

# Indigenous Engagement and Partnership

## Considerations for Working in a Good Way with Indigenous Partners

### **Co-produced with contributions from:**

- Traditional Knowledge Keepers and Elders
- Indigenous community representatives and leaders
- Leaders in Indigenous engagement
- Indigenous and non-Indigenous practitioners working in relevant fields
- Professionals with extensive experience in cross-cultural partnerships
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## Table of Contents

<b>Considerations for the Indigenous Focused Program Area</b> _____	<b>4</b>
Considerations for Project Selection Criteria_____	<b>4</b>
Considerations for Program and Project Design_____	<b>13</b>
<b>Wise Practices in Building Good Relations</b> _____	<b>17</b>
Good Practices in Relationship Building_____	<b>17</b>
Indicators of a Good Partnership_____	<b>19</b>
What to Avoid when Partnering Respectfully with Indigenous Peoples__	<b>20</b>
<b>Appendix A. Methodology</b> _____	<b>23</b>
Scope of the Research_____	<b>23</b>
Who We Spoke To_____	<b>23</b>
Interview Process_____	<b>25</b>
Interview Tool_____	<b>25</b>
	<b>26</b>



## Considerations for the Indigenous Focused Program area

This report provides guidance on project selection criteria, program design, and building strong relationships with Indigenous communities for the BHP Foundation's Indigenous Focused Program area.



### Considerations for Project Selection Criteria

#### 1. Prioritize partnering with projects that are Indigenous led.

- ▶ If the project partner is a non-Indigenous organization, consider whether there is Indigenous voice in decision making. For example, is there Indigenous representation at the senior management or executive level? Does the project have an Indigenous advisory council or working group that guides the design and delivery of the project? Consider asking how long Indigenous representation or advisory groups have been part of the organization.
- ▶ *Avoid partnering with organizations that rely on a single Indigenous staff or Board member to ensure cultural competency or safety for the entire organization.*
- ▶ *As an example, the Nuclear Waste Management Organization (NWMO) is advised by a Council of Elders and Youth that provide counsel on integrating Indigenous knowledge systems into policy and practice, as well as advising on maintaining good relations with Indigenous communities. This demonstrates how involving Indigenous advisory groups can guide culturally informed decision-making.*
- ▶ *Another example is Native Courtworker and Counselling Association of British Columbia (NCCABC), which is governed by a board of 13 community-elected members representative of the communities that are being served by NCCABC. This highlights how advisory groups can ensure culturally informed decision-making.*
- ▶ Regardless of whether the project is Indigenous-led or not, it is imperative that the project is co-designed with those who the project is intended for. Each community is distinct with their own needs and priorities, and it is necessary that the design of a project is reflective of those priorities.

- *Unless there is a long-standing partnership (and even if there is a longstanding partnership), relationship building and community engagement are essential to the design of new programming.*

## **2. Prioritize partnering with organizations that have established relationships with Indigenous communities, organizations and/or people.**

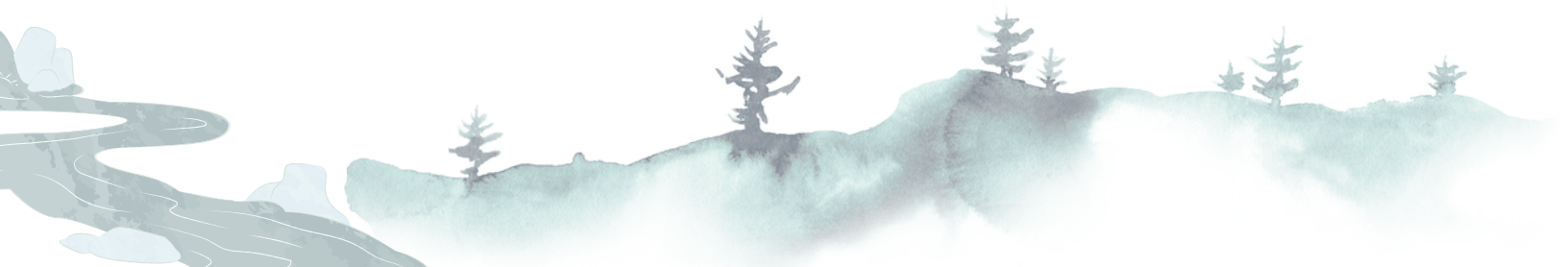
- Partners that have a demonstrated track record of working with Indigenous communities consistently will likely have already identified and worked through some of the challenges and barriers that can impede the success of the project (e.g. establishing trust, geographic, relational, capacity).
- *See section on Wise Practices in Building Good Relations for indicators of a good partnership.*
- Partners that are currently working with one or more Indigenous communities will also most likely have an understanding of that community including the political context, which can impact ongoing support for the project.



*We did pretty diligent scoping on [the initiative's focus] and asked if there would be interest in more resources coming to the [community] and the response was that more flexible access to non-government resources would be helpful. But the caveat was if your intent is to come and tell us what to do, then don't come. There's a big history of philanthropy coming in to change people and impose things on people.*

## **3. Prioritize project partners that can demonstrate that the organization has done work to reflect on the historical and ongoing impacts of colonization.**

- This consideration is particularly true of non-Indigenous organizations working with Indigenous partners. It is important for individuals working within an Indigenous context to understand the historic and ongoing impacts of colonization in order to gain an understanding of the root causes for the need for many of the projects.



- *Consider whether potential partners have publicly available documents related to fostering inclusivity, safe spaces and good relations with Indigenous peoples such as strategic plan priorities or documentation of ongoing work to address the impacts of colonization. For example, Nature United has created an Indigenous Right Relations Strategy and Action Plan, articulating specific actions the organization is taking to engage in right relations with Indigenous peoples.*
- *Relatedly, it is important for organizations to reflect on and address power imbalances in funder / fundee relationships. Consider asking organizations to share about their learning journey and trajectory.*
- *Consider whether evidence supports that potential project partners works to address the impacts of colonization and/or demonstrates support for UNDRIP.*
- *Consider also (if a potential partner is also a funder) whether the funding agreements have built in flexibility or whether they are overly stringent in terms of reporting expectations and timelines.*
- *Having an action plan in place or policies related to fostering good relations, addressing racism, or upholding Indigenous knowledge systems are good indicators that an organization that partners with or intends to partner with Indigenous peoples has not only done some reflective work but is working toward institutionalizing a culturally safe environment.*
- *Consider whether there is a department whose role at the organization is to set standards for and support the implementation of policy related to fostering an inclusive and safe environment for staff and partners. For example, NWMO has an Indigenous Knowledge and Reconciliation Department whose role is to support the implementation of NWMO's Reconciliation Policy and Indigenous Knowledge Policy.*
- *Consider whether a potential partner has policy developed related to fostering a safe and inclusive space for Indigenous peoples and protecting Indigenous knowledge systems.*
- *Consider whether there is a process for identifying and addressing racism.*



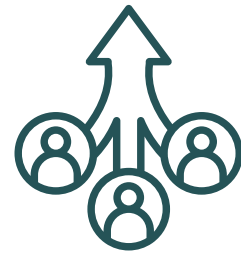


*People need to understand what reconciliation is... As Indigenous people we have had to walk through these things for a long time, and most of the population hasn't had to do that – acknowledging those gaps is really important.*

#### **4. Prioritize working with project partners who have values that are clearly aligned with the work.**

- ▶ Key informants described values related to transparency, consistency, humility, and accountability to be extremely important when partnering with Indigenous communities, organizations and peoples. Consider asking organizations to describe their approach to partnering with Indigenous organizations. In addition, consider asking organizations about the values they bring to their work and why the focus area is a priority for them.

*For where we have been successful, I think is because we've led with humility, we've led with transparency, we've led with acknowledging what we do know and don't know about the field where we see ourselves as experts, and transparency about our future intentions for this project.*



#### **5. Prioritize project partners that take a wholistic approach to programming including investing in Indigenous communities and peoples.**

- ▶ It is well known that Indigenous communities, particularly those located in rural and remote areas, are underfunded and underserved in terms of programming. Furthermore, funders do not always see the same value in the priorities that Indigenous partners have, in part due to a difference in worldview. Wellness cannot be addressed piecemeal (one factor at a time), and a wholistic approach aligns with Indigenous worldviews, where the interconnectedness of family, community, language, culture and land are all intertwined.
- ▶ *Inclusive program designs identify the barriers that can inhibit participation in programming such as transportation, childcare, and wellness and then work to address them.*

- *Language, culture, family, community and environment are integral components to health and wellbeing and economic development in programming that serves Indigenous peoples.*



*Be sensitive to the fact that the First Nations do not have a lot of capacity unless they have some big industry...accept that they have restrictions on how much they can put into the partnership.*

**6. If the project partner is an intermediary funder, prioritize project partners that take a flexible approach to funding that upholds Indigenous self-determination and seeks to fund for depth rather than breadth.**

- *Indigenous peoples have been historically over-scrutinized and over-policed in how funding is spent and whether funding is utilized for things considered a priority by Western standards. Consider funding partners that employ a trust-based approach to funding.*
- *Trust-based approaches to funding looks like minimizing paperwork and administrative burdens (e.g. proposal development, reporting to funders), allowing flexibility in the design to enable community engagement and iteration, having community identify program outcomes, having flexibility in timelines, and reducing barriers to working together including revising restrictive policies and procedures that value risk mitigation over effective self-determined programming in Indigenous communities. For example, both MakeWay and the Mastercard Foundation have a commitment to trust based philanthropy and actively work to build in flexibility to enable self-determined programming.*
- *Other indicators of sustainable funding practices include offering multi-year grants and having long-term funding relationships with the same community / project.*
- *Adequately funding projects is a sign that you value the work that communities do and indicates they are worth investing in. In relational work, invest for depth, not breadth.*
- *Funding projects for multiple years (e.g. 5 years) supports a community with planning workloads and retaining key staff. A chronic challenge in rural/remote communities is finding staff to fill positions and then retaining those staff. This challenge is exasperated when there is no job security beyond 1-year intervals.*



- ▶ Unless a community or organization has already been given a mandate to engage in a particular project or the project is ongoing, there will likely need to be a community engagement component to ensure the project design is reflective of community priorities. If the project design is new, ensure there is time to engage with community including community champions, Elders, and the governance body (e.g. Chief and Council).
- ▶ *In Canada, Chief and Council is technically the governing body in First Nations communities, but unless community has done the work to reclaim the structure, it is a colonial process that frequently does not accurately reflect decision making. Rights remain with each individual First Nation member. Community priorities must come from the collective, therefore community engagement is necessary unless there is already a written mandate.*
- ▶ *Guidance from Elders is an honour and a benefit. If there is an Elders council or Elders who have been identified by community contacts, it is recommended to seek feedback and guidance on the project goals, approach, design and delivery.*
- ▶ It is also worth noting that many communities are at capacity in terms of staff time and have numerous competing priorities. As a result, the pace of the work may be slower than first anticipated. Ensure milestone dates are reasonable and build in flexibility to be able to shift dates as needed (and as possible).
- ▶ *As noted, relationship building with a community where the community is effectively deciding whether to commit to a partnership frequently takes a year's worth of time. Once a community commits to a partnership, it is not unusual to spend another year in the design phase depending on the complexity of the project. From there, it is advisable to commit to 5 years of delivering a project—particularly a project that focuses on system change. Regular check ins are recommended to maintain relations, support programing, and workshop challenges as they arise.*

*The partnership building element, that can take a fair amount of time especially if the partners are new to each other. If there is a short timeline, it might make sense to go with partners that already know each other. It may be the case that a non-Indigenous organization, it can really become dominated by the non-Indigenous organization, they may not be aware of the culture.*

*5 years is absolutely foundational if you want to create change. You need time to learn and evolve and adapt and refine, and the does not happen in a year.*



**7. If the project partner is an intermediary funder, prioritize project partners that have the capacity to provide support to Indigenous communities.**

- ▶ Key informants described a lack of staffing capacity as well as turnover within community as challenges. Project partners are in a position to support some of these challenges through funding allocation, skill and knowledge building activities, and ongoing support and mentorship. It is important that intermediary partners have the capacity to provide ongoing support (as needed) to Indigenous partners.
- ▶ *At the most basic level, project partners should have the staff capacity to engage in a relational partnership with Indigenous partners with one or more consistent people who are able to respond in a timely manner, meet regularly (as needed), and have the capacity to respond to requests for support.*
- ▶ *Other types of capacity that are beneficial include the ability to share tools and resources that can support development, offer training and mentorship opportunities as wanted and needed, and connect Indigenous partners to other beneficial networks, communities or resources.*

*Non-Indigenous or Indigenous partners need to make sure that they are bringing resources and capacity to the table for communities to do that work. If you are going to do a huge project, those considerations need to be incorporated regardless of who you are.*



## 8. Partner with a diversity of Indigenous organizations or projects that support a diversity of Indigenous groups.

- 1. It was noted by some key informants that it is important to partner with those who will benefit a diversity of Indigenous peoples including First Nations, Métis, Inuit, urban Indigenous, as well as those who live in on reserve and in rural and remote areas.
- *There is significant diversity among Indigenous peoples. Consider supporting Indigenous peoples that have less access to resources, such as peoples who live in the North or in rural, remote and small population communities. Consider also the types of resources that populations have access to. For example, urban Indigenous peoples in general have increased access to health care, education and other services, but often have less access to culture and connection.*
- *Also note the importance of taking a distinctions-based approach to programing. For example, a program designed for a First Nation from the West Coast is not necessarily applicable to a First Nation from central Canada, an Inuit community or a Métis community. Furthermore, there are regional differences to consider.*



Indigenous Nations of Canada: This representation serves as a starting point for recognizing the complexity and diversity of Indigenous identities in Canada. It's crucial to acknowledge that each nation listed, and many more not included, has its own governance structures, cultural practices, and relationships with the land.

# 1. Is the project partner an Indigenous-led organization?

**Yes**

Proceed with partnership & step 4

**No**

Move to step 2

## 2. Assess Indigenous Representation

Does the organization have meaningful Indigenous representation at senior levels (e.g., management, executive, advisory council)?

**Yes**

Proceed to step 3

**No**

Avoid partnership unless representation is improved.

## 3. Evaluate Advisory Structures

Does the project include an Indigenous advisory group or working group to guide design and delivery?

**Yes**

Proceed to step 4

**No**

Recommend forming an advisory group before proceeding.

## 4. Co-Design with Communities

Is the project co-designed with the intended community, reflecting their needs and priorities?

**No**

Engage in relationship-building and co-design efforts.

**Yes**

Proceed with partnership

**Yes**

Proceed with confidence

## 5. Long-Standing Partnerships

Is there a long-standing partnership with this community?

If all criteria are met, proceed with confidence in partnership.

**No**

Avoid partnership unless representation is improved.

## Considerations for Program and Project Design

### 1. Ensure the approach to designing each project is participatory, adaptable, and trauma informed.

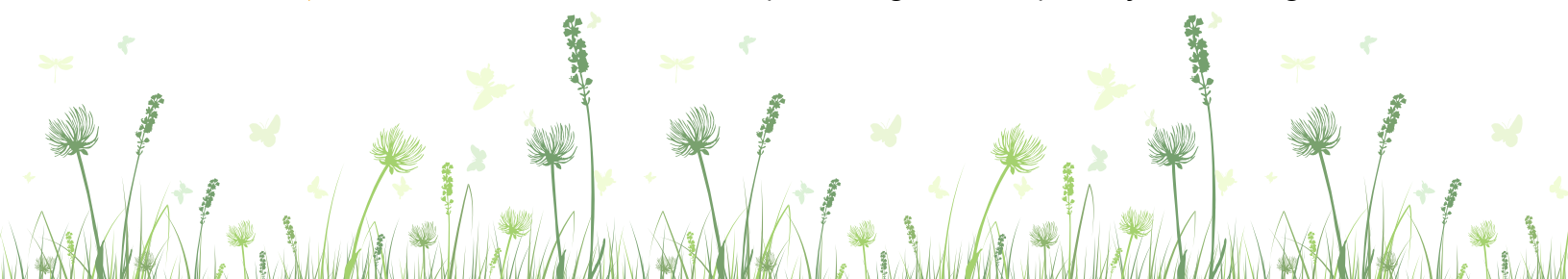
- ▶▶ It is imperative that the project is co-designed with those who the project is intended for and that it takes a trauma-informed lens to the work given the historical and ongoing impacts of colonization in Indigenous communities. Further, it is important that that project is flexible and adapts as it needs to in order to remain relevant and appropriate to the needs of those the project is serving.
- ▶▶ *Indicators of a co-designed project include community engagement as part of the design, community-defined outcomes, community members involved in the design and delivery of the project, and the project is reflective of community identified priorities, context and culture.*
- ▶▶ *It is worth noting that co-designing projects with new partners takes time. There is a need for time to build relationships, seek guidance on project goals and design, receive approval on plan for design and delivery, and then implement the project on a timeline that works with community. It is not unusual for timelines to be delayed due to competing priorities, community crises, elections or other factors.*



*For it to be successful for the funder or the organization, it needs to first and foremost be flexible for the Indigenous partner.*

### 2. Ensure that each project has a realistic timeframe that includes time for relationship building, community engagement, and project design (as appropriate).

- ▶▶ It is imperative that the project is co-designed with those who the project is intended for and that it takes a trauma-informed lens to the work given the historical and ongoing impacts of colonization in Indigenous communities. Further, it is important that that project is flexible and adapts as it needs to in order to remain relevant and appropriate to the needs of those the project is serving.
- ▶▶ *It is not unusual for relationship building to take up to a year (or longer).*



### 3. Ensure the program design is wholistic and addresses root causes to the issue it is working to address.

- ▶ Identify potential challenges to delivering the project and work to address them or mitigate them (e.g. capacity to deliver the program, geographic challenges, Indian Act legislation that inhibits what you want to do).
- ▶ Relatedly, when designing the program as well as the individual projects, work to address any barriers or challenges to being able to participate in the program or project (e.g. training, childcare, driver's license, financial literacy, first aid).
  - ▶ *For example, Aki Solutions Group builds in holistic supports to enable participation in their Aki Energy programing. Some examples of supports that Aki Solutions has built into its programing include financial planning, counselling, and driver's license attainment.*
  - ▶ *As another example, EntrepreNorth builds wellness into its program design through the inclusion of a personalized wellness plan for each of the Indigenous entrepreneurs who participate in the Entrepreneur Growth Program. The wellness plan is inclusive of culturally-grounded supports.*
- ▶ Ensure the programing takes holistic approach that understands the interconnectedness of the individual to family, community, environment and the connection of health and mental wellness to culture and language, connection and kinship, and self-determination.
- ▶ Relatedly, ensure that maintaining wellness is a component of the program design, not only for the participants, but for those who are delivering the program. Turnover and staff burnout are challenges, particularly in rural and remote communities, and building in mechanisms to support staff who are delivering the program can help with retention in addition to living project values.
  - ▶ *It is important to invest in community champions. Community champions are generally well known in community, living and working in community, and are deeply invested in the overall health and wellbeing of a community. Community champions are often involved in community-based work because of their connection to a community—it is frequently personal for them. They are serving their community, but they are also living the same reality and impacted by the same context. They are often the person who cares for their community and if they burn out, it is very difficult to find someone who can fill the void left behind.*



- ▶ Investing in wellness can look like ensuring access to cultural support, Elders or counselling. Investing in wellness looks like having clear work/life boundaries and access to adequate equipment, supplies and tools for project staff. Investing in wellness also looks like investing in professional development including leadership, skill and knowledge building.



*Understanding that if you're investing in a project, you need to invest in people's wellness, wholistic understanding of needs and relationships between cultural revitalization and trauma. We are investing in other people's stories, and it is theirs. We are happy to be acknowledged to the extent that people are comfortable, but we prioritize being a partner to the extent they want us to be. We do not center our story, we center theirs ... Successes is not our story, it's theirs.*

#### **4. When possible and appropriate, build in knowledge sharing, training and mentorship opportunities for the Indigenous Focused Program area.**

- ▶ At the program level, as appropriate and desirable, create opportunities for projects to share lessons learned with one another and to discuss shared challenges.
  - ▶ *This can look similar to the Water Network model developed for the BHPF Water Stewardship Program.*
- ▶ Capacity is frequently a challenge when partnering with Indigenous communities. Consider how the BHP Foundation can support knowledge, skill building, and leadership development opportunities.
  - ▶ *Consider asking project partners about area of knowledge, training or mentorship support that might be helpful in supporting projects. Once identified, seek to support training and mentorship opportunities.*
- ▶ Relatedly, encourage projects to build in a mentorship component to the project design as appropriate. This supports a reciprocal relationship where community can build knowledge and skills in self-determined priority areas.
  - ▶ *Community-based programing is generally a good practice. If there is no person in community who has the necessary qualifications to serve as a staff person in a particular project, consider having the community identify interested individuals and seek to build knowledge and skills within community.*

- ▶ This can look like contracting individuals or having staff work with community to support acquiring certification and knowledge and skill building as needed. Aki Solutions, Nature United, and EntrepreNorth all include individualized and group training and mentorship as aspects of programing that they offer.



*We had never done a risk capacity assessment before, we had never had that training, and BHP Foundation set that up for us. If we had done that, we would have had to pay \$25,000, we also did a cyber security training [led by BHP Foundation], this company is so big and has so much capacity and experts in different areas, we would never have been able to do something like this ourselves.*

## 5. Ensure that reporting requirements are reasonable and consider alternate forms of reporting.

- ▶ Reporting requirements are frequently found to be a burden on communities, particularly if there is a lack of staff capacity to complete the reporting and the requirements are onerous.
- ▶ Consider alternate methods of reporting such as regular check ins to hear updates on project progress, to discuss challenges, and to identify next steps. The records from these check ins can support reporting needs. Other forms of reporting can be determined in conjunction with Indigenous partners in terms of what story is meaningful to tell and what format is most relevant.

*Sometimes organizations and people get really hung up on written reports as the preferred method of reporting out when it could be an artifact, a basket, art...I understand the importance of reporting in the written form, but there is a way to be more creative in a different form...Asking if this is something we need or something we want.*



## 6. Consider either offering or enabling a tiered funding model depending on community readiness.

- ▶ Indigenous communities are at different levels of readiness and capacity to support the implementation of projects. Some communities would benefit from a 1-year readiness grant to support hiring and training staff, engaging community and developing the project design. Once the project design is established, then a multi-year grant can be offered for the delivery of the project.



Peoples' wellness is really driven by place, family history, generational trauma - we try to meet people where they are ... we try to match the skillset that is at the table, and there is that ability to connect people with supports that exist in the community.



## Wise Practices in Building Good Relations

In addition to the considerations for the programmatic area, interview participants also shared wise practices in building relationships with Indigenous communities and partners, indicators of a good relationship, as well as things to avoid while partnering respectfully with Indigenous communities, organizations and peoples.

### Good Practices in Relationship Building

- Develop a **shared purpose, values and identity** for the work. With the shared purpose, clarify the roles, responsibilities and limitations with the partnership. It is important to define shared values as these can serve as the glue to the partnership and also the mechanism to work through challenges and difficult conversations. Having a shared identity can support a team mentality and reduce "othering."

*When you establish up front what your expectations are to an Indigenous group or body and there will be no surprises, that is what sets the foundation for a strong working relationship.*



- **Co-develop mechanisms** to help maintain a good working relationship (e.g. a dispute resolution process, an MOU or TOR). Having clear, agreed upon governance structures are important to maintaining a good working relationship built on a foundation of transparency.
- **Do your homework** and learn about the community you are working with including the territory, history, language, worldview and spiritual beliefs. Some of this information may be found online, but recognize that many materials are written through the lens of those outside of community. To truly learn about a community, it is important to go in person.

*When I talk about reconciliation, that is everything: How do you say their name properly? How many members? Is this something they would even care about?*



- **Follow community protocol.** Each Indigenous community is different and protocol will likely vary between communities that you are working with. For example, offering tobacco will be meaningful for some, but not for others.
- **Show up for events** that you are invited to. Taking part in community events and taking the time to visit in person demonstrates a commitment to the relationship and helps to foster good relations.

*Try and accept their culture and see their culture. For example, go sit in on a Potlatch and go see what they do. Sit down with somebody and talk to them about what will happen at the Potlatch.*



- **Gifting** is an important custom in Indigenous communities and can help strengthen relationships, show respect, and share resources. Bring a gift for those that are hosting you. The gift can include an item for door prizes, a contribution to school equipment, or a donation to the Elders bus for example. Relatedly, provide honoraria to those who share their knowledge and time with you including Elders, advisory members, and those who take the time to support the work.
- Take time to meet with **Elders** in the community. Ask to attend an Elders meeting and share about who you are and what you are doing. Having buy-in and guidance from Elders can greatly strengthen a project.
- Engage in **open and transparent communication**. Be transparent about what you are doing, why you are doing it and how it will benefit community. Describe how individuals can participate, what information will be gathered (if any), and how any information gathered will be shared back with community. Validate any information gathered through information sharing and sense-making sessions.

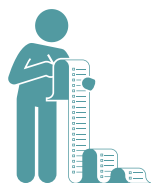
- **Meet people where they are at.** Different communities are at different places in terms of capacities. Wait for the right time to engage in a new relationship or project rather than sticking to arbitrary timelines. Invest in community readiness (as wanted and appropriate) to support communities to engage in the work.

*[It's] this mix of going and listening and putting in the time and showing up and understanding that this stuff is long term [e.g. more than 2 years], but being transparent about what you are able to commit to and to provide [and for how long].*



## Indicators of a Good Partnership

- **The community you are working with sees a positive impact.** For example, community members notice an increase in wellness, jobs, food security, language use or other benefits to community.
- **The community you are working with is public about the partnership.** For example, individuals from community speak positively in public about the relationship and the work that is happening and/or the community publishes information about the relationship or work (e.g. newspaper, website). Relatedly, there is evidence of the partnership (e.g. posters, t-shirts).
- **You are invited to community events.** Communities send you invitations to community events including meetings, ceremonies, celebrations or other gatherings.
- **The community you are working with calls you back.** Communication is not one-sided: community takes the time to return your calls. This indicates that you are a priority.



*"If you call them, they call you back." We all know how busy communities are, so in their big list of to-dos, they will call you back.*

- ▶ **Success indicators are determined by community.** Community has determined what success looks like and how you will know when you've gotten there.

*Being humble—not coming in being like “we’re going to fix everything for you guys.”  
Coming in--it’s a two-way street—you are building something that is helpful to them and to you*



- ▶ **The community you are working with trusts you.** This shows that you have taken the time to earn trust and build a solid foundation for the work.
- ▶ You and the community that you are working with have **shared goals and understanding.** This indicates that you have taken the time to identify a shared purpose and values, which is a solid foundation for the work to build from.



*If you can't get to a common understanding of common goals and definitions of self-determination and what success means or looks like, you will not be able to have a successful partnership.*

## What to Avoid when Partnering Respectfully with Indigenous Peoples

- ▶ **Avoid coming into community with pre-determined plan** about what the project will look like. Community generally already knows what their needs and priorities are and are best suited to determine an approach that will work well within their specific context.

*When you are coming in with your certifications and an already formed plan of what you want to do...that's a bit of a turn off for anyone.*



- **Avoid pan-Indigenization.** Indigenous peoples within Canada make up a diversity of Nations. There is not only diversity among the First Nations, Inuit, and Métis peoples of Canada, but there is diversity within each of these identities including history, language, geography, spiritual beliefs, worldviews, and priorities (among others). Having knowledge of one community does not translate to knowledge and understanding of another community.



*Recognizing a wide range of different ways that communities work—not taking a pan-Indigenous approach. Different communities will have a completely different approach to the same thing.*

- **Do not show up with out prior communication** or an invitation. Ensure that lines of communication have been established and that a community is interested in developing relations with you before you show up with a request.
- **Avoid extractive practices** and approaches. There is a long history of extractive research and unsustainable initiatives delivered by individuals outside of community. As a result, there is often wariness in establishing relationships with new individuals from outside of community. Ensure that the approach to any work is reciprocal and the benefit to community is clear.

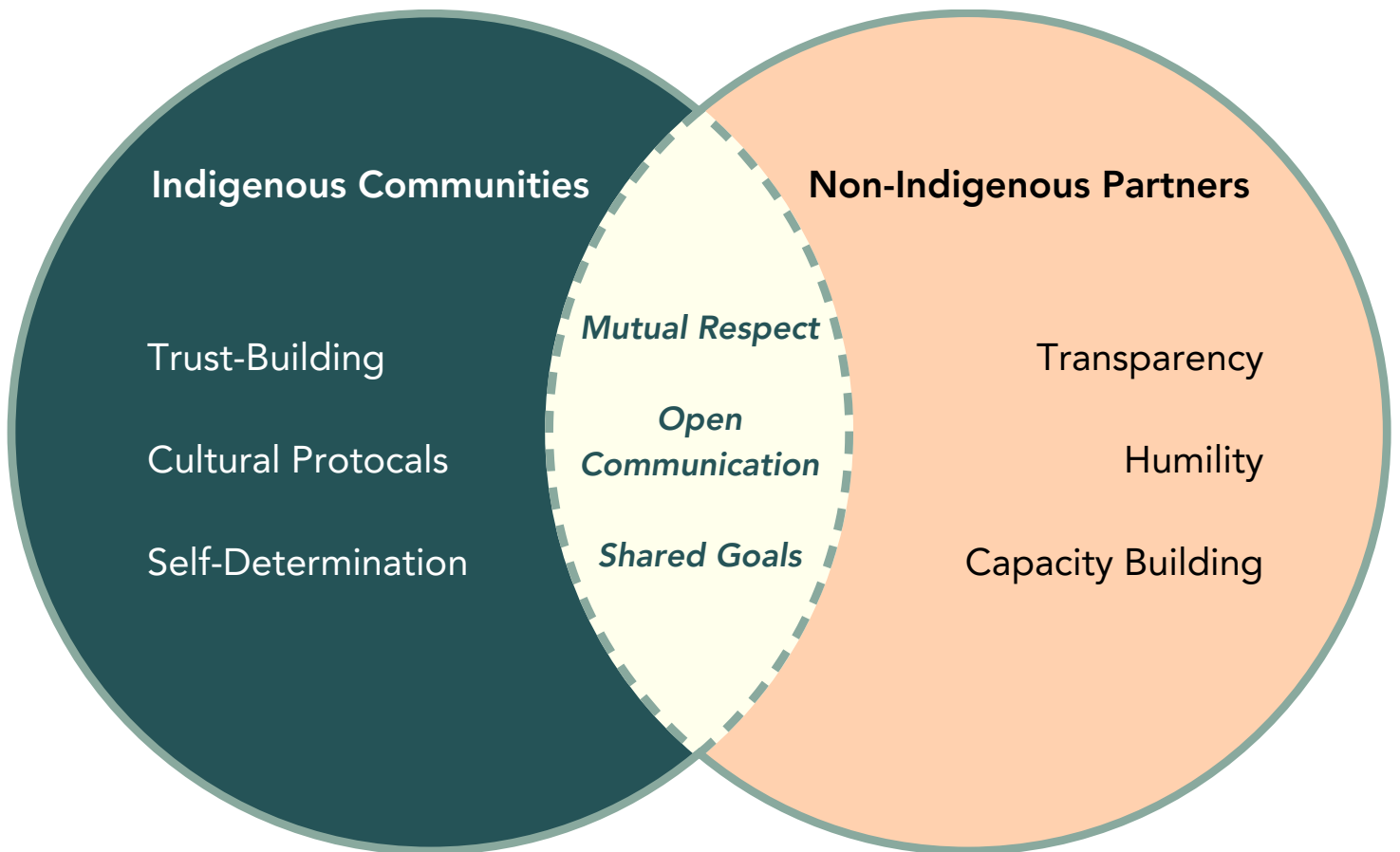
*I think there is often fatigue in communities, people coming in who want to do research and saying we want to solve your problem, and then not spending the time to make those connections.*

- **Do not overpromise.** Be transparent about any limitations that you have including timelines, funding, or other. Be clear about what you are actually able to offer. As above, there is a long history of unsustainably pilot projects that have resulted in a lack of trust in new projects.



- ▶ **Do not expect community to teach you everything.** Learn what you can about a community before you go. Come with ideas and resources but not with a pre-determined plan.

**Key Elements of Successful Partner Relationships Between Indigenous Communities and Non-Indigenous Partners:**



## Appendix A. Methodology

This section describes RCI's methodology for gathering the feedback to inform the considerations described in the body of the report.

### Scope of the Research

The purpose of this research was to foster learning to contribute to the strategic direction for the growth and development of the Indigenous-focused program area. The learning questions included the following:

1. What are key factors in successfully creating and delivering culturally relevant programming that supports Indigenous self-determination and wholistic wellbeing?
2. What are the barriers and challenges that interfere with the success of the Indigenous-focused projects from supporting wholistic wellbeing and/or Indigenous self-determination in decision-making?
3. In what ways has the approach of BHPF supported the Indigenous-focused projects and the organizations that implement these projects in making progress in their respective objectives?
4. What are opportunities for the future growth and development of the Indigenous-focused Program?
5. What are principles and indicators of sustainable meaningful and equitable partnerships with Indigenous peoples that centre Indigenous self-determination in decision making?
6. What are the critical steps needed to move from the creation of evidence and identification of wise practices to the adoption of wise practices by other organizations?

### Who We Spoke To

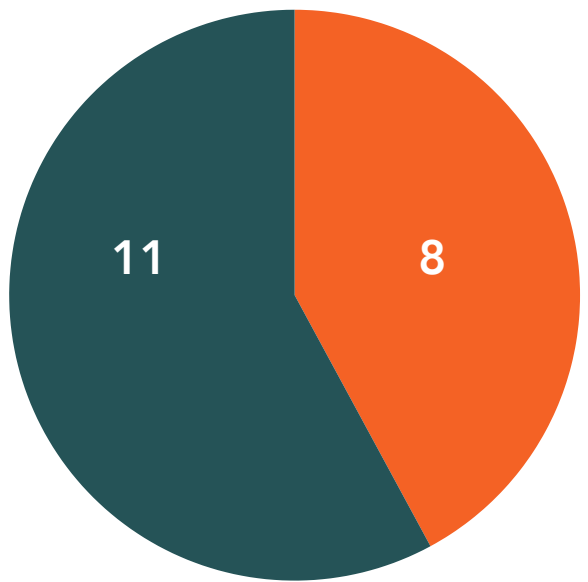
In total we conducted 13 interviews with 19 participants. All key informants were selected because they were either already involved in a BHPF funded project with an Indigenous focus or they had demonstrated experience building partnerships between Indigenous communities and non-Indigenous organizations and experience funding and delivering programming that upholds Indigenous self-determination. External key informants had relevant experience to the BHPF Indigenous Focused Program area such as: Indigenous engagement specialists, experience in the philanthropic sector, experience implementing reconciliation initiatives, experience advocating and delivering programming for Indigenous youth, and experience advocating for and delivering programming that upholds Indigenous self-determination.



The graphs below provide more information about the key informants:

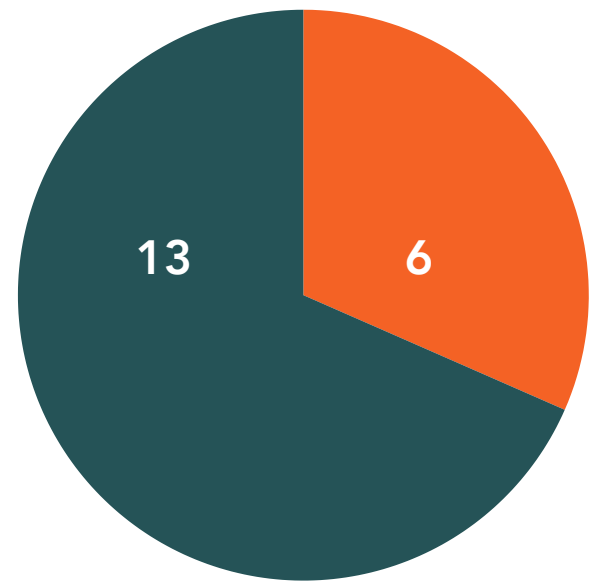
**Number of External Key Informants Compared to Project Partner Key Informants**

● Project Partners KIs   ● External KIs



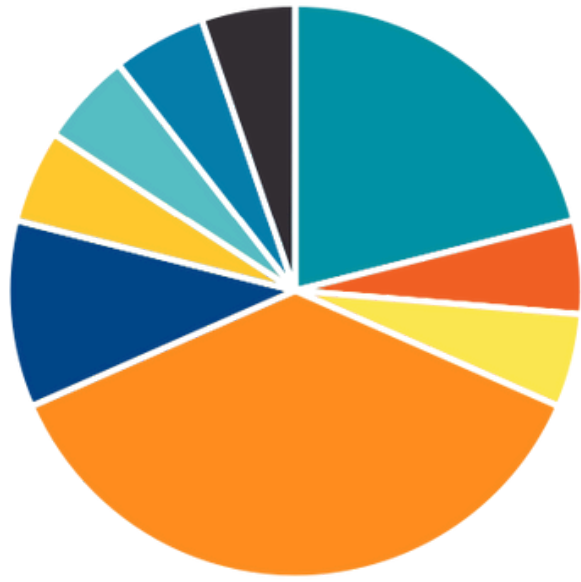
**Participants who Identify as Indigenous Compared to Those Who Identify as Non-Indigenous (Number)**

● Non-Indigenous KIs   ● Indigenous KIs



**Participant Location**

■ British Columbia   ■ Alberta   ■ Saskatchewan  
■ Manitoba   ■ Ontario   ■ Newfoundland  
■ Yukon   ■ Northwest Territories   ■ USA



## Interview Process

Free, prior, and informed consent was sought before any data was gathered. Informed and ongoing consent is a central requirement of OCAP®, particularly the ownership and access principle. Some of the components of our team's approach to informed consent involved the following:

- Informing key informants they have the right to identify which information shared remains confidential and not to be included in the report. Given the uniqueness of each project funded by BHPF, anonymity cannot be guaranteed.
- Expressing that participation in key informant interviews is voluntary and that they can withdraw at any time.
- Explaining the purpose of the data collection, and that the data is being collected only for strategic planning purposes.
- Requesting permission for use of quotes, if applicable.
- Sharing back transcripts for their verification, and providing informants an opportunity to add, change, or delete anything from the transcript to ensure their voice and input is accurately reflected. Sharing transcripts back with key informants also ensures they have a copy for their personal records. They may also retract their transcript if they choose.
- Providing the opportunity for the key informants to receive the final report when possible.

## Interview Tool

See below for the interview questions for the program partner and external key informants.

### B.1 Program Partners Interview Questions

#### Key Informant Interview Questions - Program Partner

1. Can you tell us about the approach taken in your organization to supporting Indigenous people?

#### Key Informant Interview Questions – Program Partner

1. Can you tell us about the approach taken in your organization to supporting Indigenous people?
  - a. What elements have contributed to successes and progress in supporting Indigenous peoples' self-determination? (for individuals and for community)?
  - b. What elements have contributed to successes and progress in supporting Indigenous peoples' wellness? (for individuals and for community)
  - c. What challenges or barriers have you experienced that may have interfered with progress in supporting Indigenous peoples' wellness and self-determination?
  - d. How do/have you responded to challenges?

### Key Informant Interview Questions – Program Partner

2. Is there anything you would like to share about BHPF's approach and how it's supported you and/or your organization/ project in making progress?
3. What are key elements for successfully creating and sustaining meaningful and equitable partnerships between non-Indigenous organizations and Indigenous partners/communities?
  - a. From your perspective, what is a good indicator of a successful partnership between an Indigenous and non-Indigenous organization?
4. What are challenges faced when creating and sustaining meaningful and equitable partnerships between non-Indigenous organizations and Indigenous partners?
  - a. How would you recommend for these challenges to be addressed?
5. What do you want BHPF to know about how they fund Indigenous-focused projects [that focus on culturally relevant programming supporting Indigenous self-determination and wholistic wellbeing?] [*Focus on the HOW*]
6. What opportunities do you see for the future growth and direction of the Indigenous-focused Program at BHPF? [*Focus on WHO/What kind of project to fund*]
7. What practices and steps would you share with and encourage other organizations to adopt if they were funded by the BHPF Indigenous-focused portfolio?

## B.2 External Key Informant Interview Questions

### Key Informant Interview Questions – External Key Informant

1. Can you briefly share about your organization and role?
2. In your experience, what are successful actions/steps to foster meaningful outreach and sustained active engagement with Indigenous partners? (i.e., actions/steps that you have used with an Indigenous partner, or actions/steps that have been used to engage you as an Indigenous partner)
  - a. From your perspective, what is a good indicator of a successful partnership between an Indigenous and non-Indigenous organization?
3. In your experience, what should be avoided when doing outreach and engagement with Indigenous people? (i.e., what have you learned not to do as a non-Indigenous partner, or what have you experienced in partnership attempts that you did not appreciate as an Indigenous partner)
  - a. What would you recommend to an Indigenous organization/community to be mindful of/attentive to in partnership requests from non-Indigenous organizations?
4. In your experience, what are key factors for successfully creating and delivering culturally relevant programming that supports Indigenous self-determination and wholistic wellbeing?
5. What are challenges in creating and delivering culturally relevant programming that supports Indigenous self-determination and wholistic wellbeing?
  - a. How would you recommend for these challenges to be addressed?

Design projects to be **participatory**, **adaptable**, and **trauma-informed**.



Allow **realistic** timelines for **relationship-building** and **community engagement**.



Consider **tiered funding** models based on community readiness.



**Considerations  
for Program and  
Project Design**  
Creating Inclusive  
Initiatives

Make reporting requirements **reasonable** and **flexible**.



Use a **wholistic** design that **addresses root causes** of issues.



Include **knowledge sharing**, **training**, and **mentorship** when appropriate.

