



Artist: Tracey Metallic, 2020

**Circle of Abundance**  
**Coady International Institute**  
**St. Francis Xavier University**

**COADY**  
INTERNATIONAL INSTITUTE  
ST. FRANCIS XAVIER UNIVERSITY



## Introduction

In June 2020, Coady Institute's International Centre for Women's Leadership launched the *Circle of Abundance* Campaign supported by 11 Indigenous women and our alumnae base across the country. Starting with your generous gift, we immediately launched a fundraising campaign to raise a new \$1 million for Indigenous programs over the next three years. We met this target in just four months and celebrated this accomplishment with all of our supporters in November.

Our advisory group of Indigenous women leaders, composed of graduates, mentors, Elders and expert advisors chose the name Circle of Abundance. The name signifies a shift in thinking about Indigenous communities in terms of poverty and deficits into recognizing and building upon the existing assets and gifts. In particular, the Circle of Abundance celebrates Indigenous women's strength and resilience. This group will help chart a new direction for Coady: using a strength-based and assets-based approach, they will support the overall vision of our Indigenous programming, thereby increasing Indigenous ownership of this initiative. We are honoured to work with each of these women who are trailblazers in their communities and sectors and continue to develop our relationship with the group as a whole.

The COVID-19 pandemic has had a devastating effect on us all over the past year and changed the way we have lived, worked and played. At Coady Institute, we shifted quickly to prioritizing support for our partners and alumni, scaling up our online convening and networking role, engaging leaders in new and innovative ways. Like everyone, we were forced to pause on our engagement in-person in communities and on our campus. Despite this, we have accomplished so much including supporting new groups of participants who otherwise would not have been able to take part in our educational offerings. The numbers in this report tell this story.

We're very grateful to have you as a supporter of this important work along with the longstanding support given to us by other funders. While our fundraising work continues to ensure sustainability and to enhance co-creation of initiatives with Indigenous communities, we're proud of the year we have had - focused on growth, strategy and exciting transitions as we move our work to a new level.



## Reflections on Truth and Reconciliation

Here in Mi'kma'ki, the ancestral and unceded territory of the Mi'kmaq people, members of the team at Coady Institute gathered on Indigenous People's Day, June 21, to acknowledge and honour Indigenous ancestors, Mother Earth, and all our relations to the water, land, and air.

We know there is much work to be done in repairing relationships with those directly targeted by historical and ongoing violence. Indigenous communities across Turtle Island continue to experience intergenerational trauma from these experiences at the hands of those in power. The extent of this violence and oppression is still being revealed and will continue to impact generations of Indigenous Peoples. We must respect the healing journeys many are on and constructively support them in ways that go beyond words and rhetoric.

This year Indigenous Peoples Day arrived as we were mourning, sharing in the grief of Tk'emlúps te Secwépemc First Nation where 215 children were uncovered in a mass grave on the site of the former Kamloops Indian Residential School, and the Sioux Valley Dakota First Nation as they worked to identify 104 potential graves at the site of the former Brandon Indian Residential School. So many other communities have gravesites of their children at residential schools across the country and the numbers verified continue to significantly grow into the thousands. We join the call for documentation and records to be fully revealed and shared with our Indigenous brothers and sisters, for all former residential schools across the country.

At Coady Institute, we strive to be part of positive change and continue to have much to learn and do. We urge all levels of government and Canadian citizens to honour and act on the Truth and Reconciliation Commission's report and 94 calls-to-action. We further request that the recommendations from the inquiry into missing and murdered Indigenous women and girls be fully addressed. The recent passing of Bill C-15 is one step in right direction. Bill C-15 aligns Canadian law with the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples. This includes Indigenous Peoples rights to self-determination, language, culture, and the need for free, prior, and informed consent on anything infringing on their lands or rights. As National Chief Perry Bellegarde said, "UNDRIP will help right the injustices of past, and ensure that Indigenous Peoples have a bright and prosperous future in Canada."

For 62 years Coady has been educating leaders who are creating economic and social change. Our work reflects current realities while recognizing our shared history. What we know to be true is that Indigenous women are the backbone of their communities and their leadership roles are paramount now and into the future. We strive to support them as they move from strength to strength through this initiative.



## Our Work This Year

### Education Programs

From July 2020 to June 2021 we were able to newly design and deliver three sets of educational programs specifically for Indigenous leaders, all in an online format. A total of **133 participants** took part in these courses and received certificates of completion from Coady Institute.



### By the Numbers

- Overall participant satisfaction rating in courses: **4.67/5**
- Overall participant rating on relevance of knowledge learned in courses: **4.53/5**

### Indigenous Asset-based Community Development Workshops –

A precursor to the courses below, four sets of three workshops were open to any First Nations, Métis, and Inuit participants residing in Canada and introduced Indigenous approaches to community-driven development. They also included the introduction of practical and straightforward community-building tools that participants took back to their communities for immediate implementation. A total of **60 participants** took part in the workshops. Applications for each workshop set were accepted until filled.

### Building on Abundance in Indigenous Communities –

We received a total of **53 applications** and **31 participants** took part in this course, offered for the first time. It uses Indigenous principles and practices for community work that build on strengths and assets for action. Participants learn from each other's stories of community building and lived experiences and are provided with community-building tools and methods to meet the needs of present-day Indigenous families, communities, and Nations. Many of the participants are moving on to enhance or initiate new community-driven projects.

**Indigenous Women in Leadership** – We received **146 applications** and accepted **26 participants** for this course. It has proven so popular we will offer it again in October. It is grounded in relational practices and guides women leaders to identify and connect with cultural values, build upon their already trusted leadership capacities for community-led, community-driven development, and create spaces for social change.

**Other Coady courses** – with support from our sponsors, we were able to provide **16 full bursaries** for First Nations, Métis and Inuit participants in **eight** other Coady courses this year, including Social Enterprise, Research Methods, Climate Change, Global Women's Leadership, Peacebuilding and the Future of Work and Workers.



### Representation

- Applications received: **82%** identify as First Nations, **16%** as Métis, and **2%** as Inuit
- Representation from **every province and territory**
- Data on numbers Indigenous nations/communities being reviewed



## Partnerships

Our team collaborated on the following project partnerships this year:

- Applying an energy-focused Asset Based Community Development framework in remote Indigenous communities with Pembina Institute
- Going the Distance Project, with the Further Education Society of Alberta (FESA)
- **Paddles Up!** Grand Challenges Canada's Indigenous Innovation Initiative and Coady's Circle of Abundance Program have come together to deepen our support for Indigenous innovators and entrepreneurs.



## Feedback

“Amazing course!! Shifting my perspective and deepening my understanding through an Indigenous lens was something I was not expecting but am very so grateful for now. Thank you for the experience to learn and connect with other Indigenous people in community development.”

## Events

We held several events this year, and all are available for viewing on Coady Institute's YouTube Channel. Links are listed below.

**Indigenous (Canada) Session: From Where We Stand – Indigenous Women's Voices & Perspectives.** September 2020. Go to: [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=clrT3h-PXS8&list=PLebqtij-hmh3jb0NCUrURhz\\_KDh2-2Q8m&index=16](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=clrT3h-PXS8&list=PLebqtij-hmh3jb0NCUrURhz_KDh2-2Q8m&index=16)

**CCAeLearning: A Circle of Abundance - A Decade of Learning with Indigenous Women Leaders.** In an event hosted by the Canadian Council for the Advancement of Education, a presentation of the work done over 10 years on Indigenous Women's Leadership and its evolution into the Circle of Abundance. October 2020. Go to: [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=xfBObMNB7\\_U](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=xfBObMNB7_U)

**\$1M Announcement and Celebration for Circle of Abundance - Amplifying Indigenous Women's Leadership.** November 2020. Go to: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=uFyV6hiC4PM>

**Extraordinary Lives Speakers Series.** This features an insightful conversation with Chief Terry Paul of Membertou First Nation and Sara Wolfe of Grand Challenges Canada Innovation Initiative. April 2021. Go to: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=25YqldqEBGQ>.

**Indigenous Women's Leadership and the Economics of Abundance.** To celebrate our first anniversary of the Circle of Abundance, we hosted a fantastic panel discussion moderated by Krista Hanscomb and featuring Carol Anne Hilton, CEO of Indigenomics, Rose Paul, CEO of Bayside Corporation Paqtnk'ek and Mallory Yawngwe, CEO of Indigenous Box. June 29, 2021. 500 people registered for the event. Go to: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=MvTTAdS10tc>



## Priorities for the Coming Year

### **Nurturing our Circle's Advisory Group**

The pace of the year and the challenges of the pandemic have been significant for us all. A priority for us is to continue building the relationships with our Circle of advisors, and engaging regularly in shared visioning for this work.

### **Continuing to Build our Education Programs**

In addition to the courses noted in this report, our team will re-design and launch the flagship Indigenous Women in Community Leadership Enhanced Mentorship Program. This program will be held on campus in Spring 2022 if post-pandemic conditions continue as expected.

### **Community-led Learning Partnerships**

As conditions improve and we see the pandemic subside, we're excited to take our work back into communities this year. We are developing a clearer process for meeting the demand now coming for partnerships. We will have a special focus on our support for Mi'kma'ki.

### **Learning Agenda**

We have several case studies that are in development focused on Indigenous women leaders from First Nations, Métis and Inuit communities. Our first priority is to complete a case study with Métis leadership.

### **Global Indigenous Program Development**

We believe that Indigenous knowledge and practices need to be supported and respected locally and globally. This year we will launch into programs that also support Indigenous communities globally and which connect Indigenous leaders from across Canada for advocacy, learning and movement building.



## Thank you!

In May 2021, the Circle of Abundance was awarded the 2021 Prix d'Excellence Gold Medal for Best Fundraising Initiative at a Canadian university from the Canadian Council on the Advancement of Education (CCAÉ). This is an award that recognizes the tremendous collaboration we have had in building abundance together and we share this with you with our thanks.

Since last June 2020, more than 130 individuals have contributed financially which allows us to build on the abundance of leadership, ideas and innovations of Indigenous leaders across the country. This is so greatly appreciated and we hope you will continue to support us as we move forward this year and beyond. Whether great or small, your financial support has all been given with meaningful intention and celebrates the idea that together we can build “a full and abundant life for all”. We pledge to honour these gifts and to continue to manage and disperse them efficiently and transparently.



We gratefully acknowledge the following key supporters in our work this year:

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