RIGHTS & RESPECT

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REPORT OF THE 2022 INDIGENOUS PARTNERSHIPS SUCCESS SHOWCASE

NEW ERA OF RECONCILIATION SHOWCASED AT VANCOUVER EVENT

CHIEF LEWEEN OF THE CHESLATTA CARRIER NATION TELLS OF HISTORIC AGREEMENT

INSPIRING A MOVEMENT WITH MORE THAN 20 RECONCILIATION STORIES

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Join the movement

A movement of change is happening across Canada as Indigenous peoples strive for full participation in the economy.

The Indigenous Partnerships Success Showcase (IPSS) is an annual event responding to the growing demand for practical guidance on how First Nations, Métis and Inuit communities and their enterprise partners can work together for shared success.

By showcasing successful examples of business partnerships, IPSS 2023 in Vancouver June 1 and 2 is a place for networking, learning and sharing stories across all sectors.

Business and Indigenous leaders attend to share their experiences, and to learn from and be inspired by the work done by others.

Topics in 2022 included transportation, real estate development, technology & telecommunications, energy, forestry, mining, fisheries, food production, finance and education. 2023 will continue to take a broad cross-sectoral view with increased participation opportunities via breakout rooms, open discussions and audience Q&A.

Don’t miss your chance to be part of an extraordinary experience. Get your early bird tickets now, until January 16, 2023, at www.indigenoussuccess.ca/tickets or using the QR code below.

2023 INDIGENOUS PARTNERSHIPS SUCCESS SHOWCASE

Jody Wilson-Raybould took part in a fireside chat at the IPSS 2022 banquet (PHOTO BY DARRYL DYCK FOR IPSS).

A message from the editor

Reconciliation can restore our shared future

After hearing from our Indigenous advisory council, we began the 2022 Indigenous Partnerships Success Showcase (IPSS) with the themes of renewal, connection and commitment.

In many ways, economic reconciliation is the project of Indigenous renewal. Indigenous peoples have a remarkable history of cultural and commercial achievement, and one which is being restored and revitalized for a new generation despite tremendous challenges. As JP Gladu said at our inaugural event, "Canada needs its First Entrepreneurs."

It is our hope that this renewal can be sparked into flame by connection, friendship and true partnership between Indigenous peoples and Canada's business community. The potential for connection speaks to the profound spirit of hospitality and grace shown by so many in these pages and beyond. But of course, dialogue is only the first step in a commitment to reconciliation. In the inspiring words of Chief Terry Paul:

"Like any great movement in history, it requires allyship to truly effect change. . . . Reconciliation is something we all have a part in, is something we need to practice every day. Reconciliation is going under the skin to truly see people and systems for what they are, and what they can be."

What is Canada, and what can it become? What is your community, your band, your nation — and what future will you make for it and for you?

Josiah Haynes is the communications manager for the Indigenous Partnerships Success Showcase.

Indigenous culture and music were highlighted at the IPSS 2022 banquet (PHOTO BY DARRYL DYCK FOR IPSS).

AUTHORS
Wayne Moriarty
Tracy Jager
CJ McGillivray

PRODUCTION MANAGER, EDITOR
Josiah Haynes
Josiah@resourceworks.com

CONTACT
www.Indigenoussuccess.com
www.Ipss.vidflex.tv.com
Info@indigenoussuccess.com
604-518-4469

SALES AND SPONSORSHIPS
Peter Miles
Peter@resourceworks.com
250-818-1427

IPSS TEAM
Chief Ian Campbell (chair)
Stewart Muir (founder)
Margareta Dovgal (event lead)
Lisa Mueller (strategy)
Peter Miles (sponsorships)
Amanda Nahanee (Indigenous talent)
Josiah Haynes (communications)
Chastity Davis-Alphonse (moderator)

CONTACT
Info@indigenoussuccess.ca
(604) 518-4469

PRINTER
Capital Colour
Reception@capitalcolour.com

CHANNELS
@Indigenous Partnerships Success Showcase
@IPSSevent
@IPSSevent

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Authors Wayne Moriarty and Tracy Jager in Vancouver (PHOTO BY STEWART MUIR FOR IPSS).

IPSS 2022 organizers asked writers Tracy Jager and Wayne Moriarty to act as event rapporteurs. They sat through all of our sessions to see and hear directly what was said on stage. Subsequently, they teamed up to produced a text for each one of the sessions. In this issue of Rights & Respect, we are sharing those stories. By doing this, we are ensuring that a written record of proceedings can be made available to the widest possible audience so that evidence of partnership success is more broadly understood.

Wayne Moriarty:

Wayne Moriarty was a journalist for 36 years, including 13 years as editor-in-chief of The Province in Vancouver. Throughout his career, Wayne was recognized for his creativity and leadership, and for his skills in team building, change management, public speaking, and writing. In 2018, Wayne incorporated Moriarty Media & Consulting. The company specializes in writing, editing and design, as well as strategic communications and media consulting. Moriarty Media's projects have included the writing and design of two corporate memoirs—both requiring extensive interviews and technical research. As well, the company has written case studies, trade articles, brochures, award and grant applications, and video scripts.

Tracy Jager:

Tracy Jager has nearly 20 years' experience as a writer and communications consultant, and has worked with clients in health care, health research, law, engineering, and software development. Through the production of larger publications like books or reports, or smaller articles or blog posts, she has helped clients creatively engage their community while ensuring the consistency and integrity of their image and messages. Among her talents, Tracy is especially adept at researching complex topics and translating them so that they're easily understood by various audiences. Trained in visual art, she also does design and illustration. She has been a partner with Moriarty Media & Consulting since the company's inception in 2018.

Reconciliation for business

Truth and reconciliation advice

The following is from Section 92 of the 2016 Truth & Reconciliation Commission (TRC) on Indian Residential Schools chaired by the Honourable Murray Sinclair.

"We call upon the corporate sector in Canada to adopt the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples as a reconciliation framework and to apply its principles, norms, and standards to corporate policy and core operational activities involving Indigenous peoples and their lands and resources. This would include, but not be limited to, the following:

1. "Commit to meaningful consultation, building respectful relationships, and obtaining the free, prior, and informed consent of Indigenous peoples before proceeding with economic development projects.
2. "Ensure that Aboriginal peoples have equitable access to jobs, training, and education opportunities in the corporate sector, and that Aboriginal communities gain long-term sustainable benefits from economic development projects.
3. "Provide education for management and staff on the history of Aboriginal peoples, including the history and legacy of residential schools, the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples, Treaties and Aboriginal rights, Indigenous law, and Aboriginal–Crown relations. This will require skills based training in intercultural competency, conflict resolution, human rights, and anti-racism."

The TRC's calls to action remain just as relevant today as in 2016. The Indigenous Partnerships Success Showcase was founded in large part to further the TRC's message of reconciliation within the business community.

Indigenous art, music and dance endowed IPSS 2022 with a sense of place (PHOTO BY DARRYL DYCK FOR IPSS).

Message from the chair

To those who have attended the Indigenous Partnerships Success Showcase (IPSS), thank you. To those for whom this is their first introduction to our event and our movement, I hope you enjoy the stories of hope contained in these pages.

My ancestral name is Xalek, my Chieftain name is Sekyu Siyam. I'm a hereditary chief from the Squamish nation and my lineage comes from the Squamish and the Musqueam people in Vancouver. After 16 years of being an elected councillor, I'm now the chair of the IPSS.

Our event founder, Stewart Muir, first brought me to IPSS with an inspiring vision. It was the idea of economic reconciliation and the notion of reconcili-action, of which many readers of this magazine are no doubt champions.

When I look outside the windows here in Burrard Inlet, our homelands for the Musqueam, Squamish, and Tsleil-Waututh – I think of how we have been alienated and marginalized from many of the core operations of wider society. We ask ourselves: If we could have had equity and participated in the development of industry, would we have done so? The answer would likely have been yes – but we didn't have the opportunity.

Today we do.

We know that it has taken generations of effort to get to where we are, as Indigenous people, as British Columbians and as Canadians. I'm part of the first generation out of residential schools in my family, so we know that the partnerships driving so much of reconciliation today were not possible in my parents' era. We are maturing as a society as we move forward and we begin to look at collaboration.

Today, we have the opportunity our ancestors did not because of the relationships that are being forged, and the critical acknowledgement that we are moving beyond the era of consultation to one of consent. To consent is something that is very important for Indigenous peoples. We have seen much of the impact of development throughout our territories and we have seen examples of western management where it has removed cultural and spiritual values from the vocabulary, where we have not been welcomed as true partners.

As we come together as Indigenous and non-Indigenous Canadians, we have countless opportunities to grow and progress. It is the models of collaboration and vision contained in these stories that will make our economy better, more profitable, and more equitable. With a focus on the "S" in ESG, we can make a difference for our future generations.

Chief Ian Campbell is the governance chair of the Indigenous Partnerships Success Showcase. A hereditary chief of the Squamish Nation, Chief Ian also served for sixteen years as an elected councillor. During this time he was a lead negotiator on various resource projects and worked on the first ever binding Indigenous envirionmental assessment, for Woodfibre LNG. Chief Ian was also instrumental in the establishment of the groundbreaking MST Development Corporation.

IPSS governance chair, Chief Ian Campbell (PHOTO BY DARRYL DYCK FOR IPSS).

What is the Indigenous Partnerships Success Showcase?

It is a mild but pleasant late May morning in Vancouver, BC—the forecast calls for cloud interrupted by intermittent light showers and the occasional breakthrough of blue sky and sun. Inside the resplendent Fairmont Pacific Rim Hotel, located downtown on the traditional territories of the Musqueam, Squamish, and Tsleil-Waututh Nations, tourists and business travellers weave through the grand hall—to the front desk, to the elevators that will carry them to their rooms, or to the bright, expansive Lobby Lounge for a leisurely coffee.

Upstairs, the large windows afford a view of the city's inner harbour, but the hundreds of people making their way to the third floor this morning are not lured by such a spectacular natural backdrop. They are focused on picking up name tags, grabbing a serving from the buffet breakfast, finding a seat in the Star Sapphire Ballroom, and greeting old—and new—friends.

It has been a long time since people gathered this way. Two years of pandemic suspended all large events and conferences. For some, this event, the third annual Indigenous Partnerships Success Showcase (IPSS 2022), marks their first major foray back into public space. There are delegates and speakers from across the country, some who have flown from as far away as the east coast and the vast northern reaches. Many others, unable to make the journey in person, are joining the conference virtually.

A glance reveals that while the primary focus is on Indigenous economic reconciliation and successful business partnerships, IPSS is clearly not a typical business conference.

IPSS founder Stewart Muir describes the gathering as a cultural event. What does that mean? IPSS 2022 does bring together people from different cultures, and yes, the event features Indigenous arts and performances—but there is much more going on than that.

One reason IPSS can be considered a cultural event is that while formatted like a traditional business conference, with presentations and panel discussions, its underlying spirit is about encouraging the kind of open and forthright conversations and storytelling found throughout the country's Indigenous communities. People are there to share their experiences, and to learn from and be inspired by the sharing done by others.

IPSS 2022 is also culturally significant in that the event itself, and its reason for being, are historically significant. The first IPSS, held in early 2020, was created in response to the adoption by the government of British Columbia of the Declaration and Rights of Indigenous Peoples Act (DRIPA). Shortly before IPSS 2022, the provincial government also released its action plan, containing 89 actions BC intends to take over the next five years. The government's adoption of the act in its efforts toward reconciliation demonstrate not only awareness of the current landscape, but also progressiveness. On this front, the BC government is to be applauded.

But, as evidenced by the presentations at IPSS 2022, there are many who have not been sitting idle waiting for the provincial or federal parliaments to lead the charge on economic reconciliation. Many Indigenous communities and many forward-thinking companies are already doing the challenging and rewarding work of developing relationships and partnerships. They have been laying the groundwork for a bright future, one that not only seeks to right the wrongs of the past, but also recognizes Indigenous peoples as remarkable partners who bring great value to the table.

Gone is the terrible time when the First Nations, Métis, and Inuit peoples of this country were forcibly separated from each other, forbidden from gathering, speaking their languages, and sharing their knowledge. Disappearing are the days when Indigenous peoples were wholly unable to benefit from the resources being taken from their land, when they were shut out of business dealings and denied opportunities to achieve prosperity.

A new reality is being forged.

This historical cultural transformation is taking place across this nation, in some cases even more rapidly than expected. Those who were there know it—for they are driving it.

They have already achieved considerable successes.

The stories of many of those successes, and of work still to be done, as shared at IPSS 2022, are now shared here in this magazine.

Enjoy. Be inspired.

Collaboration begins with conversation

Sit at the table. Learn the history. Find a path forward

‘Respectful dialogue’ is a phrase you’ll hear frequently at IPSS. Another is ‘meaningful consultation.’

Such words are extremely important to Canada’s Indigenous peoples, whose views and interests have, historically, been overlooked, and whose voices have been silenced or ignored. Many of the speakers at IPSS 2022 mention they often feel like industry or government engagement is done only to ‘fill in checkboxes.’

For First Nations, Métis, and Inuit peoples, though, proper engagement means being ‘at the table’—preferably as early as possible in any process that will affect them and their territories. It involves having their opinions heard, acknowledged, and respected.

That is by no means an unreasonable request. In fact, it is fair and right.

Moreover, Indigenous peoples bring their own significant skills and education to the table. Frequently, because they understand their traditional territories so well, they have knowledge that can help ensure a project’s success. And their process for making decisions, based on their values and worldview, can help ensure an initiative is sustainable in the long term. The truth of the matter is that Indigenous people are beneficial collaborators and partners.

But first, there must be conversation. There must be a space in which an Indigenous community’s culture and values can be discussed. There must be open dialogue between parties, a sharing of histories and aspirations. It is through this process that trust can be established, and authentic relationships developed.

“It’s who we are as Indigenous people,” says Chief Joe Alphonse of the Tŝilhqot’in National Government. “We respect trees, we respect animals, we respect people. And if you come from that perspective, and you come and respect us and sit at our table, we’ll work with you. That’s the root of any relationship—to get to know each other. Get to know my history, I get to know who you are. And maybe we find a way to move forward.”

Indigenous leaders also want to be able to communicate with members of their own communities, to consult with their elders and youths. And many First Nations across the country are seeing the benefit of conversing and collaborating with each other.

All this can take time. It’s not for companies or organizations that are constantly watching the clock, nor is it for those uninterested in ESG (environment, social, governance) concerns.

But for those who have embarked on the journey of developing relationships—and there are many, including those featured at IPSS—the process has been entirely worthwhile.

Is it easy? It can be. But the path isn’t always smooth. “There are lots of tough conversations that inevitably happen,” says Tiffany Murray of Coastal GasLink. “You’re not always going to be on the same page with every single issue all the time. Things come up. Major projects are big, they’re complex. . . . You have to have the space to be able to have difficult conversations. But, over-all, if you have that alignment that you both know you want [a project] to go forward . . . it opens up a real space to have constructive dialogue and know that you’re both coming to the table to come up with solutions.”

Delegates reflect on learnings from IPSS 2022 (PHOTO BY DARRYL DYCK FOR IPSS).

XwtatƏ'llƏm: Place of Learning

Inspired by Musqueam culture, this new partnership's unconventional approach is a case study of positive relationships

"How did all of our grandparents resolve issues before?" Nolan Charles asks the room during his IPSS Fireside Chat with Stephen Bruyneel, director, external relations & development, of the Fraser River Discovery Centre.

His answer: "Hey, put on some tea. . . . I'm coming over. Let's talk."

That's the approach the Musqueam Indian Band (MIB) and the Fraser River Discovery Centre (FRDC) have taken to create Xwtatə'lləm (a Place of Learning). Xwtatə'lləm will be a permanent exhibit and programming telling the history of the Fraser River and its surrounds from the perspective of the Musqueam and other First Nations who have lived, worked, and taken care of the river from time immemorial.

The creation of Xwtatə'lləm emerged from an agreement signed late 2020 between the Musqueam and the FRDC; the agreement allows for an open and flexible process to ensure meaningful and respectful collaboration.

Charles hopes others at IPSS '22 will help shape Xwtatə'lləm. "What does Xwtatə'lləm look like?" he asks. "We don't know yet. But we are prepared and offering to say we will put on tea, and we will invite others over to share their stories."

Stephen Bruyneel (left) and Nolan Charles (right) reflect on partnerships (PHOTO BY DARRYL DYCK FOR IPSS).

This type of flexible approach is completely different than what the museum and interpretive centre sector typically do, says Bruyneel. Partner companies and organizations that fund projects generally expect to see firm project plans and timelines.

"As we've approached partners . . . without a spreadsheet and a Gantt chart, it was hard for some to get their head around giving us money to do something," he says. "But some got it. . . . they got it right away. And they gave us a lot, a large amount of money, to help do this."

Bruyneel says that the development of Xwtatə'lləm is especially important because "there is nowhere that I know of that tells the history and the teachings of the Fraser River from Indigenous perspectives."

The Musqueam approach to developing Xwtatə'lləm from a reconciliation and an UNDRIP (United Nations Declaration of Indigenous Peoples Act) perspective was welcomed by the FRDC's board of directors.

"We hear a lot of talk about reconciliation and UNDRIP," says Bruyneel. "But a lot of times, companies, organizations, local governments don't know how to do reconciliation, how to participate in UNDRIP. And for our board's perspective, this is a way for us to do more than just talk about it. We can actually do something about it.

"This is a whole different approach because UNDRIP and Truth and Reconciliation affords latitude," says Charles. "It affords innovative thinking. It affords the ability to say you can think outside the box. . . . We're about getting beyond ticking off the boxes."

Bruyneel adds that conversations with Nolan and the Musqueam have informed a whole new approach to all the centre's activities.

"Everything we do now, current programs, everything is looked at through the lens of Xwtatə'lləm. We don't make any changes, we don't make any additions, until we think about this partnership. . . . From as simple as updating a sign on the boardwalk about the river, to creating a new program, to having a dialogue . . . we stop and we say, 'Okay, what is this? How would we do this from Xwtatə'lləm's perspective? How should we do this to make sure it's done correctly?' And then we do it. And that's been a massive change for us at the centre in a positive way."

"At the end of the day the FRDC board took the time to understand and educate themselves and share their stories of their understanding of what UNDRIP and Truth and Reconciliation means," says Charles, who believes education precedes true reconciliation, including economic reconciliation.

"It's either you talk culture conveniently, use culture conveniently, or you live it. That's what I'm so thankful of my elders that bestowed their knowledge within me. And it's my obligation to share that with the generation behind me.

"UNDRIP and Truth and Reconciliation are a benefit for the communities and the regions, but more importantly, it's the benefit for the little ones. How do we arm all little ones to be successful? I'd be guilty if I were to perpetuate the system that was imposed on us. That's not who we are. That's not how we roll. We are about 'Come sit by the fire and come share your stories.'"

Obligation or opportunity?

The outgoing CEO of Trans Mountain describes his journey of understanding, in conversation with Karen Restoule

It was as a youth growing up in Winnipeg that Ian Anderson, the recently retired CEO of the Trans Mountain Corporation, learned from his father to always respect, appreciate, and believe in people. He says he brought this tenet to his work on the Trans Mountain Expansion (TMX) project, which twins a new pipeline with an existing oil pipeline running from Edmonton, Alberta to Burnaby, British Columbia. Getting the project off the ground involved many years of dialogue with Indigenous communities through which the pipeline would pass.

Reflecting on the decade he spent developing industry-to-First-Nations relationships, Anderson says he didn't think of it as consultation. "I thought about it as getting to understand what the opportunities might be as opposed to the obligations. Industry looks at all this as an obligation."

"It was a journey of knowledge and learning for me," Anderson says to Karen Restoule, CEO of Shared Value Solutions, during a discussion on the first afternoon of IPSS '22. "I had to have gained some measure of respect, some measure of trust, some measure of understanding and appreciation before I was asking for anything, before I was asking to build something on their lands.

Ian Anderson shares insights (PHOTO BY DARRYL DYCK FOR IPSS).

"I also wanted to understand, and learn, from communities directly. . . . We didn't go in with an agenda. In fact, we didn't talk about impact, benefit agreements, and mutual benefit agreements, out of the gate. They came over time, as communities wished them to. I first wanted to learn and understand what the community's aspirations were, what their interests were."

Anderson went on frequent road trips, visiting and getting to know people in the communities. Along the way he developed deep friendships.

"It was a lot of weekends, a lot of nights and early mornings, and travelling around . . . but it was time well spent. And I think that our work was better for it."

By the time Anderson departed from Trans Mountain in April 2022, he had secured support from more than 60 Indigenous communities ("every land-based Nation and a good number of marine-based communities"), and the company and its contractors had hired more than 1,000 Indigenous people and allocated $2-billion worth of contracts to Indigenous contractors and businesses.

Anderson says that being genuinely open-minded, being willing to listen and learn and change, was at the core of his approach. "Every community we touch is different, and they all have different aspirations, different levels of capacity, different environmental conditions, different infrastructure. We had to do it on a case-by-case basis and stay very principled."

The journey was not without its obstacles and challenges. "I passionately have believed—and it translated into our work as a company—that we were never going to judge the opinions or claims or aspirations or values of somebody else," says Anderson. "That if we hit an obstacle, the first thing I would do is challenge ourselves to look at the situation from the other party's perspective. Why is it we're at this intersection of inaction? And what is it that will get us through that intersection without colliding?"

Anderson acknowledged there were conflicts and arguments. He says that while not everyone ended up completely satisfied, every point of opposition resulted in Trans Mountain making changes.

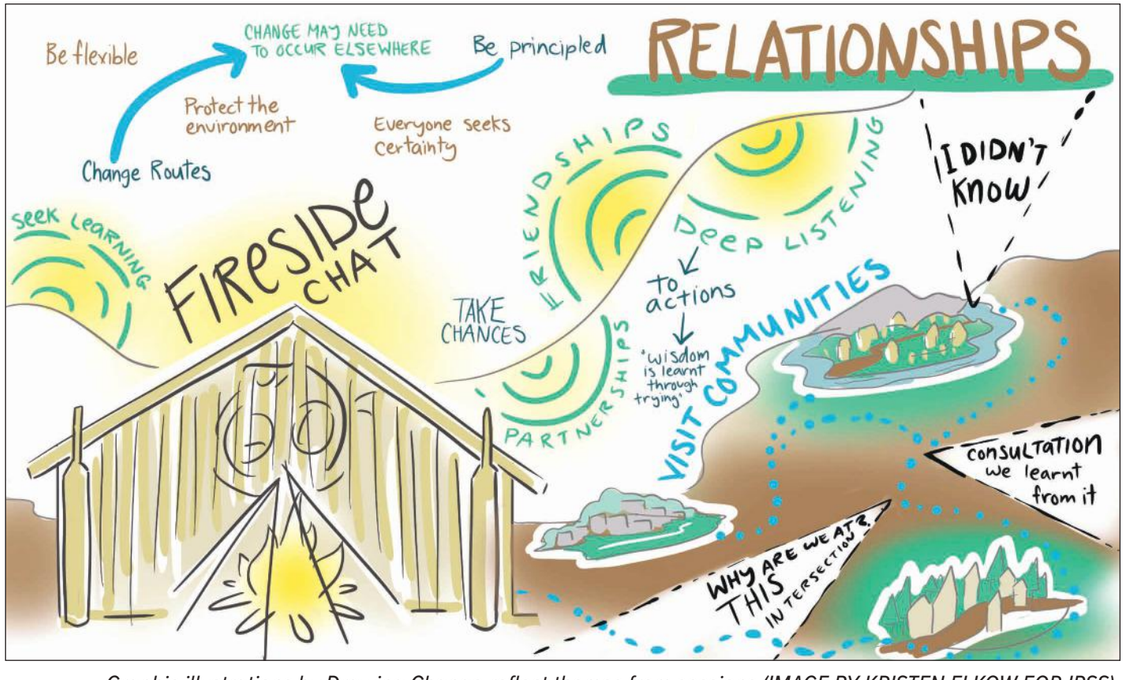
"In anything you do, there's going to be parties who aren't satisfied with what you're undertaking. And that's because we live in a democratic world, and everybody has a right to their own views and opinions. And that's what enriches all of our lives."

In relation to environmental concerns, Anderson says that he always tried to take "the high road . . . the place that there weren't environmental conditions that were being unnecessarily put at risk."

He describes a situation where the company had over 100 biologists working on the ground, doing nothing but salamander, snail, and frog moves. It also moved over 100 ant hills because they were important to the ecosystem within the areas that that they occupied.

"It was ensuring that depth of the learnings along the way were translated into actions. . . . Listening and learning is interesting. It's far more powerful if it results in change in actions. We sought to change what we did and act upon what we learned."

Anderson says that it was the process of building trust and respect at the beginning that enabled everyone involved to work through uncertain times. "Every step along the way, every challenge that we were faced with, I can really proudly say we learned from it."



Graphic illustrations by Drawing Change reflect themes from sessions (IMAGE BY KRISTEN ELKOW FOR IPSS).

Indigenous performers gave the IPSS banquet a rich cultural context (PHOTO BY DARRYL DYCK FOR IPSS).

At the bridge

The remarkable story of James Teit holds lessons for today's bridge-builders

Attendees of IPSS 2022 are forming relationships, developing partnerships, and building bridges to a positive future of economic reconciliation.

One might call them mavericks or visionaries. However, the journey they are on is but a part of a much longer passage—a passage during which many who came before struggled and toiled. Some of these mavericks of the past have been nearly erased from history, as was the case with one of Canada's earliest 'bridge-builders,' James Teit, a fellow from Scotland's Shetland Islands who first landed in BC in 1884 to work in a shop in Spences Bridge.

During the Success Showcase 'At the Bridge,' Wendy Wickwire, emeritus professor in the department of history at the University of Victoria, tells how Teit immersed himself in the communities and cultures of the area's Indigenous peoples. He became fluent in the Interior Salish languages and developed deep friendships with the people. He also recorded many aspects of their lives, including their stories and songs. Teit was not given credit for his voluminous ethnographic documentation—instead, Teit was "invisibilized" and the work was claimed by the anthropologist Franz Boas.

Wickwire says others also tried to silence Teit's political activism. For their tireless work with the Indigenous people to help them preserve their rights and "settle the land problem," Teit and fellow activists, including Haida First Nation member Peter Kelly, were labelled agitators by the government.

Upon Teit's passing in 1922, Kelly described Teit as "not just a friend, he was a brother of the Indians in this province. He had their utmost confidence. He had their implicit trust. He was looked to, not as a white man, not as a soldier among the Indians in this province, but one of them. One who could present their views perhaps better than any other man of the present generation."

Wickwire says Teit "first took hold of me when I was in my twenties." Over the course of four decades, she uncovered his history, which she then documented in her award-winning book At the Bridge: James Teit and an Anthropology of Belonging, published in 2019.

Historian Wendy Wickwire shares the legacy of forgotten bridge-builders (PHOTO BY DARRYL DYCK FOR IPSS).

Economic reconciliation is about more than money

What does a bolder vision of economic reconciliation look like?

What exactly is economic reconciliation? It may seem a complex concept to grasp, but at its core it is simple: It is about creating the environment where Indigenous peoples and communities can respectfully achieve economic prosperity and stability.

As IPSS participants point out, one should not mistake prosperity as simply being about receiving money—be it from government or industry. Economic reconciliation is also about Indigenous communities being able to participate in financial opportunities and partner on projects. It's about being in mutually respectful relationships that value Indigenous contributions.

"If First Nations are engaged in the proper way, we are not anti-development, we are pro-development," says Chastity Davis-Alphonse, IPSS 2022 moderator.

And while major projects are a big part of the path to economic reconciliation, says Margareta Dovgal, IPSS event lead, they are not the only part. "Internalizing the full spectrum of leadership, thought leadership, and ideas that Indigenous peoples in this room and across the country are putting out there is really the task at hand."

Economic reconciliation also involves allowing First Nations, Métis, and Inuit communities the chance to build their own capacities and create their own prosperity. Just like everyone else, they want economic stability, and the independence to make choices about how to achieve it. They want to get an education and work at meaningful jobs or create profitable businesses that have impact. They want to build homes and provide for their loved ones. They want to give their children and grandchildren the best shot at ongoing success.

They also want to be able to grow their communities and invest. But they have long been hampered in their ability to get financing, be it for an individual mortgage or a collective business venture. Such limitations are a result of longstanding government, business, and financial institution policies—these too need to evolve so that Indigenous communities have the chance to succeed.

Economic reconciliation requires bold vision, commitment, and follow through—from government, industry, Indigenous communities, and all Canadians. It will be worth it, because when Indigenous communities succeed, so will those around them. Canada's Indigenous economy—currently worth $30 billion and expected to hit $100 billion by 2025—will create continued prosperity for all Canadians.

Relationships are essential to IPSS and reconciliation itself (PHOTO BY DARRYL DYCK FOR IPSS).

Blueberry River First Nations chart a new course

The path forward begins with a new vision of reconciliation

"I'm here to talk to you about the treaty rights and the importance of partnering with First Nations," says Chief Judy Desjarlais. "Partnerships that start with a common understanding and goals that provide benefits to both parties is the first step towards reconciliation."

Desjarlais was elected chief councillor of the Blueberry River First Nations in January 2022, six months after a precedent-setting ruling by a BC Supreme Court judge that the provincial government had breached the Nation's rights under Treaty 8 because it allowed development, including forestry and natural gas extraction, without the Nation's approval. In the ruling, the court determined the cumulative effects of the resource development in Blueberry traditional territory in northeastern BC were significant, and it prohibited the government from issuing permits in the area without the Nation's consent.

Desjarlais says the ruling was "a blessing to our Nation in many ways, because had things gone the way they have been going, with where we've been overlooked and often set aside for our major concerns, we'd not be here today in the driver's seat when it comes to managing our territories, managing our backyard.

Chief Judy Desjarlais (PHOTO BY DARRYL DYCK FOR IPSS).

"The treaty was imposed on us in 1899 and 1900s where the Crown promised there would be no impact on our way of life. And that promise would last forever. . . . Actually, our words [were] 'as long as the grass grows, the sun shines, and the river flows.' Our ancestors took the Crown at their word and believed them. When that became inconvenient, the Crown just ignored it. Since then, our lands have been hacked up by oil and gas, by forestry, by agriculture and private landfills, while the Crown ignored treaty obligations."

Desjarlais, who comes "from a Nation whose territories [are] rich in resources" says that 86 percent of the Nation's territory was within 250 metres of an oil and gas development, and 91 percent was within 500 metres. "There was nowhere left for our people to practise their way of life."

"With Coastal GasLink and LNG Canada starting up in 2025 and two other pipelines approved, but not yet built, we estimate that to keep those pipelines running would take 80,000 new wells over the next few decades. Where are they going to put those new wells? Those new roads? New feeder pipelines? If 91 percent is gone now, how can this be done without further destroying our lands and our treaty rights? That's what the absence of cumulative effects assessment means in practice. The Coastal GasLink pipeline was approved without ever looking at the impact that the wells to fill it would have in our territory, which is the Blueberry River territory. So are all the other pipelines and new projects. Fortunately, the court has spoken. We are embarking on a process to fix these things."

For decades, says Desjarlais, the method of dealing with treaty rights entailed "checking off boxes."

"And those times have changed. It's no longer doing your due diligence. Meaningful consultation comes at the First Nations table. Building that relationship is the first step and the real step onto the path of reconciliation."

Desjarlais says "we support reasonable oil and gas development," but that "there has to be a way. . . . for us to sustain our way of life, protect our treaty rights for generations to come. We're looking for balance, as well as equal opportunity to build a successful future and a great path called reconciliation. We have a long way to go."

Reconciliation, says Desjarlais, requires engagement at all levels, including at pre-planning stages. "Meaningful consultation goes a long way, and communication is key."

She notes that oftentimes projects could have been moved to protect natural environments had there been proper engagement with the Nation. "We have environmental monitors and elders within our Nation who are stewards of the land. So, what better way to have a successful project than to have the elders and monitors at the table? Show them the map. They know the land best."

Desjarlais says the Nation also wants to know "what are the corporations and people knocking on our door going to bring to the table? Not just looking for a checkbox or a letter to say, 'We are signed with Blueberry River.' We need to have real, meaningful relationships that are looking into the long term to bring forth the vision of sustainability . . . for our members and our community.

Chief Judy Desjarlais and Sharon Singh (PHOTO BY DARRYL DYCK FOR IPSS).

"We want to see how investors are going to invest into our people, not only in our territory. How are they going to invest into our infrastructure and our restoration plan that is moving forward? How are they going to do the reclamation work and who are they going to utilize?"

Proper reconciliation, says Desjarlais, includes providing Indigenous peoples with opportunities to build their own economic capacities.

"There were millions and millions of dollars made within the Blueberry territory. . . . All non-Indigenous corporations bloomed overnight." Meanwhile, the Nation's member-owned corporations, of which there are a couple of dozen, were "often overlooked, because they didn't have the capacity, or nobody had the confidence in them. Well, there are people that are business owners out there who are capable of doing this job."

"Working with the Nation for long term is not just today. It belongs to tomorrow, and then the next day, and it's an ongoing thing to build that relationship and make sure that we have a sustainable future moving forward.

"There definitely is certainty that we're going to move forward, but again it won't be at the price of risking our treaty rights or cultural traditional way of life. . . . The point of real certainty is when we all have the same shared vision with industry and the governance.

"When you see our vision and you're walking with us on a path forward, I think that's going to be a great success."

> **"When you see our vision and you're walking with us on a path forward, I think that's going to be a great success."**
>
> **Chief Judy Desjarlais**

How Squamish Nation and FortisBC made history

An inside look at the first ever legally binding Indigenous-led environmental assessment of a pipeline project in Canada

The Squamish Nation Environmental Assessment Agreements signed with Woodfibre LNG in 2015 (for its liquefied natural gas export terminal), and with FortisBC in 2016 (for its planned Eagle Mountain-Woodfibre gas pipeline) were landmark agreements giving the Squamish Nation full and independent environmental oversight on the work being done on their traditional territory.

But as Roger Dall'Antonia, FortisBC CEO, and Chief Ian Campbell, hereditary leader of the Squamish Nation, make clear during their IPSS Fireside Chat, FortisBC and the Squamish Nation had already developed a good working relationship in the lead-up to the 2010 Olympic Games, when the company upgraded its gas line to Whistler.

"But for the Woodfibre project itself, this was an important contemplation," says Campbell. "Why support a new entrant in the market when it comes to an export facility?

"Howe Sound was the focal point with the return of herring biomass, with cetaceans returning . . . after decades of absence. We had to ask ourselves the fundamental question, 'How do you pair a new project with this trend of revitalization? Are they compatible? What are the risks?'"

Campbell says that the real process of the Squamish Nation considering environmental assessments began in 2003 when they underwent their own planning, and identified sacred areas in their territory. This involved a couple of years of consultation with community members.

Chief Ian Campbell (left) and FortisBC CEO Roger Dall'Antonia (PHOTO BY DARRYL DYCK FOR IPSS).

"We looked at protection, conservancies, of about eight percent of our territory, 50,000 hectares—some of the last non-roaded, non-developed parts of our territories."

When it came time to contemplate the FortisBC project, "looking at cultural and spiritual values was very important to the Squamish Nation. And that really set the tone in forging our relationship and then developing a process that has a start and finish and creates greater certainty."

Dall'Antonia says the agreement was unique for a couple of reasons. Usually an environmental assessment involves interveners, but the process with the Squamish Nation meant the company would have a direct dialog. "Having a direct, independent-led, Indigenous-led, review, allowed for more direct two-way communication. It also allowed us to have a better understanding of the priorities, not just the environmental, but the cultural, priorities, in the project."

Also unique was that FortisBC entered the process voluntarily.

"The reason we wanted to be involved was to make sure that we could set a precedent, if you will, for future type reviews in different parts of the province," says Dall'Antonia. "The learnings that we gathered as an organization, the cultural awareness, the awareness of the history, it really has allowed us to become better at considering Indigenous perspectives when we consider projects. . . . We now have a bit more of a framework on how to do that in a more natural way."

Campbell notes that taking on the responsibility of environmental oversight required the Squamish Nation to scale up operations and staffing to meet the needs of enforcement and monitoring. "Once those are satisfied, we then move toward the IBAs, the Impact Benefit Agreements, where there's significant value around procurement, and opportunities for our members to participate in the pre-construction."

Squamish Actor Simon Baker (PHOTO BY DARRYL DYCK FOR IPSS).

For those considering doing independent environmental assessments, Campbell suggests thinking about the whole lifecycle of a project, and then determining whether the nation has the wherewithal or the appetite to do a full independent environmental assessment, or instead does a quasi-independent assessment where the nation draws from other analyses and fills in gaps around cultural and spiritual and environmental values.

Similarly, Dall'Antonio urges companies to consider whether they have the infrastructure to commit to such a process.

"It doesn't make sense to say, 'We'll do it,' but then not have the resources within your own organization that can support the relationship. Because the relationship will be one that will span many years. We've been talking about this process now for almost 10 years, and our relationship predates that. This isn't a one-and-done. You really have to think about how you're developing the infrastructure within your organization to support this type of process.

"It can't just simply be you're there to get a project done. You have to be able to develop authentic relationships based on affinity."

Campbell says he hopes the Squamish Nation's example inspires others "to look at what this means to your territories, what you can do to exercise your authority, your jurisdiction, but also translate that into economic opportunities as well as community needs."

He notes that these types of projects often present procurement opportunities for Indigenous entrepreneurs. "It's not always just the Nations that have to do the business. It's not our core competency as governments to have to get fully involved in all the business opportunities. We have our development corporations. We have our entrepreneurs. We have JVs, LPs. We have all of these business registries and endorsements to then allow our members to participate in these projects. . . . to allow them to be a part of that legacy that their children will look back and say, 'We weren't ostracized from our lands or marginalized or alienated. We were full participants in creating a greater future for us collectively.'"

Two paths, one destination: Toward greater independence

"No matter what road you take, if it's self government agreements, if it's a rights and title case, our paths come back together," says Chris Lewis of the Squamish Nation

While Canada's Indigenous peoples—First Nations, Métis, and Inuit—share many of the same values, including a holistic viewpoint and a connection to the land, one of the messages most repeated at IPSS 2022 is that each Indigenous community is unique, and each decision—whether it be to pursue a treaty, to litigate, negotiate, or partner—reflects that uniqueness.

During a story-filled discussion on day two of IPSS 2022, Kluane Adamek, Yukon regional chief, and Chief Joe Alphonse, chairman of the Tŝilhqot'in National Government, speak about some of the synergies among Nations, as well as about differences in approach.

In the Yukon, where 11 Nations have signed modern treaty agreements, Adamek says it was "about defining our rights on our terms, our territory. For those 14,000 (square) kilometres, the 11 Nations had a sort of overarching agreement that we all agreed to, with 28 chapters, followed by a self-government agreement."

For the Tŝilhqot'in, defining their rights on their terms has been about establishing Aboriginal title. Alphonse, who was instrumental in the landmark 2014 Supreme Court of Canada decision 'Tŝilhqot'in Nation vs. British Columbia' that established Aboriginal land title for the Nation, says he always knew what he wanted: "I want to win Aboriginal title."

He tells the story about how even on the eve of the Supreme Court decision, "every Aboriginal lawyer in Canada, every Aboriginal organization in Canada, [said], 'You guys have no hope in hell of winning. Withdraw your case.' . . . Five of the six Tŝilhqot'in chiefs said they were going to withdraw. . . . Then we won. We won the title. Suddenly everybody that used to oppose us, suddenly they're standing next to us and they're best friends. . . . That's why even today, I don't run and just join other Aboriginal First Nation groups. I stand alone."

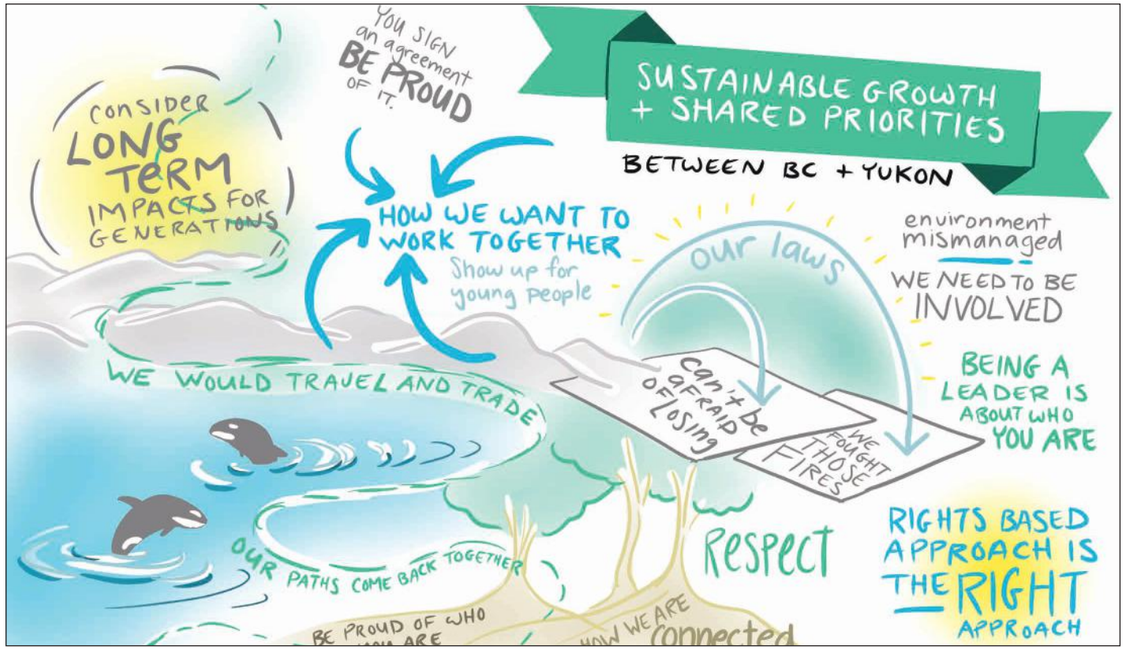
While Adamek's and Alphonse's have different approaches, they appreciate that each Nation has its own path.

"Before contact, we relied on all of the natural resources in our territory to be independent," says Alphonse. "In my Nation, we had Anahim Peak obsidian. You'll find Anahim Peak obsidian (a volcanic glass) as far east as Saskatchewan, as far south as New Mexico, and as far north as the Northwest Territories and the Yukon. We traded our products. . . . So today you go through all of the work to make sure that all your values are respected and you enter . . . an agreement. And you do that because you're trying to find a way to look after your people and you should never feel ashamed of that. . . . You sign an agreement, be proud of it. That's the path to independence. . . . It's as straightforward as that."

"We also think in terms of advancing priorities," says Adamek. "Yes, we want to work with partners. But at the same time look at the way we're talking about development. Why is it so bad . . . when a Nation does say no? That's okay. That has to be okay because that's a rights-based approach. I know there are huge projects that are being contemplated . . . and the way in which we look at development can't just be in opposition, but if a Nation says, 'We're uncomfortable with this and we need more,' then that should be enough."

"No matter what road you take, if it's self-government agreements, if it's a rights-and-title case, our paths come back together," says moderator Chris Lewis of the Squamish Nation. "We still have to fight the good fight and teach our young people and inspire our young people to take their rightful place at our leadership tables and in those areas that we need them."

Chief Joe Alphonse, Chris Lewis and Regional Chief Kluane Adamek (PHOTO BY DARRYL DYCK FOR IPSS).



Graphic illustration from Drawing Change reflects session themes (IMAGE BY KRISTEN ELKOW FOR IPSS).

Successful partnerships take many forms

Indigenous leaders highlight partnership as a path to true reconciliation

Across this beautifully diverse and vast country there are many Indigenous communities, businesses from all sectors, and governments who are working to put economic reconciliation into action. Cutting a new path, they've moved beyond words and simple consultation to agreements and partnerships.

These partnerships take many forms, including funding arrangements, equity agreements, Indigenous- environmental assessments, consent-based agreements, company acquisitions, and full-scale developments.

The diversity and flexibility of these partnerships reflects the diversity of First Nations, Metis, and Inuit communities. Each community is different, and has its own needs, aspirations, and capacities, just as does each partnering business or organization. Through creativity, conversation, and perseverance, they find the best way forward.

Many Indigenous communities and Nations have also been working together, creating their own partnerships to capitalize on their individual strengths and resources. In this way, they have been realizing great success.

"These are the types of deals and relationships that are going to start the reconciliation and get us to a point where we have true reconciliation—not just government hand-down reconciliation, but reconciliation amongst everybody in Canada and reconciliation amongst industry and First Nations," says Chief Justin Napoleon, whose Saulteau Nations in BC are among the 16 along the Coastal GasLink pipeline route that recently signed an option agreement toward a 10-percent-ownership interest.

It is the highlighting of these types of successes that truly makes IPSS unique. "We could talk all day about what's not working," says IPSS Chair Chief Ian Campbell. "But coming together at IPSS is really about showcasing what is working. And there's a lot that has been transformative."

Chief Campbell and an event delegate (PHOTO BY DARRYL DYCK FOR IPSS).

Participation and access to capital: Building blocks of economic reconciliation

A behind the scenes look at the historic Coastal GasLink equity options deal from four key participants

Back in 2019, when TC Energy decided to sell up to 75 percent of its interest in the Coastal GasLink pipeline project, they heard from partner Nations that they had an interest in having equity.

Tiffany Murray, director of Indigenous relations for Coastal GasLink, says the relationships with the Nations started over a decade ago when TC Energy first started engaging about the pipeline. "We have existing agreements with 20 Nations across the project and that really formed the original basis for partnership across the corridor.

"What we originally proposed and where we landed today are different. And that's really been as a result of all of the work the Nations have put in, the collaborative conversations that we've been able to have, and being able to really understand those interests."

"We did butt heads along the way, and there's no lie about that," says Chief Corrina Leween of Cheslatta Carrier Nation. "But that was how we got resolution at the same time. That's how we worked out some of the issues that we saw at the table and what our due diligence to our people back home was. And we brought it to the table, and we were honest and open about it."

The resulting equity agreements, signed in March 2022 with two entities—CGL First Nations Limited Partnership and FN CGL Pipeline Limited Partnership—representing 16 First Nations across the Coastal GasLink (CGL) pipeline route, give the Nations a 10-percent ownership interest as an option agreement to be exercised after the pipeline construction is complete.

Chief Corrina Leween shares insights (PHOTO BY DARRYL DYCK FOR IPSS).

For Chief Justin Napoleon of the Saulteau First Nations, one of the signing Nations, the economic benefits of agreements are key.

"The importance of it is the precedent that it sets. And the ability for Nations to have their own income coming in that's going to give them the ability to self-determine their way forward. . . . For First Nations, I think economic stability and independence is key and essential to reconciliation and our ability to self-determine. Having this extra income come in gives us the ability to invest into our communities in a way that government funding doesn't allow us."

Just as important to Napoleon is that the Nations have a voice in a project that affects their lands. "Historically, we've never had that option. Projects would come in, they'd have everything already pre-designed, pre-laid out. The path of where the pipeline was going to go was already determined and we were basically consulted and expected to just go along with the project. Where this time there was flexibility and the ability and the willingness to learn and listen and find a better way of doing business."

Working with the First Nations Major Projects Coalition on the deal provided the Nations with needed technical, business decision-making, and financial analysis support. "I come from a semi-remote community in northwestern British Columbia. . . . We have limited resources coming into our communities," says Leween.

Napoleon and Leween also point out that access to capital and financing has been an obstacle for Indigenous communities, but that accessing financing through the First Nations Finance Authority is an option that Nations need to participate as full partners.

"One of the biggest factors that our communities continue to face is the Indian Act," says Leween. "And how the act says ownership over the assets that lay within our traditional territories. . . . We are not able to levy those [to have] the capital financial piece in the business development that we're trying to do independently and together within our communities."

Access to capital through ownership of major projects could provide a different way forward. It's hard not to dream of the potential for Indigenous empowerment.

"When we can start paving our own roads, building our own homes, building our own schools, our own daycares, then we can participate in the economy as a whole. That's what we're all getting ready for," said Chief Corrina Leween.

The flexibility of the discussions with TC Energy about the Coastal GasLink deal was especially helpful to the signing Nations. "Looking at different ways of setting up this financing and the ability to leave the option until the end of the commercial operation of this project really eased up the requirements for financing," says Napoleon.

Napoleon says that it is beneficial for companies to engage Indigenous communities early in the planning for major projects.

"It gives the Nations the ability to have a bunch of time to interact with their members . . . and explain to them the potential benefits an agreement like this. . . . Also, the earlier we're at the table the earlier we get to have our input and our say, and maybe we have some new, better ideas, or just different ideas, in terms of we could do this for environmental protection in this area. Or just having that extra input from the First Nations as early as possible, getting us to the table, means we have a vested interest in seeing the project succeed, while also protecting the land that is critical for everyone."

> **"When we can start paving our own roads, building our own homes, building our own schools . . . then we can participate in the economy as a whole."**
>
> **Chief Corrina Leween**

Murray agrees. "You inevitably build better projects when you work with communities. That, I think, is the no-brainer. The earlier you have that, the more opportunity to have real partnership, then the better your project will be."

Closing the panel, Jesse McCormick of the First Nations Major Projects Coalition asked attendees to think about the tremendous potential of such partnerships.

"My invitation to you . . . is to think carefully about not only the benefits that accrued to First Nations from these types of arrangements but also think about the benefits that First Nations bring to those companies that are willing to enter into equity partnerships," he said. "Think about the value that's coming from the First Nations and flowing to the companies, and the opportunities that presents for economic development in Canada."

Historic agreement the first under new legislation

Tahltan Central Government, BC government and Skeena Resources on their work towards a consent-based agreement

Long before negotiating the first consent based decision making agreement with the Province of British Columbia under Section 7 of the Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples Act (DRIPA) regarding the Eskay Creek Mine Revilitalization Project, the Tahltan Central Government had already established its Tahltan Heritage Resources Environmental Assessment to support its Nation's decision making.

"Between 2006 and probably 2012, we at any one point in time . . . had up to 10 different projects in various stages of environmental assessment, or major project-amendment reviews," says Nalaine Morin, Tahltan Central Government lands director.

"We learned a lot about what we needed as an Indigenous government to ensure that our rights . . . and interests were being recognized and being protected. And so, for us in this work with the Section 7, a lot of that stems from the confidence and the commitment of all parties for us to get to this place. The province recognized that Tahltan have done all of this work in the environmental assessment. They were confident in the team that we had, and the collaboration and engagement that took place not only with proponents but also with government and industry."

Nalaine Morin discusses UNDRIP (PHOTO BY DARRYL DYCK FOR IPSS).

The agreement outlines consent-based decision-making related to the environmental assessment of the Eskay Creek Revitalization Project, the proposed re-opening of the Eskay Creek mine, located in traditional Tahltan territory in northwestern British Columbia, by Skeena Resources.

"The approach that we're looking at here is innovative and I believe it's the future," says Morin. "We've already seen examples of Nations that have stepped up and said, 'We want to be able to do our own Indigenous led environmental assessment process.'"

Cory Waters, the provincial government's lead negotiator, agrees. "Advancing shared decision making, and in this case, consent decision making, is going to prove, I believe, to be a hallmark of reconciliation.

"It's not just about decision-making, it's about partnership. It's about an integration into the fabric and the major projects in Tahltan's territory. Not just as a decision maker, not just as a government, but also as a partner. And that decision-making role is a path to also integrate into the economy. And I believe, as does this government, that consent-based decision making, Indigenous economic development, and equity partnership are all very critical and are good for the economy."

Justin Himmelright is Skeena Resources' senior VP of external relations and sustainability. He says that his company was already very committed to Indigenous consent and participation when considering the project.

"Over the last little while, the pace of change and acceptance of what's happening in terms of the relationships with Indigenous people in the province is faster than I could have imagined." He believes part of the reason is that financing bodies are starting to ask a lot of questions about environment, social, and governance (ESG) impacts, and about relationships with Indigenous communities. Additionally, the younger talent that industries hope to attract want to make a positive impact on the future and be a positive contribution to the planet.

"Sustainability on the land is what people automatically think of, but it also has a link to sustainability of your industry, sustainability of your company. When the opportunity was presented to go forward into a consent-based framework for re-opening the Eskay Creek project, we immediately said yes, because from the perspective of Skeens . . . if we look forward 10 years from now, we think and we believe that consent is going to be the standard for natural-resource development projects in British Columbia. And, if you're looking at extending the life of your project in a decade, do you want to be standing on a platform of consent, or do you want to have gotten your licences and authorizations without a formal Indigenous consent? So, from the point of view of sustainability of your project, it just made a lot of sense to us."

Morin says that in entering into the agreement it has been important to the Tahltan to ensure that decision making tools be representative of their government processes, and that the environmental review process be focused on values important to the Tahltan. She recalls once asking her community what the word 'sustainability' meant to them. No one had an answer. "What did I take from that? That's not a Tahltan word. And I'm sure that there are a lot of nations that would probably say the same.

"What's really important is, what is this land going to look like, 25, 50, 100 years after this mine is closed? That's what people want to know. When we talk about relationships, we talk about relationships with each other, but Indigenous people, we also talk about our relationships with the land, the water, the fish, the wildlife. Ask yourself . . . how do you take that and make a decision-making process out of that? How do you assess whether or not a project is having an impact on that relationship?"

> **"These new types of agreements that we're contemplating exist to recognize and implement Indigenous rights and jurisdiction, to recognize and respect that decision making authority, and to cooperate on how we're going to implement that together."**
>
> **Cory Waters**

Cory Waters of the BC Government (PHOTO BY DARRYL DYCK FOR IPSS).

New horizons: BC First Nations advancing equity participation in land development

Musqueam, Squamish and Tsleil-Waututh partnership a roadmap for urban prosperity

David Negrin says his first task as CEO with the MST Development Corporation was to work with the Musqueam Indian Band, Squamish Nation, and Tsleil-Waututh Nation to get their land back.

"I'm proud to say right now that we have over 20 million square feet of land in the heart of Vancouver, and we're currently negotiating another eight million square feet," he tells the audience during the panel discussion, New Horizons: BC First Nations Advancing Equity Participation in Land Development. MST negotiated the purchase of the lands at a price significantly below-market value.

"The value of land today with the holdings that we have is $5 billion. With another eight million square feet it'll be another two and a half billion dollars."

Sheryl Rivers on land development (PHOTO BY DARRYL DYCK FOR IPSS).

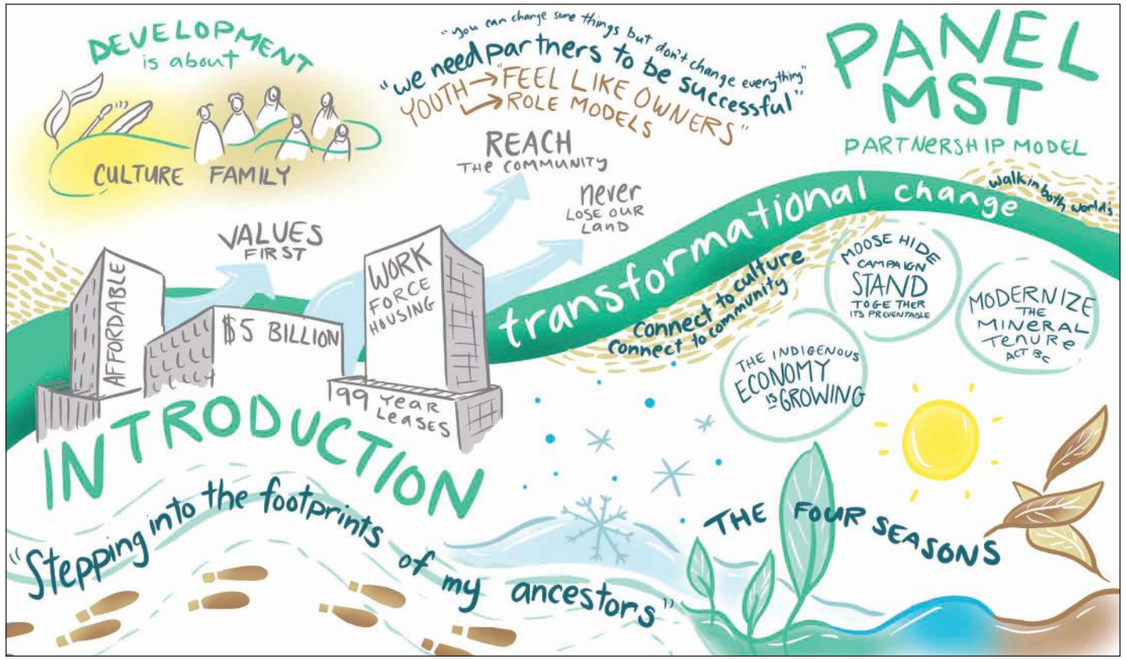
A highly lauded rezoning application by MST Development to redevelop 21 acres of that land received unanimous approval from Vancouver's city council in May 2022.

"A large portion of our development will be affordable, attainable, and work-force housing," says Negrin. "This is a totally different type of development. It's a cultural First Nations Indigenous development. And that's what's built into it. And I've got to tell you again I've never seen anything like it.

"I've learned more from the First Nations than I've been able to teach them. And what I learned about development, it's about culture, it's about family, and it's about success. And success for First Nations. And that was a huge change in my thinking of how we do development. The Nations bring a culture, and they bring values, and they bring an understanding of what they believe is a proper type of development."

Before work on the proposal even began, "the number one thing that we did . . . we created a cultural interpretive strategy, which has never been submitted in a rezoning application at all," says Tsleil-Waututh Nation Councillor Dennis Thomas.

"Our first project, we wanted to do the four elements of life: wind, land, water, fire. And they all really touch us in so many different ways that actually relate to our Indigenous laws. So we started with that."



Graphic illustration by Drawing Change reflects session themes (IMAGE BY KRISTEN ELKOW FOR IPSS).

The development's concept emerged from consulting with members in the three Nations, and then sharing their history, culture, and values with the project's designers, architects, and engineers.

"It's a game-changer in the development industry," says Thomas. "And it really comes with like-minded people and partners that really want to understand our value system, our connection to the land, connection to the water, connection to building our economy."

All of this was possible because of the partnerships forged—firstly, among the three Nations.

Prior to the three Nations signing a protocol agreement focused on land acquisitions in 2014, Chief Ian Campbell of the Squamish Nation says that the Musqueam, Squamish, and Tsleil-Waututh had all been doing their own developments on and off reserve, but "we had been in a tug-of-war with scarcity of resources. We were in competition over acquisition of lands, and dispositions of lands that are claimed by the Crown. Within our territories [this] presented a formidable challenge for the three families.

"This was certainly monumental in reframing from competition to a place of collaboration. And what I'm excited about . . . to see the families really come together and reaffirm our kinship ties . . . to gather in our longhouses to do ceremony with each other, and then to look to a brighter future, where we can develop wealth creation, wealth management."

Johnna Sparrow-Crawford of the Musqueam Indian Band, who is Aboriginal relations advisor with Aquilini Development, says: "We always have to come back to community and remember that we've been partners and families since time immemorial. And now we have to open up and realize that in order for us to be successful, we have to have partners. We've had a long road of unsuccess in the past, being marginalized in our, what we call, reservations. I want that narrative to change. It's not a reserve. It's a village. A reserve is what was inflicted on us."

"You know, we're done with Indigenous-inspired," says Thomas. "It's Indigenous-led.

"I always like to reflect on how our economies were before contact. We had sophisticated complex robust economies, pre-contact. . . . We had different resources that we respected. Our Indigenous laws were in place. All of that got derailed through col-

> “If we can empower our kids with the opportunity to realize that they’re part of a living legacy. . . I want them to feel like owners, not band members. Owners.”
>
> Johnna Sparrow-Crawford

onization. And 170 years later, we’ve come full circle now. . . . Although we do have to acquire the lands, we are now one of the most powerful three Nations in the world. And that’s just the very beginning.”

“The most powerful developer in North America right now is MST—the three Nations coming together,” says Negrin. “If the three Nations weren’t together, they would not have the land they have. And that’s the true partnership. The true partnership is MST, which drives the partnerships with developers, with the province, with the feds, and with the cities.

“The message I have today is, never underestimate the power of a Nation or the power of the MST Nations. . . . And I guarantee that any developer in this town, any developer in Canada, will cherish a relationship with the First Nations.”

How the Mi’kmaq bought North America’s largest integrated seafood company

Keynote speaker Chief Terry Paul on overcoming adversity to create pathways to shared prosperity

When Chief Terry Paul, long time elected leader of the Cape Breton based Membertou First Nation, heard that the owners of Halifax based Clearwater Seafoods were looking to sell their company, he knew there was an opportunity for his people.

Starting with just a fish truck in the 1970s, Clearwater Seafoods had grown to become North America’s largest integrated seafood company. Paul met the owners in the 1980s, and he had long admired the company for many years from afar.

“Fishing is a way of life in our communities,” says Paul in his keynote speech. “How we do it has changed over time, and we have adapted to new and innovative ways of fishing, but at the end of the day, the food that hits our tables is much the same.”

Membertou has long had a successful commercial inshore fishery employing upwards of 50 people seasonally to catch mostly snow crab and lobster. The nation’s inshore fleet of eight vessels works to generate revenue for the community, and to participate in what they call the FSC—Food, Social and Ceremonial Fishery—which provides food for elders and for community gatherings and celebrations.

“Our right . . . to fish is not debatable. Our right to a treaty fishery is not up for discussion.” He related the story of the 1999 Supreme Court of Canada decision that overturned the 1996 conviction of Mi’kmaq member Donald John Marshall Jr. on federal fisheries charges. Paul added: “When Donald Marshall Jr. won his case, he reaffirmed for all Mi’kmaq our right to fish for a treaty fishery. His legacy continues to live on through the spirit of Mi’kmaq fishers, and Indigenous fishers across the country.”

Paul, a residential-school survivor whose childhood was shadowed by poverty and systemic violence, says that as he grew into adulthood, he began to understand how the business world operated. He vowed to do everything he could to ensure that those who came after him in his community didn’t have to face the same challenges that he did.

“As elected chief in my community for the last 38 years, I’ve had the true honour of serving my community. To me, that responsibility has not come lightly.”

In 2020, when hearing Clearwater Foods was for sale, Paul immediately knew that purchasing the company would secure the future for his community. He also knew that Membertou alone couldn’t take on something of that magnitude. He spoke with the 13 Mi’kmaq communities in Nova Scotia and a Mi’kmaq community in Newfoundland about going in on the deal. Six of the communities agreed.

“We need to realize that communities aren’t all the same. They

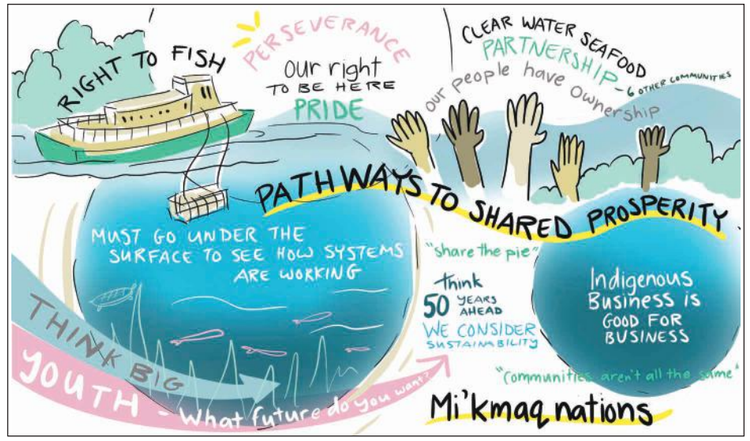


Illustration on session themes (IMAGE BY KRISTEN ELKOW FOR IPSS).

IPSS 2022 keynote speaker, Chief Terry Paul of Membertou First Nation (PHOTO BY DARRYL DYCK FOR IPSS).

have different goals and they're at different levels of sophistication. We offered this deal to all the 13 communities, but they decide themselves whether or not they want to be part of that. And it certainly was open to them. I just feel very glad that we had six other communities willing to come in with us. And that helps spread the risk for sure, but of course it also extends the benefits to those communities. . . . This investment really is for the future."

Paul says that the coalition of Mi'kmaq communities recognized they also needed a strong, knowledgeable partner. They partnered with Premium Brands.

"We hit the partner jackpot when we met Premium Brands. George (CEO George Paleologou) and his team at Premium Brands have been true partners with us from Day One. They teach us a lot, I learn something new every time we meet with them. . . . The distance that we have between us geographically is made up by closeness we foster in shared interests, shared values."

Since the Clearwater deal closed in early 2021, it has been deemed the largest single investment that an Indigenous group in Canada has ever made in the fishery. Clearwater is responsible for 80 million pounds of fish every year globally.

"For us, this deal was obviously an incredibly important business deal, but it means more than that. It's the first time that our people will have ownership in the offshore fishery. It's the kind of history-making our communities need more of, and I know we will see more of these kinds of deals."

"Many times, I've been asked what reconciliation in business looks like...This deal is an example of what ownership with purpose can be."

Today, the Membertou Nation employs over 600 people from across the region who come from many different backgrounds. "If they share our vision to build a better community, then we work with them. How they identify themselves doesn't matter, their commitment to the dream does."

Paul says he'd like to see a lot more First Nations get together to work on deals, and he believes the best way to overcome challenges is to create space for everyone to work together. "Like any great movement in history, it requires allyship to truly affect change."

He notes that Indigenous business is one of the fastest growing sectors in Canada. "Indigenous business is good for business. . . . The value when working with Indigenous people is plentiful. Gone are the days where we were used to check off the box or brought into the deal at the 11th hour. We are players. We need to recognize that we are players. And we want to play to win."

Addressing the crowd, Chief Paul says: "When you leave here today, ask yourself how you can partner with an Indigenous community to add beneficial value on both sides. And if you're an Indigenous person or organization here today, don't let anyone tell you no. Look at roadblocks as opportunities and keep going. Success doesn't happen overnight. I worked 30 years to get a chance to be involved with a company like Clearwater. My advice is work with everyone and respect everyone. Keep at it and keep fishing."

"I'm often asked what economic reconciliation means to me, or if I feel it's been achieved Reconciliation is something we all have a part in, is something we need to practice every day. Reconciliation is going under the skin to truly see people and systems for what they are, and what they can be."

Chief Terry Paul

Tools to take it to the next level

IPSS highlights models of economic reconciliation in action

How can corporations and Indigenous communities take reconciliation to the next level? How can they further empower themselves and inspire others? These were some of the questions asked and answered at IPSS 2022.

In some cases, the answers might involve re-thinking hiring practices or metrics of success, as Bill Lomax of Goldman Sachs and John Stackhouse of RBC discussed during the Showcase session Pathways to Indigenizing Corporate Canada.

It could also involve companies following through on communication commitments and monitoring agreements, as Christy Smith and Michael McPhie mentioned in their session, After the Deal is Inked. Another consideration is providing adequate time for local Indigenous communities to respond to RFPs,

Next-level economic reconciliation could also involve something like the creation of the Salish Sea Indigenous Guardians Association (SSIGA). At the first IPSS in 2020, platinum sponsor Global Container Terminals (GCT) heard a need for the assessment of the cumulative effects on the Salish Sea. They responded by putting out a call for proposals for an independent, Indigenous-led effort to address the issues. Three Nations—Semiahmoo, Kwantlen, and Tsawwassen—went on to partner on a database that collects data on three traditional food sources. The long-term goal is to be able to provide information to assist Nations with shared territories in doing regional assessments and making decisions.

"Only by taking the time to listen and find common ground can we create meaningful relationships that are building blocks of partnership and reconciliation," says Cheryl Yaremko, Chief Financial Officer of Global Container Terminals.

"The ideas we identify . . . together will carve a path toward a more prosperous future for industry and Indigenous peoples as long as we act on them. We can find ways to walk this path together by continuing to change how we do business for the better and [by] focusing on connections and relationships."

Chief Joe Alphonse takes the stage (PHOTO BY DARRYL DYCK FOR IPSS).

Addressing cumulative effects: Insights from Indigenous efforts in the Salish Sea

This Indigenous program could provide surety to industry, confidence to First Nations in one of Canada's critical waterways

The idea for Salish Sea Indigenous Guardians Association (SSIGA) was born during IPSS 2020, when Chief Harley Chappell of the Semiahmoo First Nation participated in a panel about cumulative effects on the Salish Sea, a region of the Pacific Ocean that includes Puget Sound, the San Juan Islands, and the waters off Vancouver BC.

In a panel discussion with other SSIGA representatives at IPSS 2022, Chappell explained the background: "[When we] look at the impacts that have happened over generations in our territory, and I say specifically to my territory in Semiahmoo . . . our bay has been closed for harvesting shellfish since 1976 with no mechanism to open it back up. So that's an issue. That's a problem for me."

But, he adds, "There's never been a catastrophic event. There's never been one thing that led to that devastation. It's been the death by a thousand cuts for generations."

At the same time, he notes, First Nations are often overwhelmed by referrals for individual projects in their territories. "Each individual project, one at a time, and thousands of them.

The leadership of SSIGA at IPSS (PHOTO BY DARRYL DYCK FOR IPSS).

"I come from a very small nation. We're just over 100 members. And we're a working council of three. . . . What we started to think was how we look at this from a lens as Indigenous communities, a holistic look at our territory and impacts. And we started talking about cumulative effects assessments and what could that look like?"

Tumia Knott, council member with the Kwantlen First Nation, agrees the piecemeal approach has long been problematic. "We, as many First Nation communities, are immersed in the referral process and the kind of onslaught of development that's happening within our territory. And we've been very frustrated with that process. It's a process that's very narrow in scope all the time. And of course, as Indigenous peoples, we come to those conversations always with a broader perspective and a broader lens that we want to share and communicate. And it's challenging because we always feel like we're coming up against walls and we are told we can't talk about this issue.

"I know from my own community, we are really seeing, particularly in this current generation, impacts to our precious salmon resources, and it continues to be a significant crisis in our community. So, we're looking in discussions with government and with major projects that are happening in our territory . . . how can we look regionally at impacts? How can we have that kind of information and inform decisions going forward?"

Following the discussion at the inaugural IPSS in 2020, Global Container Terminals (GCT), the event's platinum sponsor, put out a call for proposals for an independent, Indigenous-led effort to address the issues being raised. "There was a rally behind . . . why cumulative effects needed to be addressed . . . and that it should be Indigenous led," says SSIGA Executive Director Marian Ngo. In February 2021, SSIGA officially became an entity, and has since also received funding from Transport Canada and the Department of Fisheries and Oceans (DFO).

Steven Stark, council member with the Tsawwassen First Nation, and a fisher for many years, says he wanted to participate in SSIGA because he'd been part of many environmental studies over the past decade, and he knew there was little in the way of a database that Indigenous communities could use to make better decisions.

"When referrals come in there's a lot of questions and surveys amongst community members and the surveys are redundant," says Stark. "They're very invasive because every time that a new project or proposal comes up, we, as members, have to do another survey and talk about our traditional food sources, talk about our traditional areas. So here we're trying to help expedite some of those conversations by creating this software and this database so it can help better inform our communities."

The SSIGA database collects data on three traditional food sources within the Salish Sea: salmon, crab, and shellfish. Knott says the long-term goal is to be able to provide information to assist Nations with shared territories in doing regional assessments and making decisions.

"We're not a decision-making body," says Chappell. "We're an information gathering and sharing body, but again, from our lens, our worldview.

"We see so often the disconnect between government, industry, and First Nations. And so, for us to be able to stand up and say, 'We're going to collect this. We're going to do this. We're going to give some surety to industry. . . . and what our threshold may be. . . . To me, that's an aspect of reconciliation—it's an aspect of it."

Nearly 140 data layers have been gathered, organized, and stored to date, and work is ongoing to incorporate the Indigenous lens and perspectives into the raw data in a way that accommodates the needs of the communities.

"Our intention is actually to complement what we know is ongoing work throughout the Salish Sea," says Ngo. "It's really to support each other, it's not to be in competition with anything else. We're here to prop each other up, to pull all of the resources together to get a better picture and go towards informed decision-making and meaningful participation."

"It's very empowering for our communities to be directly involved in this work, leading this work," says Knott. "I think one of the very exciting initiatives that's happening in many Nations across the country is the establishment of guardianship kind of programs that . . . balance and blend the traditional values and cultural teachings, and knowledge that comes from our elders and knowledge-keepers in our community, with science."

Chappell would like to see the information used to protect future resources. "This is our responsibility, and we need to grab a hold of that . . . and value that. Because from our teachings . . . the decisions and choices that we make now will have impacts for generations to come."

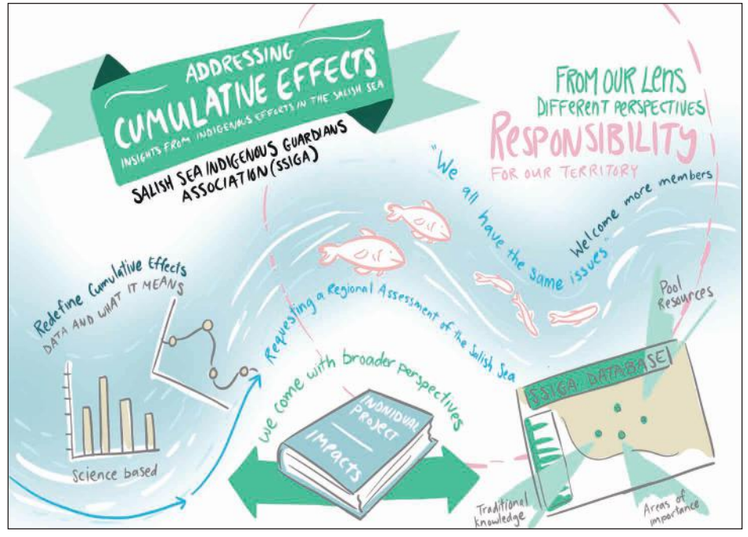


Illustration on session themes (IMAGE BY KRISTEN ELKOW FOR IPSS).

After the deal is inked

How do you ensure you fulfil your agreements? Christy Smith and Michael McPhie respond

Christy Smith and Michael McPhie have seen the scenario many times: an agreement is signed between industry and an Indigenous Nation and there's much fanfare, but then afterwards nothing happens except for monetary amounts being paid out.

"The other compliance stuff [is] missed out just because of not looking after that agreement," says Smith.

Smith and McPhie co-authored the book Weaving Two Worlds: Economic Reconciliation Between Indigenous Peoples and the Resource Sector to provide guidance to both companies and Indigenous communities on entering, and following through with, agreements.

"Often we've found that's where some of the challenges are," says McPhie. "Particularly with smaller companies, you can build expectations and then it's all really about the follow-through. . . . How can we make sure that original intent that happened at the beginning is going to be followed through as a complete organization? . . . Does the whole organization share in the values that are maybe being exposed at the beginning of the agreement? . . . Have you applied the resources all the way through to make sure that you can fill in the support?"

Christy Smith and Michael McPhie (PHOTO BY DARRYL DYCK FOR IPSS).

Smith says Indigenous communities should also be mindful of their resources. "We are limited in capacity to monitor the agreements. I know for a fact that it may be one or two agreements for a resource company, but you may be sitting with 10 agreements, 10 plus, depending on where you're located. . . . And how do you monitor compliance through all those agreements? How do you keep everybody accountable?"

Poor management of agreements can lead to deterioration of relationships, and to loss of the trust that both sides have worked hard to build. "It is like a marriage," says Smith. "You're married to that agreement and the output of what you're supposed to be doing. And if you don't fulfil your side, it can deteriorate the relationship very quickly.

"If there is an obligation to strike a committee or develop a communication plan for the year, and that just gets waylaid because you're busy, those are areas that you're going to fail in the agreement, and it eats away at . . . that relationship."

Through her work, Smith has seen that the pressure that dealing with agreements puts on Nations' leaders. "There's a lot of internal angst when you're sitting at the table and you're trying to make the best agreement possible for your Nation. Jobs and contracts tend to be the foundation of a lot of agreements and there are promises made. But what happens if the promises aren't fulfilled?"

McFie urges companies to "remember that when you're entering into a community as a corporation, you're entering their home. You have to treat it with the utmost respect. . . . The leadership on the other side, they have to go back and represent that to their community. And if as an industry person you break your vow, you're actually forcing the leadership that's on the other side of the table to break a commitment that they've made to their own people."

"People intellectualize this stuff, but this is real. This is people's lives. This is their home. And the things that industry does can really affect that. . . . It's a sacred kind of oath that you're doing when you're sitting at that table and making representation. So, you've got to follow it through. And the training and the commitments and the understanding and everything is so important."

When negotiating agreements, one area Smith and McFie encourage companies and communities to consider is procurement arrangements.

They give an example where a community received one week's notice of a bid, and then ended up disqualified because it couldn't demonstrate a history of doing successful projects of the required scale. "You might be living to the letter of the law, but you're setting it up for failure," says Smith. "If [the company] had taken the time to make the Nation aware of it, maybe a month or two before, they could have built the joint ventures ahead of time . . . and then they would have succeeded, I think."

Another aspect to consider is any change of leadership. "A real issue in the corporate world is leadership change or company change or mergers and acquisitions," says McFie. "Most agreements have a buy-in that that if leadership, or if the company, changes, it'll pass on . . . to the acquirer that they have to fulfil the intent of the agreement."

Christy Smith at IPSS 2022 (PHOTO BY DARRYL DYCK FOR IPSS).

"Leadership change is real," says Smith. "And then you're back to the table building that trust again."

"Part of this is that things do change, and you've got to have a chance," says McFie. "There will be disputes. It's going to happen. And you've got to figure out how are you going to work through those tough times."

Smith suggests "maybe not signing that 20-year agreement. But say that it will be reviewed after five years and changes are allowed . . . because things change, community needs change. The company could have changed leadership and then we need to talk about different things. The company could be doing really well and equity needs to be back on the table. So there's a lot of things that need to be considered. And one of my recommendations is to ensure that there's wording in there that allows you to reopen every certain amount of years."

Also consider what happens when the company leaves the area. "I think that's really important to think about when you're negotiating your agreements," says Smith. "Because you're not just agreeing, 'Okay, we got a five-year project, that's it.' It's how can we ensure that there's opportunity past those five years, past those 10 years . . . that you're leaving a legacy."

> **"We all have to be really aware of the commitments that are being made today, and that we have mechanisms in place to follow up and make sure that those commitments are actually being followed up on."**
>
> **Michael McFie**

Indigenizing corporate Canada

Goldman Sach's Bill Lomax and John Stackhouse of RBC on putting the "Indigenous" in BIPOC

Bill Lomax, VP at Goldman Sachs, wants to see more Indigenous representation in corporations' senior executive ranks.

"I think if you take a look at the corporate C-suite—CEO, CFO, chief operating officer—has there ever been a Native American in the fortune 500? I don't think so. And I don't know what it's like up in Canada, if we take a look at the top 50 companies, but I'd be willing to bet if there's been one, there's been one, maybe two, if that. There's definitely a lot of room for improvement."

Lomax is in conversation with John Stackhouse of RBC, during the IPSS Showcase Pathways to Indigenizing Corporate Canada.

Lomax, who has worked with First Nations and Native American tribes for about 25 years, says: "We're seeing, down in the States, one of the big issues is that there's been this big push since George Floyd to really have corporate diversity [but] there is no focus on Natives. And so, you see the word, the acronym BIPOC [black, Indigenous and people of colour], right? Second letter in there stands for Indigenous. [They] gloss over it every time."

John Stackhouse and Bill Lomax discuss (PHOTO BY DARRYL DYCK FOR IPSS).

Lomax adds that corporations should make building a diverse team a metric of a company's success. "If you say half your bonus is dependent on building out a diverse team, all of a sudden you got a diverse team. All of a sudden, people are making efforts that they just have not made before."

Stackhouse is VP in RBC's Office of the CEO. "One of the things we have been trying to come to grips with . . . is how do we rethink or reimagine employment? Because if we're just limiting employment to being a full-time employee . . . we're missing so much opportunity. Because we have engagement relationships, economic relationships, with so many Indigenous youth and other generations across the country.

"[At RBC], we're trying to rethink the metric itself. How do we measure economic engagement with communities, but also with individuals? This can be through contracts. And I don't mean call-centre contracts. Like meaningful economic contracts with individuals or teams of individuals . . . taking a more holistic approach and also being open to more fluidity."

Stackhouse says that economic reconciliation is going to require a new approach to skills. RBC's 2021 report Building Bandwidth "looked at the challenges, but also the opportunities . . . realizing we've got a lot wrong in the past. And we're rethinking our playbook on hiring, on engagement with Indigenous youth."

He also notes that the 'Great Resignation' is forcing many companies to rethink their relationships with employees.

"How do we create economic relationships and employment relationships that empower the individual to come in full time, but then leave, maybe set up their own company, serving us? And . . . maybe coming back in after they sell their company. . . . Maybe they come back to us as an executive at that level, or a senior leader. They don't come in . . . and then move up to the executive ranks. It's going to be a lot more zigzaggy. That kind of imagination, which I think is almost intuitive with youth today, is something that we laggards in the corporate world have to get more comfortable with."

Lomax says corporations "really miss the boat" by not doing lateral hiring.

"We really don't make an effort in corporate America to bring in people with great skills. There are a lot of folks in here . . . that could be working in corporate Canada or corporate America . . . but your skills may be discounted or maybe not thought of as relevant. And yet they are. You may have been running large businesses for your First Nation, as a leader, you may have . . . great leadership experience. And really when it comes down to it, skills or certain skills to your area are important, but leadership really is key to making a company successful. . . . And so I think there's a big opportunity for corporate America and corporate Canada to start recruiting there. And then on top of that, the same folks that we are just talking about should be very much eligible for opportunities for corporate board membership, right?"

At the same time, Lomax does encourage Indigenous communities to "[push] the young people in your community to go through and follow some of the traditional steps to climb that corporate ladder. Go get your MBA, get your law degree . . . and work your way up the ladder. Because having folks in those positions will have a big effect on the community long term. I can now bring a lot of the power for Goldman Sachs to the table. And the thing is I understand the issues in a deeper way than somebody who is non-Native trying to reach out to a community."

Responding to concerns about balancing corporate workload with community responsibilities, Stackhouse says: "I don't believe that working 60 hours a week is too challenging for any First Nations person. I've worked 60, 80 hours a week, I've stayed tight to my community, I go up for feasts. . . . Now more than ever, we have the opportunity to stay plugged into our communities . . . If I've got my laptop, my phone, it doesn't matter where I am, I can be working. It used to be . . . really concentrated. It had to be in the office. Now you work from anywhere, so that there's no reason you can't be massively successful in the corporate world and still be plugged into your culture is my opinion."

"COVID has opened our eyes to the future of work—that it can be done from anywhere," says Stackhouse. At the same time, he notes, one of the challenges across the country is that bandwidth in a lot of Indigenous communities "is not at the level it needs to be for active, real-time engagement.

"That's a solvable problem, but it does take a real focus, and it does take some resources . . . the support from us, the hardware and software, but also the bandwidth, the infrastructure in their communities...So I hope we can all kind of work on that together. That's a real sort of Canadian project that we can make quite possible in the 2020s."

Delegates connecting at IPSS 2022 (PHOTO BY DARRYL DYCK FOR IPSS).

One of the Git Hayetsk Dancers, People of the Copper Shield (PHOTO BY DARRYL DYCK FOR IPSS).

Empowering future reconciliation

It's a righteous pursuit, says IPSS event lead Margareta Dovgal

While there have been considerable successes to date, there is still much work to be done to achieve economic reconciliation. Many Indigenous communities continue to lack the capacity and the infrastructure to fully participate in Canada's economy—be that through partnering or developing projects on their own. Some communities lack reliable internet access, others lack clean water and adequate housing. These are urgent situations that must be remedied.

Yet other Nations are poised to participate in the natural resource or renewable energy sectors; they need only the financing or the cooperation from industry and government to make that happen. There has been some movement on these fronts, and the pace is accelerating.

Still other Nations are farther along the path—as seen at IPSS 2022—and they are freely sharing their advice and the lessons they have learned on the way.

What is certain is that Indigenous people and communities are ready for economic reconciliation. They're ready to do the work to create a prosperous future. It is up to the country's institutions, industries, governments, and fellow citizens to join them on the journey.

"What we're doing here, it's not just about business," says IPSS event lead Margareta Dovgal. "It's not just about enabling us to build shared prosperity, which is a noble and righteous pursuit. It is also about enabling us to collectively move together as a country, to build a base of common understanding. And to do the best that we can to move forward on the path to reconciliation and everything that is to come ahead of it."

Throughout the days of IPSS 2022, the stories told were entertaining and enlightening, and the conversations were brave and candid. The conference rooms were alive with an energy that was palpable, that felt electric. Was it hope? Optimism? Excitement?

As IPSS 2022 wrapped up with closing remarks from event organizers and a message from the Hon. Murray Rankin, BC Minister of Indigenous Relations and Reconciliation, the Git Hayetsk Dancers, People of the Copper Shield (Nisga'a, Tsimshian and Gitxsan Nations) took the stage. After some brief words, they began to sing and beat their drums. And it was at that moment that it became abundantly clear what the energy in the room had been.

It was power. It was the mighty power of this country's Indigenous peoples.

It is a power that they are rightly claiming as their own.

Indigenous leadership in an era of energy transformation

Why Indigenous oil and gas has a role to play in Canada's energy future

Chris Sankey believes now is the time for Indigenous communities to play a key role in the oil and gas sector.

Sankey, Lax Kw'alaams Band member and CEO of Blackfish Enterprises, says he is not blind to the fact that wind farms and solar are going to play an intricate role into our electrical grid at some point. "But that in itself is not going to be enough when we're talking about a transition.

"The field I'm so privileged to work in, and work with some of the brightest minds both on the sustainable development side and the energy sector side, is incredible. Every day these individuals are thinking about ways to reduce emissions. And the biggest that keeps coming up is the opportunity for Indigenous people and communities to lead these mega projects."

Sankey, who helped negotiate the past $36-billion Pacific Northwest LNG agreement in northern BC, says that time is of the essence.

"There's this window of opportunity for Indigenous communities to really pave the way to work with industry to look at innovation and technology and how better can we reduce our emissions and our carbon footprint."

Melissa Mbarki of the Muskowekwan First Nation and currently a policy analyst and outreach coordinator with the Macdonald-Laurier Institute agrees. "I think going forward with industry, if we could start building partnerships with operators—oil and gas, mining, pipelines—if we start building these relationships with First Nations' communities, it'll be a win-win for all."

She adds, however: "I feel like in the last five or so years with the constraints that we've had and the acts that were enacted, it really set us back. And it really put us in a place where we couldn't go forward with projects like this.

"So going forward, one of the things that I really do is I advocate for the industry because I tell them it was something that took me out of poverty. It was something that gave me a rewarding career and it was something that really let me work with my community and hundreds of communities across Canada."

Melissa Mbarki, Chris Sankey and Cody Ciona discuss our energy future (PHOTO BY DARRYL DYCK FOR IPSS).

It was through work in the natural resource sector that Mbarki was able to break free from the cycle of poverty endemic in her community.

"We have generations of residential school survivors in my community, and we also have really high rates of poverty, crime, and addiction, substance abuse. Like, we have it all in my community. One of the things that helped me was a summer position that I took on. It involved land management. I was out with the seismic crews looking at pretty much resurveying our entire reserve."

Since then, Mbarki has worked on pipelines. And: "I've worked on oil and gas. I've worked on mining operations. And I've been in the last 15 years . . . through the full lifecycle of a project. . . . I got to see how land was restored back to its original state. . . . I was out there taking soil samples. I was out there taking water samples. And I was out there planting trees. And if we can get Indigenous youth involved in this part of the industry, we would have a win-win situation for everyone."

Sankey says that Indigenous people understand they don't have the capacity on their own to make these projects succeed. "But that being said, we have to be able to open our arms and create a landing strip for industry to come to the table. So as a collective as Indigenous communities, we have to be open-minded and understanding that we do have an audience that comes to us that doesn't know who we are. . . .

"It's an opportunity for us to develop a relationship that we could create a smooth transition and create dialogue, leadership to leadership, where we could move forward and get these projects built to our standards. And industry wants to support that. But we have to be willing to open the door, and make sure the landing strip is ready.

Chris Sankey speaks at IPSS 2022 (PHOTO BY DARRYL DYCK FOR IPSS).

"I keep telling our people, 'Don't wait for government to transfer your lands because you'll be waiting forever. Go after all the fee simple land available to you and strategically position yourself so that when these opportunities do come, like these mega projects, you're in a very strong position to leverage and bring something to the table.' Not just with your land, but our language, arts, culture, and our knowledge."

Both Mbarki and Sankey advocate for early Indigenous engagement in any large projects. "Not just for the project itself," says Mbarki, "But also for the community so they know where these projects are going to be in 20, 40 years.

"One of the obstacles that we face is energy literacy. You know, we need to go out to our communities and tell them that pipelines [are for] specific commodities, whether it's oil or natural gas for LNG. You can not pump one in the other. They're specifically made and built for the commodity that it's going for. That's one of the biggest misunderstandings that I've seen out there."

Adds Sankey: "Energy literacy is key, so that as a community and as leaders, you're armed with that information, because there is a lot of misinformation that has basically scared the crap out of everybody when you talk about oil and gas."

He actively encourages Nations to work together. "If we're going to move forward, we need to be able to work together because if we don't solve what we're dealing with today . . . the next generation and the next generation is going be dealing with the mess that we left them. So it's important that we get it and have these tough discussions and don't be afraid to talk about energy.

"I've always said: Together we're stronger. . . . Come together to break bread and sit down and have a cup of tea . . . and have a frank discussion. Because the only way we're going get through this is by having those tough discussions."

Mbarki agrees: "The more that we come together with each other, the more prosperity that we're going to bring."

A proposal on resource revenue sharing: A trial balloon

Does Norway have a model for Indigenous wealth management?

What might economic reconciliation between a provincial government and First Nations look like? Dr. Don Wright, former head of the public service in BC, says one path could involve a 50/50 split of resource revenue.

During an IPSS Fireside Chat with lawyer Aaron Bruce at IPSS 2022, Wright shared a proposal he says was inspired by Norway, which established a sovereign wealth fund in 1996. By the end of 2021, that fund's value was $1.3 trillion.

Wright's proposal involves distributing 50 percent of the province's net forestry, mining, oil, and gas revenues to the First Nations on whose traditional territories the resources are located, and then allocating these to a sovereign wealth fund that would be reinvested; annual earnings would then be distributed among the Nations.

He suggests that the Nations with overlapping territorial claims agree among themselves how the revenue be shared, rather than having that dictated by the provincial government.

Wright believes this would alleviate some of the problems resulting from having to settle situations on a case-by-case basis, including "truly massive amounts of money spent in paying consultants and lawyers," stalled developments, and missed opportunities.

Don Wright (right) and Aaron Bruce (PHOTO BY DARRYL DYCK FOR IPSS).

Aaron Bruce of the Squamish Nation says that while 50 percent of net revenue sounds great as a concept, he sees that Wright's proposal raises issues related to authority and jurisdiction.

He also says that while he appreciates Wright's idea of bringing costs down, there would still be significant funds required for administration. Additionally, he says, while investing in a fund seems like an interesting idea, annual returns might not cover the "big injection of cash" many Nations need now. And that many Nations want to be able to decide on their own what to do with revenues generated on their lands, including using it to develop their own projects.

Wright emphasizes that his idea is not connected formally to the provincial government—he's "acting as a free agent"— and that this was the first time he floated the idea publicly. He acknowledges that there are challenges with the model when it comes to deciding on what "resources" are. But he says that "I just don't know of any number other than 50 percent that's really going to be sustainable. . . . Think about in terms of partnership."

"In terms of my motivation for this, I came across a quote a little while ago, and I think it's a really relevant one to this context," says Wright. "'When negotiating, don't aim for a bigger piece of the pie. Aim to create a bigger pie.'"

Squamish artist Amanda Nahanee performs at the IPSS 2022 banquet (PHOTO BY DARRYL DYCK FOR IPSS).

Indigenous communities are leading renewable projects

Chief Gordon Planes, David Isaac, and Steven Muzzo on renewable energy opportunities and creating a sustainable energy system based on Indigenous philosophies

"We're here to talk about the sunrise industries and really what a historic time for not only First Nations, Indigenous communities in Canada, in Turtle Island, but really for the world," says David Isaac, when introducing the OZZ Clean Energy Fireside Chat. "Because, as everybody's aware, we're in realtime climate change."

Isaac, who is President of the W Dusk Energy Group, was moderating a discussion with Chief Gordon Planes (Hya-Quatcha) of the T'Sou-ke Nation, and Steven Muzzo, CEO of OZZ Clean Energy.

The T'Sou-ke Nation, located on BC's Vancouver Island, has demonstrated its leadership in the innovative use of renewable energy: for more than a decade, the Nation has been generating electricity from solar panels.

The community was also planning to "put wind turbines on Vancouver Island, 100 of them, 300-megawatt project with EDP renewables," says Planes, but the project has not yet come to fruition.

"The province didn't need the power. They were building Site C. And I just thought about it, and I said, 'Well, we live on an island. We're separated from the mainland. It wouldn't come out of the taxpayer's pocket, and it would be a benefit for us to work together on Vancouver Island to strengthen ourselves into a new economy to make that transition.' I see the opportunities and maybe that opportunity isn't now. Maybe that opportunity is in a few years from now."

Chief Gordon Planes (right) shares insights alongside David Isaac (PHOTO BY DARRYL DYCK FOR IPSS).

As CEO of OZZ Clean Energy, an Ontario-based renewable energy company focused on residential and commercial solar development, Muzzo also sees opportunities that others haven't yet recognized. "Every day of the week, we're putting up buildings that are based on 1970-, 1980-engineered drawings. Not much has changed. We get frustrated in the process.

"How do you future-ready a building? Infrastructure becomes critically important. We look at these high-rise projects that sit on small parcels of land. We don't have the ability to put megawatts of solar into the ground there. So, we have to think about energy within the design of the building."

Muzzo says quite often buildings have multiple communication networks—to provide internet services, and support smart metering and IOT (Internet of Things) initiatives like leak detection—that are redundant.

"It's really about getting everyone in a room together and thinking it through more intelligently and building it right from the start. But build it in a manner where you can then think about the future. You can add other products and services in from a sustainability and energy efficiency perspective that'll just make that project a better project for the long term."

Thinking about the future for Indigenous peoples, says Planes, also involves drawing lessons from the past.

"My elders taught me how our older people used to live off the land . . . and it was done in a way that was simplistic, very easy life because it was passed down through hundreds of years of teaching. . . . We never forget that because those lessons learned . . . those are gifts.

"And when you think about the work we did with our solar voltaic project, it wasn't about solar. It was about the old way of our people. And to match that with food security because you have to add everything together within your territory and think about it. . . . Those teachings that I was able to obtain as a small boy growing up are so key to our survival. But going forward, it's going to be key for our young people to learn and then that's going be the foundation for us to go forward.

"I always like what the elders said: 'You do it for your children and your children not born yet.' When we did our solar project, we as a community got together and we said, 'What kind of project should we do?' And the elders said, 'Do a project for the children and the children will lead the way.' So, we did a solar project and it's been awesome because we feel they're the ones that'll make that shift. They're the ones that'll make those decisions. They're the ones that could speed things up."

Muzzo believes that renewable energy presents "this incredible opportunity for First Nation groups to take advantage of this infrastructure and own it long-term . . . to create long-term revenue opportunities that they can profit from. And that's really just about planning. It's just a small investment in time to create a lifetime of opportunity."

David Isaac says three out of five clean energy projects in Canada are either led or co-led by an Indigenous community. "It's really exciting to be able, as an Indigenous person, to be part of a historic time, to actually be part of an emerging sector that aligns with our Indigenous world views and traditional beliefs and in our value and respect of the land."

"It's really exciting to be able, as an Indigenous person, to be part of a historic time, to actually be part of an emerging sector that aligns with our Indigenous world views and traditional beliefs and in our value and respect of the land."

David Isaac

"Indigenous communities . . . are really creating circular economy . . . sustainable living. The way things are trending, it looks like this Indigenous concept of design and economy are really going to be essential, not just for Indigenous people, but really the world at large."

Connecting nations: Partnering to meet the infrastructure and telecommunications needs of all communities

Resolving a crisis of isolation could create untold value for Indigenous communities

The statistics on rates of digital connectivity position Canada in a positive and progressive light—88 percent of Canadians currently have reliable internet access. Yet a closer look at the numbers reveals a landscape of disparities. In urban centres, 99 percent of residents have reliable internet access; however, in rural areas, the number drops to 46 percent. And in Indigenous communities, the rate of connectivity is only 34 percent.

These alarming numbers were presented by Shazia Zeb-Sobani, VP og network implementation at Telus, during the panel discussion Connecting Nations: Partnering to Meet the Infrastructure and Telecommunications Needs of All Communities.

"And when you actually start to look at the provinces, BC is really well-connected comparatively, where Indigenous connectivity is about 63 percent," says Zeb-Sobani. "But Alberta, the connectivity for Indigenous communities there is sub 20 percent — 18.4 percent. The majority of people are being constrained from participating in the digital economy, constrained from participating in digital health, in remote learning and education."

It's not solely the lack of telecommunications infrastructure impacting Indigenous communities, but all forms of infrastructure.

Ruby Littlechild, who lives in Alberta and comes from a Cree-Maskwacis background, says of where she is from: "We're not near a city. So, the four nations, they're along Highway 2 between Edmonton and Calgary, but there's no economy. It's the poverty. . . I'm always constantly educating my colleagues on the prevalent poverty in our communities, the lack of connectivity. Once we drive into the reservation, our phones stop working, our battery dies because of the lack of connectivity. . . . My mother, my family, their teeth are bad because of the water. The water's yellow, it's not drinkable. The roads are horrible."

Joe Bevan of the Kitselas Nation in BC says his communities have been in a more fortunate position partly due to their proximity to the northern BC city of Terrace. The Nation formed a relationship with the city and the regional district: "We had signed a protocol agreement to work together instead of opposing one another. Even though they were on our traditional territory, we said, 'Let's develop it together' . . . and we developed the Skeena industrial lands right beside the airport up in Terrace."

Bevan adds his Nation also has "a lot of great relationships with some of the LNG industry folks."

Yet one of the communities was still faced with connectivity challenges: "Here's a community, 22 kilometres outside of Terrace, and didn't have broadband. And it was just so frustrating. . . . That's where our main administration building is. And we have quite a few of our people living out that way. It was very frustrating for a lot of people to get connected to the world, in more ways than one. If we think about it, we're going to be transacting that way in the near future. And if we don't have broadband, that means we're excluded."

The Kitselas Nation worked with Telus to bring broadband internet to the community, and Bevan is very happy with the results and the relationship. His one concern was the amount of time—17 months—to get provincial regulatory approval and funding subsidies. "Seventeen months. If we were in business together, business would've gone sideways real quick. And we are in business together right now. We really need to rethink these ways of going forward."

Zeb-Sobani agrees that 17 months for approval is unacceptable, and notes that more recently, "we have actually seen speedy approval processes, especially with the government of BC.

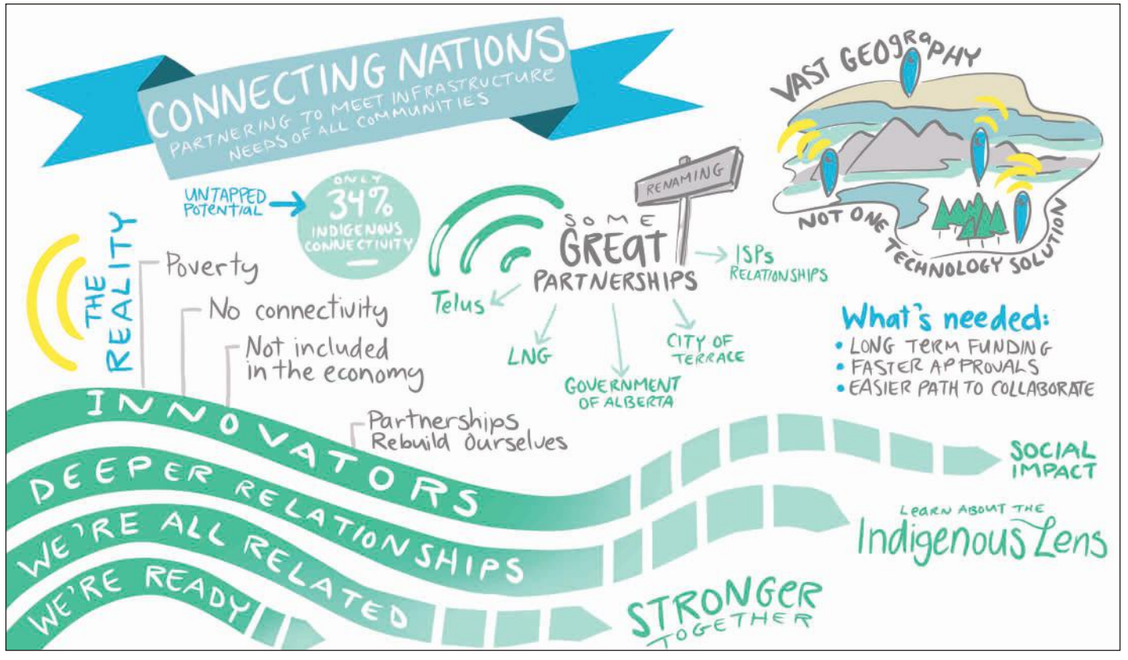
"We are seeing that the applications are invited, and they are accepted and being provided feedback on, in a rather quick way. . . . The result of that is that us alone at Telus, through that change in the policy and availability of funding, we have connected 19 Indigenous communities just last year. We are working on 22 Indigenous communities to be connected with pure fibre this year, and then we have another 19 communities on the books for the next year. That is progress. Maybe it's not fast enough, but I'm a very optimistic person and a positive person. . . . So we are moving in the right direction.

"But does that mean that there's nothing left to be addressed? There's still a lot to be addressed. There are lots of challenges, right? And, when we think about our beautiful country and its diverse geography . . . it's difficult to build infrastructure, and it's difficult to apply a single technology solution across various types of footprints and geographies. We need to have a very rich tool set, and we need to stay flexible with the use of that tool set."

And it is through great partnerships that the right solutions can be found, says Zeb-Sobani. One example is in the Cariboo Chilcotin, where Telus started a project in 2019 with partners including Interior Health and a dozen Indigenous communities.

"By the end of next year, that entire region will have connectivity. And that entire region will have the pure fibre connectivity except for one reserve. And why we were not extending it there? Because we worked with that community closely, and they did not want a very intrusive solution to the land. So, we are extending fixed wireless solution for that community. This is what we call partnership, where everybody has a place at the table, where everybody's capabilities and their unique perspective is respected

> "I can only imagine the untapped potential that is waiting for an audience . . . to show their talents, their products or services. But [that] all requires connectivity."
>
> Joe Bevan



A graphic illustration by Drawing Change reflecting session themes (IMAGE BY KRISTEN ELKOW FOR IPSS).

and integrated to create a beautiful outcome."

In Quebec, Telus also worked with the provincial and federal governments to bring connectivity to Innu communities.

"They had a desperate need for connectivity. Because 5,500 people living across 14 communities on 400-kilometre-long coastline without roads and connectivity, you can just imagine what they were deprived of and how they were constrained not to participate in economic and social activities of their lives. So that was a very difficult geography to extend connectivity."

That strong partnership led to a one-of-a-kind solution: one of world's largest microwave-based cellular-technology applications. Today all 5,500 residents across the coastline enjoy the connectivity.

"At Telus, we start partnership with deep relationship building, then progress it to mutual trust and respect for the unique capabilities that each party or each partner brings to the table," says Zeb-Sobani. "By combining those unique skills, then we can go stronger together. So, in the realm of connectivity, we work with the Nations directly . . . really working closely and understanding what the unique needs are, and then going together with the Indigenous communities to provincial and federal governments, then to broaden that partnership agreement."

James Delorme of Indigeknow technology services, and former chief of the Klahoose First Nation in BC, says: "I've got to give kudos to TELUS, and obviously SNC-Lavalin, because they're investing. They're not just the words, but they're actually taking the revenue and they're putting that into that effort. . . . What I want to see is for more private companies to invest out those dollars, time, and energy into learning more about that Indigenous lens. . . . And what I mean by that is that we're not linear. We think more in a broader sense, and we think less in silos and more in partnerships and unique situations. And when industry starts to look at that in that lens, then you start to see the partnerships and the opportunities that lay in front of you. And they're huge. They're massive."

Ruby Littlechild, who is national director of Indigenous eelations with SNC Lavalin, suggests companies hire grassroots First Nations professionals—those with education and lived experience.

"That's how you create systemic change in companies. I've always worked in mainstream organizations, but I've always brought my grassroots lived experience to these companies. And they've listened, they wanted to learn. . . . I am really grateful for those non-Indigenous allies who partner and . . . who say, 'We've got to do better. We need to do better, and we need to do it right.'"

Joe Bevan discusses connectivity alongside fellow panelists (PHOTO BY DARRYL DYCK FOR IPSS).

At a glance

If culture is at the heart of any movement, then Indigenous art and music are central to the reconciliation project. Enjoy these highlights from our IPSS 2022 banquet, captured by photographer Darryl Dyck.


YAMAHA

MOSAIC FOREST MANAGEMENT PROUDLY SUPPORTS
THE 2023 INDIGENOUS PARTNERSHIPS SUCCESS SHOWCASE

Indigenous Partnerships helping create new value from Forests

By Domenico Iannidinardo
Senior Vice President, Forest & Climate and Chief Forester, Mosaic Forest Management

The heart of the modern forest industry is about flipping an old cliché on its head. It's about seeing the forest and the trees.

What this requires is approaching working forest lands—and forest lands with potential for harvest—with sustainability in mind. How can we ensure that the forest and all its values are maximized today, tomorrow, and well into the future?

Mosaic Forest Management is the largest private timberlands producer in Canada, and our operations stretch the length and breadth of Vancouver Island and Haida Gwaii. We work with sustainability at the core on all those lands—from partnerships with First Nations and communities to opening up recreational and community access to our lands and collaborating on protecting shared environments like sensitive areas and community watersheds.

We've taken this approach for decades. More than 20 years ago, we were Canada's first forestry company to be certified under the Sustainable Forestry Initiative. We were the first forest company globally to achieve certification of its carbon footprint by the Carbon Trust. We were British Columbia's first forestry company to achieve Progressive Aboriginal Certification from the Canadian Council of Aboriginal Business.

We are continuing to build on our progress with the recently announced BigCoast Forest Climate Initiative. It may sound counterintuitive for a forest company, but the heart of the initiative is not cutting down trees.

Through the initiative, Mosaic has deferred timber harvesting on 40,000 hectares of private land for at least the next 25 years. That is an area over three times the size of Vancouver set aside. It's also important to note the type of forests set aside. These lands contribute to the broader regional ecosystem, home to bears, elk, salmon, orca, and more.

How can a forest company afford not to cut down trees? It's about seeing the value of the forest beyond those trees.

The deferral will bring high-quality, large-scale, nature-based carbon credits to the growing international and domestic market. The increased carbon storage and avoidance of 20 million metric tonnes of greenhouse gas emissions through the deferral will be independently verified, packaged, and sold. The Verified Carbon Standard (VCS), the world's most widely used and rigorous voluntary carbon program, will certify these carbon credits.

For Mosaic, this is the start of the process. We have much to learn. That's why part of the proceeds benefit local partners—the Pacific Salmon Foundation and the Indigenous Protected and Conserved Areas (IPCA) Innovation Program—to support scientific and First Nations cultural research on and around the project lands. These partnerships are critical—and will help the BigCoast Forest Climate Initiative evolve and grow through research and knowledge we just don't have. It's our goal to develop and grow together.

Recently, I had the chance to catch up with Eli Enns, the Co-Director of the Indigenous Protected and Conserved Areas Innovation Program and an internationally recognized expert in Indigenous-led conservation in a forest that is part of the initiative. He brings his background in political science to work as a 'Nation-builder' with values and approaches rooted in Indigenous economic theory and practice.

He pointed to the opportunity that will come from learning from BigCoast Forest related to how original ecosystems can guide climate adaptation and build more resilient communities that work with Mother Nature, now and into the future. The key is respecting old forests for their original, diverse ecosystems.

The possibilities stretch far beyond what you might think in delaying harvest and selling carbon credits. Eli says to think about a unique approach to housing. The T'Sou-ke Nation, with funding from the Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation, has already spent a couple of years looking at what housing would look like in an IPCA context. One idea is an eco-village that accompanies the BigCoast Forest protected areas with sustainable livelihood programs and jobs created by restoring ecosystems.

Another member of the IPCA, Chief Gordon Planes of the T'Sou-ke First Nation, explained to me the importance of learning from the land. He said Canadians walking the land and looking at it through the lens of a First Nation would learn and absorb and, in the end, take care of the land.

The Chief suggested thinking about the forest by thinking about a cedar tree—and what will happen in 25 years. Those trees are important because of the teachings members of his First Nation will hand down. It means young children will know that if they need to build a canoe in the future, the opportunity will be there. It's about knowing everything in the forest has a reason for being and that within 25 years, the partnership with BigCoast Forest will deliver a clearer understanding of the path all of us are taking.

Photo: Salish Eye Productions

Domenico Iannidinardo, Senior Vice President, Climate & Forest and Chief Forester, Mosaic Forest Management with Eli Enns, Co-Director, Indigenous Protected and Conserved Areas Innovation Program and Chief Gordon Planes

For Chief Planes, the next 25 years of the project will be about looking at the health of the old forests and their diversity, then comparing it to the health in second growth and third growth forests. He says that will open up more understanding of how the territory works, from water quality to air quality and wildlife health—all things that are connected. Looking at those connections over a 25-year span will deliver a clearer understanding of what comes next. He's confident we're going to find out things that are very important for our ability to take care of Mother Earth.

For me and everyone at Mosaic, there's genuine excitement about what BigCoast Forest and the partnership with the IPCA can deliver. It goes well beyond the trees to the whole forest, to the local environment and wildlife. And what we've started together will serve as a blueprint for a more sustainable future.

BIGCOAST FOREST
scan me

MOSAIC FOREST MANAGEMENT
scan me

IPSS 2022's closing performance by the Git Hayetsk Dancers (PHOTO BY DARRYL DYCK FOR IPSS).

Conference evaluation

- **$7 million public relations value**
- **98% delegate satisfaction**
- **40% of non-venue event costs invested in the Indigenous economy**

With its message of renewal, connection and commitment, the 2022 Indigenous Partnerships Success Showcase (IPSS) made local, provincial and national headlines. Thanks to 458 media hits including media release pickups and earned stories, the news of the historic event reached nearly 250 million people and produced a public relations value of $7 million, not including televised coverage.

Clearly, something is resonating.

Responses from the more than 700 delegates who attended the event show similar enthusiasm.

According to attendee survey results, 98% of attendees rated the event as "good" or "excellent" and 88% said the event exceeded their expectations. Meanwhile, 73% of participants strongly agreed that the event was well organized. In fact, 65% said the length and pace of the event was excellent while 9% wished for even more time, indicating significant interest in the conversations featured. Finally, 92% of attendees said they would "absolutely" attend the same format in 2023.

But, as our event chair Chief Ian Campbell says, true reconciliation requires "reconcili-action." In 2022, IPSS made a tangible difference not only in the stories shared on-stage but also by making a tangible investment in the Indigenous economy itself, spending nearly half of non-venue event expenditures on Indigenous contractors and small businesses.

IPSS exists to advance a vision of a renewed society – one based on a shared commitment to economic reconciliation and connection. In a time of tectonic change, relationships and a personal willingness to work together for shared success and understanding can have transformative results. Out of poverty, exclusion and trauma can emerge prosperity, friendship and hope.

The foundation is laid. As we have seen over the last three years of IPSS, Indigenous peoples are overcoming tremendous challenges to reach new heights of success. Much of this success has emerged from partnerships with the business community. But there is still work to be done.

How will partnerships build on growing success? What's next for urban Indigenous land development, pipeline equity progress and the first projects begun under UNDRIP legislation?

History is being made, and that means our job telling these stories is far from finished.

Economic reconciliation leaders

Economic reconciliation is the path to Indigenous renewal. Key individuals and organizations are leading the conversation, many of whom are official program partners of the Indigenous Partnerships Success Showcase (IPSS). In these pages, you'll hear from Tabitha Bull, president and CEO of the Canadian Council of Aboriginal Business; Dale Swampy, president of the National Coalition of Chiefs; Lisa Mueller, president of the Nation2Nation Forum; and key individuals in the innovative Alberta Indigenous Opportunities Corporation (AIOC).

How should corporate Canada begin new projects? Can natural resources become a road to Indigenous prosperity? What are the connectivity challenges slowing the growth of the Indigenous economy, and what does the AIOC's new mandate mean for Indigenous opportunity in Alberta? These are just some of the critical questions explored by our program partners.

Readers will also find a guest column by Adam Pankratz featured in this section. Pankratz, a lecturer at the University of British Columbia's Sauder School of Business, is a frequent commentator on the intersection between business and economic reconciliation, especially within natural resource industries.

Other program partners of IPSS include the First Nations Major Projects Coalition, the Indigenous Resource Opportunities Conference, the Indigenous Resource Network, Global Public Affairs, Foresight Canada, Deyen, Ch'nook Indigenous Business Education at the University of British Columbia, the Vancouver Career College and Emily Carr University.

Chief Corrina Leween and Bob Merasty connecting at IPSS 2022 (PHOTO BY DARRYL DYCK FOR IPSS).

Spotlight on the AIOC

Crown corporation's milestones lead to an expanded mandate featured at the Indigenous Partnerships Success Showcase

About a 90-minute drive east of the Rockies near Edson, Alberta's road to transition from coal-fired power generation runs parallel to a meaningful pathway for reconciliation with First Nations.

Here, six First Nations are ensuring Alberta's growing demand for clean electricity supplies also translates into a new economic reality for Indigenous communities by having an equity stake in the $1.5-billion Cascade Power Plant Project.

Backed by a $93-million loan guarantee from Alberta Indigenous Opportunities Corporation (AIOC), the Cascade Power Plant Project is to be a 900-megawatt combined-cycle natural gas-fired power generation, which will play a role in transitioning the province away from coal-fired power.

"This deal is transformational for the First Nations involved and creates the national blueprint for Indigenous communities to acquire ownership in major energy and infrastructure projects," said Chief Tony Alexis of the Alexis Nakota Sioux Nation.

"Financial security through AIOC for these participating First Nations in the Cascade Power Project will contribute to our energy grid, get people in Alberta back to work and put First Nations on a path to prosperity," said Alberta Premier Jason Kenney.

The Cascade Power Project is but one project backed by AIOC, which is committed to advancing meaningful reconciliation through strategic, shared value partnerships with Indigenous communities.

Others include a $40-million loan guarantee for eight Indigenous communities in the Wood Buffalo Region to finance an ownership interest in the Northern Courier Pipeline System (NCP System) and a $25-million loan guarantee to the Frog Lake First Nation for its investment in the Strathcona Resources' Lindbergh Cogeneration Facility.

"The work being undertaken contributes to reconciliation, which involves Indigenous communities accessing greater economic participation and investment opportunities," said Stephen Buffalo, board chair of AIOC.

Established as an Alberta Crown corporation in 2019, AIOC has been delegated the authority to provide up to $1 billion in loan guarantees to reduce the cost of capital for Indigenous groups and support their ability to raise capital.

"These loan guarantees help Indigenous groups participate in large equity share projects without having to leverage their traditional lands for financing," said Buffalo.

In addition, AIOC also provides capacity grants to assist Indigenous groups access third-party advice and expertise for assessing and developing a potential project. It has three million dollars per year to assist Indigenous groups with independent third-party legal, technical, and economic support. These capacity grants do not need to be repaid.

The success of AIOC has led to an expansion of its mandate and generated interest from other provinces to establish similar organizations to provide Indigenous equity share partnerships with corporate Canada.

Earlier in 2022, the government of Alberta expanded AIOC's mandate from natural-resource projects to include and create additional opportunities for Indigenous investment in major agriculture, telecommunications and transportation projects and related infrastructure.

As under the original mandate, the new eligible

The AIOC is a program partner of IPSS. To learn more, visit TheAIOC.com.

Amber-Dawn Boudreau shared the AIOC's new mandate at IPSS 2022 (PHOTO BY DARRYL DYCK FOR IPSS).

sectors require a minimum of $20 million of Indigenous investment to receive AIOC backing, with a maximum loan guarantee of $250 million per investment.

"At AIOC, our over-arching goal is to create a more equitable economy for all, and the expansion of our mandate broadens the opportunities available to our Indigenous community partners to better accomplish economic prosperity for their communities," said Buffalo.

"By expanding opportunities beyond the natural-resource sector, we are now able to consider a myriad of additional proposals. The expanded mandate further reinforces the stability and strength of the organization and commitment we have to supporting the health and well-being of our communities through directly contributing to Alberta's economy."

AIOC brought its message of thinking outside the box regarding Indigenous communities getting involved in large equity-share projects to the 2022 edition of the Indigenous Partnerships Success Showcase (IPSS), held in Vancouver and online.

The two-day IPSS event with central themes of renewal, connection and commitment highlighted how leading-edge relationships among Indigenous business and corporate Canada are making reconciliation a reality for the whole nation.

"Canada's Indigenous economy is worth $30 billion, and it is expected to more than triple in the coming years, hitting $100 billion by 2025," said Stewart Muir, who founded the Indigenous Partnerships Success Showcase

"Much of this success comes through partnerships like those developed and backed by AIOC," he said.

Spotlight on the CCAB

Canadian Council for Aboriginal Business calls on Corporate Canada to build strong ties with First Nations

Tabitha Bull of the CCABB (PHOTO BY CCAB FOR IPSS).

Indigenous businesses and start-ups need better access to financing to cultivate "ground-up" economic opportunities for First Nations communities, says the Canadian Council for Aboriginal Business (CCAB).

"We know from research that access to financing is one of the biggest barriers for Indigenous businesses," said Tabatha Bull, president and CEO of CCAB.

"Only a third of Indigenous businesses have a relationship with our traditional financial institutions so access to financing and capital are definitely big barriers," she said.

Bull said barriers to access post-secondary education must also be removed to improve the financial literacy of First Nations youth who see themselves as business leaders.

Bull also called for corporate Canada to build strong ties with First Nations before planning any projects on traditional lands.

"We need to build projects together versus a corporation having a project set, budgeted and ready and then going to a community asking if they want to approve it or if there is an opportunity for them to be involved," she said.

"Start projects right and start them with First Nations," said Bull, whose organization partnered with the 2022 edition of the Indigenous Partnerships Success Showcase (IPSS).

The Indigenous Partnerships Success Showcase responds to the growing demand for practical guidance in how First Nations, Métis and Inuit communities and their enterprise partners can work together, in common purpose, for shared success.

"I think it is incredible for us to be able to showcase and celebrate these partnerships and to be able to have those honest conversations with corporate Canada and communities working together," she said.

"There is a real ripple effect that happens from these partnerships, and we need to be able to talk about them more."

In an earlier interview with IPSS, Dale Swampy, president of the National Coalition of Chiefs, said Indigenous-led corporations should have a 50% stake in all new natural-resource development projects to form resilient partnerships that will bring an economic reality towards Canada's reconciliation with First Nations.

"This will pull our next generation out of poverty and showcase what our people can do to change the global image of Canada's natural-resource sector," he said.

"Canadians must recognize the rights that First

The CCAB is a program partner of IPSS. To learn more, visit CCAB.com.

Nations have to the land and that First Nations communities must be full participants in the development of our abundant natural resources."

A recent study by the University of Waterloo calls on Ottawa to rebuild trust between Indigenous peoples and Westernized society, via financial literacy programs.

The study found that various financial issues stem from the fact that many First Nation reserves are isolated (physically and culturally) from Westernized Canadian society. A large portion of these issues links back to the distrust and segregation between the two communities.

"In decreasing this segregation, those living on reserves may feel more inclined to be involved in the economic marketplace, increasing Indigenous financial literacy, access to the financial marketplace, and overall monetary wellness," the report said.

It found that a key reason why some Indigenous people do not get loans from mainstream financial institutions is from fear of getting rejected as many have poor credit histories. "Indigenous people also do not feel welcomed in banks and feel looked down upon for having low income, the authors said.

"The proposed program would allow community ambassadors to educate Indigenous peoples of all ages on financial matters ranging from simple banking and budgeting, student aid opportunities, to mortgaging and investment pathways.

"These ambassadors can hold community forums and classes, partner with local schools to speak with students about educational opportunities and hold one-on-one meetings with community individuals looking for financial guidance," said the report.

Anita Huberman shares reflections during a time for delegate responses (PHOTO BY DARRYL DYCK FOR IPSS).

Spotlight on the N2N Forum

While Canada's Indigenous population grows at four times the national average, over 60% of BC's rural and remote Indigenous communities lack adequate internet connectivity

Lisa Mueller (PHOTO PROVIDED BY N2N FOR IPSS).

The lack of affordable, high-speed internet connectivity is blocking the cultural revitalization and economic diversification of remote Indigenous communities, says a First Nations business leader fighting to fix the urban-rural digital divide in British Columbia.

"Some communities, especially in Northern BC are still using unreliable dial-up services while large swaths of Highway 16 don't even have cellphone service," said Lisa Mueller, who founded the Nation2Nation Forum, a platform for Indigenous leaders to share their perspectives on economic development and major projects. Nation2Nation was a partner of the 2022 Indigenous Partnerships Success Showcase (IPSS).

"Remote First Nations communities need high-speed connectivity and we need it now," said Mueller, who hails from the Tsilhqot'in Nation.

Acknowledging the lack of cellular access on Highway 16, The Highway of Tears, which has been the location of many missing and murdered Indigenous women, the government is building 12 new cellular sites from Prince Rupert to Witset for 252 highway kilometres, and connectivity at three rest areas.

"High-speed connectivity is essential to First Nations' success and partnerships but many in remote Indigenous communities know a different reality," said Mueller, who is the strategic advisor for the IPSS.

"Affordable high-speed connectivity will allow our communities to set their own priorities, both culturally and economically, and develop projects that will improve the lives of Indigenous youth to become the leaders of tomorrow.

"Fixing this digital gap is key to the truth and reconciliation process."

High-speed internet is essential for First Nations voices to be, said Mueller, adding that without connectivity not all voices will be heard.

BC's auditor general in a report in 2021 found that almost all urban areas in the province have high-speed internet.

"But 60% of rural and remote communities and 62% of rural and remote Indigenous communities still lack adequate internet (i.e., access to the 50/10 Mbps target speed)," said the report.

The COVID-19 pandemic emphasized the importance of access to reliable, high-speed internet as our work, school and personal lives have increasingly shifted online, said the auditor general, adding the government has provided $190 million in funding for the Connecting British Columbia program.

In 2017, the Canadian Radio-television and Telecommunications Commission (CRTC) found that only about 24 percent of households in First Nations communities had high-speed internet, compared with 97 percent of urban and 37 percent of rural households.

In a more recent report, the Royal Bank of Canada found a 13-percentage-point gap in confidence between Indigenous and non-Indigenous youth when it comes to digital literacy. The gap was widest among those still in school and narrowed as young people gained work experience.

"Indigenous youth are going to play a key role in bridging their communities to the digital age," said the report authors, collating data from a survey of 2,000 First Nations youth. "Imagine how much more they could do if given the right tools."

That survey found that the Indigenous youth population in Canada is growing at a pace four times faster than the rest of the country's youth, while Indigenous people create new businesses at nine times the Canadian average.

The RBC report authors urged Ottawa to fulfill the federal commitment to provide high-speed Internet, including broadband and related infrastructure to every Canadian by 2030, prioritizing underserviced Indigenous communities.

They also highlighted the need for partnerships and investments in online education to expand course offerings for Indigenous students and more representation of Indigenous culture, languages and content in online spaces.

Stewart Muir, the founder of the Indigenous Partnerships Success Showcase, said Canada's Indigenous economy is worth $30 billion and it is expected to more than triple in the coming years, hitting $100 billion by 2025.

"Economic reconciliation is the key to securing bright futures for First Nations, Métis and Inuit communities — and connectivity opens the door to continued prosperity for all Canadians in this era of transformative change," he said.

The N2N Forum is a program partner of IPSS. To learn more, visit Nation2Nation.ca.

An IPSS 2022 delegate shares her thoughts during a time of listening (PHOTO BY DARRYL DYCK FOR IPSS).

IPSS 2022 was an engaging experience for delegates (PHOTO BY DARRYL DYCK FOR IPSS).

Spotlight on the NCC

The time has come for First Nations to be active participants in the development of Canadian natural resources, says Dale Swampy of the National Coalition of Chiefs

Indigenous entrepreneurs are finding their voice and they have a message for natural-resource industries: We want in.

"Canadians must recognize the rights that First Nations have to the land, and that First Nations communities must be full participants in the development of our abundant natural resources," says Dale Swampy, founder and president of the National Coalition of Chiefs (NCC),

Indigenous-enterprise partnerships have the potential to lift Indigenous communities out of poverty while building a strong voice in support of a renewed, reconciled resource economy.

"First Nations-led partnerships will build a stronger voice for Canada's natural resource industry. . . . We do not have that voice now," Swampy argues.

Equity-based partnerships in new development projects are becoming an increasingly popular and meaningful way to commit to economic reconciliation.

These kinds of partnerships "will pull our next generation out of poverty and showcase what our people can do to change the global image of Canada's natural resource sector," Swampy continued.

The NCC joined the Indigenous Partnerships Success Showcase (IPSS) as a program partner for its 2022 event in Vancouver. The IPSS was formed in response to the growing demand for practical guidance in how First Nations, Métis and Inuit communities and their enterprise partners build meaningful partnerships as they work together for shared success.

"The IPSS is an excellent platform to communicate what it means to be part of First Nations partnerships in energy, mining, forestry and other natural-resource development projects," said Swampy, a member of the Samson Cree Nation in Alberta.

"We think it is the First Nations that should be leading the development of Canada's natural resources to show how these partnerships with industry can ensure environmental protection and sustainable practices.

"The time has come for First Nations to be active participants in the development of Canadian natural resources, to ensure we are not still living in poverty and despair a generation from now. Most Canadians know this and more First Nations support the natural resource sectors, like oil and gas, than oppose it."

Swampy's coalition is committed to working with the natural-resource industry for a shared prosperity.

Those views are reflected in a IPSS-IPSOS poll that showed 72 percent of Canadians agree that natural-resource development is a good way for Indigenous communities to reduce poverty and build economic independence.

Seven in ten Canadians also agree that "natural-resource development is a good way for Indigenous communities to create skilled and well-paying jobs."

Another key finding of the national poll is that

Dale Swampy (PHOTO PROVIDED BY NCC FOR IPSS).

nearly half of Canadians agree that "Indigenous opposition to natural-resource development projects is often exaggerated by non-Indigenous groups who oppose these projects for other reasons."

In the oil and gas sector, for example, Swampy said governments and the industry have been too passive, allowing coordinated groups to take advantage of the poverty and desperation experienced by many Indigenous people.

"Instead of putting on work boots and making a good living from the sector, some young people are paid by ENGOs (environmental non-governmental organizations) to protest at blockades and aggressively challenge authorities," he wrote in a recent commentary.

"These acts of defiance give those who want to shut down the industry the distortion they are looking for to make it appear there is widespread Indigenous opposition to oil and gas. This is despite the extensive support the vast majority of Indigenous communities and leadership have towards these projects.

"It is time for a much more sophisticated strategy that matches the efforts of the sector's detractors and brings greater synchronicity and purpose to all of our efforts to demonstrate to the world we are committed partners in prosperity."

Perhaps the best way to demonstrate that commitment to responsibility and reconciliation lies in partnerships, including entrepreneurial equity-based models.

"What Canada's First Nations want is action, not just acknowledgements. . . . We need reconciliation that has real value, not empty gestures. That's what we want."

The NCC is a program partner of IPSS. To learn more, visit Coalitionofchiefs.ca.

IPSS 2022 delegates mingle at the IPSS reception (PHOTO BY DARRYL DYCK FOR IPSS).

Guest column

Natural resources and reconciliation

This September, a great salvo was launched in the energy wars. Western governments imposed price caps on oil and gas in an attempt to cut off Russia and Vladimir Putin's war in Ukraine. Mr. Putin responded by saying that Russia would refuse to supply any country which imposed caps of any kind.

The energy markets reeled.

The last year has revealed to the world, in stark delineations, the need for energy security. Green initiatives that western governments are pushing towards have been exposed as currently aspirational and long term. There will not be a quick transition. Those of us who have long shouted this from the rooftops are not surprised.

The world is once again back to consuming over 100 million barrels of oil per day and shows no sign of slowing. A move away from such a dependency on fossil fuels, developed over a century, will take time and be measured in decades. This is the reality. In some ways we should be grateful it was presented to us so obviously by the current energy crisis, while we can still do something about it.

For many countries the recognition of the primacy of energy security was cause for panic and desperation. Nowhere more so than Europe for the simple reason that their natural resources are incredibly limited. The opposite is true in Canada. We have more reserves than we know what to with. Our oil sands have over 166 billion proven barrels of oil and our gas reserves exceed 80 trillion cubic feet.

The economic opportunity here is blindingly obvious: we must do everything to extract our resources and get them to Europe where they are in dire need of them. A single ship of LNG cargo at current prices is worth more than $100 million. If we had the terminals we could easily export one ship a day to the world. This represents $36 billion dollars a year of lost value due to poor resource development.

The green transition so often talked about will also require minerals. Canada's minerals production in 2020 was valued at over $43 billion. We are the world leader in the production of potash and rank in the top three in both uranium and platinum. There is no green transition without copper, lithium and other metals which Canada has in abundance, yet we continue to avoid this reality as well.

There is also a moral and societal argument here in Canada as well. That argument is the huge economic opportunity LNG and other resources represent for First Nations communities in Canada, and particularly in BC. LNG Canada and the Coastal GasLink (CGL) will bring in billions of dollars in royalties and jobs to these communities. Canadian natural resources represent a real and tangible difference maker for First Nations opportunity, education and training unlike anything else currently available.

Multiple leaders have spoken on the importance of this issue for these communities. Visionaries in this space include Crystal Smith of the Haisla Nation, Karen Ogen-Toews, CEO of the First Nations LNG Alliance and Wet'suwet'en member, Ellis Ross, Haisla member and MLA for Skeena and Chris Sankey, a former councillor for the Lax Kw' Alaams Band and business owner. To these names we could add many more. All of them recognize in our resources and LNG the opportunity for prosperity in business minded Indigenous communities.

Adam Pankratz (PHOTO PROVIDED FOR IPSS).

When we consider the waterfall of words politicians are keen to pour into the bucket of reconciliation it is striking that in the name of economic reconciliation so many avoid the topic of natural resource development. For make no mistake: there is no industry that can offer the economic opportunity to First Nations communities that our natural resources can. Over 10,000 Indigenous people living off reserve work in the oil and gas sector, representing over 5% of the entire workforce. In British Columbia, CGL is set to provide over 2,500 jobs to local and Indigenous communities. While many jobs promises fail to deliver the resources jobs up in spades.

Beyond energy, our much maligned mining and minerals industry provides 634,000 direct and indirect jobs to Canadians, 12% of which are filled by Indigenous workers.

All of these figures represent real jobs for real people.

Canada has at long last begun to repair a fraught and difficult relationship with its Indigenous people. For many communities and leaders there finally seems to be some light at the end of a long tunnel of negotiations and hard fought battles for rights and respect. Developing our resources in conjunction with the business-minded and entrepreneurial leaders and members of Indigenous communities represents the most tangible and immediate positive actions any government in Canada can take to make economic reconciliation a reality.

Canada is blessed with the resources the world needs to be energy secure today and transition to a greener future tomorrow. Our resources represent real opportunity for First Nations communities and offer a clear pathway to prosperity for communities who have sought it for so long. To ignore the value our energy and mineral resources offer our country is to fail on both an economic and moral basis.

Adam Pankratz is a lecturer at the University of British Columbia's Sauder School of Business.

Git Hayetsk Dancers (PHOTO BY DARRYL DYCK FOR IPSS).

Economic reconciliation is redefining corporate Canada

In 2016, the Truth & Reconciliation Commission on Indian Residential Schools called upon corporate Canada to adopt the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples (UNDRIP) as a reconciliation framework and to apply its principles to policies and activities involving Indigenous people and their lands and resources. It's a call that many in corporate Canada are beginning to answer, with the potential to redefine business at the highest levels in British Columbia and Canada.

The Indigenous Partnerships Success Showcase features voices leading this evolution in partnership with Indigenous communities and leaders. It convenes a space for the critical questions facing not only corporate Canada but a unified, renewed confederation.

Between our events, the story of this transformation continues. In the following pages of sponsored stories, you'll hear how economic reconciliation is redefining industries from shipping to energy to construction.

Author

The author of the following sponsored stories, CJ McGillivray is an intuitive storyteller and content creator with a background in theatre and literary studies. Her content writing covers a broad range of topics including sustainability, education, social justice, health and technology. She is a proud recipient of the UBC Centennial Scholars Entrance Award and the Marianna Brady PhD. Scholarship.

IPSS 2022 delegates captivated by Jody Wilson-Raybould's fireside chat (PHOTO BY DARRYL DYCK FOR IPSS).

GCT Global Container Terminals demonstrates commitment to reconciliation

Efforts include facilitating dialogue, prioritizing sustainability, and collaborating respectfully with Indigenous peoples

As a generation of Indigenous entrepreneurs and leaders demands action on economic reconciliation, corporate leads across Canada are stepping up to partner in a movement of collaboration, hope and economic renewal.

For GCT Global Container Terminals Inc. (GCT), this commitment includes providing a space for critical conversations about economic reconciliation and Indigenous prosperity. Through its continued patron sponsorship of the Indigenous Partnerships Success Showcase (IPSS), GCT directly supports the sharing of ideas and initiatives that Indigenous thought leaders will bring to the IPSS stage in Vancouver and online this coming May.

Returning for a third consecutive year, the IPSS is a response to the growing demand for practical guidance on how First Nations, Métis and Inuit communities can work together with their enterprise partners toward a common goal of shared success.

This ongoing sponsorship demonstrates GCT's willingness to listen, learn and support vital conversations. In anticipation of the upcoming 2022 showcase, GCT is "looking forward to gathering together, sharing experiences and ideas and recreating the connection and commitment" of previous years, says Marko Dekovic, vice president of public affairs at GCT.

Through its Global Commitment Program, GCT is committed to protecting the environment and forming meaningful relationships with Indigenous Peoples. The program reflects an ongoing commitment to environmental stewardship, sustainable practices and conscientious business development.

Partnership with the IPSS was evidently a natural fit for GCT. According to Dekovic, both organizations support economic and environmental prosperity through meaningful relationships with Indigenous Peoples.

In 2021, GCT Canada created an Indigenous Relations policy to solidify its ongoing commitment to reconciliation. The policy is part of the organization's commitment to respond to Call to Action #92 of the 2015 Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada report.

Consequently, GCT works toward respectful and sustainable relationships with Indigenous Peoples that are mutually beneficial for everyone involved.

"We proactively seek out Indigenous partnerships, incorporate Indigenous knowledge in our work and build new pathways for shared prosperity," says Dekovic.

As a Vancouver-based terminal operator with majority Canadian ownership, GCT is driven by values that align with the communities in which it operates. The company is uniquely situated to make waves and lead development of the marine sector in British Columbia, a sector which is reducing its environmental impact and increasing competitiveness while also recognizing that true economic, social and environmental sustainability must occur in collaboration with Indigenous Peoples.

This understanding influences how GCT engages with its Indigenous neighbours and how the company moves forward with projects.

For example, a thoroughly collaborative impact assessment process has been central to the Deltaport Berth 4 Expansion Project since the beginning. GCT conversed with more than 36 Indigenous communities to ensure an assessment process reflective of meaningful reconciliation. The company is "committed to building back better and more inclusively with this project and incorporating the principles" outlined in the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples, explains Dekovic.

This commitment to going beyond standard industry regulations is also present in GCT's efforts to reduce its environmental footprint through green initiatives and certification programs. In 2014, GCT joined Green Marine, a voluntary and transparent environmental certification program for marine transportation businesses. Four years later, GCT Canada became a Radicle Climate Smart certified business. GCT USA followed suit in 2021. These milestones reflect the Global Commitment Program, inspiring and guiding GCT's growth.

Leading by example, GCT encourages other business leaders to reflect on their social and environmental responsibilities. Only through listening and meaningful collaboration can companies genuinely engage in renewal and reconciliation with Indigenous communities.

Cheryl Yaremko, CFO of GCT Global Container Terminals, at IPSS 2022. (PHOTO BY DARRYL DYCK FOR IPSS).

Xaays totem pole symbolizes legacy of positive Indigenous relations

"It demonstrates our longstanding commitment to and future collaboration with Indigenous Peoples," says Terry Mitchell, director of Indigenous relations, Canada, at Graham Construction

Founded in 1926, Graham Construction has an unwavering drive to build respectful, trust-based partnerships with Indigenous communities. Graham's Indigenous Relations team (Graham Three Nations) works internally and externally to support reconciliation efforts and empower the communities they work with. The team also recognizes that progress and accountability begin with a foundation of fostering education.

Focusing inward, Graham Construction participates in the Indigenous Cultural Education Training Program by NISTO Consulting. The internal training program is conducted by respected educator Holly Fortier of the Fort McKay First Nation. The training program covers historical and modern injustices, cultural protocols for working with Indigenous Peoples, and life before colonization. All employees at Graham Construction are in the process of completing the training program, including the entire senior leadership team.

"When we begin to see the leadership of an organization taking the concept of wanting to work with Indigenous groups to heart, and then leading by example, it makes a huge difference in an organization," says Mitchell. "This concept permeates throughout the organization."

Graham Construction has put immense effort into fostering meaningful partnerships with Indigenous Peoples. These relationships are built on eight foundational values outlined in the company's Indigenous Statement of Principles. These values include trust, respect, transparency and commitment.

"Some of our relationships have taken several years to build, develop and then maintain. It isn't something that happens overnight," explains Mitchell. "We're not going out there just creating relationships and alliances for the sake of doing them. We're creating them because it is mutually beneficial for both the community and the organization."

Part of developing relationships with Indigenous Peoples means community engagement through participation in cultural events and legacy-building projects where possible. Additionally, Graham Construction prioritizes integrity and understanding, ethical financial decisions, and finding the right people to serve as Indigenous partner liaisons.

Graham Construction has an impressive history of forming mutually beneficial limited partnerships and joint-venture partnerships with Indigenous Peoples. In 1998, the company partnered with a number of Dene First Nations located in Northern Saskatchewan, and together they formed Points Athabasca Contracting. This first relationship sparked a series of mutually beneficial collaborations for years to come.

Using the same business model, Graham Construction formed an alliance with the File Hills Qu'Appelle Tribal Council in 2011 and created Great Plains Contracting, previously known as Points Athabasca FHQ. The majority of employees on all their projects are Indigenous. By employing Indigenous construction workers, the alliance adds ongoing value to their communities and is a direct example of community reconciliation in practice.

In 2012, Graham Construction partnered with the Siksika Nation to form a solid and long-lasting relationship. Together they collaborated on a number of successful commercial and infrastructure projects including a multi-million dollar project to prevent flooding at the Bassano Dam.

Other notable collaborations include a joint venture with the Fort McKay First Nation and an alliance with a member of the Haisla First Nation, under the name West Coast Constructors. What each of these relationships and alliances have in common is a dedication to respectful communication, cultural awareness and shared values.

Recently, Graham Construction participated in the West Totem Collab with STARS Air Ambulance and number of Indigenous groups and energy-sector companies. The campaign involved the commissioning of Xaays, a totem pole by Master Carver Ses Siyam (Hereditary Chief Ray Natraoro) of the Squamish Nation. The word Xaays comes from the Squamish language, meaning "a state of transformation".

"Expanding working relationships through public artworks, galleries and private clientele enables me to share our culture and traditions by creating a lasting legacy for future generations," explains Hereditary Chief Natraoro in an exclusive artist profile by The Squamish Chief publication.

Chief Natraoro created Xaays to symbolize five core values that speak to the ethos of the collaboration. Themes of partnership and family connection are paired with integrity, community resilience and vision. The work features bold imagery which combines natural and industrial elements. A natural-gas flame and drop of oil are carved alongside images of the sun and wind. Showcasing forces of nature side by side with industrial imagery represents a bright future of collaboration and mutual respect between Indigenous communities and business leaders in the energy sector. The duality speaks to progressive partnerships built on shared values.

"I'm proud to have the totem pole passed to Graham," says Hereditary Chief Natraoro.

The West Totem Collab is the culmination of Graham Construction's long-term efforts to foster respectful and mutually beneficial relationships with Indigenous Peoples. In June 2021, the company successfully bid on Xaays at an auction in support of STARS Air Ambulance, the Squamish First Nation and Community Futures Treaty Seven Organization.

This year, Graham Construction became the official cultural ambassador company for the Indigenous Partnerships Success Showcase (IPSS) which took place in Vancouver and online on May 26th and 27th, 2022. The sponsorship demonstrates ongoing respect for the diverse creativity and cultural practices of Indigenous Peoples.

Returning for a third consecutive year, the IPSS features keynote speakers and panels offering insight and practical guidance on how business leaders can effectively partner with Indigenous Peoples on mutually beneficial projects.

"To see major organizations involved with the Indigenous Partnerships Success Showcase is very encouraging," says Mitchell.

Graham Construction was the cultural ambassador sponsor at IPSS 2022 (PHOTO BY DARRYL DYCK FOR IPSS).

FortisBC bridges corporate and community needs through equitable partnerships

By working collaboratively with Indigenous communities and leaders, FortisBC supports economic reconciliation and strengthens project efficacy

As economic reconciliation goes beyond theory and becomes practice, more and more business leaders across corporate Canada are making good on their commitments to collaborate respectfully with Indigenous Peoples, and develop mutually beneficial projects. FortisBC is a leader in this regard through its reconciliation efforts, promotion of Indigenous entrepreneurship and ongoing commitment to community dialogue.

Accountability and respectful collaboration are at the centre of what FortisBC does. According to its public statement on Indigenous relationships and reconciliation, the organization values "building authentic, mutually respectful relationships with Indigenous Peoples" and "continually listening and learning," to the diverse perspectives of Indigenous leaders.

But what exactly does that look like in practice? FortisBC engages in meaningful dialogue with Indigenous communities throughout the collaboration process on their various clean-energy projects. The company makes every effort to "incorporate Indigenous perspectives into the work [they] do and ensure [they] have the internal structures in place to build genuine relationships and act on [their] commitments," says Vanessa Connolly, director of community and Indigenous relations at FortisBC. Cultural awareness is paramount, and FortisBC fosters a corporate attitude of respect towards the diverse cultural practices, histories and values of Indigenous Peoples.

With the growing demand for natural gas, FortisBC is proud to serve 58 First Nations communities across the province of British Columbia. As part of their ongoing reconciliation efforts, the company also has an impressive history of building strong Indigenous partnerships guided by the FortisBC Statement of Indigenous Principles.

Developed over 20 years ago, FortisBC's Statement of Indigenous Principles outlines nine corporate commitments and values that the company continually prioritizes. The statement was written under the guidance and direction of Indigenous leaders from across British Columbia. Some of the key points included are a commitment to ongoing employee education, respectful interactions with Indigenous Peoples, and inclusive hiring practices. Furthermore, the company prioritizes open and honest communication with Indigenous leaders and communities, with the goal of reciprocity and shared success.

In 2019, FortisBC became a Progressive Aboriginal Relations (PAR) Committed member through the Canada Council for Aboriginal Business. The certification is meaningful because it demonstrates that the organization is eager to engage with Indigenous communities, supporting economic reconciliation through equitable partnerships.

FortisBC regularly partners with Indigenous communities as part of its ongoing efforts toward reconciliation and Indigenous economic success. Some of their most impactful collaborations include the Mount Hayes LNG facility and the expansion of Fortis's electric vehicle charging network, and the Squamish Environmental Assessment.

Currently, FortisBC shares joint ownership of the Mount Hayes LNG (Liquefied Natural Gas) facility with the Stz'uminus First Nation and Cowichan Tribes. The Vancouver Island natural gas storage facility was constructed in 2011, and both the Stz'uminus First Nation and Cowichan Tribes contributed $5.7 million to the project. This led to an overall $70-million investment in the region. The contribution paved the way for local supplier contracts and the creation of numerous construction jobs and permanent operations jobs at the facility.

FortisBC CEO Roger Dall'Antonia dialogues with Chief Campbell at IPSS 2022. (PHOTO BY DARRYL DYCK FOR IPSS).

More recently, FortisBC partnered with the Osoyoos Indian Band on the expansion of an electric vehicle charging network in British Columbia. In the summer of 2020, two new stations were opened in Oliver and Osoyoos to encourage more environmentally friendly travel.

In a press release about the expansion, Chief Clarence Louie of the Osoyoos Indian Band reflected on the significance of the expansion and what it means for his community. "Hosting these two stations helps make our region accessible for electric vehicle drivers and reflects our forward-thinking approach to economic development," he said.

The stations also feature artwork by Taylor Baptiste of the Osoyoos Indian Band Youth Council. Her artwork is "a permanent reminder of the value of partnership in driving forward [the] shared goal of a cleaner energy future," says Connolly.

Another example of early engagement with Indigenous Peoples is through FortisBC's work with the Skwxwú7mesh Úxwumixw (Squamish Nation). By engaging with the community in an effort to understand its concerns and interests relating to the Eagle Mountain – Woodfibre Gas Pipeline (EGP) project, FortisBC supported the Squamish Nation to conduct an independent environmental assessment. Early engagement led to the Squamish Nation Environmental Assessment Agreement, an Indigenous-led assessment process that was the first of its kind in Canada. The agreement gives the Squamish Nation full environmental oversight over the work being done on its traditional territory.

Since then, a number of project changes were proposed to reflect local feedback and technical advancements identified during detailed design. The BC Environmental Assessment Office (EAO) and the Squamish Nation reviewed and approved

these changes through a harmonized process.

By working together, FortisBC and the Squamish Nation were able to improve the design of the EGP project by minimizing impacts and rerouting an eight-kilometre section of the new gas pipeline through the Stá7mes (Stawamus) Valley.

"It's through listening and engagement that we've strengthened and refined this project," says EGP Project Director Darrin Marshall in a recent development update from FortisBC. "We're grateful for the input we've received."

The above partnerships illustrate how collaboration with Indigenous communities is an absolute must for corporate Canada. By embracing economic reconciliation and engaging in respectful partnerships, more companies can pave the way for shared success with Indigenous communities and leaders.

Demonstrating an ongoing commitment to collaboration and dialogue facilitation, FortisBC returned as a gold sponsor for the 2022 Indigenous Partnerships Success Showcase (IPSS), which was held on May 26th and 27th in Vancouver and online.

The showcase reflected increased corporate demand for practical guidance on how business leaders across the country can foster strong, respectful partnerships with Indigenous communities, working toward a common goal of shared success. Sponsoring the event demonstrated clear accountability and action on behalf of FortisBC, making good on the commitment to support dialogue and reconciliation efforts.

"We look forward to the opportunity to connect with Indigenous business leaders, and to learn more about their specific interests and how we can work together to advance clean energy projects," says Connolly.

Moving forward, FortisBC hopes to see more businesses and industry leaders stepping up to facilitate reconciliation through strong Indigenous partnerships. "We encourage other businesses to examine their structure and business practices to make space for Indigenous perspectives," says Connolly. "This is an ongoing journey and commitment for us, and we invite other businesses to join us on that journey.

An Indigenous performer showcases cultural excellence at IPSS 2022. (PHOTO BY DARRYL DYCK FOR IPSS).

Trades on the road to reconciliation

Gitxaala tradesperson and instructor Raven Hillenbrand shares her journey of empowerment through the skilled trades and the BC Building College

The skilled trades, says Raven Hillenbrand of the Gitxaala First Nation in BC, offer "great opportunity" to First Nations members and especially to young people.

She should know: "I'm fortunate to have three tickets. I'm a Red-Seal-endorsed plumber, a steamfitter and pipefitter, and I have my Class B gas-fitter ticket. Never enough!"

She's also a plumbing instructor at the UA Piping Industry College of BC in Delta (UA meaning Local 170 of the United Association of Journeymen and Apprentices of the Plumbing and Pipefitting Industry).

"The most rewarding thing about being an instructor is when I can see that light go on, right? When I'm explaining something and taking the time to not only just teach it but also to work with each individual and their different learning styles. It's a good feeling when I know that they've grasped it and can understand and get through it."

That school and its three campuses are part of a larger scene in BC in which the College of the BC Building Trades offers trades-training programs that lead students to Red Seal qualification — "the four-year equivalent of a bachelor's degree."

That college is an association of training providers affiliated with the 25 construction unions that belong to the BC Building Trades. The college has more than a dozen trade-specific schools and connected campuses, including the UA Piping Industry College.

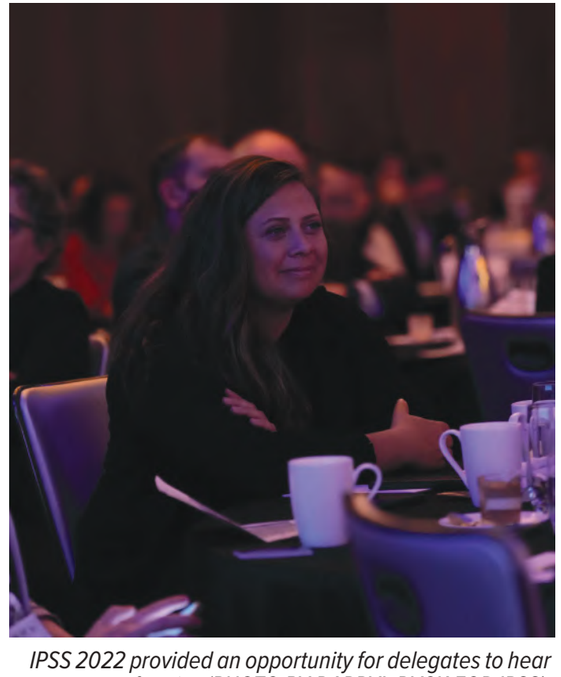
The BC Building Trades have been building BC since 1967. Now, they've re-committed to advancing economic reconciliation.

And so the 40,000-member BC Building Trades was a silver sponsor of the 2022 Indigenous Partnerships Success Showcase.

"The BC Building Trades made a commitment to Indigenous reconciliation many years ago," said Brynn Bourke, executive director. "A key part of that commitment is to ensure that we very purposefully explore meaningful, supportive partnerships with Indigenous people who are seeking to build careers in the skilled trades."

Red Seal certifications are not where Raven Hillenbrand thought she would go.

"When I was younger, I thought about getting into the healthcare system. Another one was architecture. I wanted to be an architect. I liked designing things, I liked learning about things, I



IPSS 2022 provided an opportunity for delegates to hear a range of topics (PHOTO BY DARRYL DYCK FOR IPSS).

liked the discovery of new things.

"But my father always told me it's good to have some training under your belt, and I've always been a hands-on person. Being in a trade requires you to be hands-on. And being creative is another strong piece that I can put towards being a tradesperson.

"The most rewarding thing was the knowledge and confidence I've gained. You know, you can never learn enough. And the more that I can get out there, and get out there with the tools, hands-on, whether it be in the classroom or in the field, my confidence level grows as I continue to move forward."

The biggest challenge?

"Removing barriers as a female and a First Nations individual, and being a single mother. Removing barriers was a big, big challenge, but I just kept going. The union played a huge role. They've supported me going through my apprenticeship, and when I had troubles, they never gave up on me. I felt I was at home.

"I got into the trades a little later in life. But for younger people, it's a great opportunity. Now they've got the high schools introducing these young people to trades. It's great. They'll be a journeyperson by age 25. And I'm proud of them for that."

Proud, too, of her family members in or heading toward the trades.

Her daughter, Jasmine McKay, is a first-year plumbing student at 21 years old. Her son, Eisley McKay, is a second-year student steamfitter — and his mom is one of his instructors. Meanwhile, her husband, James Hillenbrand, is a plumber.

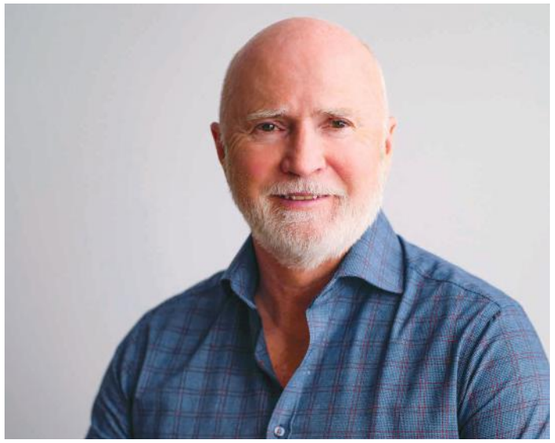
Jasmine recalls: "When other moms put on office or business clothes for work, mine wore steel-toe boots and work gear. She works hard and she's good at her job. She's a tradeswoman, and I'm pretty proud of that."

For the Indigenous Partnerships Success Showcase, Raven Hillenbrand hopes for progress on the road to reconciliation.

"I believe we're headed in that direction. There's a lot of people in Canada that are on board with that, and I hope we keep going."

Charlene Aleck (Tsleil-Waututh Nation) provided a traditional during IPSS 2022. (PHOTO BY DARRYL DYCK FOR IPSS).

Those who made it happen



Stewart Muir, founder (PHOTO PROVIDED FOR IPSS).

In 2019 when we first considered creating an event about economic reconciliation between Indigenous and business communities, we had no idea what we were undertaking.

Our January 2020 inaugural event, "The Declaration: Finding the Path to Shared Prosperity," was sparked by an environment of excitement, mystery and–for some–uncertainty about the transformative legislation that had just been passed through the BC Legislature: Bill 41, the Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples Act.

We saw a need to bring people together around what was increasingly becoming clear could be a major historic event for BC, Canada and Indigenous peoples everywhere. It was not simply an act passed through the BC Legislature and later followed by the Canadian Parliament with its own UNDRIP legislation. We were on the brink of a movement.

To us, that movement was defined by partnership.

It's a vision quickly taken up by our team and the many Indigenous partners who have made our annual event possible.

Chief Ian Campbell of the Squamish Nation joined IPSS as our first ever governance chair in 2022. His leadership, vision and hospitality defined the culture of our most recent and most successful gathering.

IPSS 2022 moderator, Chastity Davis-Alphonse of the Tla'amin Nation and Tsilhqot'in Nation by marriage, brought warmth, energy and vitality to our stage.

Amanda Nahanee (Shamantsut), a prominent member of the Squamish Nation, lent us her extensive knowledge of and deep connection to Indigenous art and music, both traditional and contemporary. Amanda infused IPSS with a rich foundation in Indigenous culture and place through her many contributions including arranging talented Indigenous performers to enrich our event.

As strategic advisor, Lisa Mueller of the Tsilhqot'in Nation provided invaluable advice, insight and friendship to IPSS. As the founder of the Nation2Nation Forum in Terrace, BC, Lisa is known for her ability to bring people together and to bridge gaps between First Nations, industry and government. In fact, Nation2Nation became an official program partner of IPSS.

Many other Indigenous leaders and organizations partnered with IPSS, including the First Nations Major Projects Coalition, the Canadian Council of Aboriginal Business, the National Coalition of Chiefs, the Alberta Indigenous Opportunities Corporation, Deyen, the Indigenous Resource Network, and the Indigenous Resource Opportunities Conference.

Others also partnered, including the Sauder School of Business' Ch'nook Indigenous Business Education program at the University of British Columbia, Vancouver Community College, Emily Carr University, Foresight Canada, Global Public Affairs and our media partner, Business in Vancouver.

I would be remiss to not also thank our patron sponsor since year one, GCT Global Container Terminals, and to all our many sponsors for their generous support and their commitment to ensuring events like ours continue to make a difference.

Much of our success to due to these leaders and their organizations, and to other team members including event lead Margareta Dovgal, business lead Peter Miles, Communications lead Josiah Haynes, coordinator Oscar Judelson-Kelly and many others.

To all who have played a part in making the Indigenous Partnerships Success Showcase what it is today, thank you.

Stewart Muir, IPSS founder.

Seaspan's IPSS 2022 reception featured Indigenous song and dance at (PHOTO BY DARRYL DYCK FOR IPSS).

Tell your story

By highlighting the relationships that underpin economic reconciliation, the Indigenous Partnerships Success Showcase (IPSS) enables participants and society at large to build an inclusive vision of reconciliation for the rest of the 21st century.

Our diverse and compelling program, grounded by emotive cultural programming, cultivates a sense of openness resulting in more impact than any other businesses conference in Canada. In 2022, IPSS sessions generated over $7 million worth in earned media.

The reconciliation story is just beginning. What part will you and your organization play?

Contact Peter Miles at Peter@Resourceworks.com for sponsorship and partnership opportunities for IPSS 2023, coming to the Vancouver Convention Centre on June 1-2.

To learn more, visit www.Indigenoussucess.ca or scan the QR code below.

2023 INDIGENOUS PARTNERSHIPS SUCCESS SHOWCASE

IPSS 2022 delegates respond to Chief Terry Paul's moving address (PHOTO BY DARRYL DYCK FOR IPSS).

GCT's Global Commitment to sustainability begins with a local commitment to reconciliation.

We've been the proud patron sponsor of the Indigenous Partnership Success Showcase for the past three years. It's helped us to listen, learn, and act on advancing reconciliation through meaningful relationships. As part of our Global Commitment to a more sustainable and inclusive future, we continue to seek out Indigenous partnerships, incorporate Indigenous knowledge in our work, and build new pathways for shared prosperity.

To learn more, visit globalterminals.com/globalcommitment

Global Container Terminals acknowledges that it operates on the shared, traditional, and treaty territories of the sc̓əw̓aθən (Tsawwassen), xʷməθkʷəy̓əm (Musqueam), Skwxwú7mesh (Squamish), and səlilwətaɬ (Tsleil-Waututh) Nations, and other Coast Salish peoples.

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