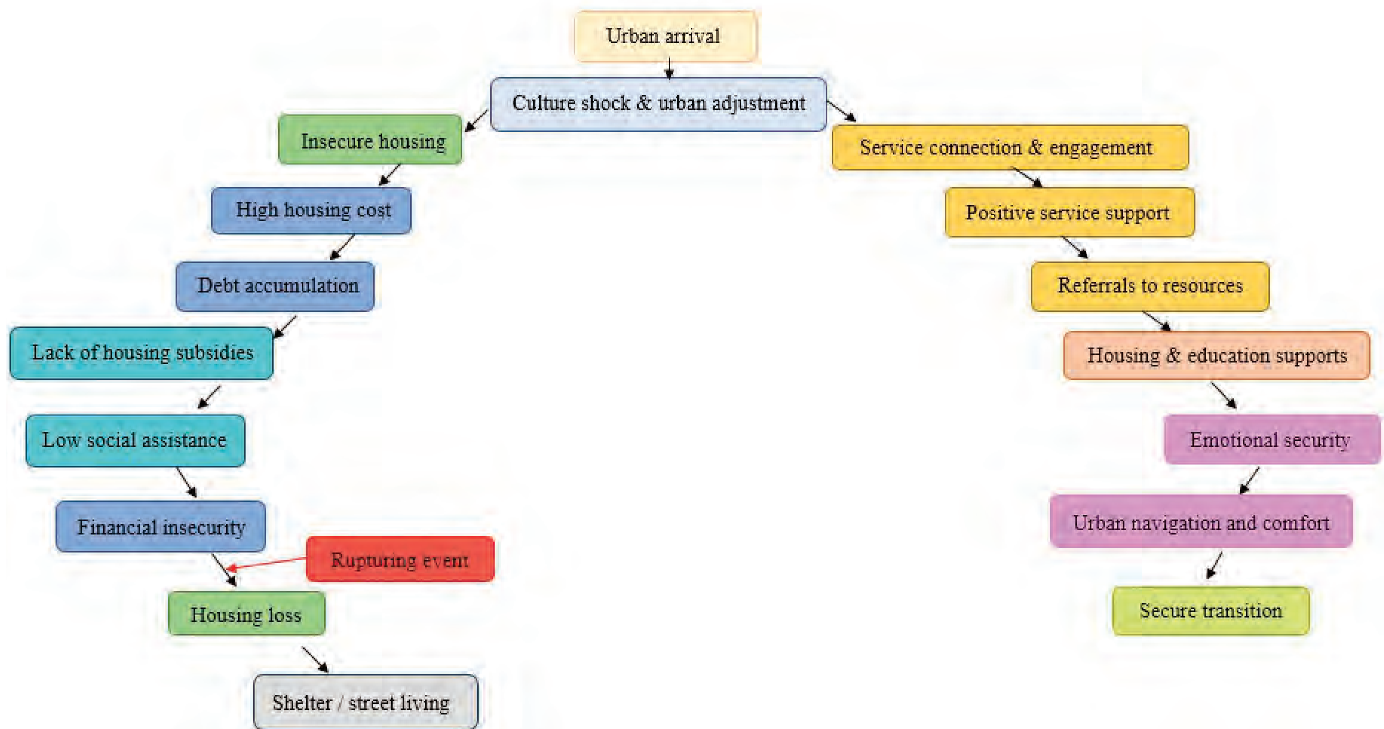
> It was a ceremony that provided our young people, whether they're girl or boy, that they would have that acceptance into community. … these lodges would attend that ceremony, because the idea is that they're no longer a young person anymore, they're now an adult, so they're going into a new lodge … they're entering a new stage of life, and it's that whole acceptance that allows them to transition through life. And they get that acknowledgement and celebration *that our people are looking for.* (Gabriel, 2021, p. 206, emphasis added)

Holistic supports

Just as Indigenous perspectives of health appreciates a holistic view, so too does supporting youth navigating transitions to housing and stability (Absolon, 2010). To exemplify the importance of holistic resource supports in housing transitions, one youth interviewed in this project described how prior debt, with no income and way of repayment, created a financial impasse. She was unable to return to school to receive training or access meaningful educational opportunities. When she was connected with a scholarship-promoted program, educational support workers offered positive interpersonal and financial resources:

> I can't say the countless times that they've helped with the food parts in the middle of the month when I have no money and there's hardly any food left in the fridge. And they give me a hundred-dollar food card. That is a lifesaver … It feeds me and my whole family for another week until OW [Ontario Works] comes out. (in Gabriel, 2021, p. 463)

Figure 3: Life transition comparisons of interviewed urban youth



Notes: On the left is a summary of factors that contributed to street living for one youth, including societal and personal factors. The right illustrates a youth's description of how the benefit of service intervention from an Indigenous community organizer supported a secure transition while completing studies.

The most supportive workers expressed personal understanding of youth experiences—understanding of the difficulty of life transitions and supportive personal connection. These personable and empathic approaches were invaluable supports through an intensely vulnerable period. Flexibility in academic opportunities, such as scholarship programs, were strongly recommended by those youth caught in the cycles of debt accumulation, housing loss, and financial detriment when struggling to meet daily needs and debt repayment. Referrals from service providers offered a positive security network that offered accessible skill building and access to resources, which promoted not only physical and financial supports, but also the secure, emotional supports of community and worker connection. Of those participants that described successful and secure housing on arrival to cities described how connection to Indigenous community service providers was key early in their arrival. The comparison between such transitions is summarized and presented in Figure 3.

The aforementioned participant described how access to service and community supports were invaluable to beneficial and reliable skill building, but personal supports were required:

> With those programs being available, free, and accessible, is really what made me the smart person that I am now. Being able to critically think myself out of hard situations. To be able to not give up. … We really need programs where we can teach the women that it's necessarily not their fault for being where they are today, but there is something that you can do about it. You can fight back, and you can be worthy of this world. (in Gabriel, 2021, p. 461)

BARRIERS TO SUCCESSFUL TRANSITIONS

While the above criteria outlined youth and Elder perspectives on successful strengths for housing navigation, they also identified key barriers, both interpersonal and societal, alongside recommendations for challenging these blockades.

Financial barriers

Financial barriers were present in a multitude of formats. On an individual level, participants described financial literacy challenges and the frightful consequence to lacking knowledge of debt: "Is there classes that I could learn about finances or classes where I can learn about credit? … I never knew how important these things were when I was a teenager, when I should have known these things" (in Gabriel, 2021, p. 465). As mentioned, one youth described how dire financial straits contributed to an ongoing, cyclical rut that restricted repayment or saving: "Every single penny that I got, I couldn't put it towards paying back anything. I needed every single penny. Paying off debt or doing anything like that was way out of the question for me" (in Gabriel, 2021, p. 465). Similarly, another youth described how any form of social assistance goes entirely towards basic survival, "They either rely on ODSP [Ontario Disability Support Program] or OW [Ontario Works], which is like 800 to 400 dollars a month. How are they going to save that when they need to meet the needs right now for the month?" (in Gabriel, 2021, p. 486).

The sole solution for such high rates of debt was identified as community-based educational supports, such as scholarship-based or free programming for skill building, or community centres where youth could connect with peers, access food, find resource, and gain marketable skills toward em-

ployment. Considering societal barriers such as high housing cost and systemic racism, Indigenous community-based supports were able to help alleviate posed barriers that individuals could not navigate alone: "Or if I get another scholarship program for an even better course, then, that's the only way where I'm going to be moving up in life" (in Gabriel, 2021, p. 465).

As noted, rampantly escalating costs of living and lack of available subsidized rent were seen as disastrous forces that expedited individuals' push to street living. One youth cited how the structure of the city's economy itself was a challenge to lower income families,

> It's not because of us; it's this economy and the way that everything is and how rigged this system is. It's not fair for a lot of people, especially the people that are living in poverty. It just never ends well for us. So we really need somebody to give these women a chance to just become successful. Don't we all have that right? I think about that all the time. (in Gabriel, 2021, p. 471)

Additional societal barriers identified by Elders included the broad, systemic reach of racism towards Indigenous Peoples, and its presence in casual societal disregard for, and systemic desensitization and numbing towards Indigenous houselessness. Elders noted that the high rates of Indigenous houselessness and further propagation of stereotypes, ignorance, and misinformation of colonization contributed to a societal disregard for the wellbeing of Indigenous and racialized peoples, "'Look at those drunken Indians on the street.' How many times have we heard that one? 'Those drugged-up Indians. They're panhandling,' or whatever. But they never stop to think that they could be in the same position" (in Gabriel, 2021, p. 430).

The poison of judgment

Just as acceptance and non-judgment was promoted to be a powerful support for navigating houselessness in Indigenous communities, judgment was a profound and impactful detriment of housing and service workers. One youth interviewed described the perils of workers' negative judgments towards houseless clients. She described how the initial stages of housing loss began with absolutely no supports in place:

> It was very hard trying to get the necessary help that I needed, because I didn't know where to start. I had no resources; I had no help; I had no workers; I had nothing. No one. I had to really do a lot of independent research on my own, even though I wasn't in shelter. They're supposed to be doing all the helping and they're supposed to get me back on track and to avoid homelessness—because I've never been homeless before—to intervene before it's something that continues to happen. Because I'm not stable; I don't have the things that I should have at my age. So, if I [hadn't taken it] upon myself to get the right help that I needed, I probably would have ended up staying in the shelter longer than I should have. (in Gabriel, 2021, p. 229)

While this youth described her tremendous motivation and resourcefulness in seeking supports toward housing, she described that motivation alone cannot surmount all barriers and blockades to stability. Reliance on a housing worker became precarious, as the totality of client health and wellbeing relied on a worker who may have inadequate knowledge of resources, insufficient approaches, or lack true understanding to client pathways to housing transitions. As housing loss includes the

dearth of total resources and supports, clients rely on workers for not only humane compassion for navigations to houselessness, but knowledge of referrals and resources that could be accessed. She also described the impact that housing transitions have on mental health: "Everyone that is going through that same situation, is going through the same things: depression, anxiety, any type of different mental health disorder … this is not something that we can necessarily control" (in Gabriel, 2021, p. 474). In this case, the worker's lack of understanding to their client's story, unique needs, and circumstances resulted in the client feeling judged and unsupported—yet another profound barrier in a seemingly insurmountable transition:

> All she kept saying is, "Housing is a 14-years-long waiting list, I can't see you getting housing or your children back." She's supposed to be someone who's supporting families? No. That was really wrong, and I actually, I told her about herself. I told her, "You automatically judged me. Your job is supposed to be non-biased. You're not supposed to just stand there and judge people because of a little picture of what you have." (in Gabriel, 2021, p. 467)

She emphasized the importance of non-judgmental support workers**:** "We don't know why this person has ended up with these children … Whatever the case may be, we can never just judge. I feel like that's what a lot of people do. They automatically just judge us" (in Gabriel, 2021, p. 470). Akin to poison, then, worker judgment of clients, and ignorance to their histories, spreads to the quality of their care: referrals for further resource support may be lacking or inappropriate; personalized, meaningful referrals to appropriate resources may remain unknown; and what hope clients hold for finding safety and security could be dashed entirely.

Recommendations for care and service provision

In better understanding the specific needs and experiences of houseless clients, more personalized supports and more applicable resources could be provided. Key recommendations for service workers include

- Training to support mental health and wellness (i.e., grounding and crisis de-escalation training);
- Cultural safety training and education on the impacts of stigma and racism on Indigenous and Afro-Indigenous community members;
- Wide knowledge of resources available to better support clients (Gabriel, 2021).

Worker perspective and approach

Workers that employed non-judgment in their approach and understood that houselessness is symptomatic of systemic issues were also noted as important: "We didn't ask to end up where we are today. Everything has led to something. At least we're here and we're trying to make the difference" (in Gabriel, 2021, p. 470). Supportive workers were recommended to employ a holistic approach in supporting their clients, as well as engaging with clients with personal investment:

> She's really had the girls' back … that is the type of woman that loves her job. You can have any person doing this program, but it's really up to them to kind of give it their all and to understand the position of these women. (Gabriel, 2021, p. 470)

Skills
In providing care for street-involved youth and community members, both youth and Elders described the crucial importance of trust-building and mutual respect. Trust and respect are foundational cornerstones of trauma-informed care and service delivery, a framework that should be mandated for street-involved care workers as, if experiences of trauma did not exist prior to housing loss, houselessness itself has been identified in the literature as inherently traumatic (Goodman et al., 1991). One Elder promoted the importance of having trust-building and crisis skills: "For myself, it was always to figure out how to navigate through that anger and how to build that trust, so I would definitely suggest some really good crisis intervention training" (in Gabriel, 2021, p. 231).

Service boundaries
Age restrictions for youth services (i.e., terminating availability of programming at age 24) were noted to be profoundly frustrating for clients seeking transition support only to be met with additional barriers. It is illogical to assume that housing loss and street needs occur within a specified time range or developmental period; however, age-related gaps exist with regard to youth and adult-based services. One youth described, "There's violence in youth shelters, but there's a lot more support in youth shelters than there is in an adult shelter. … the transition between their lives and through adult housing is night and day" (in Gabriel, 2021, p. 205). Of note, while interviews were conducted with Indigenous youth, the recommendations for supports, skills, and approaches are encouraged for community members of all ages.

Evaluation
One Elder noted the structure of Indigenous-based service providers were not well understood by Western-based funding bodies. She described that Western-based evaluation methods were compromised by the inability to capture the efficacy and scope of culturally based, ceremony-guided Indigenous care services that best meet the community's needs. Additional formats were then restricted and challenged by agencies requiring Western-based evaluations to justify spending:

> We've seen the loss of our services and sadly, they've seen more Western models get adopted in. That's the sad thing in that notion, but at the same time nobody could really prove the benefit of having a drop-in, in that sense and making sure you had staff to support it … looking at the impacts and the benefits and the evaluation components are always going to be hard to prove. (in Gabriel, 2021, p. 239)

Just as Indigenous culturally based approaches were important in community care, these same models are important to implement in the evaluation of such resources and services. Indigenous-based service evaluation for Indigenous-based services was seen as the best method of determining not only service efficacy, but the reflection of cultural values and the components of community care that are unique to the Indigenous community.

Policies and society
The high cost of living, the failure of preventative supports, and the barriers in service provision continue to compound instability, "They're really turning Toronto into a business district, and I feel like they're pushing all families who have lower income out. They're pushing them out into rural areas, giving them no choice but to leave Toronto because it's so expensive" (in Gabriel, 2021,

p. 470). This push creates further obstacles for community members striving to maintain positive supports and services that are located in the urban centre. Without more moderate housing and subsidized rental units available, community members become increasingly limited in establishing security, which further risks housing loss, "I know a lot of single moms who are paying market rent and who are suffering every single day. How can you keep up with a $2000 rent bill, and then utilities?" (in Gabriel, 2021, p. 471). However, existing interventions are in place not to prevent homelessness, but to address a crisis once it has occurred, "Basically, you really have to be in sort of a crisis for anybody to even look at you. I feel like there should be a system where we stop the crisis part" (in Gabriel, 2021, p. 471). An increase in dedicated, subsidized housing was recommended to assist economic stability.

Elders and youth alike supported the need for Indigenous policy to be rooted in holistic and spiritual knowledges, "I think can absolutely offer insight and a better policy to be made, if someone has that will within" (Gabriel, 2021, p. 238). Western policies in service delivery, evaluation, and housing situations continue to displace and impact Indigenous housing and connection to our spiritual home. Community members agreed that only cultural integration and inclusion of Indigenous Peoples into policy, housing, and health service domains can better answer the needs of Indigenous Peoples and communities, and to alleviate the ongoing conflict of cultures, worldviews, and perspectives. To bridge this gap, youth promoted the inclusion of social services, health, and housing policymakers into Indigenous ceremonies and practices, "having that understanding with them, having that personal appreciation, I think can do wonders then for the people who this policy's affecting" (Gabriel, 2021, p. 238). In personally attending ceremonies and cultural safety training, non-Indigenous policymakers have the potential to gain insights and shared understanding into the value of such cultural practices. Policymakers were encouraged to listen to Elders and Indigenous Peoples to understand their needs, "Well you have to listen now. You have to learn. … know that when you're listening and you want to help you're going to make a lot of mistakes, right? And that's OK. And just apologize. That's truth and reconciliation" (Gabriel, 2021, p. 238).

CONCLUSIONS AND REFLECTIONS

The consequences of ongoing colonization affect every aspect of Indigenous wellbeing, including the traumatizing experience of houselessness. Changes at the systemic and service levels are needed to better prevent and interrupt the houselessness of Indigenous Peoples. In order to fully and effectually address Indigenous houselessness, a holistic, multisystemic approach is required. Personal interventions are insufficient in challenging a political, societal, structural, racial, and historical epidemic. Creating meaningful interventions and supports will be no small feat, requiring gargantuan effort.

Statistical trends demonstrate that the Indigenous population is only continuing to grow; the existent systems and structures are bound to fail them. There appears to be no lack of barriers to Indigenous success. Barriers Indigenous Peoples experience include social stigma, stereotypes, miseducation in Western-based school systems, economic exploitation causing subsequent health detriments, and lack of appropriate, representative care. Each avenue of living is rife with great challenges. Each obstacle increases the pressure on communities to fill in the gaps that Western

societal structures have created. Including and collaboration with Indigenous Peoples on policy would tremendously benefit the communities whose voices are echoed in this work.

As stated, more Indigenous babies are arriving, like precious medicine bundles, to a world that will need their gifts. What if, on arrival, we could greet these little ones with a world that is more inclusive, more integrative, and better understanding of their cultures? What if they grew up in a world where policy and service providers better understood their needs?

What if, instead of houselessness, we could welcome them home?

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Growing Community Sustenance: The Social Economy as a Route to Indigenous Food Sovereignty

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ABSTRACT
While the social economy can achieve many positive outcomes, one recent benefit is that it can be a route to Indigenous food sovereignty—a restorative framework for feeding communities and engaging in decolonization. This article examines how some Indigenous groups in Canada use the social economy to build food sovereignty, beginning with an overview of cultural relationships with food, its place in an Indigenous worldview, and the effect of colonization on Indigenous foodways. After introducing food sovereignty, and in particular Indigenous food sovereignty, it focuses on how some Indigenous communities are using the social economy to build food sovereignty, using the example of the Northern Manitoba Food, Culture, and Community Collaborative. The article concludes with a discussion of the importance of community and food sovereignty, not only for Indigenous Peoples but also for the social economy itself.

RÉSUMÉ
L’économie sociale peut avoir plusieurs effets positifs dont celui de contribuer à la souveraineté alimentaire des autochtones, fournissant ainsi un cadre réparateur pour mieux nourrir les communautés et amorcer la décolonisation. Cet article examine comment certains groupes autochtones au Canada ont recours à l’économie sociale pour établir leur souveraineté alimentaire. Il aborde le sujet par un aperçu des rapports culturels que les autochtones entretiennent avec la nourriture, de la signification de la nourriture d’un point de vue autochtone, et des effets de la colonisation sur les habitudes alimentaires des autochtones. Après avoir décrit ce qu’est la souveraineté alimentaire et, en particulier, la souveraineté alimentaire autochtone, l’article se focalise sur la manière dont certaines communautés autochtones ont recouru à l’économie sociale pour augmenter leur souveraineté alimentaire. Pour ce faire, il utilise l’exemple du Northern Manitoba Food, Culture, and Community Collaborative. L’article conclut en discutant de l’importance de la solidarité communautaire et de la souveraineté alimentaire, non seulement pour les autochtones mais aussi pour l’économie sociale elle-même.

Keywords / Mots clés : Indigenous food sovereignty, social economy, community, food sovereignty, decolonization / souveraineté alimentaire autochtone, économie sociale, communauté, souveraineté alimentaire, décolonisation

INTRODUCTION

The social economy, like any economy, is not an end in itself but a means to something larger, such as increased well-being, sustainability, or independence from the capitalist economy. One emerging aim of the social economy is the enhancement of Indigenous food sovereignty. As Morrison (2011) explains, "While the language and concept of food sovereignty has only recently been introduced into communities and policy circles around the world, the living reality is not a new one in Indigenous communities" (p. 97). Indigenous food sovereignty not only asserts the right of Indigenous Peoples to choose their own foodways, but also involves the ability to exercise that right. Since the arrival of colonial powers in North America, this right has been deliberately and violently eroded, with devastating results for Indigenous Peoples, including poor health, premature death, loss of traditional knowledge and skills, and growing dependence on colonized foodways (Martin & Amos, 2017).

This article is written by three settler researchers who live and work on Indigenous lands in and around Tkaronto (Toronto). As white, middle-class academics, we study the social economy in Canada to better understand its benefits in the face of inequities based on factors such as gender, race, and class. We have long been interested in understanding how Indigenous communities engage with the social economy, particularly in terms of addressing food-related inequities. As allies, we wanted to document existing Indigenous initiatives to showcase their ability to address food sovereignty through the social economy. To document these initiatives, we received a Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council (SSHRC) Institutional Grant to map Indigenous social economy organizations related to food. This mapping exercise revealed a wide range of organizations across the country,[1] which we presented at the Place-based Food Systems conference hosted by Kwantlen Polytechnic University in August 2018.

In this article, we investigate how some Indigenous groups in Canada have used the social economy to build food sovereignty in their communities—growing community sustenance that is not tied to colonized foodways but returns to pre-colonial food practices. We begin with an overview of food, its place in Indigenous worldviews, and the effects of colonization on Indigenous foodways. Next, we explore the concept of food sovereignty and the rise of Indigenous food sovereignty. With this context in place, we then discuss how some Indigenous communities are using the social economy (whether they are aware of the concept or not) to return to traditional food practices and build food sovereignty. In particular, we examine how some communities that are part of the Northern Manitoba Food, Culture, and Community Collaborative (NMFCCC) have intentionally chosen the social economy as one of the routes to Indigenous food sovereignty. We conclude with some observations about the importance of community and food sovereignty, not only for Indigenous Peoples but also for the social economy. While the social economy can be a route to Indigenous food sovereignty, we note that Indigenous food sovereignty can help researchers and practitioners in the social economy understand the importance of community and food sovereignty. It can also help to decolonize the capitalist economy itself and overcome its inequities, which have been highlighted during the COVID-19 pandemic.

FOOD, INDIGENOUS FOODWAYS, AND THE NUTRITION TRANSITION

Food is central to human existence; regardless of our origins, we all need to eat (Sumner, 2016). While a basic life requirement, food is much more than just fuel for our bodies. Many of us, however, have lost our fundamental understanding of and connection to the deep social, cultural, economic, and environmental meanings of food, a process that Kneen (1995) refers to as distancing. Our relationship to food is developed during childhood (Wilson, 2015) and continues throughout our adult life. Food waste, food festivals, junk food, food offerings, eating disorders, and traditional cuisine all say something about our relationship to food.

French anthropologist Marcel Mauss (1967) famously described food as a "total social fact." While that may be true, food could also be described as a total cultural fact in Indigenous communities. From Indigenous perspectives, traditional foods (i.e., originating from the natural environment, including farming, wild harvesting, or hunting) must be understood within a wider cultural framing, which includes spiritual and environmental relations and concepts of responsibility, renewal, and reciprocity with respect to taking care of the land, waterways, and wider community for future generations (Neufeld, 2021). As Settee (2018) explains, food is one of the central features of being Indigenous: "For Indigenous peoples, the land, food and identity were seen as parts of a whole system. The land and food exist to feed the whole community as an extension of the family unit" (p. 179). Settee goes on to explain how Indigenous relationships to food are different from the mainstream relationships to food. To illustrate this, she calls on the words of Winona LaDuke (2005, p. 210), who explains that "food itself is medicine: not only for the body, but for the soul, for the spiritual connection to history, ancestors, and the land." In contrast, Settee argues, mainstream relationships to food mostly see food from a utilitarian perspective as individual caloric input and part of the capitalist economy. These mainstream relationships to food have been deeply encouraged by this economy, so much so that for some people:

> Food is no longer viewed first and foremost as a sustainer of life. Rather, to those who seek to command our food supply, it has become instead a major source of corporate cash flow, economic leverage, a form of currency, a tool of international politics, an instrument of power – a weapon! (Kreb, 1992 in Millstone & Lang, 2003, p. 11)

The use of food as a weapon has a sordid history, especially considering Friedmann's (1993) observation that food has long been associated with wealth and power. This is particularly true in colonial societies. For example, the Canadian government has used food as a weapon against Indigenous people. Sir John A. MacDonald, the first prime minister of Canada, withheld the food already promised in signed treaties to coerce Indigenous Peoples onto reserves (Daschuk, 2015). In addition, for more than a century, the scanty meals served to Indigenous children forced into the residential school system resulted in high levels of malnutrition, sickness, and death (TRC, 2015). And in the 1940s and 1950s, the Government of Canada performed nutritional experiments on Indigenous children in residential schools to establish the guidelines for Canada's Food Guide, withholding food from already malnourished children to test levels of food intake and health (Mosby, 2013). Overall, Neufeld (2021, p. 47) observes, "colonial policies have disrupted, denied access to, and in many cases decimated traditional food sources and medicines." In addition, the destruction of the natural world through centuries of colonization has impacted many peoples world-wide and

is an ongoing source of disruption and destruction of the traditional food practices of Indigenous Peoples, right up to the current food insecurity rampant within Indigenous communities.

Food is also a weapon in the form of industrialized or ultra-processed food—highly processed, nutrient-poor, edible commodities that are full of salt, sugar, and fat. Winson (2013) refers to these commodities as pseudo-foods and argues that they include not only what we would think of as junk food, but also juice beverages, frozen dairy products, and pre-sweetened cereals. He argues that pseudo-foods colonize grocery store shelves as well as other food environments, such as gas stations, hospitals, schools, and airports, making them difficult to avoid. Many pseudo-foods, he explains, could be classed as addictive, with a deliberate combination of salt, sugar, and fat laced with chemical flavourings that promote "craveability" or the "bliss point" and stimulate purchasing and overeating.

Pseudo-foods constitute a significant portion of what has come to be known as the Western diet, described by Pollan (2008, p. 10) as "lots of processed foods and meat, lots of added fat and sugar, lots of everything – except vegetables, fruits and whole grains." He reports that wherever people have given up their traditional foodways and taken up the Western diet, a predictable series of non-communicable Western diseases follows, including type 2 diabetes, cardiovascular diseases, and certain types of cancer. While these chronic diseases affect people around the world due to capitalism's relentless penetration of customary food systems, Neufeld (2021) argues that they tend to disproportionately affect Indigenous Peoples because of pre-existing health and social conditions brought on by colonization.

The adoption of the Western diet involves what is known as a nutrition transition, which refers to a change in a population's nutrition status. The concept was developed by Popkin (2003), who observed that after dietary changes were introduced into the developing world, the rates of non-communicable diseases increased. Considered by Samson (2016) as the most important issue affecting the health of Indigenous Peoples around the world, he describes it as "a change from gathered, farmed, fished, and hunted foods to industrialized energy-dense diets" (p. 1), adding that the nutrition transition has been accompanied by population shifts from being physically active to leading sedentary lives.

Martin and Amos (2017) have researched the nutrition transition within Indigenous communities in Canada, including the serious burden of chronic disease associated with it. They note that larger social, economic, and political contexts have shaped the nutrition transition and they highlight the impacts of *colonization* on the way the nutrition transition has manifested in these communities. When investigating this food crisis, Martin and Amos call into question the ideas associated with nutritionism, which focuses on specific ingredients in the diet, stresses individual responsibility, and fails to take into account Indigenous perspectives on how and why their communities experience food insecurity. For example, for many remote communities in Canadian sub-arctic regions, the Northern Store (owned and operated by the Hudson Bay Company until 1987) is a monopoly that has been the conduit for the nutrition transition because both the cost and quality of the foods it purveys do not support healthy dietary choices (Thompson, Kamal, Alam, & Wiebe, 2012, p. 55). In contrast, Martin and Amos (2017) emphasize the traditional importance of food in the production of community among Indigenous cultures and contend that respecting traditional cultural practices in terms

of food must become part of the solutions needed in many Indigenous communities, and indeed other communities and cultures around the globe. One solution that respects traditional cultural practices involves food sovereignty.

FOOD SOVEREIGNTY

Food sovereignty emerged in response to the lack of action over **the last** 60 years (exacerbated by the rise of neoliberal reforms in the 1980s) concerning the right to food, which was originally enshrined in the United Nations Declaration of Human Rights in 1948 (United Nations, 1948). Put forward by an international movement of peasants called La Via Campesina, the concept moves this human right beyond the right to food to the right to feed oneself (Morgan, 2010). La Via Campesina, the largest social movement in the world, was launched by small farmers who feared that pending trade deals would worsen their situation (Friedmann, 2017). As a food justice organization, it calls on "all people to keep up the endless fight for food sovereignty, for integral agrarian reforms, for the return of territories to indigenous people, for an end to capital's violence, and to restore agroecological small-farmer and indigenous food systems" (La Via Campesina, 2014).

Desmarais (2017) defines food sovereignty as the right of peoples and nations to control their own food and agricultural systems, including their own markets, production modes, food cultures, and environments. Describing it as a radical alternative to corporate-led, industrial agriculture, she explains that food sovereignty is based on six principles: it focuses on food for people, values food providers, localizes food systems, puts control locally, builds knowledge and skills, and works with nature. In addition, she emphasizes that food sovereignty places producers and consumers at the heart of decision making by asking vital questions: "What food is produced, who grows the food, where and how is it produced, and at what scale" (p. 366); thus, addressing issues of power and power dynamics. McMichael (2008, p. 220) expands on this when he proposes that food sovereignty "serves to appropriate and reframe the dominant discourse, and as a political tactic to gain traction in the international political-economy en route to a global moral economy organized around 'co-operative advantage.'"

Building on the work of La Via Campesina and liberation theology, Grey and Patel (2015) remind us that food sovereignty is a form of decolonization from capitalism's cosmology of land alienation, specific gender roles that negatively affect women, and the commodification of nature and genetic resources. By examining food sovereignty alongside Indigenous struggles, they find a key theme: "food sovereignty is the continuation of anti-colonial struggles in ostensibly postcolonial contexts" (p. 433). For these authors, food sovereignty is and should be a radical anti-colonial project. This helps to explain the development and adoption of this concept by many Indigenous and campesino movements. As Morrison (2008, p. 11) has made clear, "food sovereignty is the newest and most innovative approach to addressing the complex issues impacting the ability of individuals, families and communities to respond to their own needs for healthy, culturally adapted Indigenous foods."

INDIGENOUS FOOD SOVEREIGNTY

Indigenous food sovereignty offers a restorative framework for nurturing relationships with each other and with the culturally important plants, animals, and waterways that provide people with food (Wadden, 2010). As emphasized by the People's Food Policy Project (2011, p. 9), "Indigenous

food sovereignty understands food as sacred and part of a web of relationships with the natural world that sustains culture and community." Martin and Amos (2017, p. 209) maintain that Indigenous food sovereignty holds a special significance for Indigenous Peoples because, even though the terminology itself is relatively new, the concept "speaks to issues that Indigenous peoples and communities have been struggling with for many, many generations." They add that advocates for Indigenous food sovereignty emphasize the importance of not only decolonization and self-determination, but also co-management strategies for developing resources and using food.

Like food sovereignty, Indigenous food sovereignty is based on a set of underlying principles, all of which reflect Indigenous worldviews: 1) food is sacred; 2) participation (at the individual, family, community, and regional levels); 3) self-determination; and 4) legislation and policy reform (Martin & Amos, 2017). Morrison (2011) observes that the principles of Indigenous food sovereignty are founded in Indigenous Peoples' responsibilities to uphold their distinct cultures and relationships to the land and food systems. Avoiding the limitations imposed by definitions, she argues that the term describes "the present-day strategies that enable and support the ability of Indigenous communities to sustain traditional hunting, fishing, gathering, farming and distribution practices" (pp. 97–98). Writing from an urban perspective, Cidro, Adekunle, Peters, and Martens (2015) emphasize the importance of cultural food with respect to Indigenous food sovereignty, adding that their research yielded three themes: growing, harvesting, preparing, and eating cultural food as ceremony; cultural food as a part of connection to land through reciprocity; and relearning Indigenous food sovereignty to address food insecurity in the city. Morrison (2011) broadens the discussion by pointing out that Indigenous food sovereignty also provides a framework for exploring, transforming, and rebuilding the industrial food system into a more just and ecological system for everyone. In this vein, Loukes, Ferreira, Gaudet, and Robidoux (2021, p. 157) note that conversations and actions around food sovereignty must "move toward a diverse range of economic models that center Indigenous people's sovereignty." One economic model being explored by Indigenous communities is the social economy.

INDIGENOUS COMMUNITIES AND THE SOCIAL ECONOMY

The term "social economy" has a long and global history; however, there is not always agreement on the exact meaning of the term and the practices that are subsumed under its umbrella (Bouchard, 2009; McMurtry, 2010; Quarter, 1992). That said, the social economy encompasses many different types of organizations whose social objectives are central to their mission (Quarter, Mook, & Armstrong, 2018). In essence, "a social economy implies the basic reorientation of the whole economy and related social institutions" (Fontan & Shragge, 2000, p. 9). This includes Indigenous communities, which use social-economy organizations to overcome the devastations of colonization and return to their pre-colonial food practices through food-sovereignty initiatives.

In her exploration of the social economy as a model for Indigenous governance, Kuokkanen (2011) reports that the term "social economy" was first developed by an anthropologist studying the Tlingit society on the northwest coast of Canada in order to describe the inextricable link between economics and social organization and to recognize how the economy is embedded in social relations in Indigenous economic systems. Using the social economy as the starting point for considering

Indigenous governance, she proposes foregrounding "not only indigenous economic systems and their significance in their entirety but also social institutions as the basis of forming contemporary political organization and governance" (p. 233). For Kuokkanen, one of the added bonuses of the social economy is that it helps avoid the false dichotomy between traditional and modern, thus circumventing distractions regarding authenticity and traditionalism.

Sengupta, Vieta, & McMurtry, (2015) note that Indigenous businesses make up a distinct type of social enterprise in Canada, because they are led and managed by Indigenous communities. They maintain that Indigenous social enterprises have a complex history, with the forerunners of current Indigenous social-economy initiatives being implemented by non-Indigenous settlers and having a negative effect on Indigenous communities, reflecting the broader realities of colonization. Today, the factors that influence social-economy development in Indigenous communities include "the ability to convert different types of capital – including land, human, social, environmental, cultural, and financial capital – to meet holistic requirements of diverse Indigenous communities" (p. 119), resulting in organizations with unique quadruple bottom line indicators: economic, social, environmental, and cultural. That said, the fact that Indigenous communities participate in the social economy does not mean that the concept is automatically accepted.

> The presumption must be that the social economy label is a term that comes from outside a given community – and as such may or may not fit with the terminology used by that community for naming its experience, even though many aspects of what is labelled by the concept describes centuries-old Aboriginal practice. (Wuttunee, 2010, p. 210)

After examining critiques of the concept, Wuttunee (2010) puts forward two reasons why the social economy has become an effective tool of community development: first, it permits a range of forms; second, it maintains control in the hands of Indigenous communities. Many Indigenous communities in Canada have chosen to participate in different forms of the social economy and have a great deal to teach non-Indigenous practitioners, policy makers, and academics about the conceptualization and practice of the social economy. We now turn to some of these initiatives.

INDIGENOUS SOCIAL ECONOMY INITIATIVES

There are numerous examples of social-economy initiatives created by Indigenous people in Canada. As settler researchers, we were familiar with the benefits of the social economy among settler societies and wondered how Indigenous communities engage with the social economy, particularly in the realm of food. To answer this question, we simply documented the extent of food-related social economy initiatives, using publicly available information posted by Indigenous organizations. In doing so, we found many examples of the social economy (Sumner, McMurtry, & Tarhan, 2019) and offer a respectful scan of these food-related initiatives.

To carry out this study, we employed a three-step method to assemble a map and a corresponding Canada-wide database of alternative food procurement in Indigenous communities. In the first step, we conducted an online search using the keywords "Indigenous/First Nation/Inuit/Metis food project" and "Indigenous/First Nation/Inuit/Metis food program." We used an online search engine and academic databases to search related media articles, information from support organizations (i.e., organizations that provide financial and/or logistical support) and reports, as well as academic articles.

As a result of this initial search, we identified various types of Indigenous food initiatives (including but not limited to such things as co-operatives, community gardens, community food markets, traditional food initiatives in healthcare institutions, and school gardens). Step two involved a secondary online search for each type of initiative, which resulted in the identification of numerous additional initiatives and organizations that implement or support alternative food procurement in and/or by Indigenous communities. The third step of the online search involved an inquiry into the websites of and grey literature (e.g., reports) published by these support organizations to reveal additional Indigenous-led food procurement initiatives.

Our online research identified a total of 167 Indigenous food-related social-economy initiatives across the country. The largest number of examples were community gardens and greenhouses (58), followed by co-operatives (42), school gardens (17), food markets (9), community-based food programs (9), harvesting and hunting initiatives (5), education and training (5), institutional food (4), community kitchens (2), procurement initiatives (2), and single initiatives including but not limited to a food aid program, a food bank, a food distribution center, a combined food market–community garden–greenhouse, and a harvesting and a hunting initiative focused on food aid. A brief description of a variety of initiatives will provide a window into the breadth of food-related social economy options used by Indigenous Peoples: a social enterprise, a community garden and a community freezer program, a food bank, and a country food program (see Table 1).

The first example involves a social enterprise in Garden Hill First Nation in the province of Manitoba. In her research, Puzyreva (2017) describes Meechim Inc., which embraces community economic development. By seeking to localize food production to meet community needs, it aims "to produce locally at the farm situated on reserve, sell the produce at a local market at lower prices than at the Northern Store, and to potentially introduce more initiatives that would increase healthy food consumption in the future, like a healthy food café" (p. 24). The goals of Meechim Inc. include youth and adult training and work opportunities through the provision of agriculture equipment and infrastructure, and increased food security and sustainable livelihoods (Thompson, 2015). Although improvements are needed, Meechim Inc. has the potential to help make food more affordable, bring people together, and instill a "we-can-do-it" approach in dealing with community issues (Puzyreva, 2017).

The second example centers on the Hopedale and Rigolet Inuit Community Governments in the province of Newfoundland and Labrador. They participated in a community-led food assessment (CLFA), which involved all members of the community in examining issues affecting access to food and developing solutions to overcome challenges in a locally appropriate manner (Food First Newfoundland, n.d.). Subsequently, both Hopedale and Rigolet communities decided to establish community gardens and join a Good Food Box program run by support organization Food First Newfoundland, which allows communities to order food in bulk and thereby share the cost of shipping while choosing for themselves the types of foods that are ordered. The Hopedale community also decided to expand and enhance its community freezer program, which funded local hunters to provide meat for low-income families and for elders who have no family to hunt for them. These residents are provided with one piece of frozen meat per month, while supplies last (Food First Newfoundland, n.d.).

The third example occurs on the Chippewas of Nawash Unceded First Nation in Ontario, where volunteers run a food bank in the community centre that provides food to both families and individuals of this Indigenous community. As part of the social economy, food banks like this are non-profit organizations that have a centralized warehouse where surplus food is collected, stored, and distributed, free of charge (Quarter et al., 2018). During the COVID-19 pandemic, the Chief and Council "urged every household to take advantage of the Food Bank at this time and avoid unnecessary trips out of the community to the supermarket" (Nawash Food Bank, 2021). While the food bank relied on home delivery during the beginning of the pandemic, it has now returned to regular pick-ups at the community centre.

The fourth example takes place in northern Manitoba. In this study, Thompson et al. (2012) discuss country food programs, describing them as organized initiatives that support people living off the land to feed the local community (noting that country food includes mammals, fish, plants, berries, and waterfowl/seabirds harvested from local stocks). After reporting that the one of the participants in the program "talked about how local funding and community direction results in food sovereignty" (p. 53), they conclude that country food programs are an important option for communities to consider because they can help build food sovereignty.

Table 1: Sample food-related social-economy initiatives in Indigenous communities

Name	Type of social economy initiative	Province/ Territory	Scale	Role in Indigenous food sovereignty & food security
Meechim Inc.Garden Hill First Nation	Social enterprise	Manitoba	Local	Local food; more affordable food. *Increased food sovereignty and food security*
Hopedale and Rigolet Inuit Community Governments	Community garden, Good Food Box program, community freezer program	Newfoundland and Labrador	Local, provincial	More food choice; more affordable food; local food. *Increased food sovereignty and food security*
Chippewas of Nawash Unceded First Nation	Food bank	Ontario	Local	More affordable food. *Increased food security*
Fourteen communities in northern Manitoba	Country food programs	Manitoba	Local	Local food; community directed and funded. *Increased food sovereignty and food security*

In our research on Indigenous food procurement, one organization stood out as promoting and supporting Indigenous social-economy initiatives as a route to Indigenous food sovereignty: The Northern Manitoba Food, Culture, and Community Collaborative (NMFCCC). As a program operating under the auspices of Tides Canada, the NMFCCC is a not-for-profit organization that provides financial and technical support to Indigenous-led food initiatives in northern Manitoba. Describing itself as an interconnected group of people, communities, organizations, and governments, it began as a pilot project in 2013 and became fully realized in 2014 (NMFCCC, 2017), with the overall goal of increasing food security and economic development (Glass, 2016). The NMFCCC can be described as an innovative collaboration made up of northern community people, northern advisors, funders, and organizations who all work together to foster healthier and stronger commu-

nities in Northern Manitoba, through improved access to healthy foods and the development of resilient local economies (NMFCCC, n.d.). Over the last seven years, it has supported social-economy initiatives such as community gardens, co-operatives, community greenhouses, and country food programs.

Since 2014, the NMFCCC has been releasing annual reports presented as community stories. These reports explain the organization's values and showcase the stories of food-related social-economy projects in various communities, along with a description of shared learning opportunities. They also focus on food sovereignty, highlighting its importance to Indigenous communities. As part of the NMFCCC, the northern advisors "offer their local and cultural knowledge to provide critical insight about how best to partner with and develop relationships with northern communities in the movement toward food sovereignty" (NMFCCC, 2016).

For example, the O-Pipon-Na-Piwin Cree Nation, commonly known as South Indian Lake, has a population of 1,200 made up almost exclusively of Indigenous, mainly Cree, Peoples. The one and only objective of its country foods program is "to achieve food sovereignty by strengthening and expanding the country foods service to community members in need and 're-skilling' community members" (NMFCCC, 2014, p. 9). Another example involves the Opaskwayak Cree Nation, located on the banks of the Saskatchewan River, which has about 5,000 on-reserve residents and 2,000 off-reserve. One of the objectives of its community gardens and fruit tree orchard is "to support food sovereignty and healthy living" (NMFCCC, 2015, p. 10). And finally, the Peguis First Nation, with a strong agricultural history marked by forced relocation, developed an agricultural project in 2011 focused on community gardens. Over the ensuing years, the project "has benefitted many in the community and has been recognized by many communities, governments, and the Collaborative as an example of agricultural sustainability, food sovereignty, and reconciliation" (NMFCCC, 2018–2019, p. 12).

For the NMFCCC (2017, 2018–2019, p. 7), these stories show the power of communities taking action to reclaim food sovereignty: "building a network of people dedicated to supporting and creating community, increasing food sovereignty, and strengthening local economies." In turn, the NMFCCC sees food sovereignty as having the power to change larger systems, with the understanding that food-sovereignty work has always been happening in these communities and will continue to happen, with or without support (NMFCCC, n.d.).

DISCUSSION

These examples illustrate how the social economy can be a route to Indigenous food sovereignty. But that is not the whole story. Indigenous engagement in the social economy has a great deal to teach non-Indigenous people about the importance of community and Indigenous food sovereignty. It also opens the door to the kind of food systems that can help address future food-security issues associated with challenges, such as pandemics, climate change, and geopolitical upheavals, through Indigenous food sovereignty.

In terms of community, we have already mentioned that many Indigenous social enterprises are led and managed by Indigenous communities to meet the needs of these communities (Sengupta et al., 2015). In other words, communities, not individuals, are at the heart of social-economy initiatives that aim for Indigenous food sovereignty. Community is central to Indigenous identity and relation-

ality (Vernon, 2015), and thus essential to the way Indigenous Peoples understand and participate in the social economy. As Kuokkanen (2011, p. 219) observes, at the heart of economic activities associated with Indigenous economies is "not the exchange for profit or competition but the sustenance of individuals, families, and the community," with surplus shared at festivals and ceremonies that preserve the social cohesion of the community. These economies, she argues, continue to be embedded within communities.[2]

In all the Indigenous-led food-related social-economy initiatives discussed in this article, there is a clear intention for involving and benefitting the entire community, rather than the few who are able to directly participate in social-economic activity. Compare this to non-Indigenous social-economic initiatives like food co-operatives, many of which are gentrified and exclusive, with a focus on individual memberships and benefit, and high-quality, high-priced goods that are not always accessible to a broader and more inclusive community (see, for example, Zitcer, 2015). This has led to the demise of many of these organizations (e.g., the West End Food Co-op in Toronto and the Ontario Natural Food Co-op). Such an outcome, of course, is neither exclusive to food co-operatives nor universal. However, one need only think of global corporations like Whole Foods whose clientele and price points are clearly exclusive to see a version of the negative impacts of this individualistic approach to the social economy (McMurtry, 2015).

The importance of the role of community in the social economy has been recognized by McMurtry (2010, p. 4), when he defines the social economy as "economic activity neither controlled directly by the state nor by the profit logic of the market, activity that prioritzes the social wellbeing of communities and marginalized individuals over partisan political directives or individual gain." For McMurtry (2015, p. 70), the community is the fundamental site of decision-making and "in whatever way this community considers appropriate, decisions are fundamentally democratic." McMurtry's conceptualization reflects the reality of the food-related social-economy initiatives discussed in this article—they are community focused, based in a relationality that is completely different from the individual focus of the capitalist economy that has seeped into almost every aspect of our daily lives. Crucial as these conceptualizations are, it is the practices developed by and within communities (specifically Indigenous communities) that give these conceptualizations life. A missing piece here is the public policy to support communities making these decisions (Loney & Braun, 2016; McMurtry, 2021). If the calls to action of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission (TRC) are to be realized in the realm of food, particularly in the areas of health, language, and culture, there needs to be a fundamental shift in positive, proactive, and community control for Indigenous communities to transform the colonization of their foodways.

There is another way that Indigenous practices and concepts can help move non-Indigenous communities to a more food-aware place, namely, the concept of food sovereignty. As we noted earlier, Grey and Patel (2015) see food sovereignty as a form of decolonization from capitalism. The social economy can also be a route to food sovereignty for non-Indigenous people, so they can step away from the grip of the capitalist food system, which has done so much harm to people and the planet (see Willett et al., 2019). This route is recognized by the United Nations Inter-Agency Task Force on Social and Solidarity Economy when it proposes that new definitions of the social and solidarity economy must prioritize community needs, community ownership, and community control, all as-

pects of "the transformative notion of food sovereignty" (UN Inter-Agency Task Force on Social and Solidarity Economy, 2014, p. v). With this in mind, Indigenous food sovereignty can, as noted earlier in this article, provide a framework for exploring, transforming, and rebuilding the current food system into a more just and ecological system for everyone. In other words, the social economy is a two-way street. While it can be a route to Indigenous food sovereignty, it can also be a means for non-Indigenous people to learn from Indigenous Peoples how to deepen their relationship to community and pursue food sovereignty. Respectful cross-cultural learning in the realm of economic practice and theory can only be a positive development.

The COVID-19 pandemic has highlighted long-standing issues of food insecurity across Canada, particularly among Indigenous populations (Levi & Robin, 2020; PROOF, 2022). It reinforces the importance of building a resilient food system that can weather future challenges in the form of pandemics, climate change, and geopolitical upheavals. From this perspective, there is a need to recognize the importance of the alternative food provisioning that the social-economy initiatives in this study provide, and to ramp up support for community programming to develop Indigenous food sovereignty within communities facing food insecurity. As Levi and Robin (2020) emphasize:

> Even in a state of emergency, we can design new models and reinvigorate Indigenous food ways, honouring the resiliency and leadership of Indigenous communities like community centred food kitchens, hunter support programs, goose camps, gardens and initiatives like the Indigenous Food and Freedom School. (p. 2)

CONCLUSION

The social economy has long been associated with food, from the earliest co-operatives to the latest food-sharing platforms. This association is (and always has been) recognized by Indigenous communities as a way to overcome inequities in the current food system as a result of ongoing colonization and to reclaim food sovereignty and return to pre-colonial practices. Their engagement in the social economy, in turn, provides lessons for non-Indigenous people, including the importance of community and food sovereignty. These lessons are reinforced by the power of food, which McMichael (2000, p. 21) argues, "lies in its material and symbolic functions of linking nature, human survival, health, culture and livelihood as a focus of resistance to corporate takeover of life itself." If there is going to be an engagement with the TRC recommendations, food has to be part of the solution. When food is part of the solution, conceptualizations such as the social economy and Indigenous food sovereignty need to be engaged. If these conceptualizations are to be taken seriously, careful listening to and internalization of Indigenous perspectives is necessary. Finally, there needs to be societal supports for Indigenous communities to make community decisions on food and food futures, rather than paternalistic and colonial policies.

An Indigenous social economy combined with the power of food can decolonize, eradicate inequities, and rebuild community sustenance through Indigenous food sovereignty. In doing so, it can become a model for decolonizing the economy and overcoming its inherent inequities, which have only been heightened by the COVID-19 pandemic.

NOTES

1. For the map, see https://www.google.com/maps/d/u/0/viewer?mid=1oJUIKoPXI-_vVxB6kjEt-yWwV5x6Qmpu&ll=52.16642607535388%2C-97.79301950000001&z=3.
2. While our research does not engage with urban Indigenous communities, this would be an important site of future research. Our hypothesis is that the principles and issues outlined here would remain but would be made more complex by the urban environment.

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Accompagnement à l'entrepreneuriat collectif des jeunes Autochtones : une expérience de ré-« conciliation »

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ABSTRACT

This article focuses on how to re-"concile" support for entrepreneurship in an Indigenous context based on the case study of StartUp Nations, a collective entrepreneurship support program for First Nations youth in Quebec. Based on a decolonial qualitative approach allowing the valorization of people's points of view according to their own cultural framework, this article shows how the pedagogical approach and the theoretical content of the program have been adapted. The actions of re-"conciliation" can be summarized in six actions taken by StartUp Nations to respond to the needs and aspirations of young people, as well as to the realities of First Nations.

RÉSUMÉ

Cet article s'intéresse à la manière de ré-« concilier » l'appui à l'entrepreneuriat en contexte autochtone à partir de l'étude du cas de StartUp Nations, un programme d'accompagnement en entrepreneuriat collectif pour les jeunes des Premières Nations au Québec. Basé sur une approche qualitative décoloniale permettant la mise en valeur de points de vue des personnes selon leur propre cadre culturel, cet article montre comment l'approche pédagogique et le contenu théorique du programme ont été adaptés. La démarche de ré-« conciliation » peut être résumée en six actions concrètes prises par StartUp Nations pour répondre aux besoins et aspirations des jeunes, ainsi qu'aux réalités des Premières Nations.

Keywords / Mots clés : entrepreneurial accompaniment, Indigenous populations, collective entrepreneurship, youth / accompagnement entrepreneurial, populations autochtones, entrepreneuriat collectif, jeunesse

Dans les contextes canadien et québécois actuels, de nombreuses initiatives autochtones de développement économique voient le jour pour pallier les défis de l'autonomie socioéconomique et culturelle laissés par l'héritage colonial. Parallèlement, plusieurs voient l'éducation et l'appui à l'entrepreneuriat comme les piliers d'une réappropriation de l'avenir économique autochtone. Ceci

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est d'autant plus important pour les jeunes, lesquels constituent une majorité dans les populations autochtones au Québec ainsi qu'un des publics cibles du *Rapport sur la mise en œuvre des appels à l'action de la Commission de vérité et réconciliation du Canada* (Affaires autochtones, 2021).

L'entrepreneuriat autochtone est souvent caractérisé par la forte présence d'une dimension culturelle et la poursuite de plusieurs objectifs : sociaux, économiques et territoriaux (Lindsay, 2005; Peredo et McLean, 2013). En ce sens, l'entrepreneuriat autochtone est aussi considéré comme un véhicule pour allier les valeurs ancestrales culturelles à l'économie libérale (Fortin-Lefebvre et Baba, 2021). En milieu nordique, par exemple, le mouvement coopératif est particulièrement présent, voire dominant, dans le contexte économique inuit et témoigne d'un dynamisme envers un développement qui combine des visions sociale, culturelle et économique plus résilientes (Martin, 2003). Chez les Premières Nations du Québec, plusieurs assises peuvent expliquer la forte présence d'une vision entrepreneuriale collective, notamment le fait que, d'un point de vue sociohistorique, l'entraide entre les individus assurait l'autonomie économique, sociale et culturelle des individus et des communautés (Audy et Lemay, 2009). C'est le cas des Atikamekw qui, jusqu'au milieu du 19e siècle, vivaient selon un mode de coopération où le bien commun, l'autonomie et la participation individuelle et collective constituaient les fondements de la structure sociale (Awashish, 2013; Clermont, 1977). Aujourd'hui, sans généraliser et nier la présence des entreprises autochtones à but lucratif, plusieurs rapportent que la propension à entretenir une vision collective du rapport entre les individus se répercute chez les Premières Nations dans leurs efforts pour promouvoir et développer l'entrepreneuriat dans les communautés (CSSSPNQL, 2018). Pourtant, il reste encore à mieux comprendre comment les réalités sociales, politiques et symboliques autochtones peuvent être intégrées aux services de soutien à l'entrepreneuriat (Fortin-Lefebvre et Baba, 2020).

En partant de ces constats, nous nous sommes intéressées à comprendre comment l'accompagnement entrepreneurial collectif peut être culturellement adapté pour contribuer à la réappropriation du développement économique par les populations autochtones. Cet article propose d'analyser le cas de StartUp Nations, un programme d'accompagnement en entrepreneuriat collectif pour les jeunes des Premières Nations qui a modifié un programme existant afin de répondre plus spécifiquement aux aspirations et perspectives des jeunes et aux caractéristiques du contexte des Premières Nations. L'article est structuré autour de quatre sections. Premièrement, nous portons un regard sur la littérature en accompagnement entrepreneurial autochtone et la décolonisation des savoirs. Nous expliquons ensuite notre méthodologie et justifions la posture décoloniale de notre étude. Troisièmement, nous présentons le cas de StartUp Nations en examinant comment cette initiative a adapté son programme d'accompagnement par une démarche qui porte à la fois sur son contenu théorique et son approche. Enfin, notre article se termine en suggérant des implications pratiques et théoriques pour l'adoption d'un cheminement de ré-« conciliation » en contexte autochtone.

REVUE DE LITTÉRATURE ET CADRE CONCEPTUEL

L'accompagnement entrepreneurial autochtone

L'accompagnement entrepreneurial consiste en un soutien offert aux entrepreneurs dans leur démarche de mise sur pied d'une organisation. Cela peut comprendre des conseils, du mentorat, des

formations ou, de manière plus tangible, un accès aux infrastructures, à l'équipement et à la technologie nécessaires à la réalisation de leur projet (Vedel et Stephany, 2011). Suivant les phases de l'entrepreneuriat, l'accompagnement se décline généralement selon les étapes suivantes (Le Dinh *et al.*, 2018; Messeghen, 2021) : 1) reconnaissance d'une occasion; 2) mobilisation des ressources; 3) lancement de l'entreprise.

L'importance accordée à l'entrepreneur plutôt qu'à l'entreprise varie d'un programme et d'un service d'accompagnement à l'autre. À ce sujet, Schmitt *et al.* (2016) reconnaissent deux approches opposées. D'un côté, l'approche *externaliste* s'intéresserait aux actions que doit poser l'entrepreneur pour assurer le succès de son projet entrepreneurial. L'accompagnement est alors orienté vers l'adéquation entre le projet d'entreprise, son environnement et ses ressources par l'entremise de l'exercice d'une étude de marché et par l'élaboration d'un plan d'affaires. Selon cette perspective externaliste, le projet entrepreneurial est considéré comme une finalité et l'environnement comme une donnée à maîtriser. De l'autre côté, l'approche *internaliste* chercherait à comprendre qui est l'entrepreneur et comment l'accompagner psychologiquement. Selon cette perspective, l'accompagnement est surtout dirigé vers le profil entrepreneurial de la personne et vers son acquisition de compétences en leadership et en gestion d'entreprise.

Nous savons aujourd'hui que la réussite d'un processus d'accompagnement découle de son adéquation avec les besoins des entrepreneurs (Rice, 2002). Pour cette raison, les pratiques d'accompagnement varient en fonction du type d'entrepreneur, de ses besoins et motivations, ainsi que de son contexte professionnel et personnel (Chabaud *et al.*, 2010; Messeghem *et al.*, 2020). Par exemple, l'accompagnement sera différent pour un projet entrepreneurial à but lucratif dont la motivation de l'entrepreneur est de nature économique, alors que pour un projet à portée collective et sociale, l'intérêt est d'apporter des solutions à des besoins auxquels le marché ou l'État ne répondent pas. Suivant les phases de l'entrepreneuriat, les occasions, les ressources et le lancement de l'entreprise seront abordés de manière différente. Ce faisant, le profil des entrepreneurs ayant recours à l'accompagnement se diversifie et l'initiative tend à viser de plus en plus des publics précis comme les femmes, les minorités ethniques ou le repreneuriat. C'est le cas également des populations autochtones qui présentent le besoin d'avoir un accompagnement entrepreneurial adapté aux défis particuliers auxquels ils font face (Fortin-Lefebvre et Baba, 2020). Plusieurs barrières les maintiennent en effet dans une position de marginalité face à la société dominante et cette position de marginalité influence leur entrepreneuriat (Frederick, 2008; Frederick et Foley, 2006; Fortin-Lefebvre et Baba, 2021). C'est le cas au Canada, alors que les entrepreneurs autochtones font face à des difficultés accrues pour obtenir du financement, pour établir des liens commerciaux avec les non-Autochtones et pour avoir un accès aux programmes de soutien (National Indigenous Economic Development Board, 2017).

La décolonisation des savoirs

En Occident, les discours sur l'entrepreneuriat tendent à véhiculer une vision de la réussite liée à l'héroïsme de l'entrepreneur solitaire et à son succès financier. Les services d'aide offerts aux entrepreneurs sont généralement conçus sur la base de techniques combinant des notions financières, juridiques et organisationnelles (Chabaud et Brenet, 2019) s'inscrivant dans une logique néolibérale. Dans un pareil contexte, le succès des services d'accompagnement est mesuré en

nombre d'entreprises créées (Spigel, 2015) et les entrepreneurs apprennent des notions orientées vers la croissance économique. Enseignée dans les écoles de commerce comme une « vérité supérieure » (Mir, 2003; Ndlovu-Gatsheni, 2020), cette vision économique néolibérale de la croissance s'est donc imposée sur le reste du monde (Escobar, 1995).

Il n'est en ce sens pas surprenant de constater que les services de soutien à l'entrepreneuriat tendent à véhiculer des valeurs et des notions qui ne correspondent ni aux caractéristiques, ni aux besoins et aspirations de certaines populations, dont celles des Autochtones. En effet, les mesures de soutien tendent à favoriser une conception du développement plus proche de la perspective non autochtone (croissance) que de celles généralement portées par les populations autochtones (émancipation, partage avec la communauté, et harmonie entre culture et nature) (Peredo et Anderson, 2006; Peredo, Anderson, Galbraith, Honig et Dana, 2004). Ce manque d'adaptation culturelle pose certains problèmes. Premièrement, il ne représente pas la réalité du contexte autochtone et des défis particuliers qu'elle engendre. C'est le cas du principe d'insaisissabilité imposé par la *Loi sur les Indiens* qui restreint l'accès au financement bancaire pour les Premières Nations du Québec (Fortin-Lefebvre et Baba, 2020). Deuxièmement, le manque de connaissances sur cette réalité tend à décourager les investissements et, par conséquent, les activités commerciales (Arjaliès, Bernard et Putumbaka, 2021). Troisièmement, enseigner des notions entrepreneuriales selon une approche qui ignore les différences culturelles et les valeurs d'une partie de la population constitue un manque de valorisation des fondements culturels de cette population (Little Bear, 2009).

Ce constat nous rappelle l'importance de prendre en considération les spécificités du contexte culturel et social dans la recherche de solutions viables (Hindle et Moroz, 2010; Roth, 2014). Loin d'être statique, la culture renvoie aux comportements et pratiques résultant des croyances et des valeurs d'une société ou d'un groupe social (UNESCO, 2009). À ce sujet, nous empruntons à Sahlins (1999) la conception de la culture comme étant vivante, et comme étant à la fois un héritage et un projet. Elle est un héritage en ce sens que le patrimoine culturel confère des ressources, une identité et un sens à l'existence humaine. Partout dans le monde, des communautés autochtones prennent ainsi appui sur leur culture ancestrale pour soutenir leur développement économique (Bunten 2008; Roth, 2014).

À titre d'exemple, la roue de médecine est un modèle souvent utilisé par les populations autochtones comme forme de savoir culturel pour guider les services et programmes qui leur sont destinés. Elle comporte quatre dimensions qui, ensemble, composent un tout offrant une vision holistique d'une situation. Appliquée à l'être humain, la roue de médecine rassemble les composantes spirituelle (valeurs et croyances), émotionnelle (émotions et sentiments), intellectuelle (réflexion et créativité) et physique (actions et stimuli). Son utilisation est variée et adaptée en fonction des besoins. C'est le cas notamment des programmes d'intervention auprès des jeunes, autant en éducation que pour la protection de la jeunesse, qui se basent sur la roue de médecine pour adapter leurs activités aux caractéristiques culturelles des jeunes autochtones. Utilisé par des centaines d'écoles au Canada pour l'autonomisation des jeunes, le « cercle de courage » est un modèle adapté de la roue de médecine qui se fonde sur quatre valeurs fondamentales pour guider les interactions et le rapport aux autres (Brendtro *et al.*, 2002) : l'appartenance (besoin de se sentir valorisé et important), la gé-

nérosité (désir authentique d'aider les autres), la maîtrise (acquisition de compétences), et l'indépendance (autoresponsabilité). C'est sur ces valeurs que le personnel des programmes d'intervention s'appuie pour adapter ses services auprès des jeunes (Brendtro *et al.*, 2002).

Suivant ces réflexions sur l'accompagnement entrepreneurial autochtone et sur la décolonisation des savoirs, nous nous sommes posé la question suivante : comment l'accompagnement entrepreneurial peut-il être adapté par les autochtones pour répondre à leurs besoins, leurs savoirs et leurs façons de faire? Pour répondre à cette question, notre étude se penche sur le cas de StartUp Nations, un programme d'accompagnement à l'entrepreneuriat collectif, pour comprendre la manière dont celui-ci a adapté sa démarche et son approche pour appuyer des jeunes autochtones dans leurs projets entrepreneuriaux.

MÉTHODOLOGIE

Méthode de recherche et sources de données

Cet article est le fruit d'une recherche qualitative qui repose sur l'étude de cas comme méthode de recherche afin de documenter le programme StartUp Nations. Nous avons choisi de situer notre étude dans un paradigme épistémologique interprétativiste pour la pertinence de celui-ci dans le cadre d'une approche décoloniale, puisqu'elle permet la mise en valeur de points de vue des personnes selon leur propre cadre culturel (Gutiérrez et Rogoff, 2003; Kovach, 2021; Wilson, 2008).

La collecte de données s'est déroulée sur une période d'un an (2019-2020), durant laquelle ont été effectuées des observations participantes lors d'activités de préparation et lors de l'événement de clôture, ainsi que 12 entrevues en français et en anglais (individuelles et de groupe) menées auprès de : quatre jeunes de différentes nations, six accompagnateurs, et deux des personnes organisatrices du programme[1]. Les entrevues avec les jeunes, chacune d'une durée de 45 à 60 minutes, portaient sur leurs parcours et leurs motivations, leurs sources de soutien, leurs défis, les réalités autochtones en matière d'entrepreneuriat, et leurs ambitions personnelles et entrepreneuriales. Avec les accompagnateurs, l'accent a été placé sur leur expérience d'accompagnement dans le cadre de StartUp Nations et sur leur point de vue quant au potentiel de l'entrepreneuriat collectif. De plus, nos résultats ont pris en compte treize vidéos de témoignages d'une vingtaine de jeunes sur StartUp Nations. D'une durée moyenne de 15 minutes, les témoignages ont été filmés sur une période de 1 à 6 mois après la fin de l'événement. Enfin, nos résultats prennent également en compte le journal de bord de l'instigatrice de StartUp Nations, dans lequel sont inscrites ses réflexions tout au long du développement et du déroulement du programme.

En conformité avec le *Protocole de recherche des Premières Nations au Québec et au Labrador* (Basile et al., 2014) et dans le respect des principes de la théorisation ancrée (Charmaz, 2006; Mucchielli, 1996), nous avons tenu à respecter une épistémologie de nature décoloniale (Wilson, 2008) en intégrant l'instigatrice du StartUp Nations comme coauteure de cet article. L'origine autochtone de cette dernière nous a permis de situer nos données dans un contexte historique et ontologique (Kovach, 2021). Plusieurs rencontres de réflexion et de rédaction ont été tenues pour faire émerger une compréhension commune (*sensemaking*) à partir des différentes sources de données. Dans un premier temps, le processus de coconstruction a mené à une analyse thématique qualitative comprenant l'analyse des transcriptions, suivi du raffinement et de la validation du co-

dage de manière itérative. À cela se sont ajoutées des rencontres réflexives sur le contenu du journal de bord de l'instigatrice et des notes d'observation des coauteures. Suivant les étapes de structuration des études qualitatives interprétatives, nous avons ensuite structuré les thèmes émergents de notre codage en concepts de premier ordre, de second ordre et agrégés. Cette première étape a permis, dans un premier temps, d'identifier les enjeux de l'adaptation du programme StartUp Nations et, dans un deuxième temps, de diviser la démarche d'adaptation en deux catégories d'actions : l'approche et le contenu théorique.

LE CAS DE STARTUP NATIONS

StartUp Nations est une initiative coordonnée par la Commission de développement économique des Premières Nations du Québec et du Labrador (CDEPNQL) par l'entremise de la Table régionale d'économie sociale des Premières Nations (TRESPN) pour soutenir l'entrepreneuriat collectif des jeunes des Premières Nations de 15 à 35 ans. Sous la forme d'un parcours d'accompagnement entrepreneurial, l'initiative s'est déroulée en deux cohortes, la première en 2017 et la seconde en 2019. Au total, 75 personnes de cinq Premières Nations différentes ont participé aux parcours et 12 projets se sont dégagés au cours des deux années qu'a duré le programme.

StartUp Nations a reposé sur l'adaptation du programme SISMIC, appuyé administrativement par le Chantier de l'économie sociale et financé par le Secrétariat à la jeunesse. SISMIC accompagne des jeunes fréquentant les établissements d'enseignement supérieur dans leurs parcours d'idéation et d'incubation d'entreprises collectives. Sous forme d'un parcours entrepreneurial accompagné par des agents et des intervenants des pôles en économie sociale, les jeunes et leurs équipes évoluent en fonction d'étapes précises (Révélateur, Idéation, Prototypage-Faisabilité et Propulsion), pour développer leur projet collectif d'affaires.

Afin d'adapter le programme SISMIC aux jeunes autochtones, StartUp Nations a d'abord misé sur la mobilisation et la participation d'accompagnateurs locaux. Ceux-ci ont été recrutés parmi les agents de développement économique des communautés des Premières Nations et autres organismes autochtones. Une formation en six modules a été créée à leur intention afin qu'ils puissent soutenir les jeunes dans le processus d'idéation et de prédémarrage des projets. Les enseignements ont porté sur les environnements socioéconomique et culturel des Premières Nations, l'économie sociale, et la gestion d'entreprise. En plus des rencontres et activités préparatoires s'échelonnant sur huit semaines en petits groupes entre accompagnateurs et jeunes dans les communautés, chaque parcours (en 2017 et 2019) s'est soldé par un rassemblement de quatre jours à Montréal. Des ateliers et des conférences à la fois ludiques et éducatifs ont été organisés par des intervenants autochtones afin de créer un espace stimulant de transmission de connaissances, de réalisation de soi et d'engagement socioéconomique et culturel.

RÉSULTATS

La section qui suit présente les résultats des observations, notes et entrevues effectuées dans le cadre de cette étude. Nous y soulignons quelles actions ont été prises dans le but d'adapter le programme SISMIC pour former le programme StartUp Nations afin que celui-ci puisse correspondre aux caractéristiques du contexte et des cultures des Premières Nations, ainsi qu'aux besoins et aspirations des jeunes. Nous avons choisi d'utiliser le terme ré-« conciliation » pour désigner ce

processus d'adaptation qui repose sur une combinaison de savoirs à partir du cadre dominant jusqu'aux savoirs autochtones, en priorisant le développement du potentiel global de l'humain sur l'atteinte de résultats normatifs. Nous estimons que cette démarche de ré-« conciliation » s'inscrit dans une visée de décolonisation des savoirs.

StartUp Nations a adapté son programme d'accompagnement entrepreneurial en fonction de sept étapes clés allant de l'idéation au lancement de l'entreprise. Chacune des phases a regroupé une série d'actions pour l'analyse, l'évaluation et la gestion d'un projet collectif. Mais surtout, l'adaptation de l'accompagnement par StartUp Nations a reposé dans son ensemble sur l'adoption d'une approche basée sur l'engagement, la motivation et le leadership des jeunes en mettant un accent particulier sur l'ancrage culturel autochtone. En partant de l'analyse des besoins des jeunes et des caractéristiques de leur environnement, le parcours visait à favoriser la participation économique et sociale des jeunes dans leur milieu par la mise sur pied de projets collectifs. StartUp Nations encourageait ainsi les jeunes à répondre à leurs propres aspirations, à s'impliquer dans leurs apprentissages, et enfin, à avoir envie de mener des projets communautaires et entrepreneuriaux favorisant l'émergence d'une économie diversifiée, voire une transformation du modèle économique dominant.

Les enjeux de ré-« conciliation » d'un programme d'accompagnement entrepreneurial en contexte autochtone

Les témoignages récoltés rapportent de nombreuses difficultés vécues dans le système d'éducation allochtone. Autant les jeunes que les accompagnateurs mentionnent avoir de la difficulté à s'y reconnaître dans les façons de transmettre les connaissances et dans le contenu des formations offertes. StartUp Nations avait donc comme défi de rendre son programme mieux adapté aux caractéristiques du contexte des Premières Nations et aux besoins particuliers des jeunes. Les principaux enjeux soulignés concernent la prise en compte des obstacles spécifiques à l'entrepreneuriat chez les Premières Nations, tels que l'éloignement géographique, l'isolement culturel et la mobilisation de l'écosystème, afin de développer les moyens pédagogiques et théoriques pour motiver les jeunes à s'impliquer.

D'abord, la participation constante des membres du groupe s'est avérée difficile à maintenir à toutes les étapes de la réalisation de projets. Les difficultés liées à la conservation d'une communication régulière, les défis familiaux et les difficultés d'être pris au sérieux par l'entourage expliquent en grande partie pourquoi peu de projets se soient effectivement réalisés à la fin du programme. À ceci s'ajoute la considération des jeunes face au système économique et aux structures institutionnelles qu'ils décrivent comme étant décourageantes, complexes et peu accessibles et présentant « beaucoup de blocages » (J3). Les témoignages ont également rapporté un manque d'appui à l'entrepreneuriat dans certaines communautés comme une source de démotivation durant le programme. Parmi les raisons identifiées, ils mentionnent les préjugés défavorables à l'égard de l'entrepreneuriat, qui, selon eux, n'invitent pas à se projeter comme entrepreneur. Un jeune l'explique ainsi : « Il n'y en a pas beaucoup d'entrepreneurs dans ma communauté. … C'est pas dans l'esprit de [la nation autochtone], ça paraît impossible, inatteignable » (J2).

En ce qui a trait aux éléments de motivation, la recherche d'autonomie personnelle et la perspective de participer à la revalorisation de leur culture et de leur communauté par le biais de l'entrepre-

neuriat collectif ont été les éléments les plus soulignés comme étant essentiels à la volonté d'apprendre et de persévérer jusqu'à la fin du programme. Le témoignage suivant résume bien l'ensemble des rétroactions recueillies :

> Je voulais revenir à la maison et utiliser mon éducation pour améliorer ma communauté. Ça me tenait vraiment à cœur. … Et je pense que je suis si personnellement impliquée et intéressée parce que c'est ce que je veux faire. Je sais que lorsque je retournerai dans ma communauté, il n'y aura pas un super emploi que je pourrai obtenir et qui pourra me soutenir. C'est même pas une option, du tout. Je savais donc que je devais participer à la création d'emplois (J1).

Ainsi, en réponse aux enjeux de ré-« conciliation » d'un programme d'accompagnement entrepreneurial en contexte autochtone, nous retenons l'importance d'adapter à la fois le contenu des formations et l'approche pédagogique afin de répondre aux besoins et aspirations des jeunes, ainsi qu'aux réalités des Premières Nations.

La ré-« conciliation » de l'approche d'accompagnement : la dynamique relationnelle et la coconstruction des savoirs

L'un des apprentissages clés observés dans cette étude a été la nécessité de baser l'approche pédagogique sur les besoins désignés par les jeunes eux-mêmes afin qu'ils puissent s'identifier au contenu théorique. Une personne responsable de l'organisation de l'événement explique que, pour rejoindre les jeunes, «Il faut que le programme leur parle de leur réalité et de leurs ambitions.» (O1) À ce sujet, les besoins exprimés par les jeunes portaient sur les façons de redonner à leur communauté, de se constituer un réseau, et de se familiariser avec les compétences entrepreneuriales, les ressources disponibles et comment les obtenir.

Nos résultats montrent également que les accompagnateurs ont opté pour une approche d'encadrement qui permettait aux jeunes de trouver leurs propres voies. Un des accompagnateurs explique cette position en ces termes : «Être flexible et en même temps faire avancer le groupe. Et de ne pas essayer de prendre le dessus. J'essaie de laisser leur voix guider le groupe» (A2). Pour intégrer cette approche, StartUp Nations a adapté son programme afin de miser sur l'entretien d'une dynamique relationnelle égalitaire entre les accompagnateurs et les jeunes pour favoriser la cocréation des connaissances et «que tout le monde ait une position d'apprenant» (O6). Par exemple, StartUp Nations a privilégié des outils ludiques, le partage de succès autochtones, le travail en petits groupes auprès de mentors et des cercles de paroles pour remplacer l'enseignement magistral et la hiérarchie enseignant-élève. Un autre élément évoqué à plusieurs reprises dans les témoignages concerne l'importance de se rassembler en personne, autant pendant l'événement à Montréal que par la suite lors des activités de rassemblement en communautés. Le fait de se retrouver entre eux est décrit comme un élément motivant pour «s'impliquer dans un processus concret» (V4).

Un autre élément important à souligner réside dans l'identité culturelle des accompagnateurs. Pour les jeunes, le fait que les connaissances transmises étaient portées principalement par des personnes autochtones, même si celles-ci étaient de communautés ou nations différentes, accentuait la signification et la crédibilité des apprentissages. La ré-« conciliation » faite par StartUp

Nations a aussi inclus le respect des spécificités de chaque communauté et nation afin d'éviter le risque de généralisation des réalités sociales, institutionnelles, économiques et géographiques autochtones. C'est d'ailleurs un point qu'évoque une personne allochtone faisant partie du comité d'organisation, lorsqu'elle reconnaît l'importance d'adopter une posture d'humilité :

> Je ne veux pas prétendre que je le sais, comment fonctionne leur culture. Je ne le sais pas. … Ça, c'est une autre affaire [dont] je me suis rendu compte. Je ne suis pas outillée pour faire des liens quand ce n'est pas ma culture. Les jeunes sont plus attentifs lorsque le contenu est présenté par des personnes autochtones (O2).

De manière unanime, les accompagnateurs ont souligné l'importance d'outiller les jeunes afin « qu'ils deviennent les leaders de demain» (A2). À cette fin, l'entrepreneuriat (collectif ou autre) a été mentionné comme une occasion de répondre à certains enjeux du contexte autochtone, tels que le décrochage scolaire et l'isolement. Par l'élargissement de leurs réseaux, de leurs perspectives et de leurs connaissances en entrepreneuriat, autant les accompagnateurs que les jeunes peuvent bénéficier d'outils pour développer leur leadership :

> L'idée [est] aussi de faire émerger un sentiment de leadership, d'entrepreneuriat… Le jeune va faire émerger des idées, puis c'est ça qu'on veut. On veut qu'ils émettent des opinions, qu'ils vivent une expérience, un projet (A1).

Ainsi, l'adaptation de l'approche s'est avérée essentielle non seulement pour mieux mobiliser les jeunes, mais également pour permettre aux accompagnateurs de se reconnaître culturellement et de croire en la valeur de leur travail.

La ré-« conciliation » théorique de l'accompagnement : transmission de la culture et retombées pour la collectivité

Du point de vue théorique, plutôt que de miser sur la transmission d'informations normatives, StartUp Nations a privilégié les savoirs basés sur le développement global de la personne et les dimensions psychologiques de l'entrepreneuriat.

C'est dans cette perspective que les personnes responsables de l'organisation ont fait le choix de moins porter l'accent sur les définitions et autres caractéristiques normées de l'entrepreneuriat collectif telles qu'elles sont généralement véhiculées au Québec. Nous pensons ici aux principes et statuts juridiques de l'économie sociale. Plutôt, dans l'objectif de rendre le programme d'accompagnement plus en adéquation avec les besoins, valeurs et aspirations des Premières Nations, l'accent a été mis sur le transfert de connaissances relatives au leadership, aux valeurs collectives, et au caractère solidaire et démocratique de l'acte d'entreprendre en groupe. Selon plusieurs témoignages, c'est ce qui explique pourquoi les jeunes de StartUp Nations ont vu le potentiel de l'entrepreneuriat collectif comme un moyen concret et opérationnel de faire vivre les valeurs traditionnelles et «d'aider la communauté» (V7). Parallèlement, nos résultats montrent que l'accent mis davantage sur la personne et moins sur l'entreprise a largement contribué à l'enthousiasme des jeunes face au potentiel que représente l'entrepreneuriat collectif comme alternative au système économique dominant pour contribuer à la revitalisation de leurs communautés respectives :

> [On] n'est pas en train de penser qu'on va créer une entreprise, on est en train de penser qu'on forme une génération, tu sais, d'entrepreneurs. Pas nécessairement un entrepreneur

> qui va partir une entreprise, mais des personnes qui vont entreprendre les choses différemment et collectivement ou, en tout cas, qui vont avoir une notion plus démocratique de … s'entreprendre (A3).

Selon nos résultats, cet intérêt pour des façons alternatives d'entreprendre s'est manifesté dans le choix des projets choisis par les jeunes. Ceux-ci avaient une visée de transmission de la culture ou de retombées pour la collectivité, ou les deux à la fois. L'entrepreneuriat étant vu comme un véhicule pour redonner aux autres davantage que pour faire des gains personnels. Parmi les projets, notons : la préparation, la vente et l'utilisation de peaux d'orignaux selon les enseignements traditionnels; la création d'un café-auberge en communauté offrant des mets traditionnels et l'hébergement touristique; la promotion de saines habitudes de vie et l'offre d'un hébergement pour aînés, favorisant ainsi la transmission intergénérationnelle. Les jeunes dans leur sélection de projets se voyaient comme des acteurs de changement qui allient les besoins économiques et la revitalisation de la culture :

> It's really for us to bring into the community. Finding a need and try to meet it … Try to create something that is accessible to everybody, being inclusive, try to create self-sufficiency and autonomy. (V13)

Des efforts de vulgarisation ont également été apportés au contenu des formations et des outils d'accompagnement. Par exemple, au lieu de représenter un parcours entrepreneurial et ses étapes de manière linéaire, les outils pédagogiques fournis présentaient les étapes de la mise sur pied d'une entreprise sous forme d'une rivière sinueuse dans laquelle un canot peut s'arrêter à différents endroits tout au long du parcours. Selon les témoignages, ce type d'adaptation instaure une meilleure fluidité au processus entrepreneurial, lequel reflète alors mieux les valeurs des populations autochtones, qui conçoivent le succès davantage comme un processus que comme une fin en soi.

DISCUSSION

Par l'analyse du cas de StartUp Nations, notre intérêt était de mieux comprendre comment l'accompagnement entrepreneurial peut être adapté par les autochtones pour répondre à leurs besoins, leurs savoirs et leurs façons de faire. Sans prétendre que StartUp Nations s'inscrit dans une démarche de décolonisation des savoirs, nous estimons que la ré-« conciliation » correspond à une démarche de réappropriation culturelle des savoirs. Nous résumons nos résultats en six actions prises par StartUp Nations pour adapter son programme aux besoins des jeunes, ainsi qu'aux savoirs et façons de faire autochtones dans un cycle et dans un rythme personnalisé.

En ce qui a trait au contenu du programme, nous pouvons résumer la ré-« conciliation » par l'adoption de six stratégies concrètes : 1) l'accent a davantage été porté sur le développement de la personne et moins sur les dimensions techniques et normatives de l'entrepreneuriat; 2) l'entrepreneuriat collectif a été présenté comme un outil de transmission de la culture et un moyen de redonner à la communauté. Pour ce faire, 3) les valeurs collectives, solidaires et démocratiques ont été considérées comme des savoirs à être transmis et intégrés au programme d'accompagnement dans l'objectif assumé qu'elles servent aux jeunes dans le développement de leur leadership.

L'approche a également été adaptée par StartUp Nations de trois façons. D'abord, 4) pour assurer une validité des savoirs, le programme a misé sur l'identité culturelle autochtone des accompa-

gnateurs. De la même façon, 5) l'accent a été mis sur l'adaptation des formations aux besoins identifiés par les jeunes eux-mêmes afin que les apprentissages soient en adéquation avec leurs aspirations et les caractéristiques des contextes spécifiques des différentes nations et communautés autochtones. Cette façon de faire, qui mise sur la coconstruction des connaissances, s'est concrétisée par 6) une relation égalitaire entre apprenants et formateurs basée sur les valeurs démocratiques prônées par le programme.

Implications théoriques

D'un point de vue théorique, notre recherche contribue à la littérature sur l'accompagnement entrepreneurial en ce sens qu'elle présente des clés pouvant servir à mieux concevoir son adaptation à différents contextes culturels. Par l'étude du cas de StartUp Nations, nous suggérons que la ré-« conciliation » dans le contexte des Premières Nations du Québec se situe dans la dynamique d'écoute et de partage entre les parties prenantes du programme, afin de permettre une remise en question des contenus théoriques et des approches pédagogiques. Selon nous, c'est ce qui explique pourquoi plusieurs jeunes ont mentionné que l'approche pédagogique de StartUp Nations répondait mieux à leurs façons d'apprendre, comparativement à ce que propose le système éducatif conventionnel en place au Québec. Ceci est d'autant plus important puisque les jeunes se sentent généralement peu écoutés (OCDE, 2018). Cette donnée fait d'ailleurs écho à plusieurs constats dans la littérature selon lesquels le système éducatif québécois ne reconnaît pas les façons de penser et d'apprendre des Autochtones, ce qui explique le haut taux de décrochage scolaire (Blanchet-Cohen *et al.*, 2018; Lévesque *et al.*, 2015). La même critique a été formulée dans le cas de formations en entrepreneuriat comme pouvant reproduire et perpétuer des pratiques colonialistes, ainsi qu'un discours déficitaire et néolibéral (Pinto et Blue, 2016).

C'est pour ces raisons qu'aux connaissances techniques de l'entrepreneuriat et de l'accompagnement entrepreneurial (Le Dinh *et al.*, 2018 ; Messeghen, 2021) doivent être combinés des savoirs culturels et contextualisés (Hindle et Moroz, 2010 ; Roth, 2014). Les savoirs se transmettent aux nouvelles générations afin que celles-ci s'approprient les ressources culturelles pour répondre aux défis du présent selon leur matrice identitaire. Mais la culture est aussi un projet d'avenir, en tant que conception de ce que signifie le mieux-être et les moyens pour y accéder dans un contexte donné (Appadurai, 2004). En ce sens, l'adaptation des services d'appui à l'entrepreneuriat peut s'avérer être un vecteur d'émancipation individuelle et collective dès lors qu'elle encourage la liberté et la créativité dans le développement de réponses aux défis des différents contextes culturels. Nous nous permettons ici de suggérer que ce peut être le cas lorsque l'accompagnement de l'entrepreneuriat collectif considère l'économie autrement que par la mécanique économique que prescrit la croissance comme finalité, entretenant les inégalités de classes, de genres et de générations, sans oublier les inégalités entre les espèces (Abraham, 2019).

Implications pratiques

Par un éclairage sur les besoins, les savoirs et les façons de faire ayant servi à la démarche de ré-« conciliation », notre étude du cas de StartUp Nations met en lumière certaine pratiques pouvant servir au soutien des entrepreneurs autochtones. Une telle approche débute par le fait de reconnaître que la démarche d'adaptation doit être développée en fonction des caractéristiques et besoins des entrepreneurs, selon leurs propres termes culturels. Tout comme pour l'adaptation

culturelle des programmes d'intervention en éducation et pour la protection de la jeunesse (Brendtro *et al.*, 2002), notre étude de StartUp Nations montre qu'une démarche de ré-« conciliation » de l'accompagnement entrepreneurial en contexte autochtone peut également s'expliquer par les dimensions de la roue de médecine.

D'abord, la dimension spirituelle influence le savoir-faire et le savoir-être, en ce sens que le climat de travail et les relations entre les personnes doivent être guidés par les valeurs collectives et démocratiques de respect et d'humilité. C'est ce qui sert de base au développement de l'approche et du contenu des formations, programmes et services d'accompagnement. La dimension émotionnelle quant à elle peut être vue comme la force motrice de la motivation et de l'engagement des participants envers eux-mêmes et envers les autres. Elle est à la base de la persévérance envers la réussite d'un projet entrepreneurial. Concrètement, c'est aux accompagnateurs et autres professionnels offrant des services d'appui qu'incombe le rôle de favoriser des émotions positives (confiance, humour, joie, courage) en tentant d'écarter les émotions négatives (peur, crainte, découragement, indignation). Ici, l'expérience du processus d'accompagnement est considérée aussi importante que la finalité. À cette assise émotionnelle et spirituelle s'ajoute la dimension intellectuelle qui interpelle l'esprit d'analyse, l'esprit critique, l'ingéniosité, et les capacités de planification et de gestion. Concrètement, l'atteinte de ces objectifs requiert un soutien technique et une formation. Enfin, la dimension physique de la roue de médecine complète la dynamique d'accompagnement avec la mise en œuvre et l'opérationnalisation des actions à réaliser. Elle renvoie aux activités de transfert de connaissances, ainsi qu'aux méthodes et aux stratégies de communication utilisées.

Cette lecture du cas de StartUp Nations à travers le modèle holistique de la roue de la médecine montre qu'une démarche d'accompagnement entrepreneurial réussie en contexte autochtone nécessite un soutien à la fois tangible (financier, humain, physique, intellectuel) et intangible (émotionnel, spirituel et psychologique). En lien avec la littérature académique, il s'agit d'une démarche venant appuyer une approche internaliste de l'accompagnement qui prône le développement des capacités de l'entrepreneur dans sa globalité plutôt que du seul projet d'entreprise comme barème de réussite (Schmitt et al., 2016).

CONCLUSION

En somme, le cas de StartUp Nations montre qu'une démarche de ré-« conciliation » repose sur une combinaison de savoirs, du cadre dominant aux savoirs autochtones, en priorisant le développement du potentiel global de l'humain sur l'atteinte de résultats normatifs. Mais au-delà d'un tel objectif, cette expérience montre de manière concrète comment l'accompagnement peut réconcilier les perspectives émotionnelles de l'entrepreneuriat. Les démarches de soutien entrepreneurial hors contexte autochtone tendent généralement à prioriser les dimensions intellectuelles et physiques de l'accompagnement. En contrepartie, les dimensions spirituelle et émotionnelle sont souvent sous-estimées, voire ignorées. Nous croyons pourtant qu'elles font partie intégrante d'une démarche de décolonisation des savoirs et de ré-« conciliation » culturelle puisqu'elles accordent une place aux valeurs et aux rapports sociaux qui correspondent aux caractéristiques culturelles spécifiques de chaque population (Hindle et Moroz, 2010; Roth, 2014). Pour ce faire, une telle approche suppose d'abord de considérer une diversité de résultats, basés moins sur un projet d'en-

treprise quelconque que sur le développement de la personne : la confiance en soi, le leadership, la vie en groupe et la cohésion sociale. Dès lors, une remise en question de l'hégémonie du modèle néolibéral structuré, normé, bureaucratique et hiérarchique est possible pour laisser une place à d'autres modèles entrepreneuriaux plus proches des valeurs collectives et démocratiques. L'entrepreneuriat collectif devient ainsi l'occasion d'une démarche d'autodétermination des collectivités qui mérite d'être considérée et soutenue. En ce sens, nous croyons qu'en contexte autochtone, laisser la place aux fondements culturels (Little Bear, 2009) dans l'appui de l'entrepreneuriat constitue une façon constructive de revoir nos rapports socioculturels et économiques afin de contribuer au mieux-être des communautés et à la lutte aux inégalités.

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NOTE

1. Les sources des extraits d'entrevues sont identifiées par leur rôle : jeune (J), accompagnateur (A), organisateur (O).

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