



# INFORMATION SHARING AND GATHERING SUMMARY REPORT FOR CLUBS

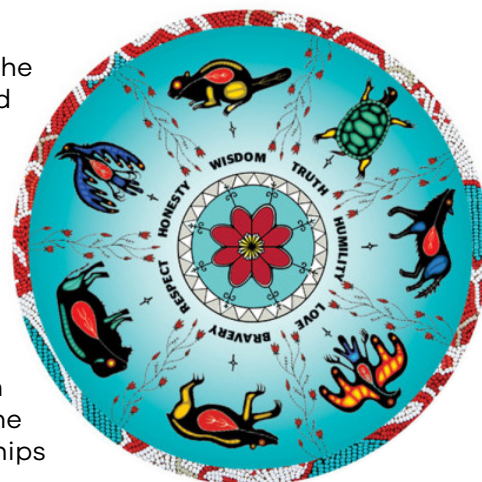
## Introduction

In the spring of 2021, BGC Canada undertook an information sharing and gathering project to explore promising practices for advancing commitment to First Nations, Métis, and Inuit (FNMI) peoples through national and community initiatives. The project aimed to identify meaningful practices for building partnerships between Clubs and FNMI communities and practices for engaging FNMI communities to advance the goals of Truth and Reconciliation. This includes practices for teaching about FNMI culture, the history between FNMI and settler populations, colonization, and ongoing harms done towards FNMI peoples. The work was completed by Taylor Newberry Consulting (TNC), with BGC Canada providing strategic direction for the project. (For a list of recommendations from the report, see Appendix A).

## Methodology

To ensure the project approach was guided by Indigenous ways of knowing and being and reflective of Clubs' perspectives, the BGC Canada national Truth and Reconciliation Committee<sup>1</sup> acted as advisors to the project. TNC was accountable to feedback provided by this Committee.

Through the guidance of the Truth and Reconciliation Committee, the project used the Seven Sacred Teachings<sup>2</sup> (see image to the right) and Two-Eyed Seeing approach<sup>3</sup> as guiding frameworks. The project also prioritized respect and trust-building processes into the data gathering phase through land acknowledgements that focused on getting to know one another and personal relationships and histories with the land. Land acknowledgements were completed by TNC, Truth and Reconciliation Committee members, and participants and took place when meeting new people and at the beginning of conversations to gather data. Ten conversations with Club staff members took place; five of these conversations were with members of the Truth and Reconciliation Committee.<sup>4</sup> Two conversations with local Club partners also took place (one was First Nations, the other had extensive experience building partnerships with FNMI communities).



A national survey was also administered to explore the breadth of Truth and Reconciliation-focused initiatives across the BGC membership federation, a national survey was also administered. The survey further explored challenges and successes in delivering initiatives and partnering with FNMI organizations, communities, and Elders. The survey was completed by 50 respondents from Clubs across Canada. To ensure our findings were accurate and meaningful to Committee members and aligned with FNMI perspectives on relationship building, truth, and reconciliation, we involved the Committee in several stages of review and feedback of the findings.

<sup>1</sup> The Truth and Reconciliation Committee at this time was comprised of Candice Cardinal (ED, BGC Saddle Lake), Christy Morgan (Director of Indigenous Initiatives, former Boys & Girls Clubs of GC Calgary), Nicole Combres (ED, BGC Battlefords), Shirley Puttock (ED, BGC Foothills), and Heidi Carl (Director of Operations, BGC Saskatoon).

<sup>2</sup> Seven Sacred Teachings include Respect, Courage, Honesty, Wisdom, Humility, and Truth. The image above illustrates that they must all be practiced together in unison. The terms were used to organize information that was gathered and to guide the questions that were asked. We recognized that the Seven Sacred Teachings may be less relevant to some First Nations, Métis, and Inuit peoples, but it was agreed that the teachings were widely recognized and understood. The image above was copied online at <https://earthhaven.ca/blog/the-seven-grandfatherteachings/210>

<sup>3</sup> The term "Etuaptumuk" or "Two-Eyed Seeing" promotes the strengths of Indigenous knowledges coupled with the strengths of Western knowledges. This co-learning approach emphasizes the themes of interconnectedness, interrelations, co-existence, and community spirit. The Two-Eyed Seeing concept was developed by Mi'kmaq Elder Albert Marshall in 2004.

<sup>4</sup> All project conversations followed the principles of OCAP (Ownership, Control, Access, and Possession) and free, prior, and informed consent, as recognized in the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples. To promote ownership, access, and possession, transcripts were shared with participants to review and provide feedback about. Findings were also shared through this summary report that was circulated to all participants.



## Findings

**It was more common for Clubs to deliver Truth-and-Reconciliation-focused initiatives and initiatives aimed at FNMI members and families through one-off events, compared to ongoing programming.** Club initiatives aimed at serving FNMI members and families included cultural days; programming that taught about FNMI culture, food, language, and art; restorative justice programs; and programming that taught about land-based and traditional practices. Clubs generally found it easier to start with small events at a single Club location and work towards more frequent ongoing programming initiatives. One-off initiatives were also less likely to be impacted by staff turnover.

### Wisdom, *nêhiyaw isihcikêwin*, ᓂᐱᓂᐅ ᐃᓯᐱᓂᐅ

Meaningful Truth and Reconciliation initiatives teach about the ongoing impacts of colonization, residential schools, systemic oppression, and other harms that FNMI peoples face in Canada. Clubs shared that it was important to incorporate wisdom and guidance from Elders and Knowledge Keepers, FNMI leaders, members of the community, and FNMI youth when sharing about FNMI cultures and histories in Canada. Truth and Reconciliation-focused programming and programming for FNMI members and families were more successful when they were **led by FNMI people, designed according to FNMI needs and values, and grounded in FNMI worldviews**. Clubs experienced challenges in delivering high quality initiatives when they did not involve FNMI communities in decision-making processes or when Clubs asked FNMI communities for their feedback or opinion but did not act on that feedback.

### Truth & Honesty, *tapwewin*, ᑕᐅᐃᐅ

During conversations with Club staff, it became clear that Truth and Reconciliation-focused programming was more meaningful when it taught about FNMI cultures and histories, including colonization and former and ongoing harms done towards FNMI people in Canada. To do this well, initiatives should be based on Indigenous frameworks, cultures, and worldviews in a way that is genuine (e.g., ensuring reciprocity is not only discussed but also demonstrated). When Indigenous worldviews and cultures were incorporated, those initiatives were more welcoming to FNMI peoples. FNMI worldviews and culture also sometimes played a role in healing and wellness for participants. Further, when FNMI communities were facing crises or significant challenges, such as during the ongoing pandemic, initiatives that met immediate needs identified by the community were greatly valued. To help guide Clubs in creating meaningful initiatives in partnership with FNMI communities, Clubs requested that additional program toolkits and guiding documents about Truth and Reconciliation initiatives be created.



**Respect & Love, kistêyhtamowin, ᐱᓄᕈᖅᑐᒃᔪᓂᓗ**

Partnerships with FNMI organizations and peoples are critical for delivering effective programming about Truth and Reconciliation. Partners supported program delivery and facilitation, provided referrals and programming space, and led ceremonial, cultural, or knowledge-sharing activities. Findings suggest the following approaches were useful for forming meaningful partnerships with FNMI communities and organizations:

- When forming partnerships with FNMI communities, **start in a way that honours, respects, and values FNMI community voices and needs**. Club staff should not assume it is the role of FNMI people to educate others about their histories. For Clubs to foster meaningful partnerships with FNMI people, they must demonstrate an understanding of these histories and a willingness for continued learning. Partnerships were successful when parties came to the table authentically and in a way that will was meaningful to the FNMI peoples being engaged.
- It is critical to **involve Elders, Knowledge Keepers, and FNMI leaders in sharing cultural knowledge**, and in ensuring compensation is in place, and that the right protocols are being followed. Finding the right fit between the Elder and the role you hope that Elder will play is also important.
- Clubs should promote relationships that are **mutually beneficial** by exchanging services, materials, or resources that the FNMI partners identify as important to their organization or community.
- **It is critical to demonstrate ongoing commitment and consistency when forming partnerships with FNMI organizations and communities** to not perpetuate ongoing acts of colonization and harms done to FNMI peoples. Clubs shared that it was important to follow FNMI processes and timelines, not rush the process, and have genuine conversations. It was also helpful to connect directly with family members and approach partners authentically and with a genuine interest in working together. Consistent relationships can also be promoted by fostering cross-organizational relationships through formal agreements that move beyond relationships between specific staff members.
- **Physical access to the Club** may be a challenge for FNMI members. In these circumstances, it was preferable to have a physical location where FNMI people reside such as a reserve (if applicable), rather than to offer transportation.

## **Humility and Bravery, tapahtêyimisowin, ᑕᐸᓴᔭᓂᓄᓂ**

For Clubs that struggle with understanding where to begin, **fostering a personal connection among Club staff to Truth and Reconciliation** was identified as a critical first step. **Staff training** about Truth and Reconciliation helped prepare Clubs to deliver focused programming, such as training about culturally appropriate ways to build partnerships with FNMI communities and training about trauma-informed care. Similarly, **staff capacity** to take on FNMI initiatives and develop partnership and knowledge were critical for successful Truth and Reconciliation initiatives.

To build Club capacity to deliver Truth and Reconciliation initiatives and meet the needs of FNMI members, an effective approach was to **involve FNMI people in leadership positions and all levels of decision-making**, including frontline, staff, management roles, and board members. While staff recognized the importance of involving FNMI people in leadership roles at the Club, this was a challenge for Clubs who did not have capacity to hire or where their leadership staff were not yet aware of the responsibilities of Truth and Reconciliation. Perhaps due to difficulties involving FNMI leaders at the Club, it was also a challenge to incorporate Truth and Reconciliation within the Club organizational strategy. Clubs found it easier to start with informal events and initiatives.

## Summary

During the information sharing and gathering project it has become clear that FNMI peoples need to be involved in issues and initiatives that seek to benefit their communities. At all levels, BGC Canada can play a critical role in promoting Truth and Reconciliation by partnering with FNMI communities in ways that are mutually beneficial, by following the lead of communities, avoiding assumptions about FNMI community needs, and by promoting Club capacity and leadership to intentionally and meaningfully engage FNMI members and families.

## Appendix A: Recommendations for BGC Clubs

Many factors contribute to the success and challenges experienced by BGC Clubs in their Truth and Reconciliation journeys. Based on the findings, the following recommendations are provided:

### **Respect and Love: Forming and Maintaining FNMI Partnerships**

1. Partnerships with FNMI communities and organizations are essential for Clubs to be able to carry out Truth and Reconciliation initiatives. Partnerships should also be formed with Elders, families, and other members of local FNMI communities.
2. Foster mutually beneficial partnerships with FNMI organizations by exchanging knowledge, staff support, training, program space, program funding, or other resources based on needs identified by the partner.
3. Demonstrate commitment to partners by being authentic and genuine in the process of engagement, showing up consistently, and accepting that partnerships may take a long time to develop.
4. Form partnerships that involve multiple Club staff to ensure the partnerships outlive staff turnover.
5. Involve Elders when cultural or historical knowledge is being shared. Create relationships with Elders with relevant experience and offer compensation that respects their time and effort.

### **Wisdom, Truth, and Honesty: Prioritizing FNMI Leadership and Decision-Making and Incorporating FNMI Worldviews and Community-Identified Needs**

6. Programming and initiatives about FNMI people should be led or co-developed and co-facilitated by FNMI people. This may include FNMI staff, Elders, volunteers, youth, family, community members, or staff at partner organizations. It is recommended youth leaders be involved in co-delivering programming where possible.
7. Educational programming should be developed that teaches about FNMI histories and cultures. Programming should promote pride in FNMI identities and provide spaces that feels safe and inclusive.
8. FNMI worldviews and perspectives should be incorporated into program delivery (e.g., medicine wheel, Seven Sacred Teachings, Natural Law). If pre-existing programs are used, have FNMI staff or partners suggest adaptations and/or rule out activities that may be culturally inappropriate or disengaging.
9. Develop or adjust programming based on the interests and needs of participants. This may include programming that addresses emerging needs (e.g., coping with the pandemic), ongoing struggles (e.g., mental health), and cultural topics that youth want to learn about.

### **Bravery and Honesty: Organizational Capacity Building**

10. Clubs should involve FNMI people in leadership roles and organizational decision-making (e.g., board governance roles, strategy consultants).
11. Provide recurring staff training about FNMI cultures, histories, and other FNMI initiatives and content that are local and specific. (e.g., history of current land, treaties, nations, languages, practices, etc.).

12. Any efforts to teach or involve members, staff, or others in Truth and Reconciliation initiatives should promote personal connections to FNMI peoples and issues.
13. Ensure there is time taken to debrief as a group and to support individual staff who may become emotionally impacted by learning about the lived experiences and histories of FNMI peoples in Canada.
14. Foster capacity to engage in Truth and Reconciliation initiatives by allocating budget and staff time to partnership-building, designing, and delivering FNMI initiatives and programming, and Club strategy-level efforts (e.g., developing and delivering staff training).
15. Incorporate Truth and Reconciliation into organizational planning, policy, and strategy documents; Create processes to ensure progress is made.
16. Keep Truth and Reconciliation relevant in an ongoing way by incorporating discussions into staff meetings and other frequent events and initiatives.



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