



SHINING THE SPOTLIGHT

NATIVE WOMEN'S ASSOCIATION OF CANADA NEWSLETTER

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Message from the CEO

The Native Women's Association of Canada (NWAC) is a national Indigenous organization representing the political voices of Indigenous women, girls, Two-Spirit, transgender, and gender-diverse+ (WG2STGD+) people in Canada. We are an aggregate of Indigenous women's organizations from across the country. Together with these provincial and territorial member associations (PTMAs), we work to enhance, promote, and foster the social, economic, cultural, and political well-being of the people we serve and represent.

In this issue of our newsletter *Shining the Spotlight*, we look at some of the many topics in which NWAC is involved. Some of those topics or issues relate to breaking down barriers and lifting up Indigenous women, through initiatives such as the recent "Change the Bill" call to action that aims to promote reconciliation through art. Then there's our ongoing work on the missing and murdered Indigenous women and girls file, with our current focus on the Safe Passage project. Given the affinity that Indigenous women have with the land, all things climate-related continue to be top-of-mind. That's why participating in such international events such as COP 15 In Montreal in December 2022 is so important to NWAC and the people we represent.

But we couldn't do our work without the active participation and involvement of our grassroots members.

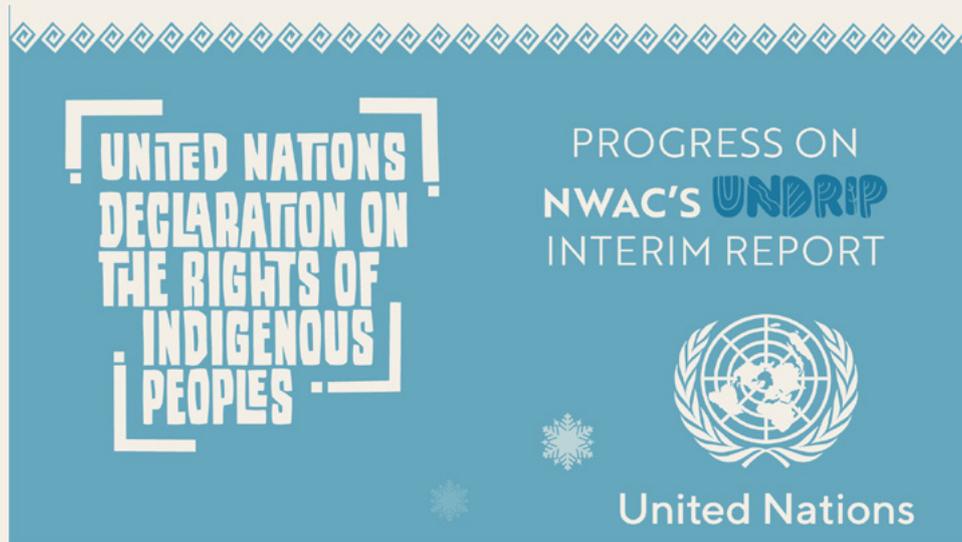
Message from the CEO (CONT.)

In this issue you'll read about the work we are doing with our PTMAs, to help them build operational capacity in the areas of fundraising, project management, budget management and helping them build linkages and relationships with their federal political representatives. A large part of capacity building involves securing stable core funding for our organization, and for our PTMAs, as well as funding to develop resiliency lodges in every province and territory across the country.

Drilling down, engaging with our individual PTMAs encompasses not just NWAC helping them build political relationships and fundraising. It also involves our Capacity Building team providing direct training and support on how to write strong grant and funding proposals, how to develop strategic action plans, and how to create programs that meet the needs of their specific communities. This issue carries two stories about our engagement work with the PTMAs and the art of proposal writing.

On every file we work on, NWAC is ever mindful of our mission to advocate for and inspire women, girls, 2SLGBTQQAI+ people, and the families of many Indigenous nations. Every action we take is designed to move us toward achieving an inclusive world that understands and respects the diversity and uniqueness of all Indigenous women, girls, 2SLGBTQQAI+ people, and families.





Progress on NWAC's UNDRIP Interim Report

NWAC's Legal Affairs and Justice Unit is busy preparing to advise Canada on how to implement the UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples (UNDRIP).

Our focus is on the perspectives of Indigenous women, girls, Two-Spirit, transgender, and gender-diverse people, and how these perspectives can help inform the Canadian government's Draft Action Plan to implement the UNDRIP Act.

In 2021, Canada adopted the *United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples Act* (UNDRIP Act) domestically. The UNDRIP Act will operate to implement the UNDRIP in three ways:

- It makes it clear that judges can use UNDRIP in Indigenous rights cases, elevating the non-binding international declaration to a universal human rights instrument with application in Canadian law.
- It mandates Canada to consult and cooperate with Indigenous Peoples in taking all measures necessary to make Canada's laws consistent with UNDRIP.
- It creates a statutory duty that the Justice Minister must consult and cooperate with Indigenous Peoples to develop and implement an action plan to achieve the objectives of the UN Declaration.

Progress on NWAC's UNDRIP Interim Report (CONT.)

Our unit started this work by identifying 12 gender-based priorities and recommendations to implement the UNDRIP Act. We did this by reviewing and analyzing Canadian law, jurisprudence, significant Canadian reports published on Indigenous affairs, and major speeches provided by the government throughout the study of Bill C-15 (*An Act Respecting the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples*).

Next, we organized and hosted two expert roundtables and one grassroots roundtable during the month of October 2022 to gather feedback from field experts and Indigenous people with gendered perspectives on their UNDRIP rights. To ensure a national reach and to mitigate the risks related to the COVID-19 pandemic, we conducted all roundtables online. Each session was facilitated by experienced Indigenous women leaders and supported by Elders.

We also consulted with experts from a range of backgrounds including lawyers, academics, Indigenous leaders, and advocates. The expert roundtable discussions focused on legal and policy matters and challenges associated with UNDRIP.

Our grassroots engagement session addressed how UNDRIP rights impact Indigenous women and how these groups can effectively contribute their unique knowledge to developing UNDRIP-complaint federal laws, regulations, and policies. We are so grateful to those who participated in these challenging but meaningful discussions and are hopeful Canada will heed NWAC's recommendations and apply them in their draft action plan. The government's action plan is expected to be tabled in February 2023, ahead of their final action plan in June 2023.

From roundtable discussion participants and experts, we heard:

- there is a lack of clarity surrounding s. 35 rights of the *Constitution Act, 1982*
- there is ongoing strike stemming from Canada's historic disregard for the treaties signed with Indigenous Peoples
- concern about the absence of consultation with Indigenous women
- provincial and federal divisions that obstruct Indigenous Peoples' right to self-determination
- sex-based discrimination within the *Indian Act* and Indigenous governing bodies
- colonial harms are ongoing

Progress on NWAC's UNDRIP Interim Report (CONT.)

NWAC sent the interim recommendations to the Justice Department in November. This report is divided into three sections:

- barriers and issues Indigenous women face in exercising their Indigenous rights guaranteed by the UNDRIP
- strategies for implementing the UNDRIP Act
- recommendations and priorities

Suggested approaches to implementing the UNDRIP Act include repealing and replacing the Indian Act, revoking the doctrine of discovery, working alongside Indigenous legal orders, launching pilot projects, prioritizing treaty rights, forming a women's council, enforcing accountability measures, amending existing legislation, considering constitutional amendments, and upholding its legal obligations in other international human rights treaty bodies. NWAC also proposes 21 recommendations that align with the list of 12 gender-based priorities.

Indigenous women must be at the forefront of these discussions. Their input should be received and valued, not just as an act of reconciliation with a marginalized group affected by colonial harms, but as a group whose knowledge is essential to the growth and development of Indigenous and Canadian societies.

Next steps will include hosting an additional expert roundtable and three more grassroots roundtables. We want to receive substantive feedback on Canada's draft action plan before the final action plan is drafted.





Engaging with the Provincial and Territorial Member Associations

NWAC's Capacity Building team is currently made up of three team members. Duane Ironstand, who resides on Treaty 4 territory, is the manager. Michelle Eagle Tail Feathers, residing on Treaty 7 Territory, and Adrienne Thomas, also residing on Treaty 4 territory, are community liaisons.

The Capacity Building team works in partnership with the provincial and territorial member associations (PTMAs) to help them build administrative capacity so they can provide support within their regions. Currently, our unit is:

- providing training and support for proposal writing to help PTMAs pursue new funding sources with confidence and to better support and sustain local programming
- developing customized strategic action plans for each PTMA, to identify key region-specific needs and develop or adjust programming to address these needs
- creating a funding sustainability plan for each PTMA to ensure longevity, maintenance, and growth of programming

Engaging with the Provincial and Territorial Member Associations (CONT.)

Engagement:

Over the course of the past two months (December 2022–January 2023), the team has been engaging with individual PTMAs. We have completed introductory meetings, developed and facilitated proposal writing training, scheduled ongoing engagement meetings, conducted email communication for specific material and tasks, and maintained close connections as needed to support the ongoing efforts of the PTMAs.

Training:

The team held a training workshop on proposal writing on November 30, 2022. Seven of the 11 PTMAs took part. The training included open question periods so participants could 'share their thoughts.' This resulted in an open line of communication with participants sharing invaluable insights.

Key indicators from the training workshop were as follows:

- 87.5% of participants who answered the survey said this training strengthened their knowledge of the proposal writing process
- 50% of participants who answered the survey said they welcome continued ongoing support to enhance their proposal writing processes and/or guidelines
- survey responses identified a need for ongoing support to help the PTMAs create programs that meet the needs of their community
- The Capacity Building team has a deeper understanding of the challenges that individual PTMAs face in their respective regions.

What we are doing now

The team is currently holding discussions with the PTMAs to assess community gender-based violence (GBV) issues, existing programming, current funding, identified funders, and needs and gaps. The information we glean from these discussions will help the team develop individual strategic action plans for each PTMA, with a focus on building organizational capacity.

The team will be meeting with each PTMA, virtually or in person, to complete the action plans.

The goal is to help each PTMA achieve financial sustainability. We are excited to be building a strategic framework that will allow PTMAs to build their capacity, thereby increasing the support they can provide to Indigenous women, girls, Two-Spirit, transgender, and gender-diverse people.





NWAC Goes to COP 15

The Conference of Parties 15 to the [United Nations Convention on Biological Diversity](#) (CBD) (COP 15) was held in Montreal December 7–19, 2022. Funded by its **Conserving Nature Biodiversity** project, NWAC hosted a side event as part of the [Canadian Pavilion](#). The event was facilitated by Environment and Climate Change Canada (ECCC).

At the global level, NWAC's contribution to COP 15 was located within the wider global context of targets 21 and 22 of the [post-2020 global biodiversity framework and the AICHI Global Biodiversity goals and targets](#), particularly Goal E and Target 18.

Target 18 states:

By 2020, the traditional knowledge, innovations, and practices of indigenous and local communities relevant for the conservation and sustainable use of biodiversity, and their customary use of biological resources, are respected, subject to national legislation and relevant international obligations, and fully integrated and reflected in the implementation of the convention with the full and effective participation of indigenous and local communities, at all relevant levels.

NWAC Goes to COP 15 (CONT.)

At the Canadian federal biodiversity policy level, NWAC's participation was guided by some of the challenges highlighted in the [Summary of Canada's 6th National Report to the Convention on Biological Diversity](#) in achieving Targets 12 and 15 as outlined in the [2020 Biodiversity Goals and Targets for Canada](#).

- **Target 12:** By 2020, customary use by Aboriginal [Indigenous] peoples of biodiversity resources are maintained, compatible with their conservation and sustainable use, and
- **Target 15:** By 2020, Aboriginal traditional knowledge [Indigenous Knowledge] is respected, promoted and were [sic] made available by Aboriginal [Indigenous] peoples, regularly meaningfully and effectively inform biodiversity conservation and management decision-making.

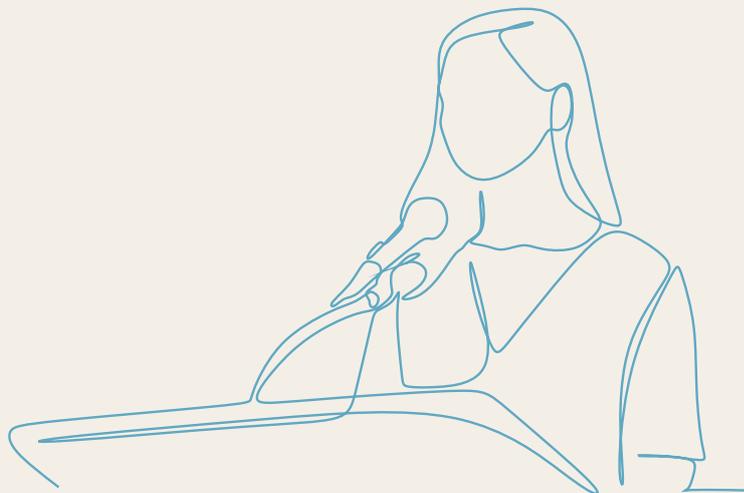
NWAC's side event presentation was titled **Beyond Biodiversity Targets: Insights from Indigenous Biodiversity Research and Practice**.

COP 15 provided an opportunity for NWAC to highlight several effective initiatives that Indigenous Peoples have taken to conserve biodiversity in Canada.

To showcase these initiatives, NWAC partnered with the [Centre for Indigenous Environmental Research \(CIER\)](#) in a powerful panel discussion on agrobiodiversity, Indigenous leadership, gender and Elder inclusion, and the value systems that drive conservation practices within Indigenous communities.

The event featured a panel of five Indigenous women: **Hannah Patrie**, NWAC (Metis-Anishinaabe); **Madeleine Redfern**, Nunavut Inuit Women's Association and NWAC (Inuk); **Lisa Smith**, NWAC (Inuk and Settler heritage); **Carlyn Allary**, CIER (Metis); and **Anita Murdock**, CIER (Long Plaine First Nation with Fisher River Cree family roots).

The five panelists collectively voiced their concerns about global and Canadian biodiversity goals and targets, particularly as it relates to Indigenous Peoples and territories.



NWAC Goes to COP 15 (CONT.)

On behalf of NWAC's Environment Unit we wish to thank ECCC for providing the support for NWAC to present at COP 15. We also wish to thank CIER for supporting NWAC's panel discussion.

We believe NWAC's presentation has done Indigenous women, girls, and gender-diverse peoples justice across Turtle Island, nation to nation, and coast to coast to coast.

To watch the full NWAC event at COP15, click [here](#).

Note: NWAC's participation at COP 15 represents the penultimate activity of the Conserving Nature Biodiversity project. Final reports on the project will be submitted to ECCC at the end of April 2023.

For more information on NWAC's participation at COP 15 and the Conserving Nature Biodiversity project, please contact Alvin Thompson, NWAC's Senior Director of Environment: athompson@nwac.ca.





The Indigenous Women's Safety Council

NWAC's MMIWG department is excited to officially announce the launch of the Indigenous Women's Safety Council as a part of the Safe Passage project. The Safety Council comprises representatives from our provincial and territorial member associations across the country to ensure that regional and grassroots perspectives, views, and concerns, are represented in the Safe Passage project, which aims to redress the overwhelming violence that Indigenous women, girls, Two-Spirit, transgender, and gender-diverse people (WG2STGD) experience. The overall goal and purpose of the Safety Council is to ensure that the invaluable knowledge and expertise of grassroots Indigenous women's organizations are at the centre of NWAC's efforts to track MMIWG2S+ cases and enable Indigenous women, girls, Two-Spirit, transgender, and gender-diverse people to report areas and experiences where they feel unsafe. We also want to equip them with the knowledge of where to find safety resources in their region.

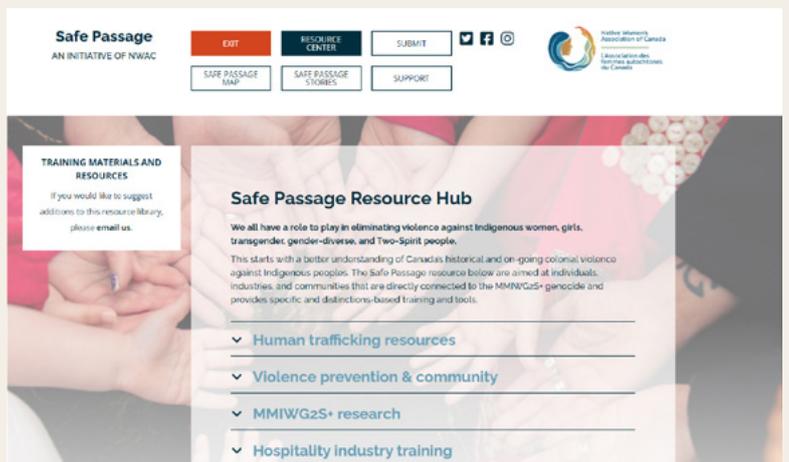
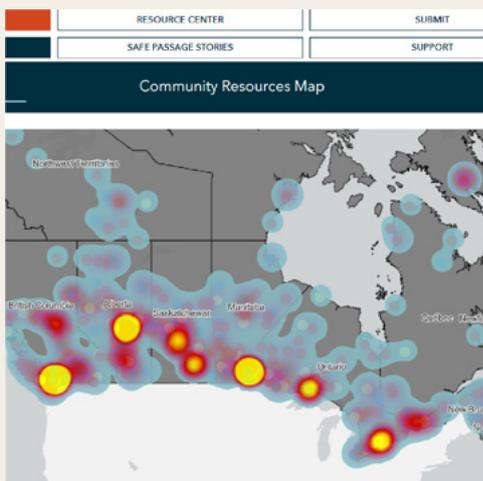
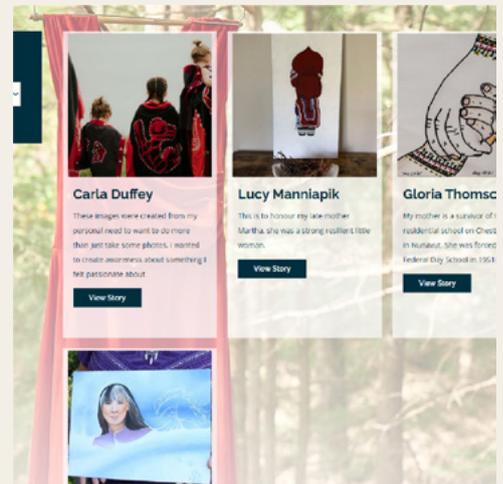
The Council meets four times between January 2022 and March 2023 for 2-2.5-hour meetings and will attend two virtual meetings and two in-person meetings at NWAC's head office in Gatineau, Quebec. In addition, Council representatives will have the opportunity to voluntarily provide written feedback on content and resources related to Safe Passage between meetings.

The Indigenous Women's Safety Council (CONT.)



Radio Canada Interview

On Monday, January 16, Chanel Blouin, a policy advisor in the MMIWG department was interviewed by Radio Canada about the disproportionate and distressing number of Indigenous WG2STGD people that are victims of human-trafficking. The interview also focused on the past and ongoing structural and institutional factors contributing to this issue, including the child welfare system, overincarceration, and lack of culturally relevant resources. Importantly, in the interview Chanel highlighted NWAC's response to this issue through our Safe Passage website and our continuing efforts to advocate for a national MMIWG alert system.





The Art of Proposal Writing

NWAC's Executive Policy Unit is responsible for writing a high volume of the funding proposals submitted by the organization based on the distinct strategic needs of each department. In 2022 alone, the unit has drafted over 50 proposals on a wide range of policy areas and programs central to NWAC's work. These include MMIWG2S+; economic development; climate change, conservation and biodiversity; and Resiliency Lodge programming.

For any non-profit organization to carry out projects and programs, consistent sources of funding are critical. Grants can provide a critical stream of revenue to support projects and programs. However, this ultimately requires a significant amount of work as a proposal must be submitted for each grant opportunity.

So, what is a proposal? Most funding opportunities require you to submit a proposal—a description of the project or program you want to have funded. A proposal typically outlines and provides information on who is applying, what the project—or program will do, when the project/program will take place, and the budget for all of the proposed activities. Most of the time, you will be asked to provide information on:

- who to contact
- the organization's background, including expertise
- the title, timeline, description, and target audience for the project
- how you will measure outcomes
- the budget needed to realize the project

The Indigenous Women's Safety Council (CONT.)



Planning is critical in proposal writing, and each proposal needs to meet the specific needs of the funder. When writing a proposal, it's important to consider the following:

- outline a clear the process of decision-making and the persons involved in proposal writing in your organization
- plan enough time for each step of the proposal, from writing, to budget development, to submission
- review the requirements of the proposal and make sure you address them
- be accurate and specific—provide details on what you hope to realistically achieve and which can help the funder see the importance of what you are proposing
- make your plan sustainable and consider how the project or program can continue after funding ends

To increase accessibility to information on project funding, specifically at the government level, the Executive Policy Unit has included more details on proposal writing and project funding in *A Warrior's Briefcase: Tools for Engaging in Federal-Level Advocacy*. This handbook will be released in early 2023.





Promoting Reconciliation Through Art: "Change the Bill"

On January 23, 2023, the Native Women's Association of Canada (NWAC) launched "Change the Bill". This is a call to action that aims to promote reconciliation through art. Despite being the original inhabitants of this land, an Indigenous woman has never been represented on a permanent Canadian banknote.

Irene Goodwin, NWAC's Director for Policy and Programs, Culture, Art, Youth, Sport, has been an important part of getting the message out about the underrepresentation and marginalization of Indigenous women. Despite playing a crucial role in shaping the country's history and culture, Indigenous women have been historically excluded from mainstream representation. Working together to amplify the voices of Indigenous women in mainstream media and prioritize representation will help to breakdown long-standing barriers.

In recognition of this important issue, The Local Gallery in Toronto hosted an exhibition from January 20th to 28 to showcase reimagined \$20 bills by Indigenous artists. The exhibition was designed to raise awareness and empower Indigenous women in Canada, in alignment with the objectives of NWAC.

Promoting Reconciliation Through Art:
"Change the Bill" (CONT.)



These pieces of art highlight Indigenous women heroes and provide an opportunity to showcase their talents and contributions.

Prints of each art piece are available to purchase for \$20, with all of proceeds going to the artist.

This exhibition serves as an important step towards recognizing the significance and contributions of the Indigenous population. It also provides an opportunity to support and uplift Indigenous artists.

The power of art as a tool for social change and cultural understanding is well-documented. Museums and galleries around the world have long recognized the impact that art can have on people and society. From shaping the cultural mosaic of mankind for centuries, art continues to be a powerful means of influencing humanity.





The New Indigenous Women's Entrepreneur Accelerator Program

Since 2012, NWAC has hosted several Aboriginal Women's Business Entrepreneurs Network conferences to improve business, management, and entrepreneurship skills for Indigenous women, Two-Spirit, transgender, and gender-diverse (W2STGD) people. Participants expressed the need for ongoing support in the form of peer mentoring and navigation. Since then, we have provided support to entrepreneurs through our #BeTheDrum program. This program is an entrepreneurial outreach and navigation program designed to build the skills of Indigenous W2STGD people entering the sphere of business, management, and entrepreneurship.

Building on the success of #BeTheDrum, NWAC is pleased to be launching an additional program in partnership with the Canadian Women's Foundation. The Indigenous Women's Entrepreneur Accelerator program will help entrepreneurs seeking to expand their start-up business. We will be offering workshops and resources on growing and advancing businesses on a wide range of topics, such as strategy, traditional and digital marketing, finance, HR, technology and equipment, networking, and procurement.

The **program will provide** peer mentorship, navigation support, and overall guidance so that Indigenous W2STGD entrepreneurs and their businesses can thrive during their phase of acceleration from a budding enterprise to a growth stage. This will serve to strengthen entrepreneurial networks and relationships.

The New Indigenous Women's Entrepreneur Accelerator Program (CONT.)

The overall objective of the Indigenous Women's Entrepreneur Accelerator **program is to help support the economic independence and resilience of Indigenous W2STGD people. By increasing the economic sustainability of their businesses, the program will help address the economic marginalization of Indigenous W2STGD people. Reducing the economic marginalization of Indigenous W2STGD people will, in turn, help prevent violence and responds to Call for Justice 1.3 from the National Inquiry into Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls.**

The Indigenous Women's Entrepreneur Accelerator program **will** empower the Indigenous W2STGD entrepreneurs who we serve, including First Nations on and off reserve, status and non-status, disenfranchised as well as Métis and Inuit. It will be delivered virtually to have a national reach.

Members will be invited to join various workshops and networking events to build their entrepreneurial skills in addition to forming industry network connections.





From “Change the Bill” to lobbying the Supreme Court, communications shines spotlight on Indigenous women

NWAC’s communication team has been hard at work on pushing a number of campaigns and advocacy projects into the mainstream. One significant campaign that is taking the media by storm is our **Change the Bill** project.

“Change the Bill” aims to promote reconciliation through art by commissioning Indigenous artists to reimagine the \$20 bill with an Indigenous woman who is each artist’s particular hero.

The team promoted a [web page](#) for the project, issued a [press release](#) (French version [here](#)), launched an elaborate social media campaign across all of our channels, and created a petition that calls for having an Indigenous woman on the next Canadian bank note.



From "Change the Bill" to lobbying the Supreme Court, communications shines spotlight on Indigenous women (CONT.)



These initiatives have attracted media and public attention, encouraged people to join the conversation in "reimagining" the Canadian \$20 bill, and empowered Indigenous artists.

The story was picked up by over 150 media outlets, including [CBC](#), [Canada's National Observer](#), the [Toronto Star](#), the [Daily Hive](#), and many other platforms. And the [petition](#) is now on its way to collecting 15,000 signatures. The CBC story alone reached over 16.4 million users just one week after the project was launched, according to our media analytics.

Early December marked a National Day of Remembrance and Actions of Violence Against Women. NWAC marked the day by issuing a [press release](#) in recognition of all mothers, daughters, sisters, and aunts whose lives have been cut short (French version [here](#)).

Alongside this day of recognition, NWAC remembered First Nations women who died last spring in Winnipeg. We issued two separate press releases on this cause, one demanding that Winnipeg Police Services [resume its search](#) of a city landfill in hopes of locating the bodies (French version [here](#)), and the other demanding that the government intervene in stopping the [genocide](#) against Indigenous women, girls, Two-Spirit, transgender, and gender-diverse+ (WG2STGD+) people (French version [here](#)).

We issued another [press release](#) lobbying the Supreme Court to advance women's equality rights, particularly in the provision of Indigenous child and family services (French version [here](#)). *The Act respecting First Nations, Inuit, and Metis children, youth, and families*, which came into effect in January 2020, is constitutional and therefore its rights should be extended to all—including Indigenous WG2STGD+ people.

From "Change the Bill" to lobbying the Supreme Court, communications shines spotlight on Indigenous women (CONT.)

We published two new issues of **Kci-Niwesq**. In December, our winter edition celebrated the holiday season and winter solstice. We explored this season as a time of reflection; a time to slow down, rest, and turn inward for self-realization. Issue #16 is our environmental edition, which was released in January. We explored how climate change and environmental ruin critically affect Indigenous Peoples. We explore how communities lack integral Traditional medicines and food sources, and how following the direction of Indigenous Peoples can lead our nation to environmental sustainability.

Be sure to follow us on socials to stay up to date on all of NWAC's happenings and initiatives! Follow us on [Facebook](#), [Twitter](#), [Instagram](#), [TikTok](#), and [LinkTree](#), and be sure to [subscribe](#) to our magazine, **Kci-Niwesq**.





SHINING THE SPOTLIGHT

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