

**EndPovertyEdmonton
Indigenization Evaluation
2022-2023**

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Executive Summary

EndPovertyEdmonton (EPE) is working to eliminate poverty in Edmonton by convening, innovating, and advocating for systemic change focussed on the root causes of poverty. Indigenization is a key objective or “Game Changer” in EPE’s work to end poverty. In short, Indigenization involves 1) centering the needs and priorities of Indigenous peoples in Edmonton and 2) reclaiming, educating about, and integrating Indigenous values and solutions in the work of EPE. The strategic direction of the Indigenization Game Changer centers on building and strengthening relationships within the community, systems-level advocacy grounded in Indigenous values, as well as building capacity for reconciliation and allyship.

Evaluation of the Indigenization Game Changer was conducted in partnership between the Indigenization team at EPE, the Indigenous Circle, and CUP (the Community-University Partnership for the Study of Children, Youth and Families at the University of Alberta). This evaluation was guided by three questions:

- How is Indigenization creating system change in Edmonton?
- How are we practicing relational accountability through this learning?
- To what extent is (re)Indigenization and decolonization opening the way to reconciliation between Indigenous and non-Indigenous peoples?

This community-based evaluation measures advancement within the Indigenization Game Changer on the strategic priorities of Anchoring into Community, Advocacy in the Systems, and Reconciliation and Allyship.

Data was collected between February-August 2023 through methods including conversation, sharing circles, interviews, focus groups, and surveys. Participants included the Indigenization team, the Indigenous Circle, EPE staff, and the Stewardship Roundtable.

Successes within the Indigenization Game Changer

1. Creating Change Grounded in Reciprocal Relationships

Relationship building is the foundation for advancing system change because it allows for improved exchange of information, mutual trust, and grounding knowledge and reasoning about why the system isn’t working for Indigenous peoples. Indigenization staff have dedicated significant time and capacity to connecting with the community, developing, and maintaining relationships with partners and allies. As a result of this

dedication, the Indigenization team has laid the foundation for progress toward system change.

2. Creating a Collective Voice for Advocacy

By building and maintaining reciprocal relationships, the Indigenization team was able to create a collective voice for advocacy. Progress toward system change is illustrated in the outcomes of one of the circles the Indigenization team worked with.

In 2023, the Indigenous Housing Collaborative submitted a joint Expression of Interest between 11 Edmonton-based Indigenous organizations and First Nations. The expression of interest proposes a decolonized approach to working together and caring for Indigenous peoples to address Indigenous homelessness. As the work of this collaborative is grounded in relationship, they were able to submit this expression of interest within a very short period of time. The collaborative has been invited to meet with the funder to improve their application and there is interest from multiple levels of government in this type of housing solution.

The funder's response is indicative of progress toward systems change because the collaborative is being recognized for working in an Indigenous way. More specifically, the letter of intent was written by the collaborative in an Indigenous way, where everyone came together around an issue affecting the community. In their submission, the collaborative indicated that they could not provide a concept design because they would need to consult with the community. As an alternative, the proposal described characteristics of the shelter. As the Expression of Interest was accepted by the funder and used Indigenous methods, this outcome is an example of progress toward systems change.

3. Creating Space for Reflection and Learning Toward Allyship

Teachings by the Indigenization team have contributed to an increase in EPE staff knowledge about Indigenization and decolonization, along with improved awareness of how historic events contribute to poverty for Indigenous peoples. Additionally, some staff indicate that these teachings have informed their understanding of the systems that they are trying to change and their strategy for changing these systems. As a result, EPE staff have increased knowledge of how to integrate Indigenization into their Game Changer.

Areas for Growth

As this Game Changer transitions into its second year of implementation, there are a number of areas for growth. Opportunities for improvement and learning include:

- Clarifying the relationship between the Indigenous Circle and EndPovertyEdmonton as there is a difference of perspective, with the Indigenous Circle viewing themselves as an autonomous, self-determining entity influencing the work of EPE and EPE viewing the Indigenous Circle as an advisory group.
- Engaging with the Stewardship Roundtable (Indigenization team and Indigenous Circle) to build a stronger relationship and improve the Stewardship Roundtable's knowledge of Indigenous culture and ways of knowing.
- Updating and validating the Indigenous Circle Strategic Plan as it guides the work within the Indigenization Game Changer and some activities have been on hold until this work is completed.

As indicated by the successes within this Game Changer, significant efforts have been made to ensure the work of EPE reflects the needs and priorities of Indigenous people in Edmonton and to indigenize the work of EPE. Although progress toward systems change through a strategy grounded in relationships is necessarily incremental, the foundation for success is being developed in the Indigenization Game Changer. Further, through continuing this work and applying the recommendations from this evaluation, the Indigenization team can continue to grow and refine areas of opportunity within the Game Changer. Overall, despite being a relatively new Game Changer, there is evidence of progress toward system change, illustrating the effectiveness of this strategy in addressing poverty in Edmonton.

Introduction

EndPovertyEdmonton (EPE) is working to eliminate poverty in Edmonton and views poverty elimination as an act of reconciliation. As a strategy for ending poverty, Indigenization involves working to end poverty in an Indigenous way. Indigenization in this context involves (1) ensuring the work of EPE reflects the needs and priorities of Indigenous peoples in Edmonton and (2) Indigenizing the work of EndPovertyEdmonton through the reclamation and integration of Indigenous values and solutions in systems.

Poverty affects many Indigenous peoples in Edmonton. Systems-level change, instead of developing more programs and charities, is essential to ending poverty, yet approaches to date have tended to exclude Indigenous peoples and perpetuate the structures of inequity. Additionally, many approaches have failed to meaningfully acknowledge the multidimensional experience of poverty (material, social, spiritual, cultural) for Indigenous peoples (Hanson & Smylie, 2020).

Indigenization

Indigenization, at its core, involves Indigenous peoples reclaiming their spiritual connection to the land and the reclamation of Indigenous values in the systems. Indigenization efforts must be led by Indigenous Ceremonial Keepers, Indigenous people, and Leadership. Indigenous peoples take a holistic worldview as part of their natural laws; therefore, to Indigenize is to continuously seek a holistic worldview on matters, and to continuously incorporate Indigenous knowledge, land-based teachings, and practices. Indigenous peoples believe that creativity and spirituality nurture one another; therefore, ceremony, culture, arts, language, food sovereignty, and traditions play a fundamental role in Indigenous life. Indigenization facilitates and supports these elements to flourish and recognizes Indigenous peoples as the “Keepers of Turtle Island” (Indigenous Circle - EPE, 2022).

Indigenization and Ending Poverty

The objective of the Indigenization Game Changer is to ensure that the priorities and needs of Indigenous peoples in Edmonton is core to and spans across EPE’s strategic areas: anti-racism, inclusive economy, affordable housing, affordable and accessible childcare, and access to health and mental health services. The Indigenization strategy is guided by the Indigenous Circle at EPE and implemented by the Directors of Indigenization. The Indigenous Circle is a group of Indigenous peoples whose work is centered on Indigenous ways of knowing and doing. The Indigenous Circle comes

together to influence and inform the work of EPE. The Indigenization strategy forefronts anti-racism, economic reconciliation, policy advocacy, partnership, relationship building, and educating where there exists ignorance around Indigenous ways of knowing and being. It also includes the planning and development of the Indigenous Cultural and Wellness Centre.

When Indigenous peoples think about community, they consider everyone within the community. According to Nadine Chalifoux, Indigenous Circle member, “community is everybody and we always make sure we lift everyone up.” As such, Indigenization as a poverty elimination strategy has the potential to benefit both Indigenous peoples and people of other ethnicities who are experiencing poverty in Edmonton.

This evaluation measures the impact of EndPovertyEdmonton within the Indigenization Game Changer. A Game Changer is a strategy with the potential to contribute to ending poverty in Edmonton. As a strategy for poverty elimination, work within the Indigenization Game Changer is organized into five strategic priorities:

1. Anchor into Community
2. Advocacy in the Systems
3. Reconciliation and Allyship
4. Continuous Learning and Evaluation
5. Establish an Indigenous Culture & Wellness Centre

The evaluation framework was developed from the Indigenous Circle Strategic Plan and the Indigenization team’s work plans, and can be found in Appendix A: Evaluation Protocol. Note that this evaluation focuses on strategic priorities 1-3 for reasons outlined in the evaluation framework found in Appendix B: Evaluation Framework.

Relationship and Partnership

Over the last 5 years, the Community-University Partnership for the Study of Children, Youth and Families (CUP) at the University of Alberta has collaborated with EPE (End Poverty Edmonton) to address EPE's research and evaluation needs. Our partnership is committed to co-creating knowledge-based solutions to mitigate poverty and advance social justice in Edmonton. CUP has funded and embedded various human resources (inclusive of staff and students) within the work to support relevant and responsive reviews, strategic research development, network growth, and knowledge mobilization efforts.

Our evaluation team has representatives from EPE: Karen Bruno and Kourtney Boucher, Directors of Indigenization, and from CUP: Maria Mayan, Professor, and Janelle Knoop, Research Coordinator. Karen is a Treaty Six Cree woman who has worked in the inner city for 30-plus years and actively participates in Ceremony. Kourtney is a member of the Miksew Cree First Nation who works closely with the Indigenous community to ensure that the policies, actions, and advocacy work in ending poverty appropriately reflects the priorities and needs of Indigenous peoples. Maria has spent most of her career leading community-engaged research addressing the root causes of poverty. Janelle has diverse research experience, including community-based, governmental, and academic projects in poverty elimination, discrimination, and violence against women and girls.

In July 2022, Kourtney and Karen approached Maria about evaluating the Indigenization Game Changer due to our existing partnership and relationship. The knowledge generated through this research was co-created, and all decision-making occurred in partnership. Karen and Kourtney contributed direction and consultation to ensure the project responds to community needs and expertise in the practice of Indigenization. Maria contributed strategic leadership, and Janelle provided strategic input in the development, design, and implementation of the project. The partnership is foundational to the knowledge generated.

Guiding Principles

Our evaluation of the Indigenization Game Changer is grounded in three guiding principles. The first principle guiding our partnership and process of engagement is “nothing about us, without us”. Second, this evaluation was guided by the First Nations Governance Information Centre’s Principles of OCAP (Ownership, Control, Access, Possession) for data governance and sovereignty. Third, data that exposes inequities has the potential to deepen inequities (Walker, 2023). Deficit-based research and evaluation can inflict harm on Indigenous individuals and communities (Mashford-Pringle & Pavagadhi, 2020). This evaluation uses a strengths-based approach and is designed to learn about the assets of individuals, communities, and Indigenization as a poverty elimination strategy. As Indigenization focuses on the strengths of Indigenous knowledge, teachings, and practices, this evaluation focuses on the strengths of this strategy, as well as opportunities for learning about how to improve its implementation. These principles informed choices in methodology, design, and methods.

Methodology

Ceremony and Relationships

Ceremony and relationships are ongoing and central to the learning and storytelling occurring in and through this evaluation. This evaluation started with relationship building within the evaluation team and between CUP and the Indigenous Circle. Grounded in responsibility, relevance, respect, and reciprocity (Pidgeon, 2016), this project centres Indigenous ways of knowing. Ceremony is embedded in the evaluation, as a practice and as a method. All aspects of this evaluation are accountable to relationships, including the evaluation plan, methods, analysis, and the sharing of results (Wilson, 2008).

Community-Based Participatory Evaluation

This project is a community-based participatory evaluation where knowledge was co-constructed between academic and community partners (Israel et al., 1998). We employed flexibility throughout the research process and remained open to changes in work plans, additional methods of collecting information and analyzing information, as well as the ongoing importance of relationship building. This process is displayed in Figure 1.

All stages of the evaluation process, including conceptualization, design, methodology, interpretation, and communication of findings were co-created by the evaluation team. Each partner's contribution was determined based on interest, skills, knowledge, and capacity. Evaluation processes and guiding principles were determined by the Directors of Indigenization and the Indigenous Circle. Technical decisions about evaluation plan development, methods, data collection, and analysis were made by the CUP team. The CUP team collaborated with the Indigenous Circle throughout the evaluation process and the Indigenous Circle gave final approval of the evaluation plan.

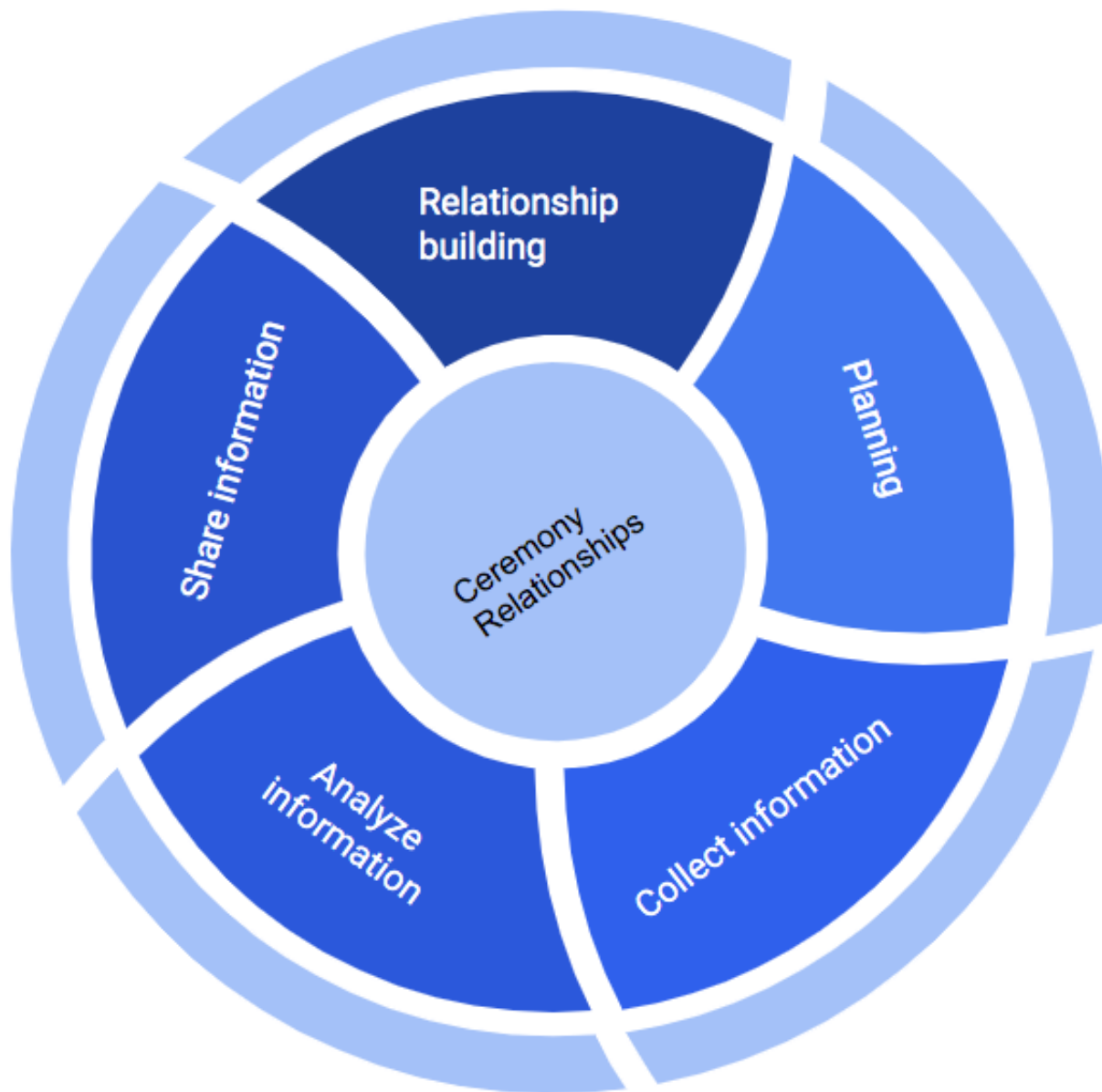


Figure 1: Evaluation Process

Qualitative Methodology

This project also employed a qualitative methodology in which the evaluators “attempt to interpret and make sense of the meaning people attach to their experiences or underlying a particular phenomenon” (Mayan, 2023, p. 3). Qualitative methodology was implemented to guide data collection and analysis. All data collected were analyzed using qualitative content analysis.

Methods

Our evaluation was guided by three questions:

- How is Indigenization creating system change in Edmonton?
- How are we practicing relational accountability through this learning?
- To what extent is (re)Indigenization and decolonization opening the way to reconciliation between Indigenous and non-Indigenous peoples?

Learning occurred through engagement and relationship building with the Indigenous Circle and Indigenization team. Between August 2022 and May 2023, the evaluation plan was developed and revised based on feedback received from the Directors of Indigenization and the Indigenous Circle. The evaluation agreement was accepted by the Indigenous Circle in May 2023.

As participants, the evaluation team engaged with EPE staff, including the Directors of Indigenization, leadership, and staff from other Game Changers, as well as the Indigenous Circle, Elders, the Stewardship Roundtable, and representatives from partner agencies to answer the evaluation questions and learn about Indigenization as a poverty elimination strategy.

A total of 32 participants contributed to this evaluation between April and August 2023, for 4 individual conversations, 2 sharing circles (5 participants each), 14 individual interviews, 2 focus groups (with 2-7 participants), and 14 surveys. We also reviewed 17 documents. Some individuals participated in more than one data collection event.

A description of each method is available in Appendix C: Description of Methods. Both conversations and sharing circles involved participants sharing their perspectives on the determined topic, with time and space for storytelling. Interviews and focus groups of 15-50 minutes were semi-structured, and probing questions about learning and system change were asked to delve deeper. Two surveys on the outcomes of external staff training and collaboration were distributed. Most conversations, sharing circles, focus groups, and interviews were audio recorded; however, the evaluator took notes during some conversations due to participant preference.

Main Findings: Key Strategic Successes

Creating Change Grounded in Reciprocal Relationships

“It is about connecting with people and people first and then going into why you are coming together.” (Indigenous Circle Member, EndPovertyEdmonton)

A main theme within this Game Changer was creating systems change grounded in reciprocal relationships. As all other strategic priorities are grounded in relationship, building connections with members of the urban Indigenous community, allies, and partners is the first step towards the success of Indigenization as a poverty elimination strategy. In the Indigenization strategy, anchoring into community through relationships is the foundation for systems change and is vital to be successful in advocacy and reconciliation.

Within the evaluation period, both the Directors of Indigenization and the Indigenous Circle spent time in community building and developing relationships. The Indigenous Circle and Directors of Indigenization built relationships with people, organizations, and governments including:

- Members of the Nîsohkamâkewin Council at Edmonton Police Service
- Edmonton City Mayor and Council
- Representatives of Indigenous housing agencies in Edmonton and area
- Leadership of Indigenous non-profit agencies in Edmonton and area
- 6 Members of Parliament, 1 Canadian Senator or their representatives
- Other EPE staff members and the EPE Stewardship Roundtable.

Within this priority, indications of success include building trust, reciprocity, abundant sharing of information and resources, transparency, and respect. Relationship building involves connecting as people first.

As one member of the Indigenous Circle explained:

“You kind of accept the systems wherever they're at. And you build that relationship, and you try to maneuver it in different ways. And find a way to find a way to give inputs that they're comfortable with, while you're building that relationship. You introduce something, and you build their education, while you're building your relationship, and you're supplying them with information while you're building that relationship. So I think that's kind of, that's the process I use. I just kind of watch, observe, see where they're at, see who has the influence and

power, start building on that relationship, and then just see where they're at.”
(Sharing Circle)

To a member of the Indigenous Circle, relationships are a method of advancing Indigenization and affecting system change.

“I see partnerships and relationships as a way of providing people with another perspective and affect change. So that's how I see the importance of it. We can't and we shouldn't do it on our own [as Indigenous peoples].” (Sharing Circle)

As relationships are the foundation for bringing people together and the advocacy efforts of this Game Changer are focused on bringing people together (convening), relationship building is necessary and important to implementing Indigenization. Additionally, relationship building is important to advocacy in order to have the advocacy respected and for others (especially within the Indigenous community) to know what the intentions of the advocacy are. Due to ongoing relationship building, there have been multiple successes in advocating in the systems described below.

Progress Toward System Change

Relationship building is the foundation for advancing system change because it allows for improved exchange of information, mutual trust, and grounding knowledge and reasoning about why the system isn't working for Indigenous peoples. Indigenization staff have dedicated significant time and capacity to connecting with the community, developing, and maintaining relationships with partners and allies.

Creating a Collective Voice for Advocacy

“Where I've seen some powerful changes was when Indigenous peoples collectively got together as a group, with some powerhouses in there, too. And said, this is an issue we need to change. Right. So Indigenization is us coming up with the resolution.” (Sharing Circle)

Another theme within the Indigenization Game Changer was creating a collective voice for advocacy in the systems. As a result of intention and time dedicated to the reciprocal relationship building, between the Indigenization team and Indigenous Circle, it was possible to bring many people together around issues affecting Indigenous peoples to create a collective voice. The purpose of this advocacy is to figure out a way to get to the root of historic and systemic issues started by the Doctrine of Discovery and move forward by working together.

The process of creating a collective voice included:

- Building and maintaining reciprocal relationships within the community
- Learning about issues affecting Indigenous peoples in Edmonton through informal research, conversations with Elders and Knowledge Keepers
- Learning about opportunities for advocacy
- Bringing people together around these issues.

Four different circles were convened within the evaluation period. The purpose of each circle was to come together around an issue affecting Indigenous peoples to identify systems and policies that do not support Indigenous values and advocate within these systems.

- Indigenous Leadership Collective is a circle of Indigenous leaders of Indigenous non-profits in the Edmonton area. The purpose of this group is to work together to strengthen Indigenous agencies, develop a collective voice, and create a strong cultural environment for Indigenous peoples in Edmonton and area.
- Indigenous Housing Collaborative is a group of leaders from Edmonton-based Indigenous organizations and First Nations. The purpose of this collaboration is to transform the housing landscape through collaboration and partnerships and to bring a collective voice that will work towards equitable opportunities for Indigenous peoples and communities, work with partners to achieve tangible outcomes, and, overall, give Indigenous peoples a fair chance at housing.
- Economic Reconciliation Circle is a group of Indigenous and non-Indigenous peoples and organizations focussing on work together as a community to advance economic reconciliation in Edmonton. This is a newer circle that is temporarily on hold until Fall 2023.
- Outreach Service Delivery Collaborative is a circle convened around the issue of outreach services delivered to Indigenous peoples and people experiencing poverty in Edmonton. This is a newer circle seeking to improve access to health and social services.

Progress Toward System Change

In 2023, the Indigenous Housing Collaborative submitted a joint Expression of Interest between 11 Edmonton-based Indigenous organizations and First Nations. The expression of interest proposes a decolonized approach to working together and caring for Indigenous peoples to address Indigenous homelessness. As the work of this collaborative is grounded in relationship, they were able to submit this expression of interest within a very short period of time. The collaborative has been invited to meet with the funder to improve their application and there is interest from multiple levels of government in this type of housing solution.

The funder's response is indicative of progress toward systems change because the collaborative is being recognized for working in an Indigenous way. More specifically, the letter of intent was written by the collaborative in an Indigenous way, where everyone came together around an issue affecting the community. In their submission, the collaborative indicated that they could not provide a concept design because they would need to consult with the community. As an alternative, the proposal described characteristics of the shelter. As the Expression of Interest was accepted by the funder and used Indigenous methods, this outcome is an example of progress toward systems change.

Additional successes within the strategic priority of Advocacy in the Systems include:

- making progress toward people and organizations viewing EPE as an ally to Indigenous peoples. Examples of this progress include 1) more Indigenous peoples coming forward and asking to be part of these circles, and 2) agencies and community members contacting the Indigenization team and asking for circles to be convened around issues affecting the Indigenous community.
- contributing to the Indigenous Procurement Framework created by the City of Edmonton.
- meeting with Members of Parliament, Senators, or their representatives to discuss support for an Indigenous Cultural and Wellness Centre in Edmonton. These meetings provided an opportunity to engage in policy advocacy for Indigenous solutions.
- training other non-profit organizations that report an improved understanding of Indigenous protocols and how to work with Indigenous clients.

By establishing and maintaining a collective voice for advocacy, staff within the Indigenization Game Changer continue to create momentum toward the implementation of Indigenization as a strategy for poverty elimination in Edmonton.

Creating Space for Reflection and Learning Toward Allyship

“People don’t understand how historically embedded these things are [Indian Act, anti-Indigenous racism]. You can’t change systems without that education, that understanding as to how that system became, right? So, you know, without all that knowledge it’s not possible.” (Sharing Circle)

Another significant theme within the Indigenization Game Changer is the efforts made to develop EPE staff allyship by creating space for reflection and learning. Many EPE staff members described how the relationship-centred approach to teaching employed by the Indigenization team supports them in their learning because they are able to have difficult and uncomfortable conversations. For example, as one staff member commented,

“Karen and Kourtney are directors of their Indigenization, like they’re a Game Changer. They’re trying to do incredible work in that community. So it’s amazing that Karen is able to do these like weekly teachings with us and Kourtney is able to bring up these contemporary issues and supports with the approval of policies and just like, being like a support for me and all my questions about Indigenization.” (Staff Interview)

By teaching staff about history, current realities, and Indigenous ways of knowing and being, the intention is to support staff to be allies to Indigenous peoples in conversations around Indigenous poverty. Throughout this evaluation period, Indigenization staff taught other EPE staff on topics such as the Truth and Reconciliation Commission, United Nations Declaration on Indigenous peoples, Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls, protocol, reconciliation, colonization and poverty, and smudging. EPE staff also engaged in land-based teachings, including medicine picking and building a sweat lodge.

By creating space for reflection and learning, the Indigenization team is supporting other staff members in navigating the process of Indigenizing their work. Many EPE staff described how the Indigenization team’s teachings impacted how they approach their work, as well as their practices and how they develop strategy within their Game Changers.

One key finding is that some staff reported shifting to focusing on connecting and relationship building as a part of their work, instead of focusing only on their Game Changer strategy or objective. For example, one participant explained:

“So it's about building that relationship for me in a genuine way. So like, it's a process as well, not just - we have a project. So let's sit and work together. It's a more in depth relationship, to understand, like, where the person is coming from, like, how our history is like, what are the commonalities? And then what goal are we working towards?” (Staff Interview)

Another staff member described how these learnings have impacted how they approach people with a different perspective in meetings.

“If you want to change people's mind, you need to, like actually do things differently, not just tell people what they need to do differently. Right. And so I actually started bringing that concept to meetings, instead of saying, ‘Well, I think you should do this, and I think you should do that. I'd be like, can I share? Can I tell you a little story?’ I say, ‘I'd like to share an experience I think we might be able to pull from that would be relevant here.’ Because then it provided more context and gave them a chance to like, come on the journey with me, which like I know, changed me even though it was just like two teachings.” (Staff Interview)

Another example of changing staff practices is one staff's example of approaching their work with more intention as a result of the teachings of the Indigenization team and their own learning. As this staff member noted,

“I can be distracted or multi-tasking when I'm doing emails and just like going and doing the mundane parts of my work. But when I'm doing something like the Indigenous Women's Advisory Council or with the Indigenous Circle, I need to ground myself. I need to do this intentionally and be more present.” (Staff Interview)

To one staff member, their knowledge of how to work as an ally to Indigenous peoples and implement reconciliation has changed how they work.

“We're trying to work as a team. Sometimes, I think people's heads like, oh, that's an indigenous activity, or, and it's like, so [Karen's] like, we're gonna go to all these meetings together, ...And so we have to go together and talk about it together. And it means, you know, we may look at it differently.” (Staff Interview)

Finally, one participant discussed how the teachings from the Indigenization team have shaped their strategic thinking.

“I think the way we think about [ending poverty] and the current systems, we can see that they are clearly not working. I've been really interested in learning the teachings because I'm trying to think about things like, seven generations thinking. How do we have an impact on the next seven generations? And how does this fit into how we structure our organization and our work? Indigenization is a way to inform our future systems.” (Staff Interview)

Progress Toward System Change

Teachings by the Indigenization team have contributed to an increase in EPE staff knowledge about Indigenization and decolonization, along with improved awareness of how historic events contribute to poverty for Indigenous peoples. Additionally, some staff indicate that these teachings have informed their understanding of the systems that they are trying to change and their strategy for changing these systems. As a result, EPE staff have increased knowledge of how to integrate Indigenization into their Game Changer.

Additional successes within the strategic priority of Reconciliation and Allyship include:

- EPE staff report having an improved understanding of how history impacts current realities for Indigenous peoples
- Participants (including EPE staff and staff from other non-profits who participated in training) report learning about how the systems that uphold poverty were created and how this understanding gives context to the importance of Indigenization
- Staff report feeling more confident in seeking out resources on Indigenization on their own because they know who to ask for clarification or support
- EPE is working toward to Indigenization of its organizational policies and processes
 - Developing an Inclusive Workplace Policy and Intellectual Property Policy grounded in Indigenous values.

Overall, EPE staff expressed that they are learning about the process of incorporating teachings into their work and that the guidance from the Indigenization team is supporting them in their learning journeys. Increasing staff knowledge of Indigenous ways of knowing and doing has the potential to increase their capacity as allies in working toward reclamation and integration of Indigenous values and solutions in the system.

Additional Findings

Taking the Time to do it Right

As Indigenization is a newer Game Changer at EPE, considerable time and effort have been dedicated to learning how to apply Indigenization as a poverty elimination strategy. Evaluation participants emphasized the focus on information gathering, learning, and relationship building over the past year. Despite pressures from the systems regarding demonstrating results, the Indigenization team is implementing the Indigenization Game Changer and are taking their time to engage with the community to determine priorities, build trusting and reciprocal relationships, and get community feedback on strategy. As another participant explained, creating change in this way will take time because,

“This is a generational change. This is not a one budget cycle change we are trying to create.” (Focus Group)

Progress Towards Systems Change is Necessarily Incremental

As EPE is a non-Indigenous organization, the Indigenization team needs to take time to build relationships, engage and network with the urban Indigenous community in and around Edmonton. There is a general lack of trust in the systems within the urban Indigenous community in Edmonton. Despite this lack of trust, participants report improved community buy-in about EPE and Indigenization resulting from the time and intention dedicated to anchoring into the community.

“So, what I've learned is that incremental progress is still progress. So, even if we, even if it's something as small as incorporating ideas about Indigenous governance within EPE, and ensuring that it is working well and it's being acted upon, in a non lip service manner in a genuine way, that's a win! But larger scale progress is going to take time.” (Staff Interview)

Overall, implementing Indigenization both within an organization and as a poverty elimination strategy takes time and the progress toward systems change described above is indicative of its potential success.

Strategy Needs to be Adaptive

Another theme is the consistent evolution and fluidity of strategy within the Indigenization Game Changer. As stated by one participant:

“I'm finding that the whole concept of Indigenization within a poverty elimination strategy or in [EPE], that's... that evolves, you know? It almost changes from month to month and it's like, 'oh, okay, we should be working here and doing more in this space because there is an opportunity here', or like, 'how do we do that?'" (Staff Interview)

For example, when the Indigenization team first started working within the area, their strategic plan was quite broad, creating challenges in implementation due to staff capacity and time. As the Indigenization team and Indigenous Circle continue to learn about Indigenizing and decolonizing strategies, the efforts in this Game Changer have become more targeted. Overall, considerable learning about implementing Indigenization as a poverty elimination strategy has occurred in the last year and these learnings will be applied to future work in this Game Changer.

Areas for Growth

As the Indigenization Game Changer moves into its second year of implementation, there are a number of areas for growth emerging from the evaluation analysis. Suggestions for improvement are outlined below.

Areas for Growth in Anchoring into Community

Clarify Relationship between the Indigenous Circle and EndPovertyEdmonton

- There is a difference of perspective of the relationship between Indigenous Circle and EPE. EPE sees the Indigenous Circle as an advisory group, the Indigenous Circle views themselves as an autonomous, self-determining entity that has the ability to inform and influence the work of EPE.

Continue to Develop Relationships Between the Indigenous Circle and Urban Indigenous community

- The Indigenous Circle's capacity is limited. The Indigenous Circle needs to figure out how to implement their ideas within the community, given the Circle's current capacity or expand capacity by recruiting additional members.

Strategic Plan Update and Validation

- As the Indigenous Circle Strategic Plan is being updated and validated, some of the community consultation and relationship building with the urban Indigenous community was not completed and will be led by the Directors of Indigenization in the upcoming year.

Areas for Growth in Advocacy in the Systems

Continue to Develop Relationships for Collective Advocacy

- An advocacy strategy based on relationship building and consulting with the community will take time to implement. As there has been significant focus on relationship building in the last year and some progress toward systems change in the advocacy strategic priority, further progress toward systems change due to advocacy can be expected in the upcoming years.

Requirement for Allies in Advocacy

- Many Indigenous peoples are skilled advocates because they have to be. Due to systemic issues such as racism, Indigenous peoples need advocates and allies to support system change. In order to be effective allies to Indigenous peoples, non-Indigenous peoples need to have a strong understanding of how the systemic issues affecting Indigenous peoples came to be and how they are perpetuated through the current systems.

Strategic Plan Update and Validation

- Some activities within this strategic priority are on hold as the Indigenous Circle Strategic Plan is being updated and validated. Updating the strategic plan and engaging with the urban Indigenous community in Edmonton on the strategy will help to guide advocacy efforts.

Areas for Growth in Reconciliation and Allyship

Clarify EPE Staff Understanding of Indigenization

- There are different understandings of Indigenization across EPE. Many staff members are at different stages of their learning journey, but clarification of what Indigenization means to poverty elimination would support EPE staff to implement Indigenization in their Game Changers.

Integrate Indigenous Perspectives into EPE Organizational Systems

- EPE as an organization needs to better integrate Indigenous perspectives in its organizational policies and processes
 - Although EPE has grounded its Inclusive Workplace Policy and Intellectual Property Policy grounded in Indigenous values, there is more work to do in this area.

Clarify Responsibility for Learning about Indigenization

- There needs to be clarification of the shared responsibility for learning (EPE staff) and teaching (Indigenization team)
 - Some staff feel they are taking responsibility for their learning by reading books and seeking out information on their own
 - In some cases, the Indigenization team indicated that staff do not engage with teachings or that their efforts are not well received.

- The Indigenization team sees connections between past and present, intersectionality of Game Changers, yet some staff are trying to learn only in the context of their Game Changer.

Engage with Stewardship Roundtable

- The Directors of Indigenization and the Stewardship Roundtable need to build their relationship and the Stewardship Roundtable's knowledge of Indigenous culture and ways of knowing.

Recommendations

As described above, the Directors of Indigenization and the Indigenous Circle have been figuring out how to implement Indigenization as a poverty elimination strategy. Participants in this evaluation had suggestions for growth and improvement within the Indigenization Game Changer.

Recommendations for Indigenization Team

- Teachings based on stories help to learn about complicated concepts.
- Some staff are interested in being involved in the Indigenization or decolonization of EPE, but do not know how to be an ally in this way.
- Staff need and appreciate guidance with implementing Indigenization in their Game Changer work.

“And so I'm really interested in understanding how those changes can be incorporated into our work. So like, is it a change in the way we communicate with each other? Is it a change in team meetings? Is that a change in, you know, how we show up to work?” (Staff interview)

Suggestions for Future Education Topics

- Effect of historical trauma on health of Indigenous peoples
 - What does this mean for Human Resources policies? How does this contribute to poverty for Indigenous peoples?
- How to apply knowledge about history of colonization to present
- How to apply knowledge about Indigenization to work in various Game Changer areas.

Recommendations for EPE Staff

Proactive Engagement with the Indigenous Circle

The most common area for improvement for EPE staff was to engage in more proactive engagement with the Indigenous Circle. Suggestions for engagement included:

- Sharing operational reports with the Indigenous Circle
- Building relationships with Indigenous Circle members
- Engaging with Indigenous Circle members at the planning stage of new strategies or initiatives

- Inviting Indigenous Circle members into Game Changer work and maintaining their self-determination by asking members if they have the capacity to contribute
- Countering stereotypes about Indigenous peoples when possible (i.e., tax exemption, contemporary impact of the Indian Act)
- Becoming an ally with and advocating for Indigenous peoples to support system change.

Learning on Reconciliation and Allyship

Additional recommendations for EPE staff are to continue actively engaging in learning on topics related to reconciliation and allyship. Suggestions for learning topics include:

- Continue building understanding about how what happened in the past affects Indigenous communities today
- Work towards improving understanding of Indigenous governance and worldview
- Work towards improving understanding of systemic issues from a holistic perspective and focus on how the systems are interconnected.
- Take responsibility for learning but accept guidance from Indigenous peoples.

Recommendations for Leadership

- Provide clarity on organizational governance. Although governance conversations are ongoing, there was limited clear direction given over the last year. A clearly defined governance plan and system would provide much needed strategic direction for the Indigenization Game Changer and enable staff to work toward meaningful impacts in poverty elimination.
- Improve understanding of how Indigenization can contribute to poverty elimination to be able to support work occurring within the Indigenization Game Changer.
- Build processes to develop intentional relationships between the Indigenization staff, the Indigenous Circle, and the Stewardship Roundtable

Many successes have been achieved within the Indigenization Game Changer within the evaluation period of one year. Significant efforts have been made to lay the foundation for systems' change and make progress toward strategic priorities. Importantly, the Indigenization team is building relationships with the Indigenous community and their allies in Edmonton. Advocacy efforts are grounded in relationships and focused on reclaiming Indigenous values while also addressing poverty. In addition to working in the community, the Indigenization team has also started to develop the capacity of other EPE staff members to be allies and to begin the process of integrating Indigenization across the other Game Changers. Although it will take time to see change with a strategy

based in relationships and community engagement, the foundation for success is being developed. The Indigenous Circle's update and validation of their strategic plan will help to guide future work in this Game Changer. Further, the recommendations from this evaluation have the potential to refine the work of the Indigenization team, EPE staff, and leadership. In all, there have been indications of progress toward systems change within the Indigenization Game Changer demonstrating the value of this strategy in ending poverty in Edmonton.

Appendix A: Evaluation Protocol

Our evaluation of the Indigenization Game Changer used the following evaluation protocol, as created by the evaluation team. This protocol, including evaluation methodology and methods, has been discussed in-depth at the EPE Indigenous Circle. CUP presented the Indigenous Circle with tobacco to ask for guidance, support, and participation, and this evaluation was given approval to proceed.

1. All aspects of the evaluation process were co-designed by the Indigenization Team at EndPovertyEdmonton (Kourtney Boucher, Director of Indigenization; Karen Bruno, Director of Indigenization) and Poverty Research Team at the Community University Partnership (Janelle Knoop, Research Coordinator; Maria Mayan, Principal Investigator) as the evaluation team.
2. The evaluation team sought and incorporated feedback from the Indigenous Circle as leadership whenever possible, including evaluation plan development, data collection, analysis, and sharing results.
3. Indigenous methods and ways of learning were centered in this evaluation.
4. This evaluation was designed from an asset-based lens and all results, data, and knowledge mobilization will centre the strengths of Indigenization and decolonization.
5. The EPE Indigenous Circle maintained control of the knowledge generated through this evaluation and will become stewards of the knowledge upon completion of the project. The Directors of Indigenization are stewards of these data.

Appendix B: Evaluation Framework

Strategic Objective 1: Anchor into Community

Objectives	Indicators	Results
<p><u>Objective 1.1:</u> Engage and build/develop relationships with broader urban Indigenous community</p>	<p>Outreach presentation on Game Changer developed</p>	<p>Met - Document review indicates PowerPoint developed.</p>
	<p>List of Indigenous-led and grassroots organizations reviewed and updated</p>	<p>In Progress - Document review indicates list reviewed. Next steps of updating the list and including grassroots organizations in progress.</p>
	<p>Indigenization team engages in ongoing relationship building with the urban Indigenous community in Edmonton</p> <p>Community has improved understanding and awareness of the Indigenous Circle and EPE, who they are and what they do</p> <p>Community is represented accurately by the Indigenization team and EPE</p>	<p>In Progress - Conversation and interview indicate that the Indigenization team has made a significant effort to be present in the community by attending events (i.e., attending round dances, golf tournaments, and meeting with Indigenous businesses and organizations, as well as Chief and Councils of First Nations).</p> <p>The Indigenization team continues to work toward this objective.</p>

	Indigenous-led organizations have knowledge of Indigenization Game Changer at EPE	<p>In Progress - Indigenization presentation developed</p> <p>Next steps:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Review of presentation with Indigenous Circle and planning for engagement with Indigenous-led organizations after review of the Indigenous Circle strategic plan.
	Relationships developed between community and Indigenization team	<p>Met - Conversations and interviews indicate relationships for future collaboration and foundations for future partnerships developed.</p>
	Indigenization team is accountable to the broader Indigenous community	<p>In Progress - The Indigenization team is engaging with and building relationships with the broader Indigenous community as they develop the foundation for future partnerships and collaboration to develop systems change.</p>

<u>Objective 1.2:</u> Build/strengthen relationships with allied organizations and Edmontonians	Review and revise list of EPE stakeholders and identify potential allied organizations and people Presentation on Indigenization Game Changer for allied organizations and Edmontonians created.	In Progress - Creation of list EPE stakeholders in progress. Met - Document review indicates PowerPoint completed. Presentations will occur when the list of allied organizations and Edmontonians is finalized.
	Share Indigenous ways of knowing and being by providing cultural opportunities to SRT members	On hold - Engagement with SRT on hold due to staff capacity and plan to update and validate the Indigenous Circle Strategic Plan.
<u>Objective 1.3:</u> Engage with Indigenous community to validate Indigenous Circle Strategic Plan	Community provides feedback on strategic plan Community validates strategic plan Relationships with community are built and maintained Meaningful engagement and relationship building	On hold- Engagement with Indigenous community to validate strategic plan on hold. As the current strategic plan is from 2019, the Indigenous Circle plans to review and update the strategic plan in fall 2023.

Strategic Objective 2: Advocate in the Systems

Objectives	Indicators	Results
<p><u>Objective 2.1:</u> Establish capacity within the Indigenous Circle to ensure advocacy efforts are achieved</p>	<p>Systems Change 101 presentation developed and presented to Indigenous Circle</p>	<p>Partially met - PowerPoint and presentation developed, presentation to Indigenous Circle postponed due as other objectives took priority during the evaluation period.</p>
	<p>Skill matrices completed for Indigenous Circle members based on strategic plan</p>	<p>On hold - Postponed until strategic plan is updated and validated and revised by the Indigenous Circle.</p>
	<p>Indigenous Circle Recruitment Committee convened</p> <p>IC has diverse membership and representation</p> <p>Honest and diverse perspectives inform the work of the IC and system change work</p> <p>Indigenous-led organizations and the diverse Indigenous populations are represented</p>	<p>Partially met - Document review indicates there were 2 meetings of the Indigenous Circle Recruitment Committee in 2023.</p> <p>Indigenous Circle recruitment postponed until the strategic plan is reviewed and updated.</p>
<p><u>Objective 2.2:</u> With community, identify the systems and policies that do</p>	<p>Informal research (including talking with elders and knowledge keepers, attending community events and webinars, reviewing</p>	<p>Met - Conversation indicates there is ongoing learning about topics of focus and awareness of community perspectives.</p>

not support Indigenous values	news and internet sources) conducted to support Indigenous leadership, economic reconciliation, workforce development, Indigenous housing, and other Game Changers	Strategy development is informed by results of informal research.
	<p>Convene Indigenous housing organizations to work toward systems change</p> <p>Recognized experts advise and inform each other</p> <p>Indigenous Housing Collaborative develops a shared agenda for system change</p>	<p>Met - Conversation and document review indicates actions including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Informal research conducted to inform group development • Group convened • Relationships developed inform method of working together • Collaborative submits joint expression of interest for funding to support action toward supporting Indigenous peoples experiencing homelessness into housing
	Convene government, community, and businesses to work towards economic reconciliation	<p>Met - Conversation and document review indicates:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Research conducted, 14 people interviewed • Definition of economic reconciliation established

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Initial meeting of economic reconciliation collaboration complete
	<p>Indigenous leaders convened to identify the systems and policies that do not support Indigenous values and work toward changing these systems and policies</p> <p>Recognized experts advise and inform each other</p> <p>Indigenous leaders develop a shared agenda for system change</p>	<p>In Progress - Relationship building and tobacco presentation is underway. Meetings are currently on hold but expected to resume Fall 2023.</p> <p>Many members of this group are also members of the Indigenous Housing Collaborative and the focus has been on housing in the winter and spring of 2023.</p>
<p><u>Objective 2.3</u>: Advocate in the systems for the incorporation of Indigenous knowledge, practices, and solutions</p>	<p>Advocate to Edmonton City Council for the incorporation of Indigenous knowledge, practices, and solutions in city policy and strategies</p>	<p>Met - Interview analysis describes participation in three Edmonton City Council meetings to advocate for Indigenous knowledge and solutions related to the Indigenous Cultural and Wellness Centre, anti-racism, and the City of Edmonton's Indigenous Framework.</p> <p>Next steps:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Council meetings being a full day commitment is a barrier to Indigenous Circle member participation.

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Amending Indigenous Circle strategy and process for council meeting advocacy. • Monitor for advocacy results.
	Advise businesses, community, and government on the incorporation of Indigenous knowledge, practices, and solutions	Met - Survey and conversation analysis indicates community organization staff that have taken training with the Indigenization team have increased knowledge of how to be an ally to Indigenous peoples.
	Advise and advocate for the health of Indigenous peoples through active participation in the Indigenous Health Working Group - University of Alberta Indigenous Health Working Group report reflects advocacy for the health of Indigenous peoples and steps for improving current practices	<p>Met - Conversation indicates the working group was receptive to feedback on how to support Indigenous students pursuing a career in the health sector. The success of Indigenous students has the potential to improve Indigenous experiences in the health system.</p> <p>Insufficient evidence to assess</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Report not yet released as of August 2023.

Strategic Objective 3: Reconciliation and Allyship

Objectives	Indicators	Results
<p><u>Objective 3.1:</u> Integrate Indigenization across Game Changers and build capacity of non-Indigenous staff as allies</p>	<p>Indigenization team creates supportive environment for other EPE staff to learn about Indigenization and decolonization</p> <p>Processes and practices for teaching about decolonization and Indigenization established</p>	<p>Met - Conversation and interview results indicate staff feel supported in their learnings around decolonization and Indigenization.</p>
	<p>EPE staff actively engage in learning about Indigenization from Indigenization team and know how and where to access knowledge and guidance</p> <p>Staff understand Indigenous worldview processes and protocols and can offer protocol</p> <p>Awareness of contemporary issues impacting Indigenous communities</p>	<p>Met - Interview and conversation analysis indicate staff actively engaging in learning about Indigenization and beginning to navigate the process of integrating Indigenization into their Game Changers and work.</p>
	<p>Indigenization team helps EPE staff and potential Indigenous partners to foster connections and relationships</p>	<p>Met - Conversation and interview analysis indicate Indigenization team supporting EPE staff in developing relationships, connections, partnerships</p>

	EPE staff have connections and relationships with members of Indigenous community and are building the foundation for future partnerships	with potential Indigenous partners.
	Indigenous knowledge, perspectives and practices into strategies and efforts of other Game Changers	Partially met - Interview and conversation results indicate that EPE staff are figuring out how to integrate Indigenous knowledge, perspectives and practices into their Game Changers.
	Anti-oppression framework developed to guide EPE staff and community partners in centring the voice of Indigenous and Racialized group members in their everyday work	Met - Focus group analysis and document review indicates framework developed.
<u>Objective 3.2:</u> Identify allied organizations to partner and advocate with on numerous issues impacting Indigenous populations in Edmonton	Indigenous Circle continues to build and maintain a relationship with Mayor and council	Partially met - Initial relationship building occurred through a lunch between Mayor and Council and the Indigenous Circle. Indigenous Circle has not followed up due to limited capacity. Relationship building will be continued in Fall 2023.

	Outreach between Indigenous Circle and Nîsohkamâkewin Council at Edmonton Police Service	Met - Initial meeting completed. Discussion about future collaboration on hold.
<u>Objective 3.3:</u> Develop approach for working with governments, agencies, and organizations to develop a Reconciliation Action Plan	Environmental Scan on local governments, agencies, and organizations who do or do not have a Reconciliation Action Plan completed	Met - Environmental scan completed. Document will inform future approaches.

Strategic Objective 4: Continuous Learning and Evaluation

Objectives	Indicators	Results
<u>Objective 4.1:</u> Engage in continuous learning and evaluation of work within the Indigenization Game Changer for the purpose of accountability to community and sharing learnings	Learning through fulsome engagement with community, including talking to Elders and Knowledge Keepers	Partially Met - Following the lead of the Indigenous Circle and Indigenization team, efforts were not put into this objective of the evaluation due to limitations in CUP staff capacity, and project timeline delays. Learning about how to evaluate the work occurred by attending Indigenous Circle meetings and making edits to the evaluation framework and methodology in response to feedback.

	<p>Knowledge of successes and learnings occurring in Indigenization Game Changer</p>	<p>Met - Evaluation report provides overview of successes and learnings in Indigenization Game Changer.</p>
	<p>Options for Indigenous methodologies explored.</p>	<p>Met - Options for Indigenous compiled and presented to the Indigenous Circle.</p>
<p><u>Objective 4.2:</u> Develop evaluation approach and plan for evaluating work occurring within the Indigenization Game Changer in collaboration with CUP and the Indigenous Circle</p> <p><u>Objective 4.3:</u> Ensure Indigenous methods are centred in the evaluation of this work and that all plans, efforts, and results centre Indigenous ways of knowing, being, and learning</p>	<p>Indigenization team actively engages with evaluation team to develop an evaluation plan grounded in Indigenous methodology, centering Indigenous ways of knowing, being, and learning</p> <p>Evaluation plan uses Indigenous methods where possible and centres Indigenous ways of knowing, being, and learning</p> <p>CUP team respects work occurring and works from a strengths based perspective</p>	<p>Met - Evaluation plan and approach centres Indigenous ways of knowing, being, and learning and priorities use of Indigenous methods.</p>

Strategic Objective 5: Establish an Indigenous Cultural and Wellness Centre

Objectives	Indicators	Results
<p><u>Objective 5.1 :</u> Revisit and revise draft business case</p>	<p>Business case completed</p> <p>Awareness of project approaches of social enterprise, social purpose real estate, and commercial development</p>	<p>Insufficient evidence to assess.</p> <p>Limited data were available to answer objectives related to this objective due to difficulty connecting with outside contractors and lack of access to documents due to confidentiality.</p>
<p><u>Objective 5.2:</u> Complete studies & make decision on Project 1</p>	<p>Assessments and studies completed</p> <p>Understanding of options for business opportunities and revenue streams</p>	<p>Insufficient evidence to assess.</p> <p>Limited data were available to answer objectives related to this objective due to difficulty connecting with outside contractors and lack of access to documents due to confidentiality.</p>

<p><u>Objective 5.3:</u> Ongoing participation and targeted engagement</p>	<p>Develop & implement engagement plan</p> <p>Engagement on revised draft business case</p>	<p>Insufficient evidence to assess.</p> <p>Limited data were available to answer objectives related to this objective due to difficulty connecting with outside contractors and lack of access to documents due to confidentiality.</p>
<p><u>Objective 5.4:</u> Presentation to City Council</p>	<p>Submit revised business case and prep for Council</p> <p>Council accepts revised business plan</p>	<p>Insufficient evidence to assess.</p> <p>Limited data were available to answer objectives related to this objective due to difficulty connecting with outside contractors and lack of access to documents due to confidentiality.</p>

Appendix C: Description of Methods

In the research method of **conversation**, the participant guides the conversation and shares what they would like to about the conversation topic. Kovach (2009) offers the following about the origins and intentions of this method: “in line with Nêhiyaw epistemology, which honours sharing story as a means for knowing, conversation is a non-structured method of gathering knowledge” (p. 51). Unlike the interview, conversation as data collection focuses more intentionally on “a combination of reflection, story, and dialogue” (Kovach, 2009, p. 51).

As practiced by various Indigenous peoples and groups, the **sharing circle** involves active listening in order to identify solutions and build “a shared understanding that aims to benefit the entire community” (Nabigon et al., 1999; Roethe et al., 2009, as cited in Hunt & Young, 2021, p. 2). When the Western model of focus groups is adapted and indigenized to contain key elements of a sharing circle, this method can offer a “supportive environment whereby Indigenous peoples can autonomously express their perspectives and reflect on their experiences without interruption or questioning” (Nabigon et al., 1999; Roethe et al., 2009, as cited in Hunt & Young, 2021, p. 2).

Storytelling is a way of knowing about the world and can be personal, political, social, or about the perceptions, beliefs, attitudes, or relationships that the storyteller is sharing. When implemented in research, storytelling can be “a useful and culturally appropriate way of representing the ‘diversities of truth’ within which the story teller rather than the research retains control” (Russell Bishop, as cited in Smith, 2021, p. 166). Furthermore, Jo-ann Archibald (2008) proposes that storytelling and stories “engage listeners and the story teller in a respectful relationship of reciprocity that creates and sustains oral cultures” (as cited in Smith, 2021, p. 166).

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