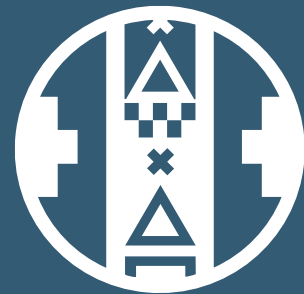


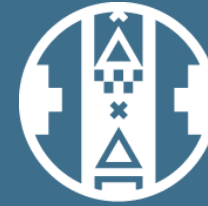
Towards the Renewal of Canada's Museum Policy

July 26, 2023



Archipel
Research & Consulting

Agenda



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About Archipel Research & Consulting

Archipel's Approach

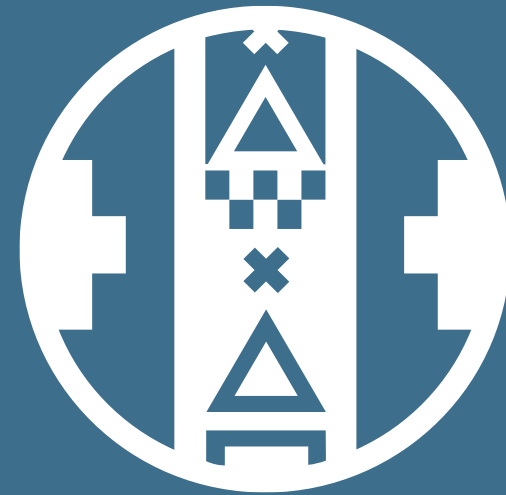
Project Overview

Key Findings

Elements to Consider

About Archipel

- Indigenous owned and women-led
- Years of cumulative experience facilitating conversations and answering important research questions about Indigenous and Canadian society
- We acknowledge that Indigenous community members, Elders, and Knowledge Keepers are the experts in their lived experiences
- Highly qualified Indigenous facilitators and researchers who bring sensitivity, flexibility, lived experience and ethical rigour





Archipel
Research & Consulting

We approach
each research
project
grounded in
these guiding
principles:

Etuaptmumk & Intersectionality

Indigenous methodologies

Consensus decision making

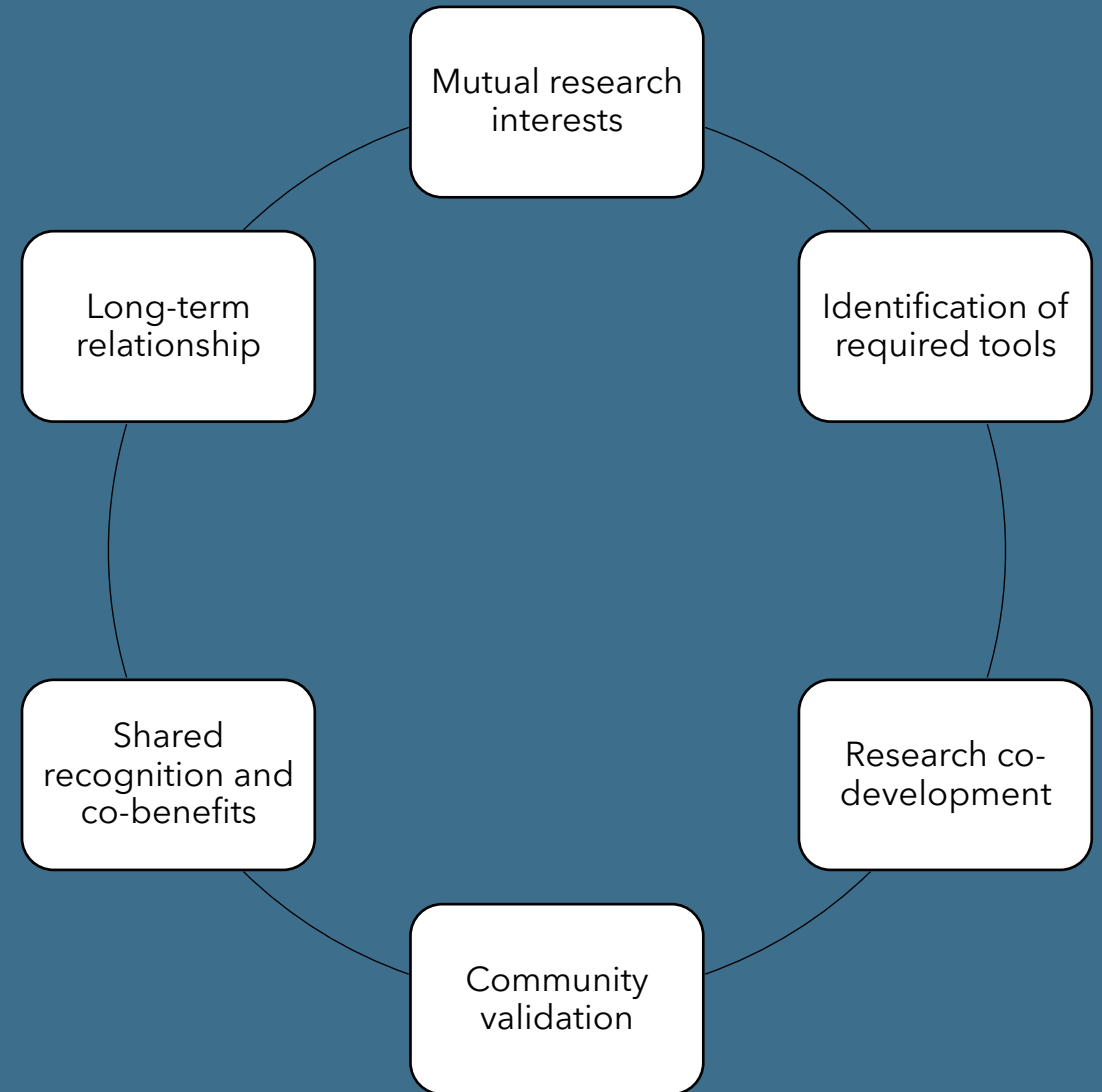
Honorariums

Indigenous protocols

Data collection through the
conversational method

Methodology

- Etuaptmumk: Mi'kmaq methodology, which puts Indigenous ways of seeing and Western approaches into conversation for a more fulsome perspective.
- Conversational Method: gathering knowledge based on oral storytelling tradition



Project Description

Advocacy for a renewal of the 1990 museum policy has been ongoing for years, as it continues to inform the federal government's programming response to the heritage sector, encompassing various organizations and necessitating updated measures reflecting their needs.

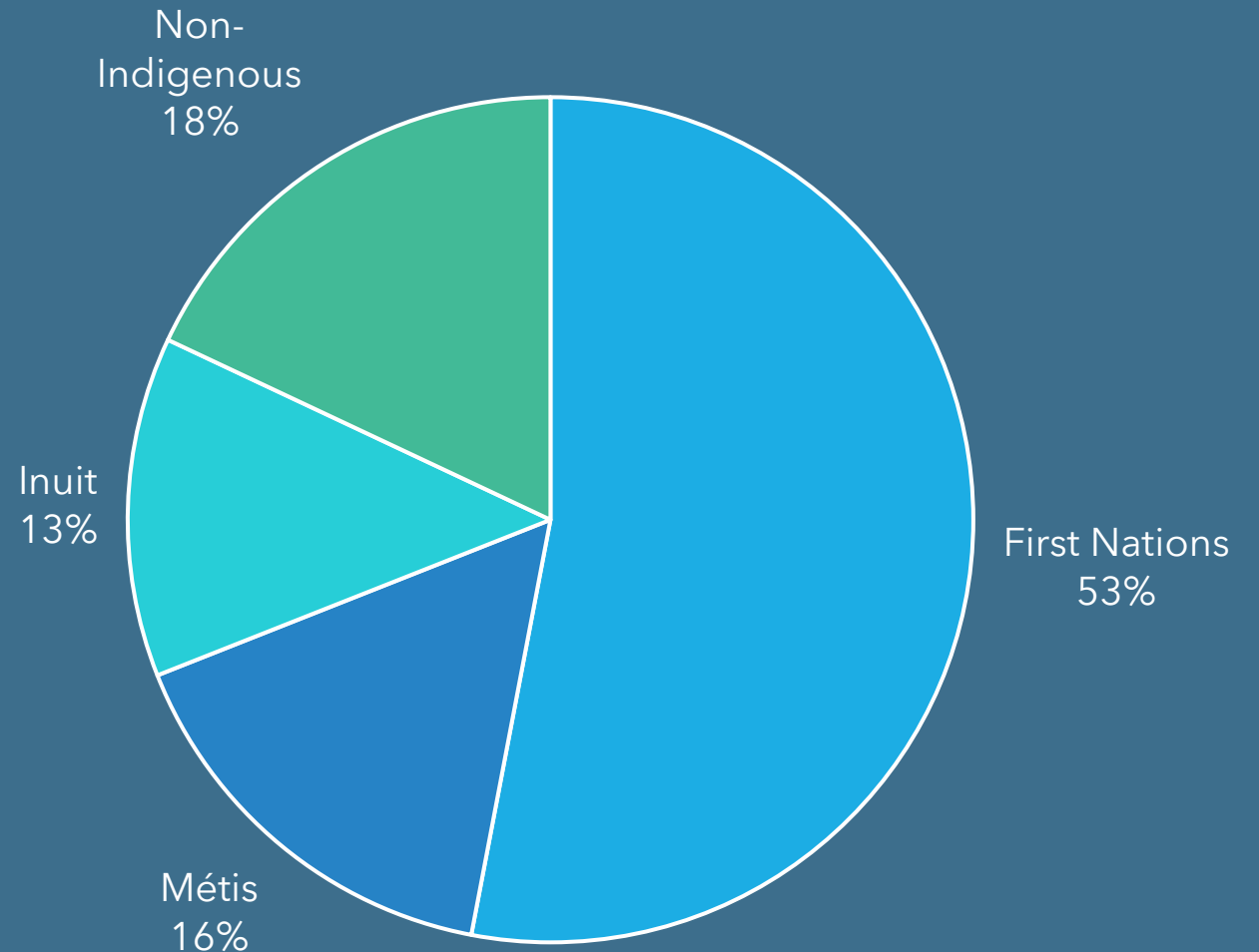
The report aimed to gather observations and recommendations on Indigenous heritage and the museum sector to inform updates to Canadian museum policy, addressing the unique challenges and perspectives of Indigenous Peoples and the sector's colonial history.

Whom We Spoke To

During the three Sharing Circles and several subsequent one-on-one interviews we heard from a total of 39 participants.

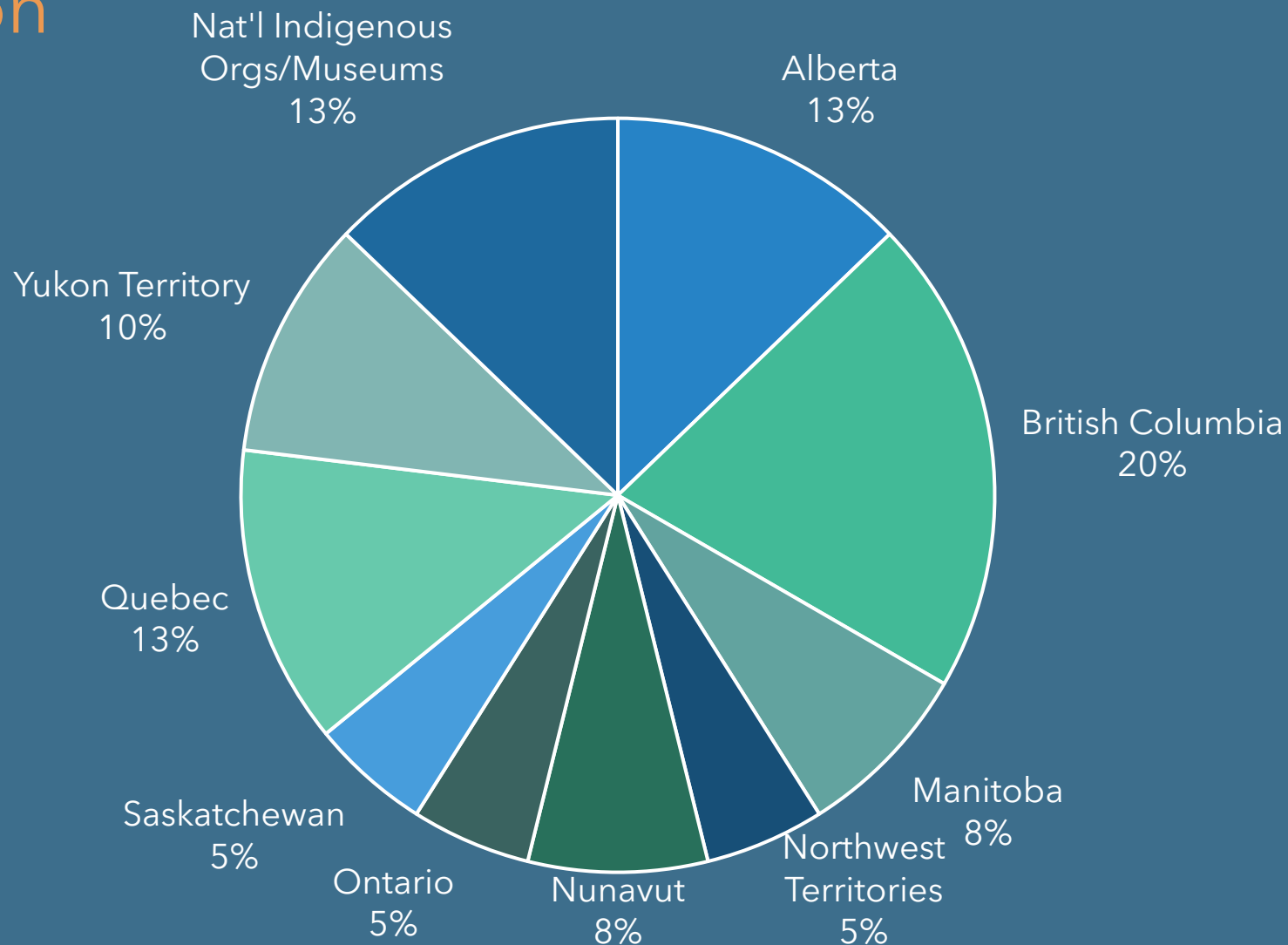
Participants included Indigenous museum experts and individuals working in heritage organizations with Indigenous collections, as well as representatives from the Native Women's Association of Canada.

Two participants chose to participate in French.



Regional Representation

While we sought to gain perspectives from across Canada, we were unable to garner any participation from museum professionals in New Brunswick, Nova Scotia, Prince Edward Island, or Newfoundland and Labrador.





Key Themes

01

Role of
Museums in
Society

02

Resilience and
Sustainability
in the Heritage
Sector

03

Preservation
and Access to
Collections

04

Reconciliation
with
Indigenous
Peoples

05

Equity,
Diversity, and
Inclusion

01: Role of Museums in Society

This area explores Indigenous views on museums' societal roles and values, including how these vary from other communities and how they affect organizational practices and priorities.

Conceptualizations of Museums

Intersection Between Tourism and Heritage

Role of Museums for Indigenous People

Questioning Values, Principles, and Practices of Museums

Building Bridges Between Indigenous and Non-Indigenous Communities

Role of Museums in Society: Key Findings

Beyond preserving and displaying historical materials, museums play a role in supporting living cultures and communities. Museums can help Indigenous people connect to their identities and culture.

Indigenous museums have cultural, economic, and employment benefits for communities.

Acknowledgement of how museums support colonization is essential. Museums have played a role in hiding and misrepresenting Indigenous knowledge, presenting history that justifies colonial rule, and housing stolen belongings.

Museums can support Indigenous histories and truth-telling and the return of belongings and knowledge to Indigenous communities.

Museums can build bridges between Indigenous and non-Indigenous people by helping make connections to local communities.

Role of Museums in Society: Participants' Voices

If you look back on the history of museums in North America and other colonized countries, they are literally a part of the construct of the genocides that are practiced in order to have colonization. [...] Back in the 1800s, which is when the museum started forming in North America, they were part of the genocide of the land grab and in war. The two main tactics[...] is you first wipe out communications and then you wipe out heritage. You remove identity. [...] How do you destroy identity? You remove people from the land, from their people, and from their cultural expression and culture. So, museums are absolutely implicit in genocide. (Interview Participant)

Heritage organizations isn't a term I use, but cultural institutions is the one that I use, because they're the ones that help shape our culture, that are those spaces for having dialogues, sharing work, sharing culture that helps us define who we are as people and in relation to the broader world. (Interview Participant)

02: Resilience and Sustainability in the Heritage Sector

This area concerns resilience and sustainability in the heritage sector, focusing on the resources that are needed to support Indigenous heritage organizations and institutions with Indigenous collections, and the unique needs of these organizations.

Funding

Youth

Challenges for Remote or Smaller Museums

Resilience and Sustainability: Key Findings

More operational, multi-year, and long-term funding is needed.

Indigenous museums need improvements of their facilities, including for storage.

Indigenous museums need support for staff hiring and retention and training and capacity-building of Indigenous employees. This includes training opportunities for Indigenous youth.

Dedicated funding is needed for repatriation and revitalization activities.

Smaller museums and those in remote and rural locations have distinct funding challenges and needs.

Funding can be made more accessible by having streamlined application processes and building partnerships between Indigenous communities and museums.

Funding: Participants' Voices

What can really help the [name of institution] are grants that support administration costs or building storage. Because now we get a lot of grants, and we can do art projects, or projects that facilitate the transfer of knowledge. But there's always a limited amount that you can go to support the staff and also the building. (Sharing Circle Participant)

We're starved with funding; we don't get the opportunities that the larger centres do. And the government is East-centric, so they won't look to the West; if the East is satisfied, they're happy. So that's kind of being an outlier. So what that means is then our programs are not able to become reality. (Sharing Circle Participant)

We're doing a lot of digital repatriation. We don't have the internal capacity and human resources to answer all the requests. We also don't have funding to cover the time of the person doing the work. [...] It would be really lovely if there was some sort of built in core funding for each heritage institution that covered these sorts of things. [...] It would be nice if the government increased our core funding, which hasn't budged in a long time. And have you know, this stipulation that this is for truth and reconciliation efforts or repatriation efforts, or Indigenous related projects, and then you could hire somebody to be on site as part of the main team all the time to do this work. (Sharing Circle Participant)

03: Preservation and Access to Collections

This area centres on preservation and access to collections, including digital platforms. It identifies barriers Indigenous people face in accessing collections and opportunities to improve accessibility.

Support for Travel to Collections

Digitization of Museum Collections

Accessing Museum Spaces

Bringing Collections to Indigenous Communities

Updating Preservation Practices and Values

Preservation and Access: Key Findings

Bringing Indigenous people to collections by supporting travel to museums, subsidizing memberships and admission fees, increasing awareness of collections, and facilitating Indigenous-led programming.

Bringing collections to Indigenous people through digitization and sharing belongings with communities.

Respecting Indigenous protocols of care for belongings related to preservation, use, and display.

Preservation and Access: Participants' Voices

I can go back to the [...] weaving exhibit [...] That was a specific request from community that we do that exhibit. One of the things that the weavers asked us to do was to have workshops where the weavings weren't in display cases so that they could come and handle the work. And then we negotiated with all the different institutions that people could come in, and they could spend time with the weavings. And we had open days, and we would put out the call to all the weavers and say, anybody who wants to come to on these days at these times, here's the weavings that you can see and spend time with. And, you know, that's the kind of work I think that's really important, that allows people to come and spend time and see things up close and do that kind of work. (Interview Participant)

From the point of view of the North, there are places if people want access, they have to fly to get even to Yellowknife. So, looking at how to scale, you know, if we're talking about [travel] grants at a federal level, how do you scale those to different people's situations of how far they have to travel, what that travel is, like, how expensive it is? (Sharing Circle Participant)

The next version of collections access is when we actually take materials to community for use and ceremony. [...] So, in that case, generally, we take the pieces to the community, and then they're used in ceremony, and then we bring them back. [...] So, we have taken masks, weavings, blankets up for use in ceremony. [...] And for that work, we cover the insurance by us taking it, we cover the transport, and we cover our stay if we have to stay overnight or a couple of days in the community, we cover our costs for that, and then we transport back as well. (Interview Participant)

04: Reconciliation with Indigenous Peoples

This area directly addresses how museums can advance reconciliation, exploring how museums can better affirm Indigenous self-determination regarding their cultural heritage.

Cultural Revitalization

Repatriation

Ownership and Stewardship

Indigenous Influence and Control Over Exhibits

United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples (UNDRIP)

Reconciliation with Indigenous Peoples: Key Findings

Museums support Indigenous cultural revitalization through providing education and internship programs, supporting language revitalization, running cultural programming, hosting events and workshops, and serving as community hubs.

It is essential for Indigenous people to have control and ownership of their cultural belongings to respect Indigenous rights to cultural sovereignty and self-determination, including those outlined in the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples.

Indigenous self-determination is supported through repatriation, stewardship agreements and Indigenous ownership, providing funding and resources to communities to house belongings, and ensuring Indigenous communities have control over exhibits of their cultural belongings.

Reconciliation: Participants' Voices

I think people need to understand when we're talking about repatriation, we're not just talking about tangible items, we're talking about the intangible, which is our ceremony, our songs, the stories. So again, these museums or any of these institutions need to be providing a space for that, advocating for that, and supporting that. (Sharing Circle Participant)

The big social, spiritual, language, arts and culture. Like the stuff you might expect out of museums in a way, except when you look at it through an Indigenous lens, it's much deeper and runs much farther. It's educational. It's scholarship. It is like people say like this, you know, like not taking away from Elders—they are absolute, you know, books of knowledge. But this is our education, this is our school, in a way. (Interview Participant)

You can't separate repatriation from museums. Museums were built on genocide. Nation state museums in particular or city museums are the physical evidence of Canada's genocide against Indigenous Peoples. [...] The other thing about museums is when they are operated with values of respect, responsibility, telling the truth, reciprocity, then museums are powerful agents of change. (Interview Participant)

05: Promoting Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion

This area focuses internally, identifying how inequity and exclusion exists in institutions and their practices and developing understanding of how to embed and promote equity throughout organizations.

Embedding Equity Throughout Institutions

Advancing Indigenous Leadership

Developing Equal Partnerships with Indigenous Communities

Accountability to Local Indigenous Communities

Standards for Promoting and Measuring Equity

Promoting Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion: Key Findings

Embedding equity throughout an organization may include cultural training for staff, Indigenous leadership, inclusive representation in exhibits and programming, professional and community development opportunities, changing institutional policies and values.

Advancing Indigenous leadership includes supporting Indigenous-led museums, hiring more Indigenous staff and leadership, and working with Indigenous partners as equals.

Equitable community partnerships ensure clear benefits to Indigenous partners and are guided by the leadership, protocols, and priorities of those partners.

Accountability to local communities includes reflecting the diversity of the local community in museum staff, being accountable to Indigenous governments, and engaging with Indigenous communities.

Truth and Reconciliation Commission's Calls to Action and the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples may be useful frameworks for measuring progress in equity for Indigenous Peoples.

Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion: Participants' Voices

[When people think] we've checked a box on our list [by hiring Indigenous staff] and we're good to go, [they] are not really understanding that that person brings a whole community, brings a whole family into this, and that if they're going to properly do this, be in relationship, it's much more in depth than just the one hire. It's about looking at this intergenerationally and looking at some of the ways that we are repairing some of the atrocities of the past. I don't just mean residential schools, I mean all other types of things that have happened: the taking of objects, the displaying of ceremonial things like Sundances and things that that are not to be displayed or the recording of that, and things that they have in their collection.

(Sharing Circle Participant)

For many years, they had [non-Indigenous] people telling our history. And so we've been able to replace a lot of the interpreters and we have our own Indigenous interpreters. And so they're telling our story. (Sharing Circle Participant)

As part of our nation, we are mandated by our leaders [...] by our hereditary leaders, and by the band councils. All our leaders mandate us to pursue this work by making relationships. And that is key to the way our nation approaches things, we must form relationships and we must base this work on the goal of mutual respect, cooperation, and trust. So this has been highly successful for us. It's an approach of our nation, firm diplomacy, understanding. We can truth tell, seek reparation, and coexist. (Interview Participant)

Elements to Consider

Recognizing museums' historic and ongoing role in colonial dispossession

Providing adequate funding, resources, and infrastructure and increasing accessibility of grants

Increasing Indigenous representation and leadership in museums

Encouraging equal partnerships between funders, museums, and Indigenous communities

Ensuring national policies are adaptable to regional specificities and needs, especially in remote and Northern regions

Increasing access to Indigenous belongings in museums collections for Indigenous people

Facilitating the involvement of youth in museums and heritage centers through employment/internship opportunities

Supporting Indigenous-led cultural programming in museums and heritage centers

Developing funding and policies to support the repatriation of Indigenous belongings and ancestral remains in collections

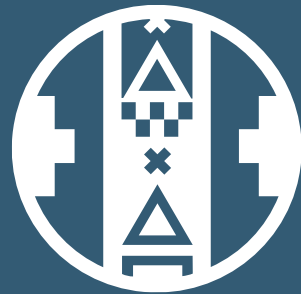
Incorporating Indigenous rights and cultural sovereignty in the museum policy

Questions or Feedback?



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Thank you
Merci



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