



Acting on Climate Change: Indigenous Innovations

The main objective of *Acting on Climate Change: Indigenous Innovations* is to forward cross-cultural learning on climate change mitigation and adaptation that makes meaningful progress towards Reconciliation in Canada, recognizing the leadership of Indigenous cultures with respect to sustainability as a key element of their relationship with the environment. To reach this objective, there are three specific goals:

(1) Share Indigenous climate change and sustainability success stories in Canada with other Indigenous peoples and with Indigenous leaders.

We have begun documenting existing, inspiring Indigenous climate change and sustainability initiatives throughout Canada in a database that will be made publicly accessible via an interactive web tool in Spring 2017. Recognizing the importance of training the next generation of Indigenous leaders, Indigenous Youth Ambassadors will be recruited and participate in a holistic training program focused on leadership, culture, jurisdiction, reconciliation and climate action as well as basic filmmaking and investigative journalism techniques. Indigenous Youth Ambassadors will form teams and select from the database climate change initiatives that they consider most inspiring. Each team of Ambassadors will reach out to four communities/organizations to collectively produce short films to document the initiatives. They will act as disseminators of knowledge between communities across the country.

(2) Inform the general Canadian public about Indigenous peoples' leadership and innovation in climate and sustainability action.

To do so, some initiatives in the database will be showcased in an exhibit entitled Indigenous Innovations developed with the Centre des Sciences de Montréal, a federal museum. The exhibit will launch in October 2017 and travel across Canada over the next five years in two formats: large scale for cities and small scale for community centres.

(3) Use these success stories to inform policy recommendations to all other levels of government (federal, provincial/regional and municipal) to support culturally-relevant, evidence-based climate decision-making informed by Indigenous traditional knowledge.

Providing feedback to high-level policymaking will be made possible through collaboration with Sustainable Canada Dialogues¹, an informal network of 60+ scholars who have been working with policymakers to inform Canadian climate policy over the past year. For example, we provided input to Canada's Mid-Century Long-Term Low-Greenhouse Gas Development Strategy², a document officially submitted by Canada to the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change. We indeed alerted Environment and Climate Change Canada to the wealth of Indigenous climate initiatives and two examples of renewable energy projects mentioned on p. 27 of the aforementioned document are highlighted in our database.

¹ <http://sustainablecanadialogues.ca/en/scd>

² http://unfccc.int/focus/long-term_strategies/items/9971.php



As proposed, our project supports full engagement of Canada's Indigenous peoples in climate change policy. Acknowledging that “the goal of decolonial thinking and doing is to continue reinscribing, embodying and dignifying those ways of living, thinking and sensing that were violently devalued or demonized by colonial, imperial and interventionist agendas”³, we propose a concrete initiative that would be one step forward in building bridges between the peoples of Canada, in keeping with the desire for reconciliation emerging from the Truth and Reconciliation Commission⁴.

The project is steered by Norma Kassi (co-Chair), Arctic Institute of Community-Based Research, and Catherine Potvin (co-Chair), McGill University, as well as Catherine Béland, First Nations of Québec and Labrador Sustainable Development Institute, Eli Enns, POLIS Project, and Tonio Sadik, Assembly of First Nations, under the auspices of the UNESCO-McGill Chair for Dialogues on Sustainability.

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³ <https://transnationaldecolonialinstitute.wordpress.com/decolonial-aesthetics/>

⁴ <http://www.trc.ca/websites/trcinstitution/index.php?p=890> (page visited on 13 November 2015)