

Northern Ontario Research, Development, Ideas and Knowledge

**N·O·R·D·I·K·**  
INSTITUTE



# **CULTURE, RESILIENCE AND PLACE**

## **ANNUAL RESEARCH REPORT** 2017/2018



## DIRECTOR'S REPORT

*BY SEAN MEADES, DIRECTOR, NORDIK INSTITUTE*

“ Throughout my first year as Director of NORDIK, much of our attention as an organization has focused on maintaining momentum. The previous ten years of community development research, capacity building, and dialogue have provided us a strong foundation. The dedication of our team members – including staff, Research Associates, and students – demonstrates a strong commitment to growing the role we play in promoting a more vibrant, caring and sustainable communities across the North.

Much of the work we've accomplished to that end is profiled in the pages that follow, but some highlights outside of our primary projects have included:

- Assisting the Sault Ste. Marie District Social Services Administration Board complete its strategic planning for the provision of Early Years services to Indigenous families, and with successful applications that garnered over \$4.1 million of investments and 69 new early years spaces for Indigenous children in Sault Ste. Marie over the next two years;
- Assisting community partners promote their growth and sustainability through strategic planning and assistance with funding proposals (bringing nearly an additional \$250,000 of investment to the region in the process);
- Launching new collaborations with the Community Development Corporation and Millworks Centre for Entrepreneurship to combine our resources and expertise to develop a peer mentorship and lending network for social enterprises;
- Shedding light on the socio-economic, tourism and cultural benefits of the restoration of passenger rail service at NEORN's 2018 Rail Summit;
- Participating in the development of the Algoma region's first Food Tourism Strategy, led by Algoma Kinniwabi Travel Association; and
- Expanding dominant notions of heritage through our contributions to the Community Heritage Ontario 30th anniversary conference, organized by the City of Sault Ste. Marie and its Municipal Heritage Committee.

Momentum, however, is not measured only in the number of projects we complete or the dollars we pull in. The changes in our local culture are an important measure for our progress. The growing acceptance of a community resilience framework and the acknowledgement of the importance of culture and placemaking in community development has been among NORDIK's (and its partners') strongest impacts to date.

Finally, we would like to extend special thanks to our departing board members, *Nadine Roach*, *Katie Elliot*, and *Cynthia McCutcheon*. Chi-miigwech for your years of service.

## BOARD OF DIRECTORS:

*Katie Elliott* – Chair, *Meghan Boston-McCracken*,  
*Cynthia McCutcheon*, *Dr. Pedro Antunes*,  
*Dawn White*, *Nadine Roach*, *Asima Vezina*

SEE Project Staff: *Katie Blunt*, *Erika Luoma*,  
*Jamie McIntyre*, *Jordan Wettlaufer*

Research Assistants: *Samantha Kyle*,  
*Zach Low*, *April Westley*, *Caitlin Wieja*

Students: *Quinn Bifano*, *Sara Gray*, *Hsar Kae*,  
*Tracy Mentis*, *Brendan Sutherland*, *Riley Tessier*

Graphic Designer: *Gabrielle Fogg*;  
Communications: *Kristy McKay*

## RESEARCH STAFF & STUDENTS:

Director of Research: *Sean Meades, PhD. (c)*

Faculty: *Dr. Laura Wyper*, *Dr. Sheila Gurner*,  
*Dr. Rosa Sanchez*, *Dr. Derek Rice, PhD (c)*

Research Coordinator: *Dr. Jude Ortiz*,

Researcher: *Lauren Doxtater*





## COLLECTIVE IMPACT: COLLABORATIVE INTERVENTIONS FOR A NORTHERN CULTURAL ECONOMY

Throughout the 2017-2018 year, numerous NORDIK researchers and partners moved planning efforts for the Collective Impact process forward through our *Organize for Impact* phase, funded by the Ontario Trillium Foundation. Trillium's Collective Impact funding stream has three stages in total, with the third focused on implementing a work plan over a period of up to five years.

Existing partners were joined by new partners from the Community Development Corporation of Sault Ste. Marie and Area and Millworks Centre for Entrepreneurship.

Developing the work plan and governance model for the collaborative led the partnership to address some of the conceptual and logistical challenges underlying our initial theory of change and test sites. Following months of dialogue, the partnership narrowed its focus to central Algoma and on creating economic opportunity and diversification through developing the cultural economy by fostering respectful relations and collaborations; building entrepreneurial capacity; and filling knowledge gaps by conducting and disseminating research pertaining to cultural economies, rebranding the initiative as Collaborative Interventions for a Northern Cultural Economy. Special thanks go to **Dr. Jude Ortiz, Dr. Gayle Broad, Lauren Doxtater, Zachary Low, Jordan Wettlaufer** and to our placement student from Algoma University's Social Work program, **Tracy Mentis** for moving the initiative forward.

## GARDEN RIVER FN STRATEGIC PLAN

In January 2018 NORDIK was contracted to by Garden River First Nation to work with its Chief and Council to develop a strategic plan for its term of Council. Planning sessions took place in late January under the facilitation of **Sean Meades** with support from Researcher **Lauren Doxtater**, Program Assistant **April Wesley**, and Research Assistant **Zachary Low**. The plan was finalized and adopted by council in April.



***Northeastern Regional Partnership for Adult Education (NRPAE) Regional Session, Timmins***

## **NORTHEASTERN REGIONAL PARTNERSHIP FOR ADULT EDUCATION**

In April of 2018 NORDIK Institute was contracted by the Northeastern Regional Partnership for Adult Education (NRPAE) Coordinator and steering committee, who had acquired project funding through The (former) Ontario Ministry of Advanced Education and Skills Development (MAESD) \*now changed back to The Ontario Ministry of Training, Colleges and Universities (MTCU) to develop a sense of both regionalism and local solutions for adult education in Northeastern Ontario. The NRPAE was part of the regional partnership funding project by the Ontario Ministry of Education (EDU) and comprised a group of school boards in the northeast region of the province.

The NRPAE is one of the regional partnerships in Ontario and part of a set of deliverables, based on the EDU's vision for adult education in Ontario. The NRPAE aims to work with students, school boards and other partners to provide and promote quality educational services to adults of Northeastern Ontario. NORDIK's role was to conduct local and regional community engagements sessions in order to build relationships across relevant adult education partners as a means to make adult education more seamless and accessible for the adult learners; by improving information sharing, collaboration and coordination amongst these community partners.

Led by a research team consisting of **Dr. Laura Wyper**, **Zachary Low**, **Sean Meades** and **Sara Gray**, four local sessions took place throughout the month of May in Sudbury, North Bay, Timmins and Sault Ste. Marie.

These sessions focused on the needs of the adult learners, the needs of the agencies who were participating in the sessions and developing localized solutions related to adult education pathways. Participants at the local sessions were largely represented by school board based adult credit and literacy and basic skills upgrading programs, college sector ACE programs, and employment training agencies. There were however, a diverse range of participants from Ontario Works, Indian Friendship Centres, First Nations employment and training centres, multicultural associations and newcomer settlement agencies, libraries, and disability services.

Many themes emerged from these local sessions but the common ground that resonated across them all were:

- The need for equity of access for adult learners
- The basic needs of adult learners
- The need for cooperation and sharing between agencies and funders (Ministries)

The regional session took place July 11, in Timmins. The format of the day was based on some of NORDIK's concerns related to the common ground and implications from the local sessions. The research team decided to focus the regional session on building cooperation between agencies and funders, specifically. This included reviewing the emergence of the NRPAE and its current strategic plan as a living document and by utilizing the World Café process as a means of expanding and increasing the inclusivity of the strategies previously identified by the NRPAE. Guest speakers were also included in the regional session to speak to working together in solidarity with a more de-colonial mindset, and in thinking of social innovation as the guiding principles for this work. The day started with **Dr. Gayle Broad**, from Sault Ste. Marie and **Aaron Paquette**, from Edmonton, AB, speaking to these topics.

NORDIK's final report to the NRPAE coordinator and steering committee included recommendations and future considerations in order to ensure an equitable and accessible participatory process for primary, secondary and tertiary adult education agencies to participate in the NRPAE group and process.





**Social Enterprise KuKu Hut**  
Kagawong, Manitoulin Island

## SOCIAL ENTREPRENEURSHIP EVOLUTION (SEE): SUSTAINING SOCIAL INNOVATION IN THE NORTH

After four years of exciting efforts in developing and supporting youth social innovation in Northern Ontario through SEE, new funding from the Ministry of Economic Development and Growth supported an expanded partnership with PARO Centre for Women's Entrepreneurship, the Small Business Enterprise Centre (SBEC) in Timmins, the Regional Innovation Centre in Thunder Bay, and YouLaunch in Sault Ste. Marie. The goal of this partnership is to build the capacity of Business Development Officers (BDOs) and Economic Development Officers (EDOs) across the region to provide support to startups as well as scaleups in the social enterprise sector.

### Social Enterprise and Entrepreneurship

## Resources



**Four of Many Social Enterprise and Entrepreneurship Resources, Available at [seethechange.ca](http://seethechange.ca)**

The work of SEE staff during the 2017-18 year focused on providing training and resources to BDOs and EDOs across the region, and building an inclusive partnership by bringing together local groups in social enterprise asset mapping. Asset-mapping was conducted in 7 communities, including Kenora, Dryden and Red Lake, Sudbury and Timmins, and in the First Nation communities of Thessalon and M'Chigeeng. Training for all of the communities served by Waubetek Development Corporation resulted in substantial interest and capacity building with First Nations in the Robinson-Huron Treaty area, while training for over twenty Small Business Enterprise Centres' staff as well as twenty-three Community Futures Corporations also substantially increased capacity of the sector to provide ongoing development and scale up support.

A regional roundtable in February 2018, held in Sault Ste. Marie with over 60 participants, launched a series of resources available in both official languages on the SEE website ([www.seethechange.ca](http://www.seethechange.ca)). Panelists, workshops and guest speaker **Danielle Levigne** combined to provide participants with greater knowledge while strengthening the regional partnership.

Funding for the 2018-19 year has been secured and ensures that the collaboration shall continue to build capacity within the social enterprise sector, a key tool for community economic development in the North.





*Deep Breath, Michael Burtch. Cast Sculpture, Commissioned 2004*

## RESEARCH ASSOCIATE MICHAEL BURTCH AWARDED MEDAL OF MERIT

*Michael Burtch*, Research Associate with NORDIK Institute, was awarded Sault Ste. Marie's highest honour in March 2018, when he received the City's Medal of Merit for his outstanding work in culture and the arts. Family and friends, together with City dignitaries, celebrated the award with a dinner at the Civic Centre in his honour.

Michael's work has benefitted Sault Ste. Marie, Algoma District, and particularly the arts community, in many ways – as a visual artist his sculptures illustrated several public and private locations, including the John Rhodes Community Centre; as an educator his passion for art history has engaged students and adult learners; and as a curator and former Director of the Art Gallery of Algoma he has supported the development of both artists and audiences across the region. In 2016-17, Michael chaired the cultural committee for Sault Ste. Marie's strategic planning efforts, resulting in a much increased understanding of the role culture plays as one of the four pillars of community resilience, and a renewed commitment by the City to supporting cultural endeavors.

In the last few years, Michael's research into the Group of Seven has brought recognition to the vital role the Algoma region played in this historical collaboration of artists which has defined Canadian art throughout the world. This work made a significant contribution to the identification of Sault Ste Marie and Algoma as one of Tourism Ontario's key Group of Seven locales to visit.

NORDIK congratulates Michael on his achievements and this particular award – way to go!!!



*The Painted Land, Film Feature and Awards*



**Communities Engaged In Research**

## CULTURE, CREATIVE AND THE ARTS: BUILDING RESILIENCE IN NORTHERN ONTARIO

Jude recently completed her PhD in Arts, Education and Creative Industries at the University of the West of England, UK. Her thesis *Culture, Creativity and the Arts: Building Resilience in Northern Ontario* focuses on how engaging in the arts strengthens community identity and fosters the emergence of local culture-based economies and creative tourism, generally, and the critical role artists in rural communities play in achieving such, specifically.

The study presents a new integrated, community system framework for understanding the central role culture, creativity and the arts play in building adaptive capacity and providing the social and commercial infrastructure necessary for successful transitioning and continual regeneration.

The research also highlights similarities between artistic and community developers' practice suggesting that capacities gained through engaging in the arts parallel those necessary for developers' to work effectively within emergent, inclusive, and holistic approaches that underpin continuous community adaptation in addressing change. This extensive research engaged diverse cultural and geographically located artists, arts organizations, economic and tourism development staff and funding agencies.

## COALITION FOR ALGOMA PASSENGER TRAINS (CAPT) AND NORTHEASTERN ONTARIO RAIL NETWORK (NEORN):

The Coalition for Algoma Passenger Trains (CAPT) and the Northeastern Ontario Rail Network (NEORN) have been very busy over the past year in their advocacy work for the reinstatement of passenger rail service in Northeastern Ontario. Highlights included holding the Northeastern Ontario Passenger Rail Summit in Sault Ste. Marie in May and the publication of a well researched commentary with the Northern Policy Institute (NPI).

The Rail Summit featured several experts who spoke to over 130 attendees about the economic, environmental and social reasons that passenger rail should be brought back to the existing rail lines in Northeastern Ontario ---from Toronto to Hearst (connecting at Cochrane with service to Moosenee), from Hearst to Sault Ste. Marie and from the Sault to North Bay. The NPI commentary can be read at: [www.northernpolicy.ca/passengerrail](http://www.northernpolicy.ca/passengerrail). CAPT continues to advocate for funding from Transport Canada for the Mississinabie Cree First Nation led Mask-wa Oo-ta-ban (Bear Train) which would be the first First Nation operated rail service in Ontario.

CAPT and NEORN very much appreciate the research and community development support that they receive from NORDIK.



**Northeastern Ontario Passenger Rail Summit, Sault Ste. Marie**





*Mural Artwork, UIYFC*

## URBAN INDIGENOUS YOUTH FOR CHANGE

Urban Indigenous Youth for Change (UIYFC) received funding from Indigenous and Northern Affairs Canada to deliver a series of workshops and programming dedicated to providing youth opportunities to build relationships with elders, skills training and cultural based programming. Beginning in February 2018, UIYFC has hosted workshops in the following topic areas, such as: Hide Tanning Demonstration, Hair Braiding 101, Ribbon Skirt/ Shirt Making and a Goulais Bay walking tour among others.

Two prominent workshops that UIYFC has organized and developed are Rainbow Road and the youth programming for the Shingwauk Residential School Gathering. **Kimberley Pelletier**, **Teddy Syrette** and Elder **MaNee Chacaby** hosted the 1st Rainbow Road, a UIYFC event held during Sault Pride week. This once-a-month event formed the needed space where Indigenous youth who identify on the LGBTQ2S spectrum could gather to share, find support and network with one another and their allies. This event has continued with UIYFC support and is under the direction of Kimberley Pelletier. As a lead organizer of youth programming for the Shingwauk Residential School Gathering, UIYFC worked with the Shingwauk Anishinaabe Student's Association and Youth Social Infrastructure. The programming was successful in building relationships between youth and residential school survivors through their participation across nine different workshops.



## INDIGENOUS YOUTH LEADING YOUTH ANTI-RACISM PROGRAM

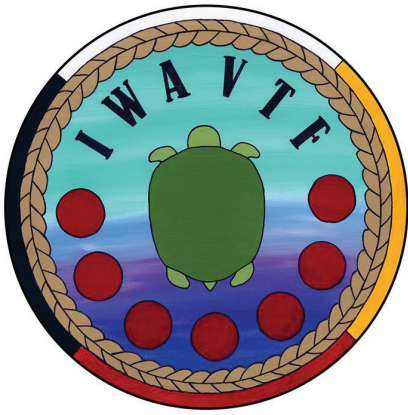
Under the umbrella of UIYFC, the Indigenous Youth Leading Youth Anti-Racism Program (IYLYARP) has been in development since September 2017. Working together with the Ministry of Indigenous Relations and Reconciliation (MIRR), now Indigenous Affairs Ontario (IAO), the program focuses on leadership skill development for Indigenous youth as they step into the role of anti-racism educators. The program consists of six sessions that are delivered in elementary, high school and post-secondary institution classrooms by Indigenous youth across the province. This program promotes active, positive responses to racism, and addresses safe spaces and emotional supports, which are imperative to the sensitivity of the issue discussed.

UIYFC has invited Indigenous youth and elders to participate on an advisory circle that informs the direction, workshop activities and content through the development process including everything from curriculum to graphic design. The Youth Advisory Circle and MIRR traveled to Thunder Bay and Sioux Lookout in March to receive feedback from students attending Dennis Franklin Cromarty, Keewaytinook Okimakanak and Pelican Falls High School regarding the program. Throughout this week, discussions were held with approximately 200 students to ensure the program spoke to their experiences.

With several revisions completed, the final draft of the program is now resting with Indigenous Affairs Ontario. Once the program has reached final approval, application can be made by Indigenous organizations to IAO so that they may support young Indigenous leaders through training in the program by UIYFC and delivery of the program in communities across Ontario.



*Indigenous Youth Leading Youth Anti-Racism Program, Conversation and Feedback in Thunder Bay*



## INDIGENOUS WOMEN'S ANTI-VIOLENCE TASK FORCE

The Indigenous Women's Anti-Violence Task Force (IWAVTF) was created through an identified need for an increase of Indigenous-led advocates to address the issue of violence against Indigenous peoples after the Murdered and Missing Women's March on February 14th, 2018. During the formation of the Task Force, NORDIK Institute has supported the development of this initiative through strategic planning exercises that culminated in the IWAVTF adopting their vision and objectives. The Task Force has also finalized a Terms of Reference and has held a series of monthly planning meetings devoted to establishing its goals and actions.

The Task Force is 100% Indigenous-led and founded by *Nimkii Naabkaawagan Family Crisis Shelter*, *UIYFC*, *Missanabie Cree First Nation* and *Vivian Jiminez-Estrada*, all who are recognized as the core membership.

The IWAVTF has dedicated Indigenous members from various local organizations from within Baawaating and Ketegaunseebee Territory.

## SOUP STE. MARIE

Soup Ste. Marie was held in April, 2018 at Sault College. This year's theme centered on "Environmental Sustainability and Community Needs". Knowledge keeper, *Frank Belleau* delivered a teaching on the environment to attendees preceding the pitch competition.

Soup Ste. Marie is a crowd-funding event whereby purchasing a ticket gets you a fresh bowl of soup and one vote. Project or business pitches are presented based on the theme, the audience selects the winner through their vote and the winner receives 100% of the profits of ticket sales. Algoma Educational Gardening Committee was awarded the proceeds to help support their work with the Food Bank Farm.



*"Environmental Sustainability and Community Needs", Soup Ste. Marie, 2018*



## NORTHERN CORRIDORS AND RESTORATION

NORDIK's partners, restoration specialists *Meghan Krajchi* and *Ron Bes*, completed another year of habitat restoration activities at Stokely Creek Lodge in 2017, combatting riverbank erosion and enhancing pollinator habitat along bike and ski trails. In the Spring of 2018 they also partnered with RAIN to assist in their Riparian Restoration project in collaboration with the Kensington Conservancy and the Central Algoma Freshwater Coalition. Krajchi and Bes offered assessment of erosion in riparian areas and identification of natural species that may be used to curtail erosion, training and oversight for volunteers to assist with planting.

## VALUING NORTHERN LIBRARIES PROJECT SHORTLISTED FOR INNOVATION AND EXCELLENCE AWARD

In partnership with Ontario Library Services North (OLSN) and five pilot public libraries across Northern Ontario, NORDIK has developed a toolkit that libraries may use to evaluate their impact. The two-year project, commencing in 2016, used a participatory approach to identifying indicators of community impact, and provided training at three regional workshops and one Northern Ontario conference for library staff on using the toolkit. In collaboration with OLSN staff, an on-line training for toolkit use was also developed.

NORDIK has recently received notice that one of the pilot communities, Temiskaming Shores Public Library, has been short-listed for the for the Valuing Northern Libraries Project for 2018 Minister's Award for Innovation and the Angus Mowat Award of Excellence.

The Valuing Northern Libraries Project provides a new and innovative way for libraries to measure their impact in their communities, creating a tool for both the evaluation of library services and library advocacy. This toolkit is an innovative approach to a return on investment study as it allows small, rural, Northern and First Nation libraries, who may otherwise have been unable to afford consultant fees, to complete return on investment studies independently. This project affirms that libraries are a valuable contributor to the culture, wellness and economy of every community.



Northern Ontario Research, Development, Ideas and Knowledge



## RESEARCH, DIALOGUE, ANALYSIS AND REFLECTION

### THANK YOU TO OUR PARTNERS AND FUNDERS:



### ALGOMA UNIVERSITY'S CESD CLUB

**NORDIK Institute**  
**Algoma University**  
1520 Queen Street East  
Sault Ste. Marie, Ontario  
P6A 2G4

[www.nordikinstitute.com](http://www.nordikinstitute.com)