

INDIGENOUS YOUTH ADVISORY CIRCLE



idea book  k





Introduction

Across many Indigenous communities the circle has been an important symbol to represent balance, interconnectedness and harmony. It teaches us about relationship and strength while challenging us to connect with one another and the land in order to find our place in community.

While our teachings around this have carried on for thousands of years, there have been many attempts to weaken our circles since settlers first arrived on Turtle Island. Violence and discrimination throughout colonization has plagued our communities with intergenerational trauma and pain, disrupting our wellness and potential as nations. Now, as we approach the 150th anniversary of confederation in Canada it is critical that this past be known and understood not just as a key part of Indigenous history, but of history for all Canadians.

So where are we now?

First Nations, Inuit and Métis peoples now find ourselves at an exciting and hopeful time where our circles are coming back together and we are becoming more and more strong. We are building relationships both within and across our communities, learning from one another and working together to ensure that our voices are heard. We also find ourselves ready to form new circles, in particular circles for reconciliation and understanding with non-Indigenous peoples, grounded in uncovering the truths of the past and rebuilding respect, trust and hope for the future.

This Idea Book is about strengthening those circles, about celebrating the emerging network of Indigenous youth leaders who are inspiring meaningful change across the country and about challenging all Canadians to learn more and to join us in creating a better future where everyone sharing this land can thrive and grow. Through online discussions, videos, social media posts, emails, phone calls, in person interviews, and workshops, youth from 30 different communities engaged in dialogue about Canada's past, present and future and formed content into 7 different key themes. I encourage you to read their ideas carefully and to find inspiration in the passion that they share.

Marsi/Thank-you to all of the young change makers, community builders, storytellers, and dream shapers who shared their ideas and hopes in this book. While our communities are still healing and continue to face many challenges, these youth are a testament to our strength, beauty and resilience. Many thanks also to our elders, knowledge keepers and ancestors who have paved the way for our leadership; if it wasn't for them our voices would have no spirit and our circles would have no foundation.



With love,

LINDSAY DUPRÉ

Métis Nation of Ontario
Indigenous Youth
Engagement Coordinator,
TakingITGlobal



THE ROOTS of our ideas



For Indigenous youth our knowledge and ideas are strongly grounded in the places that we are from and the land that we learn from every day. Check out this map of the **30 different communities** that youth from the **Indigenous Youth Advisory Circle** are from.



Naujaat

Nain Nunatsiavut

Membertou First Nation

Wauzhushk Onigum First Nation

Creemore

Kitigan Zibi Anishinabeg



Manitowaning

Akwesasne

Saugeen First Nation

Ottawa

Penetanguishene

Toronto

Hamilton

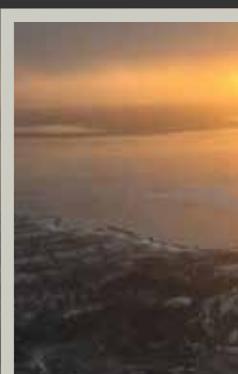
UNCOVERING our histories

How are we connected to the past? What do you think people need to know more about in regards to Indigenous histories and the history of Canada?

“ In my community, I would like to have more drop ins, more buildings for kids, more activities for families to do together, more school for adults and **more chances for elders and young people to share stories** so that we can learn our histories...”



— **Bridgitte Alikasua**
Arviat





We have **laws that have been around for thousands of years...** a lot of youth and middle aged people even some of the elders in our communities have forgotten or haven't learned these laws, but I think **these teachings are important** because it helps keep us grounded and have meaning to life.



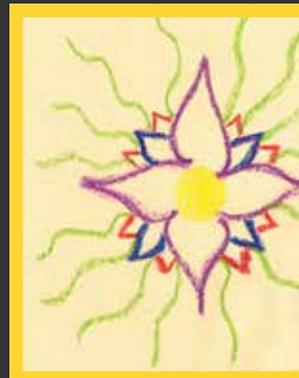
— **Shaheen Baker**
Pelly Crossing



I have hope because I think it is getting to the point where more and **more youth are taking advantage of opportunities** to learn our history and traditions... it is a way for us to spend time together and to gain knowledge around our teachings that have been **passed down by our ancestors for generations.**



— **Ariana Roundpoint**
Akwesasne

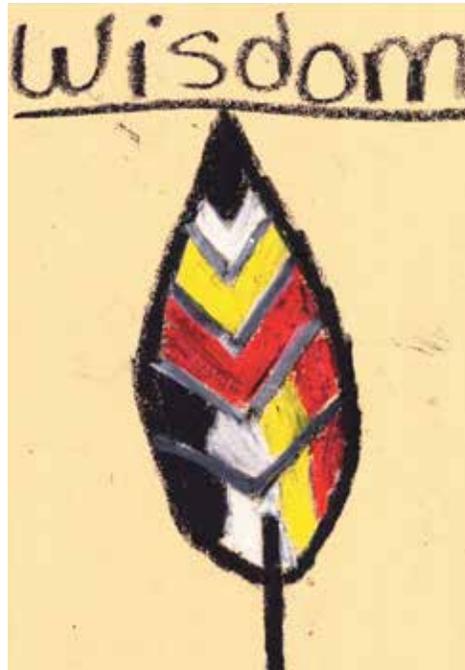




Throughout history our **Indigenous languages** have always had a **connection to the land**. Things like place names for example have a deeper meaning than just 'Toronto' or 'Edmonton' or 'Canada' they represent concepts and come from words in our languages. **We are tied to this history every time we use these words.**



— **Devin Pielle**
Sliammon First Nation



I think Canadians need to **learn about our histories**. For Inuit history we went through experiences with forced relocation. We also went to residential schools. People should also learn about the slaughtering of our sled dogs and that we are under a different land claim and that we don't fall under the Indian Act... **we have different rights and a different place in this country** and I would really like to see this come forward as a key part of mending our relationships.



— **Mikka Komaksiutiksak**
Rankin Inlet



We need to start honoring the treaties and agreements that were made in the past. The government and Canadians need to start recognizing these and the violence that has been done in the past to our communities. **We need more than an apology**, we need action.



— **Haley Moody**
Hamilton



I really believe that you need to know where you come from before you know where you're going.



— **Caroline Nochasak**
Nain Nunatsiavut



“ In the next 150 years, I hope to see more of an **infusion of Indigenous knowledge and history within the education curriculum** right from kindergarten through to post-secondary. My hope is that more people can become aware of our history and not have their views of us formed by ignorance.



— **Maria Lucas**
Creemore

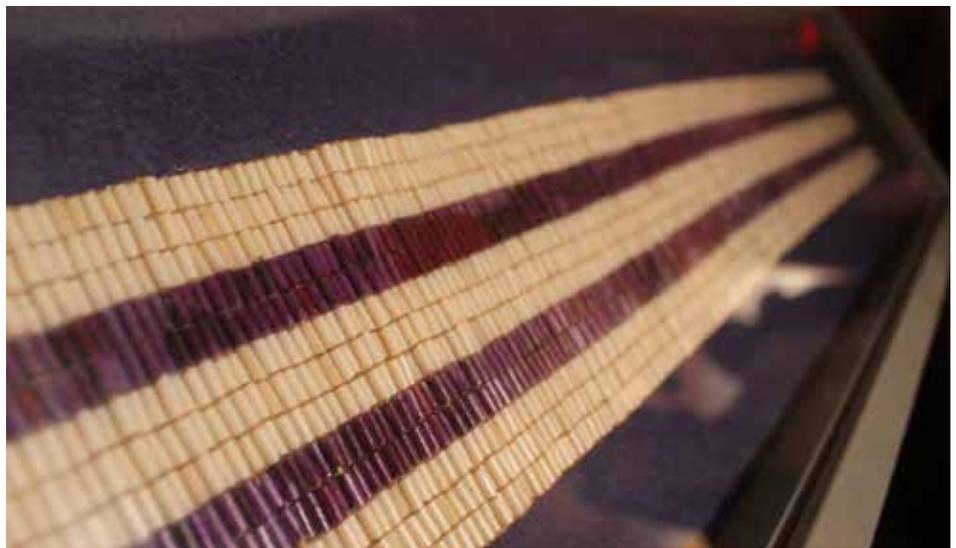
The Indian Act

When Canada became a country, the Department of Indian Affairs (DIA) was created to administer policies regarding First Nations. In 1876, the Indian Act was passed. This act gave legal power to government to control the lives of First Nations communities across the country. The Indian Act combined earlier colonial and federal laws into one act, and included clauses about land, Indian status, and local government.

The Indian Act defines who is considered a "Status Indian." Individuals who qualify as "Status Indians" are wards of the government, meaning that the act treats them as if they were children in need of parental care. Before 1951, Status Indians were not deemed to be "people" under the laws of Canada, and therefore were denied certain rights that other Canadians enjoyed. Status Indians could only become "persons" by voluntary enfranchisement—by relinquishing their Indian status. Only then would they be allowed to vote, own property, or have the rights of other Canadian citizens. "WOW!"

The Indian Act provided for reserve land to be set aside for the use of Status Indians, and specified who could live on the reserves. Government officials exercised considerable power over people living on reserves. Among other things, they could dictate when and where children would go to school.

The Indian Act infringed on personal behavior in its discriminatory laws regarding alcohol use. It was a crime for anyone falling under the act to own or consume alcohol, and an inebriated person could be



“ Many people celebrated as heroes in Canadian history have actually contributed to a lot of oppression on our communities. Indigenous and non-Indigenous **youth need to be supported in deconstructing this** and given the opportunity to **celebrate our Indigenous heroes** as well. Our heroes include those who fought and continue to fight for our rights and ways of life; those who demand justice for the lands and waters; those who have shared critical knowledge with settlers despite being discriminated against and often not recognized for it. These heroes, past and present, need to be celebrated for they are the reason we are still here.



— **Hayley Moody**
Hamilton



It is important for **Indigenous young people to take the extra step when they are ready** to learn about who they are, to ask questions. For me, I didn't even know about my Dene nation history or about First Nations history within Canada. I didn't know most information about the residential school system. Learning from that, I can see how Indigenous people were treated back then and **connect it to where we are now.**



— **Jasmine Sangris**
Yellowknife



They don't teach about our history very much in school, but it's important to know what our elders have to say to us about it because they have had a lot of experience. You know they just want to share with us and see our faces light up with joy when hearing their stories. A lot of these **stories and legends come with important lessons** and I think that the way they put the stories and lessons together is very interesting... We need to learn about these and not just American history **or what they call Canadian history.**



— **Renee Angotialuk**
Naujaat



More non-Indigenous people need to know about **the impacts of intergenerational trauma** and understand the negative history so that the problems aren't perpetuated and so that we aren't discriminated against anymore.



— **Krista McNamara**
Penetanguishene



My culture and community gives me strength because I know what we have been through and what all Indigenous peoples have been through over the past couple hundred years. We have been through so much abuse and racism, but we must remember that for many nations it made us stronger. **I carry this strength from my ancestors through the blood and spirit that we share.**



— **Ariana Roundpoint**
Akwesasne





STRENGTH Through Land, Lang AND CULTURE

Where do you draw your strength from? What are our responsibilities to each other and the land?



I believe in empowering youth through cultural initiatives and spirituality as a strength and **an anchor to hold you down**; to let you know yourself. **You can't be happy and you can't help others until you know yourself.**



— **Doronn Fox**
Kwanlin Dün First Nation



Culture is essential. Culture is the strongest foundation I can think of. Culture I strongly believe is what's going to unite us all as one people again. We've been separated by politics, by votes, by borders and boundaries, by addiction, by work. Culture is something that we all truly have in common and culture is what I believe will make us strong.



— **Devin Pielle**
Sliammon First Nation



We are borrowing the land from our children, grandchildren and future generations... One way we can use our land based teachings to protect the land is to **only take what you need, use only what you need.**



— **Silpa Suarak**
Nain Nunatsiavut



uage



Language is a key part of who we are. **It's our identity** and it's how we can communicate with elders and how we should be communicating with our children and our parents. **I am proud of the stories and legends** that elders have to share in the language - growing up I listened to stories that would teach me things to protect me. We need **more encouragement and opportunities** for adults and young people to learn.



— **Robin Ikkutisluk**
Gjoa Haven



Some of the change that I want, I won't see because it will take time, but I am working for **the future generations**. I want to set foundations so that they can succeed and have an easier time than I did growing up, an easier experience in education and **an easier experience connecting to their culture**. I may not see these changes, but to know that I have been able to set those foundations will be a huge success for me.



— **Will Landon**
*Wauzhushk Onigum
First Nation*



In Mi'kmaq culture trees are believed to possess the spirit of women because the trees have a **direct relationship with mother earth herself**.



— **Levi Marshall**
Membertou First Nation



It's vital for us Indigenous youth to have a voice in shaping our country, because we are the **next generation of Canada's original people**. We have to be the ones to carry out the stories, legacies and traditions, so that **our cultures can thrive and grow**.



— **Levi Marshall**
Membertou First Nation



The way we are taught in schools is that humans are on top of the living pyramid. There are people, there are animals and at the bottom are resources. **We need to change our understanding of this and flip the pyramid** because truly if it were not for the earth and all of the resources, none of the rest of living things including humans would exist.



— **Feather Pewapisconias**
Littlepine First Nation



I hope that language becomes more of a priority... **Language is fighting colonization**. It is what they took away from us and we owe it to the residential school survivors to hang on and bring it back... I speak our language regularly to my daughter and to hear her use the language, **to say the words of our people makes me so proud**. It's so normalized for her and that's beautiful.



— **Devin Pielle**
Sliammon First Nation





Living in a small community it's nice knowing that a lot of people care about you and can support you, but there are changes that I would like to see back home and everywhere. **Keeping our land clean, more respect for each other and education** for example. Going to school can't just be about passing any more it needs to be about learning. We need to be supported better to reach higher education, but this **learning needs to be centred around respect for each other and the land.** There should also be more of a focus on embracing our culture and our language in school because it brings such important knowledge.



— **Renee Angotialuk**
Naujaat



I think to gain more land based teachings **we must utilize our elders and get them fully involved in any way we can.** They have all of the knowledge we need... I remember the best feeling in the world was when I was a little girl exploring the land and always being taught the simple teachings of **Respect, Care, Share and Teach.**



— **Shaheen Baker**
Pelly Crossing



I love that when I teach youth how to **throat sing** I get to practice communication! I try to let them learn the basics then build on their skills. This can be applied to **many leadership and teaching situations** like catering to an individual's needs.



— **Caroline Nochasak**
Nain Nunatsiavut

Ideas INTO Action



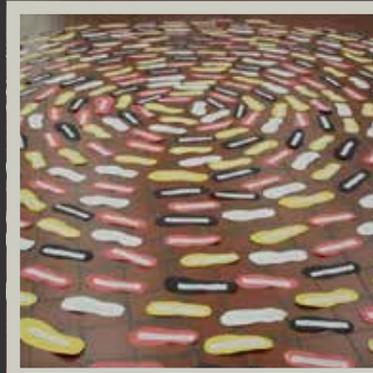
Throughout their involvement in the Indigenous Youth Advisory Circle, several of the youth advisors organized projects and workshops in their communities. These initiatives brought together groups of Indigenous youth to develop leadership skills while engaging in dialogue around Canada's past, present and future.

Devin Pielle from Sliammon First Nation facilitated a workshop on Indigenous history focusing on the experiences and resilience of Indigenous peoples throughout colonization. She worked with an elder from the community to share this knowledge and to guide the youth to understand how this past affects their current realities. They were encouraged to see themselves as leaders with the potential to create positive change for the future.





Levi Marshall from Membertou First Nation worked with a group of students at his high school to start the Footprint Project, an initiative aimed at raising awareness around the violence faced by Indigenous women in Canada. They cut out over 450 footprints which students signed expressing their commitment to taking action on this important issue. Levi also took inspiration from ribbon projects done in The Pas and Winnipeg, cutting out strips of red cloth and tying them all over the branches of trees in his community to honor the Indigenous women who have been lost through violence.



Ariana Roundpoint from Akwesasne Québec organized a Mukluk making workshop where youth in her community were invited to learn more about their Mohawk history and culture. Knowledge keeper and artist Jessica Hall guided the youth on how to make the mukluks, with each youth getting to create their own pair. They discussed the importance of youth stepping forward to learn teachings in order to pass them onto future generations.



BREAKING DOWN Stereotypes and MISCONCEPTIONS

**What are some common stereotypes and misconceptions about our communities?
What impact do they have and how can we challenge them?**



Stereotypes affect me and my community because it's almost like we have to live up to those **stereotypes and the misconceptions** in how people view us. It's not whether we want to, but sometimes we feel like we have to... **It makes things harder for our communities and especially our youth**, but we're trying to change that – having our voices and stories heard is a big part of this.



— **Ariana Roundpoint**
Akwesasne



People need to realize the judgment that a lot of our people face. **I have faced a lot of judgement in the places that I lived** – I have had a lot of allies but they didn't understand a lot, they didn't understand why I needed certain things or some of our practices. Just offering support, even if you don't fully understand is important.



— **Krista McNamara**
Penetanguishene



Being Métis does not just mean you are mixed. We have a **distinct history, culture and language** that identifies us as one of the three Indigenous groups of this land. We need non-Indigenous peoples to recognize this, but we also need our First Nations and Inuit cousins to understand this better as well.



— **Lindsay DuPré**
Toronto - Métis Nation of Ontario



NS



I often see our people being represented either as drunks or having a drum in their hand. There is hardly an in-between. I think that this is telling the general public that we're either a big mess or a cartoon stereotype version of our culture. **To fix these stereotypes, we must create compassion...** If the general public can understand why Indigenous people have their struggles, we can then create compassion, reconciliation, and we can **work together** to make Canada better for my daughter's generation.



— **Devin Pielle**
Sliammon First Nation



People's perceptions of Indigenous people often comes from a place of ignorance and misunderstanding. People are not informed of our history, where we come from. They do not know the unique legal framework between our people and the Canadian government or the beauty of our different cultures – without this understanding how is there going to be respect?



— **Maria Lucas**
Creemore



I would really like for people to know that Inuit throat singing is played between two people and is not a one person thing... I think that is important to understand because **it is a traditional teaching of ours**, it's not just a traditional song.



— **Mikka Komaksiutiksak**
Rankin Inlet



There are a lot of people who think that Canada only goes from British Columbia to Newfoundland and the north is just open land with no people, no ideas and no innovation – or that we just live in igloos. This is so far from the truth. **We have the strength and vision** to determine our own structures and policies and know what our people need. **We are resilient**; our people say that we have survived in one of the most harshest places to live in the world, but I believe **we haven't just survived, we have thrived**. Take a look at how dynamic our cultures, languages and traditions are and you will see the truth in my belief.



— **Jordan Peterson**
Inuvik



I know a lot of people who don't know about the facts and that's where stereotyping comes from. **Take the time to understand** before you start assuming stuff. It's very important to educate people about that.



— **Jasmine Sangris**
Yellowknife





We are talked about as though we live in the past, and these elementary school children and high school children, even up to the university level, they are not even recognizing that **we are still here** and that we are still practicing our traditions, culture and languages. I think the education system needs to include that in their school curriculums because I think that's **where a lot of the racism and intolerance comes from...** They don't know anything about us and then they watch the news and everything is negative. People need to see the positive aspects of our cultures and better understand what's happened in the past.



— **Hayley Moody**
Hamilton



We need the people down south to **understand the north because it's special.** The north has people, people that are the most heartwarming passionate people and they just need to see us and understand that **we are here, we're not going away and we're strong.**



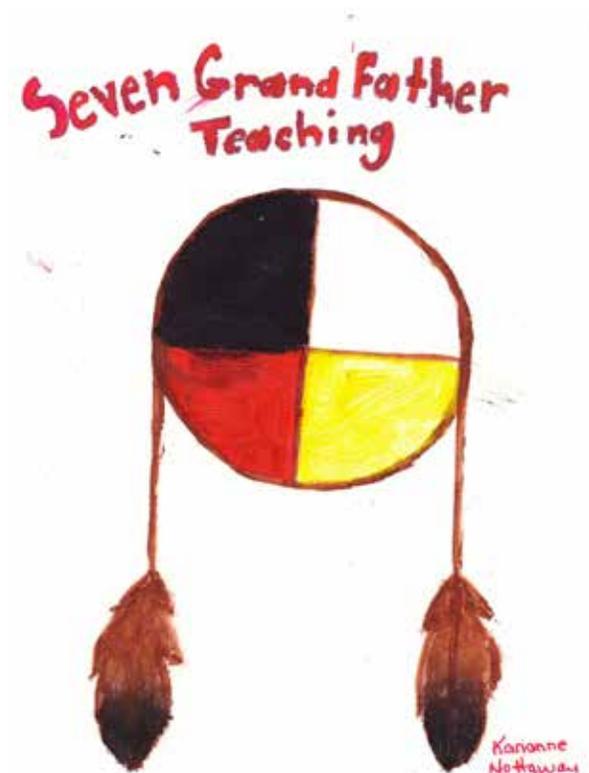
— **Doronn Fox**
Kwanlin Dün First Nation



The non-Indigenous side of my family, they used to see us Indigenous people as **always wanting money, being lazy.** This has now turned into this pseudo enlightenment of pitying Indigenous people, 'oh poor them, they can't help themselves'. This isn't any better and **these views need to stop.**

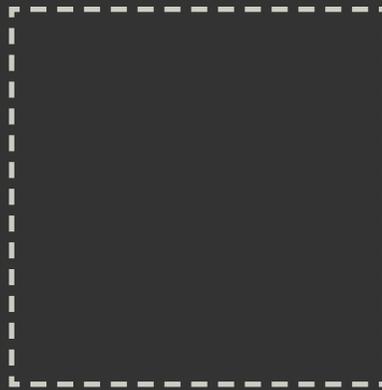


— **Elise St. Germain**
Toronto



Food ^{IS} Belonging

During her visit to Arviat, Nunavut in October of 2015, TakingITGlobal co-founder Jennifer Corriero supported a group of youth in hosting a feast within their community. The event explored the role that food can play in community belonging and connectedness. Youth supported the planning process by providing input on the menu, venue and activities.





Food was prepared by a group of youth in the kitchen at Arctic College with mentorship and guidance from those with experience. Several members within the community also provided caribou (both raw and cooked) and discussions took place on how healthy food links to well being. The evening was opened by a prayer offered by an Elder along with traditional Throat Singing. Youth also set up art activities including a beading station and a collaborative painting with the Inukshuk as the central design element.





CONNECTEDNESS AND **Belonging**

Why is our connection to each other and the land so important? How do these connections impact our sense of belonging?



I always loved being out on the land, feeling a sense of freedom and **feeling like I belonged**. It's where my identity is, where my ancestors are, where my dad grew up and where my whole family tree is.



— **Jasmine Sangris**
Yellowknife



I'm trying to build a connection with my community to **ultimately build a stronger connection with myself**, so I can help other people who are struggling with the same issue.



— **Maggie Moose**
Nisichawayasihk Cree Nation



Often our youth struggle with belonging when they feel they don't know enough about our culture and our traditions, but relationship is tradition. Kindness is tradition. If youth are able to start there then that's the most important thing.



— **Sinéad Charbonneau**
Métis Nation - Anishinaabe Territories



Culture and tradition are important, but we need to figure out a way to keep youth interested, at the high school age, it isn't always seen as cool to go to culture camps or talk your traditional language. I remember myself just wanting to be white with blonde hair and blue eyes. I was ashamed for being native. **Racism made me hate who I was...** My dad was chief of my nation when I was growing up, so I was forced to go to cultural events. Now at 23, I am regretting not appreciating those experiences and paying more attention. **Finally I am coming to terms with this and accepting my background, and starting to be proud.**



— **Lenna Charlie**
Whitehorse



Laughter is so important because it really signifies community and belonging...if you can laugh with someone you probably aren't worrying about belonging or performing your identity. You are just there with people building relationships.



— **Elise St. Germain**
Toronto



I've always wanted to be outside and do outside stuff...even when I joined the military. Being outside, **that's how you bond with people.** When you are in the elements with them and are stuck with them, they don't have a choice but to bond with you.



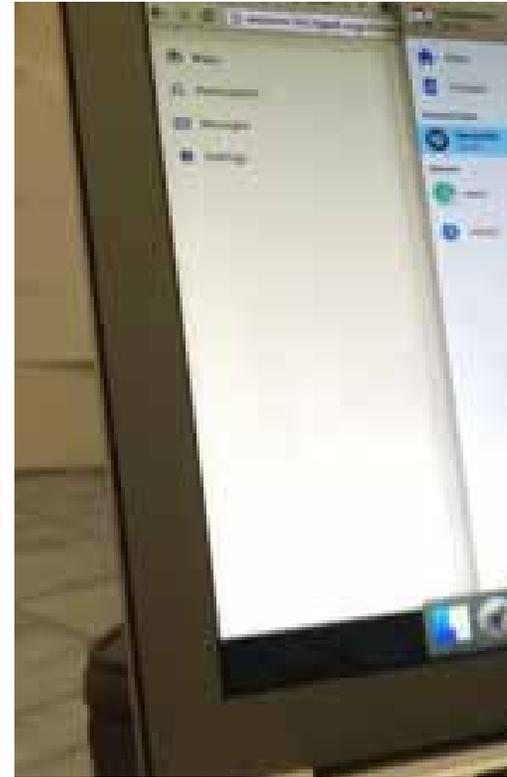
— **Michael Pyette**
Manitowaning



I think we are finding our voices, finding our strength and the courage for youth to share their stories; it's great that we can **work together as Inuit, Métis and First Nations youth** because we are affected by many of the same realities in Canada and **if we don't come together we will never learn.**



— **Mikka Komaksiutiksak**
Rankin Inlet



Youth are craving knowledge around **who they are and where they come from.** They need more opportunities to practice the culture and languages in order to feel a **stronger sense of identity and belonging.** Residential schools tried to take this away from us and issues of suicide and addiction facing our peoples remain as evidence of the disconnection that has happened.



— **Jordan Peterson**
Inuvik



It is very important for us to stay connected to our **traditional ways of knowing and being** and not just change everything according to how the people down south do it. For us in Nunavut we try to incorporate the **Inuit Qaujimajatuqangit Principles** – there are 8 of them and they help guide us in how we should learn and be.



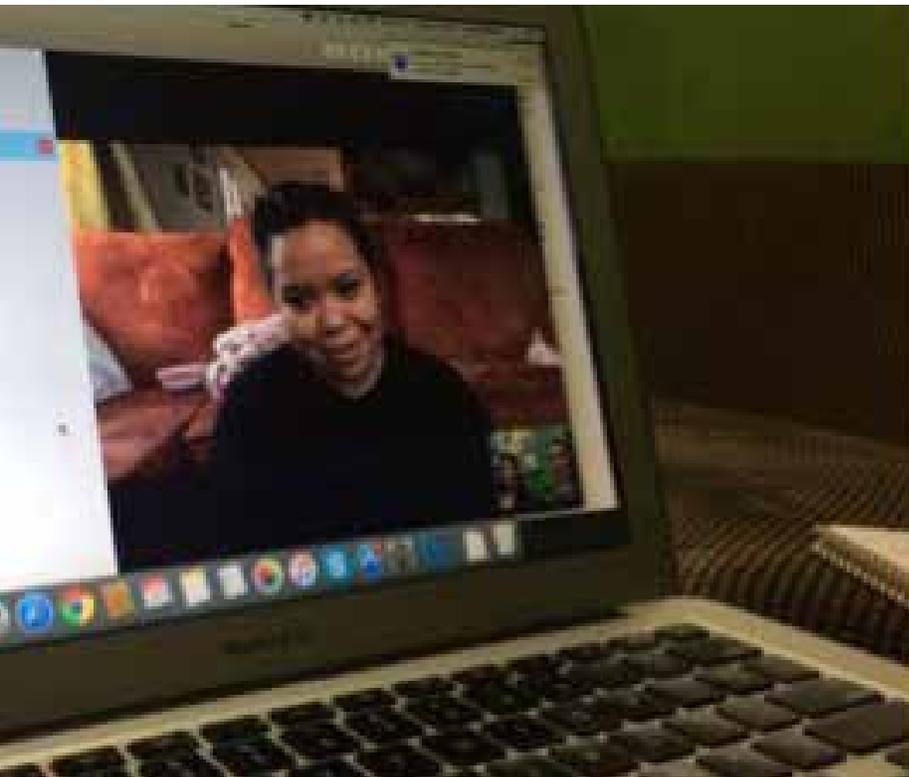
— **Robin Ikkutisluk**
Gjoa Haven



I think it's really important to have **technology connect us across the land...** Sometimes I feel like there aren't too many youth interested in language revitalization and culture where I am and so knowing that there are other youth across the country who share this passion gives me more of a **sense of community.**



— **Devin Pielle**
Sliammon First Nation



We learn so much from the environment around us; the water teaches us to flow freely and not let anything hold you in one place; the plants and animals teach us that we all need each other to survive and that we must take care of each other in order to keep ourselves sustained.



— **Ariana Roundpoint**
Akwesasne



One thing that really impacted me was when an elder said that as **urban Indigenous youth** we are removed from the land... we don't have access to the land in the way that we need to. **Our identity is derived from the land,** therefore we are going to struggle with knowing who you are and where you have come from.



— **Maria Lucas**
Creemore



I believe it is extremely important that **our young leaders of today connect with one another** as it gives us the opportunity to discuss issues in our communities and give solutions and suggestions to one another in order to move forward and resolve those problems. **Youth idolize other youth,** that's how trends start! Having Indigenous young people talk about bettering our society and taking action is the only way we will be able to see **change for the upcoming generations** – by inspiring each other.



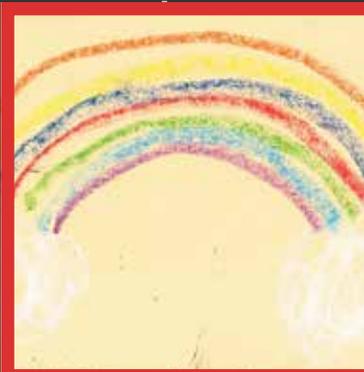
— **Levi Marshall**
Membertou First Nation



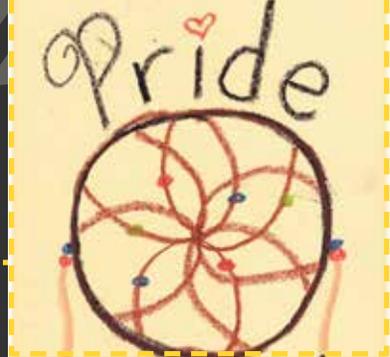
Hope THROUGH Leadership

AN
RE

Youth from Kitigan Zibi visited Ottawa to check out the Explore150 Winterlude exhibit and to participate in a workshop to talk about leadership and their visions for reconciliation. We explored the gifts that each of them bring to their community, learned from the stories of Indigenous role models across the country, and created beautiful artwork to represent their ideas and hopes for the future.



D CONCILIATION



One student shared that she thought the most important way to create change is to approach our leadership through the seven grandfather teachings - especially love. The day was filled with laughter and learning, with the power of love and friendship evident throughout all parts of the day in how the youth supported one another. Youth Advisor Silpa Suarak helped lead the workshop sharing powerful words around overcoming loss and finding a sense of belonging.



HEALING AND Resilience

How have our communities demonstrated resistance and resilience throughout colonization? What do we need to continue healing?



My advice for youth who are struggling is to **talk to an elder** and learn about moving on – learn about who your people were. There are books, websites and resources now that can help you learn. Also **listen to stories and get involved in culture** in any way that you can—whatever that means to you. Everyone has their own gifts and so **find the outlet that works for you and connects you.**



— **Devin Pielle**
Sliammon First Nation



We need the imagination and creativity that our youth provide **to better our community and world** or else we will be stuck in the past with the mistakes being repeated over and over again.



— **Ariana Roundpoint**
Akwesasne



For myself, when I'm feeling **overwhelmed** or when I find myself frustrated, I like going to sweats or smudge myself. It's calming and allows time for me to **reflect on what it is that I need to do.**



— **Levi Marshall**
Membertou First Nation



Healing is the biggest challenge facing our communities. **As we heal our fires are getting stronger**, but some people and communities are having a harder time. We need to help spread the strength of our fires to those who are about to burn out by **sharing our love, knowledges and best practices.** Our fires are connected and we need them all to burn bright and strong.



— **Jordan Peterson**
Inuvik





We are proud of our small community because we work together to **create as many chances** as we can for our kids.



— **Bridgitte Alikasua**
Arviat



One of our Inuit teachings is all about working together for the same cause and that's what we are starting to do... we're working together to **overcome the suicide rates and violence** that affect our communities.



— **Mikka Komaksiutiksak**
Rankin Inlet



Youth need spaces to share their feelings and stories and to know that as a collective community we are here to support them... we need to celebrate the positive things that they are doing, whether it is someone choosing life and committing to do better or someone who is out there making a difference in the community... We need to be able to honor our young people while they're with us not just once they're gone.



— **Kluane Adamek**
Kluane First Nation



I think that by reaching out to **community it's like a life raft**, there are people there to catch you and bring you back to life...I'm not perfect, I'll never be perfect, but **I've chosen to stay here and to keep trying.**



— **Krista McNamara**
Penetanguishene



Lateral violence makes things **difficult** within our own community. I experienced it when I was young and am still experiencing it in my leadership. But there is a way to get past that... it's strength and confidence. If youth find this strength and confidence it will take them a long way.



— **Paul Josie**
Vuntut Gwitchin First Nation



You have to be compassionate and understanding as people come from all different walks of life. You have to be able to put yourself in their shoes to try and **understand what's holding them back...** I know some youth up here in the Yukon feel that they aren't valuable - they underestimate themselves and their purpose in life. **People just need to know they can do anything.**



— **Lenna Charlie**
Whitehorse



Being Métis we are constantly **adjusting to the different spaces and identities** that we are a part of. In the past we were made to feel ashamed of this, but we need to be proud of it and know it's a skill and learn how to use it... **stay rooted to our ancestry**, but adapt and use it for creating change.



— **Michael Pyette**
Manitowaning



We were quiet hundreds of years ago, but **we're different now**, we have courage, we have confidence and support.



— **Silpa Suarak**
Nain Nunatsiavut



I think one of my strengths may be the ability I have to **get back up after being pushed down so many times...** It takes a lot to pick yourself back up, especially when you don't want to or you feel you have no reason to.



— **Maggie Moose**
Nisichawayasihk Cree Nation



Ever since I was a little girl I felt that **this world needs help**. As I grow older I am hearing it from other people - that **the world needs healing**. The people in this world need healing, Mother Earth needs healing... we have started, but we need to keep going.



— **Shaheen Baker**
Pelly Crossing



We need to set goals for ourselves, long term and short term, but in achieving these we need to look at the little successes along the way. These **little successes will speak a lot more than your failures ever will**. Just make sure that you're not afraid to fail. As much as we need to celebrate success we also need to focus on not being afraid of failure.



— **Will Landon**
Wauzhushk Onigum First Nation

FINDING OUR Space in Leadership

Why is it important for Indigenous youth to gain leadership opportunities? What gifts do you bring to your community?



I think teaching young people how to be leaders, how to respond **using their morals and values** is not just going to make people stronger and empowered, it will make people happy. Becoming a leader is essential for Indigenous youth all over Canada and this comes in many different forms; **everyone is a leader in their own way.** We just need to help youth identify their strengths and make sure these strengths **help bring them to their dreams.**



— **Doronn Fox**
Kwanlin Dün First Nation



I am so excited, because I see how much leadership is out there within Indigenous youth. When you are in it, you feel this bubbling, you feel this energy that is going and it's really exciting because things are changing.



— **Elise St. Germain**
Toronto



Leadership comes from taking care of this land, these land rights... we wouldn't be anywhere without the earth.



— **Feather Pewapisconias**
Littlepine First Nation



The work that we are doing is so important. We have such an intelligent generation of Gwich'in coming up that are **starting to express themselves intellectually about all that surrounds them...** They have really impressed me with how engaged they are and that they want to be a part of many conversations we're having on important topics including modern treaties and citizenship... I know that if guided, mentored, and sometimes pushed along the way that our young people, no matter where they live, will **live up to their responsibilities to help teach, heal and protect our communities.**



I think it is very important to give a voice to our youth because **you never know the ideas one might have until you allow them to speak up...** and a lot of youth never get the chance. Let's give ourselves and other youth a chance to change the world!



— **Wesley Simon-Solomon**
Saugeen First Nation



— **Jordan Peterson**
Inuvik

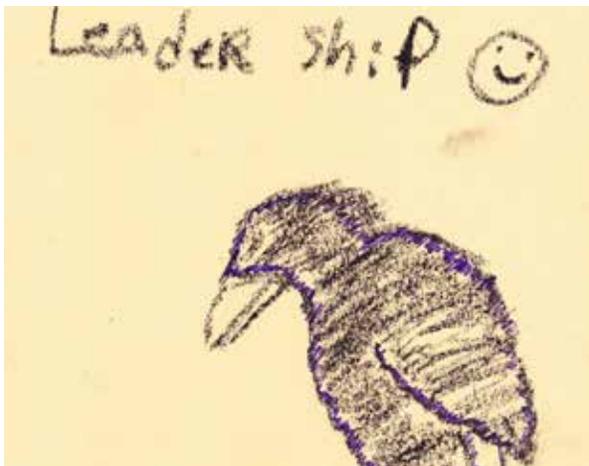
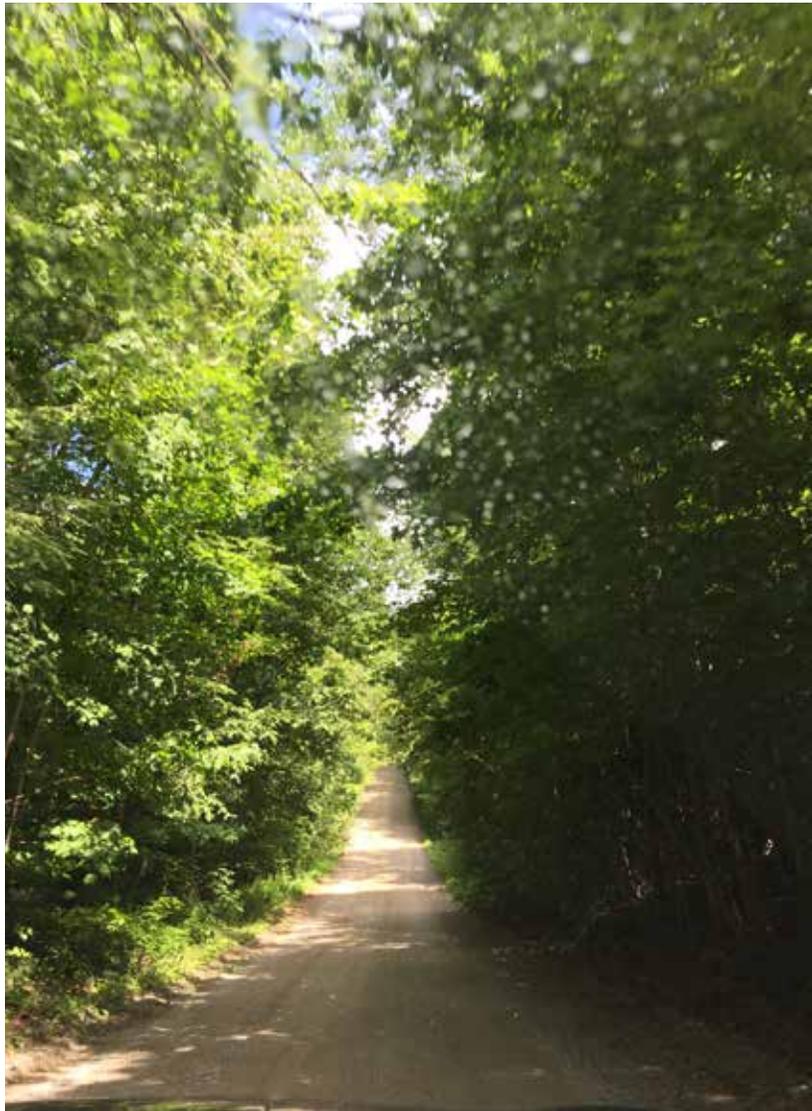


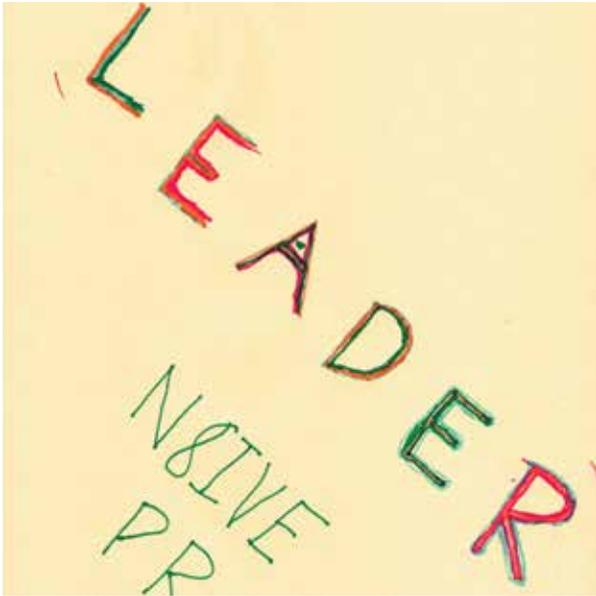


I look forward to seeing what's going to happen in the next decade. I know so many great leaders that are my age and younger that are so incredibly passionate about creating positive change for our people. They are **arming themselves with traditional and western knowledge** in order to do so – exactly what our ancestors fought for. Lifting our leaders up, leaders of ALL ages, should be happening - not tearing them down because they don't think or do things the way it's been done in the past. Society evolves. Culture, traditions, and ways of knowing evolve. I feel that **old ways and new ways should come together to create a better way.** Maintaining balance is one of the most important concepts of Indigenous livelihood. Why can't there be a balance of old and new?



— **Amber Bellegarde**
Little Black Bear First Nation





“ I think in order to be a good leader you need to be helpful, be kind, be respectful and be responsible and **be proud to be who you are.** I hope to be a leader one day and I also hope to inspire other people, youth and adults and even elders to be proud of who they are.



— **Gabriel Shepherd**
Fraser Valley



“ You have to be confident in yourself in order to be a leader. You need to **be open minded** to take the opportunities we have available to us so that you can **hear other people's ideas and learn from them;** learn their perspectives on different issues in the world.



— **Lenna Charlie**
Whitehorse





Maybe **I have more to offer than I credited myself to have...** Identifying with my strengths helped me see a deeper meaning as to what leadership is, made me feel good about myself... then it made me think about the youth in my community, who might also not take the time to **identify their strengths**, made me think do they know what their strengths are, have they asked themselves that? And with that thought in mind made me think of how awesome it would be to be able to encourage that sort of thinking.



— **Maggie Moose**
Nisichawayasihk Cree Nation



When I was a child we would learn how to bead and sew, which helps with our creativity. **Creativity is very important when it comes to leadership**, we have to come up with new ways and expand our thinking. Our traditional ways also include **storytelling**, which helps us listen and in the future, when the time is right, we apply those stories and teachings to our own lives



— **Shaheen Baker**
Pelly Crossing





“ It's a great thing to see **youth from our communities being inspired**; especially now in a time when there are so many changes in the world, and within Canada. We need to get our youth more interested in leadership positions, to know their **traditional roots, their traditional values**. To understand our treaties, our modern treaties, to understand this because they are going to be our future leaders.



— **Paul Josie**
Vuntut Gwitchin First Nation



“ Identifying our strengths plays a huge role in **connecting with our sense of knowing** how we can better our communities. **Our community is like a home**, a family has to work with one another in order to function effectively... We're all great at something and so by working collectively and using our gifts we're guaranteed to finish with the best result possible.



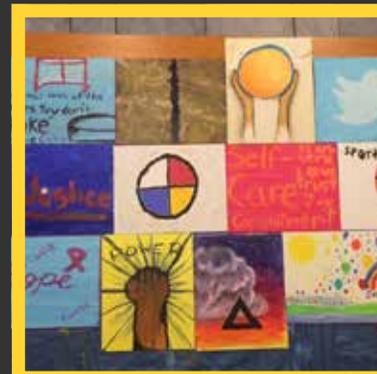
— **Levi Marshall**
Membertou First Nation



BUILDING Bridges

In September 2015, TakingITGlobal collaborated with Canadian Roots Exchange (CRE) to run a workshop for youth leaders participating in their 2015-2016 national Youth Reconciliation Initiative training. The session looked at ways that technology can support building relationships between Indigenous and non-Indigenous youth and how it can help decolonize our understanding of Canada's past, present and future.





In March of 2016 we collaborated with CRE again to run two of our Places of Change workshops. At their Niigaanzaadaa Youth Reconciliation Conference in Sudbury Ontario we explored the different facets of leadership and changemaking by examining youth role models across Canada. Then during one of CRE's reciprocal exchange programs we explored the question "what does change look like?" and the importance of empathy in relationship building with youth from Norway House Manitoba and Toronto Ontario.

As shared by Jordan Omand, "The Medicine Wheel gives us teachings in life about balance. In order to be healthy and to create change you need all aspects of this circle. All of these things that we've listed on the board are a part of it and help us each find our place in the circle of community responsibility and of change."





Reconciliation

What does reconciliation mean to you? How can we rebuild honest and respectful relationships between Indigenous and non-Indigenous peoples?



In order to be part of reconciliation non-Indigenous peoples need to start by **learning about the traditional territories that they are on**. Once they connect in this way then they can keep expanding their knowledge and building a more meaningful relationship. It will help them see that **they are a part of the history of that land and they have responsibilities because of it**. Learn about things like residential schools, the sixties scoop, the Hudson Bay company and especially about treaties. Understand that Indigenous people were tricked and that the original intentions of the treaties have gone unfulfilled, but maybe now they can **help change the relationship** moving forward.



— **Jordan Peterson**
Inuvik



Our present is a work in progress, but our future is bright.



— **Maggie Moose**
Nisichawayasihk Cree Nation



I want other people in Canada to know that **we are important too** and that **we count as people** and I hope in the future that more people are interested and inspired by us Inuit.



— **Renee Angotialuk**
Naujaat



Alongside the tremendous positive change we have seen ignited by Indigenous leaders across the country **there continues to be enormous challenges**. Our youth continue to face inequality in areas such as education, the child welfare system, access to healthcare and clean water, representation in the media, violence and the criminal justice system –just to name a few..If this country is **serious about reconciliation** we need to move the conversation beyond just residential schools to address these current injustices as well.



— **Lindsay DuPré**
Toronto - Métis Nation of Ontario

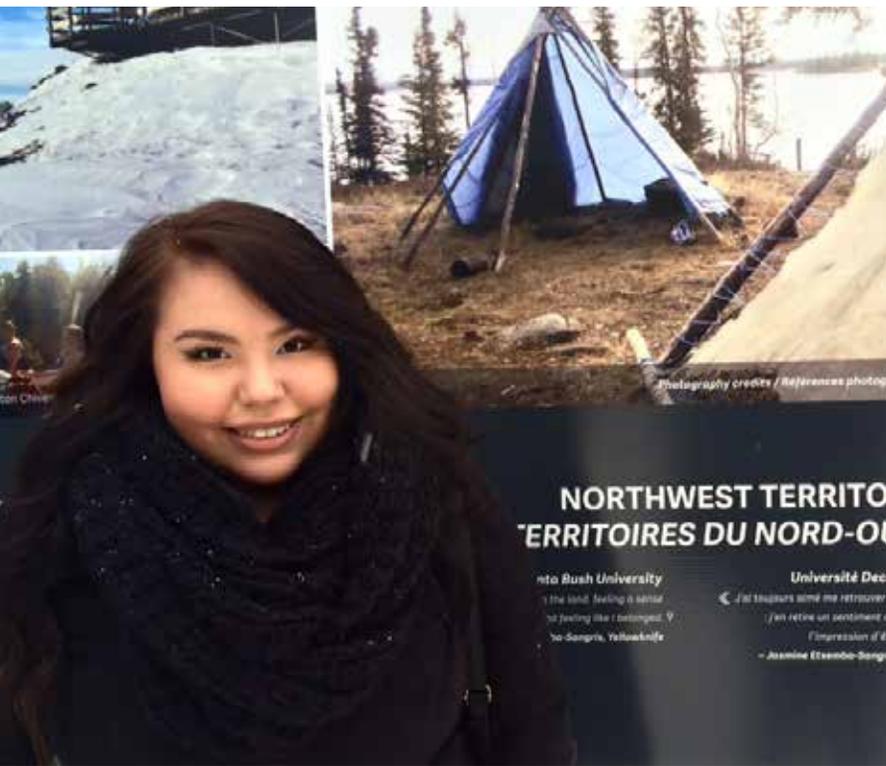


I want non-Indigenous people to understand that there are different groups and identities of Indigenous peoples and that we each have different cultures and histories. To **understand that we are very different, but that we also have commonalities** and shared obstacles that we are trying to overcome. So whether it be suicide, violence against women, drug addiction or alcoholism, they need to understand that our struggles all stem from the same roots in the violence we have faced. **We need to be open to talking about it** and it can't just be our communities, it has to be other non-Indigenous communities living in Canada as well.



— **Mikka Komaksiutiksak**
Rankin Inlet





It's very exciting to have non-Indigenous people show their curiosity and **give us the space to talk about who we are.** I love being a voice for the Northwest Territories, I love putting my voice out there. I love saying how amazing my culture is and it's important for somebody who is not native to learn about that.



— **Jasmine Sangris**
Yellowknife



There are **so many layers to reconciliation.** It means many different things to many different people; it is about Canada as a whole looking at relationships between Indigenous communities and the government and non-Indigenous peoples, but it is also at the community level and a personal individual level as well. **We need to come together on all of these levels** and really push Canada towards new positive relationships. We are moving in a positive direction and I think a large part of this is because of our youth.



— **Hayley Moody**
Hamilton



“

Young leaders like us in this Indigenous Youth Advisory Circle can make a huge difference. Knowing that there are youth on the other side of the country doing what they can to make a better quality of life for my daughter is reconciliation. Knowing there is a brighter future ahead is reconciliation. Knowing languages are being saved and culture is being practiced is reconciliation. **Our drums are getting louder, and so are our voices!** I believe in everyone who is doing something to make a difference in our communities. We will all be a part of reconciliation.



— Devin Pielle
Sliammon First Nation

“

As Métis peoples we have always had a role in between Indigenous and non-Indigenous peoples. We have both in our blood and represent how both can coexist respectfully. **It is important to see both sides and to build good relations.** Our people have suffered a lot being in this in between space, but as we move forward I think it will be an important place to be in order to **bridge the gap.**



— Michael Pyette
Manitowaning





There needs to be **respect for the process of reconciliation**, nothing can be rushed and there needs to be compassion for what will be encountered. There will be a lot of pain and hurt unearthed in this process and we can't blow past it. We really need to face the facts and **do our best to move forward together...** It needs time and patience.



— **Maria Lucas**
Creemore





Sometimes we're born into **a cycle that we don't even know about**. When I did this one workshop in my community none of the youth knew about the Indian Act. It shocked me because as First Nations youth we are so impacted by it every single day, but some of us have no idea... Part of the truth and reconciliation process is **our own people learning the truth of our histories and trauma** because how do you break the cycle if you don't know that it is there.



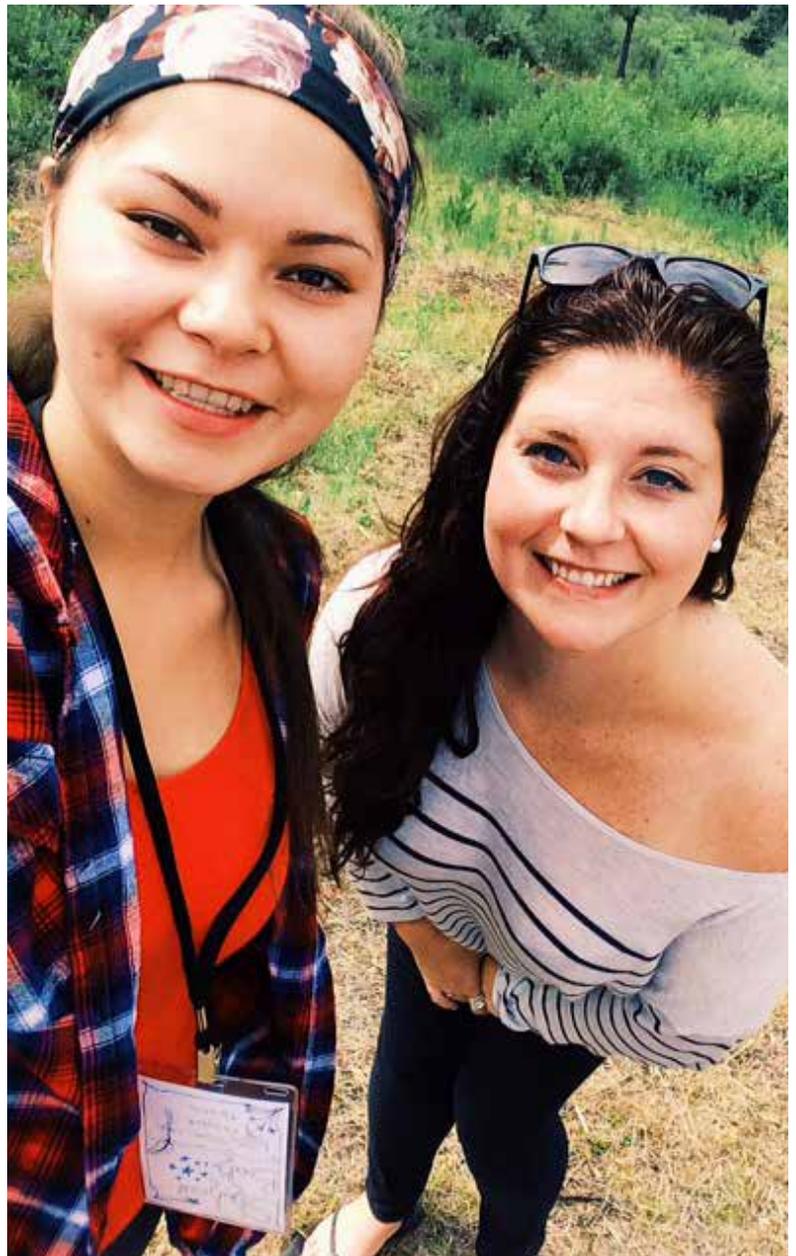
— **Devin Pielle**
Sliammon First Nation



Part of reconciliation is allies knowing when to bring Indigenous people in to talk about things and share our voices. **Having other people speak for us isn't acceptable anymore...** rather than talking about us, let us talk about us, no one should be speaking for us anymore.



— **Krista McNamara**
Penetanguishene





Conclusion

I am very grateful for the young Indigenous leaders from 30 communities across Canada who have shared their experience, knowledge and aspirations as part of this Idea Book. We celebrate your courage and appreciate your meaningful contributions to this project, to your nations and to Canada as a whole. It is an honour for me to be a part of this circle as a non-Indigenous person who cares deeply about empowering youth voices and creating spaces to imagine possibilities.

Explore150 is a project that invites youth from across Canada to reflect on their role as leaders in their communities and to share their visions around Canada's past, present and future. When I co-founded TakingITGlobal in 1999 as a teenager, my own source of motivation and confidence was rooted in being invited to join conversations where I was asked to share my own ideas and opinions. I know first-hand about how transformational it can be to have ideas showcased as part of a bigger platform. When our Indigenous Youth Engagement Coordinator Lindsay DuPré first pitched the idea of curating this Idea Book, I was in full support and am proud of how it has evolved into such an incredible collection of insights.

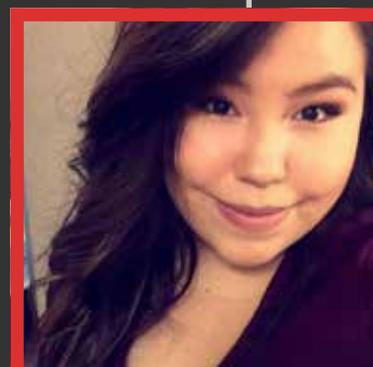
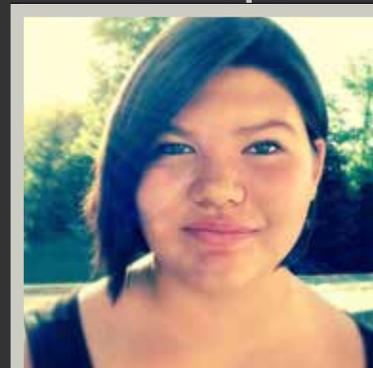
As we aim to do our part to support the work of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission, and as we approach Canada's sesquicentennial in 2017, we are committed to promoting Indigenous youth leadership and cultural exchange throughout our programs at TakingITGlobal. In creating pathways to reconciliation, we have the opportunity to dream together and envision the future in a way that is grounded in our shared values and history. When we strengthen our connections to one another, our communities can thrive and grow. We invite all Canadians to join us in exploring these important issues.

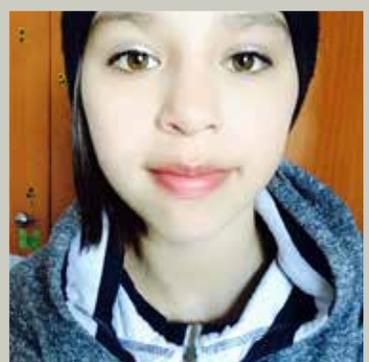
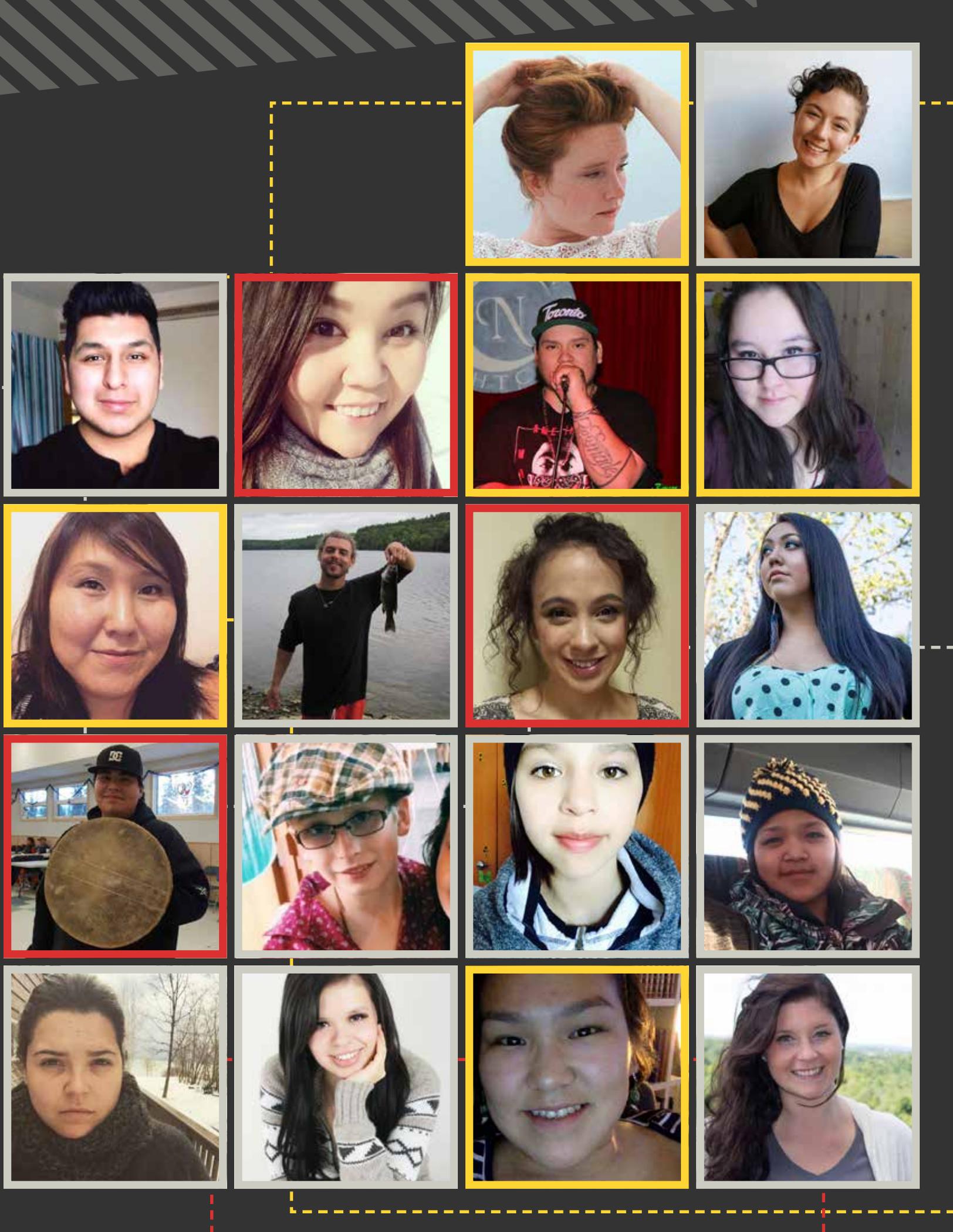


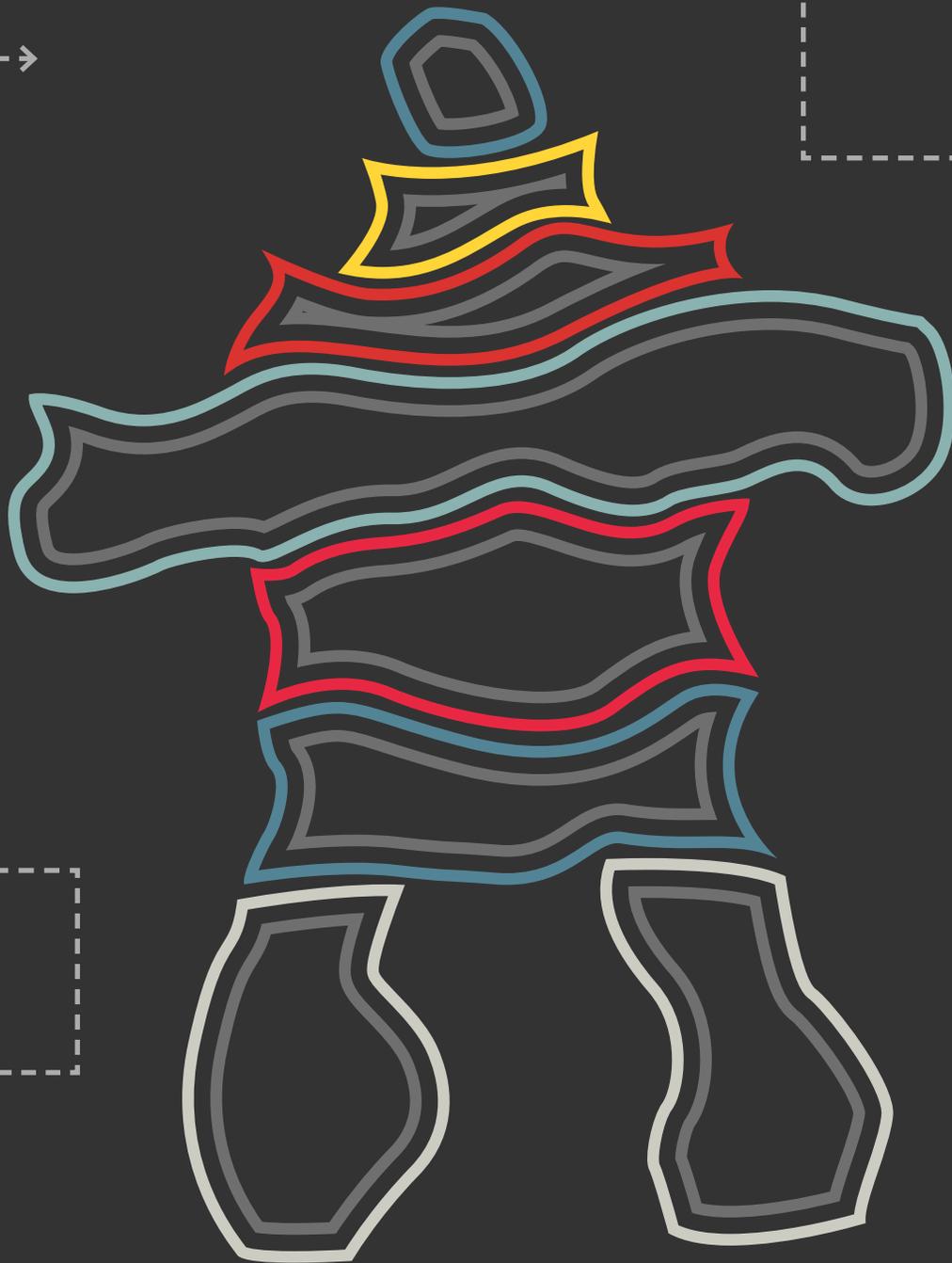
In friendship,
JENNIFER CORRIERO
Co-founder & Executive Director
TakingITGlobal



Many thanks TO OUR Circle







TakingITGlobal would like to extend our appreciation to the **Government of Canada's Youth Take Charge** program at **Canadian Heritage** and the **Samuel Family Foundation** for supporting this Idea Book and creating spaces for youth voices to be heard.

In addition, we want to acknowledge the **Canadian Roots Exchange, Kwanlin Dün First Nation, Alistair Maitland Photography, Our Voices** and other local community partners for sharing their connections and networks.