

Introduction

David Newhouse

In this issue, we address two important issues: COVID-19 and poverty. As this issue goes to press, the World Health Organization has just ended a world-wide public health emergency that addressed COVID-19. The impact of the three-year pandemic on Indigenous communities was severe, with many nations and communities resorting to lockdowns to prevent the spread of the virus. Economic activity throughout the world, including in Indigenous communities, was severely curtailed. Indigenous communities demonstrated incredible strength in the face of an unprecedented public health crisis as they worked to protect the health of their communities and nations.

Ken Coates and Greg Finnigan examine the impact of the pandemic on Aboriginal Economic Development Corporations (AEDCs). The AEDCs, like all enterprises, faced challenges in keeping their companies operational. AEDCs, because of their community mandate and because they had access to or could access goods and services, helped communities in ways that were not normally part of their purview. Some procured and delivered PPE, groceries, and medicines to remote communities in addition to supporting the enterprises in their portfolios. The use of a crisis management framework for the development of AEDC responses proved to be effective.

Poverty within Indigenous communities remains high despite a half century of development effort since Wabung in the early 1970s. Liam Kelly examines Native American experiences to see if we might learn from them. Kelly reviews the experience through the lens of institutions rather than programs. He highlights the importance of ensuring that the key institution of land and its governance are reformed as they are foundational to economic development as well as creating access to credit,

mortgages, and other banking services. He argues that more research is needed in remote and rural communities to understand the institutions that can work at these sites.