

Indigenous Entrepreneurship

An Examination of Economic Development Policies to Inform Community Futures Peterborough

*We respectfully acknowledge that we are on the treaty and traditional territory of the Michi Saagiig Anishinaabeg.
We offer our gratitude to the First Peoples for their care for, and teachings about, our earth and our relations. May we honour those teachings.*

Background

The purpose of this project is to offer feedback to Community Futures Peterborough (CFP) about how to support Indigenous entrepreneurs and businesses in the Nogojiwanong/Peterborough area. CFP has a specific interest in examining both financial and other non-financial support opportunities for Indigenous entrepreneurs, with specific focus on Indigenous youth and women. Further, the project works to illustrate the need for appropriate and informed cultural awareness within economic development programs.

Research Questions

1. How should CFP conduct relationships with Indigenous entrepreneurs that remain respectful to Indigenous cultures and practices?
2. How should CFP offer culturally-informed loan opportunities to Indigenous entrepreneurs and businesses?
3. How should CFP offer non-financial supports (i.e. mentoring, training) to Indigenous entrepreneurs and businesses?
4. In what ways can CFP gear their financial and non-financial programs to Indigenous youth and women?

Methodology

1. Interviews were conducted with four organizations from across Canada that provide financial and non-financial support to Indigenous entrepreneurs.
2. Conducted comprehensive research/literature review of scholarly sources and various organizations.

Findings

1. The **perpetuation of colonialism is present within government legislation**, and this is evident in language and practice of governmental agencies.
2. Research emphasized the **importance of forming relationships with Indigenous peoples**, creating long-standing and trusting relationships which contribute to their overall success.
3. Research highlighted the **need for organizations to make their spaces inclusive**, accessible, and approachable for Indigenous entrepreneurs.
4. **Programs must be informed by Indigenous peoples, knowledge, and history**, therefore recognizing the importance of reconciliation and Indigenous voices at the table in all policy, conversations, and support systems. This involves the voices of Indigenous youth, women, and elders to ensure that programs are informed by the appropriate peoples.
5. **Loans should be conducted on a subjective basis** to ensure that there is flexibility and understanding in order to suit the entrepreneur and contribute to their overall success. This includes offering financial opportunities for those who face barriers to accessing equity.

"The relationship between the funder and the guarantor does not end at the [loan]. We are here to provide support, workshops and capacity building throughout the duration of the [relationship]."

- Interview Participant, Funding Organization Representative

Map of CFP's Service Area



Source: Government of Ontario. [2017]. *First Nations and Treaties*. [Map]. Retrieved from https://files.ontario.ca/treaties_map_english.pdf.

Recommendations

1. CFP should **ensure they form deep and trustworthy relationships with Indigenous communities** surrounding the Peterborough/Nogojiwanong area.
2. CFP should **allow for Indigenous entrepreneurs to assert their wants and needs** in a business relationship without forming prior assumptions. This involves **working collaboratively and engaging in ongoing cultural awareness training**.
3. CFP should **work to adopt the outlined goals of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada (TRC) Calls to Action** into their policies and practices. CFP is urged to note, among all others, declaration number 92 from the TRC Calls to Action which calls upon corporations to adapt the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples (UNDRIP) into their policies and operations.
4. CFP should **increase their involvement within the Peterborough/Nogojiwanong community** and educational institutions to involve Indigenous youth in their programming by creating scholarships, co-op programs, and opportunities for experiential learning.

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