



Image: Keptin John Joe Sark

A GATHERING OF INDIGENOUS ELDERS AND KNOWLEDGE HOLDERS

MILLBROOK FIRST NATION | MARCH 9, 2017

A GATHERING OF INDIGENOUS ELDERS AND KNOWLEDGE HOLDERS

INTRODUCTION

The purpose of the gathering was to inform the creation of an Atlantic Indigenous Mentorship (AIM) Network – which is a proposed Network of academic and community partners. It has an overall goal of expanding and augmenting the research capacity, skills, and career trajectories of Indigenous¹ early career researchers and trainees at all post-secondary levels (undergraduate, graduate and post-doctoral) in Indigenous health research within Atlantic Canada. The proposed Network, at its core, will be guided by spirit, ceremony, and storytelling – hence the need for guidance and wisdom from Elders and Knowledge Holders.

THE AIM NETWORK HAS THE FOLLOWING OBJECTIVES

1. Support the training and development of the next generation of Indigenous health researchers throughout their respective stages of training and early careers;
2. Leverage the mentoring capacities of our existing network of 60+ researchers and Indigenous community health partners from across the Atlantic region and beyond as well as their expertise in Indigenous health research;
3. Deepen the transformative impact of the AIM Network by embedding each of our activities within a Two-Eyed Seeing framework that recognizes the importance of geographically-defined, community and culture-specific knowledge that promotes and centres Indigenous languages and ways of knowing, being and doing;
4. Facilitate the implementation of Indigenous knowledge(s) and support for Indigenous health research within institutions of higher learning in Atlantic Canada, creating a supportive environment that welcomes, encourages and builds capacity for Indigenous trainees.

The Gathering was supported by the Atlantic Aboriginal Economic Development Integrated Research Program (AAEDIRP) and the Canadian Institutes of Health Research – Institute of Aboriginal Peoples' Health (CIHR-IAPH). The following report is submitted to AAEDIRP. It is intended to be a 'living document', and will be reviewed by the Elders

THE GATHERING

On March 9, 2017, a gathering of Indigenous Elders and Knowledge Holders took place at the Hampton Inn, Millbrook First Nation. The gathering included 15 Elders and Knowledge Holders from across the Atlantic region – New Brunswick, Prince Edward Island, Nova Scotia and Newfoundland and Labrador. The Elders and Knowledge Holders were from the Mi'kmaq, Wolastoqey, Innu and Inuit communities within the region.



Photo: John R. Sylliboy

L-R: Miigam'agan, David Perley, Josie Augustine, Frank Augustine, Gkisedtanamoogk

¹ Indigenous in this context refers to Metis, Inuit, and First Nations of this land.

and Knowledge Holders who were present at the meeting for their feedback. Once this feedback has been incorporated, the report will be finalized.

BACKGROUND

In March 2016, with funding from CIHR-IAPH, an initial planning meeting was held in Dartmouth, Nova Scotia, and included 23 individuals active in Indigenous health research and/or Indigenous mentorship from across Atlantic Canada. Meeting participants identified some of the mentorship needs within the Atlantic region, what objectives our mentorship network should aim to accomplish, and the types of activities that would accomplish these objectives. A key outcome of this meeting was the need to do further information and feedback-seeking from a wider cross-section of individuals and groups.



Photo: John R. Sylliboy
Josie Augustine

Subsequently, in the fall of 2016 (September and October), we held three follow-up community gatherings: K'jipuktuk (Halifax, 28 participants), Membertou, Unama'ki (Cape Breton, 16 participants), and Happy Valley-Goose Bay (Labrador, 15 participants). The participants at these meetings included Indigenous and non-Indigenous people from academic (students and faculty), community, and health organizations from across Atlantic Canada (New Brunswick, Prince Edward Island, Nova Scotia, and Newfoundland and Labrador). A fourth, smaller gathering (a lunch meeting) was also held in Happy Valley-Goose Bay where Inuit students studying in the Inuit Bachelor of Education Program were asked to share their mentorship needs. At each gathering, we sought advice and guidance on how to move forward with the development of a Mentorship Network.



Photo: John R. Sylliboy

L-R: Grand Chief Ben Sylliboy, Shirley Clarke,
Margaret (Makit) Poulette

Each gathering was a one-day event that opened with a prayer, and a teaching about Two-Eyed Seeing presented by Elder Albert Marshall and Dr. Cheryl Bartlett. Following this, an overview of the proposed Network was provided. The remainder of the day was devoted to discussing each of the proposed Network activities, what modifications might be needed to the proposed activities to suit various contexts, and whether the Network should prioritize any additional activities. The activities listed in this grant are vetted and deemed 'high priority' by our Network members.

A key recommendation coming out of our community gatherings was to ensure that we seek the advice and guidance of the Elders, Language and Knowledge-Holders from the region in the creation of the governance structure and overall direction for this Network. This recommendation aligns with the eight recommendations that were identified during an Elders' Gathering in 2010 convened by AAEDIRP, where Indigenous Elders from across the Atlantic region were asked to identify how to incorporate Indigenous Traditional Knowledge into economic development research (acknowledging the usefulness of extending their recommendations to include other research, such as health). We draw upon these recommendations to inform the creation of this Network (see Appendix A for a list of these recommendations). In particular, we draw your attention to the very first recommendation:

It needs to be recognized that Atlantic Aboriginal communities are losing their Elders, their languages and their cultural knowledge very rapidly. Therefore, Aboriginal communities and leadership need to recognize the urgency and importance of working alongside Elders and learning from their Traditional Knowledge immediately.

APCFNC Elders Project, 2010

SUMMARY OF GATHERING

As mentioned, the Elders and Knowledge Holders Gathering held in Millbrook in March 2017 included 15 Indigenous Elders and Knowledge Holders from across the Atlantic region (see sidebar). The meeting was also attended by Amy Bombay, Carla Moore, and Debbie Martin of Dalhousie University, Cheryl Bartlett (Cape Breton University – Retired) and Jane McMillan (St. Francis Xavier University), who are involved in varying capacities in the proposed AIM Network. John R. Sylliboy facilitated the meeting. David Haley and Kanani Davis were also present to assist with Elders' needs. Theresa Andrew speaks Inuktitut. Her goddaughter (Kanani Davis) was present to provide translation. In preparing for future gatherings it is important to consider the significance of language and the need to support its maintenance within the activities of the AIM Network.

ELDER & KNOWLEDGE HOLDER ATTENDEES

Jane Abram

Theresa Andrew

Frank Augustine

Josie Augustine

Shirley Clarke

Gkisedtanamoogk

John Learning

Ron Lyall

Albert Marshall

Miigam'agan

David Perley

Magit Poulette

Keptin John Joe Sark

Grand Chief Ben Sylliboy

Marie Sylliboy

Invited but unable to attend: Doug Knockwood, Bill Lewis, Christine Gabriel, Marjorie Polchies, Imelda Perley, Murdena Marshall, Madeline Martin, and Elizabeth Penashue.

The meeting was convened with an opening prayer and introduction by Mi'kmaq Grand Chief Ben Sylliboy, who welcomed everyone to Mi'kma'ki and offered his thoughts on the importance of partnerships between various Indigenous peoples as a means of working towards shared goals. This was followed by introductions of all who were present. Jane Abram smudged and Josie Augustine offered a teaching about the importance of the four sacred medicines (cedar, sage, sweet grass, tobacco) as being the foundation of Mi'kmaw and Wolastoqey cultures.

Debbie Martin provided an overview of the AIM Network and presented three questions to guide the day's discussion:

1. How should an elders and knowledge holders' council advise and guide the AIM Network?
2. What would the primary goals of the council be?
3. What are the research priorities of your community? How might (or should) the AIM Network help with these priorities?



Photo: John R. Sylliboy
Front, L-R: Kenani Penashue, Teresa Andrew;
Back, L-R: Ken Mesher, Ron Lyall

All Elders and Knowledge Holders were given the opportunity to speak, and all shared stories, perspectives and wisdom. Below we highlight just a small portion of the rich discussion that took place.

Elder Albert Marshall and Cheryl Bartlett gave a short summary of Two-Eyed Seeing, which is the concept that provides the foundation for the AIM Network. Albert recommended that we read the Coyote Story in 'Research is Ceremony' (written by Shawn Wilson), as it conveys the importance of Two-Eyed Seeing, which is not a new concept. Albert said that the spiritual domain must be healthy in addition to other domains. This is why it's important to include ceremony. We must re-awaken our dormant spirit. We have epidemic health concerns because the four domains are not included in treatment.

Albert also spoke of co-learning. He indicated that it would be best to come together to share our stories in a co-learning environment. To Mi'kmaq, knowledge is alive – it has spirit. Systems need to change to understand nature. He said that we must clearly define words such as i'l'oqaptmu'k ('to revisit for renewal'). He said that institutions should be **compelled** to put in place things sacred and dear to us, such as wisdom and experiences. The current education system has been used to eradicate the essence of who we are and the responsibilities of knowledge holders today must be to assert that our ways of understanding have to be part of what we do, especially in health.

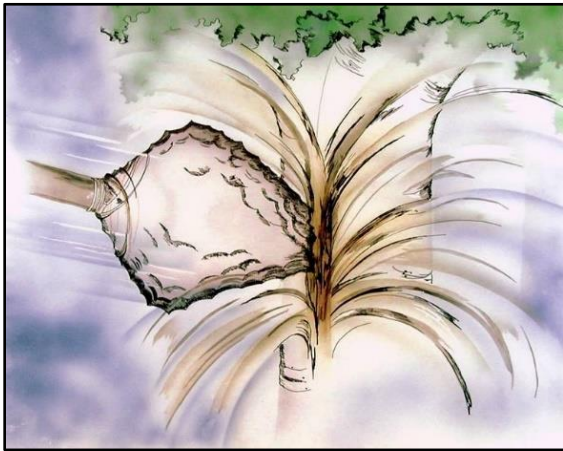


Image: Keptin John Joe Sark

Cheryl spoke of challenges that students and faculty experience while in university as many try to encourage the university to accept and use different approaches. This is why we need a network such as AIM. She said that the young people need the help of elders and knowledge holders. She has heard Elders from different parts of the country say that there is a tendency of the educational elite to think they are in the 'head goose' position and are to remain there, rather than recognizing that each goose takes the lead and then takes a back seat, letting someone else lead for a while.

Albert said that he is not comfortable with the word 'council', but rather would like the term elders' 'senate' to be used. He said that the education we receive must benefit us, however he also indicated that spiritual knowledge must be part of our education to ensure young people are well equipped to meet the challenges they face. Our students need to be agents of revival. This can only be achieved if the right stories are exchanged. We have to figure out how to move forward in a good way.

Keptin John Joe Sark said that we had a pristine environment that was destroyed by settlers. When you take away the trees, there is nothing to replenish the soil. The institutions in Canada aren't Canadian but are transplants from Europe. We're relying on European institutions to tell us who we are – this is not working. We need to look more at the holistic medicine of our people. Everything we need is out there. He thinks that this knowledge should be taught before kids get to university.



Photo: John R. Sylliboy

L-R: Amy Bombay, Carla Moore, Debbie Martin

Albert asked if anyone can gauge the urgency that the elders feel at meetings like this? Loss of language is a big concern. Even though we have made great strides in education, a very small percentage of our student population go onto higher learning and a low percentage finish high school. He said that young people will have problems knowing who they are, where they come from, and why they are here without our Indigenous knowledge. We come from a collective society where everything we do must benefit our families, communities, and nations. He wants us to deliver a message to universities so that they feel **compelled** to act to support our students to complete higher education, but universities should not be defining

who are the Knowledge Holders or certifying Indigenous knowledge. We need a community-based strategy to validate Elders knowledge that is acknowledged by universities.

David Perley said that it's really important that we do what we can at universities to immerse our students in culture. We do this by tapping into the knowledge of the elders. Students should have access to elders' knowledge at university and to be able to spend time with them. The elders should be part of faculty at universities. UNB has been asked to recognize elders there as faculty. So far, the feedback at UNB has been positive. He hopes that elders there will be given PhD credentials recognizing their knowledge.

Gkisedtanamoogk said that certifying Indigenous knowledge is important but the communities need to develop a system where we grant a degree on our people who we recognize as knowledge holders. In agreement, David Perley said that 'we need to define who holds knowledge, not the universities'. John Joe Sark said that it's important to identify who is Indigenous, not for government or institutions to do so. He said that elders' councils should be able to speak truth to power with our chiefs.



Debbie Martin provided an overview of the goal, objectives and governance structure of the AIM Network. Debbie, Amy and Jane went over the five proposed activities. These activities are summarized on pages 6-9 (the presentation slides are included as Appendix C).

Photo: John R. Sylliboy

Standing: Debbie Martin; Sitting, L-R: Carla Moore, David Haley, Keptin John Joe Sark

AIM Five Proposed Activities

1. ATAUTSIK NIPIK COLLABORATIVE

Atautsik Nipik means 'one voice' in Inuttitut, which grounds this Collaborative as a shared space that will bring our hearts and minds together for the larger purpose of achieving the health and wellness of our communities. The purpose of this decolonizing mentorship collaborative is three-fold; it will: 1. Offer mentees opportunities to remain connected to, and learn more about their culture throughout their health research experience by receiving mentorship through formalized partnerships with Indigenous Elders and Knowledge-Holders; 2. Provide academic advice and guidance on the health research process from experienced Indigenous and allied health research scholars; and 3. Provide opportunities to connect with other Indigenous peers so that experiences and teachings can be shared.

2. AIM HEALTH RESEARCH PORTAL

This health research portal will be a web-based ‘go-to’ place for communities, mentees, and mentors to connect. It will act as an online catalogue that will highlight: 1) undergraduate and graduate health research employment and study opportunities available at universities and health research institutions within the region, and we will also advertise other opportunities such as medical and dental school summer scholarships; Research in Medicine programs; dietetics internships, hospital and health centre placement opportunities, etc.); 2) student and early career scholar research successes, including profiling the health research being undertaken by trainees; 3) funding opportunities relevant for the Network (e.g., Canadian Institutes of Health Research, Nova Scotia Health Research Program, institutional internal grants, etc.). The AIM Portal will also provide a means to connect Indigenous communities with appropriate health research expertise.

3. ATLANTIC INDIGENOUS CO-LEARNING INITIATIVE

The objective of this initiative is to create a safe, healthy, and supportive space for Indigenous learning to occur within Atlantic post-secondary institutions through three proposed activities:

A. Summer Institutes

Two Summer Institutes will be held, one in Antigonish, based at St. Francis Xavier University and another in year 4, in Happy Valley-Goose Bay, based at the Labrador Institute of Memorial University. Over five days, participants will take part in ceremony, cultural learning, land-based learning, community events, and will be engaged by interactive presentations and activities delivered by academics, Elders and Knowledge-Holders, and community members with experience participating in Indigenous health research.

B. ‘The Land as Mentor’ Field Schools

Two Fields schools will offer an interdisciplinary and inter-university core training program in Indigenous health research, based on a wellness, resilience and a strengths-based approach. The first field school will be based in Mi’kma’ki and will focus on Indigenous Traditional Food Systems. It will be developed and taught by and with Indigenous Knowledge-Holders. The second Field School will offer an integrated learning opportunity by bringing students together through the Indigenous regions of Labrador. Both Field Schools will be used to illustrate the relationship between the land and health and will create opportunities for the



Image: Keptin John Joe Sark

land to act as mentor by way of institutional graduate student learning opportunities. The Field Schools will be representative of the notion that if the land is not well, we, as humans are not well.

C. An Indigenous-centered learning series for academics and university administrators

This learning series will target four groups of people at institutions: 1) ethics boards; 2) financial services; 3) research services; and, 4) health educators and clinicians. Overall, the goal of this learning series is to build institutional knowledge of Canada's shared history with the Indigenous Peoples of this land and to offer successful examples and tools to implement not only Indigenous ways of knowing, being, and doing at all levels of the institution, but to illustrate how institutions must respond to their colonial histories.

4. KAUSATTUMI STUDENT GRANTS PROGRAM

We will offer student stipends to offset costs associated with undertaking Indigenous community-based health research at the undergraduate, graduate, and post-doctoral levels under our *Kausattumi* (Innuitut for 'the dawn') Student Grants Program. Awards will be allocated based on a review process that includes a panel of knowledge-holders from both Indigenous knowledge and western scientific traditions. There will be separate review panels for our Wabanaki and Labrador Branches to ensure reviewers have expertise that



Photo: John R. Sylliboy

Front Row (L-R): Keptin John J. Sark, Grand Chief Ben Sylliboy, Teresa Andrew, Albert Marshall, Amy Bombay
Middle Row (L-R): Kenani Penashue, Jane McMillian, Josie Augustine, Marie Sylliboy, Margaret (Makit) Poulette, David Perley, Ken Mesher, Jane Abram Cheryl Bartlett, Debbie Martin (her baby)
Back Row (L – R): Carla Moore, David Haley, Ron Lyall, John R. Sylliboy, Shirley Clarke, Frank Augustine, Miigam'agan, Gkisedtanamoogk.

accounts for local social, cultural, and geographic epistemologies and perspectives. Priority for funding will be given to Indigenous students to conduct research in their own communities, including travel, honoraria, and research equipment. Applications for funding will be accepted throughout the academic year with yearly deadlines. Stipends will be available in the following amounts: Undergraduate (\$5k/year); Masters (\$10k/year for 2 years); PhD (\$15k/year for 2 years); Post-Doc (\$30k/year for 2 years).

5. AIM NETWORK NEEDS ASSESSMENT

In line with the AIM Network's commitment to meeting the health research needs of Indigenous peoples, communities, and organizations in the region, and to increasing capacity for community-based participatory research, we will conduct a community needs assessment to ensure that

Indigenous voices continue to drive the AIM Networks' development. The Needs Assessment will identify community needs and opportunities, identify whether the AIM Network will be able to assist with addressing these needs and opportunities, and provide concrete evidence of the overall impact of the AIM Network in improving the health of Indigenous communities within the Atlantic region.

After the five activities were described, John R. Sylliboy led a discussion that offered a number of recommendations for the development and governance of the AIM Network itself, as well as the Elders and Knowledge Holders Council. Below is a summary of the draft recommendations. We emphasize that these recommendations are in 'draft' form, and will be reviewed for accuracy by Elders and Knowledge Holders present at the meeting before they are finalized.

Draft recommendations for the Elders and Knowledge Holders Council

1. The Council is referred to as a 'Senate'.
2. The Senate is integral to the permanent foundations of AIM Network governance, as a long-term, sustained relationship, rather than an ad-hoc project specific group.
3. A protocol is developed for interactions within the Senate and with other existing Elders Councils in the region.
4. The Senate will have the opportunity to meet all those involved in the project, and to meet with the Trainees.
5. The Senate should maintain a sense of cultural, spiritual and academic freedom from political and partisan influence.

Logistical recommendations for future Elders and Knowledge Holders meetings

1. Members of the Senate will be mailed (or emailed) all meeting materials ahead of time.
2. Presentations to the Senate will be made available in hard copy with larger print.
3. Microphones are used at meetings.

Draft recommendations for the AIM Network

1. The AIM Network should emphasize cultural teachings and history, and opportunities for on-the-land learning.
2. Spirituality is essential for learning; our Trainees need to incorporate spirituality into their learning so they know who they are and where they come from.
3. Trainees should be taught to acknowledge their relationship to all of creation; we are but one small part of a whole.
4. Acknowledge different knowledge systems.
5. Elders' teachings have historically been oral; we need to write down our knowledge to ensure it is transmitted. The role of the Elders will be to ensure the knowledge that is written is valid and authentic and sacred.
6. The governance model currently uses the Black Spruce tree – the Birch is a sacred tree to Mi'kmaq and should be incorporated into the governance model (see Appendix B for story of the sacred birch).
7. Awareness of the AIM Network should be extended to communities, particularly Chiefs and Council, and Health Departments.
8. Non-Indigenous people who are involved in the AIM Network should be offered education and opportunities to learn from the Elders.
9. Direction of the AIM Network should come from the Elders Senate, and their knowledge should be accepted and validated by the Network.
10. AIM Network participants and partners should view themselves as 'champions' who build bridges of knowledge in a co-learning way and to help universities recognize, respect, validate and engage with Elder knowledge.

CONCLUSION

NOURISHING THE LEARNING SPIRIT

The words of Albert Marshall seem to capture the overall sentiment expressed throughout this meeting; infusing spirituality and language into any teachings should be a central focus of the AIM Network.

"Science can't tell us what happens to people when they are spiritually starved, like it can tell us what happens when people are physically starved".

Elder Albert Marshall, March 2017

To this end, we draw upon the 'Spirit of the East', which is characterized by Light, Beginnings, Renewal, Hope and Courage (Marshall, Marshall, & Bartlett, 2012). We draw upon these characteristics to ensure that each mentorship activity that we are proposing is informed by spirit, guided by our collective goals of knowledge-sharing, our shared tribal consciousness, and the well-being of the Indigenous peoples of the region. Ultimately, it is the stories that will be critical to the way mentorship is carried out, both in the telling and the listening.

As articulated by Leslie Marmon Silko (1997) in her groundbreaking work, *Ceremony* and highlighted throughout our regional meetings, including this most recent Elders and Knowledge Holders Gathering, stories have the ability to heal:

"I will tell you something about stories...They aren't just entertainment. Don't be fooled. They are all we have, you see, all we have to fight off illness and death. You don't have anything if you don't have the stories (p. 2)."

References

- Atlantic Policy Congress of First Nations Chiefs Secretariat. (APC FNC) (2011). APCFNC Elders Project: Honouring Traditional Knowledge, 2009-2011. Dartmouth, NS: APC FNC. Retrieved from http://www.apcfnc.ca/images/uploads/FinalReport_HonouringTraditionalKnowledge_1.pdf.
- Marshall, M., Marshall, A., & Bartlett, C. (2012, March 30). Two-Eyed Seeing and co-learning: Honouring traditional knowledge in academia. Cole Harbour, NS: AAEDIRP.
- Silko, L.M. (1977). *Ceremony*. New York, NY: Viking Press.

APPENDIX A: AAEDIRP ELDERS RECOMMENDATIONS



The Atlantic Aboriginal Economic Development Integrated Research Program (AAEDIRP)

APCFNC Elders Project: Honouring Traditional Knowledge

Background

The Atlantic Aboriginal Economic Development Integrated Research Program (AAEDIRP) is a unique research program on Aboriginal economic development formed through partnerships among the 37 member communities of the Atlantic Policy Congress of First Nations Chiefs (APCFNC), the Inuit of Labrador, and 12 Atlantic Canadian universities.

In August, 2010, the AAEDIRP brought together a group of 23 Atlantic Region Elders to participate in a project called "Honouring Traditional Knowledge". The intention of this project was to bring together a group of Atlantic Region Elders to develop protocols, ethics, and guidelines to inform the integration of Traditional Knowledge and Aboriginal world views into community economic development research. These protocols, ethics, and guidelines may be used to inform areas outside of research as well.

Project Process

An Elders Mawio'mi (which means "gathering" in Mi'kmaq) brought together Elders from four Aboriginal cultures of the Atlantic region—the Mi'kmaq, the Wolastoqiyik (Maliseet), the Innu, and the Inuit. Elders gathered in Millbrook First Nation at the Glooskap Heritage Centre from August 12th to 14th, 2010. The processes and outcomes of the project were determined by the Elders. The project was supported by the APCFNC and Aboriginal community members.

Key Outcomes

A key area that was explored was consultation protocols for engaging Elders. As part of the project, the Elders have made eight recommendations concerning how they would like to be consulted when sharing Traditional Knowledge.

The Atlantic Chiefs, having reviewed the eight recommendations at their 16th Annual General Meeting on September 29th, 2011, supported the recommendations put forward by Atlantic Region Elders as an All Chiefs Resolution #2011-14.

Project Resources

The Elders directed that resources from the Mawio'mi be released for educational purposes.

Honouring Traditional Knowledge Video

The Elders asked for the Mawio'mi to be videotaped. This video highlights the role of Elders and Traditional Knowledge. Under the Elders' guidance, the video was made from footage taken at the Elders Mawio'mi.

Honouring Traditional Knowledge Transcript and Report

The Elders asked that a transcript be made of the discussions that took place during the Mawio'mi. This transcript was made and a full report based on the discussions has been completed.

Elders Recommendations

Based on discussions, the Elders made eight recommendations concerning how they would like to be consulted on sharing Traditional Knowledge.

All resources can be accessed at: <http://www.apcfnc.ca/en/economicdevelopment/aaedirp.asp>

Atlantic Policy Congress of First Nations Chiefs Phone: (902) 435-8021
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For a copy of the full 2010 report, please visit:
<http://www.apcfnc.ca/images/uploads/FinalReport-HonouringTraditionalKnowledge>



The Atlantic Aboriginal Economic Development Integrated Research Program (AAEDIRP)

APCFNC Elders Project: Honouring Traditional Knowledge

Elders Recommendations

The following is a list of recommendations from the APCFNC Elders Project: Honouring Traditional Knowledge. It is an initial list concerning how Elders would like to be consulted when sharing Traditional Knowledge. Reading and acknowledging this list of recommendations should not be considered a form of consultation with Atlantic Aboriginal communities.

- 1) It needs to be recognized that Atlantic Aboriginal communities are losing their Elders, their languages and their cultural knowledge very rapidly. Therefore, Aboriginal communities and leadership need to recognize the urgency and importance of working alongside Elders and learning from their Traditional Knowledge immediately.
- 2) It is imperative that Elders be involved in all aspects of the territorial, cultural, linguistic, ecological, economic development and social affairs of Atlantic Aboriginal communities. Elders are in a position to help prioritize what is most important because of their collective cultural knowledge.
- 3) Traditional Knowledge should be woven into all aspects of Aboriginal community life, including economic development, fisheries, health, social, law, environment and education etc.
- 4) Elders should be consulted in meaningful ways and have advisory roles for all Aboriginal community planning, development, implementation and evaluation taking place. Meaningful involvement would include being members of steering committees and advisory committees so that Elders have input into decision making.
- 5) Traditional Knowledge must be shared and passed on before it is lost. The ways in which Traditional Knowledge is passed on, needs to be directed by the Elders from each territory.
- 6) An Elders Council, appointed by Elders, that would advise on matters related to the sharing of Traditional Knowledge, should be formed for the Atlantic region. The Council would advise on matters related to protocols and/or ethics and the best practices for the sharing of Traditional Knowledge as well as the best practices for working alongside Elders. This would include working alongside Elders in all areas of community life and development including research.
- 7) Elders should be involved in developing and approving educational curriculum related to Traditional Knowledge for Aboriginal community schools, provincial and post-secondary institutions in the Atlantic region.
- 8) Each Aboriginal community needs to encourage the use of traditional practices, which are products of Traditional Knowledge. This would encourage younger generations to learn about and respect traditional practices, such as traditional laws, cultural and spiritual practices, language learning and practices related to hunting and fishing, food gathering, medicine, ecology, science, arts and education.

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APPENDIX B: EXCERPT FROM JOHN JOE SARK'S UNPUBLISHED BOOK THE STORY OF THE MI'KMAQ

Many thousands of years ago, the Great Spirit created the universe and all life. The Creator enjoyed what he had made.

As he sat resting amid the twinkling lights of the stars, the sun and the many galaxies in the universe, he created Glooscap and gave him special spiritual and physical powers. He shared the sacred peace pipe with Glooscap.

"Glooscap, he said, I will now create people in my own image. These special people will have a mind of their own. I will call them Mi'kmaq."

The Great Spirit took out his special bow and selected an arrow from his quiver. He shot this arrow into a huge Sacred birch tree. The arrow hit the tree with a resounding crash and tore the bark into many pieces. He picked up these pieces of bark and blew upon them, and they turned into beautiful Mi'kmaq women, children and men, with healthy, dark red complexions. They rested in a deep sleep.

The Great Spirit again beckoned to Glooscap. Look at this large piece of clay, the same colour as my Mi'kmaq people, he said. I will shape this clay into a crescent form and it will become a home for my Mi'kmaq people.

The Great Spirit fashioned an enchanting Island, (Minegoo), and named it 'Epekwitk' which means "Cradled on the waves." He dressed her dark skin with green grass and lush forests of many different kinds of trees, and sprinkled her with brightly coloured flowers. Her forest floors were like deep, soft carpets that would cushion the feet of the Mi'kmaq people.

Epekwitk was so beautiful the Creator considered placing her among the stars of the universe. Nevertheless, he finally decided to place her in the middle of the singing waters of the Gulf of St. Lawrence. He instructed Glooscap to carry her through the heavens and down to Mother Earth.

"When you reach Mother Earth, my beloved Kiptu (eagle) will join you. He is the greatest bird on Earth, and I have given him power to fly the highest and gifted him with great vision. Kiptu will become a protector of the Mi'kmaq people.

"Put-P (whale) is the largest fish in the ocean. When you reach Mother Earth, "Put-P will escort you to where I want you to place Epekwitk. Glooscap followed the Great Spirit's instructions, and when Put-P spouted out a large column of water, Glooscap gently set down the Creator's masterpiece.

Epekwitk became a sparkling jewel, a cradle on the waves.

The Great Spirit gave Glooscap a special arrow to give the Mi'kmaqs everything they needed to survive. Glooscap used the special powers given to him by the Great Spirit, and shot the arrow into a sacred birch tree. Wigwams, canoes, bows, arrows, and everything else the Mi'kmaq needed sprung from pieces of that sacred tree.

The Great Spirit asked Glooscap to stay with the Mi'kmaq to teach them how to care for all the Great Spirit's creation.

Glooscap was happy with Epekwitk. After flying over and around the Island, he wept tears of joy. He could hear the soft, whispering voices of creation in the trees, in the winds and in the joyful songs of many birds. Listening to these sounds, and to the voice of the Gulf washing upon the peaceful shores, Glooscap lay on the warm sands and slept. Many moons passed, yet no one disturbed him.

The warm winds and gentle breezes of summer massaged the body of Glooscap as he lay resting on the sands of the seashore, listening to the voices of creation, and knowing that in this peaceful island, all cares floated away, like fog before the sun.

Then, one summer, Glooscap decided to make himself known to the Mi `kmaq so that they, too would appreciate Epekwitk as a Happy Hunting Ground. He invited them to share and care for this lovely paradise.

Glooscap taught the Mi `kmaq the lessons given to him by the Great Spirit. The Mi `kmaq were intelligent, proud, and strong in heart and spirit, and learned their lessons well. Glooscap was proud of them. Of the many things he taught the Mi `kmaq, the greatest was that all people must share with one another the great gifts of Epekwitk and its surrounding waters.

Glooscap taught the people how to see the Creator in all things and in all seasons. He taught the Mi`kmaq they were equal with all the animals, and should share Epekwitk with all creatures. He taught them to use the plants and creatures for food and other needs, but to always offer thanksgiving and reverence to these beings for their life-giving gifts. Glooscap showed the people how to make medicines from herbs, and how to dress wounds if they should be injured

If you have to kill a deer so you can live, you should tell the deer his beauty will live on to glorify the Great Spirit, in the clothing that will be made from its skin, Glooscap said.

The skin must be carefully treated and decorated so it is worthy of the Great Spirit. All parts of the deer should be shared among the Mi `kmaq people and what is not used should be hung on a tree so that it will not be desecrated. Give thanks the Great Spirit for the deer.

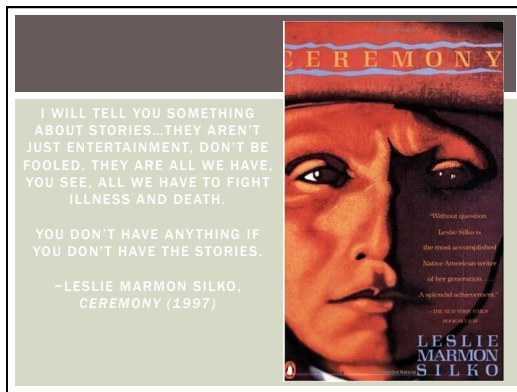
Glooscap taught them to show love and affection for children and the elderly. "The children and youth are able to grasp knowledge and have strength to carry out their plans, but they need the wisdom and understanding of the elders who have walked paths of joy, hunger, grief, hardship and danger.

With the strength of the youth and the wisdom of the elders, you, the Mi`kmaq people, will always give life the dignity it rightly deserves.

APPENDIX C: PRESENTATION SLIDES

ATLANTIC INDIGENOUS MENTORSHIP NETWORK ELDERS AND KNOWLEDGE HOLDERS GATHERING

March 9, 2017
Millbrook,
Nova Scotia



WHO WE ARE

- Large and diverse group of >60 Indigenous and non-Indigenous professors, educators, researchers, government representatives, organizational leaders, knowledge holders, students, early-career professionals, and Elders
- Situated in Nova Scotia, New Brunswick, Prince Edward Island, and Newfoundland and Labrador
- Representing Mi'kmaq, Maliseet, Metis, Innu, Inuit from Nunatsiavut and NunatuKavut, and Settlers
- Many part of NEAHR programs, particularly the Atlantic Aboriginal Health Research Program (AAHRP)
- Many already leading strategic mentorship & recruitment initiatives

WHAT GUIDES US

Knowledge is spirit. It is a gift, passed on through many people. As Elders, we must pass it on.
words of Elder Albert Marshall

- Belief that institutions of higher education, educators, and researchers must respond to the Truth and Reconciliation Commission
- Universities need to build their own capacities to respectfully engage and support Indigenous communities and priorities
- Supporting next generation of diverse Indigenous-health focused researchers and practitioners is essential for reconciliation
- Diverse perspectives, knowledges, ways of knowing, methodologies, and Two-Eyed Seeing approaches are essential to move forward with Indigenous health research

The essence of **CO-LEARNING** is that the **SPIRIT OF COLLABORATION** has been energized for: **"We, Together ... ongoing"**

1
CO-LEARNING
relationship growth
→ nurturing collective, relational capacities to understand and to collaborate
We, together ... ongoing

words of Elder Albert Marshall

**How do we re-awaken Spirit?
How do we create opportunities
for our Spirits to start collaborating?**

words of Elder Albert Marshall:

- This Mentorship Network could really do justice to Co-Learning.
- Co-Learning does not need "evaluation" ... but rather we need to understand that the essence of Co-Learning is *i'l'oqaptmu'k* meaning "to revisit for renewal" ... in order to maintain movement in the direction Spirit intended.
- This new Network will be an opportunity to do this; it could be a key facilitator to genuinely move forward in the Spirit of Co-Learning.
- Traditionally, we would not have to say "co-learning" because the relationship naturally functioned in that way. "Nurturing", on the other hand, is done in a mindful way ... anything that is alive has to be nurtured with love and compassion.
- How do we invoke the Spirit of Co-Learning at universities?**
- We need an independent body to enable mentorship, i.e. this Network! One suggestion for consideration: embed Co-Learning in the envisioned webinar series ... towards institutional uptake.

1
CO-LEARNING
relationship growth
→ nurturing collective, relational capacities to understand and to collaborate
We, together ... ongoing

PROJECT GOAL

- To build research capacity, skills and career trajectories in the area of Indigenous health research within Atlantic Canada, and beyond. This Mentorship Network is hoped to be the beginning of an expanded Network of Indigenous Health Researchers across the Atlantic and the country.

OBJECTIVES

1. Support the training and development of the next generation of Indigenous health research trainees and new investigators
2. Leverage the mentoring capacities of existing network of 60+ researchers and Indigenous community health partners
3. Deepen the transformative impact of the AIM Mentorship Network by embedding each of our activities within a Two-Eyed Seeing framework that recognizes the importance of geographically defined, community and culture-specific knowledge.
4. Provide education and knowledge-raising for institutions of higher education in the region to better support Indigenous students training in the health professions, and an understanding of the determinants of Indigenous peoples' health.

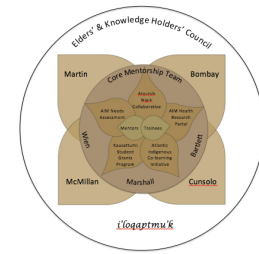
PHASE I: INFORMATION GATHERING

1. Held an initial gathering in Dartmouth, Nova Scotia where we identified existing Aboriginal education initiatives and mentorship initiatives already occurring in the Atlantic and the challenges they face;
2. Began the process of building an understanding of where improvements to student recruitment, retention and mentorship are needed;
3. In consultation with communities across the Atlantic, we brainstormed activities that the AIM Network could undertake.

PHASE II: REGIONAL MEETINGS

1. Work with our colleagues, trainees, and community partners to finalize the key goals and objectives of the AIM Network;
2. Facilitate discussions about how to successfully recruit, retain and mentor Indigenous trainees;
3. Develop a culturally appropriate and geographically-specific governance and reporting structure for the AIM Network;
4. To identify sub-committees that might be needed to undertake the work of the AIM Mentorship Network.

GOVERNANCE STRUCTURE



ELDERS AND KNOWLEDGE-HOLDERS COUNCIL

The purpose of the Elders and Knowledge-Holders Council would be to provide wisdom and guidance to the overall network.



ACTIVITY #1: ATAUTSIK NIPIK ('ONE VOICE') COLLABORATIVE

The purpose will be to offer trainees the opportunity to remain connected to, and learn more about their culture, receive academic advice from experienced Indigenous health researchers, and to connect with their peers.

- Elder Mentorship
- Health Research Mentorship
- Peer-to-Peer Mentorship

ACTIVITY #2: AIM RESEARCH PORTAL

- A 'go-to' place for communities to access Indigenous health research trainees, as well as provide a place to link trainees with community partners. It will highlight:
 - 1. Employment and study opportunities within the region;
 - 2. Student profiles and their successes;
 - 3. Student funding opportunities.

ACTIVITY #3: ATLANTIC INDIGENOUS CO-LEARNING INITIATIVE

- Making the university setting a safe, healthy and successful place for Indigenous students through 3 activities
 1. Learning series for academic and university administrators
 2. **Summer Institutes:** 5 days, cultural learning, community events, 2 locations – Labrador and Nova Scotia.
 3. **Land-as-Mentor Field Schools:** **credit-based**, core training in Indigenous health research, reflecting Indigenous epistemologies – in Labrador and Nova Scotia.

ACTIVITY #4: KAUSATTUMI ("THE DAWN") STUDENT GRANTS PROGRAM

- It will offer research stipends to Indigenous students engaged in community-driven health research priorities.
 - Undergraduate: \$5000/year
 - Masters: \$10,000/year for 2 years
 - PhD: \$15,000/year for 2 years
 - Post-Doc: \$30,000/year for 2 years

ACTIVITY #5: AIM NETWORK NEEDS ASSESSMENT

1. Identify and describe current health priorities and associated needs and assets/resources
2. Identify and describe current needs and assets/resources related to research capacity
3. Identify how the AIM Network will address the identified needs
4. Describe the impact of the AIM Network and provide the foundation for future programs.

FINANCIAL & IN-KIND SUPPORT

- CORE FUNDING (\$1MILLION FOR 5 YEARS)**
- Canadian Institutes of Health Research (Institute of Aboriginal Peoples' Health)
- ADDITIONAL FUNDING SUPPORT (\$500,000 FOR 5 YEARS)**
- Atlantic Aboriginal Economic Development Integrated Research Program* (to help support today's gathering ☺)
 - Dalhousie University
 - Memorial University of Newfoundland
 - Saint Francis Xavier University
 - Mount Saint Vincent University
 - Unamak'i College and Cape Breton University
 - Canadian Aboriginal AIDS Network

TO GUIDE THIS AFTERNOON'S DISCUSSION

1. How should an Elders and Knowledge-Holders Council advise/guide the AIM Network?
2. What would be the primary goals of an Elders and Knowledge-Holders Council?
3. What are some of the health research priorities of your community? How might the AIM Network assist with these priorities?