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Building an Engagement Strategy from the Inside Out

A Toolkit in Support of
Moved to Action: Activating
UNDRIP in Canadian Museums



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Canada 

Overview

Building an Engagement Strategy from the Inside Out

This self-serve facilitated discussion will help inter-departmental groups of museum professionals develop a whole-of-museum strategy for engagement and consultation with Indigenous communities.

Estimated time: Full day session

This toolkit contains:

- Facilitator's Guide and Printable Session Agenda (DOCX)
- Session Slides (PPT)
- Preparing to Engage: Core Considerations (PDF)
- Recommended Resources (PDF)

Other formats of these items are available upon request (reconciliation@museums.ca).

Facilitator's Guide

Building an Engagement Strategy from the Inside Out

Toolkit overview

This self-serve facilitated discussion will help inter-departmental groups of museum professionals share, relate and develop a whole-of-museum strategy for engagement and consultation with Indigenous communities.

Estimated time: Full day session

Please note that each section of the session can be broken up and discussed incrementally over longer periods of time.

This document contains:

- Facilitator's guide
- Printable session agenda
- Preparing to Engage: Core Considerations (PDF)
- Recommended Resources (PDF)

Recommended items:

- Group brainstorming recording tool (ex. whiteboard, flip chart, shared google doc, padlet, etc.)
- Individual recording tool (ex. Paper and pen, word document, etc.)
- Printed copies of the *Moved to Action Report*, Engagement section for all participants
- Screen presentation or printed copies of Session Slides
- Job descriptions for every participant
- Organizational chart

Objectives

- Develop an understanding of **interconnections between engagement areas** and ways these can be synthesized/connected.
- Critical assessment of the **full scope of expectations** and capacity to initiate Indigenous engagement.
- Co-develop a **community-centred engagement plan** that considers how to acknowledge and protect Indigenous intellectual property; use **respectful terminology**; considers **protocols**; develops a **compensation plan and budgetary requirement**; and assesses the **long-term partnership capacity** of the museum.
- Co-develop a **list of whole-of-institution engagement needs** and areas requiring pre-learning/preparation

To Start

Reading

Towards Braiding resource by Elwood Jimmy, Vanessa Andreotti, Sharon Stein

New Standards for museums and the Engagement section of the *Moved to Action* report

Reflections

- How can your museum conduct engagement and partnerships with Indigenous Peoples in a way that **centres and supports the needs and interests of Indigenous communities** as identified by those communities?
- How can your museum consider the **assumptions underlying the intentions** for the engagement?
- How can your museum ensure there is **capacity to maintain the relationship** for the long term?
- How can your museum **provide necessary resources** to support and facilitate the work?



Facilitator's Guide

<p>Set the Tone (20 mins)</p> <p>Introductions</p> <p>Review agenda</p> <p>What are participants hoping to gain or contribute?</p> <p>Review discussion of “Brave Spaces.”</p> <p>Discuss the intended objectives for this session.</p> <p>Check:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ How is the discussion being recorded? ✓ Participants have reviewed the Standards in the Engagement and Partnership Section of the Moved to Action report. 	<p>Familiarize (45 min)</p> <p>In this section, develop an understanding of how and by whom work is carried out within your museum.</p> <p>5 min – section intro</p> <p>10 min – individual reflection</p> <p>30 min – group reflection</p> <p>Identify individual and intersecting roles for each participant.</p> <p>Individually, ask:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ What are the ways these positions interconnect and support one another to form the institution as a whole? ✓ What are the areas in your work or related work that you think would benefit from Indigenous contributions or leadership? <p>As a group, reflect:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Identify overlap and connections among institutional areas you identified as benefitting from engagement and consultation with Indigenous communities. ✓ Record a full list of these potential requests.
<p>Understanding of participant expectations for the session.</p>	<p>Understanding of interconnections between areas and roles in the museum.</p> <p>List of engagement areas and ways these can be synthesized/connected.</p> <p>Understanding of full scope of expectations for engagement requests.</p>

Break (10 min)

Review (60 min)

Define your expectations for ways Indigenous perspectives will inform the work you identified in the previous section.

Facilitator note: review the *Towards Braiding* resource by Elwood Jimmy, Vanessa Andreotti and Sharon Stein before commencing the session and make use of the additional prompts provided in the resources.

<https://decolonialfuturesnet.files.wordpress.com/2019/02/towards-braiding-handout-1.pdf>

Before continuing onto the next section, consider the following excerpt from the *Towards Braiding* resource:

If you find yourself in a position to “include” Indigenous peoples and perspectives in your organization, then there are many practical, ethical, and educational dimensions and implications to consider before and while doing so. It is important to consider how your invitation might end up reproducing harmful patterns of relationship and representation, even if your intention is to do just the opposite. Think through your expectations, your intentions, and the impact of your choices. Think where your institutional structures must first change to support meaningful, long-term, nation-to-institution partnerships.

(from *Towards Braiding*, link above).

Individually, reflect on:

- ✓ What are the intended outcomes of the engagement?

Together, reflect on the motivations behind the full list of your requests.

Discuss:

- ✓ What do you expect the Indigenous perspective to do for you?
- ✓ What are the possible impacts of your engagement proposal?
- ✓ How might your engagement activities end up reproducing harmful patterns of relationships and representation?

For example, are you trying to “fix” or get sign-off on a pre-existing exhibit? making the request to secure funding or fulfill a grant requirement? Are you making the request to check a box on an existing exhibit? Is the request being made to showcase the decolonizing initiatives of the museum?

Critical assessment of expectations and capacity to initiate Indigenous engagement.

BUILD YOUR INTERNAL ENGAGEMENT STRATEGY

Meal Break (60 min)

If conducting the session in person, we encourage session organizers to provide a communal lunch for participants.

Explore

Indigenous-Led & Community-Responsive (30 min)

Individually, identify the extent to which the areas you have identified could fulfill community needs.

Consider:

- ✓ How would you respond if you receive requests or encounter Indigenous perspectives that do not meet your expectations and projections?
- ✓ How would you accommodate these?

As a group, discuss ways that community needs will be identified and prioritized.

Discuss:

- ✓ What commitments can you make to the community to ensure their input will be meaningfully accommodated?
- ✓ How capable is your institution to support or accommodate requests made by communities in your engagements?
- ✓ Are you coming with a preformulated plan or allowing space for the community to meaningfully guide the work, including the option to say no?
- ✓ What is your plan and response if the community is unresponsive or denies your request?

Strategy for community-led engagement

BUILD YOUR INTERNAL ENGAGEMENT STRATEGY

Think Beyond Museum Walls (10 min)

Now that you have thought about the expectations and institutional operations that are driving and shaping your engagement plans, consider how engagement activities can occur outside of the institution.

As a group, discuss:

- ✓ What are some opportunities for the museum to go out to the community in conjunction with other activities that answer community needs or in support of community events?

Respecting Indigenous Authority and Intellectual Property (15 min)

As a group, identify the ways your engagement plan and any outcomes and activities will acknowledge and respect Indigenous authority.

Discuss:

- ✓ How will these perspectives be given priority in your institution?
- ✓ How will your engagement plan and any outcomes and activities acknowledge, respect, recognize and protect Indigenous intellectual property?

Respectful Terminology and Language (15 min)

As a group, discuss what work needs to occur to ensure proper and respect use of Indigenous names and terminology throughout the museum, including research and consultation.

Discuss:

- ✓ Have you put methods in place to ensure these are reflected at all levels of your institution?
- ✓ Do you have a funded strategy for consulting on Indigenous language use and translation?

Community-centred engagement plan

Plan to acknowledge and protect Indigenous intellectual property

Plan to use respectful terminology

BUILD YOUR INTERNAL ENGAGEMENT STRATEGY

<p><i>Honouring Protocols (15 min)</i></p> <p>As a group, discuss any protocols that might be required in conducting your engagement activities.</p> <p>Discuss:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Do you know the specific community protocols and practices related to engagement requests? ✓ Are you aware of the governance structure of the Indigenous community (traditional and contemporary)? 	<p><i>Re-Evaluating Compensation (15 min)</i></p> <p>As a group, identify and review all costs involved in the long-term partnership.</p> <p>Discuss:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Are there hidden costs and labour involved in your invitation to engage? ✓ How will the community be consulted on how they would like to be compensated for their participation, including fees/ rates, timing for payment, and method of payment? ✓ Are there opportunities to consolidate these engagement activities into a paid position (community coordinator or liaison)? 	<p>Break (10 min)</p>
<p>Protocol awareness</p>	<p>Development of compensation plan and budgetary requirements</p>	

Non-Extractive Partnerships (20 min)

Individually, reflect on:

- ✓ Where must your institutional structures first change to support meaningful, long-term, nation-to-institution partnerships?

As a group, discuss:

- ✓ What is your museum's ability to maintain a long-term nation-to-institution partnerships?
- ✓ How will capacity be left in the Indigenous community through your engagement and partnership?
- ✓ What measures can you put in place to ensure that your requests do not create additional burdens for Indigenous partners?
- ✓ What systems can you put in place to ensure the partnerships are maintained beyond individual staff?
- ✓ What are some possible obstacles to achieving this?
- ✓ Who will need to be involved to ensure this happens?

(ie. Food services to accommodate feasts, building services to accommodate smudging, board support for budgetary matters)

List some strategies your institution will develop for accommodating community-driven timelines or interruptions to your projects should they emerge. For example, maintaining notes and records, ensuring long-term funding is in place to support projects.

Institution Self-reflection (30 min)

As a group, further reflect on the institutional barriers that may inhibit this work from happening in a cultural safe and responsive manner.

As a group, discuss:

- ✓ Where must your institutional structures first change to support meaningful, long-term, nation-to-institution partnerships?
- ✓ What kind of learning and preparation does the museum need to do?

See Pre-Engagement Learning Checklist for assistance.

Assessment of long-term partnership capacity

Plan for institutional learning

BUILD YOUR INTERNAL ENGAGEMENT STRATEGY

Consolidating an Approach (15 min)

Now that you understand your whole-of-institution scope for engagement requests and have reflected on the intentions regarding engagement, return to your list of engagement areas and activities.

As a group, discuss how these can be refined and consolidated.

See Identifying Partners for an Associated Engagement Strategy for additional support.

List of whole-of-institution engagement needs and areas requiring pre-learning/preparation

Assemble

Now that you have considered and analyzed options for a museum-wide engagement strategy, assemble and review each area.

See the Pre-Engagement Plan Checklist for a framework.

Identifying Partners for an Associated Engagement Strategy

Do not underestimate the number of people that could become interested or involved in potential projects. This is the time to ensure that you understand the local and regional contexts of your engagement project, the people who help to shape those contexts, and what planning issues interest them.

Considered who potential partners are by thinking about others in your region and sector who may be conducting similar work.

- ☐ Identify the individuals and groups that will be **affected by the outcomes of your engagement areas**, including other organizations.
- ☐ Identified the individuals or groups who might be **undertaking similar engagement processes**.
- ☐ Compile a **list of partners**.

Once you have identified the partners and information about their influence, assess their interest and levels of understanding about planning issues.

Once this assessment is complete, you will be able to create a prioritised list of partners who you can approach to develop an associated engagement strategy.

Pre-Engagement Learning Checklist

Note: This is not comprehensive but is a starting point.

- ☐ Understanding that your current **knowledge and assumptions will be challenged.**
- ☐ Knowledge of the **governance structure and decision-making processes** of the community.
- ☐ Knowledge of the **history of the community and of the Indigenous Nation**, including the history and impact of the arrival of settlers to the area.
- ☐ Knowledge of **respectful terminology and language** used to refer to the community, Indigenous Nation, and the territory of the Nation.
- ☐ Knowledge of the **community's plans and priorities**, as derived either through their website, community or strategic plan, media or other communications.
- ☐ Knowledge of past projects through which the community has **undertaken engagement activities.**
- ☐ Knowledge of past projects undertaken by the community that may be **similar in objectives to those proposed by the museum.**

Pre-Engagement Plan Checklist

Topic	Description
Consultation Design	<p>The consultation design phase encompasses all discussions and planning to establish a co-developed consultation methodology.</p> <p>Checklist:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Discussion and agreement on a participatory approach to established an institution-to-nation relationship. ✓ Effective mechanisms for identifying and developing community priorities. ✓ Capacity assessments for both parties have been conducted and shared in advance of the consultation exercise. ✓ Proactive capacity building activities to address capacity. ✓ All accessibility issues have been identified, considered and planned for in the design of the consultation methodology.
Planning	<p>The planning phase brings together both partners to develop plans for conducting the consultations.</p> <p>Checklist:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ The process and proposals for the planned consultation are communicated to the partners. ✓ Methods for sharing and/or returning information collected through the consultations to participants in order to ensure equitable knowledge sharing. ✓ Plans for how the partnership(s) can be revised over time to ensure the objectives are flexible to accommodate all partners' needs. ✓ Mechanisms for establishing the partnership, for example through an MOU or letter of agreement, or through culturally appropriate means. ✓ Clear ethical protocols are developed, including an explanation of how consent must be sought and can be withdrawn at any point. ✓ Collaboration on the objectives, agenda and desired outcomes of the consultation.

Topic	Description
Engagement	<p>The engagement phase is the proactive and timely dialogues held on an ongoing basis between the community and museum partners, enabling them to shape strategic priorities and emerging objectives.</p> <p>Checklist:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">✓ Timeline for regular meetings and conversations, with jointly set agendas.✓ All meeting and consultation material sent well in advance.✓ Community insights are meaningfully and effectively reflected.✓ Specific and informed consent is given prior to any consultation taking place, recorded in a secure location and refreshed on an ongoing basis.✓ Consent is given and recorded for use of photos, social media and reference to people's names and/or organisations names.✓ It is clearly communicated to participants that they should only disclose information that they feel comfortable with.✓ Participants feel like they are able to provide valuable input without providing direct testimony of any past experiences or traumatic experiences.✓ Clearly communicate appropriate and accessible support services that are available before, during and after participation in consultation activities, as necessary.

Topic	Description
Accommodation	<p>The accommodation phase inputs and implements the dialogue, priorities, and objectives identified in the engagement phase.</p> <p>Checklist:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Clear and timely feedback on recommendations and actions provided, in accordance with the timetable decided upon at the beginning of the consultation process. ✓ Communities and individuals are given the option to be credited for their contribution. ✓ Provide options for how questions or feedback on all outcomes and actions from consultation participants will be incorporated. ✓ Actively engage participants to validate and shape the findings of the consultation beyond the initial engagement, in accordance with the timetable decided upon at the beginning of the consultation process. ✓ Clear actions and developments resulting from the consultation are communicated to all who participated in the consultation in an appropriate format, and all materials and deliverables are provided back to participants.
Partnership	<p>Partnership development comprises the consultation activities that result in long-term strategies, funding, and co-development in decision-making areas.</p> <p>Checklist:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Partner communities play an integral part in the planning process for all relevant areas, including providing authoritative guidance in all relevant areas. ✓ Relationships are strengthened by positive experience of collaborative, participatory consultations and trust is developed through a mutually respectful relationship.

*The material for this section has been adapted from the *Beyond Consultations* toolkit developed by Women for Women International
https://beyondconsultations.org/images/Beyond_Consultations_Tool.pdf

Recommended Resources

Topic	Description	Source
Ethical and practical guidance to engagement with Indigenous communities	Common blind spots and pitfalls that many settler organizations fall into related to their efforts toward Indigenous engagement, along with guidance to decolonize engagement efforts.	<p>Towards Braiding resource by Elwood Jimmy, Vanessa Andreotti, Sharon Stein</p> <p>https://decolonialfuturesnet.files.wordpress.com/2019/02/towards-braiding-handout-1.pdf</p> <p>https://decolonialfuturesnet.files.wordpress.com/2019/05/braiding_reader.pdf</p>
Step-by-step guide to community engagement	50 resources for community engagement, including tip sheets, case studies, and resources for online engagement.	<p>The Indigenous Guardians toolkit</p> <p>https://www.indigenousguardianstoolkit.ca/node/50/resources</p>
Engaging and Empowering Aboriginal Youth: A Toolkit for Service Providers (2009)	The purpose of this toolkit is to provide front-line service providers, facilitators, educators, community partners, and researchers a guide for making programs more appropriate and relevant for Aboriginal youth.	<p>The Youth Research and Evaluation eXchange</p> <p>https://youthrex.com/toolkit/engaging-and-empowering-aboriginal-youth-a-toolkit-for-service-providers/</p>