

PATHWAYS OF INDIGENOUS YOUTH ENGAGEMENT

*Overview of the Summer Institute of the Youth
Research Network (Indigenous stream) June 2023*



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INTRODUCTION

KWE! KWÉ! KUEI! KWAÏ! QEY! AI! KWEI! WAACHIYE! WAACHIYAA!



From June 5th to 9th, 2023, we had the opportunity to discuss the many ways in which Indigenous youth are mobilizing and are engaged in Quebec. Youth, students, Indigenous partners and researchers from the Youth Network Chair explored, through varied and interactive spaces and media, the forms, issues and visions of the future of engagement.

Topics covered included engagement in community mobilization, culture, healing, land protection, art, intergenerational transmission, governance and research. Together, we have learned, we have been inspired, we have mobilized and we have networked in order to support the development and empowerment of Indigenous youth.

This overview sheds light on highlights of the activities that took place during the first three days of the Summer Institute at Concordia University. The last two days were devoted to students registered in the AHSC 498/598 course, including one day at Iontionnhéhkwén in Kahnawake. Consistent with the summer institute, to accompany this written overview, we present photos of the activities and creations produced during the week by the participants. Over the three days, a fresco with three trees took shape for participants to share their actions, emotions, memory and vision.

C R E D I T S

ORGANIZING TEAM

Natasha Blanchet-Cohen, Co-chair of the YNC,
Professor, AHSC, Concordia University
Alicia Ibarra-Lemay, Research Assistant
Véronique Picard, Coordinator and Part-time instructor
Flavie Robert-Careau, Research Professional
Carole Bérubé-Therrien, Event Organizer and Cultural
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Translation internal (original in French)

YOUTH ADVISORY COMMITTEE:

Kananish McKenzie (Innue)
Ève Custeau-Wiscutie (Anishnabe)
Kassandra Laviolette (Kanien'kehà:ka)
Mailys Flamand (Atikamekw-IlInue)
Frédérique Gros-Louis (Wendat)
Marie-Hélène Canapé (Innue)
Carling Sioui (Wendat)
Sébastien Lamarre-Tellier (IlInu)
Sabryna Godbout (Wendat)
Anaïs Ambroise (Innue)

@ Quebec Youth Research Network Chair (Indigenous Youth Stream) 2023

The Quebec Youth Research Network Chair is part of the 2016-2021 Youth Action Strategy and is intended to be a structuring measure for government action in favor of young people. Its work (under the theme of paths towards autonomy and fulfillment of young people in a changing society) allows us to take a scientific, multidisciplinary and intersectoral look at the issues and challenges described in the Québec Youth Policy 2030 to guide government action and that of its partners towards young people. <https://chairejeunesse.ca/>



**FACULTY OF
ARTS AND SCIENCE**
Applied Human Sciences



**OFFICE OF COMMUNITY
ENGAGEMENT**





« EDUCATE YOURSELF WITH SKILLS,
BUT RETURN TO INDIGENOUS
WISDOM AND ASK THE EARTH TO
EMPOWER YOU ». (KA'NAHSÓHON)

OPENING

Ka'nahsohon Kevin Deer, Kanien'kehá:ka (Elder)

The summer institute was opened by Ka'nahsóhon Kevin Deer. His teachings helped put into perspective Indigenous youth engagement in a context of diversity of knowledges and thus created a space rich in exchanges.

"I have a daughter that I helped create, but she's not mine, she's living her own life. Spirits are around us, but they cannot express themselves and it is up to us to give them voice in events like this. I'm not Mohawk, I'm not like this forever, I am spirit. I made a lot of mistakes when I was young because I didn't know love. I had suicidal thoughts, I didn't love myself. But for 43 years, since the birth of my daughter, I have been on the path to peace. [...] In your language you say "love", in ours we say kanoronhkwahtshera. kanoronh (precious) kwah (which covers everything) tshera. This is our word. We are precious clay connected to our cosmology. Everything is connected. Today there is a resurrection of Indigenous spirituality. Everything is precious."

LAUNCH OF THE WEEK

Natasha Blanchet-Cohen (co-chair of the YNC, AHSC Concordia)

“Laughing, getting to know each other better, taking breaks, reflecting on Indigenous engagement. We are three days in the same canoe and we are going to paddle together” (Natasha and Véronique)

"Welcome to the summer institute of the Indigenous stream of the Quebec Youth Research Network Chair. We are very happy to be able to welcome you and share together in the next few days, moments of enrichment and discovery. The last time the YNC partners met was in November 2018 before the pandemic. At the time, we were in the process of defining what we were going to do and how to work together in this context, which seemed to us to be quite complex. The world has since changed, and so has the ecosystem of Indigenous youth engagement.

A priority for us at the YNC since 2018 has been to create a platform; a space to facilitate synergies between young people, students, researchers and decision-makers, to support the next generation and to co-create tools and documents that can adequately reflect the perspectives of Indigenous youth.

Over the past few years, these ambitions have materialized, in particular through lunchtime talks, research projects that validate what you are already doing, and activities and meetings of all types. In addition, generally we have attempted to put forward ways of carrying out decolonizing and relational research processes, which value the expertise of young people and Indigenous organizations, and make it possible to inform other streams such as education, employment and health.

This summer institute is part of the yahonwa stream (canoe in wendat); transversal activities of the YNC, which meet several objectives. The image of the canoe represents this space centered on collaboration and collective work.

Throughout this week, we invite you to:

- Explore the forms and visions of Indigenous youth engagement to stimulate individual and collective reflection on the challenges, issues and ideal conditions of engagement.
- Mobilize young people, students, researchers and community partners to network and discuss innovative initiatives.
- Inspire you to promote youth engagement in communities and organizations.

DISCUSSION - OUR CONTRIBUTIONS : PRESENTATION OF THE YNC ADVISORY COMMITTEE

Ève Custeau-Wiscutie (Anishnabe)
Sébastien Lamarre-Tellier (Innu)
Kassandra Laviolette (Kanien'kehà:ka)
Mailys Flamand (Atikamekw-Ilnue)
Carling Sioui (Wendat)
Kananish McKenzie (Innue)
 With facilitation by Véronique Picard (Wendat), and
 participation of Carole Bérubé-Therrien (Innu) and Alicia
 Ibarra-Lemay (Kanien'kehà:ka)



The Youth Advisory Committee is composed of Indigenous youth who work in a variety of backgrounds and have diverse experiences and expertise. The committee's collective objective is to guide the work of the YNC. The members of the committee were central in the ideation of this summer institute. During this discussion, members shared their impressions of the committee and the different projects they have helped carried out. The postcard on pathways to Indigenous youth engagement that emerged at a retreat was also presented.

The strength of the youth committee is reflected in the people who are part of it. Together, young people reflect on their own visions of research in relation to those of researchers. The committee are guardians of knowledge who have made it possible to create tools that reflect Indigenous youth and that correspond to their realities. For Véronique, getting involved "is a bit like launching into the void" but she stresses that "we do not start alone". For young people, participating in the committee allows them to find a space for Indigenous expression (Sébastien). The committee allows everyone to find a space that celebrates the knowledge and experiences of young people as experts of their realities. "It's a very easily accessible group," insists Sébastien. It's a way to connect and understand the research community from new perspectives. Through this committee, everyone has a place and a space where it is easy to share.

The retreat in Rawdon was the realization of this space of sharing. "The goal was to meet in a calm, safe space in order to think and create together" (Véronique). The young people bonded quickly and felt accepted in their differences (Carling). The weekend allowed us to discover everyone's different stories. Kassandra recalls, "I got out of there with friends, we didn't just want to produce something, it's something that goes further than that." The young people appreciated the format of the retreat: there was work to be done, but in all informality with a lot of free time to get to know each other and to take care of us, while being in nature.

Postcards are tools co-created with the committee from its inception (2019) to represent different concepts at the heart of the YNC's work. Visual concepts help start the conversation and go beyond words. These are real postcards that can be sent by mail with the aim of reaching as many people as possible. Participants stressed that they still need to be sent to communities more broadly. Carling recalls that she wanted to join "a decolonizing participatory community" and enjoyed "finding the postcards online". Through their artistic and singular character, they help to approach research topics and interact with young people. "I use postcards in my friendship centre," says Ève. Kassandra comments on the last card made during the meeting in Rawdon "Seeing our weekend on paper with this light, it helps to visualize our experience". Youth have connections to different organizations and the cards are shared in this way as well. Mikana for example, uses them.

"IT FEELS GOOD AS
YOUTH TO BE VALUED
ALONGSIDE GREAT
PEOPLE". (ÈVE)

SHARING CIRCLE - THE DIFFERENT PATHS OF ENGAGEMENT

Gabrielle Vachon-Laurent (Acting Executive Director RJPNQL and Vice-President - Quebec Native Women)

Jay Launière-Mathias (Managing Director - Puamun Meshkenu)

Jessica Joseph, Songhees Nation (Arts and Community Coordinator)

John Harris, Snuneymuxw First Nation (Facilitator for Elders and Indigenous Knowledge at Greater Victoria School District No. 61 and Living Lab Project Coordinator)

Samuel Rainville (Ambassador - Mikana)

Kosa Chilton (Youth Development Coordinator, Council of the Atikamekw Nation)

During this discussion, young leaders engaged in their communities, discuss models of engagement, mobilization and their visions and challenges of Indigenous youth engagement.

What is engagement?

Jay opens the discussion "Youth engagement is dynamic. There is a desire to get involved and take one's place among young people." Bringing about change for First Nations youth requires solidarity and a lot of support. The victory of one person is really a collective victory (Gabrielle). We have mentors, we are a community of young leaders," confirms Samuel. For Jessica, the commitment is to meet young people where they are and amplify their voices. John also mentions the importance of being connected to the land, and to the elders, that healing and engagement starts there.



What is your type of leadership?

Jay answers this question first. He says that sometimes you need a leader who is forward, but you also need someone in the back, so you don't forget anyone on the way, it's another type of leadership. Gabrielle insists that we must invite young people to take their voice and that we need more young people in gatherings. She explains that leadership is about putting others in the spotlight even though we often think that young people are not old enough. Samuel explains that some environments require a particular form of leadership "I work with rigid institutions, but we can always influence our immediate surroundings, focus on our circle of proximity".

Kosa explains that he exercises his leadership by putting himself in other's shoes for an hour or a day. Jessica confirms the importance of a sensitive form of leadership: using a gentle approach, ensuring the well-being of all. John concludes on the relevance of secure leadership. It is necessary to know the strengths and weaknesses of young people, and to create safe and cultural spaces (activities in circles). Inside the circle, there is a chance to speak and several chances to listen to others. To be a leader, it is not just a question of making noise, but of listening to the needs. We need to work as a team to support all young people.

What advice would you have to give, advice you would have liked to receive?

"Don't be afraid to take your place. Know your limits and don't be afraid to ask for help. Surround yourself with a network," says Jay. Samuel invites patience: "Sometimes you can't give everything you want, but being present is also important. Sitting and being an Indigenous youth is sometimes enough. You have to choose your battles." Kosa points out that sometimes it's "hard to perform because people see me as someone who has studied away from the community, but being yourself is the most important thing." For Jessica "the impostor syndrome is strong. I am an artist, I want to share with people with an Indigenous vision and heart. We need to bring 'good medicine' into the spaces."

John mentions that the school system is colonialist. White people think they have a right to Indigenous knowledge. But it's about balance, sharing, you have to know how to say no.

What do you like most about working with young people?

"The projects we develop are the ones I would have liked to experience when I was young. Working with young people who live what I live, it helps to accompany them," begins Jay. Gabrielle says that as a child she had a double education, both on the land and in the Quebec system. "I started being an activist to have as much as others. I had to learn to say that I was capable of having positions of responsibility, and that's what I like to bring to young people."

For his part, Samuel recalls that "we are experiencing the same things and we can feel the same emotions. I see more human beings than 'young people'. Kosa confirms, "I like to talk with someone as 'you and me,' like people walking the same path." Jessica says that often young people just want to be listened to, just sit down and hear how their mood is changing. John shares that sometimes it can be difficult to work with young people, that some test us. Sometimes it is thought that a young person is heading in the wrong direction, but their path can change.

"We need to create safe spaces. Invite youth to take their voice." (Gabrielle)

MIKANA AMBASSADORS WORKSHOP - MY LIFE IS AN ETERNAL AWARENESS WORKSHOP. INDIGENOUS APPROACHES TO ANTI-RACIST EDUCATION

- Widia Larivière** (Director and Founder)
- Stéphanie O'bomsawin** (Project Manager)
- Samuel Rainville** (Ambassador)
- Alexandre Nequado** (Ambassador)

In this workshop moderated by Widia Larivière - co-founder of Mikana - three ambassadors discuss their experiences in raising awareness.

During this discussion, various dimensions related to sensitization of Indigenous realities were discussed. Panelists highlighted the necessary continuum between sensitization, reconciliation, decolonization, Indigenization.

Reconciliation in Atikamekw is called "returning to mutual aid" or "coming back to walk together on the path". Beyond the theoretical concept, there is an understanding through action. Participants emphasized the fatigue associated with the mission of permanent sensitization, the educational load that rests on the shoulders of Indigenous youth and how to take care of oneself throughout the process.

According to Widia, Mikana acts against racism and discrimination through information and sensitization, for the empowerment of young people towards systemic and lasting changes. "My life is an eternal sensitization workshop" starts with a hashtag about the fatigue of always explaining oneself as an Indigenous person. The workshops make it possible to compensate for what sometimes appears as a decolonization-spectacle that remains superficial. Symbolism is important, but deep and concrete questioning is needed.



Stéphanie shares her experience: I realized that it is impossible not to raise awareness, it starts as soon as I give my name. People don't know about Indigenous realities, they have a preconceived idea of what I should look like. I have an additional justification to give. It's like a double justification: "Yes, I'm Indigenous, even if I don't fit your representations. [...] Quebecers see themselves as a colonized people, so they have a hard time seeing themselves as colonizers. They ask a lot of questions, but just because I'm Indigenous doesn't mean I have to know everything. It's not just up to me. It is by telling myself this that I take care of myself.

"I'm learning to say no,
to take care of myself"
(Alexandre)

According to Samuel: One carries a permanent educational load. I always have to give the same "Indigenous 101" course and explain our differences amongst Nations [...] We have been talking about reconciliation for a long time, but where are we now? How can we live up to the energy our families have put into documenting the history of residential schools. We have a responsibility to enhance the discourse even if the word "Indigenization" is not understood at all by most people in Quebec. Decolonization means, for example, recognizing Indigenous legal systems and traditional knowledge.

Alexandre explains that often we ensure a symbolic presence, as when I was asked to do a ceremony with sage in a CEGEP, without really giving me the chance to speak. Not all Indigenous people prioritize having knowledge of their Indigenous culture, they may have other passions. Even though I live in the city, I still need to go back to the source, to the woods or to the community. Over time, I learned to say no, to take care of myself.

Available tools: Mikana's team recalls that they have developed and have available a multitude of resources on their website: <https://www.mikana.ca/en/resources/>

WORKSHOP – INTRODUCING COOPS: ANOTHER VOICE OF THE ECONOMY

Karine Awashish (PhD student in sociology at ULaval and co-founder of Coop Nitaskinan).

Karine shared with us her vision of the future on collective entrepreneurship and the need for self-determination. She launched the comic strip created as part of her participation as a co-researcher of the YNC as well as her broader reflections on youth engagement.



The entrepreneurial model is a vehicle that can be taken wherever you want, if you understand how it works, and the co-op model is more respectful of the spirit of Indigenous entrepreneurship. Reconciliation also means bringing the Indigenous vision into mechanics, major academic and scientific systems. For the Nitaskinan coop, it means creating meaning, belonging, valuing knowledge, imposing our right to recognition and the hope that it resonates. It is a manifestation of our self-determination as Indigenous people.

The economy is an easy way to do things right away, without waiting for the political. But the economy is not only capitalism, consumption, competition. We can see the economy as a system of exchange and ask ourselves how money circulates and how it is distributed. Historically, cooperation was the basis of our systems, first in family, which is naturally in line with the values of the coop. The community has been transformed, but we can define new spaces, other territories. There is still solidarity and sharing to allow us to work and undertake together. Finally, based on all these elements, I chose to interpret the medicine wheel according to the different human dimensions : intellectual, physical, spiritual, emotional and to build a vision of the future in a circular dynamic force.

The cooperative model illustrated in a small booklet (distributed to participants) is a tool that can circulate and that you can use to bring out another way of conceiving the economy and entrepreneurship. We want to live in an environment of common good.

"Self-determination is what it takes "
(Karine)



SHARING - KAHNAWÀ:KE YOUTH CLIMATE COLLECTIVE IAKWATOHONTSANÓNSTA'TS "WE ARE SAFEGUARDING THE EARTH"

Ohontsakéhte Montour
Sage Karahkwinetha Goodleaf
Dawson Horne

Young people from Kahnawà:ke share their commitment to the environment at the community level and internationally.

Karahkwinetha: I am studying science and psychology in university, and I want to study law. I participated in COP26 and 27. The COP is 96 countries trying to put the Paris Agreement into action. We are attentive to Article 6 of this agreement, which talks about Indigenous lands and carbon offsetting. For example, the Trudeau government is making projects in the Amazon to offset the tar sands in Alberta that are devastating Canada's Indigenous territories. The right to pollute are bought by violating Indigenous rights.

During the COP you need badges to access certain negotiating tables, it creates several layers of difficulties. There are a lot of physical and administrative barriers, there are participation quotas [...] COP27 was funded by Nestlé, which shows how much territorial actions will change things with local activists. At COP, however, we are building relationships with Indigenous youth around the world, and we all want to see these changes take place in the next 7 generations.

Dawson: My Kanien'kéha name means "under the clouds." I am involved in fighting climate change at the community level. Being part of the COP27 delegation in Egypt and seeing that we were taking ten steps back put a lot in perspective, but an Elder taught me that you don't solve things all at once.

One of the tips shared: It's easier to make changes at the collective level, Indigenous climate action reaches a lot of communities and you can start your own group in your community. There are several organizations that help such as the David Suzuki Foundation and Indigenous Climate Action.

Ohontsakéhte: My name means "I carry the Earth on my shoulders" I work at the cultural center of Kahnawà:ke, I participated in COP26 in Glasgow, and we wanted to perpetuate action at the community level. COP26 was presented as if it would save the world, but in reality, the decision-makers are the polluters. It was destabilizing to see the hypocrisy of governments, so we have to figure out how to use positive energy at the community level. The COP was a rewarding experience for me, and we are always bringing more young people so that they feel sufficiently represented. We plan to bring 11 youth from Kahnawà:ke to the next COP in Dubai.

We have daily issues in our communities and at COP we find the same political and corporate issues. What is important is to be able to act at home. While some young people don't see this as important, others have questions. You have to stay in the arena to make the change. "If you're not at the table, you're on the menu." To learn one's language and culture, to know the importance of Mother Earth is to do something about climate change.

"If you're not at the table, you're on the menu."
(Ohontsakéhte)

WORKSHOP- PADDLING TOGETHER: RESTORATION AND RESURGENCE IN COAST SALISH TERRITORY

Jessica Joseph, Songhees Nation (Arts and Community Coordinator)

John Harris, Snuneymuxw First Nation (Facilitator for Elders and Indigenous Knowledge at Greater Victoria School District No. 61 and Living Lab Project Coordinator)

Sarah Jim, WSÁNEĆ First Nation (Artist and Stewardship Coordinator with the PEPÁKĚŃ HÁUTW Foundation)

By creating a safe space and through a creative activity involving all participants, Jessica, John and Sarah offer us an interactive way to engage and engage youth with paddle creation.

John Harris proposed to start the activity with each person in the circle presenting themselves. He took the time to explain that part of teaching from the land is to know where we come from and then to create relationships with others. We need to know how to be a good guest on someone's land and represent our families and communities well. To be a good guest there are protocols, we put ourselves in a circle and we talk about us, our grandparents, where we come from. This is what he offers to the participants of the summer institute.

Eve illustrated the importance of this moment by confiding "This is the first time that I have the opportunity to present my kukum, in a circle. It allows me to bring out all the strength transmitted by my grandmother."

Jessica, Sarah and John shared with us knowledge about the traditional art of their respective Nations, and symbols of paddles. Participants were invited to give way to their creativity and paint their own paddles. John also invited everyone to give their very first creation to someone.

All paddles have the potential to get us where we need to go. At the end of the day they will all be different, all beautiful. If that doesn't work, take a break and come back when you're emotionally and spiritually ready. The best way to engage young people is through woodworking, let their hands, minds and hearts be occupied at the same time.

The workshop ended with a round table during which everyone expressed their recognition and gratitude. It is a practice that anyone can create. The children who have the most difficulty in the school system are the most sensitive to this healing process (John).



"All paddles have the potential to get us where we need to go"
(John)



**TESTIMONY- KA MAMUHITUNANUATSH MESHKANU /
THE PATH THAT BRINGS PEOPLE TOGETHER**

Jimmy-Angel Bossum

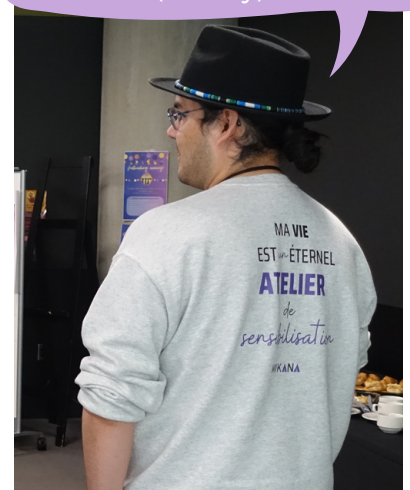
**Les partages de projets innovants et porteurs nous inspirent, surtout quand ils sont portés par des jeunes!
Jimmy raconte son parcours vers l'accomplissement de ce projet de marche en raquette sur le territoire.**

I do a lot of projects for young people in my community. I received a lot when I was younger, it's my turn to give back. The project was born from a walk on the land that was held in winter in Mashteuiatsh a few years ago. This gave me the idea to do a 900km walk on the land, but finally I went more modestly, we did 90km in 5 days. I received help from my network, funding from the community youth council and the David Suzuki Foundation. The goal of this project is to connect with the land and culture as well as to promote holistic health, including the spiritual dimension.

During a first snowshoe walking experience, an Elder explained to me that in traditional culture, the father would first pave the way in snowshoes to facilitate the walk for the other family members. It is a way of doing things, not just one's way, but of allowing the path of others.

We walked, pulling our toboggans, followed by logistics provided by car or snowmobile. An Elder of the territory accompanied us on her family's land along the "Chief's River" historically making the link between the Cree and Innus of the lake. I won an award for this initiative. It was someone related to the march who nominated me and I was surprised. It taught me the necessary balance between giving and receiving.

"It's a way of doing things,
not just your way, but
allowing the path of others."
(Jimmy)



**PANEL - YOUTH ENGAGEMENT IN THE FRIENDSHIP CENTERS
PROGRAMS AND SERVICES**

Stéphanie Fontaine-Dumais (Regroupement des Centres d'amitié autochtones du Québec)

Paméla Dubé (Native Friendship Centre of Trois-Rivières)

Danyka Gravelle-Dumont (Val-d'Or Native Friendship Centre)

Ève Custeau-Wiscutie (Senneterre Friendship Centre)

In the form of a conversation, the director of member services of the RCAAQ and workers from three native friendship centers in Quebec (Trois-Rivières, Senneterre and Val-d'Or) present their services and approaches to young Indigenous people in the urban settings.

The Native Friendship Centers are hubs of front-line services for Indigenous people who live or pass through cities. They constitute places of cultural anchoring favorable to the emergence of approaches of cultural revalorization and identity affirmation. The mission of the Native Friendship Centers is to improve the quality of life of Indigenous citizens in cities, to promote culture and to foster rapprochement between peoples. The Native Friendship Centers Regrouping is the provincial association that accompanies and supports the Native Friendship Centers in their mission. Together, they form the Movement of Native Friendship Centers of Quebec, which has as a priority the mobilization of young Indigenous people. The Centers develop innovative youth programs. Sometimes these young people even become volunteers and, as they grow up, some are employed in a Friendship Centre. Before getting there, mobilizing them is still a challenge. Here are the possible solutions that the panelists propose:



Eve: We take the time to listen to young people, to understand their needs. We focus on cultural activities, but we also try to do what young people want to do (e.g. going out to Montreal). The most difficult challenge is to get teenagers off their screens. Sometimes Indigenous youth hesitate to come with their non-Indigenous friends, but when it happens, non-Indigenous youth become pillars. Food is always a way to reach everyone, regardless of age.

Pamela: Recently, we have created traditional, cultural or health-related activities. The young people ask to go into the woods, to gather, to sleep in the prospector tents. But the challenge is to get young people to make a long-term commitment. They go back and forth between the city and the communities. In Trois-Rivières, there is a lot of turnover and we try to keep young people active at the centre, such as through a youth committee so that they can develop and express their leadership. We will also reach young people in schools. Food and outdoor activities are always winning aspects. Food is like life, it's very unifying. Art workshops and circles also makes it possible to bring people.

Danyka: It's also important to leave the centre to meet the young people where they are at. We do outdoor activities in the public space.

Stéphanie adds that recently "educ trainers" have been trained and certified at the college level. This existed before, but the curriculum has been adapted to Indigenous contexts with an emphasis on a sporting challenge. This fall will begin the second cohort. There is a first aid, insurance, technical skills component. Equipping intervention workers helps mobilize young people. 10 new people are going to be trained as educ trainers in our centres.

"Friendship centres belong to the members, they are the ones who make a centre" (Stéphanie)

WORKSHOP - INDIGENOUS HEALING KNOWLEDGES

Catherine Richardson Kineweskwêw (Métis, Full Professor, Director of First Peoples Studies, Concordia University)

Donny Riki (Māori, Educator and Psychotherapist)

Juliet Mackie (Métis, INDI PhD candidate)

Moe Clark (Métis, Multidisciplinary Artist, Educator, INDI Master's Student)

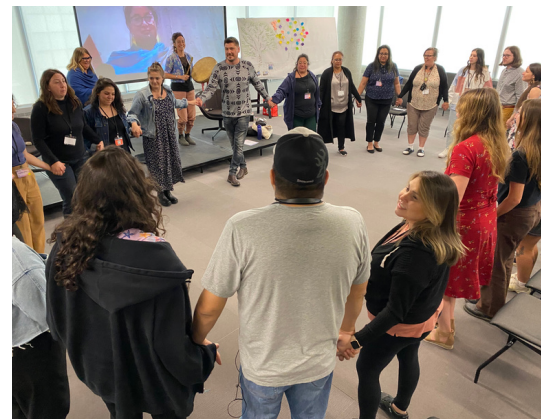
Alicia Ibarra-Lemay (Kanien'kehà:ka, INDI Master's candidate)

Research can be an opportunity to create spaces for engagement with Indigenous youth. This healing research project composed of members of several Nations around the world explains their process and commitment to healing as well as the impacts for youth and future generations.

Alicia opens the discussion by inviting panelists to share how they started their healing work.

Donny explains that her Indigenous name means "the one who lives under the skin."

We have experienced a lot of colonial violence and we must embark on the path of healing. The knowledge I received is still very much alive and present in my children and family. I am always aware that all of the big decisions I make have to be made with the consideration of wanting to benefit Māori for the next 100 years. So this project goes in that direction. As an Indigenous person, we have so many points of connection and similarities and so we have to support and elevate each other.



Moe adds that the pandemic has allowed for the creation of innovative meeting spaces. She insists that for decades "young people have been lost because they have not been able to connect with their culture and in their own role, since it had been confiscated from them.

Moe reminds us that :
 "These virtual spaces have allowed two-spirit people to meet Elders. Today we return to stories, dances and songs in person. Healing involves finding the tools so that those who identify as two-spirit can find their place around the circle. This has no longer been transmitted. So we need to open these healing spaces."

Cathy recalls: "I wrote a book Facing the mountain. Indigenous Healing in the Shadow of Colonialism (2021) which asks: Are there links between well-being and not having one's Earth stolen? When people are unwell they automatically make a list of their ailments and then they go around in circles, continuing to sink and move away from healing. Instead, we must keep the channels open on how we resisted, how we survived, it lights small fires of resistance. We learn so much from our Earth, to be robbed of your land is to have your knowledge stolen.

I learned from Moe that if you look at the height of the trees, and put it on a score it produces a song, and it's the same with the horizon of the mountains, the course of the river and the height of the people around a circle.

"Healing is when someone tells you, 'I see who you are and I appreciate you.'"
 (Catherine)

Moe echoes this by adding that: "We can sing the skyline, that's how our songs were born. We sing the horizon. Returning to our Earth, we can sing about our land".

Alicia adds, "I never had this space, before this project, to determine my own healing journey."

Cathy ends this discussion with a powerful message: "The more we talk about our ancestors, the more they are there with us to support us. Healing is when someone tells you, 'I see who you are and I appreciate you.'"

NETWORKING NIGHT - ESPACE SHIFT

Appetizer bites by Chef Maluh, songs by Moe Clark and John Harris, launch of participatory mapping with Stéphane Guimont-Marceau, Marie-Ève Drouin-Gagné and the creation committee (represented by Alicia, Carling and Coralie) and screening of the short film 6 minutes by Km by Catherine Boivin, presented at the Cannes Film Festival. Presentation of Pasha Partridge's collaborative film -- Indigiqueer stories.





"Narrative sovereignty is the power to reclaim our voices, our stories, with our words and our gaze"
(Véronique Rankin)

PANEL - YOUTH NARRATIVE SOVEREIGNTY THROUGH FILMS

Véronique Rankin (Executive Director - Wapikoni Mobile)

Maily's Flamand (Coordinator of awareness workshops - Wapikoni Mobile)

Michelle Smith (Principal Researcher - Dawson College FPPSE - First Peoples' Post Secondary Storytelling Exchange)

Pasha Partridge (Research Assistant, McGill University, FPPSE)

The film allows young people to discover and carry their voices as they see fit. Our guests from Wapikoni Mobile and FPPSE talk to us about narrative sovereignty and the importance of audiovisual creation to mobilize youth in communities and education systems.

After the screening of Wapikoni Mobile's introductory film, Véronique briefly introduced the organization: In addition to the trailers that everyone knows, there are virtual creative studios. Since last year we have been trying to make the link between community initiatives and the professional world of cinema. All trips are concentrated in the summer period.

Pasha says, "It takes time to identify as a film director. But after the third one it was easier." In her film "The Story of Pasha" she shows how continuing to use the name is really important in Inuk culture. The name is my grandmother's. To bear someone's name is to embody their spirit. Making a film on the history of my name pushed me to do a lot of research."

Véronique explains that narrative sovereignty "is the power to reclaim our voices, our stories, with our words and our gaze. When entering the trailer, whoever comes to see us makes a decision. They will have to make all the other decisions that are based on the first one, that of coming to see us. They may even choose not to showcase their film." She explains: "Anthropologists' films are about looking at us, but it's not our gaze. For 20 years, we have been documenting knowledges, materials/tools?, culture, traditional techniques. Narrative sovereignty becomes collective thanks to the video library constituted."

Maily's adds that films are opportunities to come together, to bring the community to life. The projections allow the community to take a look at itself.

Pasha has made several films with FPPSE illustrating, for example, the post-secondary reality for Indigenous youth. "More recently I've shown how young queers can live in communities and this film has been shown at festivals."

Maily's was hired in 2017 to be the Wapikoni local coordinator in Manawan. She also made her first film with the organization, where she talks about the culture shock she experienced between high school in the community and college studies in the city. "Films give back to the community," she insists.



Michelle explains that making films is a collective process. "We must change the rules of college spaces to decolonize them and install cultural safety that allows for creation." Pasha confirms that "it is done collaboratively, but we keep our way of doing things. Everyone can edit their own story, that's how narrative sovereignty is realized."

Véronique nuances at the end of the discussion "we can not say everything". Sometimes you have to make choices between what you want to do and what you can do. Some stories cannot be told as illustrated in the film "Nothing About Moccasins". Narrative sovereignty is a complex subject. Choices must be able to be assumed collectively.

LEADERSHIP SUPPORT

An important component of engagement is leadership. Grouped into 5 large tables, each expressed their notion of leadership on a sheet of paper with words or drawings. Then around each table, participants exchanged on their representations of the notion of leadership. One spokesperson per table presented the summary of the discussions.

Table 1: "In the form of "exquisite corpses" drawn, the group presents the different parts of the body: "the brain for connections, the heart to understand, the feet to go where we want... And even a hat with feathers to represent leadership responsibilities."



Table 5: "We talked about toponymy. These are our words that have been integrated into the colonial system but people do not know it. Young people have the power to make changes in the community."

Table 2: "The heart is placed at the centre of the community to illustrate how values are shaped. An eye represents the vigilance that one must have to preserve the values of the heart."

Table 3: "The canoe represents the balance to be found, the cooperation, the direction to follow. A living fire shows conservation and transmission. We need to listen to the Elders. Just listen, we don't ask questions of the Elders, we have to listen."

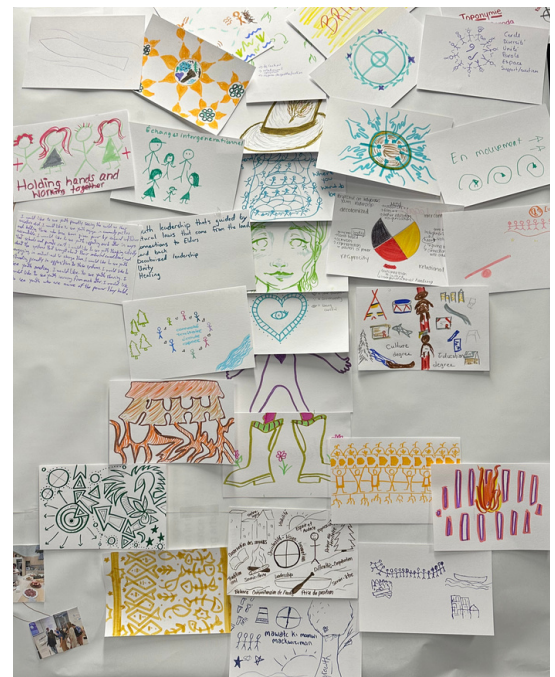
Table 4: "There is an emergency, but the future is sunny. We must remain rooted to make our voices heard. The medicine wheel shows the balance between the industrial world and the traditional world."



"Every quality of young leaders is represented by a bead color and we weave them together" (Magalie)

Magalie Quintal-Marineau (Assistant Professor - INRS and YNC co-researcher) presents a collaboration with the Qarjuit Youth Council on leadership. Two days of workshops allowed us to reflect on the notion of positive leadership of what leads young people to engage and leadership paths. Here's a quick look at the activity:

In a beaded banner a color was associated with each quality of the young leaders. We told real life stories to bring out the individual qualities of the participants and then we sewed them together to remember the strength of each other, together. Individually, even a leader brings little. But in action, together, in relation to others we were able to visualize the strengths of the council.



DIALOGUE – INTERGENERATIONAL TRANSMISSION OF LANGUAGES

Véronique Iakohaháwis Legault, linguist and mother
Véronique Picard, facilitator

Iakohaháwis is Kanien'kehà:ka from the community of Kahnawake. A linguist by training and mother of two, she is dedicated to learning and transmitting her language and culture. Through a dialogue, she presents her motivations and her commitment to making Kanien'kéha shine in her family and community.

In my family, the language has been lost. It was only at the end of her life that my grandmother reopened herself to her language when she saw that I was trying to learn it. Hanging out with families who have never lost their language is inspiring. Kanien'kéha is a descriptive language that cannot be learned in books. We create an environment where children are exposed to language, we call it a "language nest". Parents also hear it and take it home with them.

When trying to learn a language it helps to have a foundation in linguistics. Today I have become a linguistic reference. Often Elders do not know what they know and do not know why language rules are the way they are.

I have seen how a language is lost, a culture is lost. It's a shame not to have a resource within your own family. At home my children are educated in 4 languages (French, Spanish, Kanien'kéha, English). We put the language in its cultural context, it helps to give meaning. For example, the way we count in our language is related to the history of creation. The cultivation of plants is also done in song in the language. Children are often not trusted enough. In total immersion, a child can really progress quickly, learn to switch from one language to another.

Transmitting my culture is the mission of my life. The language is present in schools but it must be taken out of the classroom. You have to be able to order a coffee in Kanien'kéha. I've translated a lot of children's books, it's a lot of work but that's saving a language.

Resources should be found for speech-language pathologists so that they do not assess children solely on their vocabulary in English or French. Often they think that Indigenous languages are the problem.



CONVERSATION - PARTNERSHIP AND SUPPORT FOR YOUTH ENGAGEMENT

Valérie Picard-Lavoie (Jeunesse autochtone et entrepreneuriat social - Youth Secretariat)
Elisha Laprise (Head of Partner Relations - Lucie and André Chagnon Foundation)

In the format of a discussion, two funders of youth initiatives shared their thoughts on their roles and how they navigate their own institution to better support Indigenous youth.

At the beginning of the workshop, the speakers briefly introduced themselves. Valerie introduced herself: I am Wendat, even though I was asked not to highlight it too much where I grew up. The work I do allows me to make my children proud of their origins and to allow other young people to do the same.



Elisha talks about her journey: In 2017 I had the mandate to develop relationships between the foundation and Indigenous cultures. As a child, I saw a lot of racism in my extended family. I hope that today's young people do not grow up in ignorance.

What is a good partnership?

Elisha says that as a representative of the Foundation, she has a lot of power since we have the money, but we must give recognition to both partners. Valerie adds that she feels as though she is between a tree and its bark, in a system that is not adapted to Indigenous values; I try to preserve authenticity, respect. I try to move forward with my Indigenous values. To make my superiors understand that commitment is more the path, than the result.

What achievement makes you proud today?

Valérie has succeeded in getting her organization to no longer consider projects as files, but as energy, dynamics, initiatives and dreams. Elisha says they are able to intervene in the regions thanks to a partnership with Centr'aide.

What would you do to better support Indigenous youth?

Valerie advises to recognize the mistakes of the past. Sometimes at the end of the decision-making chain, the intervention is not adapted to the people targeted. Elisha adds that good intentions are not enough, we must change the way we listen to each other.

"I'm trying to move forward with my Indigenous values... Commitment is more the path than the result."
(Valérie)

WORKSHOP – PARTICIPATORY MAPPING

Marie-Ève Drouin-Gagné (Assistant Professor - INRS)
Stéphane Guimont Marceau (Associate Professor - INRS)

Marie-Ève and Stéphane begin the workshop by providing context for what cartography is and how they use it in their projects. Then they invite participants to collectively map their stories of engagement.

For Marie-Ève and Stéphane, mapping is about defining our spaces, but it is also a means of communicating spatial concepts and knowledges. This can be expressed on maps, but also words, songs, activities. Beyond maps, all cultures have a relationship to space. In an Indigenous context, the space of territoriality is really important. The colonial vision imposes a representation of the land and makes groups, individuals and their history invisible. The choice of content on the maps overshadows certain realities.



"Counter-mapping makes it possible to co-create and create a dialogue between several types of knowledges and expertise" (Marie-Ève)

Counter-mapping re-presents, re-tells the story from an Indigenous perspective. For example, existing cards can be renamed or the format completely changed to songs or beading. In Montreal, a project has allowed for mapping youth space. Counter-mapping makes it possible to co-create and allow for a dialogue between several types of knowledges and expertise.

Table 1: "We represented a turtle with, in the centre, the groups concerned here, the young people, the committees... The head represents knowledge, the legs show the peoples. Around there are spaces that young people invest in: research, territory, tradition, education."

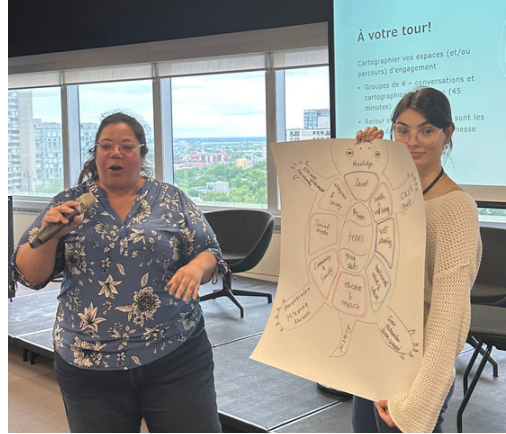


Table 2: "Our first idea is a circle held by two hands. At the center we put our values. In our language the word work and the word wool is the same since the work consisted of weaving wool. There is a word for connection and good thoughts. A word for children and Elders. The stars represent the ancestors. There is also the thunder that is part of life. We all signed it."

Table 3: "We represented different ways to connect with young people. Social means, electronic, but also institutions represented by a house. One of the ways to establish the link is also to do manual activities on the land, fishing or woodworking. The healing of our inner child goes through the relationship around the table through board games for example. Entering into a relationship always means discovering a path between us."

Table 4: "The first commitment is by and with our family. The drawing of our tree shows that it is not so much the leaves as it is the pine, the conifer that has served our survival. Every First Nation is unique, that's what apples represent. Commitment is participating in multiple adventures. Beyond the survival of yesteryear, our culture is now expanding with modern means. Squirrels represent people individually with their peculiarities."

A LOOK BACK AT THE COLLECTIVE PRODUCTION AND A SHARING CIRCLE

"The 3 days allowed me to know how to get young people more involved. Like the idea of the postcard or the decoration of the paddle. It gave me a lot of ideas."

"I will report your views to the Assembly of First Nations" (Gabrielle).

"I received a lot of gifts in terms of learning"



Here are the words chosen by some people present during the sharing circle at the end of the event:

Pride, transmission, thank you, youth, creativity, vision, grounded, fun, two spirit, gratitude, welcome, connection, optimism, focus on real relationships, similarities and differences, create bridges, openings, learning, recognition, connections to communities, hope.

"Just like in a forest, the trees of the three days are connected by their roots." (Carole)

Closing

Ka'nahsóhon Kevin Deer, Kanien'kehá:ka (Elder)

" I know who I am. I know where I come from." (Ka'nahsóhon)

"My drum is not just a drum; There is water inside. Water unites the elements of life. The heart, like the ocean, contracts and relaxes. Snow comes and goes. We need to have an attitude of gratitude to our ancestors who speak out and teach us about our relationship with our first mother. Everything that happens on this Earth we should be thankful for. The Earth is animated, there is life. Even the little ant is my sister. We must open ourselves to cosmic intelligence. When the student is ready the teacher appears. And your teacher is your first mother who can forgive you unconditionally. When I understood this I understood that I could cry. And the Earth wept with me. Mother Earth is not just a word, she has feelings, she is alive.

You form a circle, the sacred circle, it has no beginning, no end. We are here to be happy. Every day can be the last. We must return to our unity. I enter your circle and we can share if we are happy. And now, it's incredible, I know who I am, I know where I come from."

COMMENTS FROM PARTICIPATING STUDENTS OF THE SUMMER INSTITUTE:

I really appreciate the decolonized approach to this class. I was able to truly engage with the material without being preoccupied with performance. I was able to learn and enjoy the content in a way I have never done before. - Sharon

I think it is important for youth to have a space where they feel like they can learn at their pace without any judgment. (...) Decolonizing is not just a mere add on, it is completely changing the way we think, act, believe. It is all about centering, honoring, and valuing Indigenous experiences, culture, voices and perspectives. - Megan



The biggest challenge that I see that the youths is surviving throughout is the systematic erasure. The continuous erasure of the familiar features of the land and the drawing of another face for it, so that its people and its creatures feel alienated, so they gradually wither until they no longer have a trace. But the reality says is that you can't erase the original shape. If you dig under all these covers, you will find that it's all still there waiting for its people to come back looking for it. - Iyan

My first experience reminds me of how uncertain we are as youth and that encouragement from those we admire allows us to grow. Surrounded by supportive and open teachers in a safe space to learn gave me the opportunity to find community and to find myself. I realise that it is now my turn to provide the safe space to share knowledge that I possess with younger generations. Again, reminding me that a safe space requires me to be more patient and understanding. Learning and teaching are not linear activities, nor are they rigid structures. There is room to grow, share, listen, create, learn... Just as Veronique Iakohaháwis Legault said, time to sing songs to the seeds during planting season. Giving the tiny seeds love and sending them off with goodness for them to grow well, for them to feed our people. As we send our children in the future to nurture and to protect our people and the land. - Alana



THANK YOU! MERCI!

TSHINASHKUMITIN,
MIKWETC
WELA'LIN

MEEGWETCH
WLIWNI
NIA:WEN,

TSHENISKEMETEN
WOLIWON
NAKURMIK

TIAWENHK
MIIGWECH

