Using Two-Eyed Seeing to Codevelop First Nations Housing Policies with Canada

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ABSTRACT

This study explores the use of Two-Eyed Seeing to guide the codevelopment of housing policies between First Nations and Canada, fostering meaningful collaboration and advancing self-determination. It examines historical contexts, challenges, and benefits, using interviews with Kitigan Zibi Anishinabeg, Quebec, and Potlotek, Nova Scotia, as case studies. Key principles for effective policy codevelopment include meaningful engagement, respectful dialogue, shared decision-making, and the recognition of Indigenous rights and sovereignty. The paper contributes to ongoing discourse on Indigenous governance and equitable partnerships.

KEYWORDS: First Nations, housing, self-determination, codevelopment, Two-Eyed Seeing

Housing is integral to the economic, social, and cultural well-being of First Nations communities. Historical colonization and inadequate resources from Canada and the Canadian Mortgage and Housing Corporation have led to persistent housing crises (Persaud & Ross, 2022). Codevelopment of policies is critical for fostering collaboration between First Nations and the Canadian federal government, enhancing Indigenous self-determination and governance. By examining the historical context, challenges, and benefits of First Nations housing, this paper explores the application of Two-Eyed Seeing in codeveloping policies. Through case studies from Kitigan Zibi Anishinabeg (KZ) and Potlotek, it highlights these communities' unique housing challenges and needs.

Historical Context and Challenges of First Nations Housing

Historical Backdrop of Policy Development for First Nations

The relationship between the federal government and First Nations has been shaped by a complex history of impactful policies. The Royal Proclamation of 1763 recognized Indigenous sovereignty and laid the foundation for treaty-making (Reid, 2010). However, assimilation policies in the late 19th and early 20th centuries, including the *Indian Act* of 1876, sought to control First Nations' lives, with Indian residential schools causing profound intergenerational trauma (Timofeev, 2021).

In recent decades, there has been growing recognition of Indigenous rights and self-determination. Section 35 of the *Constitution Act,* 1982 affirmed Aboriginal and treaty rights (Urquhart, 2019). The Truth and Reconciliation Commission's (TRC) 2008 establishment and its 94 Calls to Action highlighted the need for healing (Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada, 2015), while the National Inquiry into Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls issued 231 Calls for Justice, addressing systemic violence and human rights abuses (2019). Additionally, the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples (UNDRIP) (2008) was adopted by Canada in 2016 and became law in 2021 (Government of Canada, 2021).

Challenges and Limitations in Traditional Policy-Making Approaches

Despite important developments, many challenges persist. Indigenous Peoples continue to suffer from the impacts of colonial policies that aimed to diminish or eradicate First Nations culture, practices, and economic power (Colbourne et al., 2019). Issues such as poverty, inadequate housing, lack of clean drinking water, and limited access to healthcare and education disproportionately affect First Nations communities (Sheikh & Islam, 2010). Because of this, First Nations leadership and self-governance are crucial in public policy decisions regarding health, economy, politics, and social conditions (Stout & Kipling, 1998). The next section will discuss the severe housing crisis faced by First Nations on-reserve, its social and economic repercussions, the historical and systemic barriers to addressing these issues, and the ongoing efforts needed to promote reconciliation and Indigenous rights.

First Nations Housing Background

First Nations on-reserve housing is in crisis due to severe shortages, mold contamination, overcrowding, and structural deficiencies. Despite audits and mandates, Indigenous Services Canada and the Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation have made little progress, with 80% of housing needs unmet and funding not prioritized for the most affected communities (Office of the Auditor General of Canada, 2024). Indigenous Peoples in Canada are eight times more likely to be homeless than non-Indigenous people, comprising up to 80% of the urban homeless population (Thistle & Smylie, 2020).

Poor housing quality leads to various social and health issues, affecting education, job prospects, health, and family stability (Olsen, 2016). First Nations face challenges in

land development due to complex regulations, inadequate infrastructure, limited capital access, and socioeconomic barriers rooted in historical inequities (Persaud & Ross, 2022). Funding limitations force the construction of substandard housing unsuitable for climate and cultural practices. Poor conditions on-reserve also contribute to climate change vulnerability, homelessness, and domestic violence (Farha, 2017). And efforts to integrate First Nations into economic development often lead to their separation from communities, resulting in spiritual homelessness (Persaud & Ross, 2022). Despite initiatives inspired by the TRC Calls to Action and UNDRIP, progress remains slow, and First Nations continue to struggle with poverty and insufficient resources, highlighting the need for comprehensive strategies for economic reconciliation and self-determination (National Indigenous Economic Development Board, 2022).

The Concept of Codeveloping Policies and Legislation

Concept of Codevelopment

Codevelopment and comanagement are crucial to forging a new relationship between the Crown and First Nations. The Government of Canada (2023) defines codevelopment as a collaborative and voluntary process where Canada and First Nations work together on a mutually defined issue to achieve a jointly agreed-upon outcome, sharing responsibility for implementation. Codevelopment fulfills the requirements of free, prior, and informed consent while upholding First Nations' jurisdiction and self-determination. Comanagement involves shared authority and decision-making between Canada and First Nations regarding jointly owned processes or assets, ensuring both parties have an equal role in managing resources.

Codevelopment is essential for addressing historical injustices experienced by Indigenous Peoples. It acknowledges the intergenerational impacts of colonialism, assimilation policies, and systemic discrimination and aims to redress these by enabling Indigenous communities to regain control over their resources, revitalize their cultures, and improve socioeconomic outcomes. The Royal Commission on Aboriginal Peoples in 1996 emphasized the need for Canada to establish equitable and lasting coexistence with Indigenous Peoples, highlighting the inadequacy of prevailing approaches and the significant hurdles faced by Indigenous communities engaging with the federal government.

Legal and Policy Frameworks Supporting Codevelopment

Key Supreme Court of Canada cases, such as *Haida Nation v. British Columbia* (2004) and *Tsilhqot'in Nation v. British Columbia* (2014), affirm that Indigenous rights are inherent and require meaningful consultation by the Crown. This legal duty to consult is reinforced by the Cabinet Directive on Regulation, which mandates consultation when regulations may impact Indigenous rights (Government of Canada, 2024).

Internationally, Indigenous rights are recognized through UNDRIP, which Canada adopted in 2007 and implemented into law in 2021. UNDRIP emphasizes the need for free, prior, and informed consent from Indigenous Peoples before implementing legislative or administrative measures affecting them (UNDRIP, 2008).

Implementing UNDRIP involves judicial, policy, and legislative reforms, creating a framework for engagement and addressing historic power imbalances (Borrows et al., 2019). This approach ensures governments uphold international human rights standards, fostering a more equitable and just relationship between Canada and Indigenous Peoples (*Reference Re Public Service Employee Relations Act,* 1987).

Etuaptmumk / Two-Eyed Seeing and Codevelopment

Two-Eyed Seeing is a critical approach integrating the strengths of Indigenous ways of knowing with Western ways of knowing to benefit all. Bartlett et al. (2012) describe it as "seeing from one eye with the strengths of Indigenous ways of knowing, and from the other eye with the strengths of Western ways of knowing and using both together" (p. 335). This approach has been endorsed by Denny and Fanning (2016), who support Indigenous self-governance through comanagement processes, using Two-Eyed Seeing as a design and treaties as a model. They also explore other coexistence models, such as the two-row wampum belt, and delve into Indigenous Knowledge, including Mi'kmaq epistemology. Martin et al. (2017) highlight how Two-Eyed Seeing can reframe questions from an Indigenous perspective and offer solutions that incorporate both Indigenous and Western Knowledge. Martin (2012) emphasizes that "no one perspective is right or wrong; all views contribute something unique and important" (p. 34). This perspective guided my research, allowing me to analyze data through both lenses and ensure a comprehensive understanding that respects and integrates diverse viewpoints. By employing Two-Eyed Seeing, I aim to create research that is inclusive, balanced, and beneficial for all.

Two-Eyed Seeing should be adopted by everyone when working with Indigenous Peoples, ensuring that research respects and incorporates both Indigenous and Western ways of knowing. This approach fosters a more comprehensive and inclusive understanding of issues, leading to better-informed and culturally sensitive outcomes. Furthermore, the government should apply Two-Eyed Seeing during the engagement, consultation, and research phases of codeveloping policies with Indigenous communities. This will ensure that policies are equitable, sustainable, and reflective of stakeholders' diverse perspectives and knowledge systems.

Case Studies: Housing in Kitigan Zibi Anishinabeg and Potlotek

Introduction

These case studies highlight the distinct housing needs and challenges encountered by First Nations communities, providing a critical foundation for the codevelopment of housing policies that are attuned to these communities' specific circumstances and priorities. This section will justify the selection of these communities, outline the methods employed, and provide a comprehensive summary of the cases.

Background and Community Profiles

As an Anishinabekwe (Algonquin) born and raised in the KZ in Quebec, I bring a unique perspective to this research. I have lived and worked in various positions on-reserve. I have also lived, attended school, and worked off-reserve in both federal government and Indigenous organizations. I continually return to my roots, dance at pow wows, and practice traditional ceremonies. It is important for a researcher to conduct pre-research and understand customs, traditions, and historical governance structures before conducting primary research. I chose my nation and a Mi'kmaq nation because I already have a deep connection to them. Married to a Mi'kmaq man from Sipekne'katik and living in Mi'kma'ki (Nova Scotia), with stepchildren from Membertou who are Mi'kmaq and a son who is both Mi'kmaq and Algonquin, my positionality deeply influences my approach and commitment to understanding and respecting the nuances of both cultures.

Kitigan Zibi Anishinabeg, meaning Garden River Peoples, has over 4000 members and is recognized for its leadership in education, particularly in Algonquin language and cultural development (Crown-Indigenous Relations and Northern Affairs Canada, 2025, Kitigan Zibi Anishinabeg, 2021). The community offers a blend of individually owned homes (facilitated through CMHC's Section 95 On-Reserve Non-Profit Housing Program) and social housing comprised of low-income rentals (CMHC, 2018). Additionally, KZ has developed an internal housing approach tailored to its specific needs, enhancing its members' options. Historically, the Algonquin practiced a democratic form of governance where decisions were made collectively with a focus on consensus building (Kitigan Zibi Anishinabeg, 2024). Leaders were selected based on their skills and diplomacy, distributing goods received through trade to the community. This egalitarian system valued community ownership over individualism and was difficult for European settlers to understand (McGregor, 2004; Frenette, 1988). European concepts of wealth and resource ownership clashed with Algonquin traditions, leading to exploitation (McGregor, 2004).

Potlotek, located in Unama'kik (the land of fog), has a smaller population of 829 and its economy is based on commercial fishing, benefiting from various fishing licenses obtained after the Marshall decision in 1999. The community primarily consists of social housing (McDonald, (n.d.). Historically, the Mi'kmaq governance system was also democratic, but it was structured around a Grand Council (Sante' Mawio'mi), which included district Chiefs and a Grand Chief. Leadership was consensus-based, ensuring community participation in decision-making (Paul, 2007). The traditional governance emphasized respect for natural laws and democratic principles, contrasting with the hierarchical structure imposed by the *Indian Act* (J. Battiste, 2010; M. Battiste, 2016).

Methods

The primary research involved semi-structured interviews with seven members each from KZ, Quebec and Potlotek, Nova Scotia. Conducted in Fall 2022 with necessary permissions and ethical approvals, the interviews were incentivized, recorded with

informed consent, and concluded with opportunities for additional comments. Transcriptions were analyzed for thematic content, and the resulting community report's accuracy was confirmed by participants. Themes were identified through a systematic manual review of the transcripts, using an inductive, grounded coding process without software. Responses were organized into tables, and major and minor codes were refined through repeated review, comparison, and synthesis.

Analysis: Interpreting Data and Themes

The data presented in Table 1 are organized into four columns: theme, common perspectives across all participants, specific examples from KZ, and specific examples from Potlotek. The table has eleven rows, each representing a key themes: what is working well, issues with housing, proposed solutions, housing designs and cultural components, climate change and impact, local materials, modernization and energy efficiency, Elders and children, types of housing, process for housing selection and community efforts, and self-determination/autonomy. Each theme is accompanied by a short summary and one or more illustrative quotations drawn directly from participant interviews. This structure was designed to help readers understand shared issues while also seeing how these issues present uniquely in each community.

The analysis highlights similarities to demonstrate common priorities and challenges but also notes points of differentiation. In cases where differences were highly localized or outside the focus of this paper, they were acknowledged but not coded or presented in the table to maintain focus on broader themes and shared findings. This approach supports a clearer comparative analysis while leaving space for future research to explore unique community-specific concerns in more depth.

TABLE 1
Themes From Interviews

Themes	*Common Perspectives*	*Kitigan Zibi Anishinabeg*	*Potlotek*
What Is Working Well	Housing distribution systems are in place, with policies that are regularly updated. Careful consideration of materials, water, and sewer costs ensures sustainable housing development. Own-source revenue and specific funds are accessed to subsidize housing and repair costs. New homes are built to higher standards than the national building code, and skilled workers are employed to improve housing conditions.	Houses are distributed via a lottery system, which is generally considered fair, although some believe families with children should come first.	The community is working on a rapid housing initiative and replacing shingle roofs with metal roofs for storm damage repairs. "Finding money to fix old homes is tough," yet there has been noticeable improvement in health and safety over the years.
Issues With Housing	More funding is needed to build and repair houses, resulting in long waiting lists and overcrowded homes. Overcrowding accelerates wear and tear. Purchasing land on reserves and accessing loans from banks are challenging for community members. There is an increase in community membership due to recent legislation, a shortage of qualified tradespeople, and drug and alcohol addiction issues in both communities. Houses often need repairs and may have mold or insufficient insulation, and bands lack emergency repair funds.	"It is difficult for community members to purchase land on reserve." "Lack of funding results in community members living off-reserve and away from the community and culture."	Many people live off-reserve and want to return. Housing issues extend to land allotment; people can own houses but not the land. "No insulation in these walls, you can feel cold there. It's like being outdoors. I worry about my pipes bursting every winter." "If you don't have a job, you cannot get a mortgage and live off reserve. So, you're stuck living in a house with a bunch of people… it's a trickle effect, like it's sad." "The community was moved from the ocean to inland. We were taken away from the water. Our diet was primarily marine life and that was taken away from us. The water is like our buffalo. Now our diet is high in sugar and our people are suffering from diabetes, heart disease and more."

*Quotation marks are direct quotes from participant interviews.

Themes	Common Perspectives	Kitigan Zibi Anishinabeg	Potlotek
Proposed Solutions	Governments should provide more resources for housing needs. Cultural and community living programs can address issues like addiction. Trade programs in schools can develop local skills. Smaller, affordable homes can address space and cost issues. Economic development opportunities can significantly address housing challenges.	KZ placed a monetary land claim settlement in a trust that generates interest over time. Interest from the trust fund can address housing needs and repairs. A healing lodge with cultural teachings could address addictions. Low-income rental units allow community members to save for homeownership. High schools should implement trade programs. Private-public partnerships could reduce reliance on government.	"Single men and women need to be on their own so they can learn." Economic development opportunities could significantly address housing issues.
Housing Designs and Cultural Components	Housing designs should include cultural components like ceremonial areas and color schemes. Renewable energy solutions, such as solar panels and wind power, should be considered, although they require more funding. Small-scale agricultural solutions can address food security. Housing designs should meet specific family needs, with larger homes for bigger families and smaller homes for smaller families.	"Let us bring the wigwam in the 21st century," suggesting circular homes or units arranged around a playground. Small farms and gardens can address food security. Homes should be more energy-efficient, considering bulk purchases for solar panels and heat pumps.	"Incorporating culture would not be a priority for the Government but it is for us." Cultural considerations include consulting ceremonial and craftspeople and adding elements such as small sweat lodges to housing designs.
Climate Change and Impact Local Materials	Water rises quickly in the spring, causing floods and potential future submersion of the community. The water supply has high mineral and toxicity levels, leading to health issues like cancer and tumors. Warmer fall and spring seasons indicate changing weather patterns. Plants have decreased fruit production.	Moose sightings are rare due to clearcutting or overhunting, impacting food security and cultural practices. The community organized a 'moose camp' to teach Algonquin culture and moose utilization. Traditional artists notice changes in birch for baskets and canoes.	Erosion on Chapel Island is a concern during annual pilgrimages. The water supply turned black, causing concern. The community was significantly impacted by a hurricane, damaging numerous houses.

*Quotation marks are direct quotes from participant interviews.

Themes	Common Perspectives	Kitigan Zibi Anishinabeg	Potlotek
Local Materials	Access to crown land for raw materials like trees is crucial for building and repairing homes. Local trees can be used for construction, and local lumber production can create jobs.	Local rocks can be used for heat storage in solar homes.	"Moderate Livelihood could be utilized on crown land to access wood to build houses."
Modernization and Energy Efficiency	Most houses need repairs, especially for heat preservation. Training individuals to inspect homes and teach insulation practices can help.	"Homes should be modernized for energy efficiency. We are keepers of the land, which means monitoring our carbon footprint."	“Finding money to fix old homes is tough.”
Elders and Children	Elders and children need affordable, safe, and accessible homes. Large families need larger homes, while Elders need smaller, manageable homes. Accessibility features like fewer stairs, special showers, and wheelchair ramps are important. Support during power outages, such as generators, is essential.	"Children need a loving home free from drugs and alcohol."	Efforts to encourage elderly residents to move to smaller homes have been met with reluctance. The community experienced a surge in children born with autism, suggesting the need for fences for safety. Generators are needed so Elders and families can avoid food loss during power outages.
Types of Housing	There is a need for various housing types to accommodate different demographics, including young or single individuals and families. There is an emphasis on transitioning from social housing to homeownership to foster stability and ownership within the community.	KZ is proposing an apartment complex for young or single individuals. In addition, some claim rent-to-own programs for individuals on social assistance can be challenging due to those who have been renting long-term.	The community only receives one house per year from CMHC. Most homes are social housing, but there's an emphasis on encouraging those who can afford their own homes to do so. The community would benefit from options like obtaining homeownership through a certificate of possession.

*Quotation marks are direct quotes from participant interviews.

Themes	Common Perspectives	Kitigan Zibi Anishinabeg	Potlotek
Process for Housing Selection and Community Efforts	Communities face challenges in housing selection and efforts to build or repair homes. Efforts are being made to improve housing conditions through new rentals or renovations.	Housing selection was through a lottery system and considered fair by most. However, recently it went back to old ways and council chooses based on eligibility from complete applications. Some believe KZ should prioritize families with children. KZ is currently building more rental homes.	The Band council evaluates applicants using a point system, considering factors like family composition and spouse status. Housing selection decisions are challenging, raising questions like, “Do you give the house to the 22-year-old with four kids? Or do you give it to the 45-year-old still living in his parent’s basement?”
Self-Determination / Autonomy	Autonomy and cultural incorporation into living spaces are crucial for community development and independence. Safe, sustainable housing is believed to be connected to broader community well-being, including health, education, security, and economic development.	The *Indian Act* has created barriers and a reliance on governments, fostering a poverty mindset. Autonomy is seen as a way to become more independent and self-sufficient, with culture playing a role in repairing past damages. "Everything is connected and can be linked to housing. If community members had a safe, sustainable home, self-determination, and access to culture, then the community would be doing even better regarding health, education, security, and economic development." “For autonomy we need a steady revenue stream to operate, but the challenge is finding one that aligns with our values. While we could pursue resource-based revenue, many in our community oppose activities like forestry, mining, and even overflow dams due to their environmental impact”	The preservation of traditions is facilitated through self-determination and the incorporation of culture into living spaces.

*Quotation marks are direct quotes from participant interviews.

Discussion

The studies conducted in KZ, Quebec, and Potlotek, Nova Scotia, highlight recurring themes related to housing and community development within First Nations communities. These themes reveal challenges, potential solutions, and aspirations concerning housing and autonomy.

Both studies reinforce the critical role of adequate housing in ensuring community well-being. While certain housing aspects, such as distribution through a lottery system and the implementation of housing policies, are effective, significant challenges remain. Common issues include insufficient funding for housing construction and repairs, overcrowding, difficulties accessing land on reserves, and a shortage of qualified tradespeople. These challenges are exacerbated by the historical imposition of confined living spaces, forced policies, and legislation under the *Indian Act*, which does not account for growing populations and results in limited land and resources. It is difficult for members in a nation to obtain land on reserve via certificate position. The federal government has an Additions to Reserve process; however, it is slow.

Governments must respect Indigenous Peoples' rights to self-determination, land, and resources, as outlined in UNDRIP. This includes principles like free, prior, and informed consent and the right to self-governance. Acknowledging these rights can address power imbalances and build trust, ensuring policies align with international human rights standards. However, this respect is often not shown by the government, which continues to impose restrictive policies and slow processes that hinder self-determination and land access. To overcome power imbalances and foster trust, the government should engage in inclusive consultations with First Nations at all policy development stages. For example, the KZ emphasized the need for policies that respect their autonomy and cultural integrity, while Potlotek highlighted the importance of involving community members in decision-making to ensure housing solutions meet their unique needs. The studies advocate for increased government resources to address housing needs, including utilizing interest from trust funds and grants. Enhanced economic opportunities and access to resources would further enable communities to meet housing demands. Suggested solutions include establishing low-income rental units, introducing trade programs in high schools, and forming partnerships with the private sector to tackle housing affordability and space constraints. Integrating cultural elements into housing design, such as ceremonial spaces, traditional materials, and energy-efficient solutions, is also emphasized.

Climate-change impacts, such as rising water levels, changes in plant life, and wildlife decline, are observed in both communities. Efforts to mitigate these effects include incorporating renewable energy sources, raising awareness of government subsidies for renewable energies, and exploring local materials for housing construction. Climate change also affects food security, evidenced by the decline of moose, a staple food source for the Algonquins. The modernization of older homes to improve energy efficiency and the importance of designing homes tailored to the needs of Elders and children are also noted.

Self-determination and cultural preservation are pivotal for achieving successful housing outcomes. However, the *Indian Act* has imposed significant barriers to autonomy, governance, and community-led development, resulting in prolonged dependence on federal and provincial governments. This dependency has fostered a poverty mindset and limited the ability of First Nation communities to make decisions aligned with their values and long-term visions (Kelly, 2023). In this context, self-determination is viewed as a critical path toward increased independence, self-sufficiency, and culturally grounded housing solutions. As noted in the research, "Everything is connected and can be linked to housing. If community members had a safe, sustainable home, self-determination, and access to culture, then the community would be doing even better regarding health, education, security, and economic development."

Despite the ability of Nations to create their own housing policies, they still operate within confined spaces with limited land and resources. Policies impact other areas such as access to capital; Nations can only access what funds the government provides or what they generate through trusts and own-source revenue. This presents a significant barrier to building more homes. The inability to secure adequate capital limits the scale and quality of housing developments, perpetuating the cycle of inadequate housing conditions.

Regarding housing selection, the studies debate the fairness of lottery systems versus points-based systems. Community efforts to secure additional housing through initiatives like the rapid housing program are highlighted. Nations without trusts or economic development opportunities are forced to rely on limited resources provided by Canada. The governance structure imposed by the *Indian Act* and its associated funding create political instability and perpetuate poverty.

These studies stress housing as a crucial component of First Nations community development. They stress the need for increased government support, access to funding and resources, cultural considerations in design, and the integration of self-determination and community empowerment. Addressing these common themes enables First Nations communities to develop successful housing solutions that meet their unique needs while preserving cultural identity and fostering sustainable development.

Recommendations

Recognizing Indigenous Rights and Expertise

Governments must respect Indigenous Peoples' rights to self-determination, land, and resources, as outlined in UNDRIP. This includes principles like free, prior, and informed consent and the right to self-governance. Acknowledging these rights can address power imbalances and build trust, ensuring policies align with international human rights standards.

Meaningful Consultation and Inclusion

To overcome power imbalances and foster trust, the government should engage in inclusive consultations with First Nations at all policy development stages. Actively listening to and incorporating First Nations perspectives into policies and programs

is crucial. It is essential to engage directly with community members to gather their perspectives and insights, as this grassroots involvement ensures that policies are grounded in the actual needs and priorities of the people affected by them. This approach not only validates the experiences and voices of First Nations communities but also promotes more effective and culturally appropriate policy outcomes.

Tailored Housing Solutions

Two-Eyed Seeing recognizes the diversity of Indigenous communities and the need for tailored housing solutions. Housing designs should incorporate cultural components and renewable energy solutions, addressing specific cultural, geographical, and socioeconomic factors. KZ's proposal to modernize traditional housing designs (e.g., circular homes) and Potlotek's focus on incorporating small sweat lodges in housing designs exemplify how culturally appropriate solutions can be integrated.

Empowering Indigenous Communities

This approach empowers Indigenous communities to take an active role in codeveloping housing strategies. Training programs, capacity-building initiatives, and skill-sharing opportunities can enhance their ability to shape and implement housing policies. For instance, KZ's emphasis on developing trade skills within their high schools reflects the community's commitment to building local capacity.

Collaborative Governance Structures

Establishing collaborative governance structures, such as joint committees or boards, can balance power dynamics and foster trust. These structures ensure First Nations communities have a meaningful role in managing their lands, resources, and cultural heritage. For example, Nations would benefit from resources to build homes within their own Nations. This includes having access to sufficient land, increased and more flexible funding, and capacity-building initiatives. Investing in training programs for local tradespeople can ensure that First Nations communities have the skilled workforce needed to build and maintain homes. Furthermore, there must be investment in essential infrastructure such as roads, water, and energy systems, which are critical for sustainable development beyond just housing.

Balancing Traditional and Modern Practices

Two-Eyed Seeing seeks to balance traditional Indigenous approaches with modern housing practices. Indigenous communities can offer insights into sustainable design and energy efficiency while exploring ways to integrate modern technologies. For example, KZ's use of lock rocks for heat storage and Potlotek's interest in renewable energy solutions illustrate how traditional and modern practices can be combined.

Ongoing Collaboration and Learning

Two-Eyed Seeing promotes ongoing collaboration and learning between Indigenous communities and the government. This iterative process requires continuous engagement and knowledge-sharing to ensure the housing strategy remains effective and relevant. Long-term partnerships, joint monitoring, and evaluation processes can facilitate this ongoing collaboration.

Addressing Climate Change

Incorporating climate change considerations is crucial. Indigenous communities have firsthand experience with climate impacts, such as KZ's observations of changing wildlife patterns and Potlotek's erosion issues. Integrating traditional ecological knowledge with contemporary climate strategies can lead to more resilient housing solutions.

Conclusion

This study emphasizes the importance of employing Two-Eyed Seeing to codevelop First Nations housing policies with Canada, highlighting its potential to foster meaningful collaboration and advance self-determination. Through examining the historical context, ongoing challenges, and potential benefits of First Nations housing, we see the imperative for a partnership approach that respects and integrates Indigenous and Western perspectives.

The historical backdrop reveals a legacy of colonial policies that have marginalized First Nations, leading to persistent housing crises. Despite strides toward recognizing Indigenous rights and self-determination, significant barriers remain. Inadequate funding, systemic discrimination, and a lack of culturally appropriate housing solutions continue to plague First Nations communities. The case studies of KZ and Potlotek highlight these challenges, emphasizing the need for tailored, culturally respectful solutions.

Key principles for effective policy codevelopment include meaningful engagement, respectful dialogue, shared decision-making, and recognition of Indigenous rights and sovereignty. Implementing these principles requires a shift from top-down policy-making to a more collaborative, inclusive approach. Two-Eyed Seeing provides a framework for this shift, combining the strengths of Indigenous knowledge systems with Western methodologies to create holistic, sustainable solutions.

The recommendations outlined in this study advocate for recognizing Indigenous rights, engaging in meaningful consultations, tailoring housing solutions to cultural and geographical contexts, empowering Indigenous communities, establishing collaborative governance structures, balancing traditional and modern practices, fostering ongoing collaboration, and addressing climate change impacts. These steps are essential for creating housing policies that not only meet the immediate needs of First Nations communities but also support their long-term goals of autonomy and cultural preservation.

By integrating Two-Eyed Seeing into the policy codevelopment process, we can create a more equitable, just, and sustainable approach to First Nations housing. Ultimately, this study aims to contribute to the ongoing discourse on Indigenous governance and equitable partnerships, offering a pathway toward more effective and respectful collaboration between First Nations and the Canadian government.

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