

# Annual Report 2021

The Montreal Indigenous Community NETWORK

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Opening from the  
**PRESIDENT**

Kwe,

It is with great enthusiasm that we present to you the Annual Report of the Montreal Indigenous Community NETWORK for the year 2021-2022.

We would first like to acknowledge the exemplary work of the NETWORK team, a team of heart, mobilized by the achievement of a common goal: the well-being of the First Nations, Inuit and Métis members who make up the large Indigenous community of Tiohtià:ke. We would also like to thank the committed Board members who ensured the realization of the organization's mission and who contributed to the successful conclusion of this transition year.

This past year we welcomed a new Executive Director, Linda Tremblay, a member of the Innu Nation. Linda has many years of management experience in the private and associative fields of the creative industry. She arrived as a consultant in June 2021 and oversaw the revision of the organizational structure, which allowed her to gain a comprehensive understanding of the organization's mandates and the strengths of each team member.

The Board of Directors was also proud to support the organization in the implementation of policies that promote and support the well-being of employees, including the acquisition of group insurance and the implementation of a registered retirement savings plan.

We also obtained charitable status, which will allow the organization to receive donations and thus diversify its sources of revenue. Finally, it is with great pleasure that we participated in the strategy to revamp the NETWORK's brand image, which was unveiled at our Annual General Meeting.

In closing this year, it is our fervent hope that the founding of the Indigenous HUB will soon be realized as it will allow for the establishment of relationships in a common space and foster a strong sense of community.

**Geneviève Sioui**  
President of the Board of Directors

Opening from the

# EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

I would like to tell you what I discovered when I arrived, first as a consultant in June 2021 and even more so when I took over the reins in October: **The Montreal Indigenous Community NETWORK is truly a story of the heart!**

**Leilani Shaw**, Deputy Executive Director, is constantly on the lookout for ways to connect the NETWORK to the community and to understand its deepest needs. Her team is always ready to tackle challenges and help change systems. **Amanda Moniz**, an ally by nature, stands guard with integrity. Her team has worked hard to develop pathways that allow the Indigenous and non-Indigenous population to walk towards us, to understand who we are. **Raul Pineros**, who arrived recently, has taken charge of the finances, and has allowed us to have better control over the assets that we manage for the benefit of the Indigenous community.

As for me, I was welcomed with enthusiasm by these wonderful people who accepted change and did not hesitate to support me in this important stage of evolution and organization. To thank them, I would like to name: Jamie-Lee Deschênes, Jericha Major, Katia McEvoy, Élizabeth Fast, Kateri Aubin-Dubois, Sarah Charlebois, Dalhie Gagné, Fiona Wilson, Rowena Tam, Bobby Maning-Leduc, Nicole Fornelli, Alexandre Huard-Joncas, Stéphanie Héroux and Kortanie Raye.

Thank you to the members of the Board of Directors for their dedication. They have accompanied me through this complex but stimulating learning curve.

In closing, I would like to thank my predecessor, **Allison Reid**, for her unwavering empathy for the community and her courage that allowed the NETWORK's growth.

I would also like to thank all the people and organizations that have contributed to the development of the Montreal Indigenous Community NETWORK over the years. Through everyone's determination, the NETWORK is at the heart of the community in Tiohtià:ke, and Tiohtià:ke has been the heart of Montreal for centuries.

**Linda Tremblay,**  
Executive Director

The Rebirth of the

# NETWORK



## Organizational restructuring

In the last year, the NETWORK has taken the time to reflect upon the impact of the ongoing pandemic, not only on the community sector and its members, but on the organization as well. After several months of introspection, we decided to tackle foundational aspects of the organization with the mentorship and guidance of our **new Executive Director, Linda Tremblay**. As of 2022, we are **15 employees** strong and in an incredible position to better serve the interests of the community.

To enhance the NETWORK's knowledge and promote community safety, the team had the opportunity to receive a two-day training on research ethics and data sovereignty led by **Dr. Elizabeth Fast** and **Dr. Denise-Michelle Brend**.

During this training, we explored core Indigenous-specific research and ethics principles, data collection, analysis and reporting techniques, as well as protocols for Indigenous data sovereignty and research. Follow-up sessions were also organized in order to provide additional space for staff to ask project-specific questions relating to the training, clarify principles and protocols learnt, and brainstorm new ways in which we interact with data in our projects and daily workspace.

Since June 2021, several organizational changes have been made to improve, strengthen and solidify the NETWORK's role as an umbrella organization at the heart of the community. The NETWORK now has an **official organigram** meant to provide team stability and direction, as well as community project-focused objectives.

Additionally, in September 2021, the NETWORK officially obtained **charitable status**! As a charity, the NETWORK has diversified its revenue streams and will now be able to accept donations and provide receipts to donors. This development also permitted the NETWORK to gain greater flexibility and independence in the redistribution of funds to the community.





## IT and data security

As part of our foundational changes, the NETWORK was committed to enhancing the security of our data, increasing information accessibility and organization between team members, and ensuring the respect of Indigenous ethics principles. In December 2021, the NETWORK hired **ACOSYS**, an Indigenous consulting company, to provide recommendations on improving technological integration and on fostering an online infrastructure that holds a secure space for Indigenous data.

## Our vision, mission, and values

The NETWORK deemed it necessary to complete its process of rebirth by undergoing an **organizational rebrand**. In December 2021, the NETWORK began this process with the objective of illustrating and defining our role as an umbrella organization to our partners and the general public. We would like to highlight the immense collective effort of the NETWORK team, Board of Directors, as well as the many visioning sessions facilitated by **Elizabeth Hunt**. Her guidance provided a creative space to collectively compose the NETWORK's official vision, mission and values.

# HEART OF THE COMMUNITY

LISTEN - CONNECT - SUPPORT



## OUR MISSION

As an umbrella organization, the Montreal Indigenous Community NETWORK is in a unique position to connect various segments of urban Indigenous communities by supporting Indigenous and Indigenous-serving organizations working directly with community members in and around Tiohtià:ke/Montreal. **We accomplish our mission by implementing four main approaches:**

### 1. Gathering those who directly serve community members

We ensure the safety, belonging and well-being of urban Indigenous community members by facilitating collaborative spaces for frontline community organizations to share information, identify gaps in services, determine priorities and develop long-term, sustainable solutions as a collective. We invite non-Indigenous guests to listen to the needs and solutions developed by community organizations in order to strengthen strategic, action-based partnerships that will directly benefit Indigenous community members.

### 3. Transferring knowledge

We transfer knowledge to the general public through advocacy and awareness-building by collaborating with strategic partners, developing educational tools, publishing NETWORK-initiated research reports, and providing workshops for people working toward meaningful allyship.

### 2. Alleviating the burden

We influence the allocation of public funding and take on administrative tasks such as funding distribution through community consensus-based decision-making circles. We communicate with public officials to alleviate the bureaucratic burden placed on the Indigenous community sector that directly serves community members.

### 4. Empowering Indigenous leadership

We provide capacity-building opportunities for community workers, organizers, and existing leaders to develop and refine their leadership skills and practices. With a special eye on the future, we amplify Indigenous youth voices and generate empowerment opportunities through mentorship, skill and confidence-building activities and gatherings designed to promote a sense of belonging and cultural resurgence in urban Tiohtià:ke/Montreal.



## OUR VISION

The Montreal Indigenous Community NETWORK envisions an urban setting where the well-being and growth of urban Indigenous communities throughout Tiohtià:ke/Montreal are led by Indigenous communities. The NETWORK contributes to establishing and fostering an environment centered on relationship-building and community connections that ensure safe and abundant access to culturally relevant information, services, and resources. We are working towards an urban setting which honours, respects and celebrates the diversity of Indigenous knowledge, cultures and innovation.



## OUR VALUES



### INDIGENOUS-LED

Led and created by and for urban Indigenous communities



### COMMUNITY-ORIENTED

Priorities and solutions identified and developed by the community



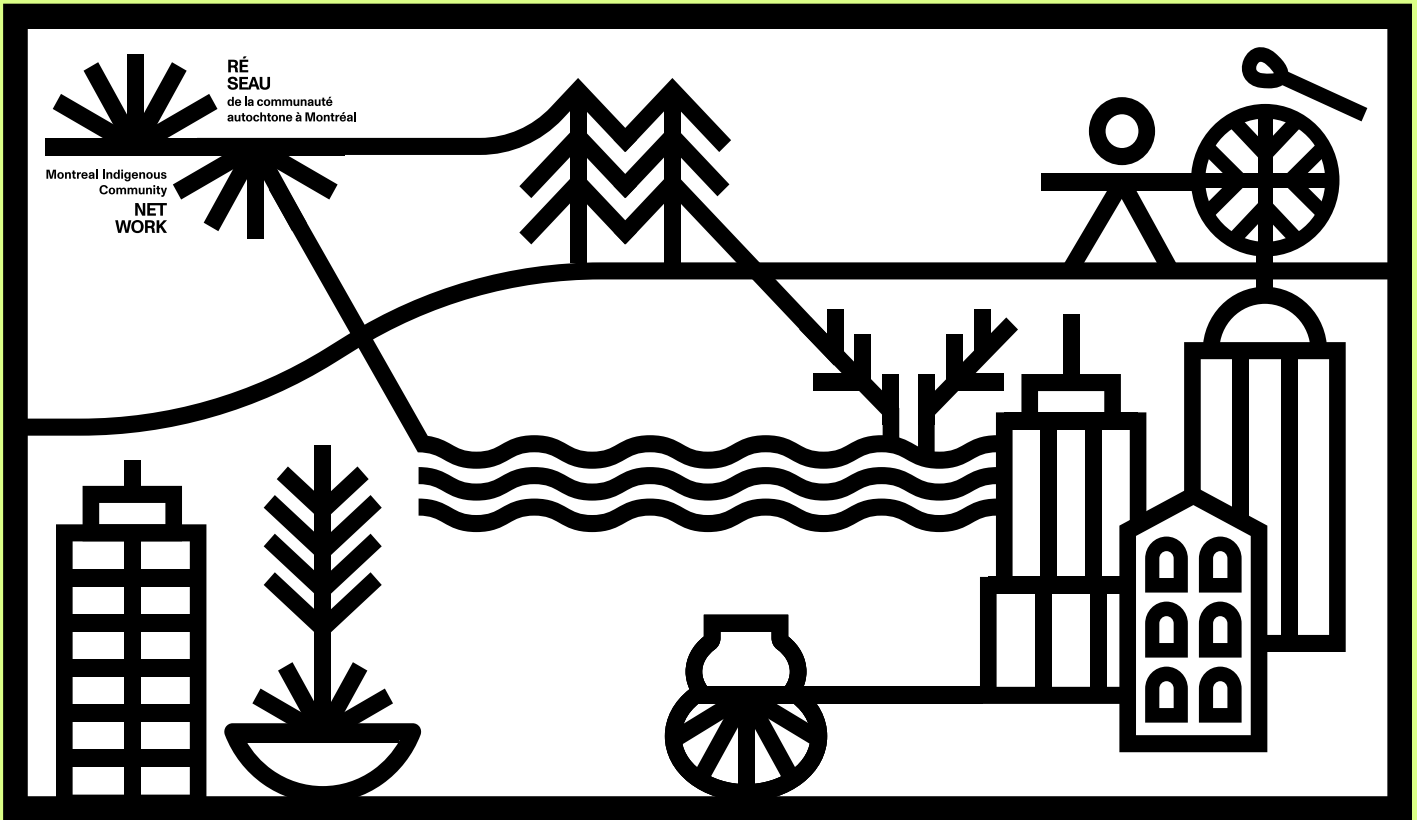
### STRATEGIC PARTNERSHIPS

Building and nurturing relationships between the community sector and strong allies



### COLLECTIVE HEARTBEAT

Working together for the betterment and empowerment of Indigenous communities



## Our new image

We are pleased to reveal our newly defined vision, mission and values with you and hope you share our enthusiasm. Furthermore, it was with great excitement that the NETWORK mandated **Studio Harrison Fun**, a Montreal-based graphic design company, to recreate and reimagine the NETWORK's iconography and logo. Over several months,

Studio Harrison Fun collaborated with the NETWORK's Communications and Steering teams to envision the organization's new identity. The final product paints a genuine picture of the NETWORK's role within the community sector and conveys a story true to urban Indigenous communities living in Tiohtiá:ke/Montreal.

Studio Harrison Fun is also working closely with **Onaki**, an Indigenous company based in Maniwaki, who has been hired to refresh the NETWORK's website and create an interactive space for community and members.

We are thrilled to present the NETWORK's new logo and iconography symbolizing community connections, the diversity of urban Indigenous peoples and the reclaiming of Indigenous ways of life.

### OUR LOGO



# Meet the Board of Directors!

The role of the Board of Directors is to maintain the vision and integrity of the NETWORK. Their work is carried out in the best interests of the organization and with the desire to collaborate and maintain reciprocal alliances with our partners and members.

Since its incorporation, the NETWORK has successfully maintained Indigenous leadership on its Board of Directors. Indigenous governance is fundamental to the vitality and success of the NETWORK. As we move towards greater Indigenous sovereignty in Tiohtià:ke/Montreal, it is essential that the NETWORK ensures that Indigenous communities are leading the future in a positive direction.

## THE BOARD MEMBERS 2021-2022

GENEVIEVE SIOUI  
President

TEALEY NORMANDIN  
Vice-president

CARLEE LOFT  
Secretary

SAMUEL RAINVILLE  
Treasurer

DON BARNABY  
Board Member

JAY LAUNIERE-MATHIAS  
Board Member



# Meet the Team!

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## THE STEERING COMMITTEE

LINDA TREMBLAY  
Executive Director

LEILANI SHAW  
Deputy Executive Director

AMANDA MONIZ  
Director of Communications and Advocacy

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## EVENTS

BOBBY MANNING-LEDUC  
Event Planning

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## COMMUNICATIONS

KATIA MCEVOY  
Communications Specialist

SARAH CHARLEBOIS  
Communications Assistant

DAHLIE GAGNÉ  
Community Liaison

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## ADMINISTRATION AND FINANCE

RAUL PINEROS  
Finance Coordinator

JAMIE-LEE DESCHENES  
Bookkeeping Assistant

JERICHA MAJOR  
Office Coordinator

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## WORKING GROUPS

NICOLE FORNELLI  
Lead Project Manager

ALEXANDRE HUARD-JONCAS  
Community Project Manager: Homelessness and Justice

STÉPHANIE HÉROUX  
Community Project Manager: Health and Youth  
Protection

KORTANIE RAYE  
Project Assistant

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## RESEARCH

ROWENA TAM  
STRATEGY Coordinator



# At a glance

## Gathering those who directly serve community members



### COMMUNITY SUPPORT

#### Mental health support program

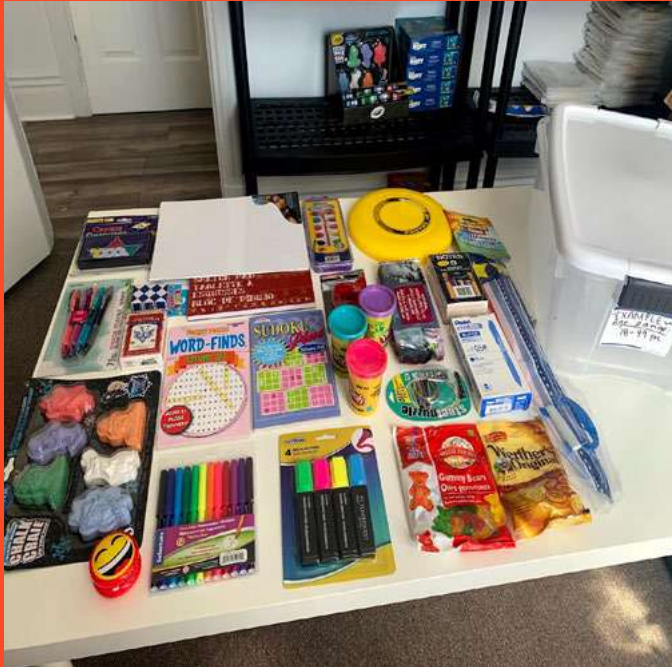
Beginning in March 2020, the NETWORK saw an increase in stress added to Indigenous and Indigenous-serving frontline organizations. The NETWORK applied and received funding from Indigenous Services Canada (ISC) in 2020 and 2021 to coordinate and offer coverage for **mental health support services for frontline workers**. Mental health support services were offered to address grief, loss and bereavement, support systems surrounding COVID-19 pandemic stress and burnout. We offered various service types ranging

from Elders, cultural support workers, psychotherapists, psychologists, counselors, social workers and creative arts therapists.

With \$36K in funding, we could provide

**5+** therapy sessions  
on average for 60  
participants

**200** busy boxes distributed



## Busy boxes

Busy Boxes are curated boxes that were designed for Indigenous community members to stay busy, encourage time at home, boost morale, and meet the needs of those who are low on essential items, in an effort to reduce the spreading of COVID-19 and to reduce the psychosocial consequences of isolation. A number of groups began distributing busy boxes across Turtle Island, and they were an early success with the Inuit community on Tiohtià:ke during the first wave of the pandemic – thanks to the hard work of the Southern Quebec Inuit Association. The NETWORK then put together and distributed Busy Boxes to members of the street community isolated with COVID-19 at the Old Royal Vic and in other hospitals where community members were quarantining during the winter 2021 outbreak.

## Storage unit

To alleviate the lack of funding and logistical capacities within the sector, on top of an overburdened and dwindled workforce, the NETWORK recorded, assessed, procured, and delivered essential supplies and equipment to our partnered organizations throughout 2020 and well into 2022. Also included in these materials were the items utilized in the Busy Box project, which was additionally addressed as an essential need amongst the community. A total of **\$350,000 was spent on requested materials and deliveries to a total of 9 different partnered organizations.**

## 9 Indigenous and Indigenous-serving organizations supported

Projets Autochtones du Québec  
Native Friendship Centre of Montreal  
La Fondation Chez Doris  
Southern Quebec Inuit Association  
The Indigenous Street Worker Project  
The Open Door Montreal  
Native Montreal  
Ulluriaq Adolescent Centre of Montréal  
BATSHAW - CIUSSS-de-L'Ouest de L'Île de Montréal



## WORKING GROUPS

### Health and Social Services

The NETWORK is committed to systemic changes, notably in the health and social services sector. This year, we remained active in two main working bodies devoted to improving the Indigenous health sector.

The **Montreal Indigenous Health Advisory Circle (MIHAC)** is an Indigenous-led self-determining health advisory body that aims to obtain equitable and accessible health and social services for the urban Indigenous community. The MIHAC advocates for culturally-safe and equal access to healthcare services.

The MIHAC informs, advises and builds working relationships with Public Health, various Centre intégré universitaire de santé et de services sociaux (CIUSSS) branches, and other governmental bodies for improving Indigenous health outcomes in the city. The MIHAC also provides updates, recommendations and calls to action during meetings with a sector-wide **Table local d'accessibilité aux services de santé et services sociaux pour les Autochtones à Montréal.**

### Projects and initiatives stemming from the MIHAC include:

- Capacity-building in Indigenous organizations, including training frontline workers, funding allocation for health navigators, advocating for equitable compensation and more
- Cultural safety training for 300 trainees + enhanced training with UQAT (14 hours training)
- Indigenization of identified hospitals and the creation of corridors of service, including advocacy for medical data sovereignty, building reciprocal relationships with Public Health, advising the role of liaison agents, and more
- Advocating for systemic changes within the health and social service education system

6

**MIHAC meetings**  
(coordinated by Stéphanie Héroux)

4

**Table local d'accessibilité aux services de santé et services sociaux pour les Autochtones à Montréal meetings** (chaired by Leilani Shaw)

## MIHAC members

Projets Autochtones du Québec  
Native Friendship Center of Montreal  
Native Montreal  
Indigenous Support Workers Project  
Southern Quebec Inuit Association  
Quebec Native Women  
Makivik Corporation  
First People's Justice Center of Montreal  
Indigenous Health Centre of Tiohtià:ke  
Centre des Femmes de Montréal  
Doctors of the World  
Direction de la Santé Publique Régionale de Montréal  
La Fondation Chez Doris  
Plein milieu  
Open Door

## Basic needs

This year, the NETWORK continued to coordinate and facilitate the C-19 Community Response Group dedicated to supporting the Indigenous community sector. The C-19 is committed to gathering frontline organizations who directly support the Indigenous street community in order to share information, strengthen partnerships, reduce siloed work culture and increase coordination of services. Organizations gather to identify gaps in services, prioritize needs and develop joint initiatives and sectoral strategies. The C-19 also consistently advocates in several governmental spaces such as the Groupe de cohabitation social du Plateau Mont-Royal, the Cellule de crise Milton-Parc and many more!



Multi-year planning for priority areas in the Indigenous homelessness sector of Montreal



Development of a strategy to answer the community needs in Milton-Parc

Development of an urban Indigenous Treatment Center

## Next steps

The C-19 sectoral vision - The 5 year plan



Coordination of resources, sharing of emerging needs and identifying priority areas for the Montreal Indigenous homelessness sector



Ongoing training of frontline workers offering services to Indigenous community members



# Alleviating the burden

## Community consensus-based decision-making circles

The NETWORK organized the first ever community-based decision-making process where local frontline Indigenous organizations collectively decided how funding for the Indigenous homelessness sector would be spent. The goal of this process was to adapt and transform existing decision-making processes to reflect Indigenous ways of coming together, notably through consensus-based collective governance.

# \$3,2M

distributed to/for



10 Indigenous and Indigenous-serving organizations



14 community projects dedicated to basic needs, including housing, food aid, shelter, support services, managed alcohol programs and more



3 organizational capacity-building projects, including human resource support, cultural safety programs, frontline training and professional development

# +1100

community members served!





# Transferring knowledge

## The STRATEGY

The STRATEGY is a multifaceted project, which aims to improve the safety, well-being and belonging of First Nations, Inuit, and Métis peoples living in and around Tiohtià:ke with a particular emphasis on preventing violence amongst Indigenous youth who are considered at-risk and facilitating their access to education and employment. It is a multi-year project that engages with decolonial, ethical and data sovereignty practices with respect to the First Nations Principles of OCAP (ownership, control, access and possession).

In order to uphold the Strategy's working model, the NETWORK's process is threefold and focuses on:

- Recognizing the community and their

lived experiences and knowledge through a consultative process

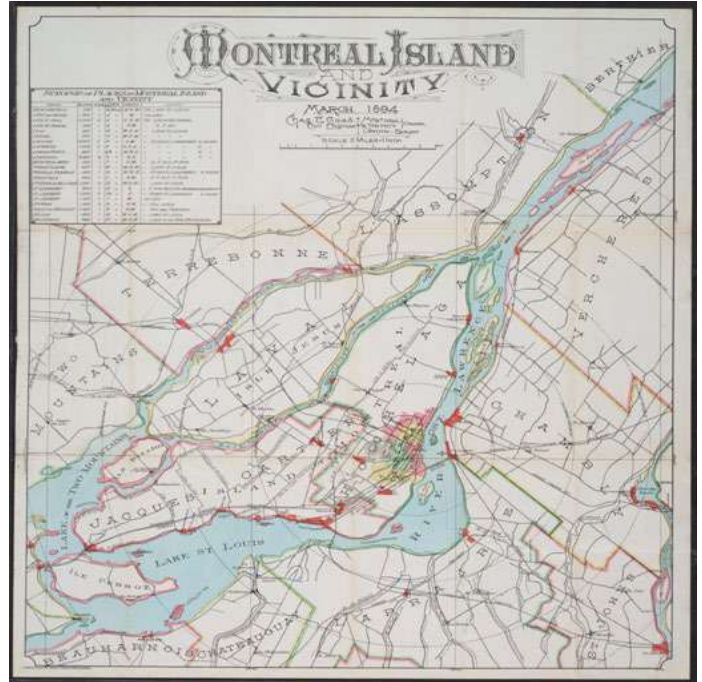
- Establishing priorities as identified by the community
- Building relationships between Elders, Mentors and Youth.

At the end of the 2021 year, the NETWORK hired **Dr. Elizabeth Fast**, Concordia University, as a Research Consultant to help guide the Strategy. Dr. Fast will work closely with the NETWORK's research team and community project managers to outline major recommendations, project developments, promote youth engagement, leadership and advocacy work.



## Homelessness Report

Currently in the works, the Homelessness report 2020-2022 will detail an overview of the realities and components that contribute to the overrepresentation of Indigenous peoples experiencing homelessness in Montreal. The goal of this report is to identify and address the issues faced by Indigenous community members living in homelessness, as well as to provide recommendations to improve needs.



## Data sovereignty project

The Smart Cities project, otherwise adopted by the NETWORK as the Data Sovereignty project, is a collaborative initiative with the City of Montreal, funded by Infrastructure Canada, in order to improve food, transportation and information systems.

As the sole Indigenous contributor, the NETWORK's role is to focus on **improving**

**information systems.** The project has officially been launched with objectives to ensure Indigenous ownership of data and knowledge, as well as the management and accessibility of this information. As with the STRATEGY, we are privileged to be working with Dr. Elizabeth Fast on this project as an expert in research, ethics and data sovereignty. She currently provides guidance on the project's vision.

Hire two individuals dedicated to this project full time

## Next steps

Secure long-term funding to ensure the sustainability of the project

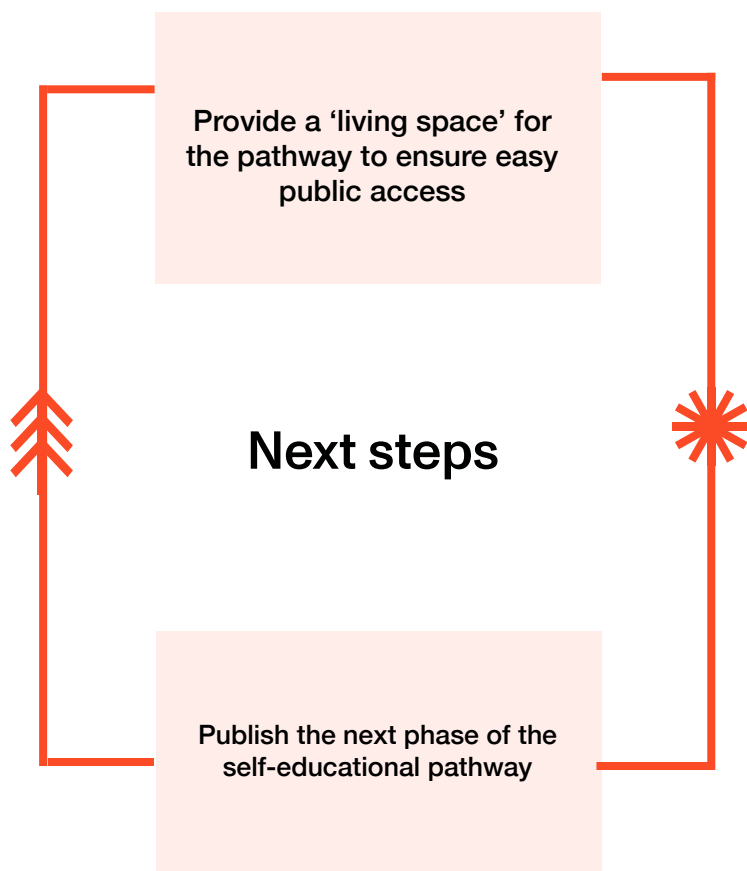
Hire an external IT company to design a multi-access platform that respects principles of data sovereignty



## Decolonial Toolbox

The Decolonial Toolbox is a collaborative initiative between the NETWORK, Mikana and Concordia University to support community-led knowledge production and information sharing by collecting existing data to prevent duplication efforts, co-create educational tools for non-Indigenous folks as well as host a roundtable gathering of organizations and groups mandated to educate the public.

As part of the NETWORK's mission, we aim to strengthen the relationship between Indigenous and non-Indigenous folks, while also reducing the burden of reconciliation and decolonization on Indigenous communities. The **first phase of a self-educational pathway** designed to guide, educate and build awareness of Indigenous realities will be launched to our Indigenous partners in June 2022. The first phase of the tool is set to be **officially launched and published to the general public on June 21st, 2022!**



## Allyship workshops

This year, the NETWORK offered several workshops to both the public and private sectors. Whilst workshops centre allyship, each workshop is specifically designed to meet the needs of each recipient. With many more workshops planned for the upcoming year, the objective remains to reinforce relationship-building, raising awareness about working toward allyship and generating revenue.



## The INDex

The INDex is a **centralized community database** that will outline and provide essential information on available Indigenous and Indigenous-serving services in Tiohtià:ke. The name INDex was chosen because it is a bilingual word that explains both the ambition of the database and the population it is meant to serve. In fact, IND stands for Indigenous and Index represents the purpose of the project, which is to record resources and act as a pointer for populations seeking services.

The project structure has been designed and a list of culturally safe and relevant resources has been created. The NETWORK also recently hired a Community Liaison that will oversee all future developments of the INDex.



## Social media presence

With the reorganization of the NETWORK's social media strategy in 2021, the NETWORK began posting regularly to Instagram, Facebook, and to a newly made LinkedIn page. The information disseminated on all three platforms included content surrounding advocacy, NETWORK related updates, community updates, and partnered organizations' events or news.

This year, the NETWORK **reached over 85,000 individuals** through all three platforms. Through this reach, the NETWORK was able to propel more engagement surrounding community events, jobs, businesses, opportunities, donations and volunteering. Furthermore, we were able to advocate for change with a wider audience and have improved our ability to carry out our mission online. As our media presence grows, we hope to continue to inspire and share positive messages for change while uplifting our partnered organizations and community members.



## Next steps

Give full visibility to our new branding on our social networks

Collaborating with Indigenous artists and youth on creative social media projects

Establish a structure to facilitate communications between Indigenous individuals and organizations regarding their promotional needs



## Empowering Indigenous leadership

### Land As Our Teacher (LAOT)

**LAOT** was a three-day land-based retreat that took place on 12 acres of property lent to the NETWORK by **Jen Gobby**, an environmental land activist affiliated with Concordia University. A total of 23 attendees were present at the event, including youth advisors, NETWORK staff, chefs, elders, mental health support workers, workshop facilitators, and a photographer. Participants came from various ethnic backgrounds, including Anishinaabe, Inuit, Kanien'kehá:ka, mixed Black-Indigenous, and non-Indigenous.

Inspired by Concordia University's Land as our Teacher research project, the NETWORK organized a strategy-related land-based retreat. This was a response to the need for cultural and land-based activities expressed by the NETWORK's Indigenous youth advisors in the Greater Montreal Area. Attendees were able to have access to the land, build connections with one another, and engage in land-based cultural activities.





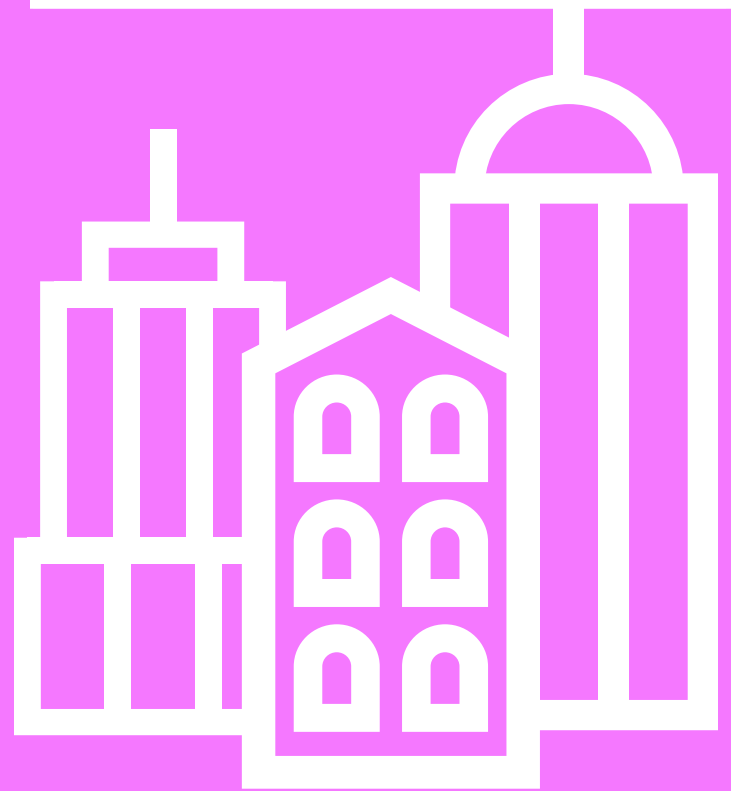
## Youth Advisors

The Youth Advisors are an integral part of the NETWORK's mandate in supporting, listening to, and learning from Indigenous youth in the Greater Montreal area. During the 2021-2022 year, our organization created various platforms to allow youth to voice their lived experiences and knowledge to steer the direction of the NETWORK's projects pertinent to the livelihood of urban Indigenous youth. Consultation circles were conducted over virtual weekly gatherings where youth were able to connect, lessen feelings of isolation and engage in cultural activities. The three-day Land as our Teacher retreat was spearheaded and inspired by the youth gatherings, where the youth had the opportunity to verbally express their desire to meet with one another, learn about their cultural traditions and be on the land.

One of the NETWORK's primary goals is to mentor and support Indigenous youth in their areas of interest to gain working experience for employment. **Five new urban Indigenous youth joined our team** in various positions, with three of them having been active participants in our virtual youth gatherings.

## THESE POSITIONS INCLUDED:

1. Bookkeeping assistant
2. Community Relations Coordinator
3. High school intern
4. Project assistant
5. Social media assistant



# Credits

## Writing

The NETWORK team

## Translation

Laurent Sioui | [laurentsioui@gmail.com](mailto:laurentsioui@gmail.com)

## Graphic Design

Alyssa Jerome | UAPAKI Solutions inc | [www.uapaki.com](http://www.uapaki.com)

## Photos (LAOT)

Cory Hunlin

# Financial Partners

We would like to thank our funders for supporting our mission.



Montreal  
Indigenous  
Community



**The Montreal Indigenous Community NETWORK**

CP 567 Succ Place-D'Armes, Montreal, QC, H2Y 3H3

[info@reseaumtlnetwork.com](mailto:info@reseaumtlnetwork.com)

[www.reseaumtlnetwork.com](http://www.reseaumtlnetwork.com)