



**RÉSEAU**  
pour la stratégie urbaine  
de la communauté  
autochtone à Montréal

Montreal  
Urban Aboriginal  
Community Strategy  
**NETWORK**



**STRATEGIC  
DIRECTIONS**  
2018+



The NETWORK supports the ecosystem of individuals and groups committed to improving the quality of life of First Nations, Inuit, and Métis communities living in the greater Montreal area. Our members include community and volunteers, nonprofit organizations, governments and institutions, and some businesses.

We help the ecosystem:

- a) Share information and transfer knowledge;
- b) Prioritize needs;
- c) Develop joint projects to address gaps and reduce duplications;
- d) Create and strengthen partnerships.

# GUIDING DIRECTION

## **I am the expert.**

My knowledge comes from my everyday.  
The years I've lived.  
In this skin. In this city.

## **We are the experts.**

Our knowledge comes from our collective experience.  
The centuries we've crossed.  
In these structures. In this way.

## **We act.**

### **We learn.**

### **We teach.**

In our voice.  
In our way.

## **You, dear ally, who wants to reconcile.**

Listen.  
Support.  
Take action.  
Take strides.  
Towards reconciliation.  
Or is it reconcili-action?

## **You are needed.**

For impact to happen.  
We are stronger when we stand together.  
You have power.  
Recognize your personal privilege.  
Recognize how you benefit from the current system.  
Use your privilege.  
In positive ways.

## **There is not one Indigenous way.**

In this city, there are many.  
Our responsibility is cultural responsibility.  
Acknowledging, utilizing, respecting.  
Our culture. Our traditions.  
Our many cultures. Our many traditions.  
How they live with us in this city. Our city.

## **Our community connects.**

In person.  
In spaces.  
In gatherings.  
In a virtual way.

## **Our community and allies connect.**

Across topics.  
Across issues.  
Across sectors.  
Across understandings.  
Across perspectives.

## **We work. Together.**

We create ways.  
To do things.  
Differently.  
Than ever.  
We unearth the roots.  
Of problems.  
So we may flourish.  
This is called impact.

## **We celebrate when we achieve.**

We see each other.  
We communicate.  
We collaborate.  
We respect.  
Ourselves.  
Each other.  
Our allies.

## **We learn.**

### **We connect.**

### **We invite.**

Our friends from other cities.  
Our friends from other nations.  
Our friends from other struggles.

## **We choose.**

The direction of our energy.  
The direction of our wisdom.  
The direction of our actions.  
We choose by listening.  
To our own voices.  
To the voices of the voiceless.  
To the voices of the quiet ones.  
To the voices of the scarred ones.  
To the voices of the strong, the resilient, and the loud.

## **We make decisions.**

Together.  
Transparently.  
In circle.  
From the bottom up.  
From the roots of problems.  
From the potential of flourishing.

## **We create.**

Spaces.  
Places.  
Ways.  
Conditions.  
From us.  
For us.  
By us.  
That is us.

## **I am the expert.**

My knowledge comes from my everyday.  
The years I've lived.  
In this skin. In this city.

## **We are the experts.**

Our knowledge comes from our collective experience.  
The centuries we've crossed.  
In these structures. In this way.

Walk with us.  
Connect with us.  
Act with us.

## **Dream with us.**

# INTRODUCTION OF THE NETWORK'S 2018+ STRATEGIC DIRECTIONS

## SUMMARY

The Montreal Urban Aboriginal Community Strategy NETWORK has been in existence for 10 years, with the mission of improving the quality of life of Indigenous people living in the greater Montreal area through a coordinated and concerted approach. Today, the NETWORK brings together more than 900 diverse members, and continues to grow.

In 2018, the NETWORK hopes to take a moment to look back at our past to launch into the future. To do this, the coordination team has put in place a process to document Lessons Learned from 10 years of activity. This collaborative work aimed to celebrate the work accomplished and the progress made, and to highlight elements on which we can build the future.

It is in this context that the NETWORK has implemented a participatory process involving the coordinating structure, the various working committees, and the members. The intention was to identify shared strategic directions and ensure that the NETWORK's offerings respond to the aspirations, needs, and realities of its members.

The purpose of this document is to tell the history of this process, the learnings that came out of it, and the strategic directions that have emerged.

## APPROACH

To maximize collaboration, participation, transparency and rigor, we used an approach that explores issues, challenges, and questions through pollination and hybridization of ideas, experimentation, and prototyping. The approach was based on three key premises:

1. Each participant is an expert of their context. This means that solutions of collective and strategic challenges are already present in working spheres and our job is to create a space to reveal them, name them, and document them.
2. Collective intelligence leads to stronger learnings. The opportunity to engage in collective creation leads to consolidation of organizations by facilitating the sharing of knowledge and practices in order to foster a culture of innovation and collaboration.
3. The daily life of an organization is where we can experiment for the future and for health work cultures: the way that we structure of our meetings, interact with each other, and develop our strategies are opportunities to practice what we want to see in the world.

## METHODOLOGY

The methodology for lessons learned + strategic directions is centered around the people who make up the network. Over the course of 6 months, we met with and listened to and worked with different subsets of the NETWORK's web of stakeholders to find out what they have learned over the last 10 years of the NETWORK's existence, and about their dreams and aspirations for the NETWORK's next 10 years of existence.

This deep listening process leveraged collective intelligence methodologies, collaborative practices and appreciative inquiry frameworks. The information that was harvested from these exchanges was presented back to members in a final sensemaking workshop where participants identified patterns and priorities.

The co-creation process was done through:

### Gathering interviews:

35 to 40 short interviews were conducted with members and guests who were present at the January 18th NETWORK gathering, focusing on:

How they have interacted with the NETWORK, and how they would like to contribute or benefit from it's work

What they have appreciated from the last 10 years of the NETWORK's existence.

Their needs and aspirations for the future of the NETWORK.

### Working Committees workshops:

4 workshops were held with working committees, exploring lessons learned and strategic through storytelling and dialogue.

### Membership survey:

A survey was sent to the 900 past and present members of the NETWORK, focusing on

- their relationship to the NETWORK;
- the demographics of the membership;
- their perception of the NETWORK.

### Interviews with knowledge holders:

9 key past and present members of the NETWORK were interviewed to provide some historical perspective and strategic awareness of the NETWORK's past accomplishments as well as possible directions for the future.

### Collective Sense-Making Workshop:

With all of the data that was collected from the above activities, we hosted a day of collective analysis of the data that brought out trends and patterns. An open invitation was extended to the membership to attend and co-create the insights from this process. 35 people came to the session, including steering committee members, working committee members, allies and guests.

## STRATEGIC DIRECTIONS

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### ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

We would like to begin by acknowledging that Montreal is located on unceded Indigenous lands. The Kanien'kehá:ka Nation is recognized as the custodians of the lands and waters on which we gather today. Tiohtiá:ke/Montreal is historically known as a gathering place for many First Nations. Today, it is home to a diverse population of Indigenous and other peoples. We respect the continued connections with the past, present and future in our ongoing relationships with Indigenous and other peoples within the Montreal community.

This initiative is made possible by the Community Fund for Canada's 150th, a collaboration between Community Foundations of Canada, the McConnell Foundation, and the

Government of Canada, as well as by the Secrétariat aux affaires autochtones du Québec.

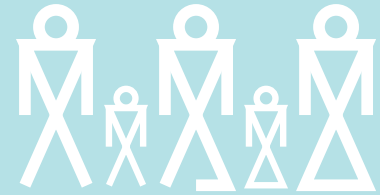
We would also like to thank the facilitators of this co-creation process, Meghan Gilmore, Elizabeth Hunt, and Cédric Jamet from Percolab, as well as the NETWORK staff Leilani Shaw, who perfected the layout and design, and Allison Reid, who coordinated the project.

Finally, we are thankful for all the generous co-creators themselves: all the NETWORK members who participated to this process, through coming to workshops, telling their stories, sharing their insights.



# Recognize the Experts

By us • For us • Owned by us



GUIDING QUESTION:

HOW DOES THE NETWORK  
**PRIORITIZE THE EXPERTISE** OF  
INDIGENOUS MONTREALERS?

*"For the Indigenous community of Montreal, by the Indigenous community of Montreal."*

DIRECTIONS



## AMPLIFY

Create mechanisms to **amplify and highlight all Indigenous voices**, by paying specific attention to those that aren't easily heard.

## IDENTIFY

Recognize that Indigenous People are the true experts on Indigenous urban issues and are best positioned to **identify and lead priorities and solutions** for action.

## DESIGN

Have our actions **designed by Indigenous People**, for Indigenous People and the outcomes are owned by Indigenous People.

## SUPPORT

**Support Indigenous leaders and People** in elevating their voices in conversations and in the decision-making processes.

# LESSONS LEARNED



## SPVM TRAINING

A program was created by Indigenous academics and community members with lived experience to provide training to police officers in Montreal using Indigenous pedagogy to increase understanding of the history and reality of urban Indigenous Montrealers.



## ADVISORY COMMITTEE

An advisory committee made up of Indigenous people with experiences of homelessness was created to provide direction on different aspects of the strategy. The strategy aimed to improve cohabitation, belonging, safety, and wellbeing with a main focus on Indigenous homelessness.



## HEALTH NEEDS ASSESSMENT

The Health Working Committee's assessment represents a timely and important example of Aboriginal organizations and their partners who considered how best to resolve some of the gaps and inequities in health service delivery in Montreal.



## ABORIGINAL DAY

A day-long cultural celebration by and for all community members including those who are most marginalized, taking place in a public space where Indigenous safety and well-being had previously been threatened.

## NEXT STEPS: ELEVATING INDIGENOUS VOICES

**"Community members are not involved enough [nor] valued in solving and decision making."**

### OWNED BY THE INDIGENOUS COMMUNITY

Support the development of initiatives by, for and owned by the Indigenous community of Montreal including an Indigenous health center. There is a demand for a holistic health center in Montreal that is culturally appropriate for Inuit, First Nations and Métis living in the greater Montreal area.

### FROM THE BOTTOM UP

Put into place mechanisms that highlight underrepresented voices. A large number of actual users and stakeholders are not part of decision making conversations at this time. The priorities need to be set by the community as a whole.

### RECOGNIZE THEIR EXPERTISE

Create a true consultation process for establishing priorities as identified by the community. Youth, individuals living close to the street, two-spirit people, elders, families, those searching for jobs, and everyone else: invite them to the table.

### INDIGENOUS PEDAGOGY

Support the conducting of research about the Indigenous community living in Montreal through Indigenous pedagogy: by Indigenous people, using Indigenous methodologies.

### INDIGENOUS INVOLVEMENT

Support the ongoing development of skill-sharing and capacity-building for Indigenous people by and through their involvement with the NETWORK.



# Foster Alliances

Solidarity • Impact • Reconcili-action



GUIDING QUESTION:

## HOW DO WE CREATE **STRONG NON-INDIGENOUS ALLIES?**

*"I respect the way you are, you respect the way I am. We will never be able to think like the other. Can we show respect to everyone."*

DIRECTIONS

### ACKNOWLEDGE

**Acknowledge the expertise** of urban Indigenous Montrealers on issues that affect them is instrumental in cultivating true, reciprocal, healthy relationships towards the future.

### CULTIVATE

Foster and **cultivate reciprocal partnerships** with governments, non-profits and the private sector.

### DEFINE

Identify and **define appropriate roles and responsibilities** of allies working alongside Indigenous people and organizations, to improve the quality of life of Montreal's Indigenous community.

### CLARIFY

Clarify how non-Indigenous allies can **use their privilege** to listen, shift power dynamics, and take concrete steps towards REconciliation.

### EDUCATE

Use Indigenous pedagogy to support awareness-building and **educate non-Indigenous individuals** and organizations on the reality and needs of Montreal's Indigenous community.



## LESSONS LEARNED



### ART AND CULTURE WORKING COMMITTEE

Through education, dialogue, and partnership building, this committee worked with the Société des célébrations du 375e anniversaire de Montréal to include Indigenous perspectives and history. This alternate perspective was brought through programming by the Cercle des Premières Nations de l'UQÀM, Sacred Fire Productions, the First Peoples Festival, Native Montreal, and Wapikoni Mobile, among others.



### MIC TIME

Speaking time at events and in meetings must take that into account and prioritize the voices of Indigenous participants. For example, a two-phase dialogue circle where Indigenous participants were given an exclusive speaking time before inviting everyone into the conversation balanced mic time for Indigenous voices.



### MAMU!

Aboriginal Employment Fair: seven annual employment fairs have been organized by the Education and Employment working committee made up of members from the public, nonprofit, and private sectors. MAMU! brings together Indigenous individuals seeking work and potential employers.



### INFORMATION-SHARING

Non-Indigenous members affirm that the NETWORK provides them with an exceptional amount of information, perspective, and knowledge that they cannot get anywhere else.



### FORMAL AGREEMENT

A collaborative agreement between the Service de police de la Ville de Montréal and the NETWORK aims to promote preventative approaches, open communication, and understanding.

*"I appreciate all the knowledge I have access to in order to help me understand the world. This is cultural, scientific, artistic, intellectual or spiritual knowledge."*

## NEXT STEPS: MAKING THE MOST OUT OF PARTNERSHIPS

### CLARITY OF ROLES

Clarify the reciprocal role between ally and expert in partnerships and collaborations.

### AGREEMENTS WITH GOVERNMENTS

Create formal agreements with different levels of government with the objective of influencing public policy from Indigenous peoples' perspectives.

### REMUNERATION FOR KNOWLEDGE

Ensure that Indigenous people (i.e. the experts) are properly remunerated for their knowledge and time. Currently, a number of Indigenous individuals participate in meetings and events as volunteers whereas those in positions of power are paid for their time.

# Strengthen Connections

Dialogue • Information • Hub

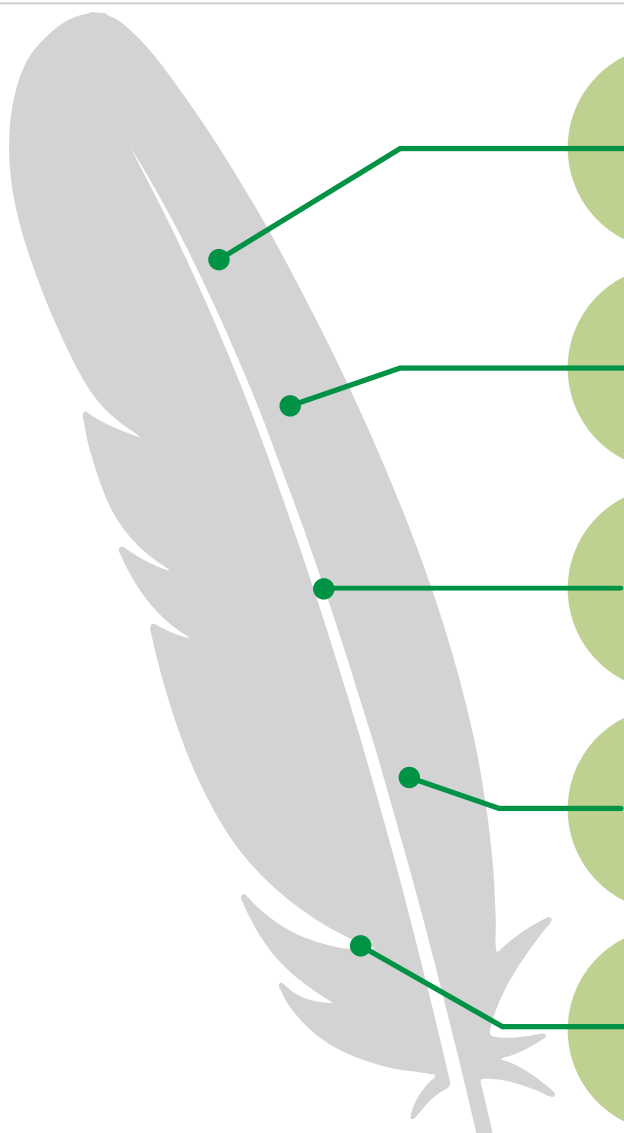


GUIDING QUESTION:

HOW DO WE **STRENGTHEN** THE NETWORK'S **CAPACITY** AS A CONNECTOR?

*“Ce qui marche au RÉSEAU c’est vraiment **la force de concertation et de création de partenariat** - des organisations qui voient un avantage pour eux où ensemble ils peuvent identifier des solutions et des besoins pour répondre.”*

DIRECTIONS



## COMMUNICATE

**Communicate and connect with** the many individuals and organizations that make up the ecosystem working towards improving the quality of life of the Indigenous community in Montreal.

## CREATE

**Create culturally appropriate physical spaces** that are easily accessible and can be used for coworking, for meetings, or for events.

## BUILD

**Build virtual and in-person spaces and opportunities** to connect Indigenous individuals and organizations with each other.

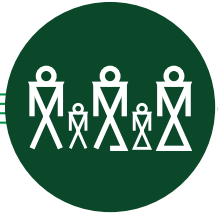
## BRIDGE

**Find ways to bridge knowledge**, information, expertise and learnings across working committees and with NETWORK members.

## LEARN

**Learn from other communities** and shape our work from their lessons, knowledge, and experiences.

# LESSONS LEARNED



## GATHERINGS

These events which happen a few times a year serve to bring together those active within the NETWORK as well as Indigenous and non-Indigenous people and organizations wanting to connect and learn more about what is happening in Montreal's urban Indigenous community.



## WORKING COMMITTEES

A number of NETWORK working committees and subcommittees bring together multiple sectors (public, non-profit and/or private) to identify service gaps and needs of Indigenous individuals, and co-implement appropriate solutions together.



## SILOS

Our structure that was created with the intention of breaking down silos has not been able to do that. Information does not yet travel with ease across its many branches.



## RESEARCH

The Cabot Square Project conducted case study research to learn from other practices and initiatives across Canada, and adapted the learnings to co-draft a strategy.

## NEXT STEPS:

*"Reverse the Champlain walk - from mountain to water to **reclaim the vision of Indigenous land.**"*



### OFFICE & MEETING SPACE

Offer a physical space to bring together NETWORK staff, Indigenous start-up initiatives, and Indigenous social entrepreneurs seeking temporary office and meeting space.



### INVEST IN TOOLS

Invest in the NETWORK's tools and processes that communicate and connect with the entire ecosystem committed to improving the quality of life of the Indigenous community in the greater Montreal.



### CULTURAL CENTRE

Support the development of an Indigenous cultural centre: a cultural embassy that brings together First Nations, Métis, and Inuit art and culture organizations and artists. Built by, created for, run by, owned by members of the Indigenous community.



### SHARE PRACTICES AND LEARN

Connect with other Indigenous networks, coalitions and groups beyond Montreal, as well as with other marginalized communities within the city, to work together, share practices and learn from past experiences.

# Positive Impact

Root causes • Systems change • Collaboration



## GUIDING QUESTION:

HOW DO WE ENSURE A **POSITIVE** AND **SUSTAINABLE IMPACT** ON THE LIVES OF INDIGENOUS PEOPLES LIVING IN MONTREAL ?

*“Our next work is a generational project; in a generation, how are families going to be? How are youth, elders, our community going to be? **Where will they be in their own culture?** What role do we want to play to accompany them in that direction. It's good to seize opportunities, but should not be just reactive.”*

## DIRECTIONS

### ADDRESS

Go beyond surface solutions to **identify and address the root causes of complex issues** that negatively affect the quality of life of Montreal's Indigenous community.

### COLLABORATE

Find new ways to **collaborate and maximize** the exchange of **information about systems change** between groups.

### CHANGE

Adapt and **change existing structures** within systems that do not appropriately respond to, or even negatively impact, the wellbeing of Indigenous individuals.

### PROPOSE

Work towards **improving existing funding streams** which currently lead to competition, and inhibit collaboration between Indigenous organizations.

### ADVISE

Conduct research on and **advise** the different levels of government on **policy issues and decisions** that directly and indirectly affect the quality of life of Montreal's urban Indigenous population.

## LESSONS LEARNED



### FUNDING CHANGES ARE POSSIBLE

We contributed to Indigenous and Northern Affairs Canada's redesign of the urban Indigenous funding structure in 2016-2017, which was based on a consultation process with Indigenous organizations across the country. The new funding structure is multi-year and funding streams better correspond to needs identified by concerned communities.



### CIRCLE OF CARE

Through the lohah'hio program, the circle of care committee works with Batshaw Youth and Family Centres, to educate social workers on Indigenous historical context, offer sensitivity training, recruit Indigenous foster parents for Indigenous children in care, and match children in care with Indigenous mentors. A collaboration agreement was also signed between two members of the subcommittee: Batshaw Youth and Family Centre with the Native Women's Shelter of Montreal.



### THE FIRST PEOPLES JUSTICE CENTRE OF MONTREAL

This independent organization emerged out of the work of the Justice working subcommittee to respond to a need that was identified to provide culturally safe support and services to end the systemic issues of marginalization, discrimination, and victimization of Indigenous Peoples in the justice and correctional system.



### INFLUENCING POLICY CHANGES

The Justice working subcommittee's letter asking the City of Montreal to take steps to correct by-law-related discriminatory practices towards the Indigenous homeless population was positively received and its request was integrated into the City's 2018-2020 Montreal Action Plan on Homelessness.



### CABOT SQUARE PROJECT

To tackle complex issues related to homelessness, this project identified root causes by getting direction from the Indigenous community with related lived experience. This led to aligned decisions, adapted practices and routines, and system changes that were tailored to the realities of impacted individuals.

*"There are too many people without access to services and a system that is woefully unequipped to serve them."*

## NEXT STEPS:

### RE-CONNECT

Deepen relationships with the communities of origin of Indigenous people living in Montreal to better understand and support positive solution-building behind the root causes of some of the challenges present in the city.

### DOCUMENT

Ongoing transparent and centrally-shared documentation of the NETWORK's achievements, challenges, progress, impact and learnings from our work.

### DETERMINE NEEDS

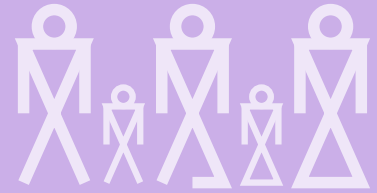
Draft a comprehensive portrait of needs and solutions by and for Indigenous people using appropriate consultation practices in order to better focus our collective effort.

### AFFECT CHANGE

Create processes to work with allies who have the power to change structures and existing ways of doing things, with direction provided by the Indigenous community.

# Reshape, Heal, & Reemerge

Transform • Indigenize • Steward



GUIDING QUESTION:

HOW DO WE **ADAPT & STRENGTHEN**  
THE NETWORK'S STRUCTURE?

*"We need to be critical of  
our own colonization.  
**Decolonize meeting spaces**  
and give power to  
indigenous organizations."*

DIRECTIONS

## CELEBRATE

Take the time to **celebrate incremental achievements**, publicly document and share the big achievements, and honour our failures and learn from them.

## CO-CREATE

Engage Indigenous individuals and organizations to **co-create the NETWORK's priorities** by supporting our experts in identifying real-life needs and appropriate solutions that improve the quality of life of Montreal's Indigenous community.

## ALIGN

Ensure that the NETWORK's structure, decisions, and actions **align with Indigenous teachings, for example the seven grandfathers' teachings**: honesty, truth, humility, love, wisdom, courage, and respect.

## ADAPT

Develop a responsive way of working so that the NETWORK can structure itself for emergence and **adapt responses** (ex. the creation of a committee) in accordance with "hot" topics, levels of engagement, and collective momentum in the ecosystem.

## IMPLEMENT

**Implement a transparent decision-making** process centred on Indigenous voices, reflecting the richness and diversity of the Indigenous community and surrounding ecosystem; allies play a supporting role.

## GATHER

We **gather and connect across sectors** because individually we can't resolve the complex issues that the Indigenous community faces.

## HEAL

Acknowledge that while the NETWORK has accomplished a lot in a decade, there have also been challenges that require attention and new behaviours. Take the time to **heal broken dynamics and reconcile relationships**.

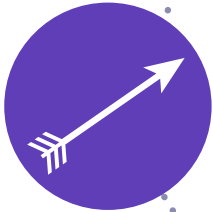


# LESSONS LEARNED



## THE NETWORK IS STILL THERE

From uncertain beginnings back in 2008 the NETWORK has led and supported significant projects, including the emergence of new nonprofit organizations to fill services gaps, affected policy change, connected countless people, organizations, and ideas, and supported information-sharing.



## THE STEERING COMMITTEE REPRESENTATION

The intention behind the Steering Committee's current structure was to ensure that information flows across committees. As the NETWORK grew the Steering Committee started taking strategic decisions despite it not being structured to do that (ex, in terms of assigned seats, strategic leadership, or processes). More diverse representation needs to be incorporated into the next iteration of the Steering Committee's structure.



## GET UNSTUCK

The NETWORK's current structure doesn't allow sufficient enough responsiveness to emerging needs and realities. It is time to consciously and collectively reflect on how to decolonize and indigenize strategy, operations, and decision-making.



## IT HAS TO BE RIPE

The topics and issues the NETWORK chooses to work on have to resonate with the ecosystem. When topics are not ripe, committees are dormant, when topics are "hot" engagement is high.



## PUT IT OUT THERE

Good work needs to be shared. For example, the homelessness subcommittee commissioned research and created an event to honour the work done, publicly launched the results to the media, and shared them with partners from multiple sectors in Montreal.

*"The working models need to be changed. Put on Indigenous terms and not on other peoples' terms."*

## NEXT STEPS:

**INFUSE TEACHINGS**  
 Infuse Indigenous teachings into the structure to guide decision-making, approaches, and actions.

**INCORPORATE CEREMONY**  
 Incorporate Indigenous ceremony into meetings, public events, and Gatherings.

**CELEBRATE ACHIEVEMENTS**  
 Document and celebrate the NETWORK's achievements and develop a process for annual celebration.

**SHORT-TERM & LONG-HAUL**  
 Accept that a few topics are ripe for short-term change and others will require commitment for the long-haul.

**MEMBERS TO SHARE**  
 Hold an annual retreat for active NETWORK members to share learnings and practices.

**EVOLVE & ADAPT**  
 Consciously restructure the NETWORK to continue evolving and adapting to best serve the needs of Montreal's Indigenous community.

**RESILIENCE**  
 Commit to addressing unhealthy dynamics within the NETWORK, healing relationships and creating community aligned with Indigenous practices.



