



**BUILDING
PARTNERSHIPS WITH
INDIGENOUS
COMMUNITIES:
BEST PRACTICES
GUIDED BY UNDRIP
PRINCIPLES**

**PORTAL
RESOURCES**

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Building authentic relationships and partnerships with Indigenous communities is crucial for creating an inclusive, respectful, and collaborative environment. The United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples (“[UNDRIP](#)”) provides a foundational framework to guide these endeavors. Here are some best practices rooted in the principles of UNDRIP:

1. Acknowledge Indigenous Sovereignty

Start by recognizing and respecting the inherent rights and sovereignty of Indigenous Peoples. Indigenous communities have distinct cultural, social, economic, and political systems that have existed since time immemorial. Recognize these systems and uphold their right to self-determination.

2. Prioritize Free, Prior, and Informed Consent (“FPIC”)

Central to UNDRIP is the principle of FPIC, which ensures that Indigenous communities are informed about and give consent to any activity that affects their lands or rights. Always ensure that consultations are thorough, transparent, and genuinely seek the community's input and approval.

3. Engage with Cultural Humility

Approach relationships with an open heart and mind, willing to learn and unlearn. Understand that you're entering a space with its rich history, customs, and traditions. Be humble, listen actively, and be willing to adjust your perspective.

4. Invest in Long-term Relationships

Building trust takes time. Instead of approaching partnerships as short-term projects, view them as ongoing relationships. Commit to regular check-ins, updates, and open lines of communication.

5. Honor Traditional Knowledge and Practices

Indigenous communities possess a wealth of traditional knowledge. Recognize, respect, and integrate this knowledge into collaborative projects. Avoid tokenism; genuinely value their insights and wisdom.

6. Provide Cultural Safety Training

For organizations and individuals seeking partnerships, it's essential to invest in cultural safety training. This ensures that interactions are respectful, free from racial and cultural biases, and recognize the historical and contemporary challenges faced by Indigenous communities.

7. Be Transparent and Accountable

Honesty is key. Clearly define the intentions, goals, and potential impacts of any partnership. If mistakes are made, acknowledge them, learn, and commit to doing better.

8. Ensure Equitable Resource Sharing

When entering into partnerships, especially those involving land or natural resources, ensure that benefits are shared equitably. This supports the economic sustainability of Indigenous communities and acknowledges their rights to their lands and resources.

9. Celebrate and Participate in Indigenous Cultural Events

Engage in cultural events not as a spectator but as an active participant. This deepens understanding, appreciation, and fosters mutual respect.

10. Uphold Indigenous Representation

Ensure that Indigenous voices are present, heard, and hold decision-making power in any collaborative endeavor. Avoid making decisions on their behalf.

11. Commit to Continuous Learning

The landscape of Indigenous rights and aspirations is dynamic. Commit to staying informed about the evolving needs, rights, and aspirations of Indigenous communities.

12. Collaborate on Community Initiatives

Support community-led initiatives, whether they're related to health, education, economic development, or cultural preservation. This demonstrates a genuine commitment to the well-being of the community.

13. Respect Sacred Sites and Traditions

If your partnership involves land, be aware of and respect any sacred sites or ceremonies associated with it. Access to these sites or participation in certain ceremonies may be restricted, and these boundaries must be honoured.

In conclusion, building relationships with Indigenous communities, grounded in the principles of UNDRIP, requires genuine commitment, respect, and the acknowledgement of Indigenous rights. By approaching partnerships with humility, transparency, and a willingness to learn, we can forge meaningful, lasting relationships that benefit all parties involved.

Next Steps:

Consider reading additional tipsheets in [Indigenous Works' Resource Portal](#)

