Indigenous Youth Entrepreneurship in Canada: Final Report

April 2023

NACCA

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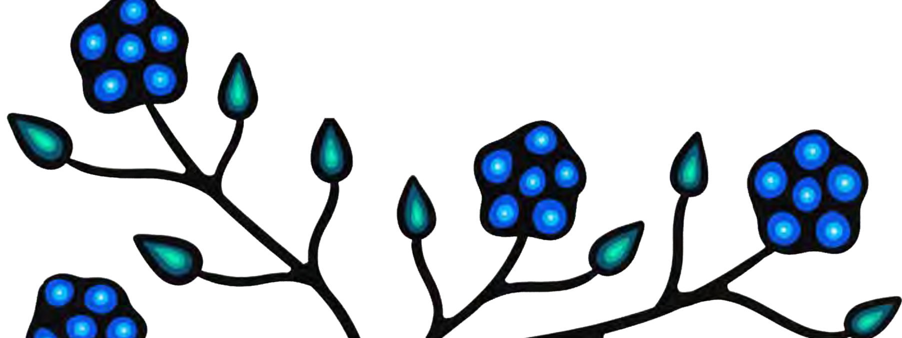

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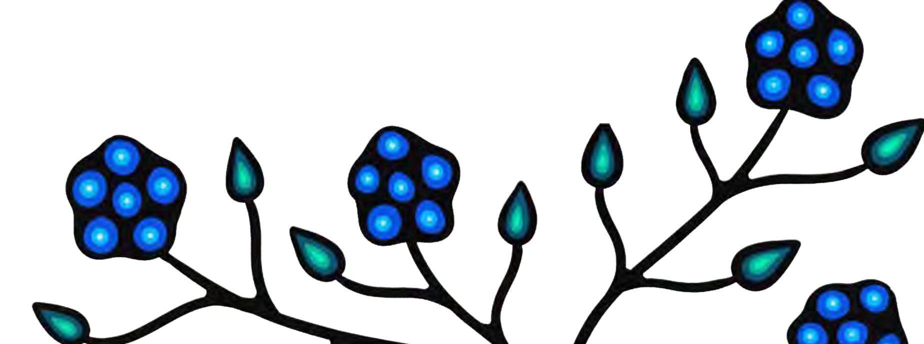


Executive Summary

This report details the development and results of NACCA's Young Indigenous Entrepreneurs research project. This project was undertaken from October 2021 through December 2022 and comprises two connected studies:

- A national survey of 112 young Indigenous entrepreneurs, and
- A qualitative study based on interviews with 13 young Indigenous entrepreneurs from across the country.

Participants in the studies differed in age, gender, community connection, business type and industry, which allowed us to gain deep insights from a broad range of young Indigenous entrepreneurs operating around Canada.

Data for the national survey were collected in both English and French. The survey was open for approximately six weeks (from March 7 through April 17, 2022), and at least one survey was collected from a participant in each of Canada's 13 territories and provinces. All participants are under the age of 40, currently operate a business in Canada, and are Indigenous (79% are First Nations, 18% are Métis, and 4% are Inuit), with 67% of participants being women.

In the survey, we asked in-depth questions about the characteristics of participants' businesses as well as their business priorities in the short and long term. We asked about their perspectives on the supports available to them, their interests in entrepreneurial education, and what they like and find most challenging about their work. Overall, we find that young Indigenous entrepreneurs often hold multiple personal and professional roles, and they are challenged to manage their responsibilities. We also find that they often self-fund their businesses and can be hesitant to bring in investors or to take on debt. Finally, we find that young Indigenous entrepreneurs love to design and make their own products, and love connecting with customers.

As mentioned above, for the qualitative study, we conducted 13 interviews with young Indigenous entrepreneurs from around Canada. Ten entrepreneurs are First Nations, two are Métis, and one is Inuk; with eight of the interviewees being women. The youngest interviewee in the study is 19, and the oldest is 40 years old.

Overall, we find that interviewees are motivated to take on entrepreneurship to gain greater self-determination in their working lives. They seek to connect with their peers and customers through their businesses, and they also seek to share stories of their communities with others. We find that young Indigenous entrepreneurs are actively looking for ways to bring their businesses in accordance with their values. This includes seeking values-aligned partnerships and flexible learning opportunities from funders and other supporters.

Existing research on Indigenous youth entrepreneurship is often based on small sample studies, and sometimes does not allow for young Indigenous entrepreneurs to provide their perspectives. In our study, we sought to focus on the perspectives and ideas of young Indigenous people, and we seek to elevate their ideas through this report. In the report, we provide in-depth quantitative and qualitative analyses of our two studies. We also seek whenever possible to share the words and wisdom of our participants.

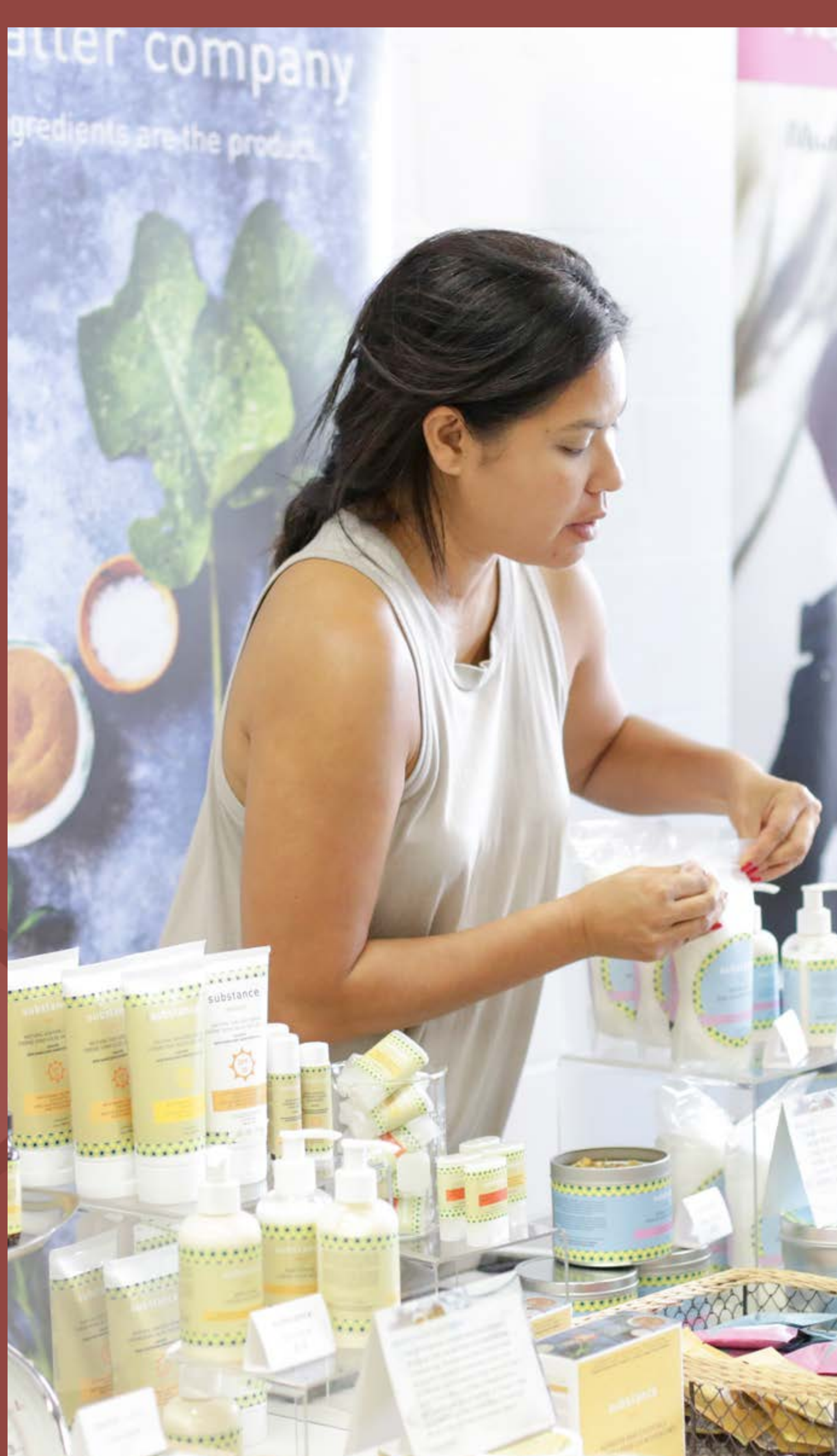
Acknowledgements

Our team acknowledges the generosity of all the young Indigenous entrepreneurs who chose to give their time, energy and stories to support this project. Without their support, our project could not exist. Our team is also indebted to NACCA and its leadership for the patience and trust offered to us, so that we could conduct this project in alignment with our values and perspectives as Indigenous people and Indigenous researchers.

A special thanks to NACCA's Indigenous Youth Business Advisory Council for providing input and guidance throughout this project:

- Kathryn Corbiere, One Kwe
- Elijah Mack-Stirling, Kekuli Cafe
- Destinee Peter, Tangles Hair & Beauty Salon
- Terrena Rizzoli, Rizzoli Denture and Implant Clinic
- Angie Zachary, Bee-You-Tee Bar

We would also like to acknowledge Futurpreneur Canada for providing financial support towards the project.



PROJECT HISTORY

The National Aboriginal Capital Corporations Association (NACCA) is the umbrella organization for a network of over 50 Aboriginal Financial Institutions (AFIs) across the geography we now call Canada. NACCA's mandate is to serve, support and advocate for the AFI network. AFIs are autonomous, Indigenous-controlled, community-based financial organizations. AFIs provide developmental loans and business financing to First Nations, Métis and Inuit entrepreneurs and businesses in all provinces and territories. With nearly 50,000 loans worth close to $3 billion made over the past three decades, the AFI network plays a critical role in meeting the needs of Indigenous entrepreneurs.

In NACCA's latest Annual Report, only 18% of clients supported by the network are Indigenous entrepreneurs under the age of 35. Recognizing that Indigenous youth are the fastest-growing demographic of the Indigenous population, NACCA identified that increasing its support for youth is a priority in its 2022-27 Strategic Plan. Through research, NACCA seeks to identify the needs of young entrepreneurs, with the goal of better tailoring the development of products and services accessed by Indigenous youth.

In 2020, NACCA developed an Indigenous Youth Business Advisory Council of young Indigenous entrepreneurs, to learn from their insights and business experiences to identify how we can best support this community. With guidance from the Indigenous Youth Business Advisory Council, NACCA is currently seeking to better understand and assess the barriers and service gaps that young Indigenous entrepreneurs face through this national research project. This research will help to inform the development of business tools and resources which will support young Indigenous entrepreneurs as they engage in entrepreneurship and business development in Canada.

Project Team

While many people supported the development of this project—from helping us test our survey instrument, to sharing our research with potential participants—there is a team of six who guided this project from inception to completion. While each contributed to different aspects of the project, we were all instrumental in its final presentation:

Magnolia Perron: Indigenous Women and Youth Team Lead (NACCA); Member of the Mohawks of the Bay of Quinte

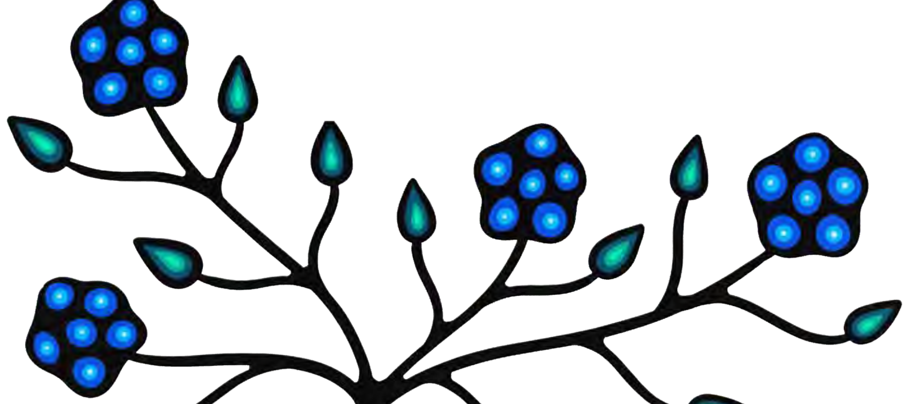
Jordyn Hrenyk: Lead Researcher; PhD Candidate in Strategy and Entrepreneurship; Member of Métis Nation Saskatchewan

Montana Forgie: Research Assistant (NACCA); Member of Squamish Nation

Kimberly Gorgichuk: Indigenous Women Program Officer (NACCA); Member of Kijicho Manito Madaouskarini Algonquin First Nation

Michael Barriault: Indigenous Women Program Officer (NACCA)

Summer Wabasse: Indigenous Women Program Officer (NACCA); Member of Webequie First Nation



Project Purpose and Research Questions

The purpose of this project is to better understand the interests, priorities, experiences, and expectations of young Indigenous entrepreneurs in what is now known as Canada. In conducting this project, our team sought to address the following research questions:

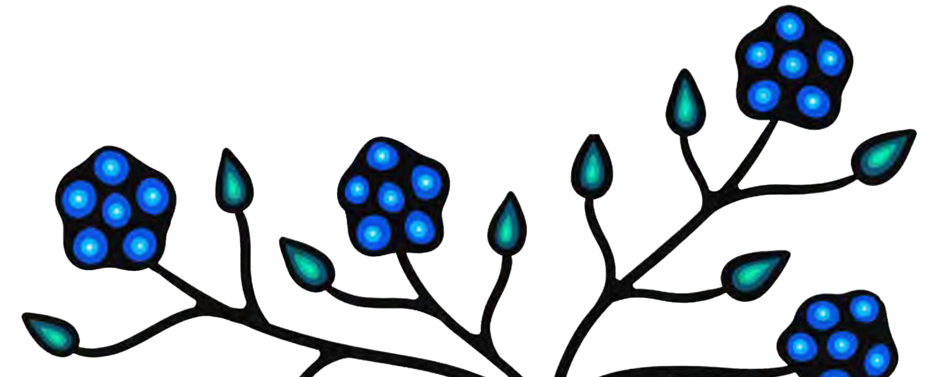
- *What motivates young Indigenous entrepreneurs in Canada to launch and build businesses?*
- *What kinds of support do they need and want?*

In this section, we outline how we came to these questions, and how they drove our research.

While we recognize that important research has been conducted with and about young Indigenous entrepreneurs in Canada in the past, we also acknowledge that some of this prior work has been designed from a deficit lens—a lens that does not always meaningfully take the perspectives of Indigenous youth into account. By this, we mean that researchers have often designed research projects that assume that the purpose of supporting Indigenous young entrepreneurs is to “raise up” Indigenous entrepreneurs to the same level as non-Indigenous entrepreneurs. This perspective and framing can result in research that does not come from the perspectives of the young Indigenous entrepreneurs themselves, and can under-acknowledge the harmful impacts of ongoing histories of colonization on Indigenous communities (Walter & Andersen, 2013). Furthermore, we find that much of the existing research in this area has been hyper-focused on entrepreneurship as a path only to economic development.

In contrast, within this work, we recognize that there are many potential motivations of Indigenous entrepreneurship beyond financial gain. For example, some young Indigenous people seek out entrepreneurship as a way of pursuing self-determination, time freedom, creative fulfilment, or community wellness. We do not assume that young Indigenous entrepreneurs are uniformly interested in business growth, and we seek to understand the challenges and benefits of entrepreneurship holistically.

We come to this project from a framing of Indigenous abundance, recognizing the innovativeness, strong community values, and passion of young Indigenous entrepreneurs in Canada today. We came to this project not to ask “What do Indigenous entrepreneurs lack?” or “What do they need to catch up?”. Rather, we sought to understand what motivates them to build their businesses and what they perceive to be their strengths as entrepreneurs. This kind of work can only be done by taking seriously the stories and perspectives of young Indigenous entrepreneurs in Canada. Instead of recognizing Indigenous entrepreneurship as just a path towards the growth of Indigenous economies, within this project, we frame Indigenous entrepreneurship by young people as *one tool among many* that can support Indigenous Peoples in our movements for well-being, self-determination, and abundance.



LITERATURE REVIEW

We designed our project to be informed by the lived experiences of young Indigenous entrepreneurs, as well as the best available academic understanding. Thus, we began this work with a thorough literature review of both academic and practitioner-based publications. We sought to better understand what researchers and organizations have learned about young Indigenous entrepreneurs, so we could expand on this knowledge with our own inquiry. In the following sections, we detail how we conducted a review of relevant academic journal articles that are focused on young Indigenous entrepreneurs around the world. In total, we reviewed 33 academic articles.

Literature Search

To begin our literature review and compile a set of academic research articles focused on entrepreneurship by young Indigenous people, we conducted a systematic search through a widely used academic database called Web of Science.[1] Our search was designed to be inclusive of Indigenous entrepreneurship by young people all around the world, and inclusive of recently published and older studies.

While our research is focused on the experiences of young Indigenous entrepreneurs in Canada, we recognized that there are commonalities and relevant teachings that can come from young Indigenous entrepreneurs around the world. As such, we searched for all articles that meaningfully included one or more of the following Indigenous identifying terms: **"Aboriginal," "Aborigine*," "Adivasi," "Alaska Native," "First Nation," "Igbo," "Inuit," "Indigenous," "Maasai," "Māori," "Métis," "Native American," "Native Hawaiian," "Pacific Islander," "Sámi,"** and **"Torres Strait Islander."**

While we recognize that this is not a comprehensive list of identity terms for all Indigenous Peoples around the world who may be included in entrepreneurship research, we find that most of the relevant articles are identified from just a few of the most common terms, namely **"Aboriginal," "First Nation," "Indigenous," "Māori,"** and **"Native American,"** and many of these search terms yielded no results in our search. Thus, we are confident that we compiled an appropriate sample. Next, to refine our sample to include only works focused on entrepreneurship, we limited our search with the following terms: **"entrepreneur*," "self-employ*," "small business,"** and **"family business."** We finally refined our sample with the terms **"young"** or **"youth,"** to ensure we collected only articles focused on entrepreneurship by young people. In this way, we compiled as complete a sample as possible.[2]

Refining Search Sample

Through our initial search of Web of Science, we found 92 articles. Next, we refined the initial sample to ensure that each of the works found was relevant to our research questions. To do this, we manually reviewed each article to ensure that it focused (at least in part) on entrepreneurship by young Indigenous people. Through this process, we excluded a total of 62 articles:

- As is often the case in Indigenous-focused literature reviews, we found that many of the articles included in the initial sample are not actually focused on Indigenous Peoples at all. Instead, the term "Indigenous" was used in the articles to mean something like "being from a particular country" rather than the global definition of Indigenous as a political and personal identifying term (Salmon, Chavez, & Murphy, 2022). Sixteen (16) articles were excluded for this reason.
- We further excluded 18 articles, because they did not adequately examine youth or young peoples' contexts.
- Similarly, we excluded 15 articles because they did not meaningfully examine entrepreneurship. For example, in some cases, the term "entrepreneurial" was used in the article as an adjective to describe someone's perspectives on innovation, resilience or creativity, rather than referring to business operations or development.
- Finally, 13 articles were removed because they were not accessible to the research team (usually this was in the case of full books or conference proceedings not shared online).

After this inclusion/exclusion process, we were left with a sample of 30 articles.

As a final measure, we added three articles found through a search of Google Scholar. This supplemented the sample of academic works that were not included through the more selective Web of Science database.

In total, our literature sample is 33 academic journal articles.[3]

1 Web of Science is accessible at https://www.webofscience.com
2 Complete search string: ALL = ((Indigenous OR (First Nation) OR Métis OR Inuit OR (Native American) OR (Alaska Native) OR (Native Hawaiian) OR Māori OR Aboriginal OR Aborigines OR (Pacific Islander) OR (Torres Strait Islander) OR Adivasi OR Igbo OR Maasai OR Sámi)) AND ALL=(entrepreneur* OR self-employ* OR (small business*) OR (family business*)) AND ALL=(youth* OR young)
3 See Appendix 1: Literature Review Articles

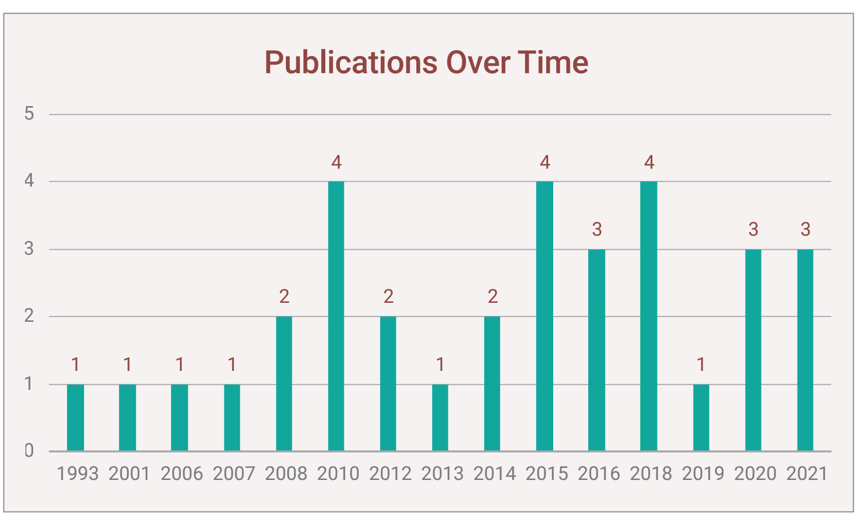
Describing Extant Literature

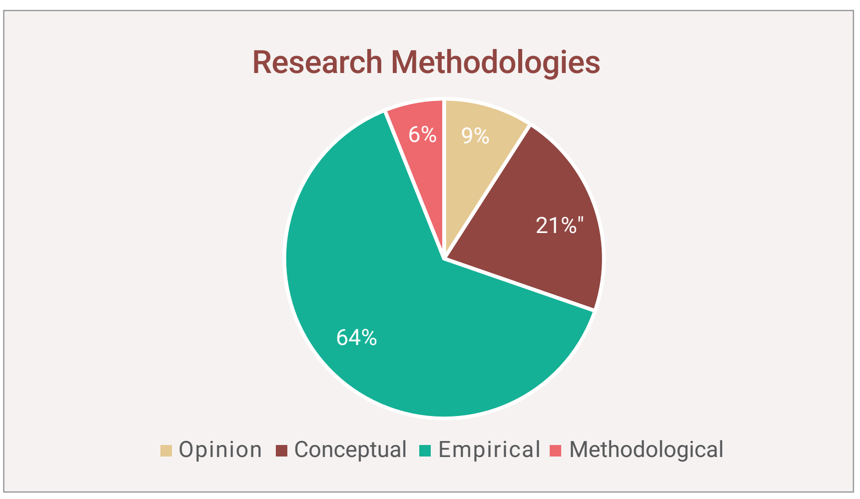
Next, we sought to better understand how these studies on Indigenous youth entrepreneurship were conducted. The first article published in our sample was first published in 1993 (Guinn, 1993); it is an expert opinion article that provides an assessment of four youth entrepreneurship programs in the United States. In 2021, there were three articles published in our sample, and at least one article over the three most recent years (2019-2021).

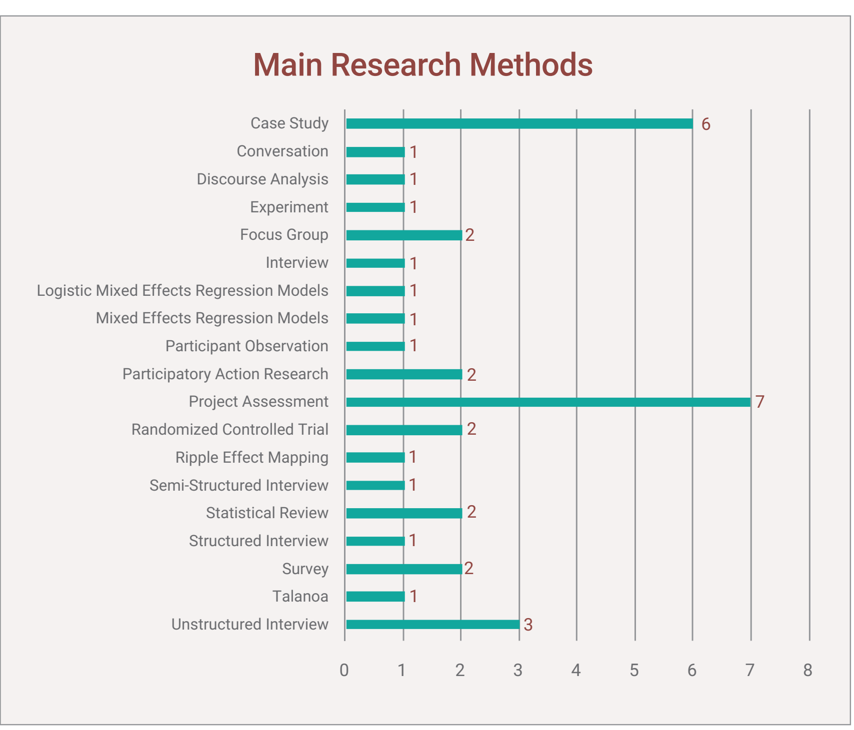
We then identified the main research methodologies employed within the articles. Overall, we find that 64% of the works (n=21) are empirical, meaning the authors analyzed primary or secondary data to come to their conclusions. A further 21% (n=7) are conceptual, meaning that authors draw conclusions or propositions from existing theory. Finally, 9%, (n=3) are expert opinion articles; and 6% (n=2) are methodological, meaning the conclusions drawn are meant to further research into methodological practice.

Of the empirical articles, there is a variety of research methods represented. Within this subsample, 46% (n=10) are described by the authors as primarily qualitative, 27% (n=6) as primarily quantitative, 5% (n=1) are described as being mixed methods (similar to this study), 14% (n=3) are described as following participatory action research methodologies, 5% (n=1) are described as following an Indigenist paradigm, and 5% (n=1) are described as an ethnography.

Among the specific qualitative methods represented in the sample, we find case studies and discourse analysis; structured, semi-structured, and unstructured interviews; and participant observation, ripple effect mapping, and Talanoa research methods. Among the quantitative studies, we find randomized controlled trials, experiments, logistic mixed effects regression models, and other statistical analyses. The diversity of methods and methodologies represented within the sample demonstrates the importance of examining Indigenous youth entrepreneurship from a variety of perspectives.







While all of these articles are focused on entrepreneurship by young Indigenous people, we find that some of this literature is written from a deficit perspective (Walter & Andersen, 2013), meaning that Indigenous Peoples are represented as unable to address intractable community challenges, without clear acknowledgement of the enduring impacts of colonization on community well-being. We find a few studies in the sample that are not written from a strength-based perspective, and overall, do not empower Indigenous youth.

However, many of the articles within the sample are respectful of Indigenous knowledges and we find examples of promising attempts to integrate Indigenous ways of knowing into the methodologies or findings of the research. Firstly, many of the empirical works within our literature review incorporate interviews with Indigenous youth entrepreneurs and entrepreneurship students (Cammock, Conn, & Nayar, 2021; Iankova, 2016; Russell-Mundine, 2007; Tchoundjeu et al., 2010; Tingey, Larzelere, Goklish, Rosenstock, Mayo-Wilson, et al., 2020; Todd, 2012). Given that this work is focused on Indigenous youth experiences, we are encouraged to find several articles within the sample that include input from Indigenous youth into the design of the project as co-researchers (Cammock et al., 2021; Conrad, 2015; Edwards-Vandenhoek, 2018). Some researchers also incorporate input from other community members, such as Indigenous community Elders, into the design of the research (Tingey, Larzelere, Goklish, Rosenstock, Jennings Mayo-Wilson, et al., 2020; Tingey, Larzelere, Goklish, Rosenstock, Mayo-Wilson, et al., 2020).

It is encouraging to see studies that incorporate not only Indigenous participants, but also Indigenous co-researchers—particularly those works that adopt Indigenist research paradigms (Russell-Mundine, 2007) or participatory action research methodologies (Conn, Cammock, Sa'u Lilo, & Nayar, 2021; Conrad, 2015; Edwards-Vandenhoek, 2018). Taking Indigenous knowledges and ontologies seriously not only provides a better experience for Indigenous participants of the project—doing so also enables more accurate research and findings to be shared (Smith, 1999). Overall, we are encouraged to see research in this field that takes Indigenous ways of knowing seriously and allows these ways of knowing to inform the overall conclusions drawn.

Some of the studies examine experiences of young Indigenous entrepreneurs as a subset of a broader study (Igwe, Newbery, Amoncar, White, & Madichie, 2018; Scarborough, 2010; P Tapsell & Woods, 2008; Zander, Austin, & Garnett, 2014), but many focus on Indigenous youth entrepreneurship specifically. There are different definitions throughout the literature of a "young" entrepreneur, with some including participants as young as 13 (Tingey, Larzelere, Goklish, Rosenstock, Jennings Mayo-Wilson, et al., 2020; Tingey, Larzelere, Goklish, Rosenstock, Mayo-Wilson, et al., 2020), and some as old as 45 (Cammock et al., 2021). Further, while some studies are fairly restrictive in their age ranges—for example, Tingey et al.'s two studies are each focused on youth from ages 13-16—others are expansive, looking at multi-generational connections in communities (Paul Tapsell & Woods, 2008). These differences are sometimes due to cultural and community understandings and sometimes due to specific organizational preferences.

Within the literature, we find many studies focused specifically on Indigenous entrepreneurship programs (Amiruddin, Samad, & Othman, 2015; Conrad, 2015), or on programs that include entrepreneurial elements (Edwards-Vandenhoek, 2018; Vettern & Flage, 2018), and the effectiveness of these programs along several dimensions. For example, Tingey et. al and Tingey et. al conduct parallel, longitudinal studies that focus on Indigenous youth entrepreneurship education as a holistic health and wellness intervention over a multi-year period (2020; 2020). Other studies examine the impacts of particular entrepreneurship (or business) educational programs for Indigenous youth and Indigenous students. For example, Colbourne examines the impacts of the development of the Ch'nook Indigenous Business Education Initiative for three cohorts of Indigenous learners at universities in British Columbia (2012).

There are also works within the sample that are critical of entrepreneurship education for Indigenous youth. For example, Pinto and Blue examine a particular Indigenous youth entrepreneurship program and identify, through discourse analysis, how the program actually reinforces harmful, deficit narratives of Indigenous Peoples, and positions entrepreneurship as a panacea to problems that have been caused and reinforced by colonialism (2016). Silva Montes examines a particular learning opportunity for Indigenous youth, not reinforcing what the author argues are imposed values of "entrepreneurial mentality, merit and self-employment" (2019: 103), but is focused instead on being of service to one's community and embracing community ways of knowing.

Key Lessons and Findings from Extant Literature

The two main areas of focus of this literature are entrepreneurship education for young Indigenous learners, and the characteristics of Indigenous youth entrepreneurship. While the primary focus of this study is more relevant to the characteristics of Indigenous youth entrepreneurship, we acknowledge the importance of understanding how entrepreneurship education can be designed to best support young Indigenous entrepreneurs.

Teaching and Learning Entrepreneurship

Many of the studies within our literature sample are focused on the development, deployment, and/or assessment of particular Indigenous entrepreneurship education or training programs. Entrepreneurial education represents promising interventions for Indigenous youth well-being (Tingey, Larzelere, Goklish, Rosenstock, Jennings Mayo-Wilson, et al., 2020; Vettern & Flage, 2018) beyond economic well-being. Within this literature, several research teams find that Indigenous youth want (and need) more meaningful opportunities to provide guidance into the development of entrepreneurship training and education programs.

For example, Beatty, Carriere, and Doraty examine Indigenous youth needs in northern Saskatchewan communities as they relate to being involved in sustainable development, and they find that while "youth are underrepresented in political and community activities, they are not disinterested in community developments to the extent that is generally believed. Youth participants believe that community involvement is important and wish to engage, but they lack the local opportunities, resources, and incentives to make it meaningful" (2015: 125). Thus, the authors argue that for young Indigenous people to be involved in sustainable development and economic growth in their communities, they need to be better welcomed into governance and educational realms of the community.

Within our literature sample, we also find support for strength-based perspectives in the development of educational and training programs for young Indigenous learners and entrepreneurs. For example, Tingey et al. find that strength-based programs support the development of skills and abilities of Indigenous youth, rather than "focus on 'fixing' adolescents" (2020: 2).

Finally, place-based education is found to be particularly relevant for Indigenous youth learners. Russell-Mundine finds that place-based education "builds esteem and aspiration through connections to culture" for young Indigenous learners (2007: 634). Beatty, Carriere and Doraty similarly find that place-based learning, and particularly in-community learning opportunities, are essential for wellness of Indigenous learners: "Bringing small town students into classrooms in the cities is not conducive to productive learning…Youth need to have accessible training and education opportunities in their communities" (2015: 133).

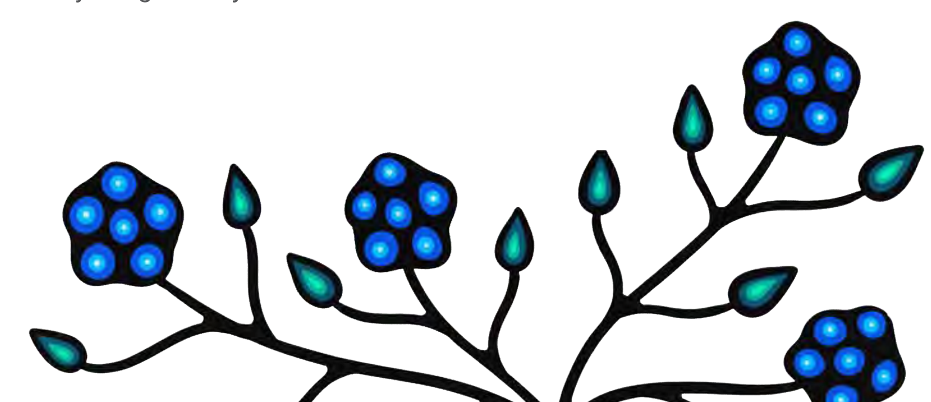
Motivations of Young Indigenous Entrepreneurs

The second major theme to emerge from our literature review is that of assessing the motivations of young Indigenous entrepreneurs.

Firstly, several authors within the literature identify Indigenous youth entrepreneurship as being values-based. For example, Todd describes Indigenous youth entrepreneurs as being "not merely grounded in economic concerns but…[focused on] individual and community values" (2012: 14). Authors also describe Indigenous youth entrepreneurs as being motivated by the opportunity to give back to their communities: "Creating a successful business was not just for individual gain, but was understood as having wider community benefits" (Cammock et al., 2021: 127).

Indigenous youth entrepreneurs are also concerned with passing on community traditions, and with bringing Indigenous traditions into greater relevance with their products and designs. For example, Russell-Mundine finds that Indigenous learners show "willingness and capacity to experiment and push boundaries of cultural design expressions" while also remaining "respectful of the traditions and environments from which they drew inspiration" (2007: 633). Similarly, Baskaran and Mehta find that Indigenous youth are interested in making use of Indigenous knowledges and "localized solutions to deal with community needs and resource scarcities" (2016: 16).

Tchoundjeu et. al also find that young Indigenous entrepreneurs need to be able to understand the short-term benefits of an entrepreneurial venture before engaging with it (2010). However, the authors ultimately find that in their contexts, young Indigenous entrepreneurs who live in rural areas are motivated in part by the desire to remain in-community to work "rather than to seek off-farm employment in local towns" (Tchoundjeu et al., 2010: 217).



Supports Needed for Young Indigenous Entrepreneurs

Finally, within our literature review, several works find that young Indigenous entrepreneurs do well in business when they feel supported by their families and peers. In fact, Iankova finds that the "most important and significant factor for startup businesses" by young Indigenous entrepreneurs is "the moral support of their families, relatives and friends" (2016: 182). Furthermore, Iankova finds that university is valued by young Indigenous entrepreneurs not only "for the skills related to the subject but also for the network that students would build during their university/college studies" (2016: 183).

Similarly, Todd finds that "Family, peer and institutional networks [are] significant in the process of getting started in business" for young, Indigenous women entrepreneurs (2012: 12). Related to peer networks, some authors also find that young Indigenous entrepreneurs do well when they have "role models to look up to—individuals who have already succeeded in the business" (Tchoundjeu et al., 2010: 227). Overall, peer networks and building partnerships (rather than competitive relationships) with other Indigenous entrepreneurs is found to be "one of the key strategies in the [I]ndigenous business world" (Iankova, 2016: 184).

In the extant literature, access to funding and administrative tasks are defined as two key barriers for young Indigenous entrepreneurs. Firstly, Tchoundjeu et al. find that access to capital is a particularly acute barrier for youth and women entrepreneurs in rural communities (2010). Possibly due to this, Todd finds that most of the participants of his study—all of whom are young Indigenous women—launched their organizations with relatively low levels of startup funding ($25,000 or less) (2012). Further, most of the entrepreneurs in this study did not take on any debt to finance their business launch (Todd, 2012).

Thus, there may be a preference among young Indigenous entrepreneurs to rely on grants for funding their organizations. There may also be a preference for self-funding among young Indigenous entrepreneurs. Iankova finds that of those young Indigenous entrepreneurs who do access grants or loans, they often have difficulty navigating the administrative systems needed to service their loans, or those needed to initially access grant money (2016). Young Indigenous entrepreneurs find that they need more "aftercare or guidance once their businesses become operational" from granting organizations (Iankova, 2016: 181). Finally, Collins finds that administrative barriers that do not reflect community values, such as fees or additional taxes, can represent barriers to Indigenous youth entrepreneurship (2006).

NATIONAL SURVEY

As part of NACCA's Young Indigenous Entrepreneurs Research Engagement, our team conducted a national survey of 112 young Indigenous entrepreneurs throughout Canada. The purpose of the survey is to gain a broad understanding of the interests, priorities, experiences and expectations of young Indigenous entrepreneurs who operate businesses in Canada today. In the following sections, we present the research design for our national survey of young Indigenous entrepreneurs. We then provide a descriptive analysis of our survey results.

National Survey Methodology

At the outset of the research engagement, we recognized that young entrepreneurs often juggle multiple roles and identities. For example, in addition to managing their own enterprises, some young entrepreneurs work jobs or volunteer outside of their businesses, some are parents or caregivers, some are students, and some are all of the above.

For this reason, we acknowledged that not every Indigenous entrepreneur interested in this project would be able to devote an hour or more by participating in an in-depth interview. Because of this, we wanted to provide less time-intensive opportunities for entrepreneurs to share their stories with us. Further, we recognized that there are more young Indigenous entrepreneurs in Canada than we could hope to directly engage with through in-depth interviews. With this in mind, we developed a national survey in both English and French for all potential participants.

We created the survey instrument (questionnaire) using SurveyMonkey, a flexible and highly customizable online survey platform. The survey was designed to take 10-15 minutes to complete. We created it to be as accessible as possible by using straightforward language and allowing participants to take it in either English or French.

Gifting

Providing a gift to research participants is a common protocol among Indigenous researchers in Canada when requesting help or asking a research participant to share their experiences. Further, it was extremely important to our team to recognize the time and energy that each participant offered to us by participating in this project. Thus, we offered each participant who completed our survey a gift in thanks for their contribution.

While we hope that every participant will benefit from our work and from us sharing our research findings with members of Canada's entrepreneurial ecosystems, we wanted to ensure that each participant was directly offered a gift for contributing to this project, as part of our commitment to reciprocity in research. Thus, we collaborated with Chief Lady Bird, a Chippewa and Potawatomi artist, educator and community activist from Rama First Nation, to provide each survey participant a gift. NACCA commissioned an original, digital art piece from Chief Lady Bird that was shared with each participant who completed the survey. This piece was designed by Chief Lady Bird for participants of this project, and an artist's statement was provided with the work:

"I went with a glowing eagle for the design to provide the youth with an image of an animal that speaks to leadership; to symbolize the importance of operating, in any space, according to our teachings and to live in a good way. It's also a more contemporary version of woodland style work, with the colours and lighting alluding to futurisms."
– Chief Lady Bird

Participant Consent

For the survey, participant consent was mediated through a project Letter of Information and Participant Consent Form made available through SurveyMonkey.[4] Before beginning to answer survey questions, potential participants were brought to the Letter of Information and Participant Consent Form as the first page of the survey; and had to provide active consent by clicking to indicate agreement with the information and terms provided in the form.

In the consent form, we provided an introduction of each team member, as well as a project summary and a summary of any potential benefits and risks associated with participation. We also provided an explanation of how the data gathered through the survey would be used in the future, and we provided a general timeline for the project progression. Finally, we provided contacts for potential participants to reach out to in the event they had/have questions or concerns about the conduct of the project. We worked with NACCA's Youth Advisory Committee to ensure that the consent form was understandable and not burdensome for potential participants.

Survey Instrument Development

A survey instrument is also commonly known as a questionnaire; it is the list of questions that potential participants respond to in order to share their insights and experiences with researchers. The development of our survey instrument was informed by multiple rounds of pretesting, as well as feedback from several relevant groups and individuals.

Firstly, the survey instrument was informed by our literature review of research articles that centre on the experiences of young Indigenous entrepreneurs globally.[5] From the literature review, we generated a set of topics that may be applicable to the population of interest in this study. Then, informed by our own professional and personal experiences of working with young Indigenous entrepreneurs, we supplemented this list with additional topics that we expected to be of interest to potential participants.

Internal Pretesting

The lead researcher then developed a set of questions, using a variety of question types, that could comprise the survey instrument. At this point, two members of the research team had just joined the project and thus, they acted as our first internal pre-testers for the work-in-progress survey instrument. These two team members were asked to complete the questionnaire in its developmental stage twice: firstly, as if they were a participant; and secondly, to review the questionnaire in depth and with a more critical eye, to identify any weaknesses in its design.[6]

After discussing our team members' questionnaire feedback, we assessed each potential question and the variety of ways that each question could be posed and formatted in SurveyMonkey. We narrowed the scope of the question list by combining questions when appropriate. We also dropped topics that we felt were more peripheral to the goal of the project, or those that we thought may reinforce a deficit perspective of Indigenous entrepreneurship by young people.

Our team shared this long list of potential questions with leadership members at NACCA in order to garner their perspectives on the topics covered within the survey. NACCA's leadership team members also suggested topics to be added to and removed from the long list as appropriate. As a result of this feedback, our team made further adjustments to the long list of questions and began to hone in on a set of topics and questions that would come to form the eventual survey instrument.

External Pretesting

Now, with a more succinct set of potential questions, our team turned to NACCA's Youth Advisory Council to assess the draft questionnaire and the project Letter of Information and Participant Consent Form. Each member of NACCA's Youth Advisory Council was provided the survey (including the questionnaire, Letter of Information, and Participant Consent Form). To help guide the survey's development, each Youth Advisory Council member was asked to complete the questionnaire as it was presented, and to answer a short series of reflective questions about the survey.

The final external pretesting of the survey instrument was done by a small group of professional acquaintances outside of NACCA, who all work in the area of Indigenous entrepreneurship and/or youth entrepreneurship and who could provide an informed review of the project questionnaire, the Letter of Information and Participant Consent Form. After adjusting the questionnaire based on all the comments, feedback, and questions from each group, we finalized the survey instrument in English and then had it professionally translated into French.[7]

Participant Sample

Defining a research sample is the process of identifying who is eligible to participate in a study, from the entire population of potential participants. Choosing the right parameters to define a participant sample is integral to gaining accurate and actionable insights through a study, and the parameters used to define the sample should flow directly from the study's purpose and research question.

4 See Appendix 2: National Survey Letter of Information and Participant Consent Form
5 See Literature Review section of this report
6 See Appendix 3: Survey Instrument Internal Pretesting
7 Please contact research team to see full questionnaire.

The purpose of this national survey is to ensure that young Indigenous entrepreneurs operating in Canada today can share their experiences and stories with other entrepreneurs and other members of the entrepreneurial ecosystem. As such, our goal in inviting participants to join this project was to ensure that the largest number of young Indigenous entrepreneurs currently operating in Canada were eligible to participate.

Our sample parameters are defined by three attributes. At the time of the survey, all eligible participants had to:

a) Belong to an Indigenous community in what is now known as Canada,
b) Own and operate a business or non-profit enterprise, and
c) Be under the age of 40

We defined these parameters to identify a sample of potential participants by including three required identification questions at the outset of the survey instrument. Specifically, after consenting to participate in the project (these sample parameters are laid out clearly in the Letter of Information and Participant Consent Form), a potential participant would have to indicate that they:

- Were between the ages of 18-39 (Question 1),
- Currently owned a business (Question 3) at the time the survey was administered, and
- Were a member of a federally recognized Indigenous group in Canada (Inuit, Métis, and/or First Nations) (Question 6).

There were no other required parameters in the questionnaire.

All participants who identified themselves as a) belonging to an Indigenous community in what is now known as Canada, b) a current business owner, and c) between the ages of 18-39 were able to proceed to the main sections of the questionnaire. Those who did not identify in this way were taken to the last page of the survey and thanked for their interest.

Indigenous Community Connection

We limited the sample for this project to include only those young Indigenous entrepreneurs who belong to communities based in the geography now known as Canada. We acknowledge that the experiences of Indigenous people living in Canada who belong to communities outside of Canada are also important and valid; however, since this work is at least partially geared towards understanding the experiences of navigating financing systems in Canada, we elected to replicate some of the constraints that exist within those administrative processes. Generally, Indigenous people in Canada are only eligible for this sort of funding if they belong to First Nations, Inuit, and/or Métis communities.

We did not require participants to "prove" a connection to an Indigenous community (such as asking for copies of a community membership card or for community references) as part of the sampling procedures; rather, we relied on self-identification. While this process is likely less strict than the processes for many funding applications, we felt that requiring proof of community connection for a short survey would place an undue burden on participants. We did, however, ask that participants provide some information on their home community, including identifying the province or territory it is located within (see Questions 6, 7 and 8).

Currently Own a Business or Non-Profit Enterprise

In the questionnaire, Question 3 asks if participants currently own a business. This closed, forced-choice question ensures that all participants clearly identify themselves as current business owners or not. Our team chose to sample only entrepreneurs who currently operate businesses, because several key questions in the questionnaire apply only to those currently running a business.

Through our pretesting, all relevant stakeholders agreed that Question 3 ("Do you currently own a business?"/ "Êtes-vous actuellement propriétaire d'une entreprise?") is clear and appropriate for the given population and expected sample. However, after launching the survey, we received feedback that the phrasing "own a business" may be confusing to some entrepreneurs who see themselves as self-employed, rather than as business owners. From a legal and administrative standpoint, there is no difference between being self-employed and owning a business; however, we realize that there may be a perceived difference for some people between being self-employed and being a business owner. We acknowledge that, in our development of the questionnaire, we could have clarified in the question itself that "owning a business" is inclusive of freelancers, artists, and other self-employed individuals. We recommend that for a future iteration of this survey, or for a similar project, researchers consider explicitly stating the inclusion of all self-employed individuals under the umbrella terms of "entrepreneur" or "business owner."

We asked respondents to identify as owning a business rather than as "being an entrepreneur," because we know that some business owners do not identify as entrepreneurs. This is, in part, due to the tight association between the term "entrepreneur" and high-growth industries such as technology. The definition of "Indigenous entrepreneur" that we rely on to guide our work was proposed by Hindle and Lansdowne: Indigenous entrepreneurship is "the creation, management and development of new ventures by Indigenous people for the benefit of Indigenous people. The organizations thus created can pertain to either the private, public or non-profit sectors" (2005: 132).

Age Requirements

Because this project is focused on the experiences of young Indigenous entrepreneurs, we needed to define age parameters for our sample. We chose to rely on the definition that NACCA has previously relied on, and the one on which partner organizations rely, which is to define a "young entrepreneur" as an entrepreneur under the age of 40.

Data Collection Methods

Using SurveyMonkey

In order to collect responses from survey participants, we utilized the SurveyMonkey online platform. SurveyMonkey is flexible and robust in that it allows for a variety of question types and provides compound survey logic. This means that, with SurveyMonkey, we were able to ask participants different questions based on their prior responses.

For example, Question 17 of the questionnaire asks participants if they have ever employed someone else in their business. If a participant responded "Yes" to Question 17, they were shown Question 18: "Do you currently employ anyone besides yourself in your business?" and potentially then Question 19: "How many employees (besides yourself) does your business currently employ?". However, if they answered "No" to Question 17, they were moved directly to question 20.

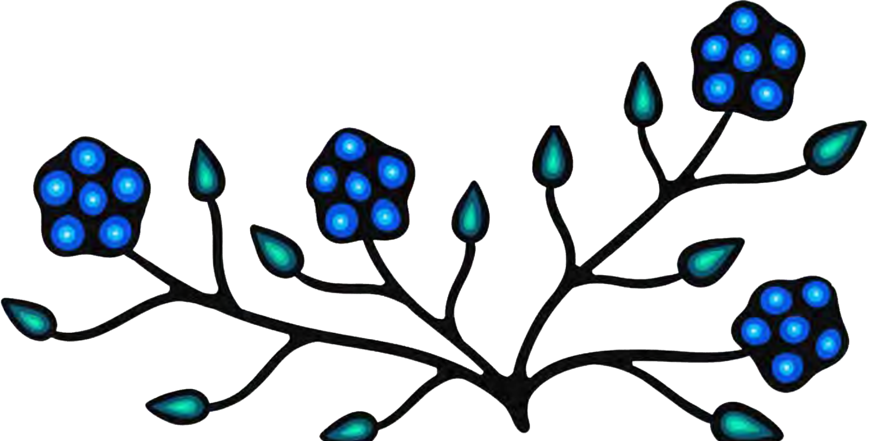
Finally, we used SurveyMonkey to collect responses for this project because the interface allowed us to easily create and distribute the questionnaire in both French and English.

Distributing the Survey

Next, we devised a participant recruitment strategy. First, our team generated a list of personal and professional contacts, who we felt might be able to share the survey with our population of interest. Each of us then shared the project within our networks, and invited individuals, groups, and organizations to share the project with their networks. We also worked with NACCA's internal communications team to create promotional materials for the project, and to launch a promotional campaign on NACCA's social media channels.[8] The purpose of these efforts was to ensure that we reached a diverse group of potential participants, including audiences across a diversity of geographic locations, ages (within our understanding of "young entrepreneurs"), genders, and community connections.

Our team monitored the submission of surveys while it was open to participants. Every week, we met to discuss the collection progress and strategize about how to fill emergent gaps in demographics of respondents. For example, since our team is based in Ontario, Alberta and British Columbia (and our professional and personal networks are concentrated there), we quickly received responses from these provinces. To attract potential participants in regions that were less represented at that time, we also strategized about potential organizations or individuals that we could reach out to.

By the time we closed the survey, we had collected responses from participants based in every province and territory in Canada. Though it was not a completely representative sample, we are pleased to have engaged with young Indigenous entrepreneurs throughout the country—including in rural and urban areas, the North and the Atlantic, and across a range of genders, ages and community connections.



[8] See Appendix 4: Sample Recruitment Posts

SURVEY RESULTS

While there were 259 total attempts to complete the survey, the majority of these attempts were from potential participants who were not members of the intended population. For example, some participants were outside of the eligible age range, some were not Indigenous, and some did not identify as an entrepreneur.

In all, 146 eligible participants began the survey, with a completion rate of 77%. This means that, of all eligible participants who started the survey, 112 of them completed it.

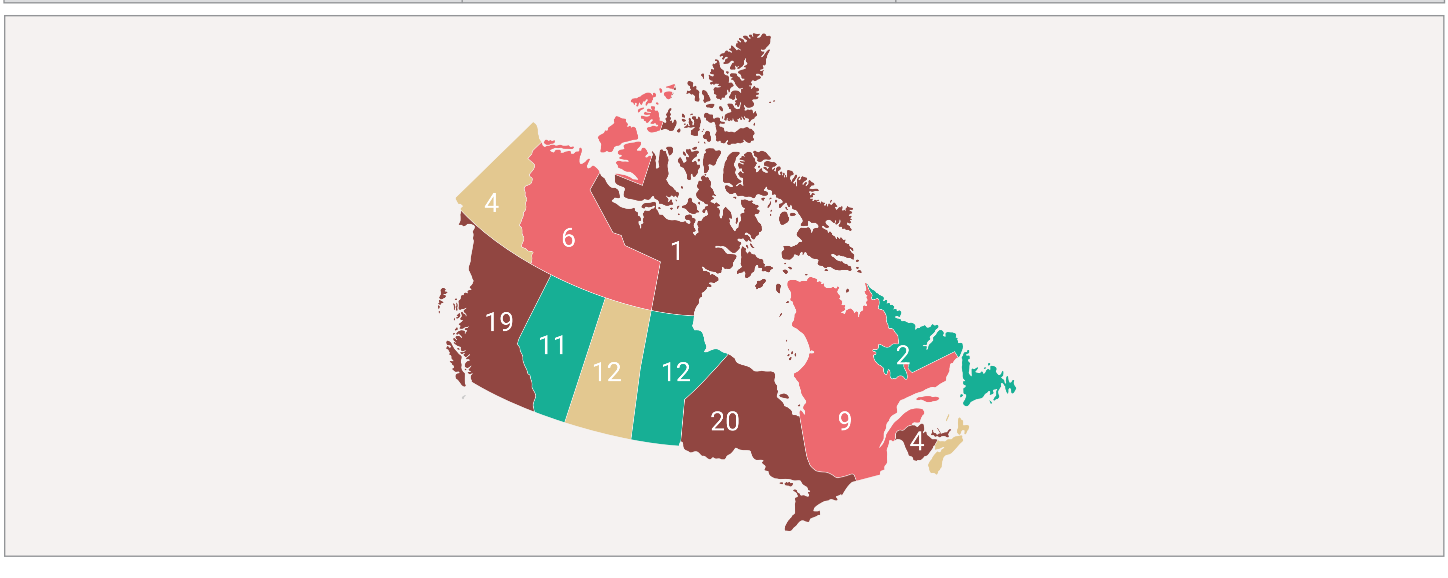
Participant Demographics

In the following sections, we describe the sample of national survey participants in detail.

Geographic Distribution of Participants

There are completed responses in our sample from at least one participant residing in each province and territory in Canada, and two responses from participants who currently reside outside of Canada. Almost one-fifth of participants—more specifically, 18.92% (n=21)—currently reside on a First Nation Reserve.

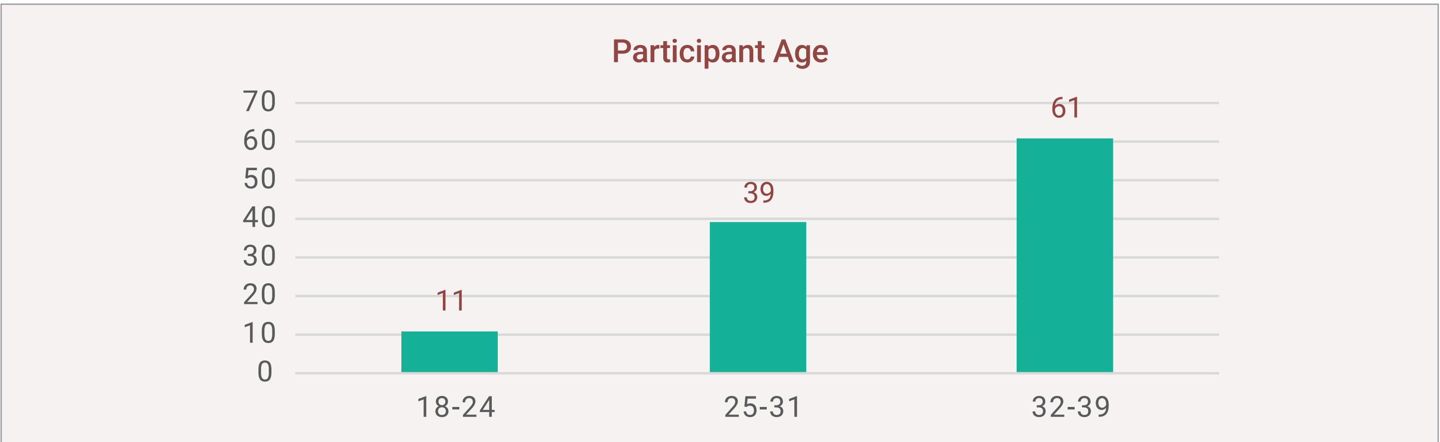
Province/Territory of Primary Residence	Proportion of Participants	Number of Participants
Nunavut	0.89%	1
Northwest Territories	5.36%	6
Yukon	3.57%	4
Newfoundland and Labrador	1.79%	2
New Brunswick	3.57%	4
Nova Scotia	8.04%	9
Prince Edward Island	0.89%	1
Québec	8.04%	9
Ontario	17.86%	20
Manitoba	10.71%	12
Saskatchewan	10.71%	12
Alberta	9.82%	11
British Columbia	16.96%	19
Outside of Canada	1.79%	2



Participant Age

The majority of participants belong to the oldest age category in our study; specifically, 55% (n=61) of our sample falls within 32-39 years of age. We recognize that in the population of all Indigenous entrepreneurs, there are likely to be more older entrepreneurs than entrepreneurs belonging to younger categories; thus, we feel this is acceptable, given the population of potential entrepreneurs. According to Innovation, Science and Economic Development Canada, 18% of all Indigenous business owners in Canada (as of 2020) are 39 years old or younger (ISED-ISDE Canada, 2022).

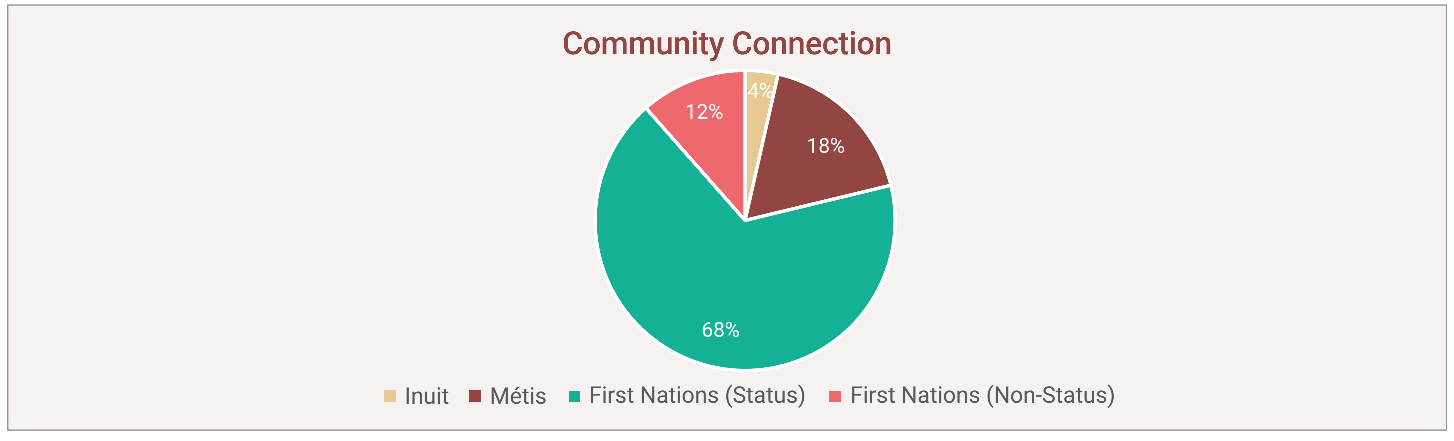
Age Group	Proportion of Participants	Number of Participants
18-24	10%	11
25-31	35%	39
32-39	55%	61



Community Connection

Nearly 80% (n=89) of survey participants are First Nations, including both Status (n=76) and Non-Status (n=13) First Nations participants. According to Statistics Canada, as of 2021, First Nations people make up approximately 60.14% of all Indigenous people in Canada, while Métis people comprise 35.81%, and Inuit make up approximately 4.05% (Statistics Canada, 2022). Thus, in our sample, First Nations individuals are slightly overrepresented as compared to the overall population of all Indigenous Peoples in Canada. However, First Nations Peoples are incredibly geographically diverse, living in almost all regions of the country. Moreover, it was important to us to ensure we represented geographic diversity in the sample, which could have factored into the slight oversampling of Indigenous participants.

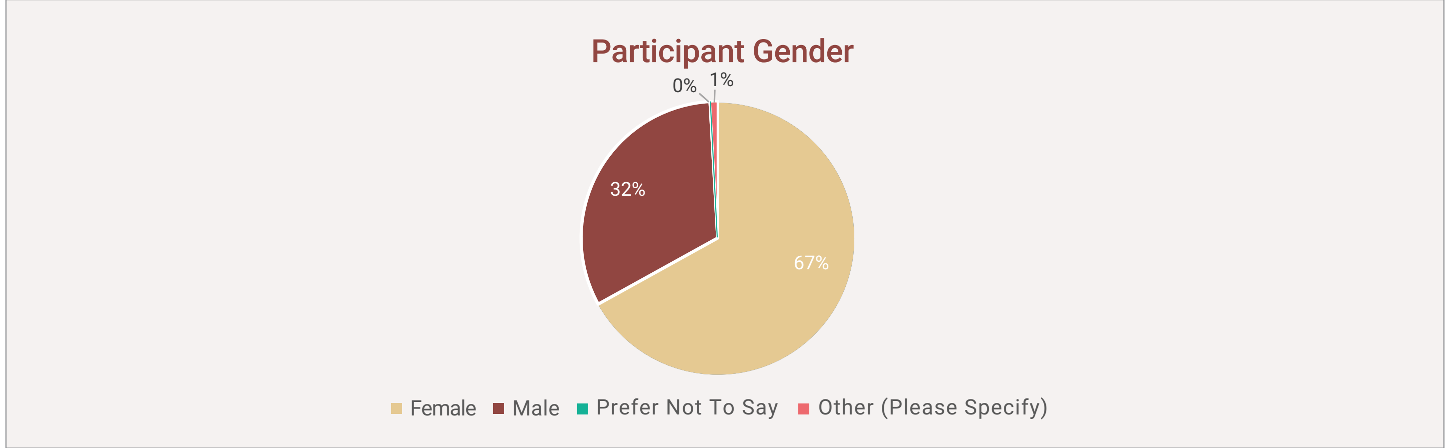
Community Connection	Proportion of Participants	Number of Participants
Inuit	3.57%	4
Métis	17.86%	20
First Nations (Status)	67.86%	76
First Nations (Non-Status)	11.61%	13



Participant Gender

A majority of survey respondents (n=75) are women. This is of course greater than the general proportion of women-to-non-women in the overall Canadian population, as well as the Indigenous population in Canada. One participant chose to not identify with either gender category of "Female" or "Male."

Answer Choice	Proportion of Participants	Number of Participants
Female	66.96%	75
Male	32.14%	36
Prefer to not say	0.00%	0
Other (please specify)	0.89%	1

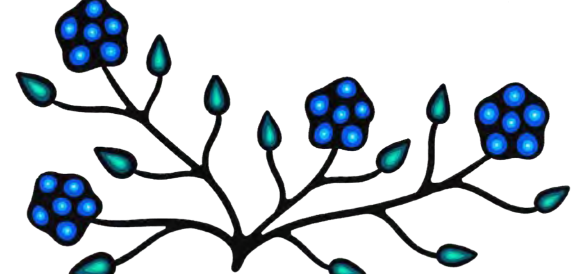


Working Outside of the Business

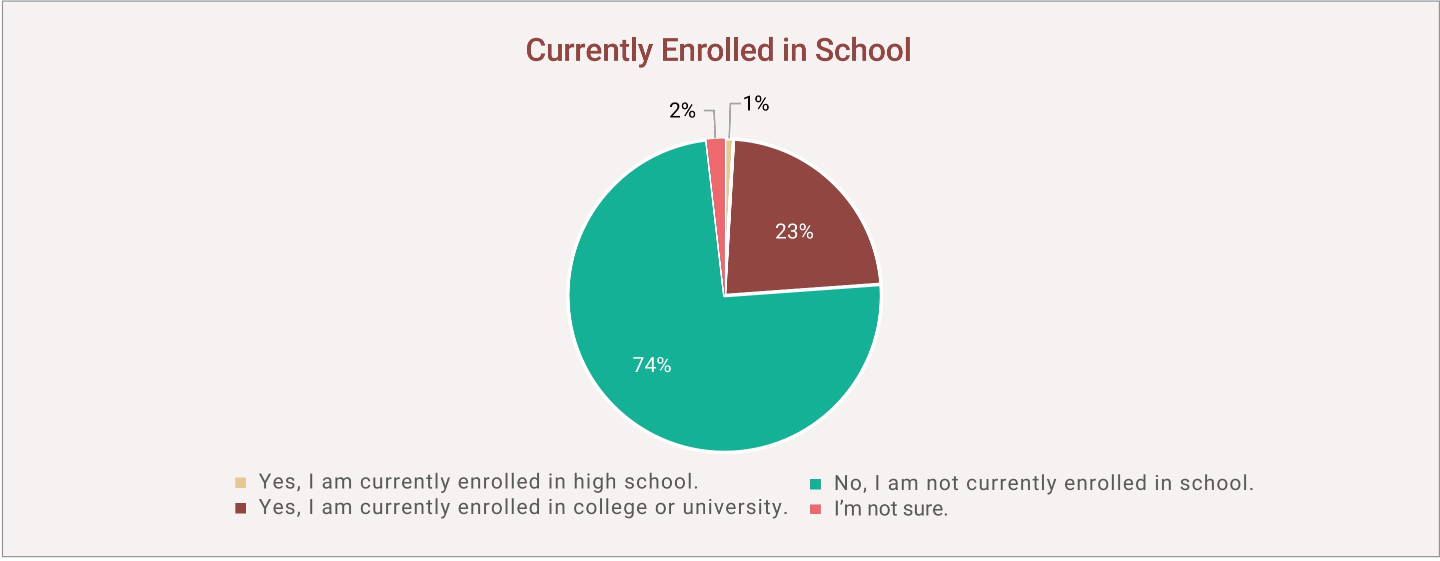
Most participants (n=63) work outside of their own organization, with over 40% of participants (n=45) working full-time hours outside of their business. This means that these participants work full-time somewhere else and manage their own organization. Thus, the majority of participants have at least two roles to juggle and manage—that of a founder or business operator, and that of an employee.

Q16. Do you regularly work another job, outside of your business?		
Answer Choices	**Proportion of Responses**	**Number of Responses**
I'm not sure.	0.91%	1
Yes, I regularly work seasonally (0-5 months per year) outside of my business.	2.73%	3
Yes, I currently work part-time outside of my business.	13.64%	15
Yes, I currently work full-time outside of my business.	40.91%	45
No, I work only for my own business.	41.82%	46

Nearly 25% (n=26) of participants are currently enrolled in high school or post-secondary school. Within our interviews, we were able to gain greater insight into the challenges that many young Indigenous entrepreneurs face in managing multiple roles—sometimes as students, parents or caregivers, employees, and of course as business founders. We find that managing these multiple roles and managing overall workload is a common but difficult challenge for young Indigenous entrepreneurs.



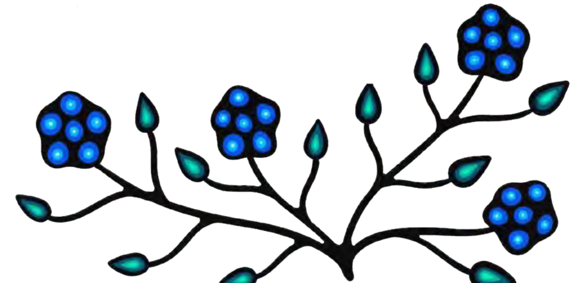
Q45. Are you currently a student?		
Answer Choices	**Proportion of Responses**	**Number of Responses**
Yes, I am currently enrolled in high school.	0.92%	1
Yes, I am currently enrolled in a college or university.	22.94%	25
No, I am not currently enrolled in school.	74.31%	81
I'm not sure.	1.83%	2

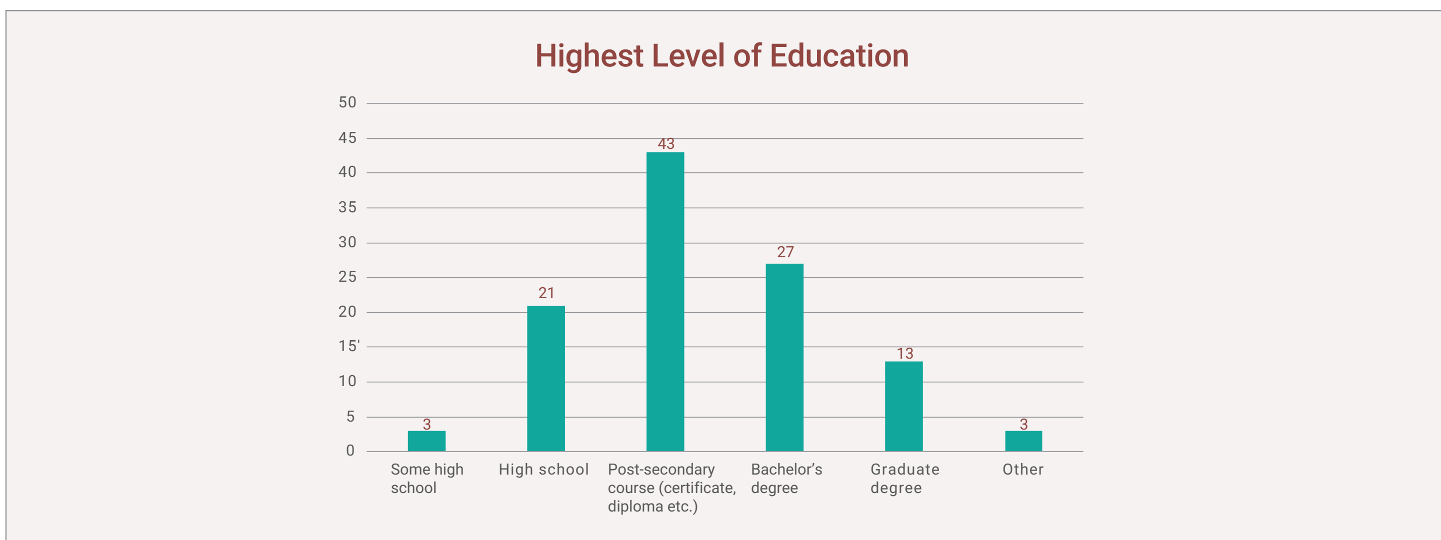


Highest Level of Education

We also sought to better understand the general educational levels of participants. We asked each participant to identify their highest completed level of education. Most participants (n=107) had completed at least high school. It is notable that of this subsample, 39% (n=43) have completed a post-secondary program.

Q44. What is the highest degree or level of school that you have completed?		
Answer Choices	**Proportion of Participants**	**Number of Participants**
Some high school	2.73%	3
High school	19.09%	21
Post-secondary course (certificate, diploma, etc.)	39.09%	43
Bachelor's degree	24.55%	27
Graduate degree	11.82%	13
Other	2.73%	3





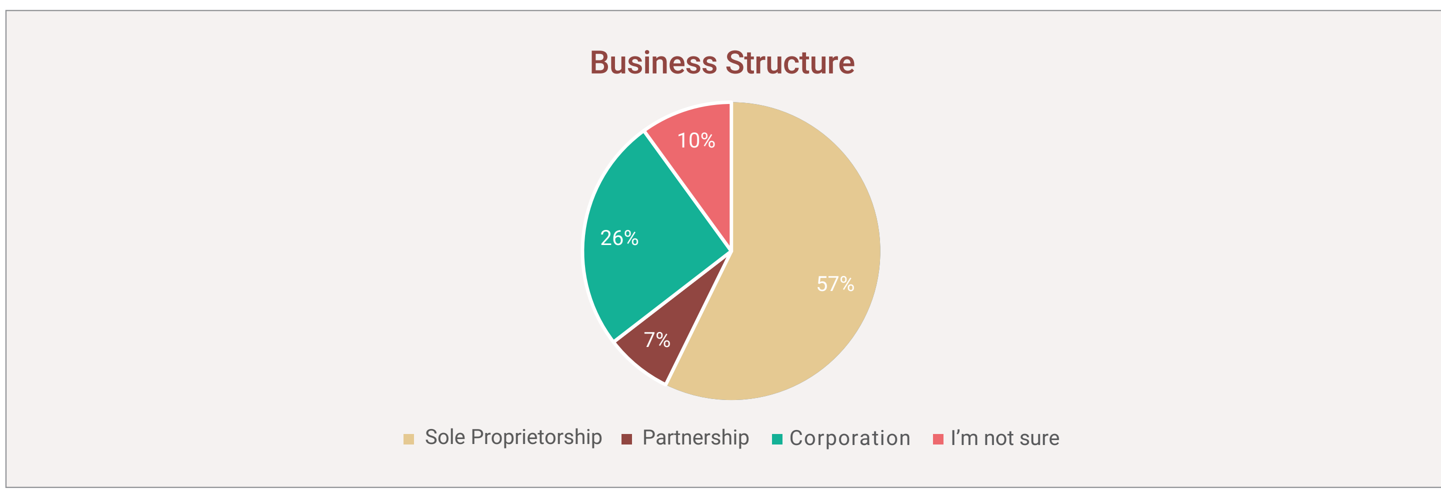
Business Description

We sought to understand the structure and industry of each business represented within the sample. We examined not only the legal structure of the businesses, but also the profit model, and the ways that each entrepreneur characterizes the industry in which they operate. We find that the most common business type represented is that of a for-profit, sole proprietorship.

Business Structure

Most participants (n=63) legally structure their organizations as sole proprietorships, while approximately 25% (n=28) structure them as corporations. Meanwhile, 10% of participants responded that they do not know the legal structure of their organization. We assume that many of these participants likely structure their business as sole proprietorships, as this is the simplest structure with which to launch a business and—in many cases—informal entrepreneurship is structured as a sole proprietorship.

Q14. How is your business legally structured?		
Answer Choices	**Proportion of Participants**	**Number of Participants**
Sole proprietorship	57.27%	63
Partnership	7.27%	8
Corporation	25.45%	28
I'm not sure	10.0%	11



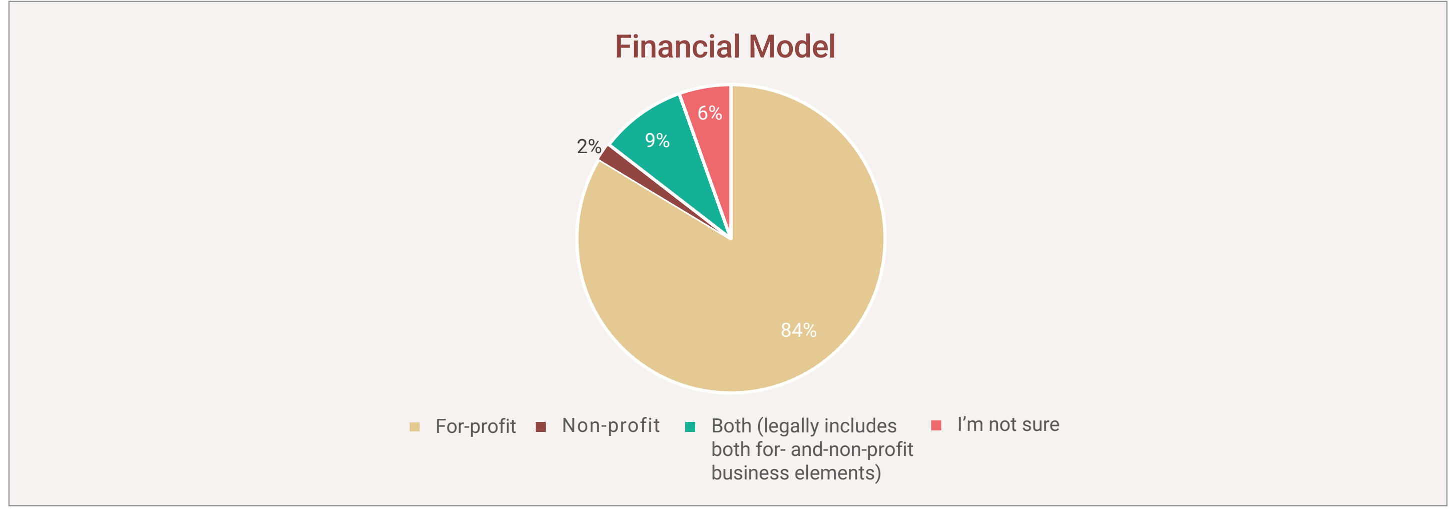
Financial Model

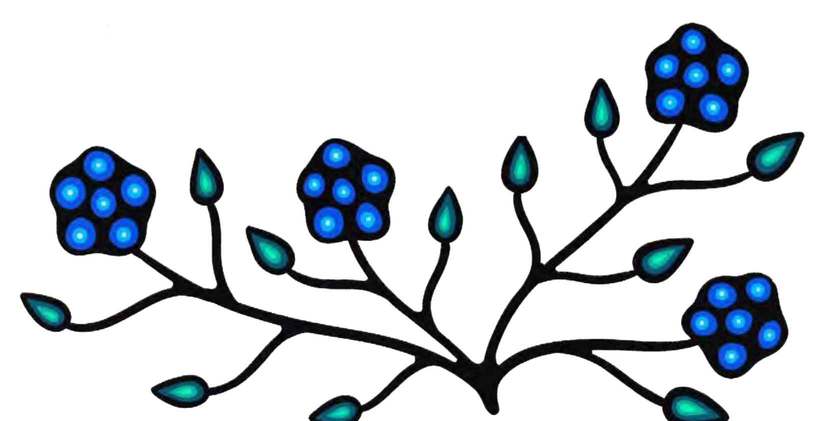
While most of the organizations represented for-profit (n=92), there is some variation in the financial models. Furthermore, within Indigenous entrepreneurship literature, there is an important focus on social purpose organizations, which can come in a variety of structures (Mika, Fahey, & Bensemann, 2019; Morales, Calvo, Martinez, & Martin, 2021). Some social purpose organizations are structured purely as non-profits, some are purely for-profits, and some are legally both (sometimes referred to as “hybrid organizations”) (Battilana & Lee, 2014). One of the most common ways for an organization to include both for-profit and non-profit elements is to separately incorporate the organizations and have them be affiliated instead. Much of the extant research on Indigenous entrepreneurship is focused on for-profit businesses; however, non-profit social purpose organizations are an important contingent of Indigenous-owned organizations and Indigenous entrepreneurship.

We were surprised to find that over 5% of respondents (n=6) are unsure of the legal structure of their business. We expect that some of these entrepreneurs may incorporate social giving or other social purpose aspects into their for-profit businesses, without legally structuring the organization as a non-profit or hybrid organization. For example, some of these entrepreneurs may donate portions of their profit or revenue to socially focused causes, but their financial model is still that of a for-profit organization.

Q11. Is your business for-profit, non-profit, or both (e.g., a for-profit side of the business that funds a non-profit side)?

Answer Choices	Proportion of Participants	Number of Participants
For-profit	83.64%	92
Non-profit	1.82%	2
Both (legally includes both for- and non-profit business elements)	9.09%	10
I'm not sure	5.45%	6





NAICS Codes and Industry Profiles

We sought to develop an understanding of the types of industries to which participants' businesses belong. We first asked participants to identify the NAICS code for their business. The NAICS system (North American Industry Classification System) is a standardized system in Canada that is used by funding programs, banks and other stakeholders within the entrepreneurial ecosystem to determine funding eligibility.

The two most represented NAICS codes of our sample are codes 44-45: Retail trade (n=21), and 71: Arts, entertainment, and recreation (n=18). Interestingly, when asked to identify the NAICS code for their industry, the largest concentration participant response was "I'm Not Sure," meaning that 23% (n=25) respondents are unsure of how to classify their organization under the NAICS code system. This could be because participants feel their organization spans more than one category (as the NAICS code system does not allow for multiple selections), or that respondents are unsure of how to interpret the codes. We feel it is important to show that many young Indigenous entrepreneurs are not familiar with administrative systems like the NAICS code system and may need support when seeking funding to navigate these administrative aspects.

At the outset of the project, we expected that not every participant would be familiar with the NAICS code system. However, we thought it was important to include this question, since all entrepreneurs who will seek funding or other support—whether through financial institutions or publicly funded programs in Canada—will be asked to identify their businesses' NAICS code.

NAICS Codes	Industry Description	Proportion of Participants	Number of Participants
21	Mining, quarrying, and oil and gas extraction	0.00%	0
22	Utilities	0.00%	0
48-49	Transportation and warehousing	0.00%	0
55	Management of companies and enterprises	0.00%	0
56	Administrative and support, waste management and remediation services	0.00%	0
91	Public administration	0.00%	0
41	Wholesale trade	0.92%	1
11	Agriculture, forestry, fishing, and hunting	1.83%	2
51	Information and cultural industries	1.83%	2
52	Finance and insurance	1.83%	2
53	Real estate and rental and leasing	1.83%	2
61	Educational services	1.83%	2
72	Accommodation and food services	2.75%	3
31-33	Manufacturing	3.67%	4
54	Professional, scientific, and technical services	4.59%	5
23	Construction	6.42%	7
62	Health care and social assistance	6.42%	7
81	Other services (except public administration)	7.34%	8
71	Arts, entertainment, and recreation	16.51%	18
44-45	Retail trade	19.27%	21
N/A	I'm not sure	22.94%	25

NAICS Codes Represented

NAICS Code	Count
I'm not sure	25
44-45: Retail trade	21
71: Arts, entertainment, and recreation	18
81: Other services (except public administration)	8
62: Health care and social assistance	7
23: Construction	7
54: Professional, scientific, and technical services	5
31-33: Manufacturing	4
72: Accommodation and food services	4
61: Educational services	3
53: Real estate and rental and leasing	2
52: Finance and insurance	2
51: Information and cultural industries	2
11: Agriculture, forestry, fishing and hunting	2
41: Wholesale trade	1
91: Public administration	0
56: Administration and support, waste management and remediation services	0
55: Management of companies and enterprises	0
48-49: Transportation and warehousing	0

We also gave participants the opportunity to define the industry of their organization in their own words. This allows for young Indigenous entrepreneurs to define their place in the market for themselves. Below is a representation of the most common words and phrases from this open-ended question in the survey. The larger words in the diagram represent words that are more commonly included in the responses from participants. From the open-ended responses, we gain greater insight into the types of products and services that participants offer, within their stated industries. For example, within NAICS codes 44-45, we can see that many participants likely offer jewelry, apparel, and beauty items. We also find that many participants identify their industry as "Consulting," which may be included within NAICS codes 81, 54, 51, or others.

Figure 1: Descriptions of Industry

Business Operations

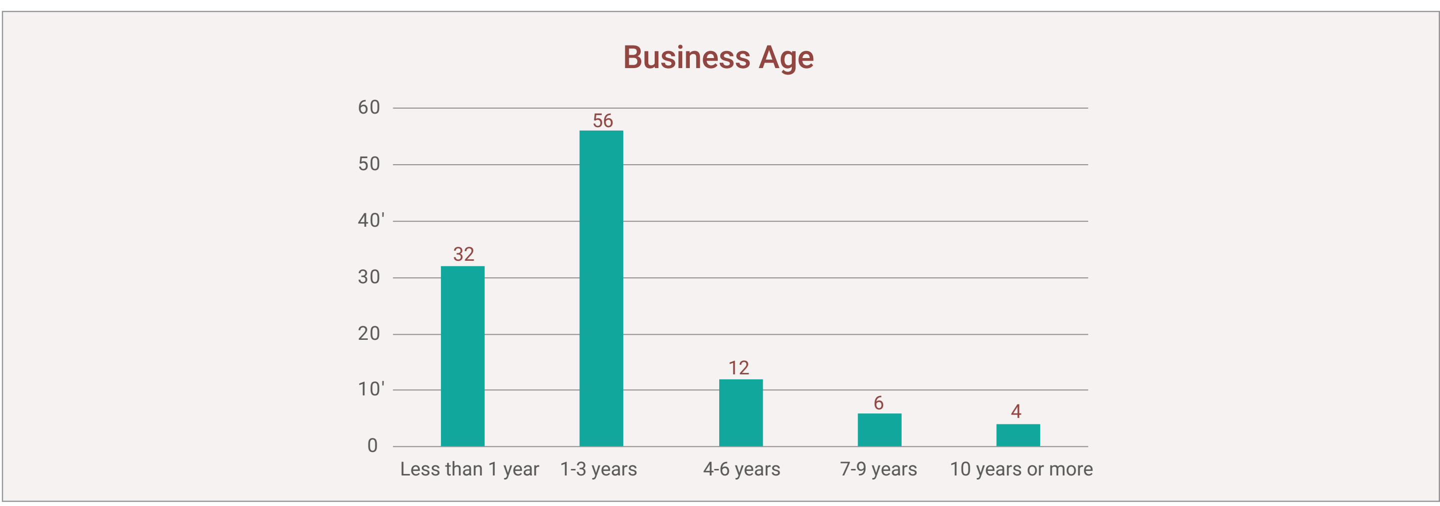
We examined several factors to gain an overall understanding of the level of operations of the businesses represented in the survey. This includes examining the age of the business, the size of the business in terms of employees, whether the business owner pays themselves a salary, and several additional measures pertaining to business accessibility.

Business Age

More than half of the participants (n=56) had operated their businesses for 1-3 years at the time of data collection. On the other hand, nearly 4% of participants (n=4) had already operated their organizations for 10 years or more. Among all Indigenous entrepreneurs in Canada in 2020, over half (52.9%) of all Indigenous businesses are 11 years or older (ISED-ISDE Canada, 2022). Thus, we recognize that we are focused on a relatively "young" sample of organizations; however, given that we are focused on young Indigenous entrepreneurs, we expected this finding within our sample.

Q13. How long have you operated your business for?

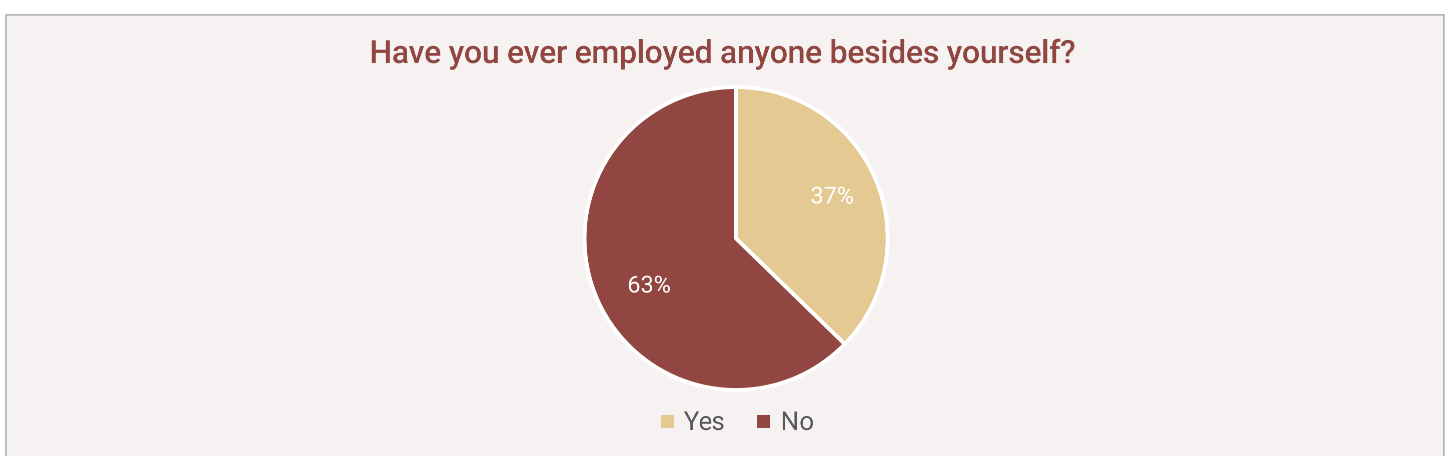
Answer Choices	Proportion of Participants	Number of Participants
Less than 1 year	29.09%	32
1-3 years	50.91%	56
4-6 years	10.91%	12
7-9 years	5.45%	6
10 years or more	3.64%	4



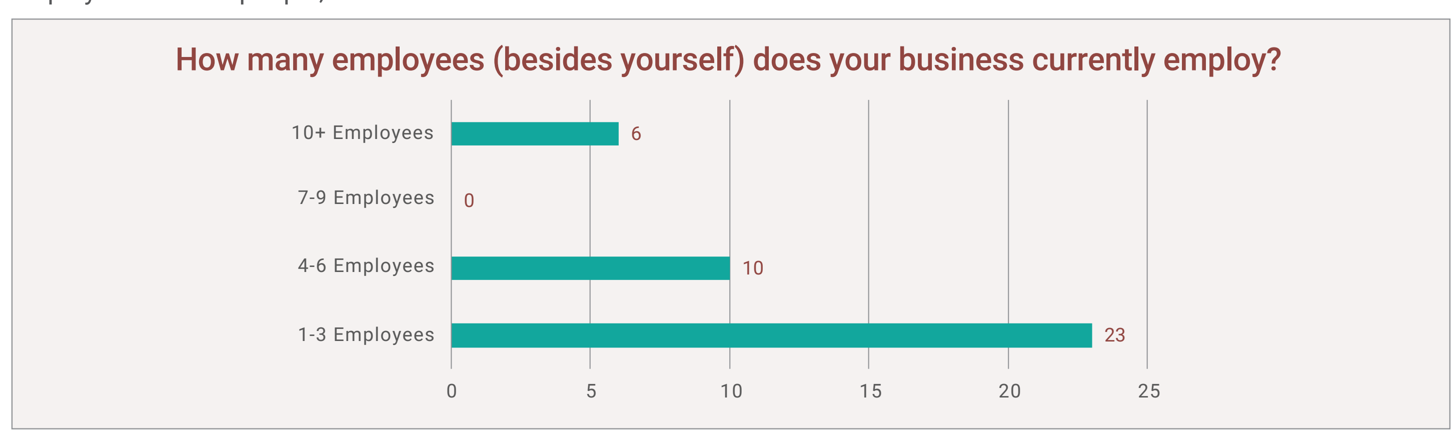
Employees

Over 60% of participants (n=69) have never employed anyone in their businesses, besides themselves.

Q17. Have you ever employed anyone besides yourself in your business?		
Answer Choices	**Proportion of Participants**	**Number of Participants**
Yes	37.27%	41
No	62.73%	69



Of those participants who have employed someone else in their business at some point, 85% (n=35) currently employ someone. A majority (n=23) of these participants currently employ 1-3 employees; while a small proportion (n=6) currently employ 10 or more people, besides themselves.

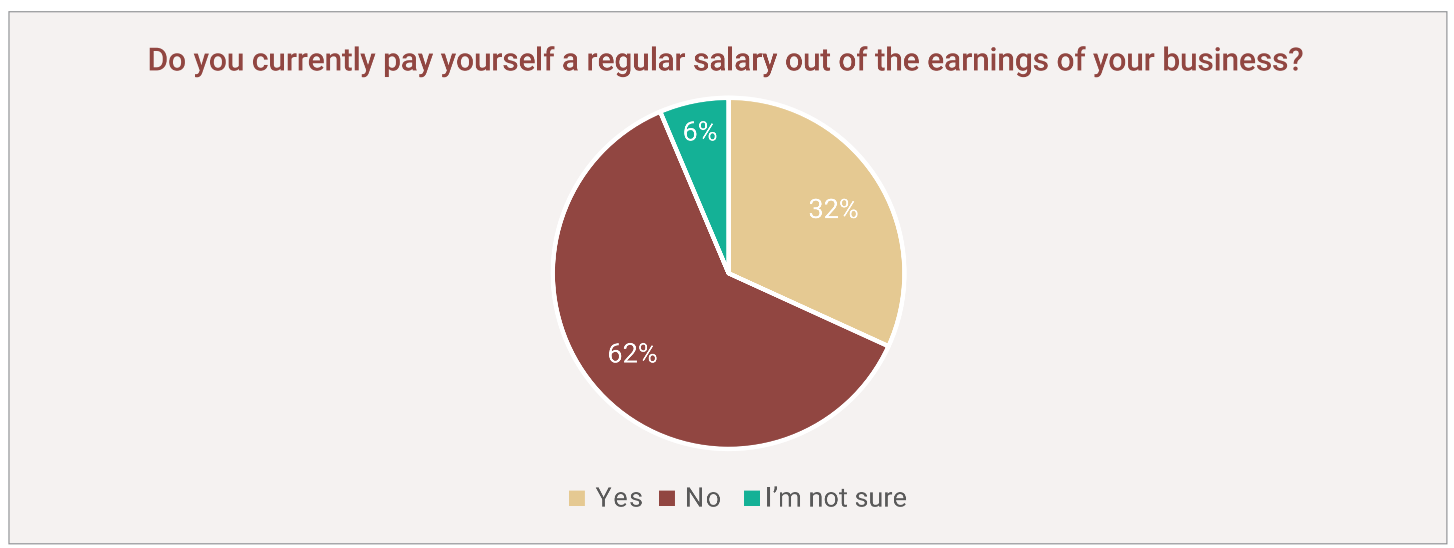


Founder Salary

Most survey participants (n=68) do not currently pay themselves a salary through the earnings of their business. While some business owners may never pay themselves a regular salary out of the business' earnings, this is often characteristic of relatively new, small and/or informal businesses. Paying oneself a regular salary out of business earnings can help with the formalization of a business, and it can be an important part of developing a complete budget for a business.

Q15. Do you currently pay yourself a regular salary out of the earnings of your business?

Answer Choices	Proportion of Responses	Number of Responses
Yes	31.82%	35
No	61.82%	68
I'm not sure	6.36%	7



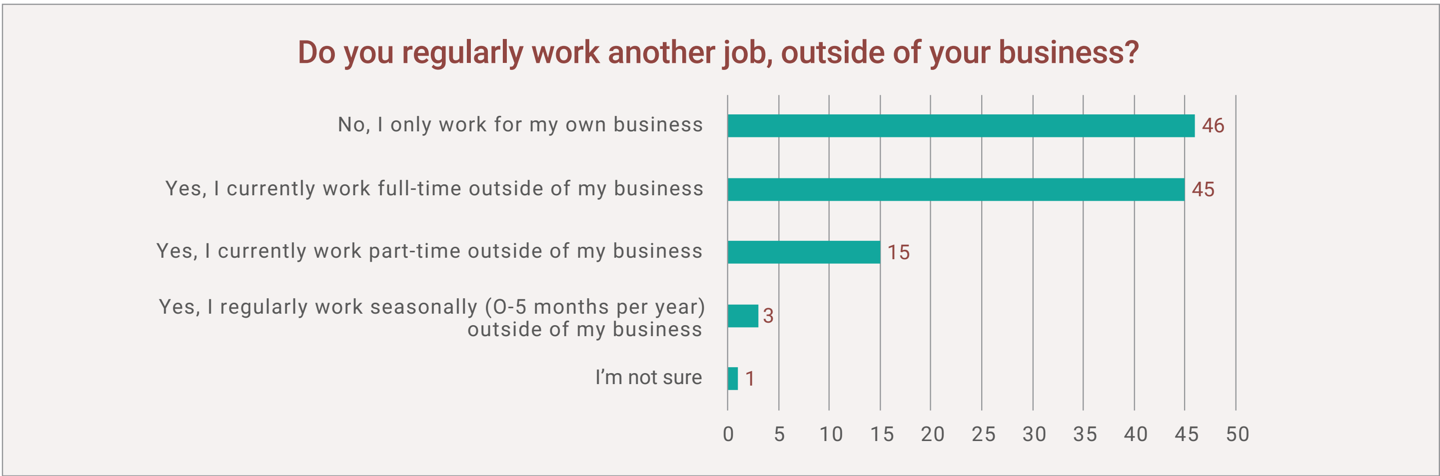
Founder Workload

The participants in this study often work more than full-time hours. Many work full-time hours in their own business (n=52) while balancing other roles, such as that of an employee, caregiver, and/or student. For example, 57% (n=63) of participants work another job outside of their own business.

Q21. When your business is operational, how much of your working time do you spend on your business?

Answer Choices	Proportion of Responses	Number of Responses
Full-time (35+ hours a week)	46.85%	52
Part-time (15-34 hours a week)	31.53%	35
Casual (1-14 hours a week)	21.62%	24

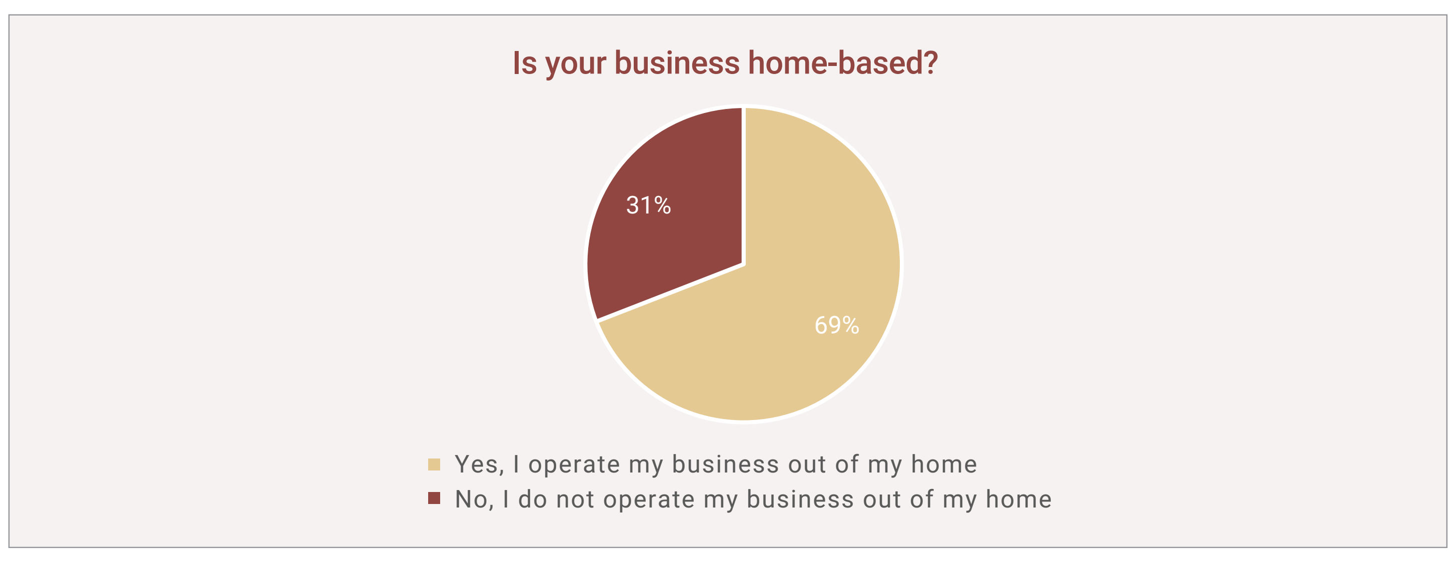
Q16. Do you regularly work another job, outside of your business?		
Answer Choices	**Proportion of Responses**	**Number of Responses**
I'm not sure.	0.91%	1
Yes, I regularly work seasonally (0-5 months per year) outside of my business.	2.73%	3
Yes, I currently work part-time outside of my business.	13.64%	15
Yes, I currently work full-time outside of my business.	40.91%	45
No, I work only for my own business.	41.82%	46



Base of Operations

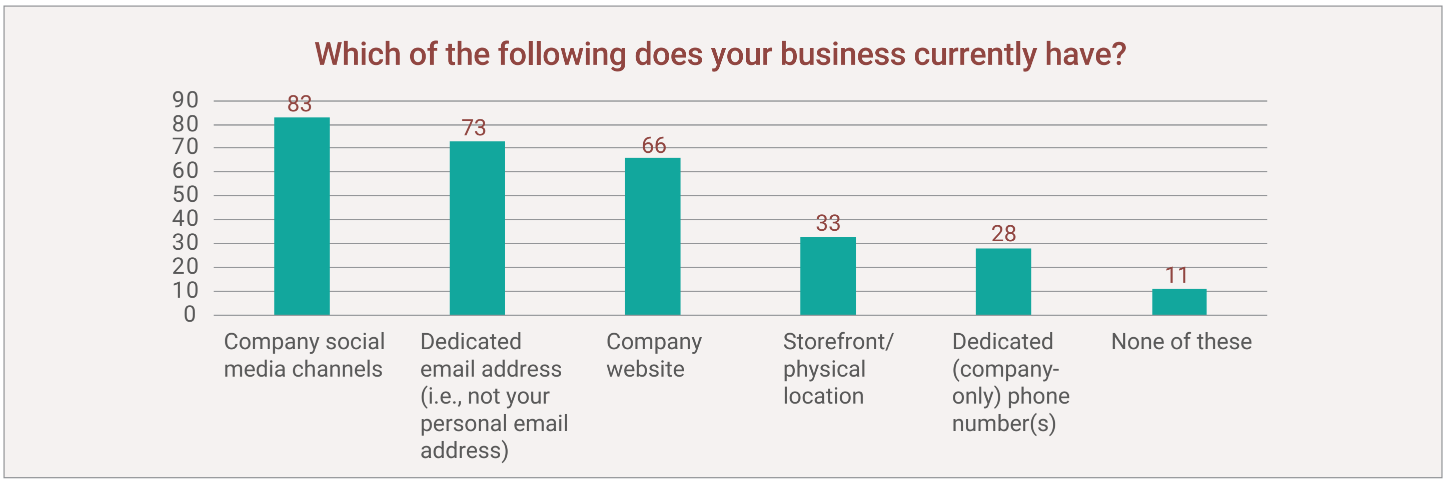
Within the sample, nearly 70% (n=76) of participants operate their businesses out of their homes, rather than from a separate workspace. If a business grows in terms of numbers of employees, it may become difficult or even impossible to run the business from a home office. Thus, this is another (imperfect) measure of the level of formality of a business.

Q24. Is your business home-based?		
Answer Choices	**Proportion of Responses**	**Number of Responses**
Yes, I operate my business out of my home.	69.09%	76
No, I do not operate my business out of my home.	30.91%	34



Further, we sought to identify the level of formality and accessibility of the business by assessing the types of contact channels they currently operate. These communication channels are common methods by which customers could interact with the business. Operating many or all of these channels would indicate a relatively high level of business formality. The most common communication channel managed by participants (n=83) is that of company-specific social media channels. Nearly 10% of the businesses (n=11) do not have any of these company-specific channels of communication, which suggests a relatively low level of business formality.

Q25. Which of the following does your business have (select all that apply)?		
Answer Choices	**Proportion of Responses**	**Number of Responses**
Company social media channels	74.77%	83
Dedicated email address (i.e., not your personal email address)	65.77%	73
Company website	59.46%	66
Storefront/physical location	29.73%	33
Dedicated (company-only) phone number(s)	25.23%	28
None of these	9.91%	11

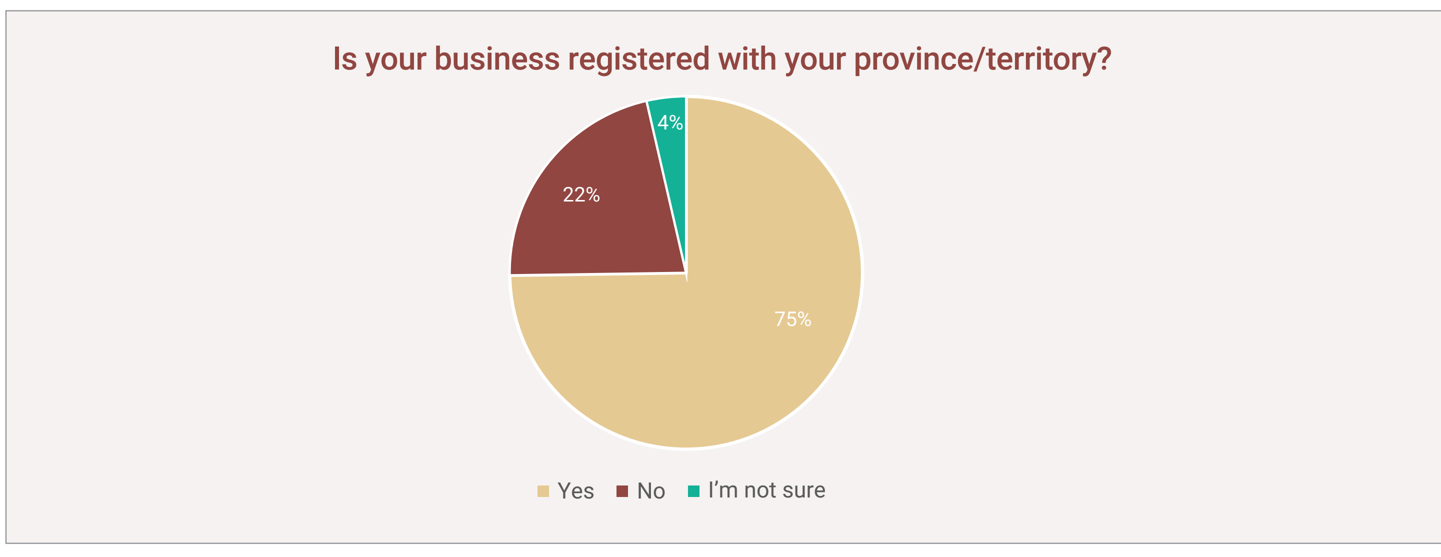


Business Registration

Not all businesses are required to be registered with one's province or territory; for example, sole proprietorships generally do not require registration. However, one can register one's business, no matter the legal structure or size. Thus, business registration is another (imperfect) measure of the level of formality of a business. Nearly 75% of participants (n=83) have registered their business, despite the fact that 57% of participants (n=63) operate sole proprietorships and thus may not be legally required to do so.[9] We consider this to be a positive indicator that participants may be taking extra steps to formalize their businesses.

Q22. Is your business registered with your province/territory?		
Answer Choices	**Proportion of Responses**	**Number of Responses**
Yes	74.77%	83
No	21.62%	24
I'm not sure	3.60%	4

[9] Legal requirements for business registration may vary by province/territory.



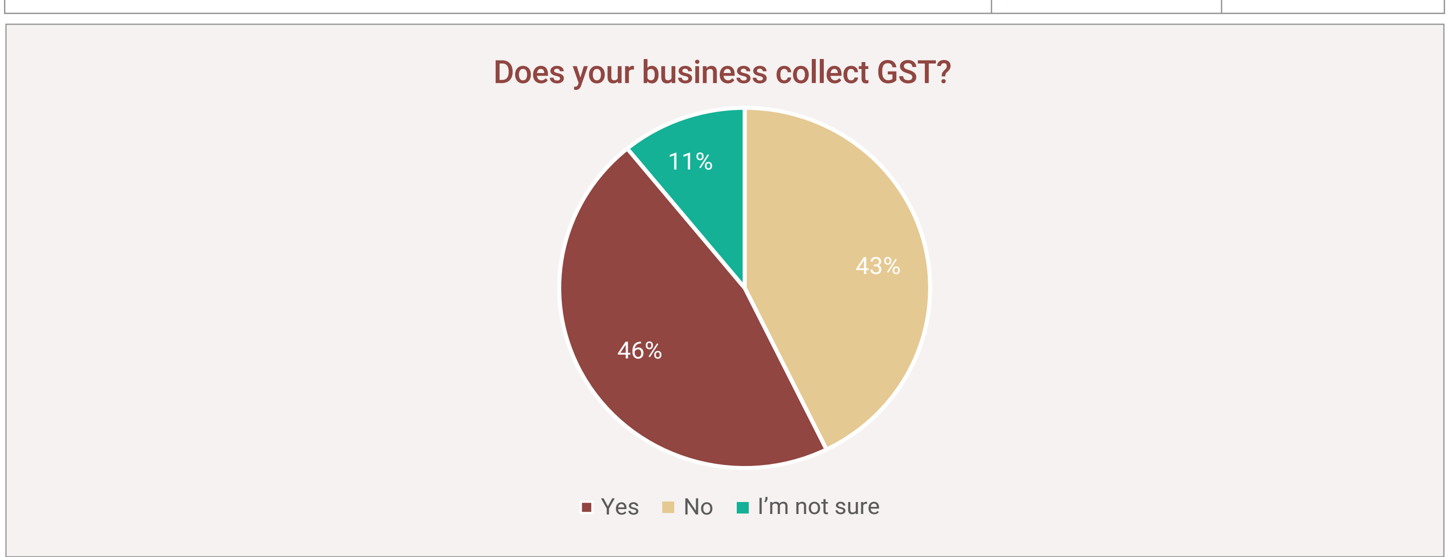
GST/HST Collection

Businesses in Canada are required to collect GST/HST under certain conditions. For example, currently in Canada, businesses that earn more than $30,000 in four consecutive quarters are required to register a GST/HST number with Canada Revenue Agency and are required to begin collection; however, there are specific exceptions to this.[10] Collecting GST/HST is one potential indicator of a businesses' relative size in terms of annual revenue, but it is an imperfect measure since businesses can opt to collect GST before reaching this relative size. Furthermore, because all participants of this study are Indigenous, it is possible that some participants may be working in a community that instructs businesses to collect FNGST[11] as a result of their legislation, as opposed to GST/HST.

Currently, about 46% (n=51) of participants collect and remit GST/HST. Interestingly, over 10% (n=12) of participants are not sure if they collect GST/HST; we expect that these participants do not collect GST/HST (since collection and remittance is an additional administrative task required for some businesses), but we note that the expectations around GST/HST may be unknown or unclear to some young entrepreneurs.

Q23. Does your business collect GST?

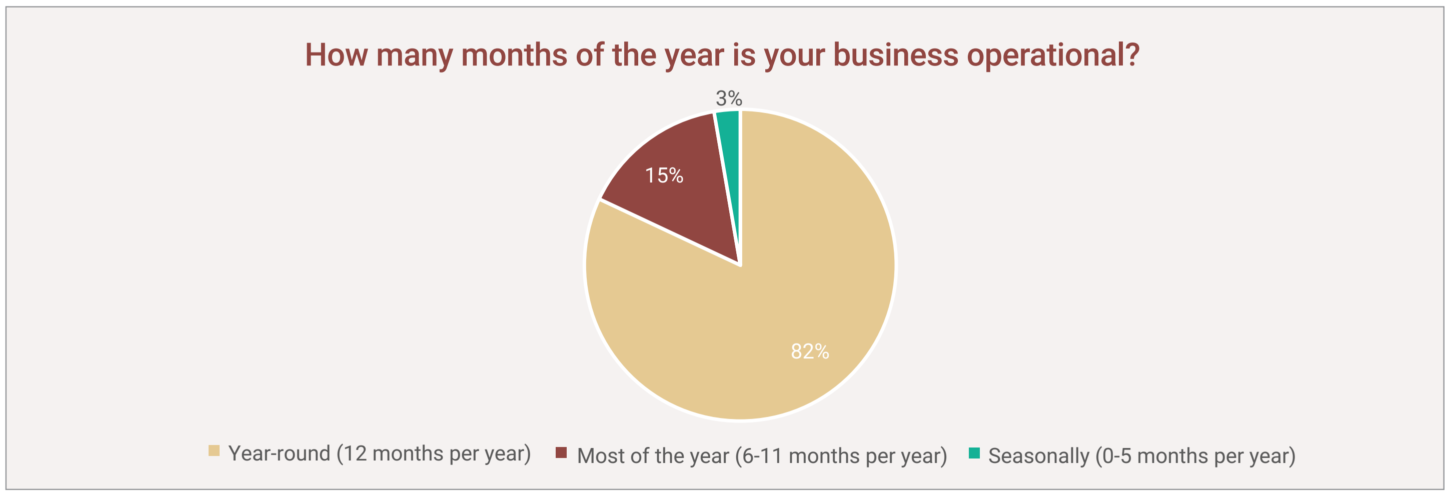
Answer Choices	Proportion of Responses	Number of Responses
No	42.73%	47
Yes	46.36%	51
I'm not sure	10.91%	12



[10] Consult a qualified CPA or business lawyer for help understanding legal GST/HST requirements in your context.
[11] The First Nations Goods and Services Tax is applicable to specific Nations that impose the tax within their territories (Canada Revenue Agency, 2021).

Operating Timelines

While most participants (n=91) operate their businesses year-round, about 15% of participants (n=17) operate between six and 11 months, and a small proportion (n=3) operate only seasonally, meaning fewer than six months per year. This could be a result of young Indigenous entrepreneurs taking time away from a business for additional professional and personal responsibilities, or the result of their business operating in a seasonal industry such as tourism.



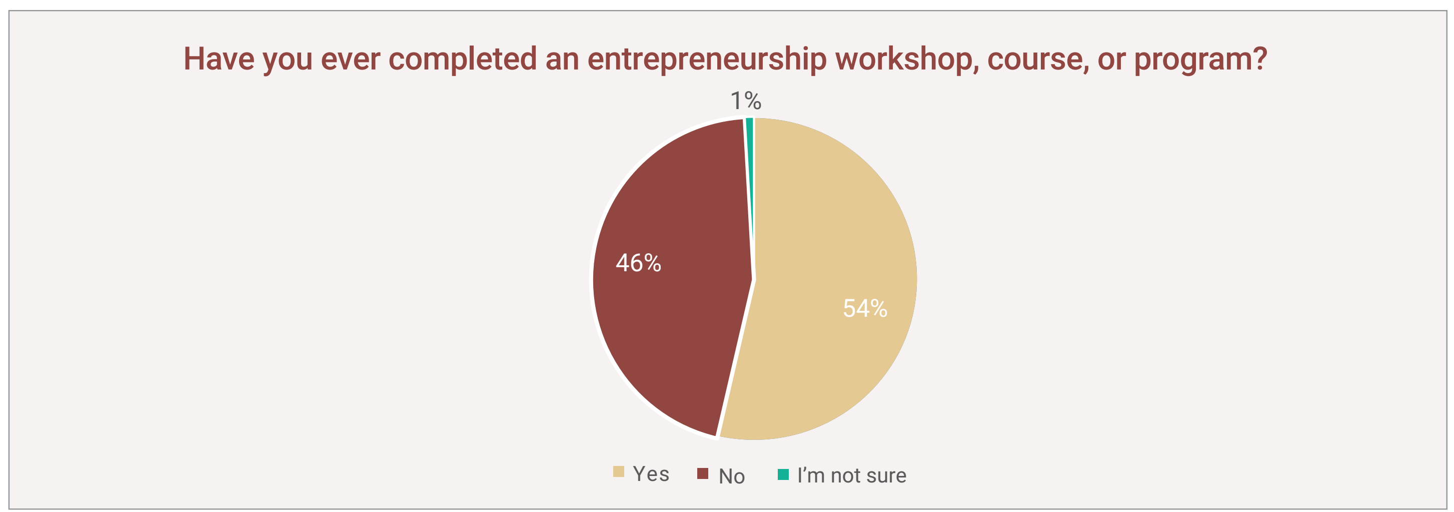
Entrepreneurial Education

We sought to understand participants' perceptions of entrepreneurial education opportunities. We examined both their perceptions of entrepreneurship educational programs they had already attended, and what they would like to see in future programs. Overall, we find a high degree of interest in formal entrepreneurship education among participants; however, many participants indicate that there is a clear need for flexibility in how programs are delivered. Finally, participants express the greatest interest in formal educational opportunities specifically focused on the technical and administrative aspects of running a business, such as tax requirements and business law (n=81), accounting and budgeting (n=80), and financial management and raising capital (n=79).

Firstly, a small majority of participants (n=59) had completed some form of workshop, course, or program related to entrepreneurship before.

Q46. Have you ever completed a workshop, course, or program dedicated to entrepreneurship or small business ownership?

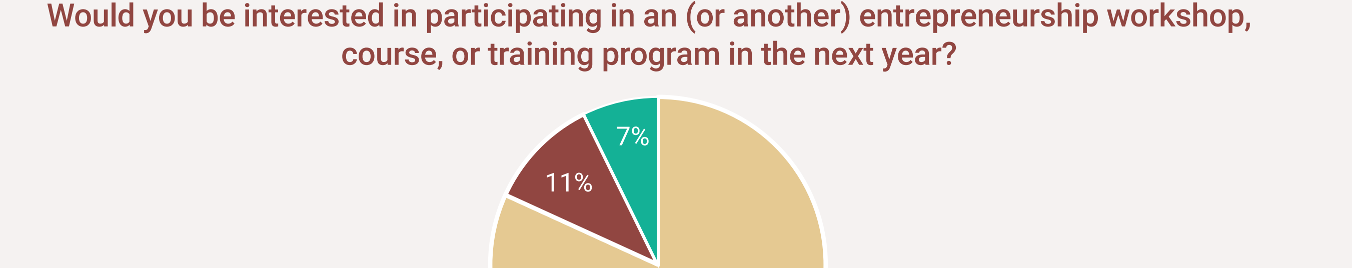
Answer Choices	Proportion of Responses	Number of Responses
Yes	53.64%	59
No	45.45%	50
I'm not sure	0.91%	1



Beyond this, over 80% of participants (n=90) are interested in taking an entrepreneurship workshop, course or program, regardless of whether they have taken one before.

Q47. Would you be interested in participating in an (or another) entrepreneurship workshop, course, or training program in the next year?

Answer Choices	Proportion of Responses	Number of Responses
Yes	81.82%	90
No	10.91%	12
I'm not sure	7.27%	8



We asked participants to identify how they would like to attend a formal entrepreneurship workshop, course or program if they were to attend one: online, in a classroom, or on the land (or a combination of these). Although there is no answer that attracted the majority of participants, overall, participants clearly favour online learning; 41% (n=44) of participants chose “Fully Online” as their preferred learning method. The second highest concentration of answers (n=28) is the combination of all available options, meaning some online, some in-classroom, and some on-the-land elements.

Within our interviews, we find similar results; many of the interviewees express an interest in entrepreneurial education but also recognize that their schedule would require a flexible learning opportunity. Many young Indigenous entrepreneurs want more formal learning opportunities, but they have busy and/or unpredictable schedules and are simply unable to commit to being in a classroom at the same time every week. Hybrid approaches or self-guided learning opportunities might be the most impactful option for this group.

Overall, 39% of respondents want at least some on-the-land elements (though only 3% want the course to be delivered entirely on the land). Currently, there are few on-the-land learning opportunities in the realm of business or entrepreneurship.

Q48. If you were to enrol in an entrepreneurship workshop, course, or training program, how would you prefer it to be delivered?

Answer Choices	Proportion of Responses	Number of Responses
Fully online	40.74%	44
Fully in-person in a classroom setting	6.48%	7
Fully in-person, on the land	2.78%	3
Mixed delivery: some online and some in-classroom elements	16.67%	18
Mixed delivery: some online and some on-the-land elements	7.41%	8
Mixed delivery: some online, some in-classroom, and some on-the-land elements	25.93%	28
I'm not sure	0.91%	1

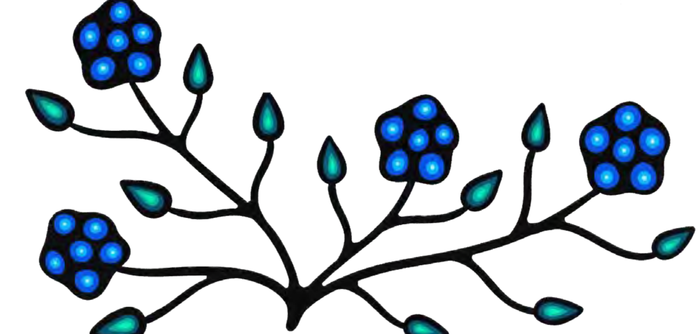
Course Delivery Preferences

Delivery preference	%
Mixed deliver: some online, some in classroom, and some on-the-land elements	26%
Mixed deliver: some online, and some on-the-land elements	7%
Mixed deliver: some online, some in-classroom elements	17%
Fully in-person on the land	3%
Fully in-person in a classroom setting	6'%
Fully online	41%

Most participants are interested in taking formal workshops, courses or programs that are focused on the business, legal, accounting and financial management aspects of entrepreneurship. These are some of the more “technical” pieces of running a business and are potentially the hardest to learn on one’s own or through trial-and-error.

Participants could select as many of these topics as they wanted to, so each topic was selected by more than 50% of respondents—with the exception of “Learning about hiring and managing employee relations.” This could be because, as discussed, only 80% of respondents have ever had another employee; and of those who do have employees, most respondents (59%) have only 1-3. Further, approximately 55% of all participants characterize hiring at least one additional employee in the next year as a priority.

Aside from technical learning, participants are then most excited to gain a network of other entrepreneurs. This is a really important point, especially in considering that 61% of respondents do not have a business mentor. In terms of our interviewees, there is also a strong emphasis on peer networks and learning from peers rather than mentors.



Q49. Which aspects of an entrepreneurship course appeal to you? (Select all that apply)		
Answer Choices	**Proportion of Responses**	**Number of Responses**
Learning about taxation and business law.	74.31%	81
Learning about accounting and budgeting.	73.39%	80
Learning about financial management and raising capital.	72.48%	79
Gaining a network of entrepreneurs to discuss my business with.	68.81%	75
Learning about marketing and promotions.	65.14%	71
Learning about the resurgence of Indigenous economies.	65.14%	71
Learning about leadership and mentorship.	64.22%	70
Learning about the history of Indigenous business leaders.	62.39%	68
Learning about the impacts of colonization on Indigenous economies.	59.63%	65
Learning about environmental sustainability and managing the ecological impacts of business.	54.13%	59
Learning about hiring and managing employee relations.	37.61%	41
Other (please specify)	7.34%	8

What are you most interested to learn more about?

Learning about taxation and business law. 74%
Learning about accounting and budgeting. 73%
Learning about financial management and raising capital. 72%
Gaining a network of entrepreneurs to discuss my business with. 69%
Learning about marketing and promotion. 65%
Learning about the resurgence of Indigenous economies. 65%
Learning about leadership and mentorship. 64%
Learning about the history of Indigenous business leaders. 62%
Learning about the impacts of colonization on Indigenous economies. 60%
Learning about environmental sustainability and managing the ecological impacts of business. 54%
Learning about hiring and managing employee relations. 38%
Othe (please specify). 7%

Conceptions of Business Growth

While over 90% of survey participants (n=100) “agree” or “strongly agree” with the statement that it is a priority to grow their businesses, through this survey, we find that young Indigenous entrepreneurs do not all view “business growth” in the same way. Rather, we find that different aspects of growth are more important to some young Indigenous entrepreneurs than others.

Q30. It is a priority for me to grow my business.

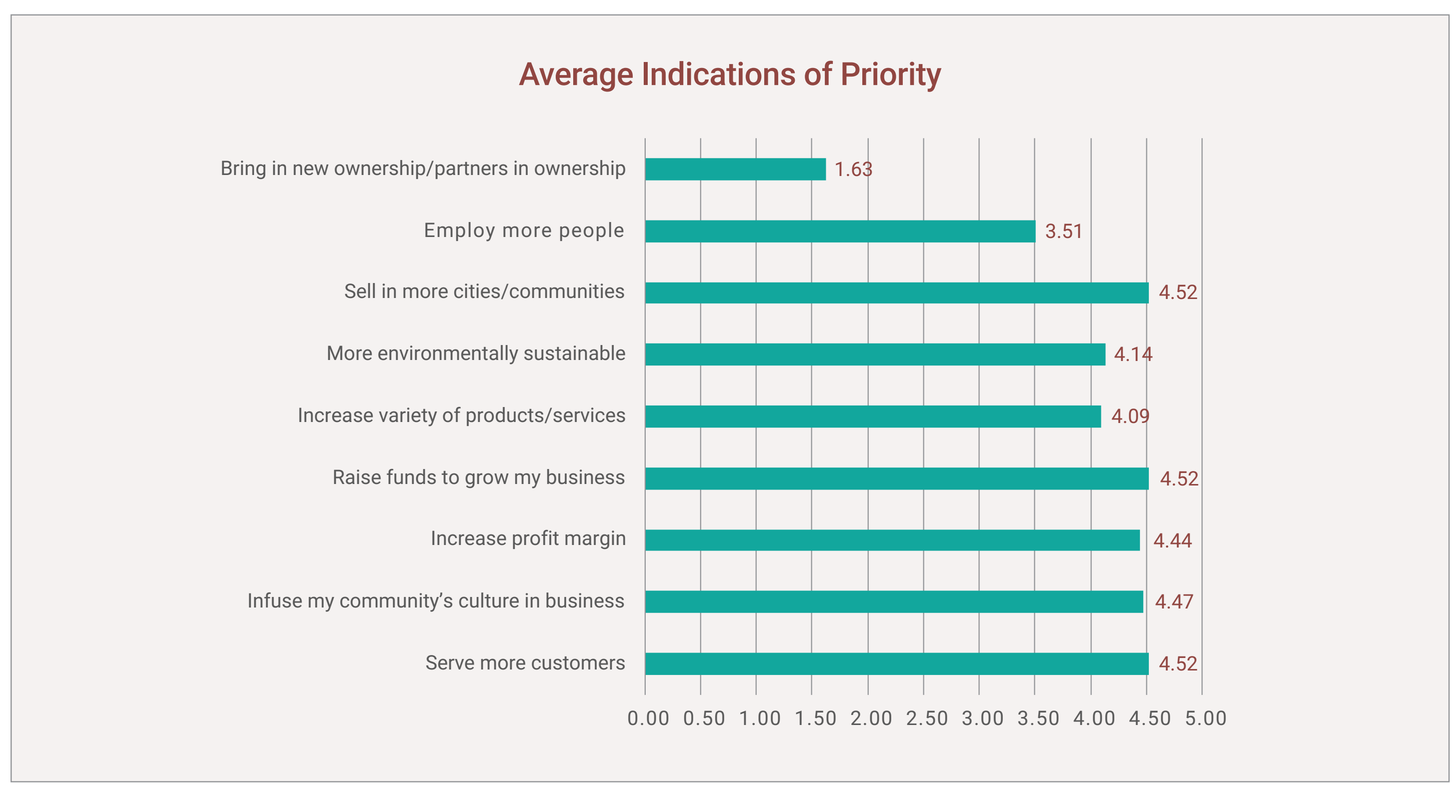
Answer Choices	Proportion of Responses	Number of Responses
Strongly disagree	3.64%	4
Somewhat disagree	0.00%	0
Neither agree nor disagree	5.45%	6
Somewhat agree	7.27%	8
Strongly agree	83.64%	92

In order to better understand how young Indigenous entrepreneurs are thinking about the concept of “business growth,” we sought to identify the types of business growth of most and least importance to them, at this point in their entrepreneurial journeys.

Below, we provide average indications of priority for each potential type of business growth.[12]

There are three specific types of business growth that are most important to participants on average: serving more customers, raising funds to grow the business, and operating in more communities. The least important measure of business growth, on average, is that of bringing in additional owners.

All types of business growth are important to most participants, except for bringing in additional owners or partners in ownership; in fact, 82% (n=90) of participants consider it a priority to retain full ownership over their business in the foreseeable future. We see a general preference for retaining ownership throughout the survey and in our interviews as well.



[12] To determine average levels of priority, we converted the Likert scale provided to participants ranging from “Strongly disagree” to “Strongly agree” into a 1-5 scale. (Strongly disagree = 1; Strongly agree = 5). Higher average scores indicate higher levels of priority among participants.

Business Support

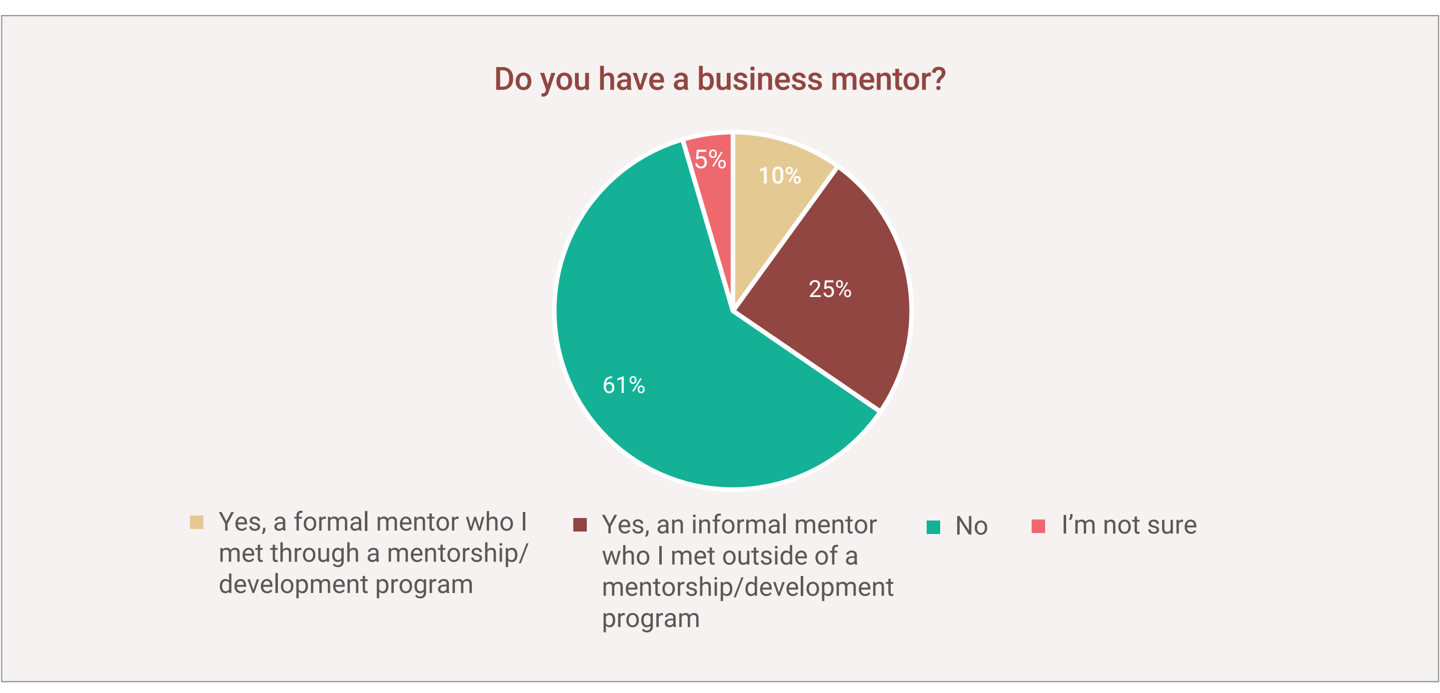
We sought to understand how well young Indigenous entrepreneurs feel supported by those around them. To do so, we asked participants to identify how supported they feel by different potential members of their community including friends, family, and their Nation(s).

On average, participants feel most supported by their family in their roles as entrepreneurs; however, many participants feel unsure of who to turn to for business advice.

This is unsurprising, as over 60% of participants (n=67) state that they do not have a business mentor. Of those who do have a business mentor, most have an informal mentor that they met in a "real-world" scenario, meaning that they met outside of a formalized mentorship program.

Q41. Do you have a business mentor?

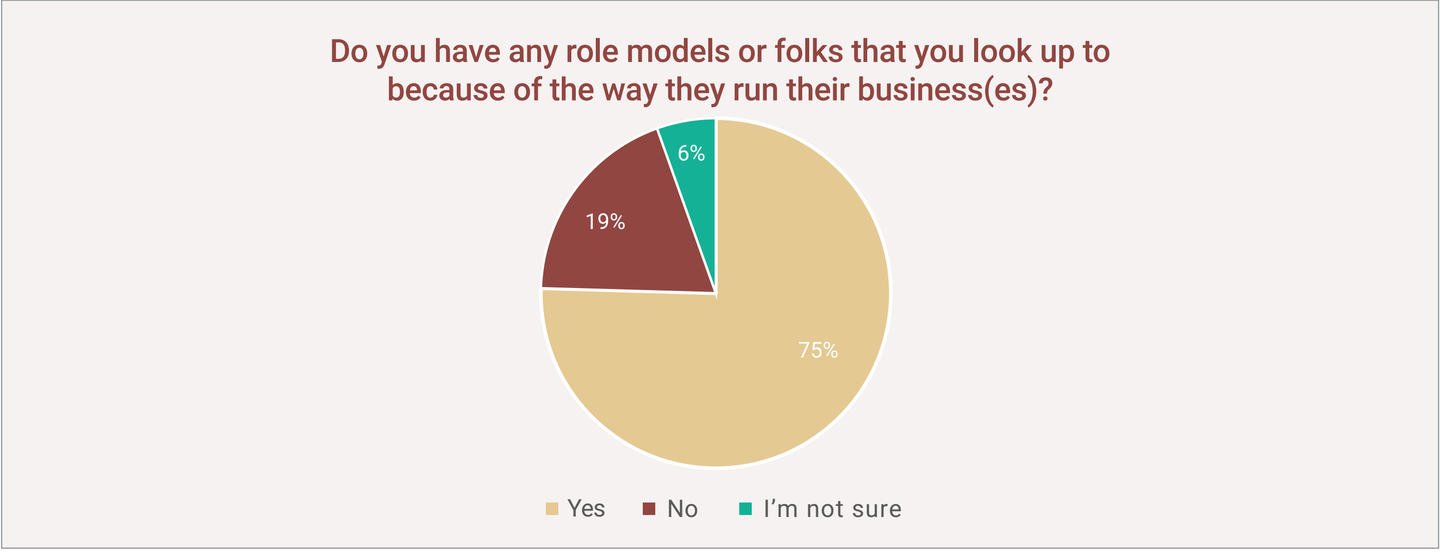
Answer Choices	Proportion of Responses	Number of Responses
Yes, a formal mentor who I met through a mentorship/development program	10.00%	11
Yes, an informal mentor who I met outside of a mentorship/development program	24.55%	27
No	60.91%	67
I'm not sure	4.55%	5



Furthermore, we asked participants if they have role models or others that they look up to because of the way they operate their businesses. Three-quarters of participants (75%, or n=83) state that they have a business role model. Because many more participants identify as having role models versus business mentors, we expect that some of these role models are either peers, or business leaders that the entrepreneurs do not personally know. We also recognize that for young Indigenous entrepreneurs, it is not only business mentors or role models that make a difference; cultural learning is also a key factor in business success. As such, we asked participants if they have someone in their life they can go to learn about their culture, and nearly 65% (n=70) do.

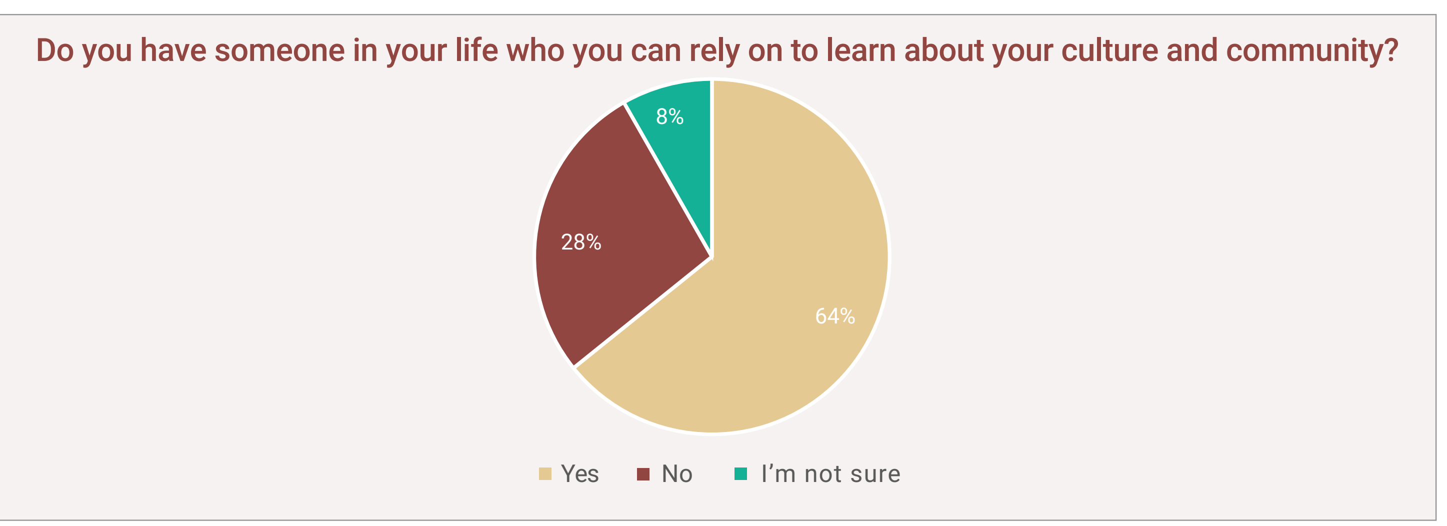
Q42. Do you have any role models or folks that you look up to because of the way they run their business(es)?

Answer Choices	Proportion of Responses	Number of Responses
Yes	75.45%	83
No	19.09%	21
I'm not sure	5.45%	6



Q43. Do you have someone in your life who you can rely on to learn about your culture and community?

Answer Choices	Proportion of Responses	Number of Responses
Yes	64.22%	70
No	27.52%	30
I'm not sure	8.26%	9



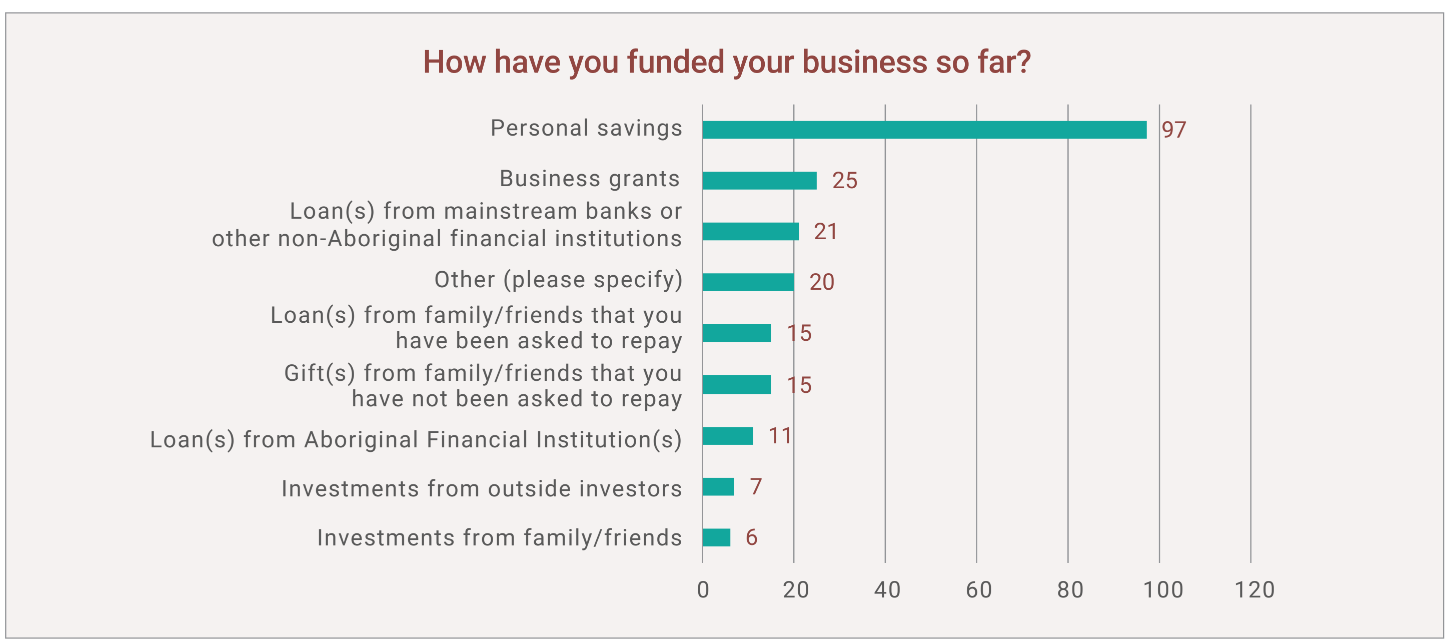
Financing

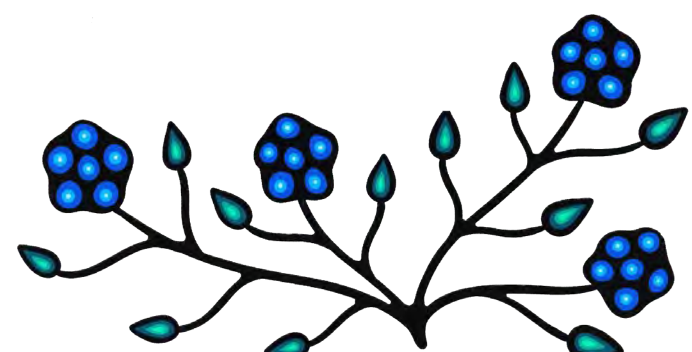
Nearly 90% of participants (n=97) have self-funded their organizations, at least in part. Relatively few participants (n=13) funded their business investment from friends, family, and other types of investors. Overall, we find that participants are most interested in self-funding their organizations, and are least interested in bringing on investors as partners. We find that many young Indigenous entrepreneurs want to retain full ownership and control of their businesses.

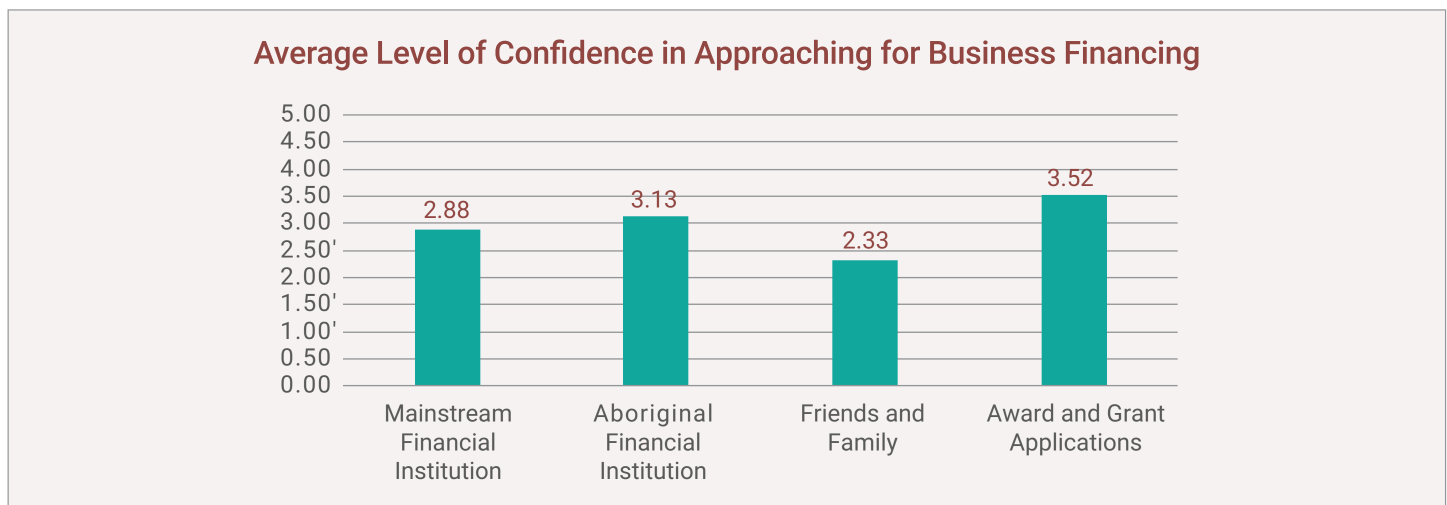
We also find that beyond self-funding, young Indigenous entrepreneurs prefer grants and awards to investment or loans, and they would feel most confident in seeking funding through these competitions. Our participants feel least confident in approaching their friends and family to seek business financing, as compared to approaching award and granting agencies or financial institutions (e.g., mainstream or Aboriginal Financial Institutions).

Q53. How have you funded your business so far? (Please select all that apply)

Answer Choices	Proportion of Responses	Number of Responses
Investments from family/friends	5.50%	6
Investments from outside investors	6.42%	7
Loan(s) from Aboriginal Financial Institution(s)	10.09%	11
Gift(s) from family/friends that you have not been asked to repay	13.76%	15
Loan(s) from family/friends that you have been asked to repay	13.76%	15
Other (please specify)	18.35%	20
Loan(s) from mainstream banks or other non-Aboriginal financial institutions	19.27%	21
Business grants	22.94%	25
Personal savings	88.99%	97





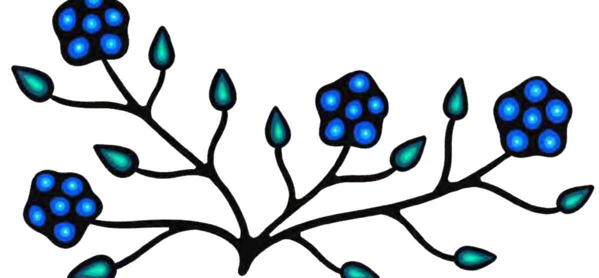


Challenges and Favourite Aspects of Entrepreneurship

Overall, young Indigenous entrepreneurs are busy. We find that 66% (n=73) of respondents regularly feel challenged by managing their business alongside their other responsibilities. Further, we find that 55% (n=61) of participants feel challenged in navigating the administrative aspects of their businesses, and 55% (n=61) feel challenged by accessing needed capital or financial support. Troublingly, we find that 20% (n=22) regularly feel challenged by "Discrimination, bigotry, anti-Indigeneity, or other social marginalization based on your personal identity." However, we find that 5% of our participants do not regularly feel challenged by any of these issues.

Q58. What parts of running your business do you find yourself regularly challenged by at this stage in your entrepreneurial journey? (Select all that apply)

Answer Choices	Proportion of Responses	Number of Responses
Discrimination, bigotry, anti-Indigeneity, or other social marginalization based on your personal identity.	20.00%	22
Getting the word out about the business and reaching the right customers.	40.91%	45
Accessing affordable supplies and materials for my business.	41.82%	46
Accessing needed capital or financial support.	55.45%	61
Navigating administrative aspects of my business (e.g., taxation requirements, licensing, business registration, etc.).	55.45%	61
Managing the work of running my business alongside my other responsibilities (e.g., family, school, or other employment).	66.36%	73
None of the above	4.55%	5
Other (please specify)	10.00%	11



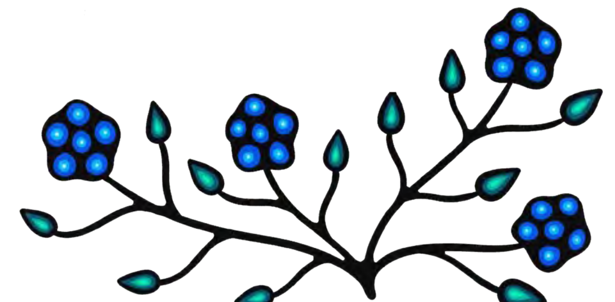
Which aspects of running your business do you regularly feel challenged by?

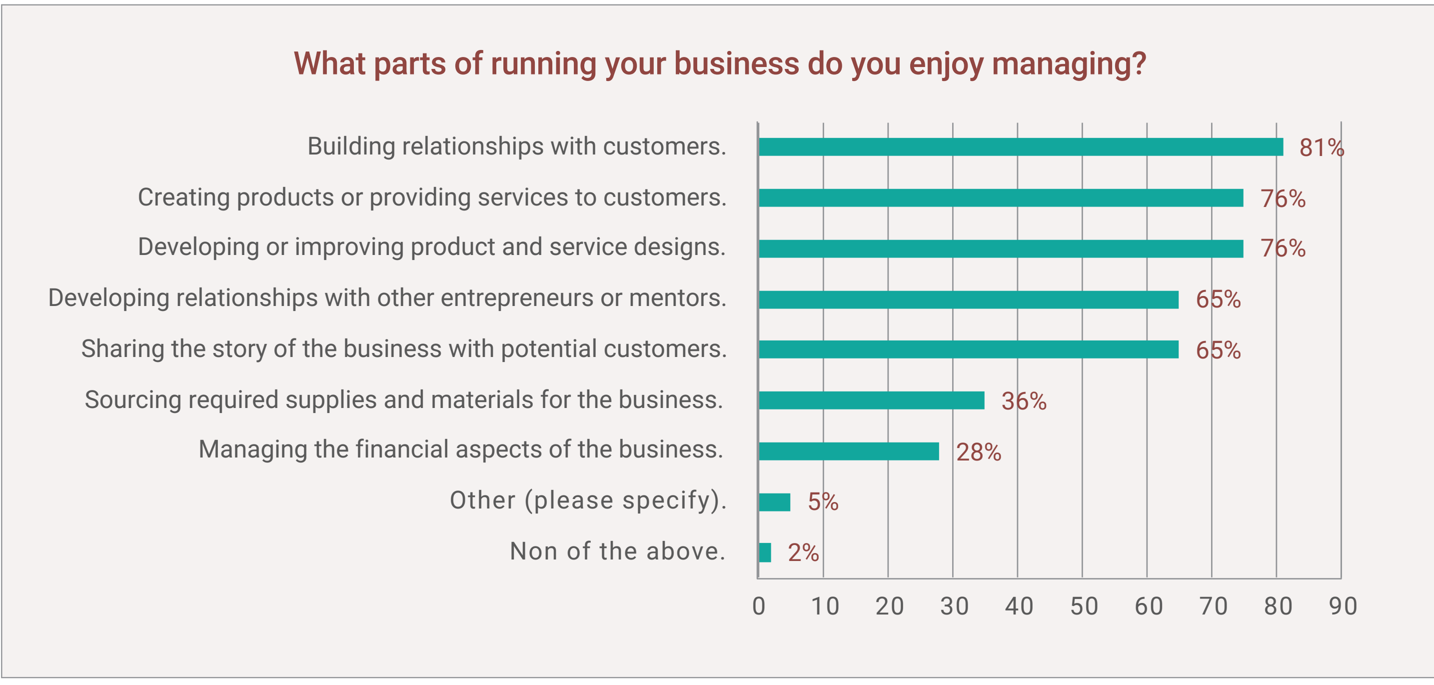
Aspect	%
Managing the work of running my business alongside my other responsibilities (e.g., family, school, or other employment).	66%
Navigating administrative aspects of my business (e.g., taxation requirements, licensing, business registration, etc.).	56%
Assessing needed capital or financial support.	56%
Accessing affordable supplies and materials for my business.	42%
Getting the word out about the business and reaching the right customers.	41%
Discrimination, bigotry, anti-Indigeneity, or other social marginalization based on your personal identity.	20%
Other (please specify).	10%
None of the above.	5%

The primary aspect that our respondents like about their work as an entrepreneur is building relationships with customers (n=89). After that, our participants like to produce their products (n=83).

Q59. What parts of running your business do you enjoy managing? (Select all that apply)

Answer Choices	Proportion of Responses	Number of Responses
Managing the financial aspects of the business.	28.18%	31
Sourcing required supplies and materials for the business.	35.45%	39
Sharing the story of the business with potential customers.	64.55%	71
Developing relationships with other entrepreneurs or mentors.	65.45%	72
Developing or improving product and service designs.	75.45%	83
Creating products or providing services to customers.	75.45%	83
Building relationships with customers.	80.91%	89
Other (please specify)	4.55%	5
None of the above	1.82%	2



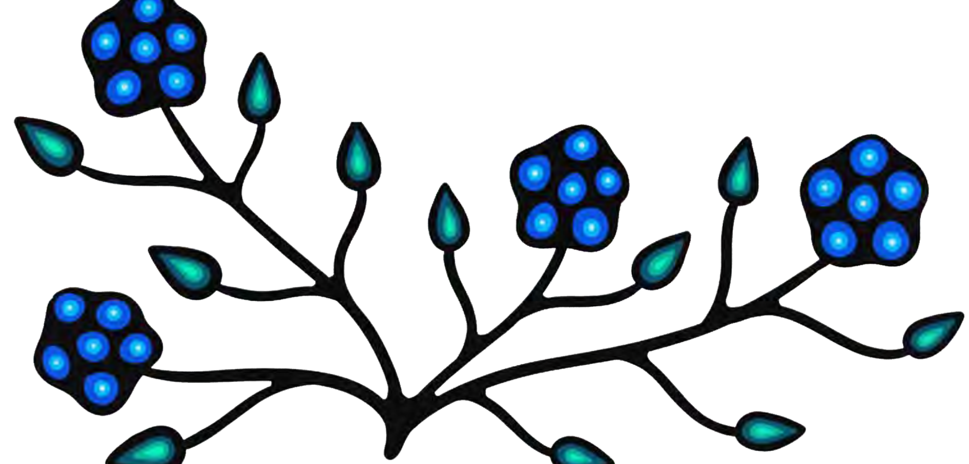


National Survey Key Findings

Through our national survey, we define several key findings regarding young Indigenous entrepreneurs' experiences working in Canada that support and supplement extant literature. Most notably, we find that young Indigenous entrepreneurs tend to manage multiple professional and personal roles, which can put a strain on their own well-being. Further, we find that young Indigenous entrepreneurs are interested in seeking out business learning opportunities, particularly in the realms of taxation and business law, accounting and budgeting, and financial management and raising capital—but these learning opportunities must be flexible in order to meet entrepreneurs' needs.

We also find that young Indigenous entrepreneurs often do not work with business mentors, but often identify business role models. We further find that young Indigenous entrepreneurs are primarily self-funding their businesses, and many intend to retain full ownership of their businesses in the foreseeable future.

Finally, we learned that young Indigenous entrepreneurs enjoy building relationships with customers, as well as creating their products for customers, and improving upon product and service offerings.



ENTREPRENEURIAL STORIES

In this section, we review the methodology of the qualitative study in this project. To gather the data for this qualitative study, we conducted 13 interviews with young Indigenous entrepreneurs from across Canada.

Interview Protocol Development

An interview protocol is essentially a set of questions or topics that can help to guide a research conversation between researchers and participants. For this project, we developed a semi-structured research protocol that allowed for significant flexibility and variation from conversation to conversation. In this way, our interview process departs significantly from our survey process—while every participant was asked the same set of questions as they moved through the survey, each interview participant was asked a slightly different set of questions based not only on our team's understanding of their business, but also based on each participant's unique interests. Our team developed the interview protocol for this project over time, and through several iterative phases.

We began the interview protocol development process with the literature review. Through this literature review, we identified several topics to explore in our conversations with young Indigenous entrepreneurs. As a team, we developed and then refined this list to include topics such as entrepreneurial education, business mentorship, and access to capital. From this initial list of topics, our team suggested further topics and potential questions, which were drawn from our own professional and personal lives. Based on this list, the lead researcher refined the questions, and our team met to approve a base interview protocol.

Before each interview, the lead researcher on the team would review any public-facing information about the participant to get a better sense of their business and entrepreneurial journey (e.g., company website or social media, media coverage, interviews, etc.). From this review, the lead researcher then adapted the base interview protocol to be more specific to each entrepreneur. Ultimately, the interview protocol served only as a guide during each research conversation; the participants themselves were encouraged to speak about the aspects of their business that are important to them, and about anything else they wanted to share with other entrepreneurs and audiences.

Purposive Sampling

Unlike our experiences with the national survey, the qualitative, interview-based study gave us more control over who would make up the sample of participants who ultimately would contribute. While we did not know exactly who would choose to participate in the work, we were in control of inviting a variety of participants to join us. While we did invite more potential participants to join than those who chose to participate in an interview, we were excited that most of those invited were happy to contribute and more than willing to share their stories with us (and—by extension—with you).

Our sample was defined by a similar set of parameters as the national survey: a) belonging to an Indigenous community in what is now known as Canada, b) a current business owner, and c) between ages 18-39.

Before reaching out to any potential interview participants, our team met to define a set of significant attributes that we wanted to ensure were well-represented by our eventual sample. These included participant age, gender, community connection, region (where they live now, and the region of their home community), industry, business age, and business size. In general, we were looking to ensure that we covered a wide variance among each attribute.

We each provided a suggested set of young Indigenous entrepreneurs from across Canada who we felt could provide unique insights into the experience of being a young Indigenous entrepreneur. Our team met to devise an initial shortlist of potential participants to reach out to first, knowing that we would be reaching out to potential interviewees in waves.

We reached out to several potential participants at a time and scheduled interviews with interested participants on a rolling basis, based on their individual schedules and availability. As we completed interviews, we adjusted our sample of invited participants to ensure we were curating a sample of participants that would reflect the diversity of young Indigenous entrepreneurs in Canada today, to the greatest extent possible.

Overall, we conducted 13 interviews with young Indigenous entrepreneurs. Within this sample, we conducted interviews with participants from each of the three major Indigenous groups in Canada (Inuit, Métis, and First Nations), and across 11 provinces and territories in Canada (including location of home territory, and current location of residence). Furthermore, we worked to ensure that the sample was

diverse in terms of age, industry, and business age. Our youngest participant was 19 years old, and our oldest had just turned 40 years old. Ten of our interviewees are First Nations, two are Métis, and one is Inuk. Five interviewees identify as men, and eight identify as women.

Participant Consent

When we initially reached out to potential interview participants for the project, we provided them all with a combined project Letter of Information (LOI) and Participant Consent Form. The purpose of this LOI and Participant Consent Form was to provide each participant with an overview of the project, and to explain how any information they chose to share in a research conversation would be used in the final project. The forms also outlined any potential risks and potential benefits of participating in the project. We further outlined the motivation for the project and its intended results.

While we asked participants to sign the Participant Consent Form, the lead researcher also made herself available to review any aspect of the forms with the participants before the research conversations commenced. This helped ensure that potential participants understood every aspect of the project. Because we have ongoing relationships with the interview participants for this project, ongoing participant consent is essential. As outlined in the LOI and Participant Consent Form themselves, participants were reminded that they had the right throughout the research conversation to drive the direction of the conversation, to not respond to any particular prompt offered by the researchers, and to even fully withdraw their data from the project after the interview concludes.

We provided a full draft of this report, along with their own inclusions (i.e., quotes, entrepreneur spotlights, etc.) for their review before the report was finalized. Participants were welcome to remove any or all data that they shared from the project, up until its final publication as a report.

Participant Anonymity

As part of the consent process, each participant was asked how they would like to be identified within the work. Participants could choose to have their real names, and the real names of their businesses, included within the work; or they could choose to have these names obscured through assigned pseudonyms. Participants were welcome to change their position on their own anonymity up until the project's final publication as a report.

Data Collection

For the qualitative data collection, we conducted in-depth interviews with the 13 young Indigenous entrepreneur participants. For these interviews, we used a conversational approach, based on the methodology described by Nêhiyaw and Saulteaux researcher Margaret Kovach in her book Indigenous Methodologies: Characteristics, Conversations and Contexts (2009). This approach is appropriate for research interviews with Indigenous participants, because with this approach the research participant is invited to drive the conversation to the extent that they would like to. This methodology requires humility; it is always important to remember in conversations like this that the participants are the experts, and the researchers are the learners. For this project, our role as researchers was only to invite participants to share their stories, to offer guidance about what they could focus on or include, and then to listen wholeheartedly to the stories that the participants chose to share. It was not our role as researchers to drive the conversation, but merely to offer direction as needed.

Each of the interviews were conducted with one or two members of our research team; the lead researcher participated in each interview, and when possible, another team member joined. Each of the 13 research interviews lasted 30-80 minutes, with the average (mean) interview lasting 50 minutes. The interviews were all conducted virtually, through videocall software. With the consent of each participant, we recorded each interview and a member of our team transcribed interviews so that we could refer to them throughout our data analysis, with accuracy and completeness.

Gifting

Our training and protocols as Indigenous researchers and Indigenous community members teach us that we must honour gifts given to us in our work, with gifts shared in return. Further, we recognize that offering an interview for this project is a significant contribution to our work, and so, we sought to show our appreciation for each interview participant. As such, in the course of this project, we shared a small gift with each interview participant after the conclusion of the interview. This is in keeping with our understanding of Indigenous research methodologies and protocols.

Data Analysis

To bring together all 13 conversational interviews and try to make sense of the different kinds of stories and experiences shared by all participants, we engaged in an process called a thematic analysis. This process enabled us to identify common and important themes from the stories shared by participants for this work.

Thematic Analysis

To conduct our thematic analysis, we utilized the qualitative data analysis software, NVivo 12. This software enables us to store all interview transcripts, review each transcript, and create various "codes" throughout the

transcripts. In this context, to "code" is to essentially place different sentences, sections or phrases from the interview transcript into different categories. The "codes" are the different names of the categories.

To complete our analysis, we conducted several rounds of coding—meaning we went through all of the interview transcripts several times to ensure we did not miss any important concepts or ideas that should be covered in the coding process. The purpose of coding is to take a huge store of data, such as our 13 interviews, and identify the most important or prevalent themes—either the ideas and themes that keep coming up again in interview after interview; or themes or ideas that maybe came up only once or twice, but strike our research team as particularly poignant or particularly representative of that young Indigenous entrepreneur's experience. In qualitative data analysis, it is said that the researcher is "the instrument" (McCracken, 1988). This means that, within qualitative research processes, there is subjectivity, and the researchers have to make judgement calls about what to focus on. Indigenous researchers often take cues from the participants and work to highlight what the participants care about; this is what we sought to do with our analysis.

For this project, the purpose of coding is ultimately about highlighting ideas and themes that seem most important to participants, and then finding ways to relate those themes and ideas to the larger literature and our broader understanding of young Indigenous entrepreneurs. We conducted several rounds of analysis as iterative processes—moving back and forth between open and secondary coding as we gained new understanding of the data from the interviews. The lead researcher on the team led all coding processes. Our coding processes do not follow a particular convention perfectly, but we relied on the explanations of qualitative coding offered by Charmaz (2006), and specifically the data presentation model explicated by Gioia, Corley and Hamilton (2013).

Open Coding

The first coding stage in our process is often called open coding, also sometimes called in vivo coding. In Latin, in vivo means "in the living," and our goal with open/in vivo coding is to keep our codes as close as possible to the words expressed by our participants. In this stage, we basically try to avoid putting our own interpretation onto the ideas expressed by participants.

So, for example, during our interview with Teri-Lee, she said: "I took a lot of training in Yukon University on heritage and culture, how to manage programs and services for the community, took a lot of human resource training and historical training on governance, and really built my knowledge to feel confident enough to start my business."

Thus, one of the codes we pulled from this statement for our analysis was "Built my knowledge to feel confident enough to start my business." We knew that, later on, we might hear from other participants about their own experiences in gaining confidence or building up their own bases of knowledge; and thus, we may be able to bring this code together with another in a later phase of analysis. The open coding process resulted in more than 100 open codes, which we then began to work with for the next phase of analysis: secondary coding.

Secondary Coding

Secondary (or axial) coding involves bringing together open codes under broader categories to begin to make meaning across the different data sources—in this case, across the different interviews with young Indigenous entrepreneurs.

Some open codes we pulled out from interviews include:

- Sage—"Being tied to a role for the sake of a pension that's decades away, is not good for the spirit"
- Elijah—"Being successful is like having free time"
- Justin—"The time and freedom, the self-determination, the expression of creativity"

In our axial coding phase, we pulled all three of these open codes (along with others) together under a secondary code that we ultimately called "Self-Determination and Time Freedom."

We concluded our secondary coding with 19 secondary codes. It is important to note that not all open codes are included within the 19 secondary codes. An important aspect of each round of coding is narrowing down the focus of our analysis to the ideas and themes that seem most prevalent, important or unique to young Indigenous entrepreneurs. To define this, we reviewed the transcripts continually and also looked back to our literature review. Doing so helps us to understand where the stories shared in our interviews with young Indigenous entrepreneurs either reinforce or deviate from what we already know about young Indigenous entrepreneurship.

Thematic Coding

The final stage in our coding process is called thematic coding. In this stage, we brought together sets of secondary codes into even broader categories—called thematic codes. These thematic codes help us to explain our findings in the project overall, from all qualitative analysis. We ended our thematic coding processes with four thematic codes: Incentives and Motivations, Decolonizing Business, Healing, and What is Needed. These four thematic codes guide our qualitative research findings.

PARTICIPANT VIGNETTES

Michael Augustine-Hachey
Running Bear Cosmetics

Michael Augustine-Hachey is the Founder and Owner of Running Bear Cosmetics. Michael is a Two-Spirit, Mi'kmaq youth who grew up in New Brunswick; he is part of the Elsipogtog First Nation.

Growing up, Michael always wanted to be more connected to his Indigenous community, culture, and heritage, and was driven to develop this deeper connection as he got older. Since he was little, he was not interested in the 9-to-5 office job life—and always knew he wanted to own his own company, create his own hours, and be his own boss. The name of his company comes from Michael's spirit name, Running Bear. He uses his name as a beginning point to bring his culture into the company—and in doing so, Michael seeks to combine his deeper connection to his culture with his passion for cosmetics.

Being Two-Spirit himself, Michael seeks to appeal to those of the LGBTQ2S+ community and hopes to cultivate a brand community where they can feel accepted, acknowledged and seen. Though he wants his brand to be open to everyone, he specifically hopes to inspire and bring positive representation to his Indigenous and LGBTQ2S+ communities. Michael is focused on creating a cosmetics company that is not only a representation of himself, but also appeals to other Two-Spirit individuals who are learning who they are in the same way he did. He wants Running Bear Cosmetics to be a place where those who are looking for community can come to feel comfortable and be who they want to be.

Along with this, Michael wants his platform to be an educational space where non-Indigenous people can learn more about the history of Indigenous Peoples. He aspires to have a global brand that can eventually support Indigenous Peoples around the world to share their own stories. It is important to Michael that his company be a place for everyone and a space where all are accepted.

Larissa Crawford
Future Ancestors Services Inc.

Larissa Crawford is the Founder and Owner of Future Ancestors Services Inc., which is “an Indigenous and Black-owned, youth-led professional services social enterprise that advances climate justice and systemic barrier removal with lenses of anti-racism and ancestral accountability” (FutureAncestors.ca). Larissa is a young entrepreneur and educator who carries Métis ancestry from Penetanguishene, Ontario, and Afro-Caribbean ancestry from Jamaica.

Larissa attended York University in Ontario, where she studied International Development and Communication Studies, which has helped her as she carves her career path today. But before launching her business, she also worked for several years as a Policy Advisor, seeking to drive positive change through government policy. She found that often in her prior positions as an employee, her experience and expertise were downplayed or outright disregarded because of who she is. Through her years of work and education before launching Future Ancestors Services Inc., Larissa recognized that anti-racism education, research, climate justice and social justice work were often being conducted in ways that replicated systems and legacies of colonialism and capitalism. She knew that she wanted to create an organization where her lived experiences were seen as valuable and positioned as qualifications to do this kind of work effectively.

Larissa's drive to start her business came from her understanding of the gaps within existing offerings of anti-racist education and Indigenous cultural empathy training. She did not want to try to recreate something that already existed, or to create another NGO or non-profit organization that would have to compete for ever-decreasing support from governments; thus, she and her collaborators decided to launch Future Ancestors Services Inc. as a business.

Larissa also realized that with a business, she could do things in a different way—a way that is more respectful of employees' and partners' energies and spirits. Larissa and her team of collaborators have sought to establish a culture at Future Ancestors Services Inc. that puts the wellness of team members as people and as community members first.

Stephanie Dawson
Beyond the Bridge Therapy Centre

Stephanie Dawson is a co-founder and co-owner of Beyond the Bridge Therapy Centre, where she and her business partner, Katie, strive to cultivate a safe and inclusive environment for clients to move through their therapeutic journeys. Stephanie is Mi'kmaq and from Summerside, PEI, where she lives with her two sons, her daughter, and her husband.

Stephanie's drive to start the business came from her deep-rooted desire to help others and be of service. Her connection to her Indigenous communities comes through her father, who always taught her the importance of education and connecting with her culture. She is surrounded and supported by many family members and friends who have not only pushed her to reach her goals—they have also helped her to achieve the successes that she's experiencing today.

Stephanie primarily provides talk therapy and especially likes to work with youth. She provides her clients with a safe space where they feel they are acknowledged and heard.

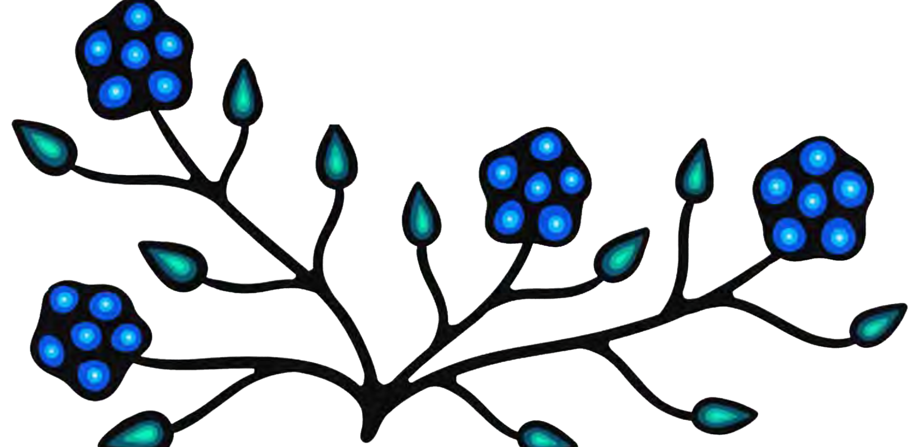
Stephanie's identification of the ableism, sexism, and racism that can occur in small towns has pushed her to create a space that is open and welcoming to everybody and anybody. Raising a child with physical disabilities herself, she and her business partner have worked to ensure that their centre is as accessible as possible for all. Her own office has extra-large doors to accommodate those using mobility aids such as wheelchairs, and it does not have stairs. It is important for her that she provides a welcoming space where everybody feels like they can be as independent as they want to be. Stephanie is continually working to learn more about her community and culture and is very interested in learning how to bring more cultural aspects into her work as a therapist.

Jordan Dooley
Vearthy

Jordan Dooley is the Founder and Owner of Vearthy., a product-based company that creates premium bedding created using bamboo, a highly sustainable material. Jordan grew up in Orillia, ON and is Anishinabeg from Whitefish River First Nation. As an entrepreneur, Jordan is committed to creating sustainable products that don't harm the environment.

Jordan has always enjoyed spending time in nature and practically built his career outdoors. Before starting Vearthy, he attended Adventure Tourism School to learn how to guide and work in the outdoor recreation and tourism management industry. He spent many years working as a kayak guide, hiking guide, boat tour guide, and doing all other kinds of outdoor activities before beginning to work with BC Parks as a Park Ranger. Each aspect of his life has stemmed from his background, his love for the outdoors, and his drive to create a more sustainable environment. Similarly, Jordan's business in sustainably produced textiles has been carefully developed to make use of hyper-renewable resources, to minimize their impact on the land.

Jordan hopes that his business can help contribute to the growing movements around conscious consumerism, by highlighting the benefits of using hyper-renewable resources like bamboo in environmentally sustainable ways. He seeks to create a community around the brand by partnering with experts to put out blog articles about environmental issues and collaborating with similar brands to connect like-minded audiences. The driving purpose behind Vearthy is to provide customers with products that are comfortable, essential and environmentally friendly. Jordan hopes to continue growing Vearthy by getting products into more stores and introducing new products for his customers.



Jordan Dooley
Vearthy
British Columbia

Justin Holness
TR1BE Music

Justin Holness is the Founder and Owner of TR1BE Music, a music-streaming platform focused on enabling fans to directly support musicians. On TR1BE, a portion of the proceeds from each subscriber goes directly to the artist at a fixed rate, which increases the artist's overall revenue from sharing their music. Overall, TR1BE Music's streaming platform is a global network committed to investing in artists to help them grow their careers and make a living doing what they love.

Justin was born and raised in Winnipeg and currently resides in Ocean Man First Nation, Treaty 4 Territory in Saskatchewan.

Before starting TR1BE Music, Justin worked at the Wabano Centre for Aboriginal Health, working with young Indigenous people as a Youth Diversion Coordinator. As part of this, Justin began to support youth in producing their own music; he was able to get the equipment needed to develop a program for youth, where they could express their love for music as well as record their own. This program helped build trust among the youth, allowing them to use the music as medicine and helping them redirect their lives the same way that he credits music in redirecting his own life. Justin's relationship with the youth was paramount in realizing what music can achieve for our people.

Everything Justin has done in his career has been to support Indigenous creatives in pursuing their passions. In creating TR1BE, Justin is striving to cultivate a space—particularly for Black and Indigenous musicians—to express their love for music and be compensated fairly for their work. Ultimately, the TR1BE Music platform evolved from the studio programs that Justin once developed; both endeavours were driven by his commitment to sharing the healing properties of music. Justin's connection to his Afro-Indigenous communities and his drive to create a space where inspiring Black and Indigenous artists can be heard and supported, is what makes TR1BE Music such a positive space to be in.

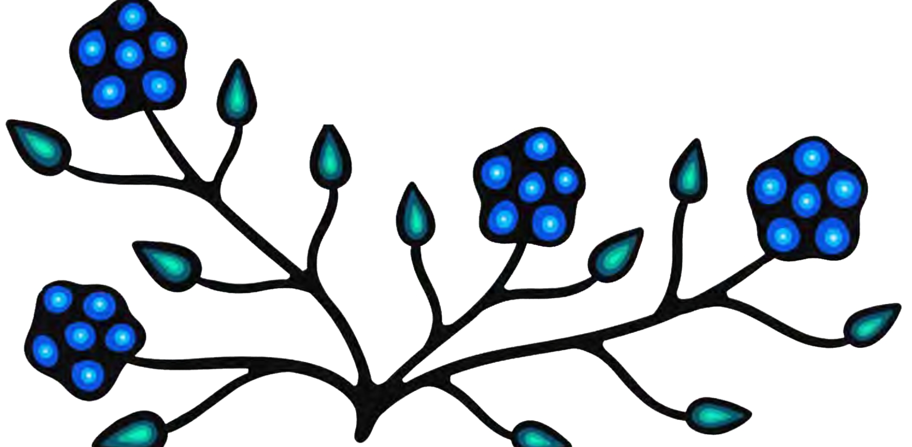
Teri-Lee Isaac
Tutchone Tours

Teri-Lee Isaac is the Founder and Owner of Tutchone Tours, a tourism company that offers guided boat tours to Fort Selkirk in Yukon. Teri-Lee was born in Whitehorse but mostly raised in Pelly Crossing, Yukon Territory. She was raised mostly by her grandmother, from whom she learned traditional activities such as hunting, fishing, trapping and living off the land. Teri-Lee is a graduate of the Yukon University's heritage and culture program. She learned how to manage community programs, services, and resources and she gained training in governance. Though Teri-Lee always knew she wanted to start her own business, it was this program that helped her develop and gain the confidence to launch her business. She has also been a part of entrepreneurship training and accelerator programs.

Before Teri-Lee founded Tutchone Tours, there were no tours that provided access to Fort Selkirk. This was one of the motivating factors for Teri-Lee to launch her business. She not only wanted to provide local, domestic and international travellers with an easier way of accessing Fort Selkirk—she also wanted to share stories and knowledge of her community in her tours.

Tutchone Tours is the only Indigenous touring business in the Pelly Crossing region of Yukon Territory. For Teri-Lee, tourism is about more than seeing the land—it's about healing from the land by connecting to it through history and stories. One of the most important things for Teri-Lee when building her business was to ensure that she could tell people who First Nations Peoples are, as well as show them our communities and histories.

Being one of the few operations in her region, Teri-Lee works to promote Tutchone Tours through social media, a newsletter, and her connection to other tourism operators. Teri-Lee has recently expanded Tutchone Tours by adding in more overnight tours to allow more customers to participate and experience her tours; and along with this, she also added in fish camp tours. Teri-Lee hopes to continue to expand Tutchone Tours to allow more people to come to know the land of Fort Selkirk.



Teri-Lee Isaac
Founder and Owner
Tutchone Tours
Yukon

Ashley Lacosse
Cooking with LaCosse
Alberta

Ashley LaCosse
Cooking with LaCosse

Ashley LaCosse is owner of Cooking with LaCosse, which is a health, food and wellness brand. Ashley has designed and published a set of cookbooks of healthy and tasty recipes, for people who struggle with healthy eating. She is a member of Eabametoong First Nation in Ontario, but she currently resides in Edmonton, AB.

The idea of developing a cookbook first came from Ashley's passion for fitness and her drive to find healthier versions of the foods she loves. She identified that people often struggle to find tasty food that is still good for the body, leading her to create her first cookbook and social media accounts built up around her burgeoning brand. This has allowed for people around the country and even around the world to taste her delicious and healthy recipes. Another factor driving her cookbook line was the inspiration and support she drew from a Facebook group she created called Women Inspiring Women. She created this group to connect with other women and create mutual networks of support and knowledge-sharing.

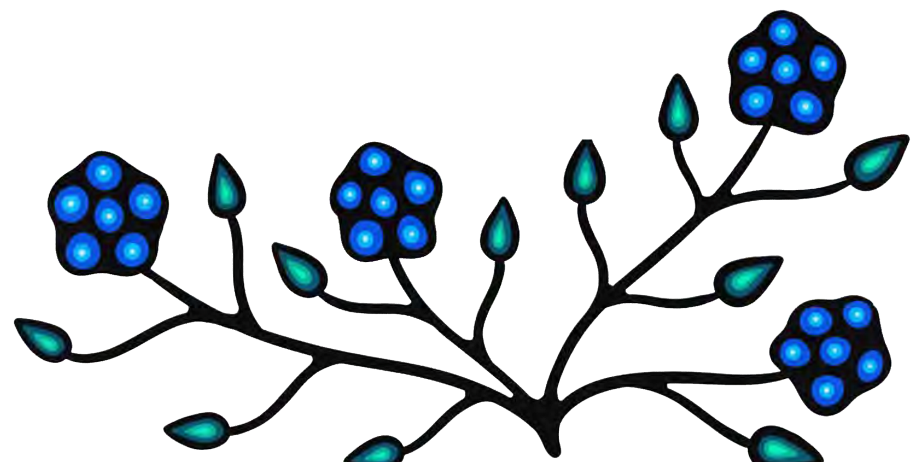
Ashely draws inspiration from many sources for her recipes and social media content. She follows many other wonderful creators on social media and pays close attention to channels like the Food Network, including notable chefs like Rachel Ray. Ashley draws inspiration from others and adds a creative twist to them, ensuring the recipes reflect her values. She plans to expand her recipes, adding in more comfort foods and different cuisines—including a cookbook of recipes from her family that are focused on ingredients indigenous to Turtle Island. Ashley hopes to expand her cookbooks so everyone will be able to find recipes that fit their lifestyles. Ashley works another job while she is developing the Cooking for LaCosse brand. Though there are always challenges to managing multiple professional positions, she is always striving to show her son that following your dreams is worth the extra effort.

Sage Lacerte
Sage Initiative

Sage Lacerte is the Founder and Owner of Sage Initiative, a collective that aims to empower Indigenous womxn with the skills and experiences needed to become successful impact investors. Sage is Carrier from the Lake Babine Nation and is a member of the Bear Clan.

When Sage started her own journey as an impact investor, she realized she was among an infinitesimally small cohort of Indigenous women investors; thus, she founded the company with the goal of creating more peers in the industry. She graduated from the University of Victoria with a Bachelor's degree in gender studies and she used her knowledge from this degree to found Sage Initiative in 2019. Sage intends for her company to disrupt the current paradigm that exists in the investment sector, which tends to be dominated by white men and western, capitalist value systems that place profit above people and the planet. Sage seeks to honour Indigenous ways of knowing and Indigenous concepts of commerce; and provides educational services, mentorship, and practical exposure to impact investing for all clients who engage with the Sage Initiative.

As an Indigenous woman entrepreneur herself, Sage understands the barriers that Indigenous women entrepreneurs often face when seeking financing to support their businesses. Lack of access to capital is a major concern for many Indigenous women entrepreneurs who find it difficult to gain financing and support through traditional financial institutions. Because of this, Sage Initiative seeks to match emerging Indigenous women investors with experienced mentors who can support them as they gain experience in impact investing. By creating more opportunities for Indigenous women to gain this experience, Sage Initiative can hopefully contribute to a shift towards meaningful inclusion within the entire investing sector. Sage believes in supporting businesses that are focused on people and the planet before profit.



Amy Jackson
NativeLoveNotes

Amy Jackson is the Founder and Owner of NativeLoveNotes, a home goods and design company focused on sharing Indigenous humour, uplifting messages, and colourful designs. Amy is from Opaskwayak Cree Nation, where she grew up and lived for many years before moving to The Pas as an adult. She now resides in Winnipeg, where she operates her business and plans to continue her Master's degree in History and Indigenous Studies. Amy always wanted to apply her creativity to produce something meaningful—not only for herself, but for other Indigenous people as well. Amy named her company NativeLoveNotes as a kind of love note to Native community members and especially to Rez Kids, who are always held at the centre of the work that her company does.

At first, Amy launched her business by creating and selling beadwork online. After a popular response, she began to develop the business to include other small accessible goods such as stickers, prints, phone accessories, apparel and more, all with Indigenous-focused designs on them. Amy and her growing team have quickly expanded the product offerings available—NativeLoveNotes now offers 200 different designs and 500 different products between the website and their newly launched physical store in Winnipeg.

As an Indigenous woman herself, Amy commits her business to prioritize the employment of Indigenous people—everyone who joins the team either is Indigenous or can demonstrate their commitment and ability to co-create a supportive working environment for everyone. Amy has always strived to impact her community in a positive way. She strategically creates her designs to bring joy, inspiration and affirmation to Indigenous people. As a part of this commitment, she is working to develop mutual aid opportunities such as a scholarship fund and a mental health fund for Indigenous people. It is paramount to Amy to share joy with Indigenous people through her brand. She strives to build a business that always keeps community at its core, and that can give back to the community in meaningful ways.

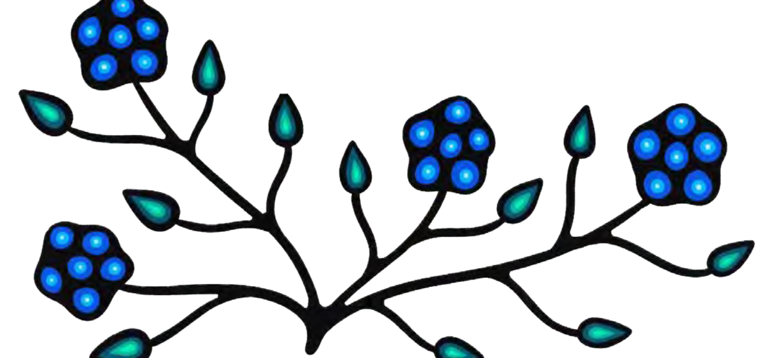
Elijah Mack
Kekuli Cafe

Elijah Mack is the owner of two Kekuli Cafe franchises—one in Merritt, BC, and another in Kamloops, BC. Kekuli Cafe is the first Indigenous cuisine franchise in Canada, and there are currently four cafe locations. Kekuli Cafe was originally founded by Sharon Bond and her husband Darren Hogg in 2009, and Elijah opened the first franchised location in Merritt in 2018. Elijah is from the Nuxalk Nation of Bella Coola, BC.

Elijah started working at Kekuli Cafe at the age of 18 and worked there for two years before being promoted to General Manager. Due to his hard work and dedication to the business, Sharon and Darren thought Elijah would be the perfect fit to be the first franchisee. Kekuli Cafe has always been a place of gathering, where its main purpose is to promote local Indigenous culture, food, language and songs—and that is exactly what Elijah strives to do both with his work at Kekuli Cafe, and in his personal life as a committed community volunteer.

Elijah believes the first part of being successful is being open and coachable. His most important mentors through his entrepreneurial journey have been the original owners of Kekuli Cafe, Sharon and Darren. Being entrepreneurs themselves, Sharon and Darren understand what it takes to run a business. They have taught Elijah how to work through tough situations with the cafe, and shared what they know about the industry. Elijah has said that having this support system and mentorship has helped him reach the levels of success he enjoys today.

Elijah is also a mentor himself and strives to show up for people and inspire others to reach for their dreams and defy others' expectations. As a volunteer coach, mentor and community leader, Elijah has supported his friends and other Indigenous youth through challenging moments. He states, "If I can further help youth and be that person that changes someone's life, then I think that I have succeeded." Elijah has been recognized numerous times for his commitment to supporting Indigenous youth and for his excellence as a youth entrepreneur.



Ossie Michelin
Freelancer

Ossie Michelin is an acclaimed journalist, photographer, filmmaker and storyteller. He is from Northwest River, Labrador, and currently splits his time between Montreal, QC and Northwest River, NL. Ossie is Labrador Inuk.

In 2008, Ossie graduated from Concordia University with a Bachelor of Journalism .He also has a certificate in Environmental Conservation from the University of Guelph. Ossie has had a broad-ranging career, working in multiple media and across a variety of topics. For example, he recently directed a short film showcasing Inuit art and music. he has also reported on—and even taken part in—movements for environmental justice and sovereignty, such as the movement against the hydro development project at Muskrat Falls. While he has covered a wide variety of subjects through different media, what unites his practice is his unwavering commitment to providing accurate and insightful coverage of Northern Indigenous Peoples, communities and issues.

Ossie realized early on in his career that people from his communities are extremely underrepresented in Canadian and international media; therefore, he wants his work to enable more people to learn about Labrador and its Peoples from an Inuk worldview. He also wants his work to inspire other Indigenous (particularly Inuk) writers and creatives to pursue fulfilling careers in these industries. Through his work, Ossie strives to help Inuk and Northern Indigenous people feel better represented in Canadian and international media. Currently, he is intending to work more at the intersections of traditional Indigenous knowledge and science journalism. He plans to further his experience in this area with fellowships.

Freelancing has provided Ossie the freedom to curate the kinds of stories he wants to tell, at a pace that is sustainable for him as an in-demand professional. He has been able to cultivate a fulfilling and unique career path by sharing stories of his communities and other Indigenous Peoples in accessible yet accurate ways. Ossie's clear connection to land, to his family and to his culture have all contributed to his success as a storyteller.

Stacie Smith
Flowers North

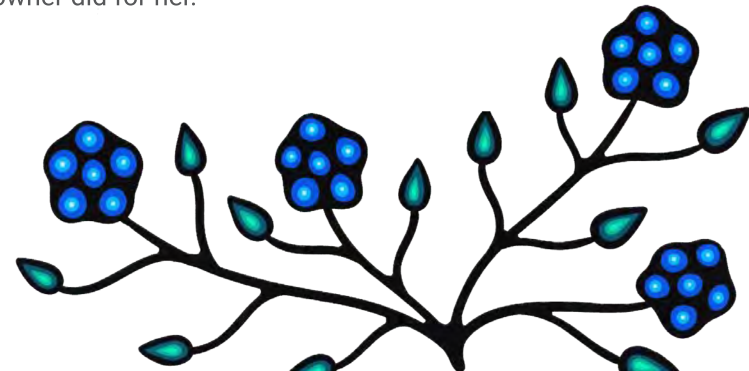
Stacie Smith is the owner of Flowers North, a flower shop in Yellowknife, NWT, that offers floral designs, plants and giftware. Stacie was born and raised in Yellowknife and is part of the Tłı̨chǫ people, as well as the NunatuKavut people of Labrador.

The shop itself has been operating since 1974, but Stacie is the fourth owner of Flowers North and has been running it since 2015. Prior to ownership, Stacie worked in the shop; when the previous owner was ready to retire, he offered her the chance to purchase the business and actually helped her through that process. After becoming owner, Stacie focused on maintaining the foundation of the business while also adding elements from her culture to make it more reflective of herself and her communities. For example, Stacie is focused on creating a hyperlocal store, and makes use of foraging practices as part of business operations.

Along with running Flowers North, Stacie is also the Deputy Mayor of Yellowknife. She has been recognized as a "Trailblazer Woman in Business" by the Yellowknife Chamber of Commerce.

Since becoming owner of Flowers North, Stacie has sought to support youth through her business, especially by offering employment opportunities to local students and offering a lot of training to support them. She recognizes the struggles that students can have in finding good employment opportunities—especially those who are Indigenous—which is why she takes pride in giving school students their first leg-up with employment at Flowers North. Stacie hires many students to work after school hours and has said that it is nice to be able to guide youth them while providing them with responsibility and accountability and teaching them how to take initiative. Stacie prioritizes teaching her staff about how to design and elaborate on their own style, as everybody has different ways of designing. She encourages her staff to explore their own type of design by giving them the tools and know-how to best represent themselves. It's important to Stacie to give the designers a chance to be creative and express their design sense while still providing for each client.

Though they have faced challenges, particularly throughout the COVID-19 pandemic, Stacie hopes to maintain Flowers North as the stable, local institution that it is, so that one day she can pass it down in the same way the previous owner did for her.



Tayler Schenkeveld
Sage and Cedar Art Therapy and Tayler Schenkeveld Art
Alberta

Tayler Schenkeveld

Sage and Cedar Art Therapy and Tayler Schenkeveld Art

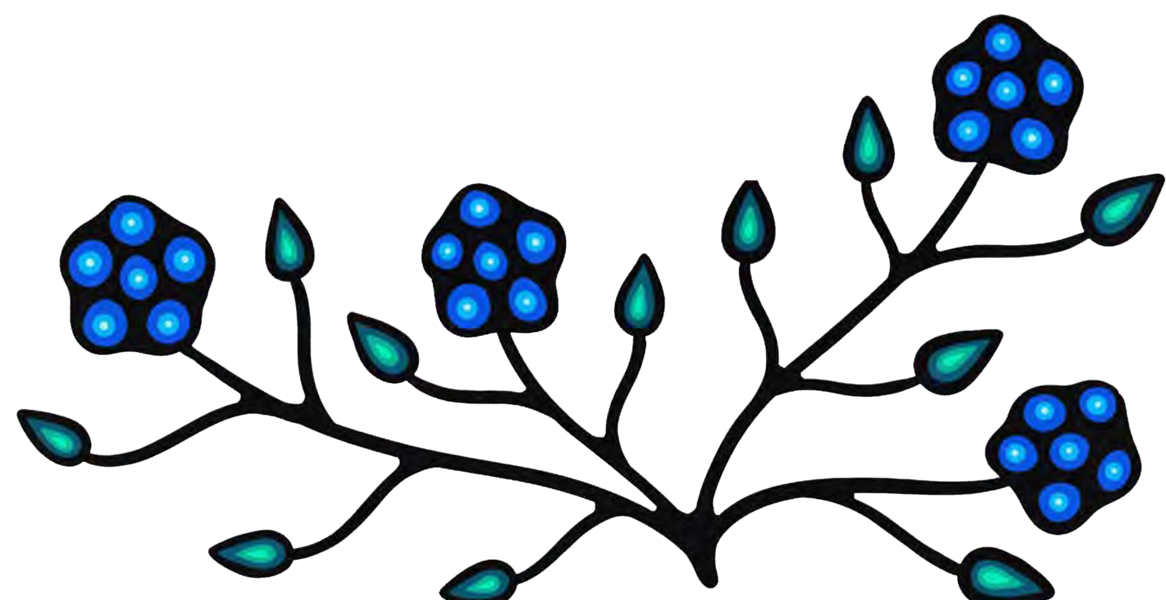
Tayler Schenkeveld is a Métis artist and art therapist. She was born and raised on Treaty 1 Territory in Winnipeg but has since moved to Calgary, AB on Treaty 7 Territory, where she now resides.

Tayler creates fine art under the name Tayler Schenkeveld Art. As a practicing Art Therapist, she works for her own centre, Sage and Cedar Art Therapy. As a fine-arts artist, Tayler creates original pieces and prints for display and sale; and in her work, she explores themes of belonging and cultural connection. Through her work at Sage and Cedar Art Therapy, Tayler supports clients in utilizing the creative process of art making as a vehicle to improving one's physical, emotional, spiritual and mental health.

Art has always been a big part of Tayler's life, which is why she decided to pursue a diploma at the Kutenai Art Therapy Institute in Nelson, BC, where she gained her knowledge and skills to open Sage and Cedar Art Therapy. While going to school, Tayler was able to reconnect with her culture as a Métis woman and learn more about who she is as an Indigenous person. These experiences fueled a passion in Tayler to help others experience the same kind of re-engagement and healing that art therapy brought her.Along with this, going to school allowed her to produce her own artwork to explore a new style of art that she now sells through her business, Tayler Schenkeveld Art.

Tayler is currently back in school taking a Master's in Psychology degree, where her goal is to expand her professional skills and become a Registered Psychologist. Before launching her own private practice, Tayler worked as an Indigenous cultural support specialist. In this role, she was able to bring art therapy to the practice, doing different group and individual work with Indigenous people, and helping them reconnect with their culture. With the experience she gained at the agency, Tayler was able to launch her own practice, Sage and Cedar Art Therapy. Though the COVID-19 pandemic hit right at the launch of her business, Tayler was able to run her business in a different capacity. She offered people a chance to engage in art therapy by offering online sessions and providing them with the support they needed.

It is important to Tayler to incorporate cultural aspects into her art therapy business, such as ceremony and smudging and healing circles. Tayler's hope for this business is to speak to culture and put it at the forefront, helping people to re-engage with their culture.



QUALITATIVE FINDINGS

We have broken our findings from the qualitative aspects of this project down into four main themes. Within each of these themes, there are a number of subthemes or topics that emerged from our conversations with participants. Some of these topics are nearly-universally shared among the participants, while others may be central to the experiences of a few entrepreneurs, but are still worth sharing because they demonstrate something emblematic about the young Indigenous entrepreneur's journey.

Main Theme	Subthemes	Subtheme Explanation
Incentives and Motives: What drives young Indigenous entrepreneurs to do this work? Why do they choose to develop and build their businesses?	Working from Purpose	Participants often seek to align their business with the needs of their community and/or their personal values and circumstances.
	Self-Determination and Time Freedom	Participants often choose to work for themselves because doing so enables them to choose where to put their energy, effort and time in relation to their work.
	Giving Back to Community	Young Indigenous entrepreneurs often seek to use their business as a way to give back to their communities.
	Sharing Our Stories	Some participants want to launch their businesses as a way to share stories of their communities with the world.
Empowerment and Support: How are young Indigenous entrepreneurs using their businesses as places of personal and professional healing? How are they trying to cultivate organizations that are conducive to wellness for themselves, their employees and customers?	Healing from Past Working Environments	Some participants felt devalued or underestimated in prior employee roles; but through their entrepreneurial journey, they have come to feel empowered and able to demonstrate their full capabilities.
	Connecting with Peers	Through their entrepreneurial careers, many participants develop meaningful connections with other Indigenous (and non-Indigenous) entrepreneurs working in their industries or fields, which has helped them to grow their own skills.
	Connecting with Supporters	Many participants have felt embraced by customers and online supporters, who have helped them to promote their brands and supported their businesses through their early growth.
	Managing Workload	Many participants have felt the lasting and harmful effects of professional burnout as a result of their entrepreneurial careers. However, they are working towards building reliable routines and boundaries that serve them personally and professionally, as they manage multiple personal and professional roles.

Main Theme	Subthemes	Subtheme Explanation
Decolonizing Business: How are young Indigenous entrepreneurs approaching business differently? How are they trying to shift perspectives on what a business can be?	Conceptions of Responsible Business Growth	Some participants focus on measures of business growth that are outside the mainstream conceptions of growth. For example, rather than focusing solely on profit or revenue, some focus on growing internal capabilities or product offerings. Most focus on building manageable rather than meteoric growth.
	Connection to Land and Place	Most participants focus on building businesses that are embedded within their local community in some place. Expressing a connection to community and homeland is important to young Indigenous entrepreneurs.
	Collective Business Practices	We find that young Indigenous entrepreneurs seek to build organizations that are focused on team-based work among and with employees and suppliers. They are also interested in collective decision-making. In this way, we find a concerted effort to return to a collective approach to doing business, which in some ways more closely aligns with some traditional Indigenous governance approaches.
What's Needed: What kinds of supports do young Indigenous entrepreneurs need from the entrepreneurial ecosystem? How can organizations and other business leaders better support their work?	Patient and Responsive Financing	Young Indigenous entrepreneurs identify challenges in navigating traditional applications and funding processes—especially considering the additional reporting and "due diligence" requirements that tend to exist for young Indigenous entrepreneurs. Further, they identify a need for funders to share values with the entrepreneurs.
	Business Learning and Acumen	Many participants express an interest in gaining access to business learning. Some had considered (or completed) formal business education programs, and some considered this as a potential asset for their entrepreneurial journey. However, the cost (in terms of time and money) of university courses was often considered prohibitive.

Incentives and Motives

The first major theme we identified from our qualitative interviews with young Indigenous entrepreneurs is focused on the incentives and motivations that drive them to work for themselves. While each entrepreneur has unique personal incentives and motivations for their work, we find strong connections between many of the stories shared by participants. Specifically, we identified the following four subthemes to describe the types of incentives and motivations that seem to drive young Indigenous entrepreneurs in Canada to work for themselves: Working from Purpose, Self-Determination, Giving Back to Community, and Sharing Our Stories.

Working from Purpose

The first subtheme to emerge from our analysis is that young Indigenous entrepreneurs seem to choose entrepreneurship as a way of working towards a purpose beyond themselves. These entrepreneurs generally seek to use their businesses in service of a larger purpose, particularly something that aligns with their personal values and circumstances. Some participants identify specific people or communities that they hope to support through their business, and others speak more generally about wanting to be of service broadly. This subtheme fits well with what we know from the literature focused on Indigenous entrepreneurs broadly, as well as about young entrepreneurs.

In general, participants demonstrate a desire for their businesses to act in service of others, such as their communities, families, and Indigenous Peoples overall. Stephanie summarizes the sentiments shared by many young Indigenous entrepreneurs as such: *“I feel like my purpose is serving others and helping”* (Stephanie).

However, the young Indigenous entrepreneurs also recognize a need for fit between their interests and skills, and the needs of the communities that they seek to support. For example, Tayler describes something calling her to help others through her work, and when she discovered that she could work as an art therapist, she perceived it to be an impactful way to fulfil that purpose: *“This light bulb went off for me like, ‘Wait, art therapy?’ Like I just feel like I've always been called to be like a helper. And to know that there was a way that I could help through art was just something that I really clung to”* (Tayler).

Similarly, Larissa describes the extensive search she undertook to identify work that would support her interests and passions, while also allowing her to be of service to her communities: *“I spent about six years really thinking about what I would be starting if I was to start anything. And I really waited until I had a good understanding of the sector within which I wanted to work and the line of work that I wanted to do and building my capacity, my skill, going to different trainings, taking on different contracts, connecting to mentors and having them support me and figuring out what does research contract work look like. What does training contract work look like? I spent and invested a lot of time and understanding this. And through that investment, I was able to begin to identify gaps in the sector, gaps in anti-racist education, gaps in Indigenous cultural empathy, training and that line of work. I started seeing these opportunities to fill”* (Larissa).

Amy identifies joy as one of the goals of her business; she articulates that she herself has experienced challenges and downturns, and wants her business to be the reason that Indigenous youth find joy: *"I feel like I'm making a difference in people's lives by creating things that bring them joy. Things that make people laugh, that can like, sometimes my posts interrupt someone's shitty day, and they're like, hey, like, that actually made me smile. And for the first time today, you know, like, that makes me so happy to hear that, because that is completely what my intentions were right from the beginning"* (Amy).

Michael also identifies specific communities that he hopes to reach through the conduct of his business. As a Two-Spirit entrepreneur, one of the purposes of Michael’s brand is to create a place where other members of the LGBTQ2S+ communities can find connection and acceptance. He identifies that he wants his business to be *“a safe place, a place that if [community members are] lost, and they're confused, they can come to my company, and they can find themselves, their image, they can, you know, become who they want to be”* (Michael).

Ashley also identifies working for others as her main purpose for working for herself. She was the most specific of our participants in identifying her son as her motivation. Ashley seeks to create a business that she can be proud of, to be a role model to her son and show him that hard work and passion can lead to positive outcomes: *“I want [my son] to know that anything's possible. Follow your dreams. You know, it was hard in the beginning to start out because as a single mom, I only had so much in the bank and I wasn't working, but I just kept pushing and pushing. And I want him to know that you can do anything that you put your mind to, because I need him to look up to me, right, I need to show him that, you work hard, you follow your dreams. Even if it seems silly to other people”* (Ashley).

Overall, participants are motivated and driven to make their businesses successful not only for themselves or for their own financial gain, but to create organizations with social purpose at their cores: *“I saw the problem, I tackled it head-on, and it took me a long time and was an extremely frustrating process, but I think the lesson learned is that in your pursuit of happiness, or in your pursuit of launching your business, your purpose must be more important than the struggle. The purpose was more important than the frustrations and the learning curves of developing a website and fortunately enough, we have a version of it today”* (Justin).

Self-Determination and Time Freedom

The second subtheme to emerge as part of the Incentives and Motives for young Indigenous entrepreneurs to work for

themselves is that of Self-Determination and Time Freedom. While participants often identified their primary incentive or motivation for working for themselves to be serving a community beyond themselves, many of them also recognized Self-Determination and Time Freedom as key incentives.

While many of the participants acknowledged that, at times, they were working longer hours than they would have if they had a more traditional job, they chose to work for themselves in part because it enabled them to choose where to put their energy, effort and time in relation to their work; we see this as an issue of self-determination.

Justin describes his commitment to working for himself in order to be self-determining: *"I'm very passionate about self-determination and I think business and entrepreneurship is one way we can achieve that"* (Justin).

Before going into business for himself as a freelance writer and journalist, Ossie worked as an employee; and while he enjoyed that experience, he realized that by working for himself, he would be able to determine for himself what kinds of work he wanted to take on and at what pace: *"I wanted to try new things. And I wanted to have some more flexibility and freedom, in terms of the pace of the work I wanted to do"* (Ossie).

Similarly, Larissa, also had experience working for others before going into business for herself and she approached launching her business with caution, realizing she had to carefully design the organization to be able to maintain the autonomy she would need to execute her and her team's visions: *"I knew I didn't want to start something and go into debt. I didn't want to start something and owe someone something else. I didn't want to relinquish power. And what I later was able to collectively define with my founding team was that we didn't see the organization we wanted to create elsewhere, or very commonly. A big reason why I decided to incorporate versus an NGO or charity approach is because my whole degree I studied the harm that we see caused not only through NGOs and their reliance on external funding, but also the ways that harm is caused to them through that dependency. And so I knew I wanted to be self-sustaining"* (Larissa).

Some participants discussed wanting to work for themselves as a means of removing themselves from toxic or dangerous working environments that do not allow for holistic health and spiritual well-being. For example, Justin realized that entrepreneurship aligns with his personal intention to remove himself from the extractive work cultures that can permeate mainstream organizations: *"All these colonial structures are not in favour of Indigenous people, that is just a fact, and as I mature and learn about the system, I want to be less involved with the system and I don't want to be employed by the system. I'd rather create my own revenue. That's kind of where that entrepreneurial spirit lives within me—how can I create my own revenue so that I'm making a living, manifesting my dream, and wanting to make an equal positive impact in the community without being dependent on a system that doesn't care?"* (Justin).

Beyond self-determination, young Indigenous entrepreneurs also identified time-freedom as a key incentive for turning to entrepreneurship rather than an employee position. For example, Stephanie realized that working for herself would allow her more flexibility in designing her work schedule around her family responsibilities: *"I knew I wanted to start my business where I had the freedom to work around my kids"* (Stephanie).

Jordan also recognized that starting a business would allow him to earn the income he needs, while also maintaining the kind of work-life balance that he needs to be well: *"If I have to work a 9-to-5 until I'm 65, then like, I'm not gonna have any time to do anything, right? So to me, it's important to find some sort of balance between the amount of work I do versus the amount that I play…and I think the only way to do that is to invest in yourself and take a risk and try to get something going"* (Jordan).

Elijah also recognizes that time freedom, or the ability to work on one's own terms, is a powerful motivator for his entrepreneurship, and he defines this as a marker of success: *"I think right now, being successful is like having free time. I think that is like—if I can have free time, then I feel like I'm doing a great job"* (Elijah).

Several participants identified early on in life that they wanted to be able to make their own hours and fit their working life alongside their other commitments and passions. For example, from a young age, Michael realized he wanted to work for himself and be able to make his own working hours: *"When I was younger, I've always wanted to own a company, it's, I don't even know what kind of sparked it, I think it was because I never seen myself like working, you know, the 9-to-5 kind of job deal. I've always seen myself in my own control, like with my own hours, and being my own boss"* (Michael).

While Elijah started out as an employee in the business that he is now a franchise owner of, he realized at a young age that being an employee did not offer all the opportunities that he wanted for self-determination and time freedom: *"I was getting tired of like, managing this restaurant for like 12 bucks an hour. And I was like 18, maybe 19, just kind of like, okay, I'm done. I feel like I'd hit my capacity, and I want to go out and develop myself more"* (Elijah).

While participants recognized that working as an entrepreneur often means working beyond 9-to-5 weekly hours, they desired the ability to create and be in control of their own schedules.

Giving Back to Community

Our participants identified the desire to give back to Indigenous communities as a motivating factor to engage in entrepreneurship. For example, Justin identifies his passion for supporting Indigenous communities as a driving force for his entrepreneurship: *"I'm so passionate about supporting our people, supporting our youth, and wanting to give back to the culture because it gives us so much"* (Justin).

Through her organizations, Sage works to demonstrate how the health of our community members is directly tied to the health of our lands. Thus, Sage discusses her efforts to give back to community through her commitment to supporting the health and well-being of Indigenous lands and territory: *"If you are willing to show long-term sustained impact on your territory, specifically, then you are able to better the lives of your people and your community. So we try to teach that through Indigenous concepts at all of my organizations"* (Sage).

Ashley discusses her commitment to giving back to community at a micro level; she perceives her business as a path to creating positive relationships with others. While she recognizes that her business needs to make money to sustain itself, she avoids letting a profit motive come above her commitment to building connections: *"Of course, I want to make money for me, me and my son. But if somebody wants one recipe on my blog, I'll still give it to them. Because I'm still trying to build relationships with people"* (Ashley).

For Amy, giving back to community has always been the driving force of her efforts: *"I've always been, I mean, my community has always come first. I think for me, everything that I've ever done in my life has been… the major things in my life that I've worked towards, were intentional to bring back to my community one day, and to impact my community in a positive way"* (Amy). In launching her business, Amy realized that her entrepreneurial efforts can directly support her communities; and she has consciously designed her business to give back not only in the products she produces, but also by working with community members on designs and hiring other Indigenous people.

Sharing Our Stories

The final subtheme to emerge under the first theme of Incentives and Motivations is that of Sharing Our Stories. Several participants wanted to go into business to share stories of their communities with the world. Some want to share stories broadly with all potential audiences, while others more specifically identify communities that they hope to reach in their work.

Ossie realized that his communities are largely unknown outside of their region: *"I realized pretty young that nobody knows [our communities]...And I just wanted people to know about where I'm from, because I love where I'm from. I love the people there. We're pretty awesome. And I wanted more people to know about us"* (Ossie). By working for himself as a freelancer, he has been able to highlight stories from his community, and he also has control over the types of stories he shares.

Similarly, Michael wants to grow his business, in part to be able to educate others around the world about his home community, and about Indigenous Peoples in general: *"I want to be able to become worldwide to educate people. And you know, because just the knowledge of Indigenous people is very slim. Like, not a lot of people know who we are"* (Michael). By growing his brand throughout and beyond Canada, Michael hopes to be able to share historical and contemporary knowledge about Indigenous Peoples through his products and marketing efforts.

Elijah also recognizes that one of the driving forces behind the brand he represents is sharing the culture of his local communities with others through food: *"Our purpose at Kekuli Cafe is to promote our culture and our food, and our language and songs. And we do that by opening this space up, and serve bannock as our traditional foods. We serve salmon. We serve venison. We do fried bannock and baked bannock, and then we add a little gourmet twist to it"* (Elijah). By embedding traditional foods and language into the brand itself, Elijah is helping to share the stories of local Indigenous communities with all customers.

Teri-Lee also seeks to share culture through her tourism business and has begun to centre Indigenous stories within her work: *"I would like to speak more on the Native side and about pre-Contact [times] and so right now I'm developing a pamphlet for just my tours so that I could speak on behalf of my ancestors, because there's so much about the Gold Rush that's already out there and everybody wants to hear that too. But I think when it comes to Indigenous tourism, it's really important to share history that no one ever hears"* (Teri-Lee).

Early into her career, Larissa realized that public speaking and sharing stories are a good match between her skills and passions: *"I figured out very quickly that I really enjoyed public speaking as a means of communication. I was finding that it was effective, and it was a good use of my skills. And so I knew very early on that this is the kind of work I enjoy doing"* (Larissa). With her business, she is turning her passion into a career as an educator and public speaker, sharing stories from her own life but also speaking more broadly about justice, disability, Indigeneity, anti-racism, and decolonized climate action.

While Tayler also wants to share culture and promote community stories, she identifies community members who are trying to re-engage in their culture as her main community of interest: *"My hope with both my businesses, actually, is to just speak to the culture, help people who maybe are trying to re-engage within their culture [who] kind of have bits and pieces and learning. And just to bring culture to the forefront, because what I'm noticing is that there's not enough Indigenous counsellors out there. And we need to kind of build that up and just bring those stories out in different ways"* (Tayler).

One of the driving incentives and motivators for many young Indigenous entrepreneurs is the desire to share culture and stories in meaningful ways. While some identify specific groups and communities that they hope to reach through their businesses, others are more generalized and hope to reach broad audiences. Because there has been so much misinformation, disinformation and outright anti-Indigeneity towards our communities in Canada for generations, many young Indigenous entrepreneurs feel some desire or even responsibility to share cultural stories in authentic ways. There is a desire to represent our communities—to ourselves or to others—realistically, and many young Indigenous people see entrepreneurship as one avenue to accomplish this.

Empowerment and Support

The concepts of empowerment and networks of support emerged from our conversations with participants in multiple ways. Firstly, some participants express that working for themselves has enabled a kind of healing—either healing from prior emotionally taxing professional environments, or healing in that their work as an entrepreneur has enabled them to engage with family, community and cultural teachings in a new or deeper way. Some participants aspire for their businesses to offer meaningful healing opportunities to customers or clients.

Healing from Past Working Environments

Elijah shares that throughout his life, he has been underestimated and put down by people who should be working to support him. In his work as an entrepreneur and franchise owner, he finds he has been able to gain confidence and achieve the kinds of success that he strives for: *"I've had too many people in my life tell me 'no,' tell me that I'm not going to be successful; a ton of people taught me that this is as far as I'm going to go. I had someone tell me in high school that, you know, like, 'you're not going anywhere in life'…So then I took all of that negativity, and I was like, basically 'Screw you, and watch me be me and be successful'"* (Elijah).

Larissa has also felt empowered in her role as an organization leader, particularly since in her previous employee roles, she often felt overlooked and devalued: *"I was constantly frustrated that my knowledge and my skill was constantly devalued, because of my age"* (Larissa).

Connecting with Community and Peers

Some participants expressed that working for themselves has enabled them to connect with and learn from peers, which has helped them to gain confidence in their fields and build stronger networks on which to lean personally and professionally.

For example, since working as a freelancer, Ossie has been able to lean on peers for mentorship and has in turn been able to lend support to others: *"I have lots of peers that I really can look to. And there's, you know, different people have different things, strengths and different things that I admire and different things that I can help them with, or they helped me with…overall sort of mentoring each other"* (Ossie). This type of community building and reciprocity enables sharing across industries and supports the health of Indigenous economies overall. By forging connections with others, they are working to bring concepts of community and relationality into their businesses.

Elijah demonstrates how he has relied on others in his journey as a young Indigenous entrepreneur, and because of this, he strives to be someone that others can rely on: *"Having that support system has helped me become so successful today. And then, you know, because I've had that person in my life, I now tell people, 'If you need help, don't feel bad to reach out, like, here's my phone number, call me if it's two in the morning, and I hear my phone going off, I'm gonna answer it.' Because if I didn't have that, I don't think I would have been this far"* (Elijah).

In both her prior employment positions and current work as an entrepreneur, Tayler has been able to cultivate a network of peers who can offer advice and industry knowledge as she establishes her business: *"I've definitely built up a lot of friends who are quite successful in their businesses. Working at the agency, actually, I met quite a few different registered psychologists who are now running their own practices and firms. They're both quite successful so I really look up to those two for sure. And then I'm quite connected within the art community. So just seeing some of the people that I've connected with be really successful in their art, sales and ventures has been really inspirational too"* (Tayler).

Connecting with Supporters

Some participants were surprised but grateful for the early support from their customers and even the media: *"I didn't think it was going to be as great a success as it is now, because I thought it was going to be like, kind of a one-hit-wonder type thing. But immediately after starting it, like my sales went up"* (Michael).

Similarly, while Ashley acknowledges all the hard work she put into developing her products and all the hard work still to come, she expressed that the growth in her sales and the support she's received from customers and social media followers surpassed her initial expectations: "*When I started this, I didn't envision [having my products] in so many stores, so quick, because I just started…I'm pretty proud of myself for how far I've come. But you don't think it's gonna be like this, right? You always have that dream; and then it's like, 'oh what, it's happening?'"* (Ashley).

Sage was similarly excited and grateful for the early support her organization received, but also worried that there may be a tendency to overemphasise the importance of youth in consideration of innovation. She reminds us that innovative ideas can come from any entrepreneur: *"I also think that there's a tendency to support young innovators more than anyone. These past few years I've gotten a lot of overwhelming support. I don't know why they chose me over others. Like I understand if they really liked my concept and want to see it go. But it's interesting to see other folks who are achieving the same level of impact metrics that I am who aren't getting any support or funding"* (Sage).

Managing Workload and Balancing Multiple Roles

Most participants had felt challenged in managing their workloads or managing multiple roles that they hold within their personal and professional lives. As entrepreneurs, most were working on creating and maintaining comfortable and healthy boundaries that allowed them to be emotionally, physically, mentally and spiritually well.

While some felt they were regularly achieving a comfortable balance between work and other aspects of their lives, most acknowledged that throughout their entrepreneurial journeys, they struggled at some point with overworking or burnout. For several participants, managing workloads and boundaries with work is the greatest hurdle they currently face in their work as an entrepreneur: *"It's one of the biggest challenges, having to manage my own balance. Like it takes mental energy, physical energy to sit in front of a computer for an extended amount of time. How do I maintain my emotional balance, my spiritual balance while grinding on my business, while going to school full-time, while helping the community and trying to take care of myself?"* (Justin).

Elijah also acknowledges that, as an entrepreneur, he has had difficulty in managing his workload. At times, he faced significant health consequences as a result of taking on too much work: *"So it's not really funny, but it's funny to me. So like every year I learn more boundaries, more healthy boundaries. And I usually find out when I end up in the hospital. So it's like funny/not funny because it takes me to get to that breaking point of being dehydrated and like, incapable of operating a vehicle to the point that I said, 'Okay, I pushed myself too far'"* (Elijah).

Several participants specified that some of the difficulties they face in managing their workloads stem from the multiple roles they hold, both personally and professionally.

Sage, who manages multiple organizations, acknowledges that it is easy to get lost in the work as an entrepreneur, particularly when managing personal and professional roles: *"I think that it takes a lot of discipline, you have to work really hard to maintain those boundaries*" (Sage).

Michael also acknowledges that he has felt challenged by managing multiple roles as a young entrepreneur: *"Balancing school, mental health, family, friends, social life, that's pretty hard. So it's been hard, but I'm getting through it"* (Michael).

Similarly, Tayler, who is both a student and an entrepreneur with two distinct businesses, recognizes that managing multiple roles could lead to burnout: *"In January, I decided that my word of the year was going to be 'balance,' because I felt like between school and work, I thought I wasn't allowing myself the space to actually like, connect with those around me and breathe and you know, just take that extra time. But yeah, so I think that's something that I've been working on. It's still kind of a daily challenge, just making sure that I'm not burning out"* (Tayler).

When Ossie first started working for himself as a freelancer, he felt he had to take on any work that was offered. However, having so many opportunities available to him, he quickly started to burn out. He says learning to be more discerning with opportunities that arise helps him to avoid burnout: *"I think it took me a few years of doing this until I realized that, like, 'Okay, I have a full plate, I don't need to say yes to everything.' And it really just took me getting burnt out and taking on way too much"* (Ossie).

Ashley notes that managing a business while parenting and working as an employee sometimes causes her work to progress more slowly than she would like: *"I have days where it's hard, because I don't have enough income for it. And I actually just had to start working again because I can't produce books if I don't have money"* (Ashley). She acknowledges that managing all her roles requires a robust support system, which includes her friends and family: *"[N]one of this would have been possible if I was on my own, you know"* (Ashley).

Stephanie similarly acknowledges the challenges of managing her organization as a working parent: *"I try to hold my weekends very sacred. And that has been a struggle, too, because I know there's like gender differences at times and owning a business. And I think in wanting to make a mark and potentially with people-pleasing tendencies, it's like, 'Listen, I'm gonna work 9-to-5,' without realizing owning a business is not a 9-to-5 kind of thing. And last year, I was working probably 13-hour days. So I am improving slowly, definitely could be working less hours, because I don't want it to impact myself or my family'* (Stephanie).

Decolonizing Business

A defining feature of our conversations with young Indigenous entrepreneurs is their commitment to understanding their role in movements that support Indigenous well-being. Some focus explicitly on a decolonial path; while others express interest in understanding Indigenous community and cultural resurgence, as well as stewarding Indigenous values. We identified three secondary themes under this major theme: Conceptions of Responsible Business Growth, Connection to Land and Place, and Collective Business Practices.

Conceptions of Responsible Growth

Many participants expressed ideas about business growth that challenge prevailing ideas about business growth. Specifically, we find that many young Indigenous entrepreneurs are interested in what we perceive to be alternative measures of growth, rather than the profit- or revenue-focused measures of growth that are common in mainstream business. Some expressed ideas about business growth aligned with the conception of growth as maturation, rather than simply growing in size.

For example, Stephanie wants to ensure that her business systems continue to mature and that she is able to find ways to reduce the time, money and energy she spends on maintaining the operations side of her clinic: *"I think the long-term goal is to probably operate my business in a more efficient way"* (Stephanie). She also hopes to nurture the business to include more employees or more systems to help with the load of day-to-day management: *"I would love to have more people … as opposed to me trying to do everything on my own from my half of the business. Because if there's more staff, maybe that means more time that I can spend with my family or more time I can spend in gaining knowledge that I want to gain with my culture, spending more time*

outside and really figuring out what makes my mental health better so I can better serve other people" (Stephanie).

Elijah similarly thinks of growing the number of employees at his business when he thinks about growth, because he hopes to see his business provide good employment opportunities for his community members: *"My goal is to employ 50 people by the time I'm done with, like both locations…So I have to say like that is the most successful thing in my life, knowing that I've created jobs for 50 people by the end of this"* (Elijah).

Stacie also takes pride in providing quality employment opportunities, especially for Indigenous youth in her community: *"I really take pride in giving students their first leg-up, because I know when I was a student, it was very difficult to get employment. Especially when you're Indigenous, it's extremely difficult. And it's nice to be able to, you know, give that little bit of a leg-up and help and guide the youth into whatever realm they want to by giving them those core [skills], you know, take initiative, responsibility, all those types of things"* (Stacie).

Beyond growth as maturation, some participants offer a conceptualization of growth as increasing the number and strength of connections that their business has within their communities. For example, Tayler's long-term vision for her business is to be able to provide her services alongside other types of Indigenous entrepreneurs within a shared space: *"My big vision is to have an Indigenous-based [services] centre. So whether that's just me offering services out of it, or I would love to have just like different Indigenous entrepreneurs and helping professions, like being able to come together in a wellness centre-type place. And just really focus on the culture and focus on welcoming our community members into the space. And being accessible"* (Tayler).

Similarly, Amy hopes to grow her business to the point where she can offer space to Indigenous creators to sell their work out of a co-operative or shared storefront. She sees this as an opportunity to lower the barriers for other Indigenous creators who are not yet ready or able to build up an individual, online presence or a brand to sell at local markets: *"I want to be able to see more Indigenous people represented in these kinds of spaces. So I think that I would love to be able to offer a year-round space where people can say, 'Oh, I think I want to pop up for a month.' And someone will be there to run transactions and stuff like that"* (Amy).

Participants focus on growing their businesses in manageable ways that would help them to increase their social impact within their communities.

Overall, the participants are generally focused on growth that they describe as manageable rather than meteoric. Jordan specifies this: *"I want the growth, but I don't want to take on too much where it becomes overwhelming"* (Jordan). Many want to focus on skills acquisition for themselves or their employees, and they generally do not want to focus on bringing on investors or additional partners to help run their businesses. Some participants are focused on building their businesses to a sustainable place, wherein the business earns sufficient income so that they do not have to work other jobs.

Connection to Land and Place

One of the most consequential shifts that we noted from our conversations is that young Indigenous entrepreneurs are centring their connections to land and place within their businesses. While some participants envisioned growing their businesses out globally at some point, many were focused on building businesses that could become institutions within their local communities and regions. Further, many participants are focused on building businesses that represent their home communities and homelands in some way.

Teri-Lee runs a business that is focused on sharing her homelands with others. She is building a business that represents the culture, traditions, and more importantly the philosophy of her connection to place with her customers: *"There's something about the land that just heals you. And I just love that. And that's something to do with my business, too is, I'm outside all day long and…I'm showing the visitors like who we are as First Nations people in the Yukon and telling the history. So I'm so glad to be where I am right now"* (Teri-Lee).

Similarly, Jordan, who currently lives outside his community's traditional homelands, has been looking for opportunities to connect his business more deeply with his home community and home territory as his business develops: *"I would love to have a headquarters up on the land. I'd love to have, like, an area out there where I could run the operations out of like a lodge almost because it doesn't need to, it's not a full store. You know, it's just a place to keep inventory. To be able to be back up there, I love it up there, it's so nice"* (Jordan).

Several participants see environmental sustainability as a core pilar of their business—those that work in product-based businesses especially considered the impacts their products might have on the land. For example, Jordan's business is geared towards environmental responsibility and healing the land: *"The whole idea around Vearthy is to make something that's comfortable, and awesome, and not terrible for the planet. And actively striving towards, you know, having a low impact and making sure that everything for the business has a low impact, because, you know, consumerism is huge, it's like the biggest thing in the world. And I really don't want to just over-contribute to the, you know, to the global amount of waste that finds its way there into the landfills, into the forest, you know, [and] the water"* (Jordan).

For some participants, a connection to place also means a connection to home and family. For example, Sage discusses how she orients her businesses and her investing around healing the land and supporting her community: *"I felt deeply compelled to invest in a clean energy company. I come from the Carrier territory, which is where most of the major pipeline projects like run through directly through my territory—like a man camp was just built on the site where the residential*

school used to be in my community. Like, that's so not okay. And every time I go home, the territory looks different. I've been hunting my whole life and I don't know where I am sometimes anymore. Like I've seen lakes totally drained, that I had fished in the year before. And it's like, something that I feel really compelled to inspire others to do similar work. I think that our kind of slogan, and the slogan and impact investment is to say that you want to support people and the planet over profit" (Sage).

When Stacie began operating her business, she sought to incorporate some of her family's and community's cultural designs and practices into the operations of the business: *"What I chose to do with it was to ensure that our signage, our logo had a beaded flower on it, which was actually designed by my grandmother. So we had that done. So using as much local, we do foraging, and they encourage foraging and most of my arrangements that I make. So drawing from the land, one of my favourites is using sweetgrass and some of the items that we would do for any sympathy or funerals, just kind of incorporating it"* (Stacie).

Participants seem to care about place and about building businesses that not only support the environment as it is, but that also actively seek to restore relationships with the land as a form of healing. Several participants are focused on developing local businesses that could support local people and their community's territories.

Collective Business Practices

Just as many participants sought out entrepreneurship as a way to gain more autonomy within their careers, many seek to enable their team members and collaborators to have autonomy over their work as much as possible—as a way to restore collective governance to Indigenous entrepreneurship. While many organizations seek to empower their employees, we find the commitment to team-based work is an indicator of returning to a collective approach to doing business. In this way, we find the focus on building trusted teams among young Indigenous entrepreneurs to represent efforts to decolonize business.

Several participants expressed their trust in their employees and partners to manage the aspects of the business that they are responsible for. For example, Amy shared that when she had experienced the personal loss of a friend, she leaned heavily on her growing team and put her trust in them to run the organization as she took care of her own well-being: *"So back in the beginning of December, my best friend had passed away, one of my best friends. And I was like, 'I am useless. I'm gonna go home. And I trust you guys.' And the staff, they handled it wonderfully. They didn't need me for anything. And I just went home for a good month, and just recovered and grieved and spent my time that way. And they didn't disturb me and bother me for anything unless it was really important. And yeah, so I just, you know, I did some design and some customer service behind-the-scenes stuff. But most of that time was just grieving and being at home with my family. So I did have that chance to take some time away and the staff were just so amazing. Like, my team is so incredible. I'm so lucky every day"* (Amy).

Sage similarly expressed that she is only able to simultaneously manage her many professional roles and take care of her own well-being by providing comprehensive onboarding and training opportunities, and then trusting in her team to make good decisions for the organization: *"Honestly, like my whole management style is to essentially just trust my team and make sure that they're onboarded properly and give them the autonomy that I know that they can run with and they're incredible. So yeah, I'm really happy with the way it runs right now. I think I just hit the jackpot somehow"* (Sage).

Larissa and her collaborators have worked to ensure that their organizational culture is one that prioritizes team members' holistic well-being. She finds that some of the greatest challenges they face as an organization is helping clients and external collaborators understand their ways of working. She finds that she and her partners often have to clearly communicate boundaries to external partners, to ensure that each internal team member can manage their workload in ways that are conducive to their overall well-being. This is significantly different than what they see as an over-focus on productivity in most mainstream organizations, and this culture represents a significant decolonial practice within the organization: *"The most challenging part, I think, is the incongruency between the culture that we've created within our organization for ourselves and the culture within which our clients and community partners exist. We have done a lot of work to really decolonize the way we relate to time, at the organization, the way we relate to productivity and labour, even the way we relate to the changing seasons. Our strategic plan, our work plan, our annual work plan, is directly informed by the way the changing seasons inform our overall well-being, our demand and our needs in those seasons. Our relationship to time at the organization is very resistant to the urgency culture, where we hold space for ourselves to rest, to reflect, to learn and to take time to communicate in ways that are reflective and authentic. We prioritize rest. Everyone on our team is expected to take at least one month off a year if not two, and almost none of us have a full work week, almost none of us work Monday to Friday. We all have very fluid and very responsive work capacity or work commitments and schedules that are responsive to, again, our health, our needs for rest, our relationship to land, and our time needed to be on the land. So it works and we exist beautifully, in relation to one another. It's when we bring in external clients and community partners that we often find we need to assert ourselves and the ways that we exist as being valuable"* (Larissa).

What's Needed

All entrepreneurs need support systems, and the next theme to emerge from our analysis of our conversations with young Indigenous entrepreneurs is focused on the types of resources and support that they want and need from mentors, funders, educators and others in the entrepreneurial ecosystem. Much of the extant literature is focused on obstacles of young Indigenous entrepreneurship, and the resources that young Indigenous entrepreneurs need to succeed. While our findings do complement some of the extant literature, we seek to focus not on what young Indigenous entrepreneurs lack, but on resources that they have identified as potentially useful to helping them accomplish their own business goals.

While each entrepreneur identified different specific resources that could support their work, we have categorized the types of support into two subthemes: Patient and Responsive Financing, and Business Learning and Acumen.

Patient and Responsive Financing

From our conversations about business financing, we find that many young Indigenous entrepreneurs are opting to self-finance over most other funding opportunities. This reinforces our understanding of young Indigenous entrepreneurs' preference for self-determination in managing their organizations. For those who are open to working with investors, we find many are interested in patient capital and culturally aware investors. Sage, whose work is primarily in the field of finance and investment, argues that investors who seek to support young Indigenous entrepreneurs must be willing to enter into the business relationship as partners. She argues that investors must *"have some shared integrity and want to see those Indigenous businesses or projects succeed"* (Sage). Sage argues that traditional financing institutions and investors often focus too much on quick returns on investment, without taking into account the full scope of the goals of the business.

In working with traditional financing institutions, some participants have felt that they were put under more intense scrutiny than other entrepreneurs: *"I've observed that we [Indigenous women entrepreneurs] also face a lot of strict due diligence, and that folks kind of come down on us and ask questions and create questionnaires for us that like no one else has to do; like twice the amount of reporting, for half the amount of money"* (Sage).

Similarly, Elijah has felt frustration in the amount of reporting required to access some financing options. He suggests that investors should be more willing to support young entrepreneurs through the process, even if initial proposals are turned down: *"You know, I think they should just say yes or no, right from the beginning. If they say yes, they should offer support through the end [of the application process] and even after. If they say no, then I think they should work with you on how [to improve]"* (Elijah).

Some participants have felt these sorts of challenges even when working with their home communities or other Indigenous funders.

We also find that young Indigenous entrepreneurs are particularly interested in grants. Many young Indigenous entrepreneurs look for support in financing their businesses but are not particularly interested in long-term investment partners or sharing control of their businesses.

Thus, Elijah encourages young Indigenous entrepreneurs to connect with Aboriginal Financial Institutions, and to take advantage of grant opportunities where possible: *"I would recommend like reaching out to AFIs because AFIs also offer grants…Grants are a lifesaver. We have like, built the company, and the franchise off grants. [Indigenous Peoples] don't have many rights in this country, but grants are one of them. So, utilize them as much as you can"* (Elijah).

On the other hand, a few participants felt frustration in trying to access applicable business grants or grants that they are eligible for. At the launch of her business, Stephanie felt self-funding was the only reasonable option: *"Like government-wise, or even like grants, we weren't able to get any government grants. We had to rely on a lot of our own personal savings to build our therapy centre. So that was very intimidating as well"* (Stephanie).

Business Learning and Acumen

Through our interviews, we learned that many young Indigenous entrepreneurs enter entrepreneurship without much formal business education. For some, this has presented obstacles throughout their journey, while others have learned to manage their business effectively by learning from mentors, peers, and other self-guided learning opportunities.

Before Tayler launched her practice, she had attended programs on how to conduct her work, but felt that the programs did not do enough to prepare her for running an organization: *"I found that [business education] was kind of the one lacking piece of my program. We talked a lot about, like theory and practice, but not really like, actually how to get the clients and how to do this"* (Tayler). Since launching the business, she has engaged in self-learning and peer learning to be able to manage the organization.

Ossie also felt that being an employee in journalism had prepared him for his work as a freelance journalist, writer and producer, but when he first started working for himself, it was initially challenging to manage the administrative aspects: *"Early on, administration, taxes, and keeping everything sorted [was a challenge]. Like, I have my GST numbers and all that, and that was really annoying, getting that sorted out. And you know, I was lucky I didn't mess anything up, but it just was a lot of stress getting there"* (Ossie). Since becoming a freelancer, Ossie has helped other emerging freelance writers and producers implement systems for themselves to be able to manage the administrative challenges of the work as another example of peer learning.

Like Tayler, when Stephanie and her business partner were planning to launch their clinic, they initially felt underprepared to manage all of the financial, administrative and operational challenges: *"I had no business background. So that was definitely trial-and-error navigating some of the things because I did not know what to do. And I certainly felt like nobody wanted to take two young women seriously"* (Stephanie). Stephanie has primarily learned how to manage the business through self-learning and by leaning on mentors from her industry, but she acknowledges that more business training and self-guided learning opportunities could help her to better manage the administrative aspects of her business.

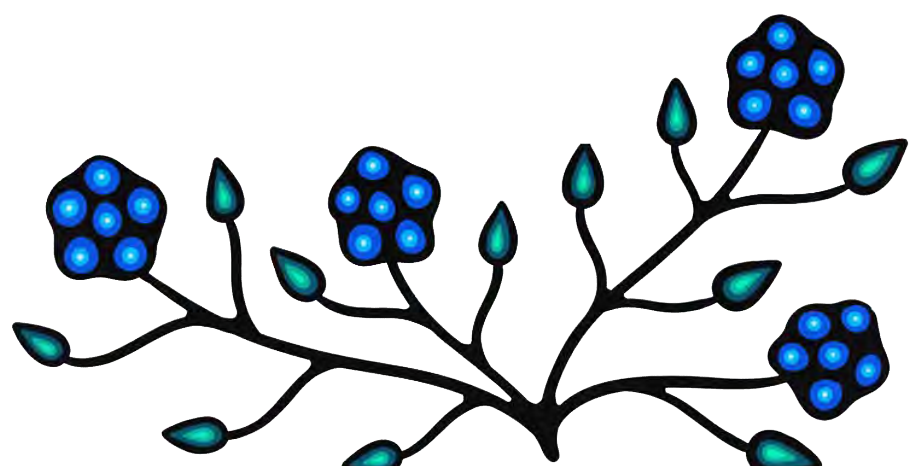
Many participants expressed a desire to gain more business learning opportunities, particularly as they relate to financial and administrative aspects of running their businesses. Elijah expresses that he is always open to gaining more knowledge and experience: *"I think the first part of being successful is like being open and coachable"* (Elijah).

However, Jordan, along with several other participants, shared the challenges of finding the time to attend formal courses or synchronous learning opportunities: *"I've been thinking about doing [business] courses…but it's tough. It's hard for me to justify because I don't know what courses are actually good. You know, and they're big expenses usually…I would absolutely love to be a part of that. It's just I guess finance versus, you know, finding the time. Yeah, I would love to if the opportunity came up, I would definitely take that"* (Jordan). Because young Indigenous entrepreneurs often already are managing multiple personal and professional roles, many suggested that self-guided, online learning opportunities would best fit with their lifestyles.

Some participants had prior training or education in business and management; and often credit this training for helping them thrive, especially in understanding the initial challenges of financing and managing operations. For example, Larissa describes how she consciously sought out learning opportunities that would allow her to thrive as a social entrepreneur: *"I invested a lot of time applying to and completing different social entrepreneur programs through the UN through my university. There were kind of just one-offs every month, I committed to doing one new program, one new conference, one new workshop"* (Larissa).

Elijah also describes the management training he received and how it has helped him both as an employee and now as an entrepreneur in running organizations: *"When I was starting out at McDonald's, I think maybe my first year in working there, I took like a management course through McDonald's Canada. So I became a certified team leader at McDonald's. It was like a two-day course or something, and then eight months of training to become a team leader. And then that like really helped with managing stations, or like even managing costs or like managing training. So I had a lot of my HR and food management, prior to running Kekuli Cafe"* (Elijah).

Some participants had education in business but still felt that additional learning opportunities could support them in reaching their entrepreneurial goals. In general, taxation and finance were the areas of business most often cited by participants as areas in which they would like to gain more education.



KEY FINDINGS

In this section, we identify overall key findings that we believe can provide direction for future research and for developing future programming to support young Indigenous entrepreneurs. In creating research or programming to better support young Indigenous entrepreneurs, it is essential to learn from the perspectives of young Indigenous entrepreneurs themselves, and to take seriously their ideas and expectations. In this section, we work to bring insights from our primary research together with insights from extant research. Further, we offer potential future directions for expanding our collective knowledge of entrepreneurship by young Indigenous people.

Young Indigenous entrepreneurs think seriously about decolonization.

Firstly, through this project, we learned more about how young Indigenous entrepreneurs think about decolonization in the context of their own business, and in the context of capitalist markets that exist in the western world. Through our national survey and interviews, we find that young Indigenous entrepreneurs often think very deeply about how to run their businesses to serve themselves and their communities. They think about serving their communities not only through financial or monetary contributions, but also by creating opportunities to share community stories and values; and by running their businesses in ways that demonstrate respect for themselves, their employees, customers, and their suppliers holistically.

This supports some prior research that has identified the centrality of "giving back" within entrepreneurship by young Indigenous people. However, our findings suggest that beyond a general desire to give back, young Indigenous entrepreneurs are working to find ways to create businesses that demonstrate their values and produce real, material, positive changes for their peers and community members.

Peer supports can enable young Indigenous entrepreneurs to feel their best, while striving to reach their professional goals.

In much of the extant research and related programming designed for young Indigenous entrepreneurs, we find that mentorship is given prominence. Young Indigenous entrepreneurs are often assumed to need business guidance and support that an experienced businessperson can provide through a mentor-mentee relationship. However, in our research, we find that many young Indigenous entrepreneurs do not have business mentors, and they may not necessarily want or need them. Rather, we find that young Indigenous entrepreneurs often gain support and advice from their peers instead of mentors. While mentors are assumed to be more advanced or experienced in business than their mentees, peers are generally expected to be at a similar level of experience.

Overall, we find that many young Indigenous entrepreneurs like to turn to their peers in the same or similar industries for advice in developing their businesses. Some note that this is because their fields or industries are new and growing or are very specific to their identities; plus there may not be as many "seasoned" or highly experienced potential mentors in those fields. Others note that friends and friendships with others in their industries have been their greatest supports to date.

Therefore, in future work, we recommend examining peer relationships and peer networks of young Indigenous entrepreneurs to better understand how peer networks support the development of sustainable, successful businesses by young Indigenous entrepreneurs.

Supports for young Indigenous entrepreneurs must be flexible and holistic, and firmly grounded within Indigenous values systems of reciprocity and interconnectedness.

Much of the extant research in this area is focused on challenges of entrepreneurship for young Indigenous people. Sometimes this work also touches on potential supports and resources that young Indigenous entrepreneurs need. In our research, we also sought to understand the types of supports that might be useful to young Indigenous entrepreneurs; however, we try to focus not only on the types of support needed (capital, training, mentors, etc.), but on how young Indigenous entrepreneurs would prefer for these supports to be delivered. For example, we delved into the types of business and entrepreneurship training and education programs that might be useful; and examined how young Indigenous entrepreneurs would like this education to be delivered as well as the areas they would like to focus on in their learning. We sought to identify the types and styles of education that would support young Indigenous entrepreneurs where they are today.

Overall, we find that many young Indigenous entrepreneurs prefer hybrid learning opportunities focused on financial and administrative aspects of running a business, but that

also take Indigenous worldviews and values seriously. We find that a subset of young Indigenous entrepreneurs would prefer to have at least some of their business learning take place on the land.

Further, rather than merely identifying a need for more capital investment, we sought to understand how young Indigenous entrepreneurs would prefer to receive investment—and from whom. We find that overwhelmingly, young Indigenous entrepreneurs are self-funding their businesses and the types of funding that they are most comfortable accepting are awards and grants—and only after that, loans from others. We expect that young Indigenous entrepreneurs may not be ready or comfortable to take on large loans or even investments that need to be repaid quickly. Rather, they are looking for funding opportunities that allow them to maintain control of their business—including the pace at which the business grows and the types of growth they seek.

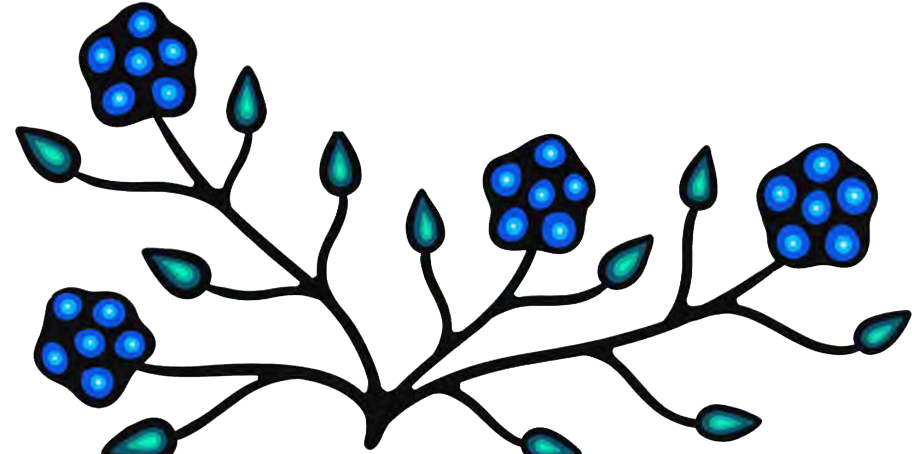
Finally, we find that young Indigenous entrepreneurs are most interested in partnering with funders that understand their business values and are willing to provide holistic support in securing and servicing the financing. Young Indigenous entrepreneurs have felt discriminated against in mainstream markets and are therefore unwilling to sacrifice their values to fit the expectations of some mainstream funders.

There is no one vision of success for young Indigenous entrepreneurs.

Finally, young Indigenous entrepreneurs define success from their own unique lenses. For example, while some young Indigenous entrepreneurs seek increased profits and revenues and expanded locations and product lines, some seek to maintain a healthy standard of living by operating their business alongside other personal and professional commitments. Some consider their business as their long-term career; meanwhile, others seek to gain experience and income through their work but are also open to other professional opportunities as their lives change.

Mostly, young Indigenous entrepreneurs seem to be drawn to entrepreneurship as a way to maintain more control and self-determination in their day-to-day lives. Some have felt overlooked, undervalued, or outright discriminated against in prior employee relationships, and perceive entrepreneurship as an empowering way to live and work in balance with their needs. Others perceive entrepreneurship as a way to share their unique perspectives and the perspectives of their community members with the world.

There is so much variety and variation in the ways that young Indigenous entrepreneurs approach their work and their careers—and given their stage in life, which can change while they run their businesses, it is difficult to try to design standardized supports for them. Rather, young Indigenous entrepreneurs need to be taken seriously as experts; and supports for them should be designed flexibly and with entrepreneurs' input, so they can be tailored to the entrepreneurs themselves.



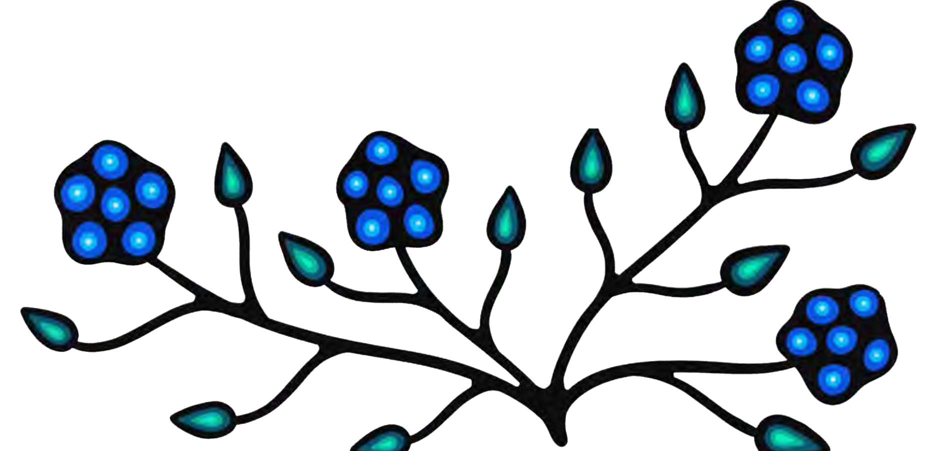
CONCLUSION

Throughout this project, we have worked to bring together the stories and perspectives of young Indigenous entrepreneurs from across the country. We have sought to avoid a deficit perspective of young Indigenous entrepreneurship and have instead celebrated the ingenuity, innovativeness, and community-connectedness of young Indigenous entrepreneurs today, while also recognizing the very real challenges and hardships these entrepreneurs can face.

Through our two studies—a national survey of 112 young Indigenous entrepreneurs, and an in-depth qualitative study focused on the stories of 13 young Indigenous entrepreneurs—we have sought to highlight the most important and pressing issues these people want to share with other entrepreneurs, and with the entrepreneurial ecosystem in Canada.

Overall, we find that young Indigenous entrepreneurs are passionate about running a different kind of business—one that is focused on community wellness, including the wellness of the entrepreneur themselves, as well as their employees, customers and communities at large. We also find that young Indigenous entrepreneurs often find effective support from peers, especially other entrepreneurs. We find that young Indigenous entrepreneurs need multifaceted supports and educational opportunities that are flexible and responsive; they need supports and supporters that are willing and able to invest in them and their unique visions over the long term.

This project allowed us to connect with and learn from a whole cohort of impressive young Indigenous entrepreneurs. We are grateful for their time and energy and we hope that this work engenders new, flexible, holistic supports from Canada's entrepreneurial ecosystem.



APPENDIX

Appendix 1: Literature Review Articles

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Appendix 2: National Survey Letter of Information and Participant Consent Form

Understanding the Interests and Needs of Indigenous Youth Entrepreneurs in Canada

Thank you for participating in our survey!

This research is being conducted by the NACCA (National Aboriginal Capital Corporations Association) Indigenous Youth Program team and an Indigenous researcher, Jordyn Hrenyk.

What is this project about?
NACCA and its member organizations offer financing and business support services for Indigenous entrepreneurs all around the country. We're using this survey to make sure that our current and future offerings are aligned with what you'd like from us to be able to meet your business goals.

We invite you to take part in this short survey to help us better understand you and your business. This survey will take about 15-20 minutes to complete. You can access the survey by clicking the link at the bottom of this page.

Is my participation voluntary?
Your participation in this project is voluntary. You may withdraw at any time by exiting the survey before completing it. Because the survey is anonymous, you will not be able to withdraw from the project after you submit your survey.

What are the benefits to participating?
1. We value the time of every Indigenous youth entrepreneur who supports this project. In acknowledgement of the gift you share by completing this survey, *we offer every participant who completes the survey with downloadable, digital art created by Chief Lady Bird*, a Chippewa and Potawatomi artist, educator, and community activist from Rama First Nation. This artwork was created by Chief Lady Bird specifically for participants of this project.

2. Further, this survey will help us to offer more effective support programs tailored for Indigenous youth entrepreneurs.

3. Finally, we will make a summary of our findings from this project available through a research report on NACCA's website.

What are the risks associated with this study?
For this project, we will be asking participants about their businesses and their relationships to their businesses. All responses will be anonymous but we will collect demographic data of participants.

When sharing one's story there is always a risk of a range of emotions coming up, which could include negative emotions. While we do not anticipate any negative emotions being brought up for participants as a result of participation in this survey, out of caution, we point participants towards the federal Hope for Wellness Help Line for Indigenous people, (1-855-242-3310 or online chat at www.hopeforwellness.ca) if you need support.

You do not have to answer any questions that you don't want to. All questions except for 3 qualifying questions at the beginning of the survey are 'skippable'. Your responses will be kept securely and your confidentiality will be respected.

What will happen to my responses?
By March 2022, access to the survey will be closed, and all responses will be analyzed by our team. Your responses to the survey will be anonymous and will only be analyzed in aggregate.

All data obtained by researchers will be kept on password-protected computers; only the researchers will have access to this data. Summarized (anonymous) results from this study will be presented by NACCA in various forms, including research reports to member organizations and other interested parties. The knowledge gained through this project may be utilized by the research team for academic works. In such an event, your responses will be combined with those of other respondents and reported only in the aggregate.

What if I have concerns?
Any questions about study participation may be directed to the project team at info@nacca.ca. When reaching out, please include "IYE Survey" in your subject line so that it can be easily forwarded to our team.

You do not waive any legal rights by consenting to participate in this study.

By continuing on to the survey at the link below, you are indicating that you have read this Letter of Information and have had any concerns about your participation addressed to your satisfaction. By proceeding to the survey, you are providing consent to participating in this project.

Thank you for your interest in supporting this research.
Sincerely,

Magnolia Perron: Indigenous Women and Youth Team Lead (NACCA); Member of the Mohawks of the Bay of Quinte; BA, MA
Jordyn Hrenyk: Member of Métis Nation Saskatchewan; BCom, MSc, PhD Candidate in Strategy and Entrepreneurship
Montana Forgie: Member of Squamish Nation; Professional Communications Student
Kimberly Gorgichuk: Indigenous Women Program Officer (NACCA); Member of Kijicho Manito Madaouskarini Algonquin First Nation

Comprendre les intérêts et les besoins des jeunes entrepreneurs autochtones au Canada

Merci d'avoir participé à notre sondage!

Cette recherche est menée par l'équipe du programme pour les jeunes autochtones de l'ANSAF (Association nationale des sociétés autochtones de financement) et par un chercheur autochtone, Jordyn Hrenyk.

En quoi consiste ce projet?

L'ANSAF et ses organisations membres offrent des services de financement et de soutien commercial aux entrepreneurs autochtones à travers le pays. Nous utilisons ce sondage pour nous assurer que nos offres actuelles et futures correspondent à ce que vous attendez de nous pour pouvoir atteindre vos objectifs commerciaux.

Nous vous invitons à participer à ce court sondage pour nous aider à mieux vous comprendre, vous et votre entreprise. Il vous faudra environ 15 à 20 minutes pour répondre à ce sondage. Vous pouvez accéder au sondage en cliquant sur le lien au bas de cette page.

Ma participation est-elle volontaire?

Votre participation à ce projet est volontaire. Vous pouvez vous retirer à tout moment en quittant le sondage avant de le terminer. Le sondage étant anonyme, vous ne pourrez pas vous retirer du projet après avoir soumis votre sondage.

Quels sont les avantages de la participation?

1. Nous apprécions le temps de chaque jeune entrepreneur autochtone qui soutient ce projet. En reconnaissance du cadeau que vous partagez en répondant à ce sondage, nous offrons à chaque participant qui y répond une œuvre d'art numérique téléchargeable créée par la Cheffe Lady Bird, une artiste, éducatrice et activiste communautaire chippewa et potawatomi de la Première Nation Rama. Cette œuvre d'art a été créée par la Cheffe Lady Bird spécialement pour les participants à ce projet.
2. De plus, ce sondage nous aidera à offrir des programmes de soutien plus efficaces et adaptés aux jeunes entrepreneurs autochtones.
3. Enfin, nous publierons un résumé des résultats de ce projet dans un rapport de recherche sur le site Web de l'ANSAF.

Quels sont les risques associés à cette étude?

Dans le cadre de ce projet, nous interrogerons les participants sur leur entreprise et les relations qu'ils entretiennent avec elle. Toutes les réponses seront anonymes, mais nous recueillerons des données démographiques sur les participants.

Lorsque l'on partage son histoire, il y a toujours un risque que toute une série d'émotions surgissent, y compris des émotions négatives. Bien que nous ne prévoyions pas que la participation à ce sondage fasse naître des émotions négatives chez les participants, nous leur conseillons, par prudence, de se tourner vers la ligne d'assistance fédérale *Hope for Wellness* pour les autochtones (1 855 242-3310 ou clavardage en ligne sur www.hopeforwellness.ca) si vous avez besoin de soutien.

Vous n'êtes pas obligé de répondre aux questions si vous ne le souhaitez pas. Toutes les questions, à l'exception de trois questions de qualification au début du sondage, peuvent être ignorées. Vos réponses seront conservées en toute sécurité et votre confidentialité sera respectée.

Qu'adviendra-t-il de mes réponses?

D'ici mars 2022, l'accès à ce sondage sera fermé, et toutes les réponses seront analysées par notre équipe. Vos réponses à ce sondage seront anonymes et ne seront analysées que de manière globale.

Toutes les données obtenues par les chercheurs seront conservées sur des ordinateurs protégés par un mot de passe; seuls les chercheurs auront accès à ces données. Les résultats résumés (anonymes) de cette étude seront présentés par l'ANSAF sous diverses formes, notamment des rapports de recherche destinés aux organisations membres et à d'autres parties intéressées. Les connaissances acquises dans le cadre de ce projet pourront être utilisées par l'équipe de recherche pour des travaux universitaires. Dans ce cas, vos réponses seront combinées à celles des autres répondants et ne seront présentées que sous forme agrégée.

Que faire si j'ai des inquiétudes?

Toute question concernant la participation à l'étude peut être adressée à l'équipe du projet à l'adresse info@nacca.ca. Lorsque vous nous contactez, veuillez inclure « Sondage sur les JEA » dans l'objet de votre message afin qu'il puisse être facilement transmis à notre équipe.

Vous ne renoncez à aucun droit légal en consentant à participer à cette étude.

En poursuivant le sondage à l'aide du lien ci-dessous, vous indiquez que vous avez lu la présente lettre d'information et que toute préoccupation concernant votre participation a été traitée à votre satisfaction. En passant au sondage, vous donnez votre accord pour participer à ce projet.

Nous vous remercions de votre intérêt à soutenir cette recherche.

Nous vous prions d'agréer, Madame, Monsieur, l'expression de nos sentiments distingués,

Magnolia Perron : Responsable de l'équipe des femmes et des jeunes autochtones (ANSAF); membre des Mohawks de la baie de Quinte; BA, MA

Jordyn Hrenyk : Membre de la nation métisse de la Saskatchewan; BCom, MSc, candidat au doctorat en stratégie et entrepreneuriat

Montana Forgie : Membre de la nation Squamish; étudiant en communication professionnelle

Kimberly Gorgichuk : Responsable du programme pour les femmes autochtones (ANSAF); membre de la Première Nation algonquine Kijicho Manito Madaouskarini.

Appendix 3: Survey Instrument Internal Pretesting

Reflective Questions for Internal Survey Pre-test

First Review:

Please record any of your general impressions about the survey instrument:

Second Review:

1. Do the questions seem to flow logically from one topic to the next?
2. Do you understand all of the words used throughout the survey (were any words or phrases that were even *slightly* confusing to you?)
3. Which questions were you most unsure of answering?
4. Which questions seem most out of place to you?
5. While taking the survey, at which points did your attention seem to wane or did your mind seem to wander?
6. Was there a point at which you stopped doing the survey to do something else and then came back to it? (If so, at which point(s)?)
7. What kinds of questions or topics related to Indigenous youth entrepreneurship (and the funding and growth of IYE enterprises) did we forget?
8. Which questions would you recommend removing?
9. Which questions do you think are most important for this project?

Appendix 4: Sample Recruitment Posts

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