

IndigenEYEZ

# Annual Highlights

2023





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I've been reflecting lately about how IndigenEYEZ is uniquely positioned to help Indigenous communities create positive change. In the jargon of the day, I've been thinking about social impact and getting to the root of the issues we face.

Over the years, I've gained three insights that guide what we do at IndigenEYEZ. These learnings come from being witness to the dreams, challenges, and barriers of frontline workers in the more than 100 Indigenous community where I've done work.

**Indigenous people have the answers:** Even though internalized oppression keeps us bringing in outsiders to help, we are the ones who have the answers to our problems.

**Change takes time:** It took several hundred years of colonization to create the problems in our communities; real change doesn't happen all at once, it takes small shifts made over time.

**Indigenous ways hold the key:** Change involves conflict and Indigenous ways offer wise guidance for dealing with disagreements in ways that create learning and strengthen relationships.

At IndigenEYEZ, we support communities to find their own solutions by helping members tap into their inner wisdom. We create space to learn and practice skills for making change. We share skills for navigating differences and create space for getting comfortable with tension.

Our work continues to invite all voices to create the movement needed to strengthen our communities, revitalize the circle around our children, and transform the systemic patterns that disconnect us. This is how we heal relationships and empower the next generations. Only by growing the capacity of communities to realize their own hopes and dreams can we make real impact. This is why we offer the programs that we do. We teach skills to engage more deeply, share the vision more clearly, and keep going even when it gets tough.

Thank you for being with us on this journey of community change!

**KELLY TERBASKET**  
PROGRAM DIRECTOR

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## SPOTLIGHT

**NEW WEBSITE** In Fall 2022, we launched a fresh website reflective of current offerings that aligns with the principles of IndigenEYEZ. Please come visit us at [IndigenEYEZ.com](https://IndigenEYEZ.com)

**HYBRID TRAININGS** Going online has been a game changer for us. We now reach more participants, in more diverse locations, without the time and cost of travel for either communities or our facilitators. With the return of in-person, we have embraced a hybrid approach that sees some of our offerings including gatherings as part of the training.

**DEDICATED STAFF** Recognizing the value of our small but mighty team of staff, IndigenEYEZ has been building internal capacity to better support and recognize our team including initiatives to support wellness and career growth.

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“If every Native woman on Turtle Island could participate in a group like this, the effects would be felt from ocean to ocean.”

—13 MOONS PARTICIPANT



*13 Moons Gathering, citx's paqalqyn // Aaron Hemens*

## FOCUS: EMPOWERING INDIGENOUS WOMEN

The 13 Moons leadership program for Indigenous women+ beautifully showcases the depth and impact of what we do. This was our second year running this program to bolster the women+ on the frontlines of our communities to value ourselves and our inner wisdom. The space created in 13 Moons is intimate and empowering, leading to newfound confidence and a network of lifelong support.

IndigiNEWS writer Aaron Hemens caught the spirit and impact of the program when he joined us for the in-person gathering at the end of the 7-month virtual series. His article is shared on the following pages.

WRITTEN BY AARON HEMENS This article appeared in [IndigiNEWS](#), May 16, 2023

## ON SYILX HOMELANDS, 13 MOONS PROGRAM UNITES INDIGENOUS WOMEN AND GENDER-DIVERSE KIN

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After gathering in a circle on the final day, more than 20 participants of this year's 13 Moons program hugged, laughed and cried together before departing for home. The event in *ciṭxʷs paqəlqyn* (Naramata) on May 7 wrapped up the second annual [free leadership program hosted by IndigenEYEZ](#).

Over the course of 10 Zoom workshops that began last fall and ended with a three-day in-person gathering, participants engaged in improv games, movement, singing, storytelling, poetry writing and more. The program uses the arts as a way to liberate the voices of participants.

[Kelly Terbasket](#), program director and lead facilitator of 13 Moons, said the play-based learning activities are meant to help people step out of their comfort zones. "We get people doing little baby steps. And pretty soon, they might be actually performing or acting in front of the group," said Terbasket. "When you stretch your comfort zone, over time, you're more confident."

Along with those who gathered for the in-person retreat, there were more than 100 registered participants this year – including Indigenous women, trans and Two-Spirit people – who were encouraged to drop into virtual programming at their own convenience, said Terbasket.



As a syilx facilitator, Terbasket said that she draws on elements of the [Four Food Chiefs](#) in her facilitation model – honouring tradition with Skəmixst (Black Bear) and tapping into *siya?* (Saskatoon Berry) for creativity.

**"You don't have to be an official leader to be a leader, to be having influence on change and decisions that are made,"** said Terbasket. **"But what you need is to have conviction, you need to have a voice, you need to value yourself and your own inner wisdom before you can share it."**

Participants in the program described leaving the experience with a lifelong sisterhood and a newfound sense of confidence. Through improvisation and activities that used her imagination, program participant Ntucumthug Crystal Spahan of the Nlaka'pamux Nation said that she experienced a full transformation in her identity, one that's not afraid to share her true colours.

"The effect that it had on me was being able to get in touch with that little girl inside. She had been wanting to play," said Spahan. "Colonialism and society's standards of going to work, being quiet and doing your job – you're not allowed to play, have fun, talk. And this was definitely playing and opening new doors that we thought were shut long ago."

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 13 Moons Article from IndigiNEWS continued...

For second-year participant Stephanie Mason of Fisher River Cree Nation and Tsleil-Waututh First Nation, she said that the program has enabled her to step into her personal strength, use her own voice in a good way and engage in her healing processes.

“It allowed me to feel safe in a space of women who I know are doing the same things; the same kind of struggles in our lives and have experienced the same things. It created that sense of trust for me to be able to share bits and pieces of my story,” said Mason. “We’ve been so ingrained in individualistic thinking. I think it’s so important to bring us together because colonization has suppressed us as Indigenous women-plus.”

In her second year participating in the program, Hasaqsut Meagan Curley — who is Nuu-chah-nulth — said that having space held for her to share her voice allowed her to feel a new sense of safety.

“There’s something different about safety with other women-plus that not a lot of people get to really experience,” said Curley. “I think that it just really provided me with the opportunity to show up as my authentic self, because there wasn’t going to be any part of me that was rejected.”

As a result, she said that she now unapologetically takes space, her communication and listening has improved, and her relationship with her children has shifted. “I think that there’s nowhere else in the world that I would’ve been able to get this,” she said. “There’s nowhere else in the world where I can feel held, heard, seen, supported and cared for in this way.”

For Terbasket, she said that workshops are intentionally structured to cultivate hope. “If you don’t shift from hopelessness to hope, then all the activities that you’re doing, they’re not going to make substantial change that’s needed,” she said. “Because hope mobilizes — if you have hope, you can take action.”

She noted that her dream is to see more Indigenous women-plus in leadership roles, where they can bring their voices and wellness into different spaces.

**“You read about how the first wave of settlers were shocked at how much power [Indigenous] women had in communities — knowing that colonization has tried to eradicate those roles, so we are lifting up those important roles and contributions to decision-making and leadership in our communities.”**

Spahan, Mason and Curley all agreed that they would enroll in the program again this coming fall, and encouraged other Indigenous women-plus to do the same. “Hopefully, we remain connected, because I think that’s the end goal to this process, is to continue to make a ripple effect and bring the Indigenous women-plus together in a stronger bond,” said Mason.

Curley said that the spirits of participants will walk together for the rest of their lives.

“Whether we see each other in real life or not again, I feel very connected. I think that all of these are lifelong friendships and connections,” she said.

“They’re my sisters, not my friends. This is something that is magical that I could never ever find anywhere else.” ❤️



## LEARN WITH INDIGENEYEZ

A critical step in meaningful community change is getting to where communities have their own people who are trained and able to bring IndigenEYEZ tools to their work with members. This is the heart of movement building. Our dream is to build of a pool of Indigenous facilitators who can take our methodologies and workshops into their communities and nations. The more we expand our facilitators, the larger the ripple into communities.

The challenge since the beginning of IndigenEYEZ has been to mentor and train new facilitators. It takes time and lots of mentorship opportunities where emerging facilitators can practice and hone their skills. Prior to Covid, we were doing training in person, which was hard because everyone lived in different places. Now, with the move online, we are no longer hampered by distance.

**“Our apprenticeship program was one of the most significant developments of the year.”**  
—Program Director, Kelly Terbasket

### IndigeRISE

In 2022, we launched our apprenticeship with 5 part-time positions for Indigenous facilitators who are located across BC and beyond. Our apprentices take our trainings online, receive mentorship online, and are able to step into work experience opportunities supporting our online workshops. It has been a real highlight to see these emerging facilitators build skills for supporting children, youth, and families in their communities.

### SPARK

Our SPARK training helps Indigenous frontline workers and emerging leaders build their capacity to better connect with those they serve and to navigate the challenging situations that occur every day in community. SPARK is an Indigenous-led space to learn how to increase participation, bring all voices into the dialogue, and strengthen connection with diverse community members.

### COMMUNITY OF PRACTICE

These trainings are grounded in a community space where participants can practice their new skills in a supportive learning environment.

## OUR WORK WITH SETTLERS IN ALLYSHIP

**kinSHIFT:** Began as a social enterprise in response to requests from settlers, [kinSHIFT](#) delivers a powerful workshop experience where individuals or corporate teams can learn and ask questions while strengthening their courage for engaging with Indigenous peoples. In an era of increasing awareness of racial and cultural inequities, kinSHIFT is described as medicine for relationships. The webinars foster emotional safety where participants explore their reactions, expand their understanding, and practice shifting unconscious patterns. Revenue from kinSHIFT goes directly to programs that benefit Indigenous communities.

Read kinSHIFT's feature in  
Gobal Heroes magazine



**kinSHIFT Corporate Coaching:** We have been working with social enterprise partners [Purppl](#) on a coaching program for organizations seeking to deepen their understanding of reconciliation and seriously explore decolonizing their operations. We have just started working with our first corporate client—a financial institution—in this one-on-one coaching program.

**Table Talks:** This grassroots collaboration with the South Okanagan Similkameen Community Foundation offers tools and resources to support neighborhoods to engage in courageous conversations about anti-Indigenous racism. While many settlers want to engage in reconciliation, they are immobilized out of fear of doing or saying the wrong thing. One of the best places to do this important work is the comfort of your own kitchen table with your friends and family. Table Talks offers resources and supports for getting start—and keeping the conversation going.

“I really appreciated the sense of connection and inclusion. While there were moments of vulnerability, there was also space to explore this safely for everyone.”

—kinSHIFT PARTICIPANT







Photo: Billie Jean Gabriel

## DECOLONIZING 101 THE INDIGENOUS VERSION

When we launched kinSHIFT, we were surprised to find Indigenous people signing up. They told us they also need to better understand how racism and colonialism have worked together to create oppression—external and internal. In response, we created HERON, decolonization training for Indigenous people. Entrenched racism and colonization will not be dismantled quickly, so HERON helps to empower Indigenous people to respond to harmful narratives and actions with assertive and factual interventions. We ran the first session in early 2023 with strong feedback to continue this program as a means of supporting Indigenous people to navigate the complexities of today's environment.

### IN THE NEWS

**IndigenEYEZ & Okanagan College:** Our programs are the focus of a community-based pilot program to understand the effects of our leadership and transformation training. The project, KINdling q'wítmi?st, is led by Okanagan College and was successful in receiving multi-year funding from the prestigious College and Community Social Innovation Fund (CCSIF) managed by the Natural Sciences and Engineering Research Council of Canada (NSERC).

# OUR WORK WITH YOUTH

During Covid, we took a pause from youth camps and used the opportunity to reflect. In the past, we found youth were “dropped off” at camp without their families or youth workers being involved. We realized that in order to create community change, our camps must include youth workers, parents, and Elders. If community members are not part of the learning, then sending youth home can be like the shock that often comes after treatment—you’ve had a transformative experience but your community hasn’t.

Our vision is to host a camp where our facilitators bring youth, families, Knowledge Keepers, and frontline workers from their communities and participate together. We are focused on building up the infrastructure so that instead of youth empowerment camps we can host community empowerment camps.



Currently, we are embedding our youth activities in community camps hosted by partners, which keeps us in touch with the youth and optimizes these resource-intensive events.

## SALMON WARRIOR CAMP

Together with the [Columbia River Salmon Reintroduction Initiative](#), we supported a week-long gathering of youth from the Syilx Okanagan, Secwépemc, and Ktunaxa Nations. The gathering was held at the headwaters of the Columbia River where salmon have been exterminated since the building of dams in the United States more than 80 years ago. This powerful annual gathering grounds the work of salmon reintroduction in the connections that IndigenEYEZ helps build with the lands and waters and between the young people themselves.

## LANGUAGE WARRIOR GATHERING

In partnership with Okanagan Nation Alliance, IndigenEYEZ helped to facilitate this gathering of the new generation of active nsyilxcən learners and teachers to talk about ways of nurturing the growth of the nsyilxcən language. IndigenEYEZ contributed facilitation and our specialty of creating safer and more inclusive spaces for difficult dialogue. The gathering focused on charting a collective path in language revitalization towards the shared vision a web of learners and teachers who integrate and contribute at the local and tribal levels.




syilx knowledge and nsyilxcen language and translation has been provided by various knowledge holders and language speakers from within our syilx nation. Indigenous peoples of the syilx nation are the exclusive owners of our cultural and intellectual properties.




IndigenEYEZ  kinSHIFT

As a project on MakeWay's shared platform, IndigenEYEZ benefits from the governance, human resources, financial, and grant management oversight provided by MakeWay with strategic direction and daily management of activities sitting with the IndigenEYEZ team.

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