

ISSUE
15

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SHINING THE SPOTLIGHT

NATIVE WOMEN'S ASSOCIATION OF CANADA NEWSLETTER



Native Women's Association of Canada
L'Association des femmes autochtones du Canada



TABLE OF CONTENTS

| | |
|---|-----------|
| Message from the CEO | 5 |
| Experiences with Disabilities and Autism for Indigenous Women, Girls, Two-Spirit, Transgender, and Gender-Diverse+ (WG2STGD+) Peoples..... | 7 |
| Captivating, Compelling Content Helps Drive NWAC Messages | 9 |
| Executive Policy Team: Engaging in Core Health Policy | 12 |
| Housing Engagement Update | 14 |
| Advancing Indigenous Rights: Legal Unit's Two Major Projects Approach Key Milestones | 17 |
| NAP: From an Apprenticeship to Self-Sufficiency | 19 |
| The Iqaluit Driver's Licence Training Program | 21 |
| From COP 15 to COP 16: The Kunming-Montreal Biodiversity Framework | 23 |
| Wabanaki Resiliency Lodge: Healing Our People and the Planet | 25 |
| Shining the Spotlight on MMIWG2S+ | 27 |

SHINING THE SPOTLIGHT

NATIVE WOMEN'S ASSOCIATION OF CANADA NEWSLETTER



Message from the CEO

June is National Indigenous History Month. While this month represents an opportunity to learn about the unique cultures, traditions, and experiences of First Nations, Inuit, and Métis, and to honour the stories, achievements, and resilience of Indigenous Peoples, it's also opportune to not forget that Canada committed genocide against our people.

And the genocide is still going on. Indigenous Women, Girls, Two-Spirit, Transgender, and Gender-Diverse (WG2STGD+) Peoples—the very people that the Native Women's Association of Canada (NWAC) represents—continue to go missing and are murdered at an alarming and disproportionate rate.

In a unanimous motion in the House of Commons, this genocide was recognized as a Canada-wide emergency. In fact, researchers have reported that Indigenous women and girls are 12 times more likely to be murdered or missing than other women in Canada, and 16 times more likely than Caucasian women.

NWAC continues to press home the message that the federal government needs to do more—far more—to address the ongoing genocide. That's why special occasions such as Red Dress Day, held every May 5, and National Indigenous Peoples Day, held every June 21, are so important. They serve as a tangible reminder that the government continues to fail Indigenous WG2STGD+ Peoples.

In this issue of our newsletter *Shining the Spotlight*, you will learn that NWAC marked RED Dress Day in a special way. We hosted guided tours to our special exhibit in our Vault Exhibition Space; held a faceless doll workshop; and held a roundtable with our PTMAs and Senator Michèle Audette to talk about the issues relate to the genocide. It was a powerful and moving day.

There is of course trauma and violence associated with colonialism and the ongoing genocide. To help Indigenous WG2STGD+ Peoples heal, and in direct response to the Truth and Reconciliation Commission's Calls to Action and the National Inquiry's Calls for Justice, NWAC created two healing lodges, the latest in



Message from the CEO (CONT.)

New Brunswick. We bring you a story on this lodge's land-based programming. To quote Elder Alma Brooks: *"Our healing is wrapped up with the healing of the earth."*

In its Call for Justice 1.3, the National Inquiry called on governments to *"pursue the measures required to eliminate the social, economic, cultural, and political marginalization of Indigenous women, girls, and 2SLGBTQQIA people when developing budgets and determining priorities."* That's why NWAC places great importance on opening up opportunities for Indigenous WG2STGD+ Peoples, such as helping them achieve skills such as learning to drive (read our story on the Iqaluit Driver's Licence Training Program offered through Employment and Social Development Canada). That's why NWAC focuses on opportunities whereby Indigenous WG2STGD+ Peoples can become self-sufficient or enter the skilled trades (read about our National Apprenticeships Program, which connects small and medium-sized enterprises with Indigenous candidates).

Health and wellness, security, clean water, and affordable, safe housing are

also vitally important. In this issue, we bring you an update on our work in developing more health resources for those we serve, along with a story about all the work we are doing on the housing front and for Indigenous WG2STGD+ Peoples living with disabilities.

Indigenous WG2STGD+ Peoples face unique challenges, and our fulsome work related to Canada's impending UNDRIP Action Plan is designed to effect meaningful change.

After all, that's what NWAC and all of the people we represent want—a brighter, more equitable future for all.



SHINING THE SPOTLIGHT

NATIVE WOMEN'S ASSOCIATION OF CANADA NEWSLETTER

SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT

EXPERIENCES WITH DISABILITIES AND AUTISM FOR INDIGENOUS WOMEN, GIRLS, TWO-SPIRIT, TRANSGENDER, AND GENDER-DIVERSE+ (WG2STGD+) PEOPLES



Experiences with Disabilities and Autism for Indigenous Women, Girls, Two-Spirit, Transgender, and Gender-Diverse+ (WG2STGD+) Peoples

With funding from Employment and Social Development Canada, NWAC completed two projects advocating and increasing understanding for the many issues and systemic barriers faced by Indigenous WG2STGD+ Peoples living with disabilities. We conducted extensive research and held a series of Sharing Circles, where participants shared their lived experiences and talked about their barriers and challenges. The outcome of these projects are two final reports, one to help inform the federal government's

Disability Inclusion Action Plan (DIAP) and the other to help inform the National Autism Strategy (NAS).

Overall, Indigenous Peoples are more likely to have a disability than non-Indigenous people. They are also more susceptible to living with mental and physical disabilities because of the social and political climate as well as the retraumatizing impact that colonialism continues to have on Indigenous communities. In addition, Indigenous WG2STGD+ Peoples are more likely to live with pain- and mental health-related disabilities than both non-Indigenous women and Indigenous men.



Experiences with Disabilities and Autism for Indigenous Women, Girls, Two-Spirit, Transgender, and Gender-Diverse+ (WG2STGD+) Peoples (CONT.)

Key findings from the DIAP Sharing Circles include the following:

- a lack of available services that results in very long waitlists—sometimes two to three years—for both physical and mental health-related treatments.
- an understanding that “wellness” has a significant, spiritual impact and differs from Western concepts of health, highlighting a need for safe spaces to discuss intergenerational trauma and begin the healing process
- a lack of affordable housing coupled with inadequate housing, which creates additional stress for those living with disabilities
- a need to have funding allocated to grassroots organizations led by Indigenous WG2STGD+ Peoples
- a lack of accommodation in the workplace for employees living with mental (or invisible) disabilities

- misdiagnoses anchored in racial bias and misogyny
- a lack of understanding in the public school system on how to support children living with autism
- a lack of understanding among police
- a lack of supports for adults living with autism
- a need for appropriate housing design

NWAC’s reports include a set of recommendations that call for a more holistic approach to wellness and for recognition that Indigenous WG2STGD+ Peoples have a right to access free, timely, and quality health services, as well as education, housing, employment, and safety. These approaches should be rooted in Indigenous Traditional and cultural values.

Participants in the NAS Sharing Circles were primarily Indigenous WG2STGD+ Peoples who have family members with autism. Similarly to the DIAP Sharing Circles, participants noted a lack of recognition of Indigenous ways of healing and the absence of available resources and supports for those who are diagnosed with autism.

Key findings from the NAS Sharing Circles include the following:

- long waiting lists
- the high cost of assessments and diagnoses



SHINING THE SPOTLIGHT

NATIVE WOMEN'S ASSOCIATION OF CANADA NEWSLETTER



Captivating, Compelling Content Helps Drive NWAC Messages

Throughout the months of April and May, the communications team has been repackaging complex, lengthy projects from various departments, down to easily digestible, concise, attention-grabbing, conversation-starting materials for social media and marketing purposes. At the same time, we have executed multiple innovative campaigns, while still driving NWAC's advocacy efforts for Indigenous Women, Girls, Two-Spirit, Transgender, and Gender-Diverse+ (WG2STGD+) Peoples' rights, equality, and inclusion.

NWAC's communications efforts over the past couple of months have helped to raise awareness of mental health and addictions, inclusion, and equality, and to call upon the government to rectify wrongdoings and end the genocide against Indigenous WG2STGD+ Peoples.

On May 15, we published our latest edition of **Kci-Niwesq**, which gave the perspective of Indigenous Peoples living with disabilities. This special edition, which was published during Indigenous Disabilities Awareness Week, also explored how colonization has had a detrimental impact on Indigenous WG2STGD+ Peoples living with disabilities.

On Bear Witness Day, on May 10, we issued **a press release** in remembrance of Jordan River Anderson. We recognised the extraordinary impact his short life has had on Indigenous Peoples with the implementation of Jordan's Principle. This order of the Canadian Human Rights Tribunal was implemented to relieve "inequalities preventing Indigenous children, and their families, from accessing the products, services, and supports they need, when they need them." The statement was also issued **in French**.



Captivating, Compelling Content Helps Drive NWAC Messages (CONT.)

During Mental Health Week, which ran from May 3 to 9, Carol McBride, NWAC President, released **a statement** on May 8 "demanding" that the "federal government and provincial governments take swift action in response to an escalating mental health and addictions crisis." The statement was also **released in French**.

Leading up to Red Dress Day, on May 5, we released **this invitation** (also **in French**) on May 2, encouraging members of the public to join us in raising awareness for the prevention of violence against Indigenous WG2STGD+ Peoples.

On April 5, NWAC issued a **press release** (available in **French here**) in response to another Indigenous woman's remains discovered at a Winnipeg landfill site. We called upon the Government of Canada to "take swift action to end the genocide" against MMIWG2S+ Peoples.

On April 14, NWAC supported and participated in the National Day of Silence. This initiative raises awareness of how Indigenous 2SLGBTQQAI+ youth are suppressed and silenced every day. As an act of support, NWAC remained silent on our social media platforms for the day. We also reminded our audiences of the importance of listening to youth and creating safe and inclusive spaces where they can thrive.

NWAC took part in Sexually Transmitted Disease (STD) Awareness Week in April. During this campaign, our communications team promoted NWAC's sexually transmitted and bloodborne infections (STBBI) fact sheets. Through social media messaging, we urged people to visit our **culturally safe and trauma-informed knowledge hub**.



Captivating, Compelling Content Helps Drive NWAC Messages (CONT.)

On Earth Day, we collaborated with Project Forest to share Indigenous Knowledge about plant medicines, trees, the land, and climate change. The campaign generated over 500 comments, likes, shares, and follows. In partnership with Project Forest, NWAC ran a free Facebook Live webinar on how to plant trees and why caring for the land is so important.

NWAC CEO Lynne Groulx and other NWAC delegates attended the 22nd United Nations Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues (UNPFII) in New York to promote Indigenous WG2STGD+ Peoples' rights internationally. Compelling branding materials and information were developed to help us promote these key points across our social media platforms with.



Our "Change the Bill" campaign continued into April and was a top-performing topic on social media even with only six posts made during this period. These generated just under 30,000 impressions, and the campaign petition received 36,421 signatures, exceeding our 35,000 target.

Overall, the communications team produced captivating and compelling content for our social platforms. Interestingly, while the number of social media posts produced were significantly lower than in the February–March period, our performance was much higher. Our top-performing posts generated nearly 265,000 impressions, over 15,000 engagements, nearly 9,000 reactions, and over 2,000 shares in just nine of our top-performing community posts.

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](#).





Executive Policy Team: Engaging in Core Health Policy

Over the past several months, the Executive Policy Team has continued to expand NWAC's core health resources through funding from the First Nations and Inuit Health Branch (FNIHB) of Indigenous Services Canada (ISC). In doing so, the team has created several fact sheets and policy briefs, which explored critical issues impacting Indigenous Women, Girls, Two-Spirit, Transgender, and Gender-Diverse+ (WG2STGD+) Peoples.

The fact sheets offer accessible and practical information to help Indigenous WG2STGD+ Peoples make significant choices pertaining to their health. The two fact sheets on the **Non-Insured Health Benefit (NIHB)** and **Jordan's Principle and the Inuit Child First Initiative** were intended to provide Indigenous WG2STGD+ Peoples with critical information on how to access health resources and understand their rights as a patient. The third fact sheet on **Culturally Relevant Gender-Based Analysis (CRGBA) informed health policy** provides a high-level overview of how the framework can be integrated into the development of health policies and programs, with the intention to support policy-makers and service providers in applying CRGBA.



Executive Policy Team: Engaging in Core Health Policy (CONT.)

While the fact sheets sought to provide more practical resources, the three policy briefs were developed to amplify and provide Indigenous WG2STGD+ Peoples with information on critical health-related issues. As such, three policy briefs were developed on **food insecurity**, **health inequalities in rural and remote Indigenous communities**, and **maternal and child health**. Each policy brief provides a high-level summary of each issue, while also outlining progress being made by NWAC and the Government of Canada.

Through continued funding from FNIHB, the Executive Policy Team will continue our work on core health policy and develop more resources to support the health of Indigenous WG2STGD+ Peoples over the coming year.



SHINING THE SPOTLIGHT

NATIVE WOMEN'S ASSOCIATION OF CANADA NEWSLETTER



Housing Engagement Update

URNI Housing Strategy Engagement

The final report on the Urban, Rural, and Northern Indigenous (URNI) Housing Strategy will be released at the end of May or early June. The report includes suggestions on the vision, scope, focus, approaches, investment priorities, and special considerations for distinct subgroups and regions. The principles that should guide this housing strategy are: affordability, safety, family, Indigenous cultures with a distinctions-based approach, accessibility, and connections to home.

The report not only suggests how to co-develop and co-implement the strategy. It offers timelines and priorities, and provides key recommendations and priorities. The report emphasizes the importance of:

- building trust with Indigenous Peoples
- consulting further
- decolonizing housing terminology
- recognizing holistic needs
- providing reliable high-speed internet service as a necessity for all housing
- providing community supports
- fostering Indigenous-led policy making to provide more funding for housing and housing supports
- creating Indigenous-specific incentives, programs, and financial instruments to make housing more affordable and available (especially in rural and Northern regions)
- funding Indigenous organizations to build culturally appropriate, accessible housing
- creating Indigenous housing navigators



Housing Engagement Update (CONT.)

Funded by the Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation (CMHC), the URNI Housing Strategy report is based on a literature review, the findings of a national survey, and input received through four community engagement Sharing Circles, which took place between February 27 and March 16, 2023.

To increase opportunities for grassroots sharing and feedback, NWAC took a new approach to these Sharing Circles. This new format included a link to a short Google Form survey, which gave participants a chance to reflect on, and share more thoughts about, the Sharing Circle questions posed at the engagement session.

Those who may not feel comfortable contributing in group settings had another opportunity to have their voices heard as a result of this addition to the Sharing Circles format. This format also increases accessibility for those who have technological difficulties or who may benefit from having more time to reflect before providing their views.

Engagement on Adequate Housing for Indigenous Two-Spirit, Transgender, Non-Binary, and Gender-Diverse+ Peoples

NWAC is working on a project supported by the Office of the Federal Housing Advocate (OFHA) at the Canadian Human Rights Commission (CHRC). This project advocates for the housing needs of Indigenous Two-Spirit, Transgender, Non-Binary, and Gender-Diverse+ (2STNBGD+) Peoples, including those who experience homelessness and housing precarity.

In all areas of life, Indigenous 2STNBGD+ individuals face additional layers of discrimination through racism, heterosexism, cisnormativity—which is the assumption that people identify with the sex assigned at birth—as well as further stereotyping associated with these biases (see **“Native American Two Spirit and LGBTQ Health: A Systematic Review of the Literature”**). These barriers include securing safe access to housing and housing-related services.



The Women’s National Housing and Homelessness Network recognized that “Gender-Diverse+, Two-Spirit, and Trans people face significant, intersecting, human rights violations when it comes to housing and accessing emergency shelters, and are more likely to experience hidden homelessness” (see **“A Portrait of Homelessness Amongst Gender-Diverse People in Canada”**). The Network published a research brief entitled *Housing Need & Homelessness Amongst Gender-Diverse People in Canada: A Preliminary Portrait*. A literature review and practice scan accompanied this brief.



Housing Engagement Update (CONT.)

To build on this work, NWAC was commissioned by the OFHA and CHRC to work on a project entitled “Engagement on Adequate Housing for Indigenous Two-Spirit, Transgender, and Gender-Diverse+ People.” The project will inform, and provide recommendations on how to support adequate housing for Indigenous 2STNBGD+ Peoples.

Key project activities include the following:

- produce a literature review to bring an Indigenous focus to research previously conducted about the broader 2STNBGD+ community
- participate in and coordinate an external advisory committee to ensure this project is informed by members of the Indigenous 2STNBGD+ community with both lived and expert experience in housing and homelessness
- host two online engagement sessions, with the intent of amplifying lived experiences that will inform policy recommendations

The first engagement session is anticipated to take place this June and will be for Indigenous 2STNBGD+ Peoples willing to share Knowledge about their experiences with homelessness and they barriers they face in accessing discrimination-free housing and housing services. In August or September, another roundtable will be held with research experts.

If you are interested in learning more about this project’s priorities, look for the literature review, which will be available on NWAC’s website/on-line library this summer.

June 22, 2023
12:30 PM- 2:30 PM EST

ZOOM WORKSHOP

Join NWAC's community engagement session on adequate housing for Two-Spirit, Transgender, Non-Binary, and Gender-Diverse (2STNBGD) Indigenous people. We seek Indigenous 2STNBGD+ people who have lived experience accessing shelters and transitional housing, and who have recommendations about how to make housing services more inclusive to ensure all housing is welcoming to and meets the needs of 2STNBGD+ Indigenous Peoples.

ENGAGEMENT ON ADEQUATE HOUSING
for Indigenous Two-Spirit, Transgender, Non-Binary, and Gender-Diverse+

Register by email to: fabdi@nwac.ca
by June 12, 2023.

Qualifying participants will receive a complementary NWAC GIFT valued at \$50

The first 40 Indigenous Transgender, Two-Spirit, and Gender-Diverse plus People who register.

Please include your address for the mail-out of the package and provide accommodation needs if applicable.



SHINING THE SPOTLIGHT

NATIVE WOMEN'S ASSOCIATION OF CANADA NEWSLETTER



Advancing Indigenous Rights: Legal Unit's Two Major Projects Approach Key Milestones

The Legal Unit has been diligently working on two significant projects, both of which are now reaching crucial milestones, with final reports coming soon. These initiatives will help restore jurisdiction over child and family services to Indigenous communities, and pave the way for achieving reconciliation with Indigenous Peoples in Canada.

One of these projects concerns the government engagement mechanisms (GEMs) on *An Act Respecting First Nations, Inuit, and Métis Children, Youth, and Families*. The Act aims to restore jurisdiction over Child and Family Services (CFS) to Indigenous communities. Funded by Indigenous Services Canada

(ISC), NWAC conducted a series of GEMs to gather input from Indigenous Women, Girls, Two-Spirit, Transgender, and Gender-Diverse+ (WG2STGD+) Peoples about the Act and its implementation.

NWAC organized, and hosted, six expert roundtables and a series of one-on-one interviews, discussing 17 topics identified by ISC along with several other topics raised during the sessions. Participants included a diverse representation of Indigenous Peoples from the four directions, including legal experts, professional social workers, academics, community leaders, Elders, youth, and people with lived experience in care.

Another important project is the *UNDRIP Act Implementation Project*. NWAC released a comprehensive final report to inform Canada's *UNDRIP (United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples) Action Plan*. The report highlights the importance of addressing unique challenges faced by Indigenous WG2STGD+ Peoples, as Canada aligns its laws with the Declaration.

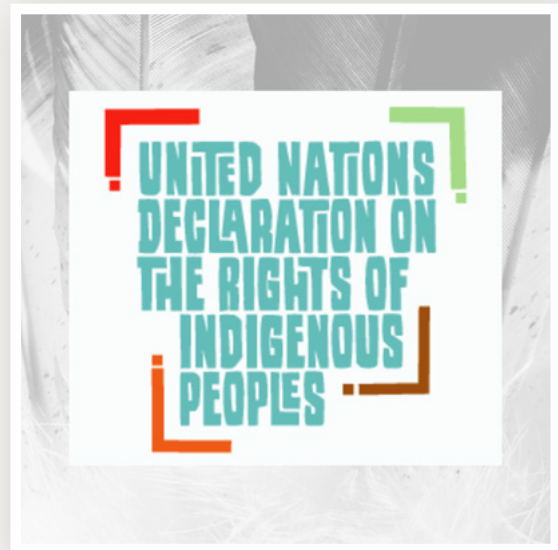


The report focuses on Indigenous WG2STGD+ Peoples' rights, calling for gender-specific directives to be included in Canada's UNDRIP Action Plan, which is expected to be tabled in June 2023. The action plan must reflect the ongoing genocide for missing and murdered Indigenous Women, Girls, and Two-Spirit+ (MMIWG2S+) Peoples, as well as the remaining inequities within the Indian Act's membership provisions, to realize their inherent right to gender-based equality.

NWAC conducted in-depth engagement sessions with Indigenous WG2STGD+ Peoples, including Elders, Knowledge Keepers, youth, experts, and legal scholars. The insights and feedback from these sessions form the basis of NWAC's recommendations.

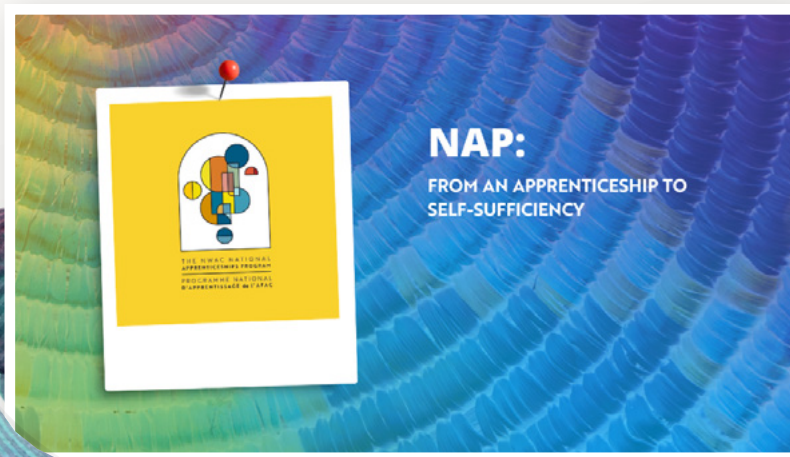
These two major projects demonstrate the commitment of NWAC's Legal Unit to uplifting Indigenous rights and pushing for meaningful change. As both projects continue to make significant strides, the focus remains on ensuring that the unique perspectives of Indigenous WG2STGD+ Peoples are considered, empowering Indigenous communities, and working toward a brighter, more equitable future.

Stay tuned for the final reports on CFS and UNDRIP—coming soon to nwac.ca.



SHINING THE SPOTLIGHT

NATIVE WOMEN'S ASSOCIATION OF CANADA NEWSLETTER



NAP: From an Apprenticeship to Self-Sufficiency

With funding from the Government of Canada, NWAC's National Apprenticeships Program (NAP) advocates for the inclusion of Indigenous Women, Girls, Two-Spirit, Transgender, and Gender-Diverse+ (WG2STGD+) Peoples in the construction and manufacturing trades. Through NAP, NWAC's goal is to connect small and medium-sized enterprises with Indigenous candidates who would qualify and receive first-year apprenticeships in one of the program's 39 Red Seal skilled trade occupations.

The program offers a unique opportunity to address the gender gap in historically male-dominated occupations. Currently, only 5% of skilled trade workers in Canada are women. The goal is to support women entering these Red Seal trades. This would align with the national strategy, which aims for 15% by 2030.

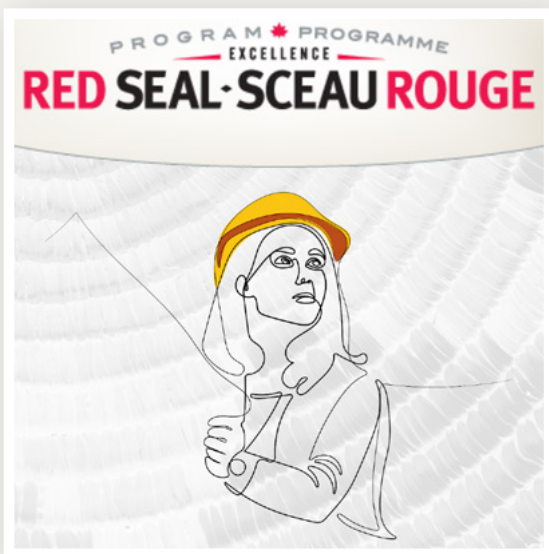
Unemployment rates among Indigenous communities in Canada confirm there are recruitment and retention issues due to systemic barriers and discrimination. By advocating for more Indigenous candidates to join the skilled trades as first-year apprentices, NAP provides a two-fold opportunity: to work and to learn. Training at work allows apprentices to gain valuable hours toward their certificate of qualification, while also receiving a wage. A few weeks of in-class training per year will solidify all the learning they would bring from their workplace to the classroom.

The Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada called upon the corporate sector to provide equitable access to jobs and education opportunities for Indigenous Peoples. Corporate commitment to reconciliation starts with acknowledging the honour to live, and work, within the Traditional Territories, while continuing with thoroughly reviewing the business culture to ensure sure it mirrors the diversity of the community. Promoting diversity and inclusion in the workplace is the first step to building a workforce



NAP: From an Apprenticeship to Self-Sufficiency (CONT.)

where all Canadians have fair access to job opportunities. An apprenticeship in the skilled trades ends with a Red Seal endorsement. With such an endorsement, a graduating apprentice can work anywhere in Canada. Those living in remote communities can gain economic autonomy through self-employment.



From a global perspective, Article 23 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights states that everyone has a right to work and be protected against unemployment. The UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples, recently adopted by Parliament as a binding international human rights instrument, codifies the Indigenous right not to be subjected to any discriminatory conditions of labour, employment, or salary (article 17(3)). From a national perspective, the *Employment Equity Act* requires employers to identify, and remove, barriers to employment, as well as to make reasonable accommodations for Indigenous Peoples in the employer's workforce.

From an Indigenous perspective, certain considerations to employment are included, such as that cultural identity is derived from the land, language, and community. Most companies lack a clear policy for Indigenous recruitment and retention. Creating internal, cross-cultural inclusion training and implementing Indigenous programs help to advance careers for Indigenous WG2STGD+ Peoples and enrich the workplace.

Diversity and Inclusion are evolving concepts that encourage people to bring different worldviews and perspectives to a workplace. When people can be themselves, they feel respected, valued, and connected in an inclusive environment. NAP is a step toward inclusive hiring by increasing the number of Indigenous WG2STGD+ apprentices, where they are under-represented.

Moreover, any recruitment process starts with building relationships, partnering with the community, and training agents. Building someone's trust is the highest barrier to Indigenous employment. Creating a true commitment between the company and the applicant is at the heart of this program.

Thus, NAP is not a job placement program as such, but an advocacy exercise to place individuals on a career path that begins with an apprenticeship and ends with self-sufficiency. NWAC's focus is on long-term career development in industries where the future is promising. Trade jobs are stable, secure, and high paying; the demand for skilled workers is high; and many self-employment opportunities await.



SHINING THE SPOTLIGHT

NATIVE WOMEN'S ASSOCIATION OF CANADA NEWSLETTER



The Iqaluit Driver's Licence Training Program

Through a funding collaboration between the ilinniapaa Skills Development Centre (iSDC), Canadian North Airlines, and NWAC, 25 Inuit women and girls (aged 15 years and older) participated in a driver's licence pre-employment training program from February 16 to March 31, 2023. Funding for participant costs was provided by Employment and Social Development Canada through the Indigenous Skills and Employment Training (ISET) Program.

The driver's licence project helped Inuit women and girls get their Nunavut Class 7 (Learner's Permit), Class 5 Unrestricted Permit, and/or Class 5 Restricted Permit.

Two accredited driving instructors from Arctic Response Canada Ltd. were contracted by iSDC. Canadian North provided in-kind and cash contributions,

which included the use of a vehicle for practice driving and exams, the costs of fuel and insurance, use of the Arctic College Lecture Hall, the costs for a graduation event and for an employment/careers session on March 30 in Iqaluit, Nunavut.

NWAC's ISETs funding provided training stipends (including individual exam fees), childcare, transportation, and personal protective equipment. Before they can secure a full driver's licence in Nunavut, residents must first obtain their Class 7 Learner's Permit. This involves 21 hours of in-class sessions to learn about the key signs, parts of the vehicle, the law regarding impaired driving (including an activity with sobriety goggles), and multiple practice tests. Program participants attended five three-hour evening sessions, as well as a 14-hour weekend session. An additional seven-hour review and prep session on February 18, was geared to participants who were unsuccessful in their first test.



The Iqaluit Driver's Licence Training Program (CONT.)

Class 7 Learner's Permit Outcomes

21 participants:

- 19 participants were successful (90%)
- 2 participants were not ready for the written exam (10%)
- average age of participants was 29 years

Class 5 Unrestricted Outcomes:

5 participants

- 4 participants were successful (80%)
- 1 participant was incomplete, as she did not attend the in-car exam (20%)
- average age of participants was 31 years

Class 5 Restricted Outcomes

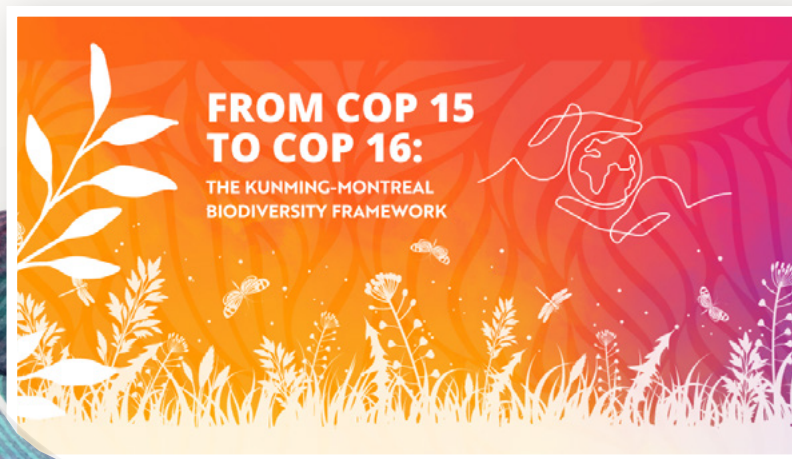
21 participants

- 10 participants were successful (48%)
- 6 were not ready for the in-car exam by March 30 (29%)
- 5 participants left the program due to medical travel/relocation (24%)



SHINING THE SPOTLIGHT

NATIVE WOMEN'S ASSOCIATION OF CANADA NEWSLETTER



From COP 15 to COP 16: The Kunming-Montreal Biodiversity Framework

In an earlier issue, we highlighted the involvement of the Environment Unit in the Conference of Parties, **COP 15**, in Montreal. In preparation for COP 15, NWAC hosted a roundtable to engage Indigenous Women, Girls, Two-Spirit, Transgender, and Gender-Diverse Peoples in a wide-ranging discussion around the **Global Biodiversity Framework**, particularly targets 21 and 22 of the framework. Both targets focus in part on issues related to gender diversity, Indigeneity, and biodiversity protection.

NWAC was also invited by Environment and Climate Change Canada (ECCC), to host a **side event** at COP 15. At the Canada Pavilion, we collaborated with the **Centre for Indigenous Environmental Resources** to deliver four presentations.

Deliberations emanating from COP 15 have led to new **commitments** by parties to the Convention of Biological Biodiversity regarding global biodiversity protection under the **Kunming-Montreal Biodiversity Framework**. These commitments relate to the development and communication, and implementation of national targets.

Preparing for COP 16

In 2024, the national targets will form the basis for deliberations during the next Conference of Parties, COP 16, in **Türkiye**, formally the Republic of Turkey. The focus of COP 16 will be "From Agreement to Action: Build Back Biodiversity." If invited, NWAC plans to be part of the Canadian delegation.

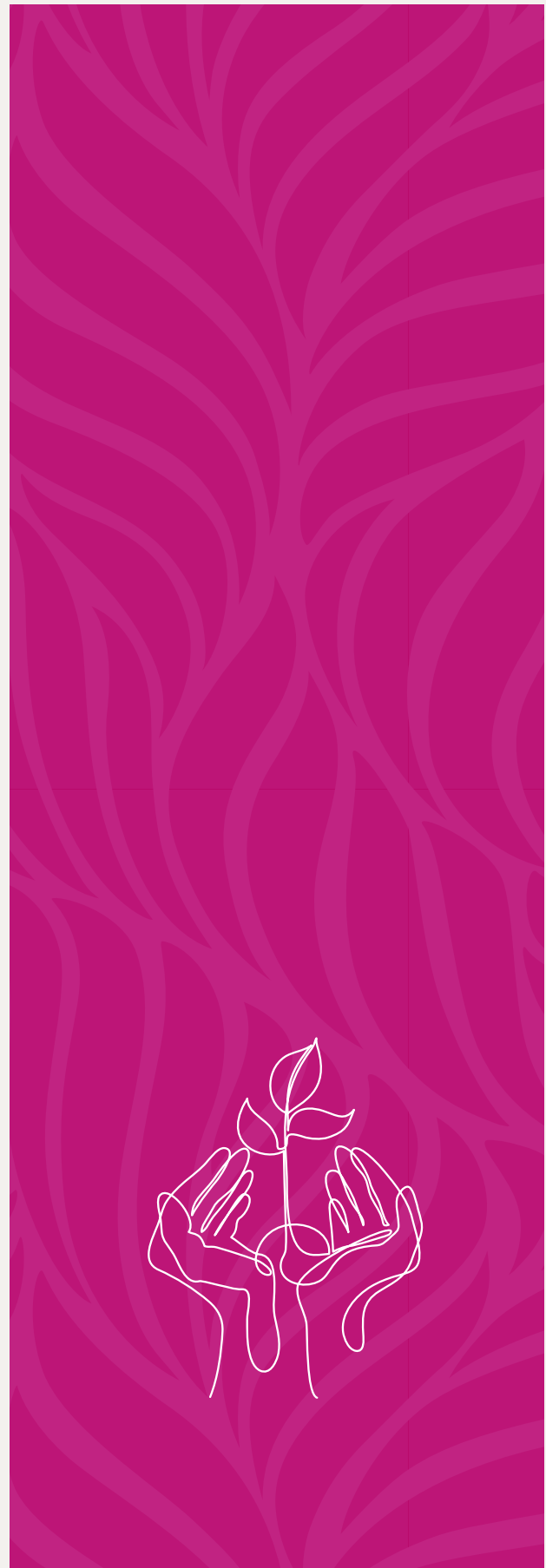
In preparation for a possible appearance in Türkiye, and as part of our formal engagement with ECCC under the program Supporting Capacity of National Indigenous Representatives to Engage in Conservation, the Environment Unit will engage Indigenous Women, Girls, Two-



The Iqaluit Driver's Licence Training Program (CONT.)

Spirit, Transgender, and Gender-Diverse People in a roundtable discussion regarding Canada's commitments to the Kunming-Montreal Biodiversity Framework.

Keep following NWAC's social media platforms for information and updates on our engagements related to this Framework.



SHINING THE SPOTLIGHT

NATIVE WOMEN'S ASSOCIATION OF CANADA NEWSLETTER



Wabanaki Resiliency Lodge: Healing Our People and the Planet

Resting on 16 acres of farmland in Wabanaki Territory, N.B., the Native Women's Association of Canada's (NWAC) Wabanaki Resiliency Lodge will provide land-based, Elder-led traditional healing services and programming. The lodge will offer healing ceremonies, sweat lodge ceremonies, medicinal baths, talking circles, art expressions, as well as Indigenous-led agricultural programming that serves as a global, prototype for how to heal Mother Earth and Indigenous Peoples.

Featuring land-based agricultural workshops, medicinal plant teachings, regenerative healing through traditional food methods, and a companion apprenticeship program, the lodge's agricultural programming is grounded

in Traditional Knowledge and led by Indigenous Women, Girls, Two-Spirit, Transgender, and Gender-Diverse+ (WG2STGD+) Peoples.

The Wabanaki Resiliency Lodge's agricultural initiative focuses on permaculture, food security, preservation of traditional medicines, and Indigenous knowledge transference through community workshops and an apprenticeship program that promotes climate health and food sovereignty for Indigenous WG2STGD+ Peoples.

Modelling best practices for environmental sustainability through teaching, ceremony, and practice, the Wabanaki Resiliency Lodge will operate a 700-square-foot greenhouse, a 3,000-square-foot barn with space for plant drying and traditional food preparation, a seed saving program, beehives, a medicine lodge, and community gathering space.

Apprentices in the agricultural program will become leaders in their communities,



contributing to the health of the next seven generations through Traditional Knowledge and stewardship practices.

Guests at the lodge—up to 15 Indigenous Women, Two-Spirit, Transgender, and Gender-Diverse+ Peoples at a time, for healing days for a weekend or up to a month each stay—will be taken on a healing journey grounded in hands-on, land-based, spiritually driven healing through our carefully tailored programming and services. “Our healing is wrapped up with healing of the earth,” says Elder Alma Brooks, who is overseeing the lodge’s programming.

The Wabanaki Resiliency Lodge is a direct response to a lack of Elder-led, culturally appropriate healing in Canada for Indigenous WG2STGD+ Peoples who have experienced violence and trauma. Recommendations for creating such a space were brought forward by the

United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples (UNDRIP) through Article 21, 23, 24, and 29, the World Health Organization, Call to Action #21 by the Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada, and Calls for Justice #2.5, #3.2, #7.1 to #7.7, #18.18, and #18.19 in the Final Report of the National Inquiry into Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls.

NWAC leads the way toward reconciliation by creating a space for traditional healing of Indigenous Peoples and the planet. To quote NWAC CEO Lynne Groulx: “It is not just a centre created to heal from trauma, but one that will include prevention through empowering wellness and resiliency.”



SHINING THE SPOTLIGHT

NATIVE WOMEN'S ASSOCIATION OF CANADA NEWSLETTER



Shining the Spotlight on MMIWG2S+

Red Dress Day

To mark the National Day of Awareness for Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women, Girls, and 2SLGBTQQIA+ Peoples—known as Red Dress Day—we came together to honour our lost loved ones and to shine a spotlight on the MMIWG2S+ genocide. On May 5, we hosted guided visits to our MMIWG2S+ exhibit in our Vault Exhibition Space and held a faceless doll workshop. On May 6, we hosted an roundtable attended by our provincial and territorial member association representatives and Senator Michèle Audette, where we gathered to candidly discuss the many issues related to the genocide and talk about own experiences.

White Ribbon

On May 25, Brandy Stanovich, MMIWG2S+ Manager and Chelsea Lodge Advisor, presented a White Ribbon at the



North American Men Engage Network's (NAMEN) first Canadian member meet-up "Ending the MMIWG2S+ Genocide." It was an inspiring conversation on the role and responsibility of men in implementing the Calls for Justice and how they can action them creatively. The event was attended by 63 people, including representatives from various organizations, experts in the field, and community members who share a common interest in addressing the MMIWG2S+ genocide.



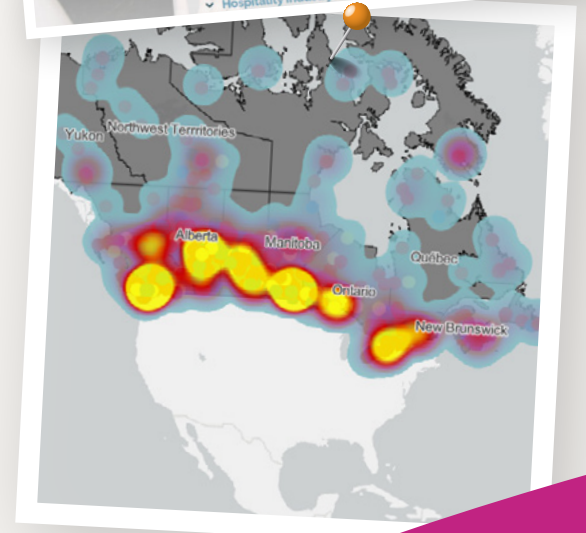
Federal Annual Scorecard

In May, the MMIWG2S+ team also worked with the Executive Policy team to draft the annual Federal Scorecard, which gives a comprehensive analysis of the progress made on by the federal government on implementing the 231 Calls for Justice and the federal government's National Action Plan. We evaluated the action taken by assessing budget commitments and their contribution to and creation of programs and initiatives. The scorecard serves as an accountability mechanism in the absence of an oversight body and provides a call for greater transparency from the federal government as well as an implementation plan.



Engagement

The MMIWG2S+ team attended the Trilateral Working Group meeting on May 18 where they held a discussion with Indigenous women leaders from Canada, the United States, and Mexico. Participants gathered their expertise to offer recommendations on priority areas for deliberation and opportunities for collaboration. They also exchanged information about policies, programs, and promising practices to prevent and respond to gender-based violence against Indigenous WG2STGD+ Peoples. We also held meetings with the Data + Feminism Lab to learn more about their Data Against Feminism project, which will help us to collect MMIWG2S+ data from media sources and populate the Safe Passage maps.



SHINING THE SPOTLIGHT

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Native Women's Association of Canada
L'Association des femmes autochtones du Canada