

Native Women's
Association of Canada

L'Association des
femmes autochtones
du Canada

Building Momentum

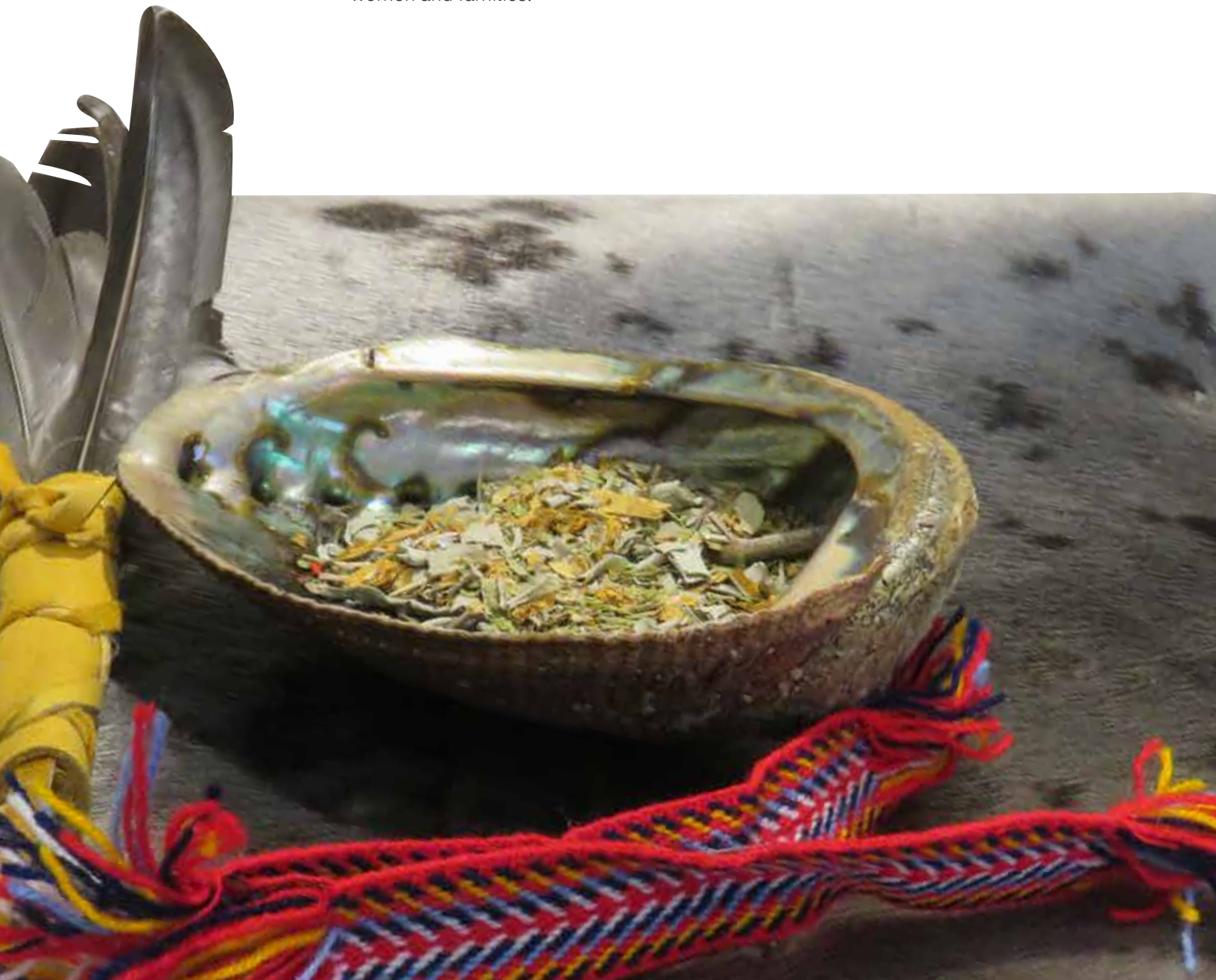
2019–2020 Annual Report

Mission

Advocate for and inspire women and families of many Indigenous nations.

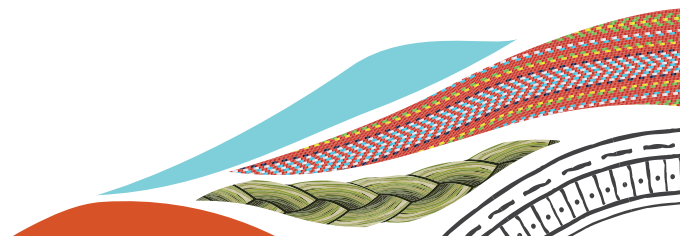
Vision

We envision an inclusive world that understands and respects the diversity and uniqueness of all Indigenous women and families.



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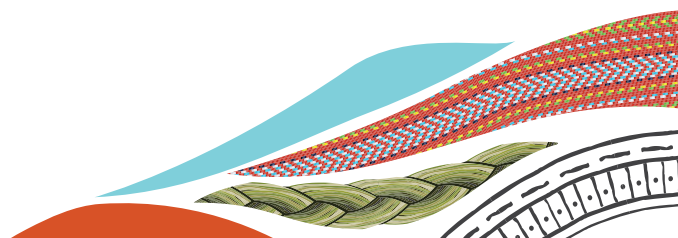
Message from the President

As I look back on 2019–20, I am proud by how much the Native Women's Association of Canada (NWAC) has accomplished, both internally as an organization and externally as a force to be reckoned with. We have continued to grow and build momentum; to have our voices heard and to be heard. And while much progress is still to be made, the traction we gained this past year is nothing less than remarkable.

While I was a member of the board of directors, NWAC started to really build capacity at a management and staff level, especially following the signing of the historic Canada–NWAC Accord on February 1, 2019—just two months shy of starting

a new fiscal year. This Accord leveraged much-needed and appreciated financial support to ramp up our activities and initiatives on so many fronts, including the high-profile Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls (MMIWG) file.

NWAC galvanized our staff and member associations (PTMAs) in preparation of the long-anticipated publication of the National Inquiry's Final Report, *Reclaiming Power and Place*, and its associated 231 Calls for Justice. We had been a key player in the MMIWG Inquiry; indeed, our Sisters in Spirit initiative was pivotal to the Inquiry's work and finding of cultural genocide.



In addition to weighing in on the Inquiry's findings, we leveraged the contacts we had forged internationally to raise awareness and gain support from such influential organizations as the United Nations, the Organization of American States (OAS), and the G7 Gender Advisory Panel. To this end, we asked for and received special audiences with the Special Advisor of the UN Secretary General on the Prevention of Genocide; the Director of the Jacob Blaustein Institute for the Advancement of Human Rights and Vice-Chair of the UN Committee against Torture; members of the Committee on the Status of Women in New York; the Executive Director of UN Women; the Inter-American Rapporteur on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples; and the European Union's Principal Advisor on Gender and Women, Peace and Security.

OAS Secretary General Luis Almagro's three-day whirlwind visit to Canada in December 2019 to see first-hand the conditions under which Indigenous Peoples live was indeed a highlight of our efforts this past fiscal year. His visit elevated NWAC's stature among national Indigenous organizations and with the Government of Canada. It also cemented our resolve to continue our important work on the MMIWG file—pressing the federal government for action on the Calls for Justice, scoring the government on four main criteria, and advocating for significant movement on the treatment of Indigenous Peoples by the RCMP and local police forces, on the high numbers of incarcerated Indigenous women and girls in federal correctional institutions, and on the coerced and forced sterilization of Indigenous women still taking place in some parts of the country.

An important piece in healing Indigenous women, girls, and gender-diverse people who have been marked by racism, colonialism (and all that entails), abuse, trauma, and violence is the Resiliency Lodge. Now open, NWAC spent considerable time and effort to acquire and renovate a private and safe property in the National Capital Region. The first of its kind in Canada, the Lodge will serve as a model for similar centres in every region of the country, offering an Indigenous healing space and giving clients the tools they need, and require, in order to move forward.



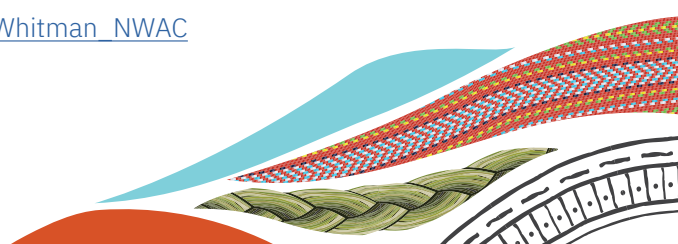
Lorraine meets with artisan card maker Marie Sack, whose designs commemorate MMIWG.

Empowering Indigenous women is also the focus of our economic initiatives and activities. Through the Social and Cultural Innovation Centre, for which we broke ground on July 12, 2019, Indigenous women entrepreneurs will be able to showcase and sell their creations. Joining forces with the World Indigenous Business Network and UN Women to create a historic partnership that will empower Indigenous women and gender-diverse entrepreneurs, both here in Canada and throughout the Americas, not only gives women access to information and resources, but also encourages them to exchange ideas, make investments, and create sustainable partnerships. This agreement along with our work domestically through the Be The Drum and ISET programs will go a long way to securing financial independence for Indigenous women.

NWAC has forged partnerships and built bridges. Now is the time to seek alliances in the important work we are doing to support the people we represent.

Thank you, Wela'lin


President Lorraine Whitman
 [@LWhitman_NWAC](https://twitter.com/LWhitman_NWAC)



Message from the CEO

The lives of Indigenous women changed forever in June 2019 with the release of the report of the National Inquiry into Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls.

And, at the Native Women's Association of Canada (NWAC), we too have been focussed on the Inquiry's findings and what they mean for the women, girls, and 2SLGBTQQIA people we represent.

The commissioners of the National Inquiry found that human and Indigenous rights violations amount to nothing less than the deliberate, often covert, campaign of genocide against Indigenous women, girls, and 2SLGBTQQIA people.

That message is central to all of the activities we undertake as we move forward on our mandate to enhance, promote, and foster the well-being of our membership.

The National Inquiry report says there are four pathways that maintain the colonial violence being perpetuated against Indigenous women, girls, and gender-diverse people. They are:

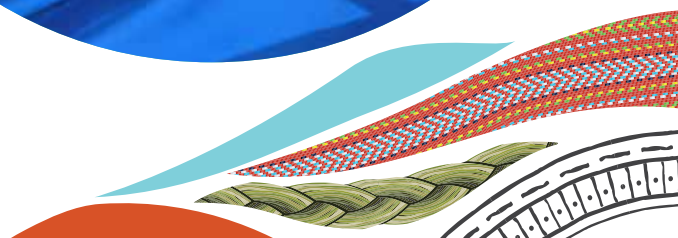
- ✦ historical, multigenerational, and intergenerational trauma
- ✦ social and economic marginalization
- ✦ maintaining the status quo and institutional lack of will
- ✦ ignoring the agency and expertise of Indigenous women, girls, and 2SLGBTQQIA people

In NWAC's fiscal year 2019–20, we moved to address all of those issues with a wide range of projects and programs and two significant infrastructure projects.

The planning for the Resiliency Lodge we have created in Chelsea, Quebec, was already under way when the Inquiry's Final Report was presented to the federal government.

But, seven months later, in January 2020, we started the renovations to create a culturally appropriate, on the land, healing lodge developed by Indigenous women for Indigenous women.

The Resiliency Lodge will address the trauma caused by decades of violence—which is the first pathway described in the Inquiry's Final Report.



The NWAC Elders suggested that the Resiliency Lodge must be connected to the land. That is why it is now located in the spiritual woodlands of the Gatineau Hills.

The second major infrastructure project we worked on in 2019–20 was the Social and Cultural Innovation Centre.

It will be a hub for social and economic development. It will also be NWAC's new home and will incorporate our programs, projects, and advocacy efforts with an emphasis on promoting Indigenous women's entrepreneurship. The Centre is designed to address the social and economic marginalization that the Final Report identified as the second pathway to ending violence against Indigenous women.



Breaking ground at our Social and Cultural Innovation Centre.

With it, and with many additional and complementary endeavours, NWAC is becoming a leader in economic development for the women we represent and support. Economic opportunities are needed to ensure Indigenous women are able to fully participate in the economy and sustain their families.

NWAC started a series of workshops with the goal of teaching artisan crafting as a pathway to healing and economic development.

We are providing further support by introducing our members to a wide range of essential business skills, including how to secure credit, devise a marketing plan, and get their products into the hands of buyers.

The Artisanelle store that will soon open at the Social and Cultural Centre, and its online counterpart, will showcase the beautiful artisan workmanship of Indigenous women across Canada and Indigenous women of the Americas.

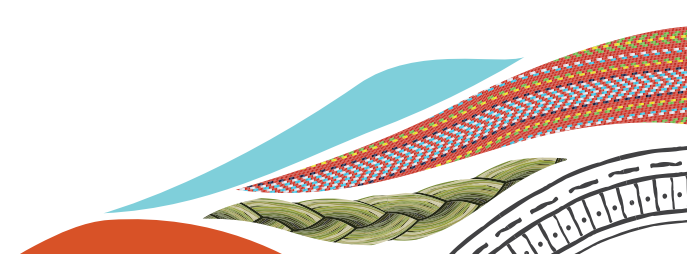
We will continue to work towards ensuring our Indigenous women's rights are protected, our voices are heard, and our projects are developed as we build capacity for the Provincial-Territorial Member Associations and NWAC.

Thank you for taking this journey with us.

Meegwetch

A handwritten signature in blue ink, reading 'Lynne Groulx'.

Lynne Groulx
Chief Executive Officer



Building Unity From Coast to Coast to Coast

Increased activism by Indigenous Peoples in Canada in the late 1960s and early 1970s led to the emergence of Indigenous political groups. This time also saw Indigenous women begin organizing on a national scale, united in their efforts to fight against Canadian laws they found sexist, racist, and imperialistic. Their efforts led to the creation of the Native Women's Association of Canada in 1974.

Fast-track to 2019–20.

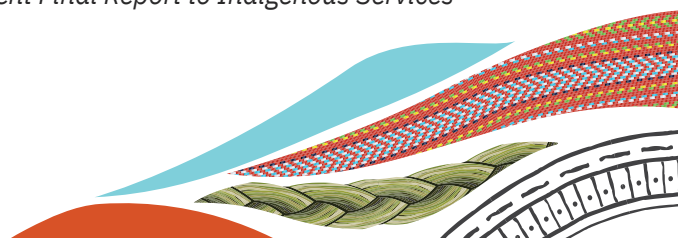
In a span of 45 years, NWAC has emerged as a powerful advocate for Indigenous women and girls marked by violence and trauma. Our success in raising the profile of the many issues and challenges that face the people we represent is due to the fact that we are **the** national Indigenous organization that speaks for and represents First Nations, Métis, and Inuit women, girls, and gender-diverse people.

We can make this claim because we're an aggregate of 13 Native women's organizations from across Canada. Together with our provincial and territorial member associations (PTMAs), we lend our collective voice and platform to the families of the missing and murdered, and every fall we honour their memory and grieve with families at the annual Sisters in Spirit vigils, held in every corner of the country. We work to promote education, health care, and safety for Indigenous women, prevent violence, reduce poverty, tackle incarceration and forced sterilization issues, and provide our perspective on the impact of a warming climate on our way of life. Through specific initiatives such as ISET and Be The Drum, we provide the supports that our constituents need to become employable or start/grow their own businesses (examples of ISET funding used by PTMAs to deliver training workshops are found on pages 10 and 11).

The perspectives of the PTMAs are critical to the work we do at the federal level. One of the most important files we worked on in 2019–202 was the response to the National Inquiry into Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls (MMIWG). To engage Indigenous communities, we held a national roundtable January 18–19, 2020. Over 65 participants from PTMAs across the country attended the roundtable. The PTMA representatives identified key priority areas and provided six key recommendations for the federal government's consideration when developing the 2020 National Action Plan as a response to the Inquiry's 231 Calls for Justice. Our ***National Roundtable on Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls: Highlights of the Key Findings & Recommendations*** was a seminal piece of work in the 2019–20 fiscal year.

One of the many recommendations offered by the National Inquiry is to establish community-based, Indigenous-led healing centres across the country. In addition to working on and establishing the first national Resiliency Lodge in Gatineau, Quebec, NWAC is using our lobbying skills to support the efforts of individual PTMAs in establishing a healing centre in their respective province/territory.

In March 2019, our PTMAs helped organize two-day engagement sessions on housing insecurity, homelessness, and housing services, involving women and gender-diverse people from communities across three provinces and one territory. The sessions covered a range of topics, such as housing infrastructure; the social effects of inadequate housing on the well-being of Indigenous women, girls, and gender-diverse people; the availability of housing stock; and the availability of shelter services in communities. This input informed our April 30, 2019, ***Indigenous Housing: Policy and Engagement Final Report to Indigenous Services Canada***.



Between March and August of 2020, the Saskatchewan, New Brunswick, Nova Scotia, and Ontario PTMAs each hosted at least one engagement session for our 2SLGBTQQIA project. The engagement sessions were held with 2SLGBTQQIA people with lived experience of gender-based violence. The information from these sessions will help develop a virtual training program (to be piloted in March/April 2021) for service providers working in gender-based violence. The program will ensure the provision of more culturally safe, trauma-informed, and intersectional services.

Building Capacity Through the PTMAs

With core funding from the federal government, thanks to the signing of the Canada–Native Women’s Association of Canada Accord on February 1, 2019, NWAC has been able to build the capacity of the 13 PTMAs. From meeting in coffee shops or members’ homes, to working in unsafe rental space, many PTMAs have used the funding to rent new office space. For some, this is a first.

Our member associations also used the funding to add to or pay staff—again, for those who ran solely on volunteers, this is a huge leap forward in building internal capacity. The PTMAs also used the funding to provide salaries to the women who have been working hard to support their communities for years, to fill operational gaps, to create association logos, and to improve their web presence.

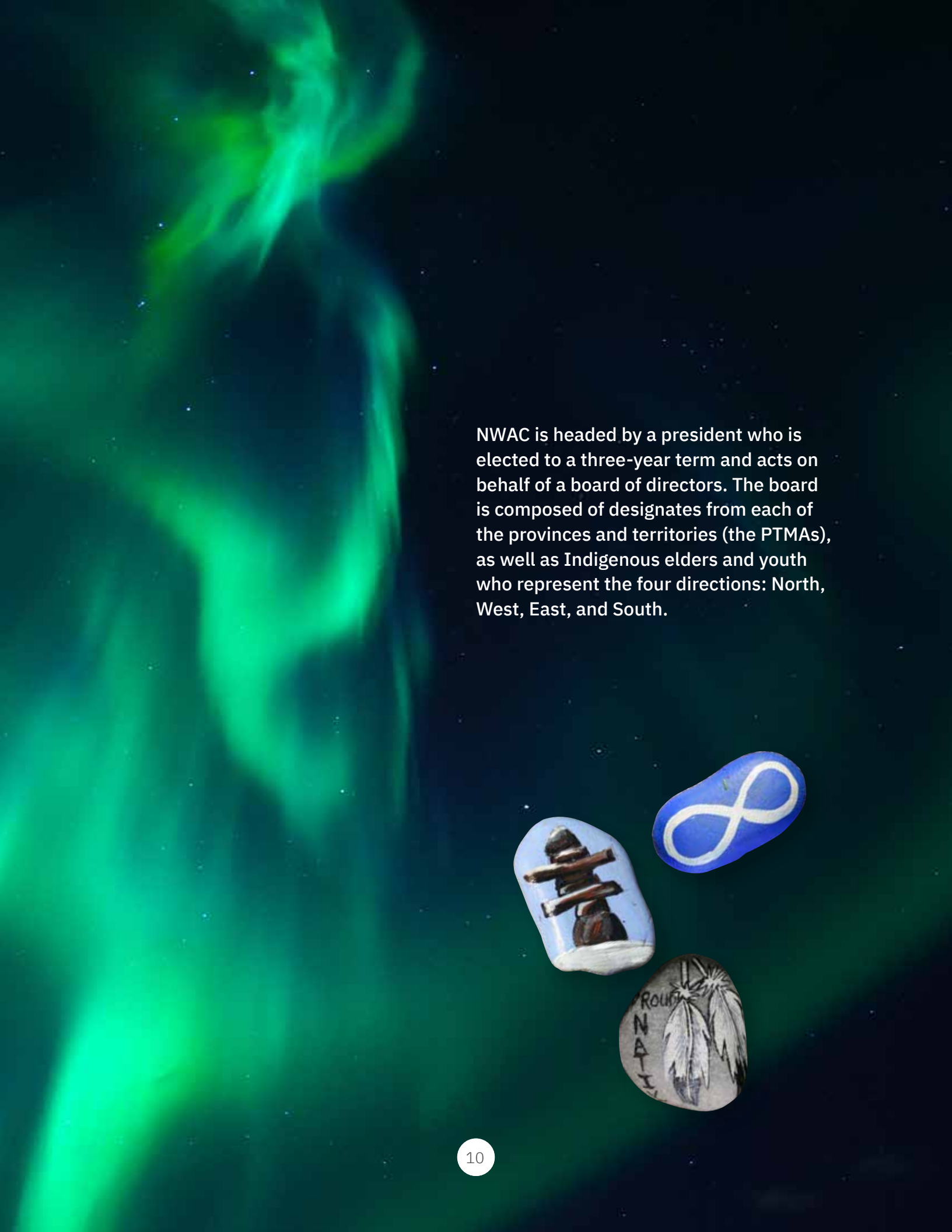
Financial reporting requirements and a payment schedule set up by NWAC not only helps to ensure appropriate spending of funds, but also provides a regular source of funding.

Highlights from Nunavut, Alberta, Ontario, and Nova Scotia

The **Amautiit Nunavut Inuit Women’s Association** completed a strategic plan, which sets out priorities for the next few years. We used core funding from NWAC to build partnerships with other organizations (with the aim to work on projects of mutual interest) and to focus on communications. We are pleased to be launching a website in November 2020 and have been developing a blog series on territorial government policies and programs of particular relevance to Nunavut Inuit women. Although COVID-19 has halted our partnership projects initiative, Amautiit is building relationships with other groups whose goals and objectives align with ours.

The **Institute for the Advancement of Aboriginal Women in Alberta** has been focusing on financial literacy as part of a broader poverty reduction strategy. By building knowledge and confidence around finances, IAAW hopes to help Indigenous women become financially stable and independent—thus breaking the cycle of poverty. The Empower U – Financial Independence Training project reaches 200 women in Edmonton alone every year. We also use our annual Esquao Awards ceremony in May to honour the strength, resilience, and beauty of First Nations, Métis, and Inuit women living in the province. Over 450 women have been honoured to date.





NWAC is headed by a president who is elected to a three-year term and acts on behalf of a board of directors. The board is composed of designates from each of the provinces and territories (the PTMAs), as well as Indigenous elders and youth who represent the four directions: North, West, East, and South.



Provincial and Territorial Member Associations

Yukon Aboriginal Women's Council

The Native Women's Association
of the Northwest Territories

Amautiit Nunavut Inuit
Women's Association

British Columbia Native
Women's Association

Institute for the Advancement of
Aboriginal Women (*Alberta*)

Saskatchewan Aboriginal
Women's Circle Corporation

Manitoba Moon Voices Inc.

Temiskaming Native Women's
Support Group (*Ontario*)

Femmes Autochtones du Quebec
(FAQ) / Quebec Native Women's
Association Inc.

Indigenous Women of the Wabanaki
Territories (*New Brunswick*)

Nova Scotia Native
Women's Association

Aboriginal Women's Association
of Prince Edward Island

Newfoundland Native Women's
Association (*Newfoundland and
Labrador*)

The **Temiskaming Native Women's Support Group Keepers of the Circle**, our Ontario PTMA, is proud to have completed two major capital renovation projects on Keepers of the Circle facilities in Kirkland Lake and Temiskaming Shores. These sites will showcase Indigenous excellence. Thanks to a three-year partnership with The Bucket Shop in Timmins, 24 Indigenous women will be trained as welders. The goal of a permanent partnership with the Charlton Sustainability Hub is to address food insecurity and the high cost of living among Indigenous communities in Northern Ontario. Much of our success in building partnerships across multiple sectors to help Indigenous women train and secure employment is due to the work of two remarkable women over the past two decades: founder and Executive Director Ann Batisse and President Jennifer Landry, who both passed away in March 2020.

Since securing core funding for the first time in our history, the Nova Scotia Native Women's Association has been able to increase its capacity, improve operations, provide additional funds for chapters, open sub-offices, and fund and reopen the Jane Paul Indigenous Women's Resource Centre. These positive developments have been instrumental in its ability to build on successes and develop new initiatives. For example, through its "Awake the Matriarch: Empowering the Indigenous Women of the Atlantic" project, they have created strategic partnerships with Indigenous women across the region, to help us create a voice at the local, regional, and national levels on matters of employment, equity, and leadership. Through the PTMAs Sexualized Violence Prevention Program, the PTMAs held workshops, shared podcasts, and hosted gatherings to increase public awareness of sexual violence and its impact.

Building Resiliency

creating an innovative, holistic healing lodge for Indigenous women and gender-diverse people

Several years in the making, the Resiliency Lodge is the answer to the National Inquiry's call for "all governments to provide adequate, stable, equitable, and ongoing funding for Indigenous-centred and community-based health and wellness services that are accessible and culturally appropriate, and meet the health and wellness needs of Indigenous women, girls, and 2SLGBTQQIA people" (Call for Justice #3.2). In its two-volume Final Report, released on June 3, 2019, the National Inquiry highlighted the need to fund a community-based healing centre for Indigenous women and gender-diverse people.

Situated on the traditional land of the Algonquin people, amid a woodland in Chelsea, Quebec, the Resiliency Lodge is the first of its kind in Canada and will serve as a model for future healing lodges across the country.

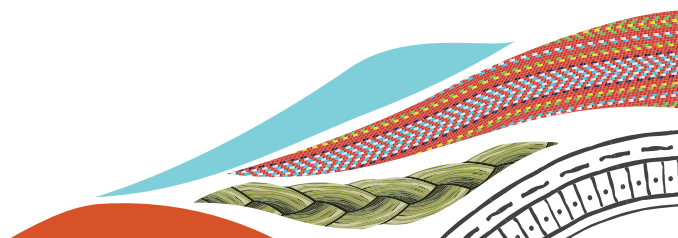
The Lodge came closer to completion by March 31, 2020, with much of the interior design work, furnishings, landscaping, and cultural references through artifacts, art pieces, sculptures, use of natural materials and plants, in place. The beautiful rugged, natural terrain features grandfather rocks, a fountain brook and pond, and a natural medicine garden path where spirit and land connect. A 16-foot ceremonial Tipi with hand-painted symbols and a copper fire pit will be used for teachings, ceremonies, and talking circles. The presence of heritage and sacred artifacts that have spiritual and/or cultural meaning adorn the rooms and furniture. Sealskins lay on the furniture. The hides of polar and grizzly bears are placed on the floor in front of wood-burning fireplaces.

Items shared from nature highlight the strong connection that Indigenous Peoples have for the land, rocks, water, plants, trees, birds, animals, sun, and moon.

In addition to accomplishing major renovations and finalizing the interior finishes, over this past year, NWAC also developed the healing and resiliency model. Guests to the Lodge will be supported on their resilience and wellness journey by Elders, Knowledge Keepers, other members of the care team, and an artist-in-residence. The care team will use a personalized approach centred on the individual's needs and experiences, and integrate traditional Indigenous ways, with the goal to help grassroots Indigenous women and gender-diverse people begin their path to healing.

The Indigenous health model stresses holism and encompasses the physical, emotional, mental, and spiritual realms of health and wellness while including the individual, the family, and the community. At the heart of the healing approach are four healing pillars:

- ✦ **Elder-led healing**, where Elders, Knowledge Keepers, and other members of the integrated care team use strength-based, trauma-informed, empowering methods and practices to provide support
- ✦ **Land-based healing**, where guests revitalize their connection to the land and its relationship to their spirit while re-learning traditional practices and customs and building resiliency



☀️ **Culture-based healing**, which incorporates cultural healing activities, such as ceremonies and sweats, and promotes Indigenous languages, medicines, and wellness practices

☀️ **Holistic person-centred care**, where programming is adapted to suit individual needs, values, expectations, and preferences

NWAC's approach combines on-the-land programming with Indigenous cultures, languages, spirituality, and ceremonies to foster wellness and resilience. Programs and activities include cultural activities such as Indigenous meditation, drumming and singing, activity-based language-learning, and food and agricultural teachings and cooking lessons. Augmenting these will be spiritual walks, MMIWG commemoration, and Indigenous ceremonies, along with body wellness activities such as Indigenous yoga, medicinal baths, sound therapy, powwow water fitness, and journaling. Specific workshops and educational talks ranging from how to access the legal, medical, housing, and education systems to knowing your rights, violence prevention, grief and trauma, and sexual and reproductive health will also be offered.

The Honouring Project

Honouring Project toolkits containing a guide, colouring book and pencils, coloured felt sheets, doll patterns and accessories to create dolls—all the materials necessary to give a face to those women and girls who were once faceless—were distributed to each Member of Parliament and to NWAC PTMAs for circulation to schoolchildren.

The Faceless Doll Project was launched in 2012.

The 2019 project (phase 2) was called *Putting a Face on Justice: From Calls for Justice to Action*. By putting faces on the dolls, the missing and murdered Indigenous women and girls are no longer faceless. The Honouring Project was a way to honour and acknowledge that the voices of missing and murdered Indigenous women and their families have been heard.



Preparing the
Faceless Dolls kits.



From top left to bottom right:

- ✦ The Resiliency Lodge is located in a safe and private woodland setting to promote land-based healing.
- ✦ Culturally appropriate spaces such as the Métis room are the backdrop to cultural healing activities.
- ✦ Healing through expressive art programs in the separate Makers Space—an arts and crafting studio—is an integral part of the healing program.
- ✦ Land-based healing, with a focus on traditional plants and medicines, will help guests re-learn traditional practices and customs.



RESILIENCY Lodge



Building Relationships and Partnerships

promoting the rights and well-being of Indigenous women, girls, and gender-diverse people in Canada

A hallmark of the 2019 – 2020 fiscal year is the progress that NWAC achieved in building and strengthening relationships and partnerships both in Canada and internationally. From increased engagements, to relationship- and partnership-building, to elevated advocacy efforts, to ramped-up legal and government relations activities, NWAC stretched its political and legal influence both in Canada and abroad.

In advance of the 2019 federal election—where NWAC participated in stakeholder meetings, including the Liberal Party of Canada’s federal election campaign kick-off—NWAC spearheaded a social media advertising campaign to encourage Indigenous women to vote and make their voices heard. With Indigenous women among the fastest-growing populations in Canada, our focus has also been on encouraging their economic empowerment.

On this note, NWAC was active at national and international forums related to economic empowerment, including speaking at the World Indigenous Business Forum in Victoria, B.C., and at the Indigenous Technology Summit in Kelowna, B.C.; signing the San Jose Alliance Agreement to promote economic opportunities; and partnering to create the Indigenous Women Entrepreneurs and Businesswomen’s Network of the Americas.

At the grassroots level, we established subject matter expert working groups and held engagement sessions with industry experts and Indigenous women. Through the partnerships we built and through

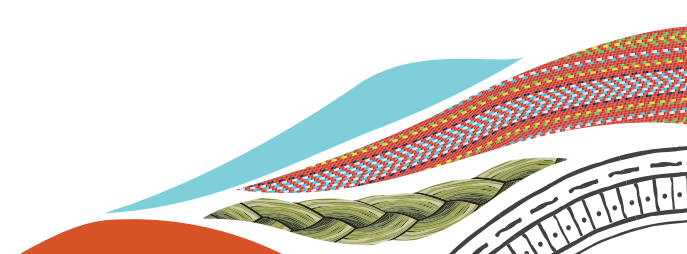
active participation in trade shows, NWAC identified partnership opportunities to support and increase Indigenous women’s participation in the labour market. We also identified and addressed barriers to their ability to become full participants in the workforce.

NWAC also engaged with federal Cabinet ministers and senators on a wide range of other issues related to gender equality, housing, health, the environment, the incarceration of Indigenous women and girls, and the protection and welfare of Indigenous children. An important piece of our advocacy work has been to push for gender-based analysis in all government policy-making.

On the international front

The global COVID-19 pandemic regrettably delayed NWAC’s international in-person advocacy activities, including, just as the pandemic broke in North America, its imminent participation in the UN Commission on the Status of Women’s 64th session in March 2020 in New York with its focus on the Beijing +25 Review process. Nonetheless, NWAC’s International Unit continued to closely monitor the Beijing +25 and other international human rights processes remotely.

As an alternative form of international engagement, NWAC organized virtual international meetings between President Lorraine Whitman and key international human rights actors. Such exchanges included the UN Special Rapporteur on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples, the UN Special Rapporteur on Contemporary Forms of Racism, and the UN Working Group on Arbitrary Detention.



A Year of Engagement

April 2019

- Women, Peace and Security's Focal Points Network

May 2019

- G7 Gender Advisory Council

June 2019

- 12th Session of the UN Expert Mechanism on the Rights of Indigenous Issues
- Inter-American Rapporteur on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples, Antonia Urrejola Noguera

July 2019

- UN Special Rapporteur on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples, Victoria Tauli-Corpuz

September 2019

- Adama Dieng, Special Advisor of the UN Secretary General on the Prevention of Genocide
- Felice Gaer, Vice-Chair of the UN Committee against Torture
- Phumzile Mlambo-Ngcuka, Executive Director of UN Women
- Inter-American Commission on Human Rights' hearing on missing and murdered Indigenous women and girls in Canada at the OAS headquarters

December 2019

- OAS Secretary General Luis Almagro

February 2020

- Council of Ministers Responsible for Transportation and Highway Safety

March 2020

- Maryam Monsef, Minister for Women and Gender Equality and Rural Economic Development
- Carolyn Bennett, Minister of Crown-Indigenous Relations



Hosting Luis Almagro, General Secretary of the OAS.

NWAC also devoted considerable time and effort to making written submissions to different UN thematic studies, several of which were directly related to the global COVID-19 crisis and its negative impact on Indigenous women and girls. These included the UN Special Rapporteur on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples and the UN Special Rapporteur on Violence against Women.

In-depth written contributions were made to the other ongoing thematic studies of leading UN experts. As illustrative cases in point, NWAC submitted detailed information to the UN Working Group on Discrimination against Women and Girls on sexual and reproductive health and rights in situations of crisis.

With the National Inquiry into MMIWG in mind, a submission was also made to the Special Rapporteur on the Promotion of Truth, Justice, Reparation and Guarantees of Non-recurrence's study on the multi-layered aspects of a gender perspective in transitional justice processes. Through these submissions, NWAC underscored the need for swift, concrete, and meaningful follow-up to the Inquiry's Final Report.

The year 2020 also set the scene for the beginning of Canada's periodic review by the UN Committee on the Rights of the Child. Even though this formal review is not scheduled until September 2021, NWAC has been active in offering its human rights concerns about the treatment of Indigenous children.

Excitingly, in 2020 NWAC embarked upon a new three-year project in relation to Canada's future examination in Geneva by the UN Committee on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities. This project aims to throw a much-needed spotlight on the precarious situation of Indigenous persons with disabilities in this country.

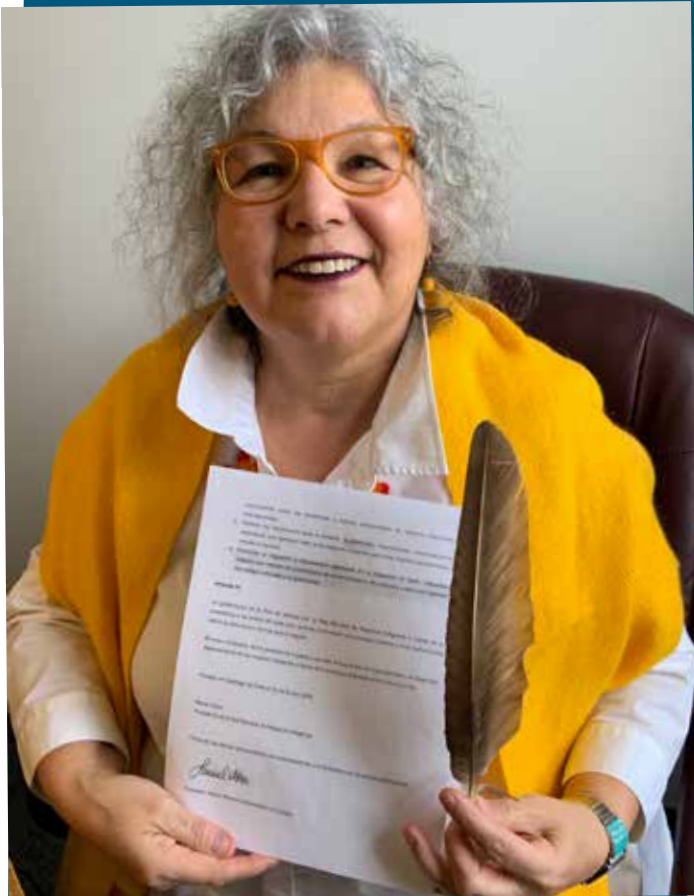
Progress by NWAC's Legal Team

From researching the concept of 'water as a person and person rights for water', to intervening in several high-profile cases, to supporting the National Roundtable on the National Inquiry's Calls for Justice, to attending the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change's 48th session in South Korea, NWAC's legal team's scope and breadth over this fiscal year was considerable.

NWAC worked on a range of issues impacting Indigenous women, girls, and gender-diverse people, with particular focus on the MMIWG file.



NWAC President Lorraine Whitman and Senior Director of Legal Services Steven Pink meet with Dr. Ivan Zinger, Correctional Investigator of Canada,



Lorraine Whitman signs the Canada-US-Mexico Agreement, which included significant protections and rights for Indigenous Peoples.

Solitary confinement: NWAC had intervenor status in the Renee Acoby human rights case dealing with the solitary confinement of Indigenous women in federal correctional institutions. On May 19, 2019, NWAC's legal counsel testified before the Standing Senate Committee on Social Affairs, Science and Technology about Bill C-83, *An Act to amend the Corrections and Conditional Release Act*. In our testimony, NWAC supported Senator Pate's call for more effective and less costly alternatives to Bill C-83, and to abolish isolating and restrictive practices like structured intervention units (solitary confinement) in women's federal prisons.

Incarceration: In July 2020, the Ontario Court of Appeal struck down two sections of the Criminal Code of Canada that unjustifiably limited the ability of judges to allow conditional sentences for Indigenous offenders. As an intervenor in the *R v. Sharma* case, NWAC had worked diligently throughout 2019 on supporting Cheyenne Sharma's challenge concerning the restriction on the availability of conditional sentences, stating it violated her liberty rights under Section 7 of the Charter and her equality rights under Section 15.

Forced Sterilization: NWAC worked on motion materials to be granted intervenor status in the Saskatchewan class action on forced sterilization (MLRP and SAT v. Canada (Attorney General)).

International: The legal team researched possible international legal avenues available to NWAC to pursue legal action on behalf of Indigenous women against the Government of Canada. The team also considered its options for lodging a complaint with the UN Working Group on Arbitrary Detention on behalf of incarcerated or formerly incarcerated Indigenous women in Canada. With respect to the issue of missing and murdered Indigenous women and girls in Canada, NWAC's legal team reviewed an application from the International Unit to the Inter-American Commission on Human Rights. The International Unit's proposal called for a hearing on Canada's failure to put in place a National Action Plan in response to the National Inquiry's Calls for Justice.

Health: The legal team drafted a research agreement for a community-informed approach to cannabis public education and awareness.

Impact Assessment: The legal team delivered a presentation to the Canada Impact Assessment Agency on *NWAC's Final Report on Indigenous Women and Impact Assessment*.

Building a Voice—NWAC Communications

To be an effective voice for First Nations, Inuit, and Métis women and gender-diverse people, our voice must be heard—by policy makers, media, and the very people we serve and represent. That's why a key goal for 2019–20 has been building our capacity for powerful communications. During the year, our communications team organized a number of impactful events and campaigns to draw attention to critical issues. Meanwhile, valuable new vehicles for communications, both internal and external, were launched.

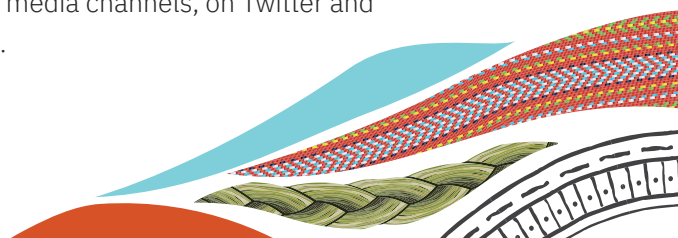
With the federal election looming, NWAC brought together women's voices for a press conference in April to challenge gender discrimination under the *Indian Act*. Together with powerful speakers including Indigenous law expert Dr. Pamela Palmater and Senator Lillian Dyck, we raised media awareness and called on the cabinet of Prime Minister Justin Trudeau to enact an order in council removing discriminatory clauses from the Act.

In 2012, NWAC launched a heart-wrenching campaign to “give a voice to the voiceless.” The Faceless Dolls project raised public awareness about the more than 1,000 missing and murdered Indigenous women, girls, and gender-diverse people. Seven years later, in June 2019, the project returned, this time putting faces on the faceless to call for justice. Kits for making dolls, along with a colouring book and educational guide, were distributed to schools across the country. Kits were also sent to every Member of Parliament.

Of course, NWAC continued our long-standing tradition of honouring the memory of MMIWG through our October 4 Sisters in Spirit Vigil. A march and gathering was held in Ottawa, and NWAC supported groups across the country in hosting their own vigil events, sending our resource kits to anyone who registered an event.

Decision-makers, and the people we serve and represent, need and deserve to know about the incredible work that NWAC does every day. That's why, in September 2019, we launched a new communications product: the monthly President's Report. Every month, Lorraine Whitman pens a message talking about the issues and successes achieved over the past month, and detailing the important meetings she has attended with Indigenous communities, NWAC members, and national and global leaders.

We live in a digital world now, so this past year has also seen considerable growth in our online presence as an organization. We launched a newly designed web site and have built significant momentum and following in our social media channels, on Twitter and Facebook.





Standing shoulder to shoulder at the 2019 Women's March to Parliament Hill.



Faceless Dolls kits, ready to send to Members of Parliament.

Building Economic Momentum

... advocating for the right of Indigenous women, girls, and gender-diverse people to improve their economic conditions through employment, entrepreneurship, education, and training



#BeThe DRUM

Your Business, Our Focus

NWAC Invites Women to Be The Drum

The sound of the drum stirs up a sense of belonging, a feeling of great joy in knowing that we are all connected in a way that gives us hope and keeps us strong. The drum signifies a calling to unite us in a place of healing, strength, and momentum toward greatness. That's why the drum is a perfect symbol for a program bringing together and supporting Indigenous women, Two-Spirit, and gender-diverse entrepreneurs in bringing their business ideas to life.

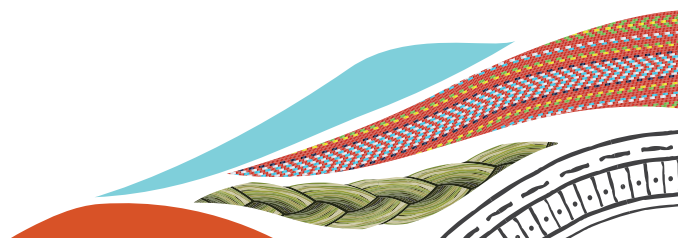
Indigenous people face unique barriers to economic development, particularly Indigenous women, Two-Spirit, and gender-diverse people, who experience the combined impacts of sexism and racism. Be The Drum is a new NWAC initiative launched in 2020 that gives entrepreneurs the momentum to overcome these barriers.

Be The Drum provides four keystones of support: one-on-one expert navigation and mentorship; workshops and networking; social media live Q&A sessions; and peer-to-peer support circles and mastermind groups.

Conceived and developed throughout 2019, Be The Drum was publicly introduced in February 2020 at the annual Indigenous Prosperity Forum, hosted by the National Aboriginal Capital Corporations Association (NACCA) in Gatineau, Quebec.

From the beginning, Be The Drum had 13 entrepreneurs jump in, spanning the country from Winnipeg to St. John's. Their businesses ranged from fashion design and beauty to cultural counselling to digital technology.

Originally designed around in-person engagement, the onset of COVID-19 forced the program to quickly—and successfully—pivot to the virtual world with online workshops, mentorship, and networking.



Direction and Community: A Be The Drum Success Story

For years, Loretta DeSousa worked with agencies supporting Indigenous women. Every day, she would see women walk in looking for support, and leave with valuable daily necessities like food and children's items. But she felt there was something missing. What the women weren't leaving with was anything deeper—life skills grounded in their own cultures.

Their plight struck a chord. Growing up in Kingston, Ontario, Loretta's father, an Algonquin trapper, had taught her skills like hunting and fishing. But the family never talked about their culture or traditions. It wasn't until her late 20s at university that Loretta began to learn about her background. She realized she wanted to create culturally relevant resources for Indigenous women that would not only allow them to prosper, but strengthen them with the confidence that comes from knowing oneself and one's roots. In 2018, the idea for the National Indigenous Health and Wellness Association (NIHWA) was born.

But an idea is not a plan. For a year, Loretta struggled to put meat on the bones of her dream. It took months just to create a name for her enterprise, let alone a business plan. Then she saw a Facebook ad for a new initiative supporting Indigenous women entrepreneurs: Be The Drum.

Loretta was connected with Hazel Harrison, a Be The Drum Navigator. Hazel guided Loretta through the process of building her plan.

"Be The Drum gave me a sense of direction," says Loretta.

With the structure for her enterprise in place, the next step was developing programming. Hazel sent an email out to the Be The Drum community, and suddenly Loretta was receiving ideas, suggestions, and offers of help from women across Canada.

"It's building a strong foundation from a strong community," says Loretta.

Although the COVID-19 pandemic has presented new challenges, with the support of the Be The Drum network, Loretta hopes to officially launch NIHWA over the coming year.

Be The Drum continues to gather momentum through partnerships. An investment in a radio advertising campaign with Indigenous stations across the country not only allowed Be The Drum to reach aspiring entrepreneurs in remote regions despite the pandemic, it also created strong and lasting relationships with Indigenous media that will be invaluable as the program grows.

Launching Be The Drum at the Prosperity Forum has also forged connections with NACCA that are already helping the program gather steam. Be The Drum is cooperating with NACCA on creating a series of booklets on personal finance for Indigenous women.

Next year, Be The Drum has an ambitious plan for inspiring workshops and panel sessions with an array of all-star speakers. The program also plans to grow its roster of expert navigators to better serve and support even more budding entrepreneurs, as well as building an online directory to promote businesses owned by Indigenous women and gender-diverse people.



Making connections at the Aboriginal Women's Business Entrepreneurship Network conference.



Investment Readiness Project

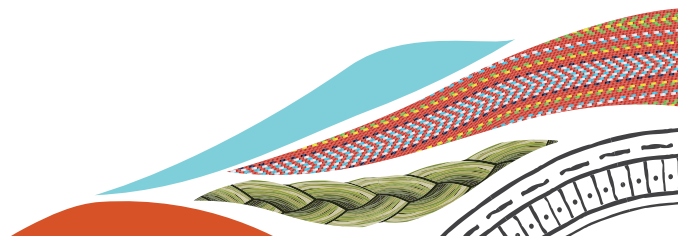
Investment funding opportunities for entrepreneurs often fail to consider the unique needs and requirements of specific population groups, such as Indigenous women and gender-diverse entrepreneurs.

NWAC has made progress in addressing this gap—and thus help advance the funding opportunities of our member entrepreneurs—with a unique training program targeted to organizations that receive investment readiness program funding from Employment and Social Development Canada (ESDC).

ESDC launched a pilot Investment Readiness Program in the fall of 2019 to help initiate and bolster community-led solutions to social and environmental challenges. The program provides funds to eligible ‘partners’ which then fund and support a broad range of non-profits, charities, co-operatives, and hybrid social enterprises (called social purpose organizations). The goal is to help these organizations access a broad range of expert services to meet their unique needs and current level of investment readiness. This could include expert services in social research and development, impact measurement, financial sustainability and accessing outcome-based funding, financial resilience through revenue-generating ideas, and investor readiness.

NWAC’s training program, called the Investment Readiness Program (IRP), has been delivered to ESDC’s IRP partners/organizations between October 2020 and January 2021. A toolkit and online resources are also in the works.

NWAC held two virtual engagement sessions in March 2020, followed by a series of one-on-one interviews, with Indigenous women and gender-diverse entrepreneurs. Preliminary findings from these engagements revealed a disconnect between the needs of Indigenous women and gender-diverse entrepreneurs and the design and delivery of funding opportunities. This disconnect covers application and reporting requirements, funding amounts, and a preference for loans over grants. Despite this disconnect, conversations with ESDC and with other IRP partners also revealed an openness to listening to NWAC’s recommendations.



ISet builds on the success of ASETS

Tuition, living allowance, childcare, on-the-job-training, and skills training—these supports and more help Indigenous women and gender-diverse people who are enrolled in a post-secondary institution get the training they need to find skilled jobs. This is where the new Indigenous Skills and Employment Training (ISet) program comes in.

Until the COVID-19 pandemic hit, ISet was on track to building on the success of its predecessor, the Aboriginal Skills and Employment Training Strategy (ASETS): 87 employed through ISet compared to 58 through ASETS; 300 total clients funded (versus 260); and 38 returning to school (versus 52).

While many training and education programs were put on hold, postponed, or cancelled as a result of the pandemic, NWAC and regional coordinators helped close to 2,000 women and gender-diverse people access labour market information and provided referrals to other job agencies.



With increased funding and greater flexibility, NWAC looks forward to building momentum by designing innovative and targeted training programs to meet the needs of Indigenous women and gender-diverse people in their communities. Examples of such programs include:

- ✦ becoming an end-of-life doula (offered by the Nova Scotia Native Women's Association—20 enrolled; 17 took part)
- ✦ training for a security guard (offered by Manitoba Moon Voices—11 enrolled)
- ✦ empowering women to be leaders (offered by the B.C. Native Women's Association—10 enrolled; 7 took part)
- ✦ acquiring skills in customer service, MicroAge, food safe handling, first aid and CPR, WHMIS, and health and wellness (offered by the Saskatchewan Aboriginal Women's Circle Corporation—16 enrolled)

ISet Success Stories

End-of-Life Doula Program (February 10–14, 2020, Truro, Nova Scotia)

Just as new life springs from the plants, animals, birds, and fish, humans are composed of a physical body, spirit, and a soul. This is the circle of life.

In the final minutes and hours of a person's life, a doula's role is to help the person feel safe and comfortable, ready to make the transition from life to death.

Seventeen unemployed Mi'kmaq women hope to translate newfound knowledge about an end-of-life doula into an employment opportunity. Over the course of the week-long training, they learned about end-of-life care, the complexity of grief, and effective responses to the way loved ones express their grief. They learned

about advance care planning and the legalities of funeral practices in Nova Scotia. They discussed the range of beliefs and practices that families and loved ones may have about death.

And at the end of the training, they gained understanding and knowledge on how to help a dying person move from life to death and support loved ones during what is a very emotional time.

While the instructor was from B.C.'s Douglas College, which offers an end-of-life doula course, incorporating the Mi'kmaq perspective on dying and death was crucial to the success of the program, says Justine Maloney, Employment and Economic Development Coordinator of the Nova Scotia Native Women's Association, a provincial/territorial member (PTMA) of NWAC. A Mi'kmaq Elder smudged, said Indigenous prayers, and performed other Mi'kmaq rituals used to prepare loved ones for their final journey to the spirit world.

Honouring Future Indigenous Leaders: 2019 Helen Bassett Award Winners

In 2019, 40 Indigenous women enrolled in post-secondary studies applied for the Helen Bassett Commemorative Student Award. For their commitment to improving the lives of Indigenous women and youth at the political, economic, or cultural levels, Marley Angugatsiaq Dunkers (North), Jeneva Rose Dennis (East), Allysa Mark (South), and Taylor Vodden (West) received this year's \$1,000 bursary. The annual award is made possible through the generous donation of Helen Bassett, who was an active supporter of equal rights for Indigenous people, especially women.

Security Training Course (January 2020, with testing in February 2020, Winnipeg, Manitoba)

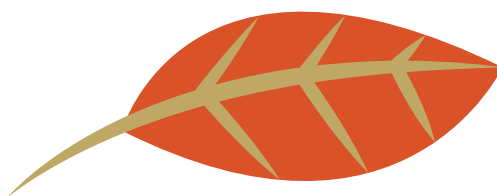
Given that Winnipeg has the highest demographic of Indigenous people in Canada and there is a high demand for female Indigenous security guards in Manitoba, it's not surprising that the security training course offered by the Manitoba PTMA filled up quickly.

"Having the security skills to help our own people is so important,"

-Shannon Hoskie, Acting Executive Director and ISET Coordinator of Manitoba Moon Voices, a provincial/territorial member of NWAC.

Derek Hart of Bear Paw Security, an Indigenous-owned and -operated security company in the province, facilitated the course. Material in the 10-chapter manual ranged from general topics on general duties and responsibilities, professionalism, and the law, to specifics on alarm systems, traffic control, bomb threats, working safely, fire, and patrolling.

To be approved as a security guard in Manitoba, people must receive a minimum 75% test score. Of the 11 women who signed up for the intense week-long course, five passed, scoring at least the minimum 75% on their test. Two women secured employment with Bear Paw. Four women who registered for the test but were unable to take the test due to COVID-19 restrictions, will take a refresher and then re-test once the testing site reopens.



Building Momentum for our Sisters in Spirit

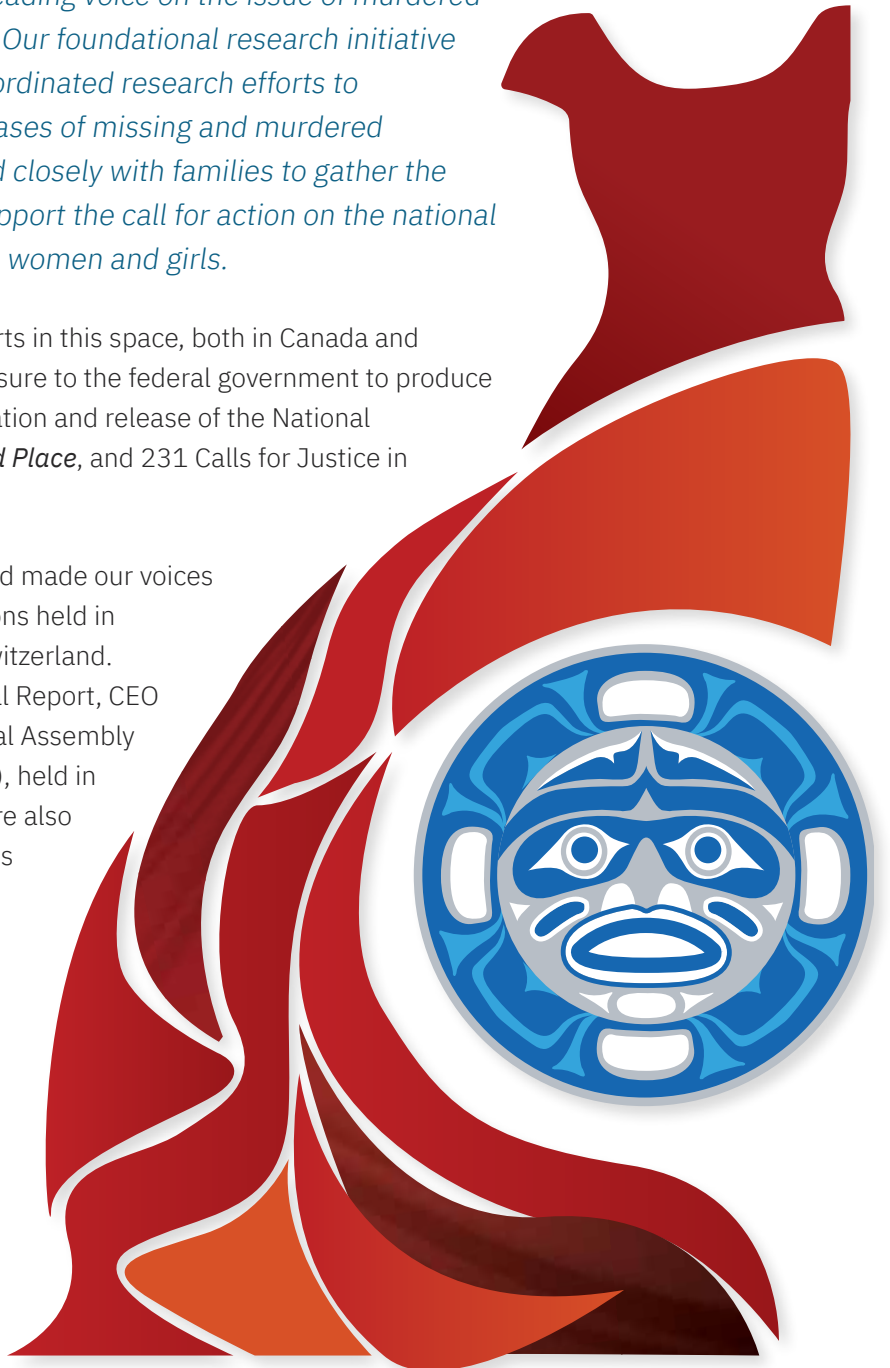
advocating on behalf of Indigenous women, girls, and gender-diverse people to provide adequate long-term funding for healing and support services for families and communities

For over 10 years, NWAC has been the leading voice on the issue of murdered and missing women and girls (MMIWG). Our foundational research initiative “Sisters in Spirit” was one of the first coordinated research efforts to thoroughly and respectfully document cases of missing and murdered Indigenous women and girls. We worked closely with families to gather the truths of our stolen sisters in order to support the call for action on the national epidemic of violence against Indigenous women and girls.

This year, we continued our unwavering efforts in this space, both in Canada and internationally, and have been applying pressure to the federal government to produce its National Action Plan following the publication and release of the National Inquiry’s Final **Report, Reclaiming Power and Place**, and 231 Calls for Justice in June 2019.

On the international front, we took part in and made our voices heard at very high-level meetings and sessions held in Washington, D.C., New York, and Geneva, Switzerland. Shortly after the release of the Inquiry’s Final Report, CEO Lynne Groulx participated in the 49th General Assembly of the Organization of American States (OAS), held in Medellin, Colombia. Follow-up meetings were also arranged with the OAS Secretary General Luis Almagro and with Antonia Urrejola Noguera, Inter-American Rapporteur on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples.

NWAC participated in the 12th session of the UN Expert Mechanism on the Rights of Indigenous Issues in Geneva, Switzerland—once again, using our presence to advance our concerns about Indigenous women and girls in Canada. We also held a bilateral meeting with Victoria Tauli-Corpuz, the then UN Special Rapporteur on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples.



In September 2019, CEO Lynne Groulx travelled to New York to continue our high-level international advocacy activities with various international stakeholders. The critical findings of the National Inquiry's Final Report featured in discussions held with Adama Dieng, the then Special Advisor of the UN Secretary General on the Prevention of Genocide; Felice Gaer, Director of the Jacob Blaustein Institute for the Advancement of Human Rights and then Vice-Chair of the UN Committee against Torture; Houry Geudelekian, Ivy Koek, and Devan Zingler, Committee on the Status of Women; and Phumzile Mlambo-Ngcuka, Executive Director of UN Women.

This same month, President Lorraine Whitman intervened in the Inter-American Commission on Human Rights hearing on MMIWG at the OAS headquarters in Washington. At the hearing, she underscored the National Inquiry's key finding of cultural genocide and the need to expand the common understanding of what constitutes this grave crime.

A highlight of our MMIWG work in 2019 was the high-profile study visit to Canada by Luis Almagro, Secretary General of the Organization of American States (OAS), who is a member of the OAS expert panel following the findings of the National Inquiry into Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls released in June 2019. Mr. Almagro's visit, which fell during the 16 Days of Activism Against Gender-Based Violence, an annual international campaign that runs from November 25 to December 10, was designed to gain a first-hand perspective on the challenges faced by Canada's Indigenous women, girls, and gender-diverse people. His visit and tour to Indigenous communities also cemented NWAC's goal to develop international collaborative partnerships and seek the support of international human rights defenders to ensure implementation of the Inquiry's 231 Calls for Justice. (This goal is one of 10 articulated in NWAC's "10-point Action Plan" in response to the Inquiry.)

2019 Sisters in Spirit Vigil.



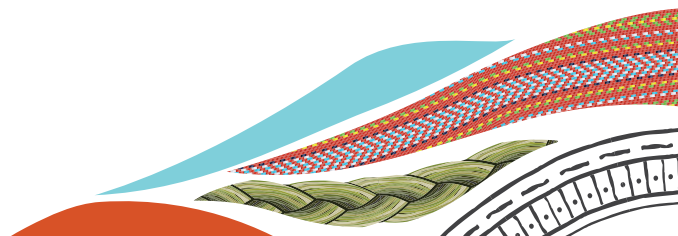
In honour of Mr. Almagro's visit, NWAC hosted the Honouring Indigenous Women Reception, where Mr. Almagro met with community and political leaders, experts, and academics to learn first-hand about Indigenous challenges. The reception featured a red dress display designed to bring attention to the thousands of missing and murdered Indigenous women and girls.

In January 2020, NWAC convened a National Roundtable on the National Inquiry's Calls for Justice with over 65 attendees, including experts on the issue of gender-based violence as well as members of Indigenous communities (First Nations, Métis, and Inuit), and Elders, Knowledge Keepers, families, and youth from across Canada. The purpose of this Roundtable was to provide an opportunity for Indigenous women, Two-Spirit, and gender-diverse community members to work together on developing concrete suggestions for the federal government's National Action Plan, which was originally scheduled for release in June 2020. Members of the Roundtable highlighted key priorities for addressing the MMIWG's Calls for Justice and established NWAC's role for the implementation phase.

Despite the absence of an action plan from the Government of Canada, NWAC released our own plan. Our 10-Point Action Plan covered the following key priority areas:

1. involve and engage families and communities
2. develop a gap analysis, in conjunction with Nanos Research
3. develop international, collaborative partnerships
4. monitor progress on the Calls for Justice
5. influence policy and research
6. build awareness among institutions and organizations
7. develop training and workshops on violence against Indigenous women and girls
8. launch a de-stigmatization campaign
9. create a social and cultural innovation hub
10. promote commemoration and honouring

Over the course of the year, NWAC made tremendous progress in all 10 priority areas. Addressing systemic violence stemming from a colonial legacy requires comprehensive and adaptable solutions. While some MMIWG issues can be addressed immediately, others require sustained action. NWAC recognizes that any approach to addressing these issues must respect Indigenous human rights and value the perspectives of those who have experienced violence and marginalization as the experts on how to advance the National Inquiry's Calls for Justice. As the leading organization on the issue of MMIWG, NWAC will continue to work tirelessly on the issue until violence toward Indigenous women, girls, and 2SLGBTQQIA people ends.



Building Awareness around Health Issues

advocating for equal access to health, which must be understood from a holistic perspective and must include access to community-based and culturally safe services and supports

Indigenous Peoples have consistently poorer health outcomes and shorter life expectancy than non-Indigenous people. Indigenous access to health services is a huge part of the issue, as well as being able to benefit from a health care environment that's mentally, emotionally, and spiritually safe.

Enter NWAC's RED Path Project, designed for Indigenous women who are incarcerated. In place at three federal correctional institutions and at Buffalo Sage Wellness House (a Section 81 facility), RED Path gives incarcerated Indigenous women information about sexually transmitted blood-borne infections, harm reduction, and healthy relationships—all important health issues for women in prison.

In 2019–20—the third year for RED Path—NWAC delivered its three-day workshop in all four institutions, reaching over 140 incarcerated women in the process.

Delivering supports and services that are gender-based, culturally safe, and trauma-informed are key to improving the health status of Indigenous women in federal prison.

“The RED Path program has to be given a lot of credit. There was a lot of eye opening and good info. The program took the stigma off of things—HIV in particular, that's a big one.”

~ Elder participant

NWAC worked with Amnesty International, Action Canada, and Inter Pares to bring national attention to the issue of forced sterilization of Indigenous women. We have testified before the Senate and issued numerous statements, fact sheets, and news releases.

Between November 2019 and January 2020, we held four engagement sessions in partnership with our Saskatchewan and Nova Scotia PTMAs with Indigenous women on sexual and reproductive health needs and priorities and forced sterilization. We also conducted a secondary data analysis on materials that refer to forced or coerced sterilization of Indigenous women in Canada.

Following our thematic analysis of these recommendations and engagement sessions with Indigenous women at the grassroots level, NWAC developed *Knowing Your Rights Toolkit: Sexual and Reproductive Health*. This educational resource informs First Nations, Inuit, and Métis women, girls, and gender-diverse people about their sexual and reproductive health rights.

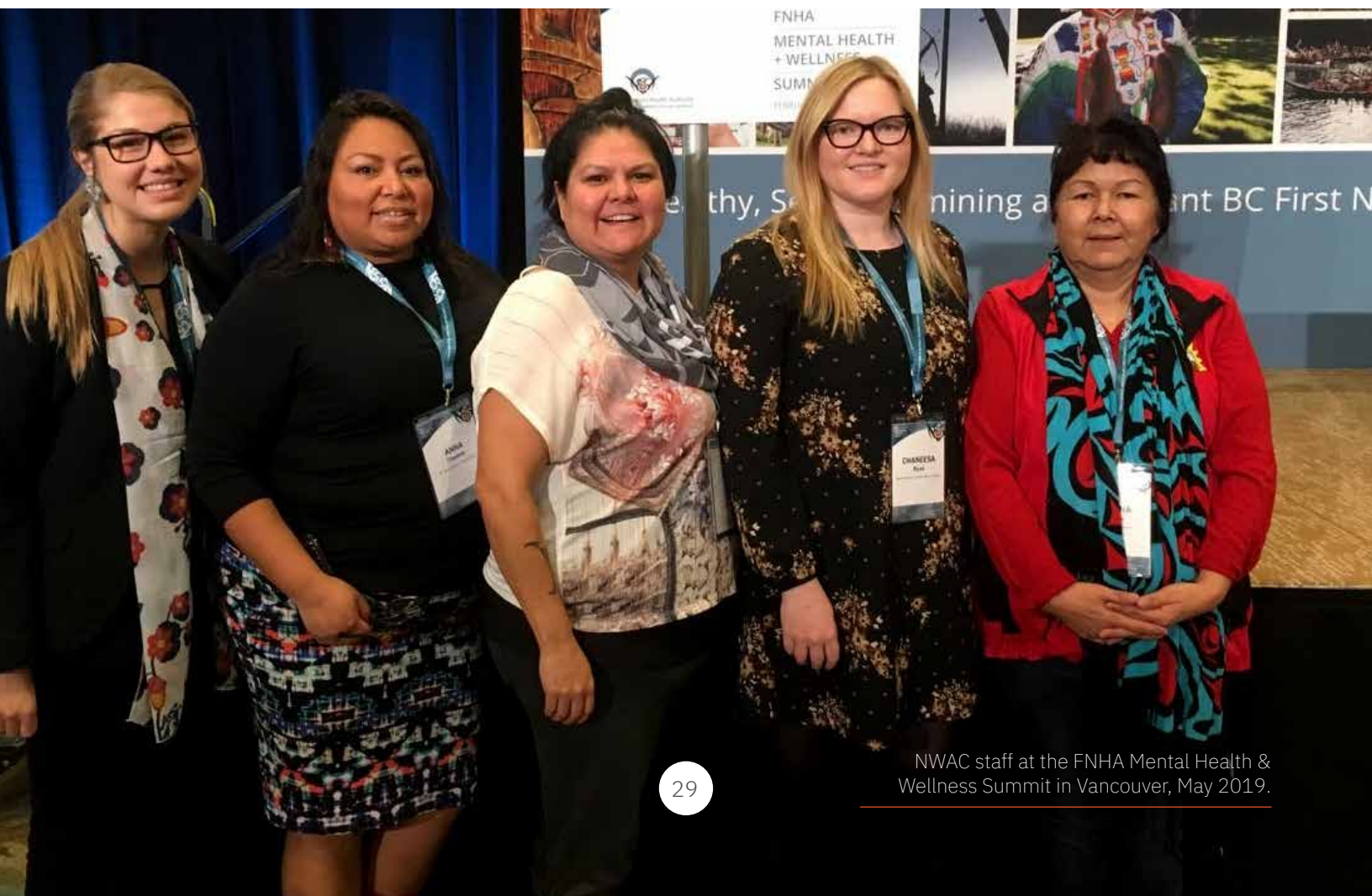


On March 6, 2019, the health team brought together Elders and caregivers of people living with dementia. The goal of the one-day meeting was to obtain feedback on our project “Supporting A Circle of Care: A Culturally-Informed Support Group and Toolkit for Indigenous Caregivers of People Living with Dementia.”

For our first national engagement session on cannabis, held in a Mi’kmaq community in Millbrook, Nova Scotia, on March 5, Indigenous women, Two-Spirit, and gender-diverse people with a wide range of experiences and backgrounds gathered to discuss needs, barriers, and priorities. Their comments will help NWAC develop a range of cannabis resources.

2019–20 Fact Sheets & Reports

- Diabetes
- Chlamydia
- Health aging
- Mental health
- Harm reduction
- The Indigenous population and aging



NWAC staff at the FNHA Mental Health & Wellness Summit in Vancouver, May 2019.

Building on our Gender Diversity and Equality Work

Building on our engagement work: Our team advocated for greater inclusion of Indigenous women and gender-diverse people in Canadian accessibility legislation; engaged Indigenous youth on gender equality through an online youth networking platform; and developed a training guide for service providers who work with 2SLGBTQQIA people with lived experience of gender-based violence.

To ensure that future policy work reflects the perspectives and needs of the diverse communities that NWAC represents and serves, our team worked very hard to build connections across Turtle Island with organizations spanning grassroots, regional, and national levels. These connections include local and regional 2SLGBTQQIA organizations, disability rights organizations, advocates, artists, writers, and speakers in the gender-diverse community.

Over the 2019–20 fiscal year, we held 12 engagement sessions with various communities across Turtle Island. Since COVID-19 hit in March 2020, the team continues to engage, collaborate, and share information and knowledge through virtual project-related engagement sessions and gatherings.

The connections we have made will ensure lasting and meaningful impact for individuals and local communities in arenas that have been neglected historically.

2019–20 Fact Sheets & Reports

- Sex and gender-inclusive terminology
- Providing trauma-informed care to 2SLGBTQ+ patients



NWAC participates in the 2019 Ottawa Pride celebrations.



Building on our Environmental Justice Work

Heat waves, floods, ice storms, droughts, landslides, wildfires and melting arctic ice—these are some of the indicators of a changing climate and a warming earth. Their impact on human health and safety, the economy, food availability, even housing, is well documented and even more significant on the lives and livelihood of Indigenous Peoples in Canada.

Indigenous Peoples have long held the view that humans are meant to be stewards of the earth—respecting and caring for the plants, animals, birds, fish, land, air, and water. And as natural life carriers, Indigenous women, girls, gender-diverse, and Two-Spirit people hold a particularly strong bond with this belief.

Our Environmental Conservation and Climate Change Office (ECCCO) researches the impacts of biodiversity and climate change on our members. From our research, we develop recommendations and provide advice on legislative and policy changes to Environment and Climate Change Canada, Fisheries and Oceans Canada, Indigenous Services Canada, Transport Canada, and Natural Resources Canada.

In recognition of the unique bond that Indigenous women have with creation, we also collect and share traditional knowledge, stories, and best practices related to safeguarding and cherishing the environment. By sharing this knowledge, we hope to inform and effect positive change, as well as reclaim and strengthen the relationships that Indigenous women, girls, and gender-diverse people have with Mother Earth, her lands, waters, and wildlife. Our goal is to ensure they can benefit from the transition to a sustainable, low-carbon economy.

We produced a comprehensive *Indigenous Women and Impact Assessment Final Report* and *Quick Guide* in multiple languages. This work is in response to the *Impact Assessment Act*, which came into force in

August 2019. Among the many reforms introduced by these legislative changes were new and important requirements that Indigenous Peoples, particularly Indigenous women, be considered in impact assessment processes. ECCCO also stressed the importance of including Indigenous women's knowledge and perspective at the outset, before decisions are made.

ECCCO also produced: a ground-breaking report on housing issues and how they affect the lives of First Nations, Inuit, and Métis women called *Indigenous Housing: Policy and Engagement Final Report to Indigenous Services Canada*; a “Gardening for Health and Food Security” presentation; and a discussion paper entitled “Indigenous Women's Voices on Marine Safety, Oceans and Waterway Environmental Protection.”

Our ECCCO team worked extensively on the Convention on Global Diversity's proposed framework. At a working session held in Montreal in November 2019, we provided a critical review of the “Options for Possible Elements of Work in the Links Between Nature and Culture in the Post-2020 Global Biodiversity Framework.” We published a critical gender-based analysis of the framework in *Indigenous Peoples and Local Communities and the Post-2020 Global Biodiversity Framework Development of a Fully Integrated Programme of Work*. We also provided a review of the “Zero Draft of the Post-2020 Global Biodiversity Framework.”

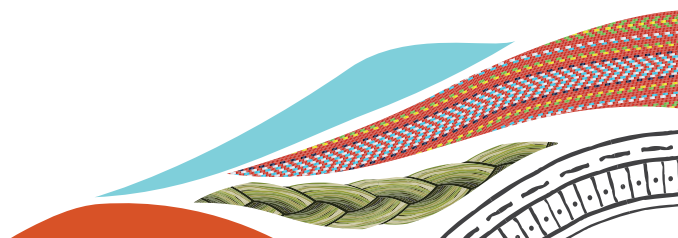


Financial Summary

The Native Women's Association of Canada reported a surplus of \$279,068 for the year ended March 31, 2020. The portfolio of projects continued to grow as NWAC implemented more projects than any year in the history of the organization. The growth in projects is a result of NWAC's ability to successfully deliver on its mission to advocate for and inspire women and families of many Indigenous nations. There are several project teams that are professionally staffed with the expertise in delivering across NWAC's wide portfolio of initiatives which include, economic development, health, policy and social development, resiliency, environment, and operations.

In the past year NWAC continued to attract many donors, mainly individual donors who contributed over \$120,000. These funds are very important and enable NWAC to fund initiatives not supported through the project funding from the federal government. During the past year NWAC also received a restricted contribution from the estate of Marie Melancon in the amount of \$736,403 which must be used for educational bursaries.

At March 31, 2020 NWAC was well positioned with a General Fund Balance of \$577,576 and a healthy balance sheet, including cash and short-term investments of \$3.9m



Thank you for supporting our mission!

Even in the best of times, it is difficult for organizations like ours, working in the public interest, to find the funding we need to conduct in-depth, thought-provoking research and raise awareness on important issues. Even though we provide services that support and empower First Nations, Inuit, and Métis women, as an advocacy group we are ineligible to register as a charity and access the fundraising advantages that come with that designation.

We are therefore immensely grateful to the many businesses and private individuals who nevertheless step up every year to donate to our cause, knowing they will not get a tax receipt for their generosity.

We are also very thankful to the many departments of the Government of Canada who have recognized the importance of including Indigenous women at the policy development table, and the value we can contribute to the work they do. We particularly want to recognize the following departments and agencies that have worked with us: Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada, Canadian Heritage, Crown-Indigenous Relations & Northern Affairs Canada, Economic Development Canada, Elections Canada, Employment and Social Development Canada, Environment Canada, Health Canada, Indigenous Services Canada, Natural Resources Canada, Public Health Agency of Canada, Public Safety Canada, Social Sciences & Humanities Research Council, Transport Canada, and Women and Gender Equality Canada.





Native Women's
Association of Canada



L'Association des
femmes autochtones
du Canada

nwac.ca