

2022



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NOVEMBER 2021

INDIGENOUS WOMEN'S VOICES ON CLIMATE CHANGE, CONSERVATION, AND BIODIVERSITY

WEBINAR SUMMARY REPORT



Native Women's Association of Canada

L'Association des femmes autochtones du Canada



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KEY FINDINGS AND HIGHLIGHTS

FROM SESSION 1—FIRST ENGAGEMENT SESSION:

- One person gave feedback prior to the start of the online seminars, stating that this form of consultation is not fully respectful to all people because it was only being offered in one format, suited for those who are comfortable with Zoom and sharing publicly. Introverts, like this woman, would not participate. She also stated, "If this was a company offering this consultation, we would be very critical. If it isn't good enough consultation for us, it isn't good enough by us."
- Most participants vehemently agree the planet is in a climate crisis and there are several observational pieces of evidence in their communities and regions that prove change is occurring. These include moose migration patterns, health of animals and hunting, quality of water and sanitation systems, declining presence of wildlife, deforestation, "nuisance bears," and frequent environmental disasters such as tornadoes, droughts, clearcutting and species endangerment.
- A major concern among people at the session was the pervasive mindset of capitalism, profit-driven environmental movements, and greenwashing or unethical practices from companies and government parties alike.
- Another person gave feedback that women should be involved in conversations in bigger forums and have better access to local organized forums and seminars. They also recommended organizations provide better technology and accommodations, as Zoom is not necessarily available to all individuals, as well as options to travel to physical locations for seminars, conferences, and meetings.



FROM SESSION 2—SECOND ENGAGEMENT SESSION:

- When asked about Mother Earth being in crisis, the participants agreed that the planet is not in crisis, but humanity is at great risk. It was added that animals and species are also at risk because of our harmful activities.
- Participants also noted that water sanitation and access to clean water is extremely important for current and future generations. Some areas of concern included pollutants, oil spills, increasing amounts of blue and green algae in the bodies of water, and rising water temperatures.
- Participants showed dissent for the Ford Government's lack of concern, or care, for the natural environment and communities. In particular: those living in the Ring of Fire region in Ontario, which consists of a majority of Indigenous People.

FROM SESSION 3—THIRD ENGAGEMENT SESSION:

- A participant said that there should be a more public showcasing for climate action and grassroots solutions for Indigenous People. The participant likened Essence Awards for the Black community and wants a similar award for Indigenous communities.
- Participants agreed that moose, deer, and fish, have become parasitic or have developed tumours and other unhealthy growths, which makes them unusable for ceremonies and consumption.
- The use of Traditional Ecological Knowledge (TEK) was highly encouraged and commended by participants and moderators alike, in order to move toward a strategically proliferating and flourishing future with all ages, Indigenous clans, and global Indigeneity, unified.



SESSION 1—FIRST ENGAGEMENT SESSION—NOVEMBER 9, 2021.

OVERVIEW:

The moderators of this session, Mary Boyden, Agency Lead; and Alexandra Bridges, PTMA representative at Keepers of the Circle, introduced key questions that were pre-selected to facilitate the most dialogue from stakeholder participants of the session. Elder Mario Batisse provided opening and closing prayers.

- Participants In Session 1 included four Indigenous women and one Elder from Ontario. This engagement session was run two more times, for a total of three times, with the same questions with little variability in wording and sequence of questions.
- The following sections provide a summary of the key points from this session. Some of these points are presented verbatim, as told by participants.

QUESTION 1

Is Mother Earth in crisis?

- Most participants resoundingly agree that Mother Earth is in crisis.
- An Elder noted that they've never seen tornadoes in the area up until recently, which is clear evidence of climate change. There were at least two tornadoes in the Temiskaming region in 2021. The Elder said clearcutting of grass and forestry causes more tornadoes and needs to be stopped. The creeks are also in a drought.
- One participant noted that, "It takes a bunch of hypocrites in the bush" to repair the land or take action. There are attempts made with water walks in the region, as well as youth engagement and involvement, however there is extreme need to enhance these endeavours.

- Another participant mentioned that society at large is taking advantage of resources for “monetary gains.” They added that, “Stewardship is being oppressed” and Indigenous Peoples within the community are being sold away “by our own people.” Similarly the participant noted that resources are, “Being sold out by our own people,” and even blockades result in people of their own community being turned away. The participant added that “pockets being lined” but not given back to the general community.
 - Participants were also distraught by the clearcutting of grey spruce in the region and the lack of select cut methods. Having this natural element being demolished is very hurtful and negligent to those who tend and care for the Earth. A participant pointed out that missing spruce trees (ultimately missing foliage) in the ecosystem would severely hinder quality of life for aquatic and land animals, as well as their feed. As one participant put it: We are losing the nurturing part of this earth. I don't think people are seeing the whole picture and are just seeing dollar signs ... they are not thinking seven generations ahead. It upsets me what is happening in the bush, the bush is my sanctuary. ... It literally breaks my heart. Our stewards need more platforms.
- Birch trees are another tree species being threatened by the forestry industry. A participant names a large business that is currently taking down young birch trees—which have not reached their full lifespan—before reaching their medicinal and full growth potency. Birch trees are a traditionally sacred medicinal ingredient for Anishinaabe communities. People are being paid to bundle young birch trees in Southern Ontario and the United States. “Our medicine is being used for crafts,” one participant said. The participant has emailed the Ministry of Natural Resources and asked for evidence of the trees being removed. This request was not taken very seriously or with urgency. There was a brief, general discussion that people are being tricked into a livelihood by the lure of driving a four-wheel truck, or other sought-after vehicles. This exploits and creates profit for them,, while damaging natural environments.
- A participant said, “Yes, [Mother Earth] is [in crisis], storms are more severe, ice caps are melting, global warming is a real thing. And so much more. Absolutely She is in crisis.” Another said, “The nurturing of humans, not just animals, all of our relations are in nature.”

QUESTION 2

What are the key components of a healthy environment?

- The diagnostics for a healthy environment are open to interpretation for many in the session, but key components mentioned included an abundance of animals and wildlife activity, seeing new growth, more greenery, clean water, and reciprocity for what has been pulled out of the environment by giving back for what has been taken.
- One participant named a well-balanced medicine wheel as a healthy environment. They also people should be held more accountable for water treatment and the water cycle; ensuring cleanliness and sanitation of water throughout the country.
 - Bridges commented that the environment is considered free enterprise. It is 100 percent profitable, which is extremely harmful and colonial. The pioneers and settlers gain the most from these extractive projects and are not providing a return to the environment for what has been seized.

QUESTION 3

What are the key issues affecting women and gender diverse peoples in their environments?

- Women have higher cancer rates and infertility rates due to air quality, water quality, and hormones in food.
- One participant stated a refinery has been established in her backyard and now she is in the position of needing to install a \$10,000 water system to trust the water to bathe her children. She admits she is doing relatively well and better than those communities that have boil water advisories.
- “Money plays a huge role in the cost of our own health,” one participant said. An Anishnaabe perspective would be helpful for those who want to comment on water quality, the degradation of water spaces, and implications on biotic life.



QUESTION 4

Are Indigenous women more impacted than Indigenous men by climate change? If so, what are the differences?

- One participant said there is no disparity between how men and women are being affected by climate change. It is not discriminatory by gender. Children and animals—regardless of sex—are being affected. “We are all impacted as a human race.”
- An Elder said organs of animals are diseased and rendered useless because of contamination in water, food, etc. and that there is damage from pesticides and sprays causing illness. He made this comment in 1972, and the animals are still sick and carrying genetic and onset disease. The Elder hasn't eaten fish, muskrat, or beaver in years because the animals are sick and unhealthy to eat from water sources (streams, creeks, rivers, lakes, etc.).
- The Elder said he used to hunt for moose on September 2 each year, while now the moose hunting calendar has shifted to between September 15 to anywhere at the end of September. This implies there are heavy changes in circadian rhythms (chronobiology), herding patterns, and geographic displacement. He added that beavers start to hoard food stashes in order to prepare for hibernation as early as November now, which is much earlier than the usual cycle for hibernation.
- Food security has become an issue due to inflation and GMOs in food.
- Participants said walleye, pike, and bass fish are producing fewer spawn and less nutritional value.
- The session agreed that there is a declining presence of wildlife.

QUESTION 5

Are you aware of any projects in your community or lands related to climate change, adaptation, or resilience, with Indigenous women's contribution?

- The participants identified waterwalk and dehydrating flowers.

QUESTION 6

How are Indigenous women crucial transmitters of Knowledge related to climate change to future generations?

- Participants agreed that women are life-givers. As well, women teach children.
- A participant noted that, "Indigenous women are cultural transmitters in the way they pass on their Knowledge of stories and songs to their children. They are the life-givers, and they will pass down culture during the upbringing for their children."

QUESTION 7

How can Indigenous women be more represented in decision making bodies related to climate change? What suggestions would you like to make to the Government of Canada?

- Women should be involved in conversations in bigger forums and with better access to local organized forums and seminars. We also need better technology and accommodations, as Zoom is not necessarily available to all people. The option to travel to physical locations for seminars, conferences, and meetings should also be offered. There are implementation gaps in Indigenous identity and Knowledge due to shame and lost traditions in younger generations as a result of residential schools and generational trauma.



QUESTION 8

How can Indigenous women be more represented in decision making bodies related to climate change? What suggestions would you like to make to the Government of Canada?

- A participant said Indigenous People need to be given a voice to allow them to share new insights.
- Another participant said:

The Government of Canada needs to listen to our Elders. They have a lot to learn about Indigenous traditions and the Elders have so much wisdom. They need to learn to respect Mother Earth and her resources. That we are the same as the animals, the water, the trees, and grass; and we need to take better care of her.

QUESTION 9

How are Indigenous women in your community helping to address the harmful emissions that contribute to climate change, and help address adverse, climate-related impacts?

- A participant said they want to see reciprocity from the government front, but also for people.
- An Elder recommended that companies and clear cutters be charged taxes for goods that are not consensually extracted from the land. There needs to be policy changes, replanting of the trees, or tax incentives, to alleviate the extraction of resources.
 - Boyden asks, "What are small ways of making impacts on a municipal or local level that we could be doing?"
- An Elder said bear traps needed to be made in his adolescent years. Today, bears come into town because they detect human activity. Bears learn the



QUESTION 9 CONT

smell of humans and they rummage through garbage and make messes. We need to find allies. Men need to take the lead from women in communities.

- A participant emphasized the difference between connotations in global warming against global catastrophe to downplay and gaslight the intensity of changes happening on our planet. Mother Earth is an entity.
- Essentials cost extreme amounts of money up north, and the mining developments are necessary to create essential items like lightbulbs, electrical car engines, etc. A participant mentioned cobalt and testing water cables when living close to water refineries.
- Another participant said the most effective way to garner attention is to gather data at a grassroots level and ask questions.
- The participants theorized nation building as an effective solution, with a goal of benefiting the environment and economy.

SESSION 2—SECOND ENGAGEMENT SESSION—NOVEMBER 16, 2021 OVERVIEW:

The moderators of this session, Mary Boyden, Agency Lead; and Alexandra Bridges, PTMA representative at Keepers of the Circle, introduced key questions pre-selected to facilitate the most dialogue from stakeholder participants of the session. Elder Mario Batisse provided opening and closing prayers.

Participants in Session 2 included 11 Indigenous women from across Ontario. This engagement session was run a total of three times, with the same questions with little variability in wording and sequence of questions.

The following sections provide a summary of the key points from this session. Some of these points are presented verbatim, as told by participants.



QUESTION 1

Is Mother Earth in crisis? If so, then how?

- Participants agreed that Mother Earth is in crisis, and it was “safe to assume” so.
- A participant noted that during the pandemic, while human activity was halted and relatively low, water levels rose again and there were positive changes in restoration. Another participant noted polar ice caps melting, changing water levels, extreme weather conditions such as flash flooding, water pollution, scarce drinking water in Ontario, and droughts, to be major changes affecting Mother Earth.
- A participant argued that the planet is not in crisis because it has been around for thousands of years and will withstand the negligence and corruption that humans have caused it, but humanity would not survive. “No matter how erratic and dangerous it gets, the planet will survive, but life as we know it will get disrupted,” the participant said.
 - Another participant agreed that the planet is not in crisis, but humanity is at risk and animals and species are at risk because of our harmful activities.



QUESTION 2

What are the key components of a healthy environment?

- Bridges encouraged participants to answer this question with specific focus on the impact for Indigenous women and diverse peoples.
- A participant referred back to the first question and said everyone has their place in relation to everything else. "Humans keep disrupting this cycle and ignoring how seriously we are disrupting it ... it is getting out of our control," the participant said. Species are being eradicated and becoming extinct, plants are being distributed across the country, and "everything being in its certain space" is now imbalanced. They said a family in their hometown had two spoiled moose in one year, which was unheard of. The animals are having complications from ingesting pesticides, chemicals, and are suffer organ damage and/or parasitic diseases, which prevent them from reaching their full lifespans and healthiest conditions. This has also led to people changing their career paths as many Indigenous women work in short-term or low paying jobs.
 - Boyden commented that this reflects our ability as humans to survive on this planet.
 - Another participant said that the health of the ecosystem and planet goes back to the health of the water on the planet. "You need water to survive—whether it is to drink, to eat, to travel."
 - A participant said climate change impacts people's lifestyles and culture. For example: Inuit communities are affected by changes with the ice caps, and later migration patterns of moose and geese, which affect the "rhythms of seasons."
- Another participant noted that pesticides and sprays also affect life for different parts of the ecosystem.
- Lack of clean drinking water is extremely disturbing and must become a demand. It is a devastating realization today.

Boyden said we are building on historic inequities, and have the opportunity to bring voices to the forefront to address issues now.

QUESTION 3

When we think about our communities, do we think that climate change is accelerating? In what ways is it accelerating?

- A participant said trains have been spilling crude oil in Gogama. There have been two cases in 10 years. The participant said a security company was hired to cover up the damage and not allow the public to ask questions.
- Two participants said herbicide glyphosate is being used in the region and damaging plants and ecosystems.
- Another participant said, "Change in traditional way of hunting, land access" as proof of climate change, is accelerating.
- A participant shared the following observations about Mother Earth being in crisis, and climate change acceleration with,

Polar bears, less geese seen, changes in species coming here, birds that weren't seen before. I remember Lawrence, our marine region manager, was talking about the snow geese and that they mentioned a possible cull—even though I don't agree with culls in principle as a solution—and that they can pose a threat to some of the vegetation further north because while geese eat the tops of grass, snow geese eat the root. Things like that. (And the) water is receding.

- Moderator Mary Boyden said, "Being legal and right are two different things. That's where our voices are needed."
- Boyden was receptive to the participants' observations. She said the findings were, "Documented by the ones who use the land, which is really important."
- A participant who lives near a lake noticed that there is an increasing amount of blue and green algae in the bodies of water, which affects the nutrient quantity and cleanliness of the water. It might be a sign of phosphates in water, or rising water temperatures.
- A participant also remarked that the Temiskaming region is outside of the Canadian Shield and immune to natural weather disasters such as tropical storms, flooding, hurricanes, earthquakes, avalanches, tsunamis, tornadoes, etc. therefore any noticeable changes and reactions in nature are clear indicators of climate change.

QUESTION 4

How are Indigenous communities implementing clean climate solution projects? Identify these groups and individuals.

- A participant named an initiative in Constance Lake, which is looking to build solar panels in the spring. The project is focused on employing women and gender diverse individuals.
- A participant shared a link about the “Ring of Fire,” which is a mining development and mineral deposit in northern Ontario. It is located more than 500 kilometres north of Thunder Bay, in an area home to Indigenous People of Treaty 9. (<https://www.cbc.ca/news/canada/toronto/ontario-electric-vehicle-mining-ring-of-fire-1.6238261>). The participant shared another article, clearly showing dissent for the Ford Government’s lack of concern, or care, for natural environments. In particular, communities living in the Ring of Fire region in Ontario, and greenwashing the concept of mining for the purpose of creating electrical vehicle engines, which use a massive amount of clean water to produce. (<https://thenarwhal.ca/cop26-ontario-economy/>).
- The participant who shared links and article resources also shared the following during the moderated session: “Here are three links about the Mill Creek site and the Temiskaming Metis Community Council’s work there—with the support of Mino M’shki-ki” The link is as follows: <http://www.netnewsledger.com/2019/09/30/indigenous-language-gathering-held-in-temiskaming-shores/> <https://www.francais.presidentssuites.com/personnes-et-endroits/mill-creek-story/>
- <http://www.cobaltmininglegacy.ca/tailings.php>.



QUESTION 5

How is conservation an integral part of environmental protection? Are there any specific animals and/or species endangerment, that should be brought to attention?

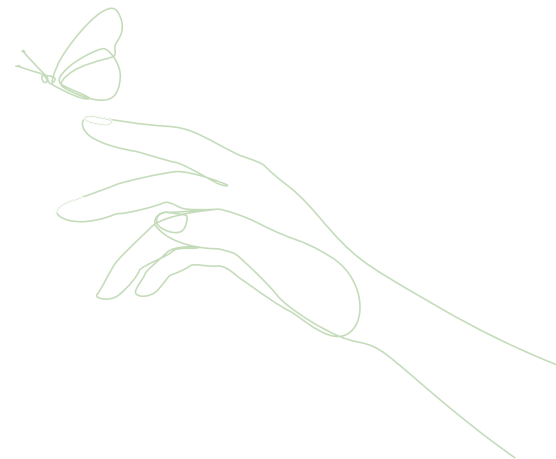
- A participant named humans as a species that should be of concern.
- Another participant named spruce trees, and birch trees.

QUESTION 6

How are Indigenous women crucial transmitters of Knowledge related to climate change to future generations?

- A participant said they think of themselves as a teacher to their grandchildren. That it is their role and responsibility to teach them how to do things so they will know the process when its their turn.
- Another participant mentions TEK, transferred from Elder to Elder. They said women are like Elders in their communities and, "Keep information sacred, and keep the ownership of their Knowledge to that community and people belonging to it," rather than it being taken away and accredited to other people.
 - Boyden said there is a resource cycle and power dynamic in between industries, and men and women.
 - Bridges said TEK is slowly becoming a more recognizable method and critical perspective for modern day reporting and data. It is used to analyze humanistic and naturalistic reasons, and hypotheses, of environmental processes.





QUESTION 7

How can Indigenous women be more represented in decision making bodies related to climate change? What suggestions would you want to make to the Government of Canada regarding this?

- A participant said there needs to be much more space made, specifically for Indigenous women's voices. "Indigenous women's voices aren't going to be there unless you put them there, ... pay them fairly, and take the active steps to get them there."
- Another participant said, "Hire more Indigenous women to work for the government."
- A participant said there should be more representation at the federal level and encouraged voices for all Indigenous women across the country. This is one method of reconciliation; to allow positions of power for Indigenous People.
 - There were also conversation about Maori People, in Australia, and how there is a set quota for representation of Maori individuals in Australian cabinet or governmental decision making. This is a huge step ahead of Canada's representation. The Australian constitution is even written in Maori, while many of the Canadian Indigenous languages are on the brink of extinction.
- Another participant said the media plays a hugely important role in the success of issues, which requires the government's attention and plan of action.

QUESTION 8

How are Indigenous women taking action to address climate change?

- A participant said that grassroots work is a very effective example of work in Temiskaming at different bodies of water, such as water walks for local lakes.
- Another participant said Mushkegowuk Council has taken action to reduce the use of pesticides and sprays on plants and crops. There is also a bird sanctuary and carbon deposits, which is a resource being kept in the ground and reserved against development.



QUESTION 9

How can Indigenous women and gender diverse people work toward climate mitigation and adaptation efforts? How can they foster ecological growth and economic development?

- A participant said food and crafts can be bought and supported locally—supporting Indigenous businesses—and optimizing local growth and consumption.
 - Bridges said home projects and local entrepreneurs should be supported.
- Another participant said there are a lot of barriers to overcome, such as domestic violence, oppression, intergenerational traumas, childcare

issues, education, and disability accessibility. The participant added that people need to work in sustainable industries.

QUESTION 10

What is the best environmental practice developed by an Indigenous woman in your community?

- A participant mentioned that there is intergenerational trauma in people facing scarcity and economic depressions. Their parents grew up in the 40s and would collect the smallest pieces of remaining bars of soap once to keep in a bag “just in case.” They emphasize that we are in a “throw-away” society, and that is a colonial style of living.
 - Bridges mentioned an Elder who doesn’t waste a single piece of textile or food, named Roberta Oshkabewisens.
- Another participant said their family would store products in a pantry with preserved goods, canned goods, fruits and vegetables, and any household items or supplies that were necessary. Their family also reused textiles and gathered materials to create new clothing or other items.
- A participant said the main motivators of change are from women and/or girls. This participant taught their elderly mother how to recycle because she had never recycled before. Their cousin started a composting business in Kirkland Lake because nobody else was doing it and sold the compost back to their customers as fresh composted soil.
- Another participant started composting a few years ago because it wasn’t a local initiative and faced backlash for it because it was perceived to bring bears to the neighbourhood.
- A participant said they have committed to eating within 100 miles of their home to support local businesses, reduce travel emissions, and improve their immune system.





SESSION 3—THIRD ENGAGEMENT SESSION—NOVEMBER 23, 2021.

OVERVIEW:

The moderators of this session, Mary Boyden, Agency Lead; and Alexandra Bridges, PTMA representative at Keepers of the Circle, introduced key questions that were pre-selected to facilitate the most dialogue from stakeholder participants of the session. Participants in Session 3 included 16 Indigenous women from across Ontario and one from Alberta. This engagement session was run a total of three times, with the same questions with little variability in wording and sequence of questions.

The following sections provide a summary of the key points from this





session. Some of these points are presented verbatim, as told by participants.

QUESTION 1

Mother Earth in crisis? If so, then how?

- A participant said they feel stigmatized and sidelined for being a single mother, especially coming from an Indigenous perspective and lens. They also noted that there is no food sovereignty in their Indigenous communities, and mistreatment of women and children coming from Elders and men, while, “walking all over Mother Earth and the people.”
- A participant said, “Mother Earth is definitely in crisis” and that calling the Earth as a mother is unethical. It implies that, “mother = sole valuation of women” and there are gendered practices and personifications of nature that are harmful. The connotations of calling elements of nature as women implies that they have to “give” parts of themselves and be potentially used. The participant said that their treaty area (Treaty 9) is being overruled with mining exploitations in their region. They urged that fossil fuels need to be phased out. Community agreements and technology development about mining would help explore, “Better ways to improve progress of closures and openings.”
 - Bridges said Indigenous People have such a close connection to the Earth and that it is a breach of personal culture and privacy for Indigenous women and gender diverse people, and environmental rights of the planet, when parts of nature are being exploited and destroyed.

QUESTION 2

What are the key components of a healthy environment?

- A participant said a key component to a healthy environment is identity. "Identity and connection to the land, ... men as firekeepers, being on the land ... healing begins from there. Your body and mind begin to blossom and accept different things like learning more about your culture, your language, your ancestors, and finding yourself in ceremony ... going on your own walk."
- Another participant liked the concept of ceremony to be a welcoming experience but found it triggering and a negative experience as a woman. The participant said it was an ageist experience, which was only holistic for older audiences and people. They felt that being in ceremony meant you had to be conditioned and know when to keep your voice silent. They said that there are no policies or rules made to create a safe space for Indigenous People in ceremony and want their children to also have a safe environment.
- The participant said they wanted no smoking whatsoever, healthier food options, and no fast food at ceremony—home-cooked food, and using plants and traditional herbs and medicinal recipes.

QUESTION 3

Are Indigenous women more affected by climate change than men?

- A participant said that this question enforces a heteronormative agenda.
 - It was noted that this question wasn't very inclusive, and we are all affected by climate change equally, regardless of gender identity.

QUESTION 4

Is climate change accelerating in your communities?

- A participant said that there are a lot of berries that aren't growing in their community anymore. They also noted that airplanes and their fuel consumption is very harmful to the environment and air quality.

QUESTION 5

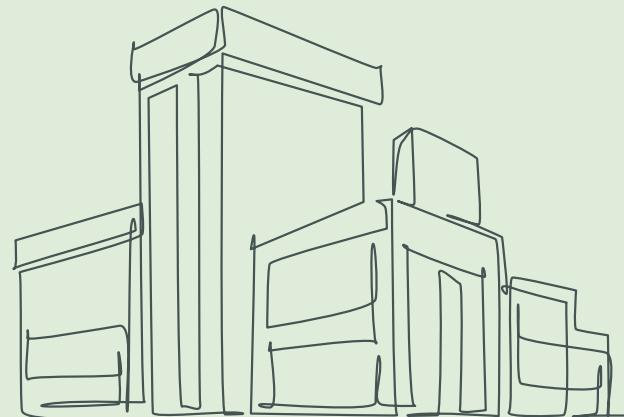
How are Indigenous women addressing climate change through initiatives in your local communities?

- A participant said there should be more public showcasing for climate action and grassroots solutions for Indigenous People. The participant likened Essence Awards for the Black community and wants a similar award for Indigenous communities. This participant makes mukluks out of used textiles and clothing for her children and peers. "We don't have any role models because we are not supporting each other. We need a Native showcasing," the participant added.
- A participant brought up the Keepers of the Circle Pathways to Resiliency. Through the program, people can promote their entrepreneurial ventures and products in the group, sharing their connections and Knowledge together. Some projects included jewelry making, dress making, and harvesting good such as honey, herbs, and foraging.
 - Boyden said, "Indigenous women have always been in the sustainability business and haven't been involved in the process."

QUESTION 6

How is conservation an integral part of environmental protection? What are some species that are affected by climate change?

- A participant said moose, deer, and fish have become parasitic or developed tumours and other unhealthy growths, making them unusable for ceremony and consumption. They added that there are no recycling or composting programs for food and waste. They want to see more community gardens, flourishing ecosystems, and medicines.
 - Bridges mentioned that milkweed numbers have been eroded because



of reduced plant diversity in the region, and due to clearcutting.

QUESTION 7

Are there any projects you've noticed in your community that are shifting conversation toward sustainability and adaptation during climate change?

- A participant named a forestry monitoring program as a local initiative. "You can replant trees, but you can't replant oxygen."
- Another participant noted less snowfall, which affects the levels of water in lakes and other bodies of water, and may also contribute to erosion and soil quality. The winters are now less cold and snowy.

QUESTION 8

How are Indigenous women crucial transmitters of Knowledge in relation to climate change and future generations?

- A participant said they thought a lot about Indigenous allodial land title and talked about their personal experiences being thrown out of their property on the reserve, and out of the reserve itself. They said falling into a pattern of grief and pain was doing exactly what the government and authorities want, so they decided to grow from their experience and the fact that people asserted their sovereignty over land that does not belong to them. They are very skilled in teaching Indigenous women how to build their own homes.



QUESTION 9

How can Indigenous women be more represented in decision making bodies relating to climate change? What suggestions would you want to make to the Government of Canada regarding this?

- A participant said there needs to be more funding for women's organizations to amplify their voices. For example, organic sources need to be used rather than chemicals and pesticides that are sprayed to prevent growth of trees on the sides of the roads. The same chemicals sprayed are ingested by wildlife and attract flies and pests, which causes havoc on the ecosystem process. "Women care about these issues and can find out what the qualifications are ... for these jobs," and can earn these opportunities to make a better reality.
- A participant said we need to better understand what is happening around the world, as there are over 370 million Indigenous People worldwide who are theorizing and battling the same issues regarding nutrition, shelter, medicines, cultural practices, and preservation. They said that it's easy to look myopically within Canada and our own realm of knowledge, but putting this together and looking at global issues and perspectives can be added to our "roster of networks" and create real change and knowledge. "We need to start thinking of ourselves as change-makers, ... and what kind of organization we want to make or be," they said, theorizing that, "Radical means 'from the roots' ... so being radical refers to going back to who we were and are."



QUESTION 10

What role do we think Indigenous women play in environmental conservation?

- The participants struggled to answer this question. It was mentioned that Indigenous women are born into this role, rather than step into it. Additionally, there are many opportunities in environmental conservation deriving from who Indigenous women are. "For us, it is common sense—so far away from colonized ways," one participant said.



QUESTION 11

How are Indigenous women in your community addressing climate change? What are the best environmental practices developed by an Indigenous woman in your community?

- A participant shared that in their community in the city, there is a transfer station for garbage out of the community. There used to be a dumping ground on a hill and leak into the bay and water areas, which would cause seepage and pollution. This has been mitigated with a relocation and the implementation of a transfer station. The junior and high schools also have land-based learning and knowledge embedded in the curriculum, which is especially fundamental for younger students regarding conservation, preservation, and protection of the Earth. Participants added that there are initiatives such as "saving the turtles" at the local marsh areas and dedicated teachings regarding local ecosystems and environmental cycles in their own communities.



QUESTION 12

How can Indigenous women move toward more climate action mitigation and conservation efforts?

- A participant said more language has to be integrated into community gardens and grants.
- Another participant said government grants are a general distraction from what is being done behind closed doors. It was noted that this deviates Indigenous communities away from nature and TEK. They vouched for following Elders' advice and caring for each other's families, peers, friends, etc. and extending love to one another.
- A participant went to a Sundance ceremony and noticed a lot of dollar store bags. The food was from fast food restaurants rather than land based or locally shared recipes. "We need to think with our spirituality and physicality. We need to do the physical work," the participant said.
 - Boyden responded to the participant and said, "Thank you for bringing in the Sundance ceremony. ... it is about celebrating life."
- A participant said they want to see more reusable products, such as grocery bags, which are able to carry heavy items and able to be designed and decorated with Indigenous designs, motifs, pictures, and references to animals. They reflected on their late father saying, "We should plant our own gardens again" so Indigenous communities know exactly what they are eating and where the foods are coming from.
- Another participant agreed that food sovereignty and healthy foods without additives, GMOs, or other chemicals, are extremely important.
- "We must take the risk to speak. Our mothers encourage us to have a voice," a participant said.



ANNEX A: MODERATOR'S GUIDE

Questions for Participants



INTRODUCTION (15 MINUTES):

- Moderator asks each participant to briefly introduce themselves and identify Knowledge they have received by Elders about our climate. Moderator explains how the webinar will take place.

DEFINING THE ISSUES (30 MINUTES):

- Is Mother Earth in crisis? If so, how?
- What are the key components of a healthy environment (e.g. health, well-being, cultures, languages, water, food security, housing)?
- Are Indigenous women more impacted than Indigenous men by climate change? If so, how significant are the differences? Please provide examples how Indigenous women are impacted by climate change in your community, in relation to Indigenous men.
- Is the climate change crisis accelerating in your communities?
- How are Indigenous communities implementing clean energy projects, and how are Indigenous women, in particular, creating climate solutions critical to addressing the growing impacts of climate change?
- How is conservation an integral part in environmental protection? What species are at risk with climate change?
- Are you aware of any projects in your community, or lands, relating to climate change, adaptation, or resilience, with Indigenous women's contribution?



EMPOWERING INDIGENOUS WOMEN (30 MINUTES):

- How are Indigenous women crucial transmitters of Knowledge, relating to climate change and future generations?
- How can Indigenous women be more represented in decision making bodies, relating to climate change? What suggestions would you like to make to the Government of Canada?
- What role should Indigenous women play in environmental conservation?
- How can Indigenous Knowledge Keepers and Elders help resolve current environmental issues facing Canada?

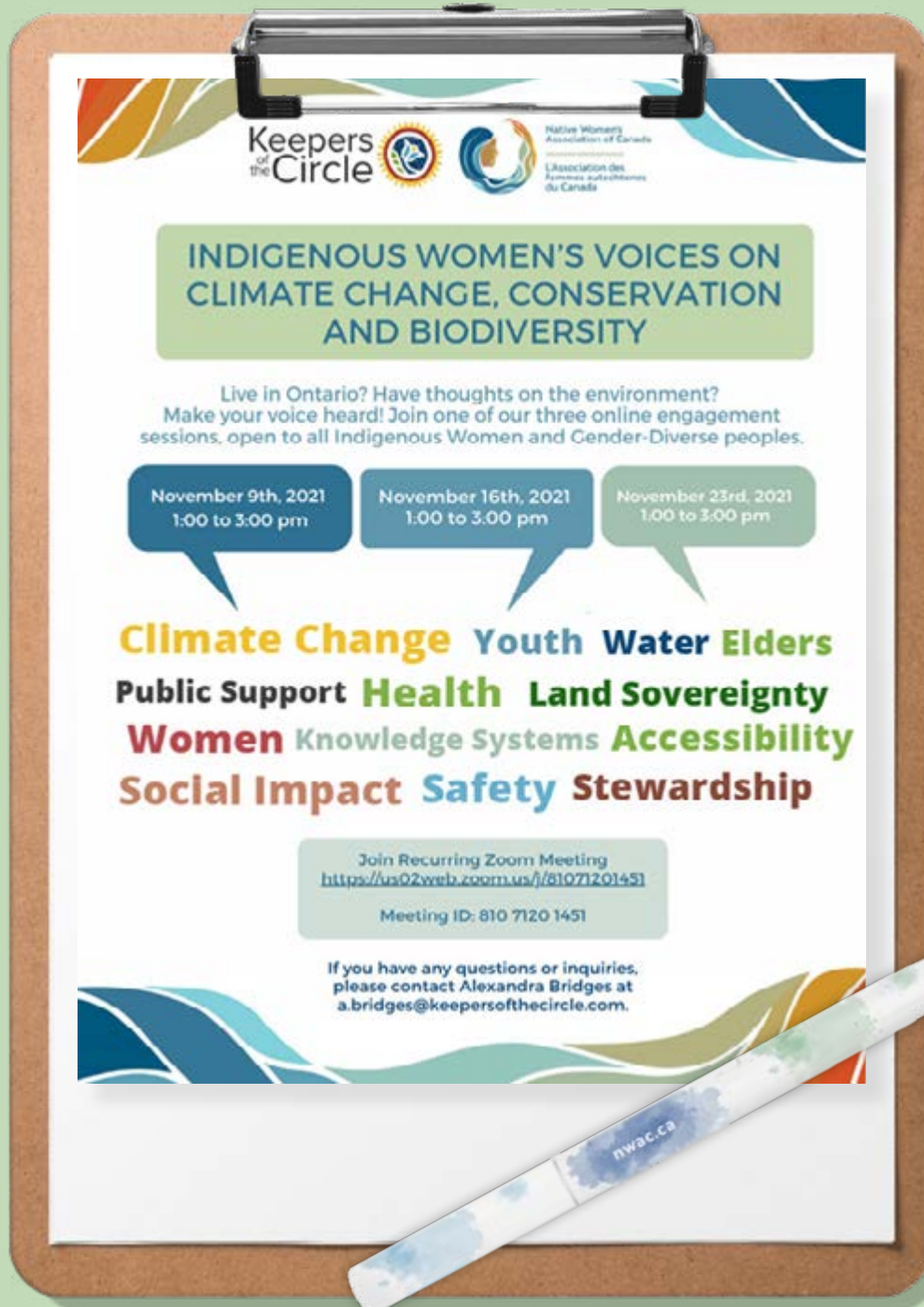
FINDING SOLUTIONS (30 MINUTES):



- How are Indigenous women in your community helping to address the harmful emissions that contribute to climate change, and help address adverse, climate-related impacts?
- How can Indigenous women and gender diverse people work toward climate mitigation to drive toward more sustainable growth and economic development?
- What environmental best practices have been developed by Indigenous women in your communities, with respect to solutions in addressing climate change?

CONCLUSION (15 MINUTES):

- Moderator asks participants if they wish to make concluding comments.
- Moderator thanks all participants for the session.





Keepers of the Circle   **Native Women's Association of Canada**
L'Association des Femmes autochtones du Canada

INDIGENOUS WOMEN'S VOICES ON CLIMATE CHANGE, CONSERVATION AND BIODIVERSITY

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November 9th, 2021
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November 16th, 2021
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Climate Change Youth Water Elders
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If you have any questions or inquiries,
please contact Alexandra Bridges at
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2022

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WEBINAR SUMMARY REPORT



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