

Building Better Together: Exploring Indigenous Economic Development in New Brunswick Report

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JOINT ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT INITIATIVE

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This project, titled “Building Better Together: Exploring Indigenous Economic Development in New Brunswick”, sought to ask: *What does Indigenous economic development mean to Indigenous Peoples living in New Brunswick?* In doing so, it attempts to identify obstacles, opportunities, and priorities to achieve these development goals. With support from an Indigenous Research Capacity and Reconciliation Connection Grant from the Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council (SSHRC), this project brought together 130 front-line representatives from Indigenous communities, organizations, and businesses with those from academia and relevant provincial and federal departments for a *Mawi’omi* (meaning ‘gathering’ in Mi’kmaq) in May 2019 to explore these questions.

In large part, this initiative validates previous research on Indigenous economic development specifically, and Indigenous development more broadly. A majority of the participants identified that self-sufficiency and self-sustainability for Indigenous communities were the most important factors for *successful community development*, with long-term stability the second most important factor. Three factors were tied for third: revitalizing language and culture, providing employment and training opportunities to members, and improving community wellness and cohesion. *Key priorities* for economic development were the creation of employment opportunities and the development of workforce skills, as well as the development of lands and infrastructure for economic development, while *key opportunities* were the cannabis, tourism, natural resources, and renewable resource sector. And finally, *key challenges* to the pursuit of Indigenous economic development were financing, human resources, and social issues. Throughout the event, participants also emphasized the need for more meaningful and respectful relations with government and the private sector.

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Resulting from this research, several recommendations were identified that support the findings above. These recommendations target three main groups: to SSHRC, continue to offer annual grants specifically for Indigenous communities and organizations, to support the creation of diverse research products relating to Indigenous economic development, and to create or support a platform to share information and resources relating to Indigenous economic development; to the federal government, increase funding for economic development for First Nation communities and Indigenous organizations; to the provincial government, create a task force to increase the inclusion of First Nation communities and Indigenous Peoples in the tourism, cannabis, natural resource, and renewable energy sectors; and to First Nation Communities in New Brunswick: develop strategies to support self-determination, self-sufficiency, and economic development.

INDIGENOUS ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

Literature on Indigenous economic development has grown considerably since the 1990s, and in doing so it has highlighted a series of tensions. Many of these relate to the unique cultures and perspectives of Indigenous Peoples who continue to place high value on personal, community, and natural relations. But many also relate to the history of colonialism, which for generations has subjected Indigenous Peoples to violence and marginalization while denying them their sovereignty, traditional territories, and ways of being. In this context, economic development is seen by some Indigenous Peoples as both a legacy of colonialism and a continuing risk to Indigenous ways of being, as well as a potential avenue to autonomy and self-determination. But regardless of these controversies, it is also clear that they face unique legal, legislative, geographic, and social barriers when trying to pursue economic development. This section will provide a brief overview of perspectives and challenges relating to Indigenous development, with a particular focus on the settler-colonial and Canadian context.

Indigenous Peoples in the Settler-Colonial Context

There is no precise definition of *Indigenous*. There are 370 million Indigenous Peoples in the world belonging to 5,000 different groups. Each group enjoys their own distinct social, economic, and political systems, as well as languages, cultures, and spiritual beliefs. Crucially, these systems and ways of being are often tied to Indigenous Peoples' intimate relationship with their natural environment, which provides not only an understanding of how to survive, but often — particularly in Turtle Island — the foundation for their belief system and worldview (United Nations, 2006).

Unfortunately, Indigenous Peoples today are also defined by the fact that they have been subjected to physical and cultural invasion (colonization) by a dominant group (Hindle & Moroz, 2010). Driven by a desire for territory and resources, it was the Europeans who were most responsible for the colonization of Indigenous Peoples in vast portions of Africa, Asia, and the Americas. This colonization took different forms; in the countries that would eventually become Canada, the United States, Australia, and New Zealand it was settler-colonialism. In this context, the new European societies did not permanently subordinate Indigenous populations through racialized hierarchies (like Indian or South America); instead, they attempted to extinguish Indigenous difference altogether and, in doing so,

establish their own governance, economic, and cultural systems. As Lorenzo Veracini states, “whereas colonialism reinforces the distinction between colony and metropole, settler colonialism erases it” (Veracini, 2011: 3). In Canada, for example, most settlers maintained their own distinct communities under the authority of either the French or British Crown and were encouraged to engage in various forms of commerce. For their part, between the 17th and 20th centuries the French and British Crowns worked to secure Indigenous lands through conquest, treaties, or negotiation in order to facilitate more settlement, commerce, and development. As settlement increased, the British colonialists were particularly severe in ensuring Indigenous Peoples were assimilated into British society and systems. Parcels of land (reserves) were set aside for Indigenous Peoples, and they were encouraged to give up their migratory livelihoods in exchange for modern agricultural ones. Efforts were made to educate Indigenous Peoples in Christian religion, English or French, and European work habits and customs. And as the separate colonial governments of British North America joined to create the Dominion of Canada, state action toward Indigenous Peoples became more coordinated, consistent, and hostile, resulting in legislation (the *Indian Act*) that created a unique series of rules to eliminate Indigenous customs and culture and force their assimilation into European society. These efforts were ultimately unsuccessful in achieving assimilation, but successful in creating conditions of marginalization and poverty among Indigenous Peoples.

Indigenous Economic Development

This brief description of Indigenous Peoples and the Canadian settler-colonial context begins to uncover the tensions that exist when exploring the idea of Indigenous economic development. In Canada, Indigenous Peoples have been dispossessed of their traditional territories, and years of state policies and public attitudes have eroded their cultures and ways of life while creating conditions of poverty and marginalization. The economic development that underpinned and empowered colonialism continues to exist today in the form of a capitalist market economy which typically promotes values and practices quite different to traditional Indigenous ones. And while settler-colonial governments like Canada’s no longer push for Indigenous assimilation, Indigenous Peoples still face unique challenges due to federal and provincial legislation and unsettled treaties and land claims. As will be demonstrated below, Indigenous economic development in this context is often multi-faceted and focuses on multiple issues of sovereignty and self-determination, as well as cultural revitalization and socio-economic improvement (Orr, 2013: xii–xvi).

Within the writings from and about Indigenous and colonized Peoples, economic development is often of minor importance compared to the larger priority of Indigenous sovereignty and self-determination. This is because, as writers like Franz Fanon (1963) have argued, colonization results in both physical and mental domination; and because the dominant actor will never allow their subordinates to achieve equality, the goal of colonized people should be achievement of autonomy and independence. For Linda Tuhiwai Smith, success by Indigenous standards is primarily about self-determination and achieving “processes of transformation, of decolonization, of healing and of mobilization as peoples” (Smith, 2001: xiii).

While many believe that self-determination should be the primary goal of Indigenous Peoples, authors like Glen Coulthard (2014) suggests that economic development — particularly capitalist economic development — works against these goals. He argues that state

structures, economic systems, and discourses reproduce colonial power dynamics in the interest of the more powerful partner. For this reason, in the pursuit of self-determination, Indigenous Peoples must reject these colonial relations and revitalize cultural land-based practices (Coulthard, 2014)

Coulthard's view touches on two inter-related points. First, it is commonly held that economic development advances a set of values, principles, and practices that are incompatible with authentic Indigenous ones. Christina Dowling, for example, states:

Traditional First Nations societies ... are essentially opposed to the very conditions of industrial development: the accumulation of wealth, growth and Westernized notions of "progress". Acceptability of these ideals, intrinsic to westernized economic success, does not dovetail with First Nations ways of life. (Dowling, 2005, p. 125)

The differences between capitalist and pre-contact Indigenous cultures are indisputable. But Coulthard's larger point is that because the Canadian state is responsible for both capitalist development and the protection of Indigenous rights and lands, it will inevitably take action to favour the former. This is because, as Michelle Mann (2000) points out, "[c]apitalism must, by its very nature, expand, seeking new markets and labour forces, in order to keep generating profit and new capital" (Mann, 2000, p. 47). Capitalism requires, among other things, private property rights to allow this investment, development, and expansion. But as previously mentioned, many Indigenous Peoples traditionally functioned as a collective and did not recognize the exclusive ownership of land or resources (Mann, 2000, p. 49). For George Manuel and Michael Posluns (1974), the issue of land is the fundamental difference between Europeans and Indigenous Peoples: for Europeans, land is viewed as a commodity that can be bought and sold, while for Indigenous Peoples it is seen as a relationship between a person and all creation. Like Coulthard, Manuel and Posluns suggest that decolonization must include revitalization of relational land-informed practices which by nature erode the power of the state and capitalism over Indigenous communities.

The Royal Commission on Aboriginal Peoples (RCAP) stated that "[s]elf-government without a significant economic base would be an exercise in illusion and futility" (Royal Commission on Aboriginal Peoples, 1996: 750). echoing the view that economic development is a necessary mechanism for Indigenous Peoples to achieve their goals of self-determination and prosperity. But as Harold Cardinal stresses, in pursuing economic development Indigenous Peoples cannot lose sight of who they are as Indigenous Peoples:

Rather than looking at economic development from the capitalistic view of making the most dollars possible, or from the socialist view of ensuring better distribution of capital, we must examine our development processes to make certain they are designed not only to help us out of our poverty, but to reinforce our identity as Indian people.... In order to accomplish this reinforcement of our cultural identity the planning for any meaningful development policy in an Indian community is going to have to involve as an integral part of the planning process, the elders, or the traditional people, who can give thrust and direction to any economic approach. (Weir, 2007, p. 9)

In this vein of thinking economic development is not necessarily incompatible with, and may even enhance, self-determination, Indigenous culture, and community cohesion. To alleviate negative risks, however, the processes by which economic development occurs involve collaboration and consensus with a diverse group of social relations (men, women, youth, elders, and knowledge keepers) to ensure alignment with community goals, priorities, and values (Orr, 2013, p. xiv). Here, the importance of participation, leadership, and

accountability are common themes in the literature on Indigenous economic development (Tulk, 2013, p. 8).

Poverty alleviation and the improvement of socioeconomic conditions are crucial themes in Indigenous economic development. Through economic development, communities hope to create sustainable employment with opportunities for career advancement and skills development for their members (Tulk, 2013, p. 8). Crucial as well are the non-human relations, particularly the relations to the natural environment, including the land, water, air, plants, and animals, which — from the Indigenous perspective — must be considered in any development decision. The concept of *Seven Generation* planning captures the essence of a popular thread in Indigenous thinking on development, which highlights the need to make decisions that will benefit *all relations* (human and non-human) for at least seven generations into the future (Jacobs, 2002, pp. 4–5).

For some, the choice between Indigenous culture on the one hand and economic development on the other is not a useful dichotomy. Alexis Celeste Bunton suggests that since so many Indigenous Peoples are engaged in for-profit economic activity and see it as a potential source of empowerment, we need an analysis of what she calls *Indigenous Capitalisms*, which reflect Indigenous peoples' shifting political relationships to settler-colonial states and international markets. The concept of *Indigenous Capitalisms* recognizes that Indigenous Peoples are “walking in two worlds” and trying to navigate between different value systems, but just because they are engaged in commerce does not mean they will be assimilated into the dominant society and culture. But at the same time, this concept acknowledges that there is no “one size fits all” solution and that some Indigenous Peoples and communities might have different sets of values and different goals (Bunton, 2011, pp. 65–68). To Bunton, the important questions are not capitalism or tradition, but “For what end do I labour? What defines happiness? Is identity individual or collective? What is the relationship of humans to the animals, plants, rocks and other elements with whom we share the planet?” and even, “What does it mean to be Indigenous in the twenty-first century?” (Bunton, 2011, p. 69).

Indigenous Development in Practice

As the above paragraphs describe, the goals and nature of Indigenous development differ from mainstream approaches. It is also clear, at least across Turtle Island, that hundreds of Indigenous communities are engaging in all kinds of development activity at an accelerating rate. From the early 1990s to 2007, the number of Indigenous businesses and economic development organizations increased from 3,000 to 27,000 (Weir, 2007). And by 2016, the number of Indigenous businesses in Canada was estimated to be 43,000 (The Canadian Council for Aboriginal Business (CAAB), 2016). Yet despite this growth, it is clear that Indigenous communities face considerable barriers to reaching their development goals, as evidenced by persistently high levels of government dependence and socioeconomic concerns. Many of these can be explained in part by the legacies of colonialism, which in Canada can include settler racism and/or discrimination toward Indigenous Peoples, geography, the unique legislative environment which Indigenous Peoples and lands fall under, lack of lands and resources, and social issues.

The Harvard Project on American Indian Economic Development (1987), founded by Stephen Cornell and Joseph P. Kalt, is one of the foundational research projects looking to understand the conditions in which Indigenous development occurs in the United States. Through an analysis of 67 American Indigenous communities, Cornell and Kalt find that

“[j]ust having resources is not the key — nor even necessarily a key — to getting a reservation economy off the ground” (Cornell & Kalt, 1998). They conclude that the most important factors to success are: sovereignty, the ability for a band to make their decisions across a range of governance matters; institutions, in order for bands to adopt predictable and fair policies and procedures largely separate from political interference; leadership, people in the community — elected and non-elected — that inspire action and change; and culture, which refers to the idea that the policies and institutions of self-government and development must be in line with the communities cultural attitudes and beliefs (Cornell & Kalt, 1998).

For Cornell and Kalt, while it is difficult to separate the importance of each factor, sovereignty and self-government are particularly important because they establish the tools and policy frameworks that are necessary to plan and implement development projects. In Canada, the *Indian Act* constitutes a fundamental barrier to de facto sovereignty and decision-making for Indigenous Peoples across a range of issues. The *Indian Act* created the legal category of ‘Indian’ and separated the dozens of Indigenous Nations across the country into hundreds of individual bands, each with their own parcel of reserve land. Responsibility for Indigenous Peoples, bands, and reserve lands was then transferred to the federal government. While the *Indian Act* also created the Chief and Council system to provide another layer of governance in First Nation bands, the actual decision-making powers of Band Councils are limited in important ways.

Crucial for economic development is how the *Indian Act* restricts a band’s ability to use their lands and resources. The *Indian Act* transferred legal title for reserve lands to the federal government for the use and benefit of First Nations. By default, this means that First Nation bands and individuals living on reserve do not own their lands, and the rules and processes of allocating these lands, whether for residential or commercial purposes, are subject to ministerial approval. The fact that First Nation communities do not own their lands *fee simple* means they cannot use these lands as collateral for investment or development, and the ministerial process places additional bureaucratic obstacles to possible development projects (Jobin & Riddle, 2019). It must be mentioned that in recent years the federal government has made greater efforts to work with First Nations to move toward self-government (Anderson, Dana, & Dana, 2006). For example, they have created legislative pathways through the *First Nations Land Management Act*, which allows bands to opt out of the sections of the *Indian Act* that apply to land management, to gain full control over their lands and resources (Indigenous and Northern Affairs Canada, 2019). These are limited, however, compared to negotiated self-government agreements, which transfer a wider range of responsibilities back to First Nation bands (Crown-Indigenous Relations and Northern Affairs Canada, n.d.).

Of course, the fact that colonization involved the dispossession of large amounts of Indigenous territory means that many First Nation communities still lack a land base large or suitable to meet their economic and social needs. Many communities have tried to correct this situation by filing two kinds of land claims against the federal government: ‘specific claims’ based on allegations that the government failed to deliver specific obligations under treaties, other agreements, or the *Indian Act*; and ‘comprehensive claims’ based on a First Nations’ traditional (pre-contact) occupancy and use of a particular territory (Alcantara, 2013). In either case, the claims process is historically complex and slow moving, and comes with no guarantee of success. For example, in 1991 about 2.67 million hectares in Canada were classified as reserve land (Indigenous and Northern Affairs Canada, 1991), whereas today it is 3.5 million hectares, or 0.35% of the total Canadian land base (Indige-

nous and Northern Affairs Canada, n.d.). But a considerable portion of this increase is not from the resolution of land claims, but from the Additions to Reserves (ATR) process which allows First Nations to buy private or public land and have it re-classified as reserve land. Since 2006, 348,000 hectares have been added through this process.

The ability of a band to govern and create economic development plans is also limited by financial constraints. Most First Nation communities still require financial resources from the federal government to fund their programs and services. But across Canada, many have argued that the funds provided to First Nation communities for development, including money to pay staff, create or maintain infrastructure, or invest in businesses, are limited and often subjected to burdensome bureaucratic constraints or proposal processes (Office of the Auditor General of Canada, 2003). Bands also face limitations on accessing the revenue they generate from the sale of their surrendered lands or non-renewable resources (Capital moneys) or from the sale of their renewable resources, leases, and fines and interest on their capital (Revenue moneys) — because these funds are transferred to the government as ‘Band moneys’ and can only be accessed with ministerial approval (Indian and Northern Affairs Canada, 2018). Similar to lands, however, in recent years some bands have been able to take full control of these funds by implementing federal acts (the *First Nations Fiscal Management Act*) which opt them out of certain sections of the *Indian Act*, or by negotiating self-government agreements with the federal government (Indian and Northern Affairs Canada, “First Nations Fiscal Management”). Finally, First Nation bands have historically had a difficult time accessing financing from commercial banks. While the restrictions on their ability to predictably leverage their lands and resources for low-interest loans is one issue, it has also been recognized that a lack of awareness about Indigenous Peoples, law, and legislation affects the way that commercial banks determine credit worthiness and risk (Cafley & McLean, 2016). While these issues have declined in recent years due to both an increasing interest from commercial banks and the development of Aboriginal Financial Institutions (AFIs) across the country, it remains a barrier to Indigenous economic development.

Colonization has also had broad social impacts that potentially affect the ability of Indigenous communities to achieve their development goals. Gwen Reimer (2010) suggests that the historical experiences of Indigenous Peoples over centuries of colonial expansion have disrupted Indigenous cultural identity and manifest today as ‘historic trauma’: “[t]he trauma to which Aboriginal peoples were exposed in the past continues to be manifested intergenerationally into the present. Unresolved and cumulative stress and grief experienced by Aboriginal communities is translated into a collective experience of cultural disruption and a collective memory of powerlessness and loss” (Reimer, 2010: x). Such terms help explain the continued prevalence of social issues, such as poverty, chronic unemployment, and low educational attainment, which compete for the limited resources that are available and make it financially difficult for small communities to obtain qualified staff to oversee economic development projects.

INDIGENOUS ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT IN NEW BRUNSWICK

People have lived in the territories where New Brunswick is now located for approximately 12,500 years. Over time, the people living here formed different Nations that are now known as the Wolastoqiyik, Mi’kmaq, and Passamaquoddy. The *Mi’kmaq* [mig-maw], the largest of

the three, historically occupied the coasts and rivers of Eastern New Brunswick, Nova Scotia, Prince Edward Island, the Gaspé Peninsula, and parts of Western Newfoundland. The *Wolastoqiyik* [*wool-ous-took-quy-ig*] lived along the Wolastoq (Saint John River) in New Brunswick as well as the southern shore of the St. Lawrence River. And the *Passamaquoddy* [*pa-sa-ma-kwah-dee*] lived along the St. Croix River and its tributaries in Southwestern New Brunswick and into Maine. Together with the Abenaki and the Penobscot who now reside in the northeastern United States, these Nations referred to themselves as *Wabanaki*, or *People of the Dawn*.

These Nations were similar, but not identical. Ways of life, including diets, hunting and harvesting habits, and the materials used for everyday items depended on the particulars of local geography (The American Friends Service Committee, 1989, p. xi). The centre of life was family and community. Communities were fluid, separating and rejoining depending on the circumstances and the seasons. Larger communities had a leader, or Sakom, who earned his position through his age, family connections, or his ability as a hunter. Leaders ruled more by consensus and persuasion than by coercion and fear, and matters of greatest importance were brought before the adult men and/or women of the community for consideration. Communities and Sakoms also participated in larger forums and assemblies where they would discuss matters of mutual importance with leaders of other communities (The American Friends Service Committee, 1989, p. 30).

Perhaps most importantly, these Peoples shared an intimate and spiritual relationship with the natural environment in which they lived. They believed that the natural world, including plants, trees, animals, rocks, and wind, possess spirits, which are considered equal to human spirits, and therefore deserving of care and respect. If a person was to use a plant or an animal for any reason, it had to be respected through gifts, prayer, or ceremony, and any part that is not used must be returned to the Creator (Lefort & Dennis, 2014). This relational understanding of the world meant that, prior to contact, many Indigenous Peoples did not prioritize the accumulation of material goods and had a relatively light impact on their natural environments: “wealth, as it is often conceived — the accumulation of things — was to them, or would have been, a positive hindrance.” More important was their relationships with their families and communities:

One could acquire more and more of these relationships, and usefully so; and relationships did not have to be carried from place to place like a weight. They were created and maintained through the routine sharing of goods and possessions, through feasts, exchanges of gifts, and through marriages. The larger a person’s network of family and friends, the greater number of people that could be counted on to rally around, whether to share food when times were lean, to go to war, to prepare feasts, to lavish presents on allies, or to support decisions. (The American Friends Service Committee, 1989, p. 24)

Still, people utilized the land and its resources for survival and for pleasure and engaged in complex systems of trade along the many river routes and coastal systems — connecting them to Nations into the interior of the continent and beyond (Prins & McBride, 2007, p. xv). But despite occasional difficulties, there was plenty of time for leisure, as indicated in the intricacy of their clothing, materials, ceremonies, and celebrations: “work did not dominate their lives as it did the lives of the French then, and many of ours now, and yet they had all that they wanted” (The American Friends Service Committee, 23).

By the early 1500s Europeans had reached the coastal waters of northern North America, making sporadic contact with Indigenous Peoples (most likely the Mi’kmaq) during

their efforts to explore or establish fishing camps. In fact, when Jacques Cartier passed Paspébiac Point on Chaleur Bay in 1534, he noted that the nearby Mi'kmaq community used sticks on the shore to make their pelts and furs more visible from the water, suggesting they already had familiarity with European traders (Rees, 2014, p. 9). But it was in 1604 that the French established their first European settlement on St. Croix Island, on the border of what is today Maine and New Brunswick, sowing the seeds of colonization and modern Canada.

The French called the Maritime region '*Acadie*' (Acadia) and claimed it for France. The French, vastly outnumbered and interested in reclaiming saltwater marshes for agriculture and engaging in fishing and fur trade, clung to small coastal settlements in Nova Scotia and did not dramatically interfere with First Nation territories or ways of life (Gould & Semple, 1980, pp. 3–4). Still, French settlement had significant impacts. The high demand for furs in Europe created a high demand in North America, and many First Nations were eager to trade for iron and copper goods, guns, alcohol, ammunition, and other European wares. As a result, First Nation people began to dedicate more time to hunting, trapping, and commerce, placing greater stress on natural resources. New diseases for which First Nation people had little or no immunity were introduced, and it is estimated that half to three quarters of the population died in the early 1600s. The effects of disease not only weakened First Nations in terms of numbers, but spiritually and culturally as well. Struggling to understand why such a disaster was occurring and why their traditional medicines and healers were unable to help, many turned to Catholicism (The American Friends Service Committee, 1989, pp. 26–27).

Despite the dramatic changes, the relationship between First Nations and the Acadian settlers was relatively positive. This harmony would soon be interrupted as competition between the French and English brought war and conflict to the region. From the late 1600s until the mid-1700s the two colonial powers fought constantly within and over the territory. Throughout this time the Wabanaki Peoples generally sided with each other and with the French to defend their territory from British occupation.

The British were eventually able to gain a foothold in the region, but due to their weak position were unable to control or rule the more numerous First Nation and Acadian inhabitants. In an effort to improve their own relations with the First Nations, and to undermine the Acadian relationship with First Nations, the British began to enter into treaties. In the 1700s dozens of treaties were struck between the British and First Nations, with at least 40 applying to the Wolastoqey and 32 to the Mi'kmaq (Milne, 1995, p. 5). The most significant of these treaties continue to be the Peace and Friendship Treaties, which refer to five different treaties that were signed between the British and the Mi'kmaq, Wolastoqey, and Passamaquoddy Nations between 1725 and 1779. While the intention, parties, and applicability of these treaties remains contested, some facts are relatively clear: the primary goals of the Mi'kmaq, Wolastoqey, and Passamaquoddy Nations were to secure their survival and their rights to trade, to practice their culture and religion, and to hunt, fish, and pursue their livelihoods — but most importantly, when making these agreements they never agreed to surrender any of their lands to the British (Milne, 1995, p. 5).

In 1763 the British and their colonial governments defeated the French in both the French and Indian War in North America and the Seven Years' War in Europe. And despite having forcibly evicted as many as 11,500 Acadians from the Maritimes between 1755 and 1763, the British were still concerned that uncontrolled settlement by future settlers would disturb the sensitive peace between the Crown and First Nation Peoples. The British solution was the *Royal Proclamation of 1763*, the intention of which was to create rules for future British settlement (Cuthbertson, 2015). In doing so, it outlined three important principles:

first, that the Crown would have a fiduciary responsibility for Indigenous Peoples; second, that Indigenous rights would be recognized; and third, that all land was to be considered Indigenous land unless it has otherwise been ceded through a treaty with the British Crown (Gould & Semple, 1980, pp. 22–27).

The spirit of the Royal Proclamation would have little impact in the years to follow. The population in the territories of what would become Canada soon swelled as British Loyalists from New England, fleeing the American Revolution, arrived in large numbers. Prior to this point, few Acadians and even fewer British subjects settled north of the Bay of Fundy. But between 1783 and 1784, 35,000 British United Empire Loyalists arrived in Canada, with as many as 10,000 settling in the Wolastoq (St. John River) valley (Rees, 2014, p. 32). The arrival of the loyalists marked a turning point for Wabanaki Peoples, who now found themselves outnumbered and greatly disadvantaged throughout their traditional territories.

In 1784 New Brunswick separated from Nova Scotia to become its own British colony, and the new government went to work designating private and Crown lands and parcelling out lots to new settlers. The new government, for their part, did set aside land (reserves) for First Nation communities (Gould & Semple, 1980, p. 55), but they were often unable and unwilling to stop even these small parcels from being encroached upon by new arrivals. The government did not have an official Indigenous policy, but early administrators hoped that by providing reserves to Indigenous Peoples they would eventually give up their migratory lifestyles in favour of agricultural-Western ones (Rees, 2014, p. 91).

As the years passed, however, few Indigenous Peoples took up farming, but because their territories were now increasingly inaccessible their traditional livelihoods became harder to sustain, resulting in considerable poverty and destitution (Cuthbertson, 2015, pp. 13–15). By 1841 Moses Perley, the Indian Commissioner of New Brunswick, submitted a damning report to the legislature about the status of Indigenous Peoples in the province. He reported that among the estimated 1,377 Indigenous Peoples in the province:

There is an appalling state of things ... calling loudly for the interference of the Government in behalf of this unfortunate people, the survivors of the ancient possessors and lords of the country, who are fastly yielding to the calamitous fate which so often befalls uncivilized man when brought into contact with the natives of Europe and their descendants.

Perley declared that if nothing was done “a mountain of reproach will rest on those who have supplanted them as lords of the soil without imparting any equivalent, therefore supplanting only to destroy instead of to civilize and save” (McGee, 1974, pp. 82–83).

While Perley was perhaps more sympathetic than other non-Indigenous Peoples during his time, his primary concern was to protect the remaining Indigenous lands from settler encroachment while pushing for greater education and assistance to encourage assimilation into modern agricultural society (Rees, 2014, pp. 91–93). The government of New Brunswick, however, had different priorities. In April 1844, the legislature passed the *Indian Act, An Act to Regulate the Management and Disposal of Indian Reserves in this Province* (Gould & Semple, 1980, p. 55). According to this act, reserve land that was deemed unproductive or underutilized by a government agent could be auctioned off to private buyers, and the revenue from the sale of the land would be held by the government to provide financial or material aid to Indigenous communities (Gould & Semple, 1980, p. 59).

In the first decades of New Brunswick's existence, its non-Indigenous inhabitants fared considerably better. Farming started slow, but due to the province's fertile river valleys it soon provided stability and sustenance to the region's growing population. The abundant supply of fish in the rivers and coastal areas also provided food and livelihood opportunities to the growing population, although it was not a major source of revenue for the government or for fishermen themselves (Rees, 2014, pp. 95–110). It was forestry, driven primarily by high demand for white pine for the shipbuilding industries in Britain, that was New Brunswick's dominant industry in the 1800s. By 1845, New Brunswick had 640 sawmills in operation throughout the province (Provincial Archives of New Brunswick, n.d.) and a large portion of New Brunswickers — even fishermen and farmers — passed their winter months in the woods (Rees, 2014, pp. 73–81).

In the latter half of the 19th century, Indigenous Peoples began to modestly integrate into the new colonial economy and labour force. Many found easy markets for crafts like moccasins, canoes, and baskets, while others worked as hunting and fishing guides. Some joined the non-Indigenous labour force working in shipyards, construction sites, mills, and farms. In some sectors, like forestry, Indigenous men were known for their strength and stamina and were considered ideal workers. Still, few gave up their pre-contact ways of living; instead, they preferred to supplement their traditional practices with modern seasonal labour (The American Friends Service Committee, 1989, p. 37).

In 1867 the Dominion of Canada was formed which had considerable consequences for Indigenous Peoples in New Brunswick and across British North America. After Confederation, responsibility for Indigenous Peoples and lands was transferred to the new federal government. Like the provincial governments before them, they hoped to foster the assimilation of Indigenous Peoples across the country into mainstream European Canadian society. By 1876 the government had passed its landmark legislation pertaining to Indigenous Peoples — the *Indian Act*. The *Indian Act* outlined the legal definition of an 'Indian' and formalized federal jurisdiction over reserve lands. In order to foster 'good governance' they established the Chief and Council system, which held limited resources and authority relative to the federal government (Moss & Gardner-O'Toole, 1991). And over time it evolved to include a range of measures designed to criminalize, penalize, and/or eliminate Indigenous language and culture, participation in political organizations, and even commerce and movement off-reserve. A cornerstone of the assimilation agenda, however, was the Indian Residential and Day School system, a network of day schools and boarding schools funded by the Canadian government and administered by various churches, the primary purpose of which was to 'civilize' Indigenous children by teaching them domestic chores, English or French, and Christianity while restricting their ability to see their families or practice their language and culture (W.D. Hamilton, 1986, pp. 13–19).

Confederation also had a considerable impact on New Brunswick and the future of Canada as a whole. The federal government set forth on an ambitious strategy of nation-building which included the inter-related goals of territorial expansion, infrastructure projects, and economic development. To this effect, the government moved West from Ontario and engaged in treaty making and occasional military conquest with Indigenous Peoples to acquire what would become the remainder of modern Canada. In terms of national economic development policy, the government hoped to foster greater domestic production across all sectors, but particularly the industrial sector. To this end, the federal government put in place a series of tariffs, duties, and other trade barriers to restrict imports and prevent foreign competition. These new policies dramatically affected the economies of the Maritime provinces

that had for decades relied on international trade with Britain and the United States. And despite the construction of the Canadian Pacific Railway in 1885 and other ad-hoc investments, the region's economies have lagged behind those of the other Canadian provinces (Savoie, 2017, pp. 75–78, 101–103).

Following World War II the federal government began to implement changes to the *Indian Act* and experiment with ways to redesign the delivery of services to Indigenous Peoples throughout the country. In 1951 the *Indian Act* was amended to remove restrictions on Indigenous ceremonies, to allow women the right to vote in band elections, and to allow First Nations to take the federal government to court over land claims (Royal Commission on Aboriginal Peoples, 1996). And in the same year, the government of New Brunswick and the other provinces agreed to include Indigenous Peoples in their programs for old-age assistance and blind persons' allowances — establishing the foundation for similar federal–provincial agreements for the provision of education, housing, and social services (Milne, 1995).

Yet, in the 1960s, the federal government made more unpopular decisions. In 1969 the Liberal government released the *White Paper* which outlined their new proposal for Indigenous–Crown relations. It called for the elimination of 'Indian' as a distinct legal status, the elimination of all Indigenous inherent and treaty rights, and the conversion of reserve land into private land. Ultimately, it called for Indigenous Peoples to become equal Canadian citizens and incorporated under provincial government responsibilities. The *White Paper* met widespread resistance from Indigenous Peoples across Canada and was eventually withdrawn, but not before ushering in a new era of Indigenous activism and resistance. The first Indigenous organization in New Brunswick — the Union of New Brunswick Indians (UNBI) — was formed in 1967 “to foster and promote greater self-determination of the Indian people of New Brunswick in the presence of all of their aboriginal, treaty, and residual rights” and “to foster and promote human development, social development, and economic development of the Indian people of New Brunswick” (Milne, 1995, p. 63).

During the 1980s there were several events that laid the foundation for progress toward the recognition of Indigenous and treaty rights in New Brunswick, the Maritimes, and Canada as a whole. The *Constitution Act* of 1982 included section 35, which states, “The existing aboriginal and treaty rights of the aboriginal people in Canada are hereby recognized and affirmed ...” While section 35 established the recognition of Indigenous and treaty rights, it does not define them and in practice did nothing to assist Indigenous Peoples in the Maritime Provinces, whose rights under the Peace and Friendship Treaties were still being restricted by provincial and federal governments (Milne, 1995). A few years later, however, in 1985, the Supreme Court of Canada (*R. v. Simon*) recognized the validity of the Peace and Friendship Treaties. Although this case only ruled on the Indigenous right to hunt, it laid the foundation for more elaboration in the years to follow (Harris, 2003).

In the late 1980s the New Brunswick government became more purposeful in their relationship with Indigenous Peoples in the province and began to verbalize their official support for Indigenous autonomy and self-determination. In 1989 they released a discussion paper entitled “A Provincial Policy Framework on Aboriginal Affairs”, which they hoped would advance self-government and help Indigenous Peoples share more fully in the benefits of the New Brunswick economy. It issued policy statements on four key areas: economic development, social development; aboriginal languages and culture; and aboriginal self-government. Economic development and self-government, however, were the provincial government's top priorities because “aboriginal people must have the opportunity and the

responsibility for their own development, both as peoples and as individuals ...” (Milne, 1995, p. 30). The UNBI opposed the working paper on grounds that it was created without consultation with Indigenous Peoples, that it lacked specific details on land or treaty rights, and failed to acknowledge the provincial role in Indigenous–Canadian relations. As the official response from UNBI to the government of New Brunswick made clear, “[o]ur trust relationship with Ottawa does not mean that you are ‘off the hook’ ” (Milne, 1995, p. 34).

The 1990s was a decade of considerable change for Indigenous Peoples in New Brunswick in terms of economic development, as communities began to establish their own for-profit businesses in greater numbers. The rise of on-reserve businesses, particularly retail operations (gasoline, convenience stores, tobacco) and gaming, eventually led to conflict with the Government of New Brunswick. This occurred for at least two reasons: first, the government perceived First Nation businesses operating on reserve as having an unfair advantage over non-Indigenous business because the application of provincial sales taxes to Indigenous Peoples in the province was waived for most items since the 1970s; and second, they believed that since First Nation peoples use some public services and infrastructure, they should pay some taxes on commercial activity. It was the view of UNBI that the provincial government should waive provincial taxes on Indigenous Peoples altogether, but in the end the provincial government and bands in the province negotiated limited taxation agreements on goods like tobacco and gasoline (Milne, 1995, pp. 51–55).

In the 1990s events were also in motion that would give greater clarity to Indigenous treaty rights in the Maritimes. In 1993 Donald Marshall Jr. of Membertou First Nation was arrested in Nova Scotia for fishing out of season and without a licence. The case went to the Supreme Court of Canada, and in September 1999 the court ruled that according to the Peace and Friendship Treaty signed between the British Crown and the Wolastoqiyik, Passamaquoddy, and Mi’kmaq in 1760/1761, First Nations in the Maritimes (communities, not individuals) have a treaty right to “earn a moderate livelihood” catching and selling fish. “Moderate” in this context, meaning only enough to secure the “necessaries” (*R. v. Marshall*, [1999] 3 SCR 456). The Marshall decision quickly led to violent conflicts in the region. In Yarmouth, Nova Scotia several hundred non-Indigenous fishermen, some of them armed, blockaded the local port to prevent access by Indigenous fishermen. And around Miramichi, New Brunswick, non-Indigenous fishermen destroyed lobster traps and accosted Mi’kmaq fishermen who were operating outside the regular season. As tension escalated the Supreme Court issued a clarification on the case in November 1999, stating that Indigenous rights were not unlimited and that Indigenous fisheries could fall under federal or provincial regulation if justified for conservation or other public objectives. It also clarified that the Indigenous right to gathering did not include logging, minerals, or offshore natural gas deposits (Cooper et al., 2010, pp. 15–16).

Although the Supreme Court ruling placed limits on the Indigenous right to fish, it opened up First Nation commercial fisheries in the region. The ruling meant that the Crown had a fiduciary responsibility to assist First Nations in realizing this opportunity, and as a result they began to negotiate Interim Fisheries Agreements (IFAs) with First Nation communities in the Maritimes. They also implemented the Marshall Response Initiative (MRI), which by 2007 had invested \$589.9 million to assist the development of First Nation fisheries in the region. As a result of these actions, fisheries comprise one of the most important economic drivers for First Nation communities in the Maritimes, bringing in tens of millions in revenue per year (Johnson, 2015, pp. 4–5).

In other key sectors, however, Indigenous involvement is more modest. In 2006 the Supreme Court of Canada ruled on the *R. v. Sappier; R. v. Gray* case that Indigenous Peoples have a right to harvest wood, but unlike fisheries, only for domestic use (New Brunswick, 2006). Still, since 1998 the New Brunswick government, through the Department of Natural Resources and Energy Development, has allocated 5% of the Annual Allowable Cut on provincial Crown lands to First Nation bands and has issued royalties from these volumes to each community. In 2014–2015, for example, the royalties paid to all bands for forestry was \$3.28 million (New Brunswick, n.d.). Still, it can be argued that for a province with a \$1.7 billion forestry industry (Forests New Brunswick, 2018), Indigenous involvement remains modest.

Forestry and other issues relating to Indigenous rights highlight the importance of land and land claims, which remains one of the most outstanding problems for First Nation Peoples in New Brunswick today. For example, while New Brunswick has approximately 6 million hectares of forested land (half of it Crown land) (Mann, 2000), First Nation communities own only 16 to 17,000 hectares in the province (Bartlett, 1986, pp. 19–20). In recent years there has been some movement on the issue of specific land claims over the loss of old reserve lands. In 2016, for example, Negootkook First Nation reached an agreement with the federal government for compensation for 10,000 acres of former reserve land (Hazlewood, 2016). And in 2017, Madawaska First Nation settled their specific claim for 3,200 acres that their community has lost since 1787 (City of Edmunston, 2017). In both cases these claims have opened up resources for communities to pursue development opportunities; but given that no lands in the Maritimes were formally surrendered to the Crown, the issue continues to loom large.

Case studies in New Brunswick and the Maritimes confirm that Indigenous communities face similar economic development challenges to others across the country in terms of funding, human resources, social issues, and land (Orr et al., 2011), but evidence also suggests that they are experiencing some success in economic development. In 2019 a report found that there were at least 850 band and privately owned Indigenous businesses in the Atlantic region that, as of 2016, generated \$1.6 billion in revenues — a 137% increase from 2012. The report also found that these businesses were engaged in a range of sectors, although in New Brunswick most appeared to be involved in the retail, service, and natural resource sectors (Bergman, 2019).

The increase in Indigenous economic development is not surprising considering the fact that there are now 16 First Nation communities in New Brunswick and a fast-growing population of 29,000 Indigenous Peoples. There are also a number of Indigenous organizations at the provincial and national level that work with, support, or represent these communities and individuals in matters relating to economic development. Crucial among these are the three tribal councils (the North Shore Micmac District Council (NSMDC), Mawiw Council, and Wolstoquey Tribal Council), which together support 15 of the 16 First Nation communities in the province; the New Brunswick Aboriginal Peoples Council, whose membership encompasses both status and non-status individuals living in the province, and who operate several businesses under their mandate; the Joint Economic Development Initiative (JEDI), a non-political organization that works to provide workforce and economic development opportunities for all Indigenous Peoples and communities in New Brunswick; Ulnooweg Development Group, an AFI that provides loans and business services to Indigenous entrepreneurs and communities in the Maritimes; UNBI, who continue to represent several First Nation communities in the province; the Atlantic Policy Congress of First Nations Chiefs Secretar-

iat (APCFNCS), who provide regional advocacy as well as research specifically focusing on Indigenous economic development. This list does not involve the numerous national Indigenous organizations, like the Canadian Association of Native Economic Development Officers (CANDO), the Assembly of First Nations, and many others.

Yet while there are numerous voices and perspectives, it is clear there is something of a holistic view of economic development held among many Indigenous Peoples in the region. In 2017 First Nation Chiefs from across the region endorsed a *Strategic Plan for Sustainable Development* which was created through the Atlantic Policy Congress of First Nations Chiefs Secretariat. The plan identified four strategic priorities: building net worth through the valuation and acquisition of knowledge, land, equipment, resources and agreements; increasing ownership, income and employment from businesses so as to be comparable to national rates; building workforce capacity and increasing participation in the regional economy; and tracking and maintaining evidence of socio-economic progress and opportunities. The plan also identified four guiding principles to underpin this strategy: self-sufficiency and self-sustainability, self-determination, long term stability, and integration with community well-being. In doing so, their vision for economic development highlights the importance of economic, environmental, social, cultural, and spiritual well-being (Atlantic Policy Congress of First Nations Chiefs, 2017).

FINDINGS

Today, there are 29,380 Indigenous Peoples living in New Brunswick on 16 First Nation communities and off-reserve in urban or rural areas of the province. There are also several Indigenous organizations involved in all sectors, including five with some involvement in economic development. First Nation communities have established a range of economic operations, particularly in the natural resource and retail sectors; and individuals, too, are forming their own businesses in larger numbers. And while Indigenous Peoples fall behind non-Indigenous Peoples in key socioeconomic indicators in the province, New Brunswick itself falls behind the national average and has continued to struggle to foster both economic and population growth. With so many people, communities, organizations, and needs, this project sought to explore: *what Indigenous economic development means to Indigenous Peoples living in New Brunswick, and attempt to identify obstacles, opportunities, and priorities to achieve these development goals.*

With support from the Special Call: Indigenous Research Capacity and Reconciliation Connection from the Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council, the Joint Economic Development Initiative (JEDI) hosted a 1.5 day *Mawi'omi* (meaning 'gathering' in Mi'kmaq) on May 14–15, 2019, in Fredericton, New Brunswick, to explore these issues. Titled "Building Better Together: Exploring Indigenous Economic Development in New Brunswick", this event brought together approximately 130 people involved in economic development from First Nation communities, Indigenous organizations, businesses, all levels of government, and academia to hear community and expert presentations and to participate in group discussions, surveys, and other activities around the themes of Indigenous development in New Brunswick.

The themes of the *Mawi'omi* were developed primarily by JEDI staff based on working knowledge and research relating to Indigenous development, while the specific content of the sessions was developed independently by the specific presenters. Select themes included

relationship building, what is Indigenous economic development, best practices in community development, the landscape of economic development in the Maritimes, recent initiatives in Eel River Bar First Nation, the role of economic development officers, economic development corporations, and business service officers, recent initiatives in Madawaska First Nation, Indigenous entrepreneurship in New Brunswick, and a keynote presentation by Chief Clarence Louie of Osoyoos Indian Band on his community's success in economic development.

The surveys and group presentations were designed exclusively by JEDI staff, and included a multiple choice and long answer survey, a group SWOT analysis, and group discussions. Throughout the event, JEDI staff circulated and collected the surveys and took notes for the various group activities.

The findings of the 1.5 day *Mawi'omi* largely confirm what others have written about development from the Indigenous perspective. As the presentations, comments, and survey results show, development from the Indigenous perspective in New Brunswick is intimately tied to Indigenous autonomy, community needs, and well-being. Indigenous participants ranked self-sufficiency and self-sustainability as the most important consideration for Indigenous development, followed by long-term stability, while factors like community health and wellness and language and culture revitalization were tied to profitability and growth. For the same question, participants suggested that environmental health and protection, improved community services, and reputation were least important. Similarly, when Indigenous participants were asked what they believed should be the priorities for their community's development, the number one response was creating employment opportunities for members, followed by the developing land and improving workforce skills. For the same question, participants suggested that enhancing environmental protection, improving public infrastructure, and growing already existing businesses were least important.

Findings relating to the challenges of Indigenous economic development also confirmed previous research. When participants were asked in the survey what were the top three challenges their community faced in terms of economic development, they cited financing as the top issue, followed by social issues and human resources. And when asked what services or supports could help foster community economic development, participants cited strategic planning as the top issue, followed by financial management and grant writing/proposal development. Participants suggested that many issues could be resolved through more long-term and predictable funding (with less bureaucratic constraints) for economic development projects and staff.

During the SWOT analysis, presentations, and group discussions, other issues like governance, leadership, shifting government policies, social issues, and location were also highlighted as key challenges. It should also be noted that governance and leadership were equally highlighted as a strength — emphasizing the diversity of opinions and perspectives within the province. Participants were also interested to learn more about high level issues such as taxation agreements, the *First Nations Land Management Act*, land codes, the *First Nation Fiscal Management Act*, and different governance models to organize economic development on reserve. It became clear throughout the event that there is no one single strategy to organize community development.

Findings relating to Indigenous development priorities in New Brunswick were more surprising. When asked in a survey what participants believed were most important for their community's future, they cited tourism, natural resources, and cannabis as the top three answers, followed closely by renewable energy. With the exception of natural resources,

these industries currently have limited participation from Indigenous Peoples and communities in the province, although they have been highly visible in recent years. These same sectors were also the most commonly cited in both the SWOT exercise and group discussions.

Partnership was a key theme of this event, and questions and presentations centred around how to build effective partnerships between communities, government, organizations, and institutions to better foster Indigenous development in New Brunswick. What is clear is that Indigenous Peoples at this event felt that there is a considerable distance between themselves, government, and the private sector, and that more needs to be done to reconcile these relationships. Interestingly, however, there was a strong interest from Indigenous participants to form partnerships with the private sector for potential business opportunities, mentorship, services, and investment. Participants suggested various measures to improve relations, including clearer and more frequent communication on programs and services, more effort by government and the private sector to learn about Indigenous issues and communities, and more effort by government and the private sector (including management) to visit Indigenous communities and organizations on a regular basis.

Returning to the research question: *What does Indigenous economic development mean to Indigenous Peoples living in New Brunswick?* Based on this *Mawi'omi*, it is clear that *economic development* is seen as a tool to increase the autonomy and self-sufficiency of Indigenous communities while simultaneously revitalizing language and culture and improving community wellness. *Key priorities* for economic development were the creation of employment opportunities and the development of workforce skills, as well as the development of lands and infrastructure for economic development, while *key opportunities* were the cannabis, tourism, natural resources, and renewable resource sector. And finally, *key challenges* to the pursuit of Indigenous economic development were financing, human resources, and social issues.

The following section provides details on the activities and exercises conducted as part of this event.

Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities and Threats (SWOT) Analysis

During the gathering, an hour was set aside to perform a SWOT analysis with participants. SWOT stands for Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, and Threats and is an exercise commonly used by businesses and organizations to help them create strategies to reach their goals. The strengths and weaknesses refer to things that are 'internal' to the organization or community, such as population growth or infrastructure, while opportunities and threats refer to things that are outside of the organization or community's control, such as investment dollars or policy change. After a brief explanation on the exercise, participants split into groups according to community — either a First Nation or city. Non-Indigenous participants or those not represented by any of the options were asked to assist other groups to brain storm answers and place them on the flipchart paper provided.

SWOT Results

In this section we looked at the combined top answers for each category with the number corresponding to the number of responses, whereas individual responses found in the survey results are reviewed in the next section. Unsurprisingly, as shown in Table 1, respon-

TABLE 1
SWOT Results

Strengths	Weaknesses
Language and Culture (8)	Social issues (4)
Location (6)	Leadership, governance, and administration (4)
Businesses (6)	Location (3)
Leadership, governance, administration (6)	Relationship with municipality (3)
Community (3)	Culture and language loss (3)
Opportunities	Threats
Hemp and cannabis (9)	Political instability and change (7)
Tourism (6)	Community wellness (7)
Natural resources (4)	Climate change and flooding (4)
Land development (3)	Resistance to change (3)

dents overwhelmingly emphasized language and culture, and to a lesser extent community, as one of the key strengths. Location and existing businesses were also identified as strengths, although these were also popular answers for weaknesses as well — demonstrating the varied opinions of participants. Social issues, culture and language loss, and relationships with the neighbouring municipality were also identified as weaknesses. Social issues during this session was used broadly to refer to poverty, poor physical and mental health, and dependence. Relationships was also repeatedly highlighted as a concern by participants who felt that municipalities, as well as provincial and federal governments, created plans and opportunities behind the backs of Indigenous Peoples and communities.

For opportunities, the most common answers were hemp and cannabis, tourism, natural resources, and land development. These first three also correspond to the most popular priorities for economic development in the survey results below. While natural resources has long been a priority and popular sector for Indigenous economic development in the province, hemp and cannabis and tourism are relatively new. However, with the legalization of marijuana in 2018 a few high profile companies have expanded their operations in Quebec, and a few retail stores (band and privately owned) have recently opened in First Nation communities in the province. Tourism, too, has become a high priority of the provincial government. And nationally, the Indigenous Tourism Association of Canada (ITAC) has been active in promoting Indigenous tourism across the country, taking steps to formalize a New Brunswick chapter. Considering the fact that participants highlighted language, culture, and community as key strengths, there appears to be belief among Indigenous Peoples in New Brunswick that this will be a competitive advantage in the tourism market.

Responses for the threat section were mixed, with several of the most popular answers (community wellness, resistance to change) being more appropriate for the weaknesses section. Still, this demonstrates the concern participants had regarding their communities' well-being and how that might be an obstacle in trying to move forward with development goals. Political instability and change referred primarily to provincial and federal government change, but here it included change to internal First Nation community government as well. As has been noted elsewhere, constant government change can make it difficult for First

Nation communities to advance economic development plans or negotiations over land claims or rights. Participants also highlighted the fact that turnover in provincial and federal administrative departments is also a key concern, as relationships and understanding can take years to develop.

Survey Results

Throughout the event participants were encouraged to fill out the following questionnaire, resulting in 43 responses. The numbers below indicate the number of people who identified that line item as one of their priority responses.

1. *What are the top three challenges your community faces in terms of economic development?*

Financing	24
Social issues	16
Human resources (finding qualified staff)	15
Lack of land (or access to good land)	11
Federal or provincial policies, regulations	11
Developing business plans and proposals	11
Infrastructure	10
Governance structure	9
Information (statistics, labour market information, economic forecasting, etc.)	5
Other	2

As noted above, the top three challenges facing First Nation communities in terms of economic development for attendees at the sessions were financing, social issues, and human resources or finding qualified staff. Financing is hardly surprising, considering that many First Nation communities report receiving little support for economic development, with many of the smaller communities not even receiving enough to fund an economic development officer (EDO) position. Social issues and human resources are both inter-related issues found elsewhere in literature relating to Indigenous development in Canada. Regarding human resources, this issue in part relates to funding, as many communities cannot support a large economic development staff; additionally, a good economic development officer is not always easy to find.

2. *What are the top three challenges that entrepreneurs in your community face?*

The top three challenges that entrepreneurs face were in fact five. Access to financing topped the list with 30 responses, but business plan and/or entrepreneurship training and social issues were tied at 19 responses for second, with financial and digital literacy along with marketing capacity ranked third with 11 responses. Participants also pointed out that both resources and staff for community economic development are limited, leaving little to support individuals in the community with their business ideas or operations.

TABLE 3
Survey Results on Question 2

Access to financing	30
Business plan and/or entrepreneurship training	19
Social issues	19
Financial and digital literacy	11
Marketing capacity	11
Mentorship access	9
Legal information	8
Accounting skills	8
Physical space to work	6
Other	2

3. *What are your top three priorities for your community's economic development?*

The top three priorities for a community's economic development selected by participants were creating employment opportunities for members (top on the list with 20 responses), developing land and/or building for industrial and business parks (a distant second of 12 responses), and improving workforce skills (workforce education and training capabilities) with 11 responses. In group discussions and sessions, many participants identified creating opportunities for members as particularly important because of high unemployment, which they perceived to be at least in part due to discrimination in the local labour market. For those who appeared to be actively involved or interested in the development of land, many made reference to the acquisition of more marketable retail land through the Additions to Reserves process.

4. *Which sectors are the most important for your community's future economic development?*

The most important sectors for a community's future economic development were tourism, natural resources (i.e., forestry and fishing), and cannabis, with renewable resources close behind. With the exception of natural resources these are relatively new industries for Indigenous Peoples in the Maritimes; however, the legalization of cannabis and widespread expertise in retail has resulted in some stores (band and privately owned) opening in the province. Tourism has also been actively promoted in New Brunswick by the government as well as by the ITAC, which has increased their involvement in the province in recent months.

5. *Which of the following factors would you rate as most important to successful community development?*

The factor rated as most important to successful community development was self-sufficiency and self-sustainability, which also had the highest response of all questions (32 responses). Long-term stability was second, with community health and wellness, profitability and growth, and language and culture revitalization tied for third.

TABLE 4
Survey Results on Question 3

Creating employment opportunities for members	20
Developing land and/or buildings for industrial and business parks	12
Improving workforce skills (workforce education and training capabilities)	11
Developing entrepreneurs	10
Forming joint ventures with industry partners	9
Participating in major projects	9
Increasing tax revenue	9
Protecting language and culture	8
Diversifying the economy	7
Enhancing environmental protection	7
Improving public infrastructure (water, sewer, roads, etc.)	6
Growing already existing businesses	5
Other	1

TABLE 5
Survey Results on Question 4

Tourism	22
Natural resources (Forestry, Fishing, etc.)	20
Cannabis	17
Renewable Resources	16
Retail	11
Manufacturing	9
Construction	5
ICT	4
Agriculture	2
Other	2

TABLE 6
Survey Results on Question 5

Self-sufficiency, self-sustainability	32
Long-term stability	22
Community health and wellness	15
Profitability and growth	15
Language and culture revitalization	15
Improved education and training	8
Environmental health and protection	5
Improved community services	5
Reputation	2
Other	0

6. *Which of the following do you think are most needed to support your community's economic development?*

Strategic planning	24
Financial management	19
Grant writing and proposal development	18
Project management	17
Information about economic opportunities	17
Marketing	11
Other	3
Information about labour market	2

Strategic planning was the item that respondents identified as most needed for a community's economic development, followed by financial management and grant writing and proposal development.

7. *Which of the following services do you think are most needed to support your community's entrepreneurs?*

Financing	27
Business plan training	22
Community support	19
Marketing training	11
Leadership training	11
Mentorship program	9
Human resources	8
Physical space	5
Other	2

Services identified as most needed to support entrepreneurs were financing, as number one, with business plan training and, then, community support as two and three, respectively.

8. *How could federal, provincial, and/or municipal governments better support Indigenous economic development goals and priorities?*

For this question, respondents were given the opportunity to provide their own thoughts on how federal, provincial, and/or municipal governments could better support Indigenous economic development goals and priorities. The responses for this question can be grouped in the following inter-related themes: funding, bureaucracy, connection and partnership, and programs and services.

Regarding funding, respondents called for better funding for community economic development initiatives, including recommendations to make resources available for entrepreneurs and to fund economic development officers in each community. The issue of funding overlapped considerably with calls for better services and programs: set asides for procurement, mentorship programs for entrepreneurs, and strategic planning and business development support. Regarding bureaucracy, respondents highlighted how government services need to be more flexible and predictable (less grant-based) to encourage long-term planning according to local needs. And finally, respondents suggested that relationships with government (specifically the federal government) could be improved through building better trust; to this effect, respondents highlighted the need for government to visit communities more regularly, to ensure the ‘right people’ from government are brought to the table, and to make information regarding programs, services, and other activities more easily available to Indigenous Peoples.

9. *In your opinion, how could the private sector better support Indigenous economic goals and priorities?*

For this question, respondents were given the opportunity to provide their own thoughts on how the private sector could better support Indigenous economic goals and priorities. The responses to this section can be grouped according to the following themes: partnership, support, and education.

While respondents provided few details, many felt that the private sector should be more open to partnership with Indigenous communities, particularly through the formation of joint ventures. Many also highlighted the need for the private sector to become more aware of Indigenous issues through educational initiatives. These included broad Indigenous issues relating to treaties, land claims, and federal legislation, as well as more local information about neighbouring communities and culture. The opportunity for the private sector to provide particular services, including mentorship, advice, and even investment was also highlighted as a desirable goal.

10. *What are your department or organization’s priorities relating to Indigenous economic development in New Brunswick?*

This question was intended for participants representing government, institutions, or the private sector, but received too few responses to draw any conclusions.

RECOMMENDATIONS

At the centre of this research project was a desire to explore *what Indigenous development means to Indigenous Peoples living in New Brunswick*, and to attempt to *identify obstacles, opportunities, and priorities to achieve these development goals*. The findings of this report confirm those found in other research: that economic development from the Indigenous perspective is intimately connected to the desire for self-determination, self-sufficiency, the revitalization of language and culture, economic and training opportunities, and community cohesion. Individuals highlighted a greater desire to create work and training opportunities for their members, develop lands and infrastructure, and pursue opportunities in the tourism, cannabis, natural resource, and renewable resource sectors. In furthering these goals, partici-

pants identified financing, social issues, human resources, and poor relationships with the government and private sector as key constraints.

What follows are several recommendations based on these findings.

Recommendations for the Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council (SSHRC)

1. *Continue to offer annual grants specifically for Indigenous communities and organizations*

This and pre-existing research confirms that economic development from the Indigenous perspective is multi-faceted and includes inter-related goals to improve socioeconomic outcomes, language and culture, self-sufficiency, and community cohesion. And while each Indigenous community faces unique obstacles, many have human resource and financial constraints. For this reason, it is recommended that SSHRC continued to offer annual research grants specifically for Indigenous communities and organizations that will allow them to explore issues in line with their priorities and be able to provide opportunities for their members while building capacity in research and project management. While Connection Grants may be appropriate for communities and small organizations, larger grants could be made available to those like the Atlantic Policy Congress of First Nations Chiefs, who have more experience managing complex research projects.

2. *Support the creation of diverse research products relating to Indigenous economic development*

Participants did not specifically identify a great need for research or information; however, participants had considerable interest and discussion around the processes through which First Nation communities acquire greater self-determination (land code development, referendums, *First Nations Land Management Act*, the *First Nations Fiscal Management Act*). These are relatively recent and complex issues, for which there is little publicly available information. Another prominent issue identified by participants was the perceived unwillingness or inability of the provincial and federal governments and private sector to engage in meaningful partnerships with Indigenous Peoples and communities. Exploring why this reluctance persists and how it can be overcome could be worthwhile. For these reasons, it is recommended that SSHRC support the creation of diverse research products relating to Indigenous economic development. As much as possible this information should be made available in various formats so that they are accessible to all levels of learners.

3. *Create or support a platform to share information and resources relating to Indigenous economic development*

Relating to the last recommendation, the resources that exist concerning Indigenous economic development are scattered and not easily accessible. For this reason, it is recommended that SSHRC create or support a platform to share information and resources relating to Indigenous economic development or Indig-

enous. Possible examples of existing platforms include the Atlantic Aboriginal Economic Development Integrated Research Plan (AAEDIRP) hosted by the Atlantic Policy Congress of First Nations Chiefs Secretariat, and the Indigenous Studies Portal Research Tool hosted by the University of Saskatchewan.

Recommendations for the Federal Government

4. *Increase funding for economic development for First Nation communities and Indigenous organizations*

Like other research, this project found that Indigenous Peoples in New Brunswick believe funding is their number one barrier to economic development. Without funding, communities have difficulty investing in new and existing businesses and hiring qualified staff. This dilemma is compounded by the fact that many communities are rural or have small land bases, making the generation of own-source revenues to invest in economic expansion difficult. For this reason, the federal government should increase funding for economic development for First Nation communities and Indigenous organizations. At a minimum, these funds should ensure that even the smallest communities are able to hire and train an economic development officer (EDO) and to begin investing in market research and proposal development. Separate moneys should also be earmarked for individual entrepreneurs, the management of which could go to communities or a third-party Indigenous organization. As much as possible, money for economic development should be long-term, predictable, flexible, and not proposal based.

Recommendations for the Provincial Government

5. *Create a task force to increase the inclusion of First Nation communities and Indigenous Peoples in the tourism, cannabis, natural resource, and renewable energy sectors*

Participants identified tourism, cannabis, natural resources, and renewable energy as priority sectors for economic development. The Government of New Brunswick has also identified tourism and cannabis as priorities, while natural resources already constitutes a major sector in the province. These overlapping interests create opportunities for mutually beneficial relationships and economic reconciliation, but the only forum in the province relating to Indigenous–provincial economic development is the newly struck Chiefs and Ministers economic roundtable. For these reasons, it is recommended that the Government of New Brunswick support the creation of a task force to increase the inclusion of First Nation communities and Indigenous Peoples in the tourism, cannabis, natural resource, and renewable energy sectors. This taskforce should include Indigenous and non-Indigenous representation from the government and private sectors and create common goals with clear targets and measurable indicators in order to ensure progress and accountability.

Recommendations for First Nations in New Brunswick

6. *Develop strategies to support self-determination, self-sufficiency and economic development*

First Nation communities have identified the need and desire for increased self-determination, self-sufficiency, and economic development opportunities. Identifying appropriate human and financial resources will be vital to developing strategic goals and objectives to achieve these factors. First Nation communities may have various economic development opportunities, such as hemp and cannabis, tourism, natural resources, land development and other opportunities. Aligning these opportunities with a strategic plan will be important for successful economic development in First Nations in New Brunswick.

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