Indigenous Women's Participation in Impact Assessments: An Examination of Barriers in Impact Assessments and the Navigation of Violence to Land and Body

Report Prepared for the Impact Assessment Agency of Canada

By the Invitation to Voices Project Team

A Collaborative Partnership between Temiskaming Native Women's Support Group (Keepers of the Circle) and AnânauKatiget Tumingit Regional Inuit Women's Association

Abstract

There is momentum gaining in academia exploring how we can achieve equitable and sustainable resource development in Canada. Alternative approaches to sustainable development, such as the incorporation of Indigenous Traditional Ecological Knowledge, and equitable inclusion of Indigenous women, girls, and gender diverse peoples in consultations about resource development projects are crucial to move forward sustainably for all the beings of creation. There is evidence of both successes and drawbacks in the current neoliberal approach to Indigenous relations by industry proponents such as, Impact and Benefit Agreements (IBA's). Ministerial approaches are evolving to include constitutional rights bestowed by Canada upon Indigenous peoples, and the Canadian Environmental Assessment Act (CEAA) 2012 is now replaced with the Impact Assessment Act (IAA) 2019. The ministry is mandated with a duty to consult impacted Indigenous communities when considering large scale development projects. As such, questions regarding how to implement Gender Based Analysis (GBA+) parameters that consider the unique and distinct circumstances of Indigenous women and girls across Canada are emerging. With international charters such as, the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous People (UNDRIP, 2008) affirming the inherent rights of Indigenous people worldwide, the pressure is rising to bring together conflicting worldviews. To move towards achieving sustainability in major projects implementation, a shift in worldviews is required to incorporate all ways of knowing and being. This report outlines the variety of barriers affecting Indigenous women's abilities to participate in Impact Assessments. This is a companion document to *Indigenous Women's GBA+ Framework* which outlines pathways and strategies to build Indigenous women's abilities to participate in Impact Assessment processes, as well as makes recommendations for community organizing and consultation protocols that are created by and for Indigenous people. The discovery of tangible and actionable solutions that uplift and empower Indigenous women will further mitigate the impacts of resource development projects and therefore, move everyone closer to securing a sustainable future.

Introduction

'Women are the heart of their nations and communities' (MMIWG Report 2019, Pg. 129). Across Turtle Island Indigenous women are making themselves heard, demonstrating how abuse and violation of lands and waters manifests violations on Indigenous women, girls, and gender diverse peoples (MERE, n.d.). Evolving dynamics in nation-to-nation dialogue between Canada, First Nations, Métis, Innu, and Inuit peoples is taking place in a variety of contexts. A diverse range of research and solutions are being investigated coast to coast across various sectors. This report outlines feedback given to us during our project activities about Indigenous women's experiences with participation in Impact Assessments. With feedback to guide us, we seek to highlight actionable solutions for more equitable, inclusive, and representative consultations processes in Northern Ontario and Northern Labrador. The Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada published 94 calls to action to be implemented to begin the transition to equitable development. These calls to action provide tangible solutions and recommendations to address intersectional issues that affect Indigenous Peoples across Canada including concerns related

to, child welfare, education, justice, health, language, and culture (Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada, 2015). The Canadian Government and the United Nations have supported this declaration on the rights of Indigenous People, explicitly supporting initiatives calling for equity for Aboriginal people in the legal system, settlement agreements, professional development, youth programs, and other widespread measures be taken. We await these measures and tangible action solutions to be implemented and we aim to support these endeavors to empower Indigenous women and mitigate the impacts of colonial oppression.

Some questions that have emerged during our project activities include 'what constitutes meaningful engagement?', 'how can Indigenous women participate in consultation processes more effectively?' and 'what role do Indigenous women take on in strengths-based approaches in community organizing?'. From the beginning of our project to its current stage, a key concept has emerged and resurged repeatedly, Indigenous women are the land. Indigenous women are life givers and knowledge transferers. The importance of inclusion and representation of all voices moves us forward in a good way. 'Indigenous women make decisions from the heart, not from the mind, the mind is there to guide the how, the heart is to guide the why' (Participant, IA Focus Group 2021). To practice traditional gender roles Indigenous women are dependent on access to land and resources, and therefore any loss and degradation of their surrounding environment due to extractive activities has long term consequences for their well-being, health, and safety (Csevar, S. 2021).

Methodology

Our methods for conducting this research use a combination of information sources. Our goal was to collect feedback from Indigenous women, girls, and gender diverse peoples in our respective regions about barriers they have experienced to participating in Environmental Assessment and Impact Assessment processes. To do this we utilized multiple methods of information collection. We conducted 46 individual interviews, 3 focus groups and 1 panel roundtable discussion that principally focused on capacity and barrier issues in Impact Assessments. We received feedback from Indigenous women, girls, and gender diverse peoples from Northern Ontario and Northern Labrador as well as from other regions across Canada. We asked 7 key questions in each interview:

1. What is your experience in participating in Environmental Assessment or Impact Assessment Processes?
2. Did other community members share their views together? How did the community come together to present information?
3. If you have been involved in an Environmental Assessment or Impact Assessments, did you find the process was a positive or negative experience? What made the experience positive or negative for you?

4. Are there things you are interested in changing so that the experiences of Indigenous Women are better captured in the Impact Assessment process? What are your thoughts?

5. In your experience, what are barriers to Indigenous women's participation in Environmental Assessment or Impact Assessment processes?

6. In your opinion, what changes are needed to ensure that Indigenous Women feel more welcomed and comfortable to engage in Impact Assessment processes?

7. Is there anything else you would like to share related to the strategies Indigenous Women use in participating in and observing Environmental Assessment or Impact Assessment consultations?

Our activities generated qualitative data through extracting key themes to guide our research. These themes are the subcategory headings listed under 'Barriers to Indigenous Women's Participation'. We have expanded on these key themes where appropriate pulling research that reflects regional, national, and global realities of Indigenous and Inuit women and girls in Impact Assessments and more broadly in resource development activities. We reviewed existing work about culturally relevant gender-based analysis (CRGBA) published by the Native Women's Association of Canada (NWAC, 2020), the concepts outlined in the report were insightful. We incorporated expansive research on the original CRGBA concepts outlined by NWAC in 2008 (NWAC, 2008) that emerged from a collaboration between Pauktuutit Inuit Women of Canada and the University of British Columbia that better reflect the distinct needs of Inuit and Innu women and provide direct parallels to resource development activity applications (Nightingale, E. et al. 2017).

We have networked with other organizations doing related work in GBA+, accountable industry practices, Indigenous community organizing, land use planning and Indigenous technological and policy initiatives. We have actively participated in seminars, conferences, speaking panels, research groups, caucuses, grassroots events to engage in conversations about contemporary solutions to Indigenous inclusion and equity in development projects. Our literature review draws on multidisciplinary sources ranging from academic research, community initiatives, case studies, grassroots reports and publications, grey literature, international publications, legislation surrounding Impact Assessment processes and best practices outlined in government databases as well as oral sources in audio visual media. This report is a crucial component in synthesizing key concepts to articulate contemporary and innovative pathways forward for Indigenous women's effective participation in Impact Assessments.

Findings

Indigenous women in northern Canada are disproportionately and negatively impacted by resource development projects and experience a lack of access to potential benefits (Steinstra, D. et. al. 2016). Industrial projects impose changes that have lasting impacts on the overall health and well-being of Indigenous communities who must live with the long-term consequences of development on traditional territories. Indigenous women who have worked in extractive industries experience higher rates of racism, discrimination, and sexual harassment (PIWC 2020, NWAC 2020a). Resource extraction and development in the north and the complex interchange of information between Indigenous communities, industry proponents and government has been evolving and new opportunities for inclusion and protection of Indigenous women, girls and gender diverse persons are available.

As is highlighted in the *What We Heard* report, it is crucial to respect and acknowledge differences of Inuit, First Nations and Métis practices and worldviews (Government of Canada, 2020). We have curated sources that have allowed us to explore research that distinctly focus on regionally specific case studies in academia. We have read reports from both Inuit and First Nations organizations that reflect the unique realities of Indigenous women from multiple sectors and projects to articulate the various challenges and opportunities Indigenous women are facing in a respectful manner. There is a significant amount of literature that focuses on impacts to the health and well-being of Indigenous groups due to extractive industries. What is abundantly clear in our research is that the individual rights of Indigenous women, girls and gender diverse people are put at risk by the systematic violations of the collective rights of Indigenous peoples (Kuokkanen, R. 2012). Land and health are intrinsically connected, disruption by ongoing colonial processes of dispossession underlies economic disparities in our societies (Nightingale, E; Richmond, A. 2022). Approvals of resource extractive projects contaminate and destroy Indigenous lands, prioritizing employment and profit over environmental and community wellness (Nightingale, E.; Richmond, A. 2022). On a global scale, Indigenous groups are implementing diverse strategies to reconnect with land and protect their knowledge ties to space and place, and there has been significant advancement for the inclusion of Indigenous women in resource development activities and project planning.

One key concept is the application of GBA+ in Impact Assessments from the onset of project planning. We have analyzed applications of GBA+ in Impact Assessments and investigated culturally appropriate standards to implement into framework parameters. GBA+ is not a new concept to government and service delivery organizations, GBA+ has been a constantly evolving conversation, spanning decades of time (Government of Canada n.d.). This feminist originated concept is awkwardly contrasted with Indigenous cultural principles such as, collectivism. Nevertheless, in consideration of the distinct and in many instances negative impacts of industry developments on Indigenous women, it remains a relevant and applicable concept to apply in Impact Assessment processes to address and mitigate some of the issues that arise such as increased rates of various forms of violence and economic marginalization against Indigenous women and girls.

After the initial introduction of the IAA 2019 into legislation, the missing and murdered Indigenous women and girls (MMIWG) report was officially released to the public. The report addresses the crisis of missing and murdered Indigenous women and girls in Canada and is a ground-breaking source of information and research. True mitigation of project impacts can only occur if the inherent rights of Indigenous women, girls and 2SLGBTQQIA people are recognized. After decades of silence, a National Inquiry has created space for survivors to come forward and share their stories. The sense of power and belonging that was lost will not be restored through the Truth-Gathering process alone, tangible responses to the calls to action must be implemented for real change to occur (Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada, 2015). The MMIWG report demonstrates how powerful relationship building is, and that restoring and rebuilding trust represents a crucial first step in understanding how colonial violence persists today. As outlined in the MMIWG Final Report titled '*Reclaiming Power and Place: The Final Report of the National Inquiry into Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls, Volume 1a, 1b',* institutional, systematic and structural colonial violence persists through 4 major pathways:

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

These pathways represent intersecting aspects that can be experienced individually or cumulatively. Structural forces reinforce discrimination towards various aspects of identity, compounding to create overlapping oppression and exclusionary patterns. Violence is more likely to occur when multiple pathways of colonial violence come together, imposing intersectional barriers of discrimination. The impacts of colonial violence manifest in the lives of Indigenous women, girls and 2SLGBTQQIA people through increased experiences of poverty, homelessness, food insecurity, water insecurity and unemployment (MMIWG, 2019). Access to support networks providing childcare, shelter, counselling, or education is limited due to the economic marginalisation that persists and reinforces further social marginalisation (MMIWG, 2019). These conditions make it challenging to satisfy basic needs for oneself or to provide adequate childcare and expose Indigenous women, girls and 2SLGBTQQIA people and their families to higher rates of violence (MMIWG, 2019). Dependency on unsafe employment makes it difficult for Indigenous women, girls and 2SLGBTQQIA people to come forward and share their truth. Survivors clearly identified the role of institutional culture that lacked recognition of these challenges and more so, lacked opportunities to heal and overcome them. Historical instances of the agency and expertise of Indigenous women, girls and 2SLGBTQQIA people being denied or ignored, made rebuilding relationships and fostering safe spaces more difficult. Lack of accountability and institutional support exacerbate the conditions of violence experienced by Indigenous women, girls and 2SLGBTQQIA people (MMIWG, 2019). This report describes the information shared with us and outlines barriers to Indigenous women's participation in impact assessment. It remains fundamentally important to contextualize the feedback we present as interconnected within a wider context of historical legacies, present needs and future concerns and aspirations of the people we have engaged with in this project.

NORTHERN LABRADOR

In Newfoundland and Labrador, there is a distinct and binary power distribution. The island of Newfoundland is the power and decision-making center, with a population of primarily European Settlers. Comparatively, Labrador is where the vast majority of resources exist. It has a smaller population, with both Indigenous communities and settlers, with limited political and decision-making power. This center-periphery construction is present throughout Canada, particularly when considering natural resource development and decision-making. Labrador is frequently excluded from decision-making in St. John's (Atlin, C. 2022). The benefits of extractive industry have been limited for Inuit women, demonstrated by a lack of meaningful employment opportunities or of consultation before projects beginning (PIWC 2020). The systematic disempowerment of women in affected communities aggravates structural issues such as, access to affordable housing, food security and poverty (PIWC 2020).

Indigenous women of Labrador recognize that by living life in their traditional territories, there is the Inuit KaujimajatuKangit knowledge system that encompasses traditional and spiritual guiding principles and that there are also the Western knowledge systems that must be navigated, creating a type of duality of worlds (ATRIWA, 2019). Because of historical settlement and policy implementations that have impacted everyone, Indigenous women in Labrador are facing more violence now than before Muskrat Falls and Voisey's Bay development projects, however, there has been no allocation of resources to address this surge in incidents (Manning, S. et al. 2018).

Voisey's Bay is a case study frequently regarded as a key example of the essential role Indigenous women have in Environmental Assessment / Impact Assessments. Interestingly, in this case Inuit and Innu women conducted an independent community-based organizing strategy to ensure their submissions and input were received by the Environmental Assessment panel. Through advocating for existing frameworks in intersectional GBA+ to be implemented, the disparities in education, training and childcare that fall on Indigenous women were made apparent (PIWC 2020; Cox, D. 2015). Through GBA+ analysis, the number of Inuit women hired was reported, displaying that Inuit women were frequently put into 'feminine' jobs like housekeeping or cafeteria work and were neglected from more 'masculine' roles related to physical labor. These more 'feminine' roles typically receive lower pay, while still expecting long on-site relocations where women are more subjected to violence and sexual harassment than their male counterparts (PIWC 2020). On top of negative workplace conditions experienced by women, at-home childcare often falls as the requirement for women, creating an additional barrier to overcome to obtain employment in remote resource extraction operations. The contributions of Innuit and Innu women were significant in providing insight to the Impact Assessment / Environmental Assessment process and development of IBA negotiations, clearly displaying that participation from Indigenous women should not be the responsibility of Indigenous women themselves but, must be formally required and supported by policies and protocols. In Voisey's Bay, despite Indigenous women being left out of the negotiation process and not explicitly invited to participate, Innu and Inuit women came together to bring the extent of violence and unfair treatment being experienced to

the Governments attention. Frameworks for intersectional GBA+ display the need for consistent and continual formal inclusion of Indigenous women in Impact Assessments. The Labrador Inuit Land Claims Agreement established in 2005 explicitly outlines IBA framework principles that are in line with Inuit cultural goals and wellbeing (PIWC 2020).

NORTHERN ONTARIO

Northern Ontario has decision making structures which center larger cities such as, Ottawa and Toronto in the south. Investment priorities, decisions about resource development projects and funding strategies are happening in places far removed from the lived realities of Indigenous peoples and rural communities in the north. The inclusion of Indigenous people's livelihood, well-being and priorities is extremely critical as Canada actionizes its Net-Zero development strategies, since it is our communities and our territories that will be impacted most (Podlasly, M. 2022). It's important to recognize that in Northeastern Ontario, a high rate of mineral exploration and development have occurred both historically and presently.

The James Bay Treaty extinguished Indigenous signatories' rights, titles, and privileges to lands and resources within the Treaty boundaries which covers most of what is known today as Northern Ontario, spanning beyond the Great Lakes watershed divide from the Hudson and James Bay basins (Leslie, J. 2016). The written terms included annuities for Indigenous signatories and opened Ontario for development and settlement. Academic literature surrounding the validity and fairness of Treaty 9 has been critically examined in the past, pertinent to this research are the provisions that traditional pursuits such as hunting, fishing and trapping could continue as it had, except for lands which were allocated for other purposes (Leslie, J. 2016). The promise that Indigenous peoples could continue their means of subsistence was conditional to their signing of the Treaty (Collins, M. 2010). Arguably, the Ojibwe and Cree signatories to Treaty 9 did so to preserve their way of life and not to extinguish their rights to the land (Collin, M. 2010).

Prior to colonization, Indigenous nations had processes for creating and maintaining diplomatic relationships with one another. These treaties were grounded in language, worldviews and knowledge systems organized by clan systems or political structures of the nations involved, and governed by common ethics such as responsibility, reciprocity, respect, peace, and accountability (Simpson, L. 2008). Mino-Bimaadiziwin is 'the good life' and is achieved through living in balance within ourselves, one another and with the beings of creation (LaDuke, W. 2017). Because of the relationship that Indigenous people hold to land, Indigenous communities rely on their traditional territories as a means of subsistence, through hunting, trapping fishing and gathering (Collins, M. 2010). The land's inherent value informs Indigenous identity, spirituality, ecology, and reality (Collins, M. 2010).

The right to hunt, fish and trap has been generally applied to many of the numbered treaties, and in Section 35 of the Constitution Act 1982 have become enshrined into the Canadian constitution, which also enshrines Treaty parameters (UBC n.d.). Historically, the Indian Act informed Indigenous policies and relations, and the numbered Treaties exacted additional submissions and delegations of power from Indigenous groups (Barsh, R.; Henderson, J. 1982). By rule of law, each Indigenous group is bound only by what it has agreed to and the powers that Canada received are limited by the numbered treaties,

however by uniform application of the Indian Act over First Nations, the numbered Treaties are repudiated and undermined (Barsh, R.; Henderson, J. 1982). Because of the precedent set by *Calder v British Columbia 1973* The surrender of title in Treaty 9 leaves Indigenous groups such as, the Cree and Ojibwe people in the far north with claims to traditional territory to register with the Negotiations Branch of Ontario's Ministry of Indian Affairs (Anonymous n.d.) still awaiting outcomes. The comprehensive land claims process has been criticized heavily as an extinguishment policy and should not be viewed as a promising solution. While the subsistence rights of Indigenous people are a definite positive part of Treaty 9 and the Constitution Act and could be used in the assertion of rights within the territory, other parameters such as, the extinguishment of title, limit and effectively remove power from impacted Indigenous groups in the far north.

Competing priorities and interests in the far north are rigorously debating major development projects such as, the Regional Assessment for the Ring of Fire, and agency documents including, the Terms of Reference about assessment parameters (Ministry of the Environment and Climate Change 2022). The people who benefit the most from these projects are not the same people who stand to lose the most (Scott, D. et. al. 2020), and the specific gendered impacts of such large scale developments are numerous and serious. The sheer magnitude of the project scale will erode areas to harvest and game to hunt. The provincial government of Ontario recently approved a series of amendments to the Far North Act which removed provisions that hinder economic development in Northern Ontario and provide cost savings measures for project proponents. It also notably removed reference to the protection of 225,000 square kms of interconnected protected areas (Ministry of Northern Development, Mines, Natural Resources and Forestry, 2022), facilitating the expansion of project overlay on sensitive watersheds and regions with significant biodiversity and peat sequestration services. The current atmosphere of changes and push-pull of opposing worldviews in Northern Ontario is demonstrative of provincial priorities laying with project implementation, at the cost of Indigenous livelihood and essential ecological services. The time for Ontario to take meaningful steps and bring significant action towards enhancing the ecological resilience (Ontario, 2020) of the land has never been more critical, this includes Indigenous conservation actions and meaningful inclusion in major project decisions which have generational impacts to First Nations peoples. In the rush for development and economic benefits, the onus of land protection is falling again to First Nations who are publicly calling for all Canadians to consider ecological impacts and resiliency (CELA; Mushkegowuk Council; Friends of the Attawapiskat, 2022).

The responsibility to intervene currently rests with the Federal and Provincial governments and this makes nation to nation engagement critical in creating better project outcomes. With the Impact Assessment Act of 2019 creating more social aspects of the environmental assessment process and creating participation funding opportunities available for Indigenous consultations, as well as taking more direct responsibility for consultations (IAAC, 2022) the time for Indigenous knowledge inclusion has never been more critical. The push and pull between economy and ecological values in major projects have been demonstrated in fierce negotiations with high stakes costs associated with all parties (Stanley, A. 2021). Priorities in the province of Ontario are not Indigenous focused and with pressure for development in the north mounting, the equitable inclusion of Indigenous priorities will be hard won. Supporting talented and effective leadership from Indigenous women within Treaty 9 territories is an essential component to the long-term success of nations seeking to protect their livelihoods and cultural practices.

IMPACT ASSESSMENT PROCEDURAL RECOMMENDATIONS

Affirming MMIWG Calls to Justice

The labelling of Indigenous peoples and governments as 'stakeholders' undermines decision-making roles and agency in community, overlooking broader commitments to nation-to-nation relationships (Manning, S. et al. 2018). Nation to Nation Dialogue is a concept well explored by academics, governments, community, and organizations across Canada. The Impact Assessment Agency of Canada (IAAC) has taken a strong stance through affirming its role and responsibility to engage with impacted Indigenous peoples during the Impact Assessment process (IAAC, 2020). However, in its current process of outlining guidelines there is a significant amount of autonomy given to industry proponents to articulate their studies and data gathering parameters as it relates to gendered impacts and impacts to Indigenous women, girls and gender diverse persons. There is significant evidence in academic research findings and NGO reports that necessitates not only broad applications of GBA+ throughout Impact Statements but exact guidelines to assess increased gendered violence around development projects (Hoogeveen, D.; et. al. 2020). IAAC can draw on existing national publications to determine parameters of study and to affirm well known standards already pre-determined by Indigenous communities. Trusted national projects such as the MMIWG final report '*Reclaiming Power and Place: The Final Report of the National Inquiry into Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls, Volume 1a, 1b'* is a thorough and foundational document that has translatable components that could implemented into documents such as the Tailored Impact Statement Guidelines and the Indigenous Engagement and Participation Plan. Articulation of known impacts and structural issues brought on or exacerbated by development activities must be openly acknowledged and addressed in tangible ways for Indigenous women and girls in vicinity of development projects, regardless of their status, traditional territories, age, education level or other intersectional factors influencing their abilities to participate.

TISG Parameters for Industry Proponents

Significant attention and priority have been given to equity in employment in industry activities and is often highlighted as a comprehensive method for the inclusion of gender issues in Impact Assessments (Hoogeveen, D.; et. al. 2020). The reporting requirements for employment statistics of Indigenous women show that the jobs they hold are difficult to find. A common practice of employment and training benefits are determined in IBAs. Developing compensation framework for impacts to Indigenous title is not a simple task. Divergent views create a challenge for reconciliation efforts at issues that are deeply entwined with political and historical context. The unique nature of Indigenous title rights requires clarity for the benefit of all involved parties, with a call for government-led policy approach that balances the various interests and unique considerations associated with Indigenous title while maintaining the honour of the Crown (Adkins, S. 2016). It has been argued that it is in the best interest of First Nations communities to deal with entities who have the power to influence or make decisions that could impact rights and claims. Non-disclosure agreements (NDAs) are typical in IBAs, where both parties involved are bound by privacy agreements about the terms of benefits of the agreements they reach. These NDA's hide issues and limit the exchange of information required to develop best practices

for other Indigenous groups and community entities who are considering similar benefit agreements.

Many IBAs have non-compliance clauses that prohibit Indigenous groups from preventing, protesting, or delaying development (Caine & Krogman, 2010). This stifles the ability to object, in the instance of new information being revealed as development proceeds, these clauses further reduce opportunities for amendments to IBAs during all cycles of a given project (Caine & Krogman, 2010). IBAs effectively act as a constraint to two historical methods of intervention Indigenous groups have relied on to insert themselves into development projects: the first being actions such as, formal legal processes like court challenges and the second being through demonstration and media campaigns. IAAC is already mitigating some of the challenges that arise in IBA's through standardized Tailored Impact Statement Guidelines requests of the proponent to provide an impact statement that gives detailed demographic information, and requests to pledge community funds be allocated for capacity building. However, there is opportunity to mandate employment equity plans and demand concrete and transparent mechanisms of delivery that ensure that equal representation from men and women occur in consultations to create gainful employment opportunities. Furthermore, requiring data articulating accommodation measures that mitigate employment issues are distinct to the lived realities of 2SLGBTQQIA Indigenous peoples. This would address issues of gendered labour distribution in industry activities, and spur innovative methods to address workplace sexual harassment and violence to increase worker retention as well as, further investment into training and higher education by proponents in communities.

BARRIERS TO INDIGENOUS WOMENS PARTICIPATION IN IMPACT ASSESSMENTS

Lack of Familiarity and Rigidity of Process

Legislative Changes to Consultation Processes

The Impact Assessment Act of 2019 is such a recent legislative change that a significant portion of the women we spoke with knew of Environmental Assessments but did not know the term Impact Assessment. We classified the women we approached about our project by their types of experience, first by those who had knowledge of Environmental Assessment / Impact Assessment processes because they became actively involved in consultations either through IBA coordinating activities, employment with a band or industry, lived in a region impacted directly, or who had related academic experience and interest; secondly, those who had lived experience with industry benefits by accessing work in resource development industries or non-traditional trades; and finally, women who had no experience with Environmental Assessment or Impact Assessment processes and did not have knowledge about the process or recent legislative changes. Of the three categories, the majority of women we approached were classified into this final category.

Most women we engaged with did not know about Environmental Assessment or Impact Assessment processes nor had been part of consultations when they took place with First Nations bands and the Nunatsiavut government in past years. However, ***all*** of them were able to describe impacts from

industry development as projects progressed. This is indicative of gaps in outreach and accessibility of information to participate in rural and remote communities. We heard repeatedly from women in each region that they were willing to attend technical training and presentations from the ministry about Impact Assessments if they were to be made available.

Contextualization Gaps

Some Indigenous women reported that they felt they could not contribute to the Impact Assessment process because the dialogue was too technical and difficult to go through. However, with further discussion the same women were able to articulate specific impacts from development they personally experienced, and those of people they knew. All were able to determine cultural impacts and valued components on the land. This indicates a lack of supportive mechanisms to foster Indigenous women, girls, and gender diverse persons empowerment to actionize their right to participate in Impact Assessment processes. There is insufficient background information and/or higher learning opportunities being spread to frame new development from a broader context of influence on people and place. Spreading awareness and involvement of Indigenous women and their families about influences on Impact Assessments processes such as, Federal v Provincial responsibilities, historical development operations, cumulative effects, citizen science and, data gathering methodologies. Industry specific technology and mitigation advancement would bring context to project specific activities and influence engagement opportunities positively.

Western Worldviews Influence in Engagement

Indigenous women reported that they felt uncomfortable in community meetings with proponent representatives who were non-Indigenous persons acting as note takers. This led to less generative discussions. Elders would reportedly ‘clam up’ in community halls where information sharing was linear and often led by outside representative technical experts who would take notes and ask specific questions for data collection purposes. The process of feedback collection by proponents is reductive and consultation summaries would consistently compartmentalize and isolate data into checklist or table format to make an easy summary in their reports. The concept of safe spaces and familiar faces for meaningful engagement repeatedly was brought up. We heard that having people who know each other and trust each other collaboratively discuss values and impacts from development generated more meaningful feedback.

The concept of conflicting worldviews in information processing is not new. When considering the worldviews of Indigenous and European people regarding the natural world, there are many similarities in the ways in which people have come to know nature. Both Indigenous and European people’s knowledge emerged from the need to make sense of the natural world to understand how to take care of themselves. Both systems are a culmination of knowledge gathered through observations, and each share intellectual processes such as questioning, looking for patterns, predicting, verifying, problem solving, adapting, and more (Aikenhead, G. 2011). Over time, each has grown and evolved to encompass

a separate set of priorities, and therefore altering the types of knowledge collected. The concept of what constitutes knowledge has diverged, Indigenous peoples are more holistic, relational and place based in ways of knowing, and tend to focus on spirituality, emotion, physical and mental balance. Whereas, European knowledge has shifted towards reductionist, anthropocentric and generalizable knowledge that has a strong focus on intellectual and physical growth (Aikenhead, G. 2011). There is no room for environmental justice issues in the bureaucratic and scientific method of data collection. The exclusion of dialogues that do not fit the narrative of scientific hypothesis driven analysis make it difficult for participants to express their concerns. Expectations for evidence-driven participation is incompatible with Indigenous knowledge rooted in Storytelling and anecdotes and imposes unrealistic expectations for participants to conform to Western scientific knowledge systems to make contributions that fit into a format that can be easily digested and marked off on a checklist.

The power disparity in knowledge applications between Indigenous and European ways of knowing and being exists and is underscored by the decision-making structures in place and impose a lack of equitable distribution of benefits, and disproportionate impacts from industry development. The heavy emphasis on scientific and economic value components has led to a limited and narrow scope through which to view nature as 'natural resources'. Information collection is by and for non-Indigenous knowledge systems and therefore, reflects value components of Western knowledge systems in their reporting structures.

Representation

There is a marked shift in representation opportunities at the community level, Indigenous women are taking on leadership positions in their respective communities and contributing to better consultation outcomes. Indigenous women are becoming more frequently involved in negotiations processes, participating as leaders and representatives in engagement forums and generally taking on stronger roles in industry-community talks (Gibson, G., personal communication January 17th, 2022).

"It's the women who hold seats of value that are heard, there are councils and coalitions that could be formed. Too often Indigenous women's values and needs are swept aside. It's beneficial to sit in positions that really consider what people are saying, to make sure that cooperation and efforts to be inclusive are made" - (Inuk Tradeswoman, Focus Group Quote 2021)

"*Having meetings in the evenings where dinner is provided and having special meetings to get engagement with women in the community is necessary. There's influence from men in dialogue and conversation and they tend to take over the conversation with their experiences"* (First Nations Woman, Interview Quote 2022)

We have learned that representation is key for connecting to information meaningfully through discussion in our focus groups. Sensitivity to dialogue over key issues varies greatly in different cultures. Discussing issues that are difficult such as, risk of sexual harm and substance abuse in community are

uncomfortable to share. Indigenous women and two-spirit peoples that have attended and helped Elders attend various engagements either by proponents or ministry reported feeling uncomfortable and ill at ease sharing openly in formal settings. In our observations from an organizational perspective, in all public information sessions held by the ministry that our team has attended, we have never seen any Indigenous women or gender diverse persons that have self-identified facilitate or act as coordinators in engagement sessions delivered by industry, IAAC or the CIRNAC support staff representatives. Representation matters in negotiations, in engagements and in community organizing initiatives to ensure structural inclusion of Indigenous women, girls and gender diverse persons voices, and priorities in engagement processes.

Timelines

The timelines for providing comments are extremely short. For communities who have varying levels of capacity and staff available, the information review required is extensive and cumbersome. In our activities we supported lands management staff in providing supplementary information about specific documents on the IAAC site, as related to Upper Beaver Gold Project. In meeting with Indigenous women working on lands management portfolios there was consistent feedback of cumbersome workloads and tight timelines to respond to documents related to the projects in addition to other workloads related to development on traditional territory. In Phase 1 of the Impact Assessment process communities have one 180 days to provide input and comments on key documents, including the Initial Project Description, Detailed Project Description, Summary of Issues, Response to Summary of Issues and Tailored Impact Statement Guidelines (IAAC, 2022). Bands and community organizations are tasked with collectively reaching out to their entire membership, and go over key documents and provide comments, the lands management staff in many bands are limited to one or very few people managing influxes of engagement and development opportunities in territories at a higher rate than ever before.

The timelines implemented by IAAC contrasted with the cultural precept that Indigenous knowledge is relational, placed based and takes time to come to collective agreement is a daunting task for individual communities the undertake (Thomas, D. 2022).

Inaccessibility of Information

Lack of Access to Technology

Indigenous women in remote communities do not have consistent access to technology. This particularly was prevalent for women along the north coast of Labrador who do not have access to reliable internet services, often not having services in their private residences. Therefore, they do not have access to technology sources such as laptops, touchscreen pads or smartphones. While information availability via online sources is readily available, and the IAAC site contains a significant amount of useful information, internet and technology access is necessary to be able to access IAAC website, which

is a critical source of project information, and all upcoming individual project documents and timelines are found online.

With older generations of Indigenous women, technology literacy was also a barrier. Elders in community who hold important cultural knowledge, TEK and land-based information do not access technology sources and rely more primarily on word of mouth, letters, posters, and community meetings to be able to share information. This method creates delays in engagement process and indicates a need for more flexible and longer periods to participate in the planning phase of a project, often when proponents are required to register their Initial Project Description to public record.

Silencing of Indigenous Women's Voices

Systematic silencing of Indigenous women's voices was highlighted in comments made to us about previous community engagement processes, especially regarding Environmental Assessments in the past. Women reported feeling disregarded, judged or dismissed when bringing concerns forward. In this respect, the CEAA 2012 has well explored deficits in its mechanisms to provide inclusion. Despite the open opportunities to participate in the new IAA there are manufactured barriers in place that may interfere with engagement of significant demographics of Indigenous women in communities, as noted in other sections of this report. One common problem is IBA negotiations at project planning outset that influences information transference within and between communities immediately. NDAs are a common practice in new developments obscures opportunities for transparency and information sharing.

Although existing policies call for consultation and consent, these principles alone are insufficient in addressing other more discrete forms of exclusion. Three forms of silencing have been made apparent in literature, locutionary, illocutionary and perlocutionary silencing (Townsend & Townsend, 2020). Locutionary silencing referring to limiting or changing the meaningfulness attached to words. This is demonstrable in summary of engagement tables submitted by project proponents which typically list comments received in bullet form and often lacks context or supplementary information. Illocutionary silencing limits the ability to communicate through words, whether that be due to language barriers, educational, or time constraints. Finally, perlocutionary silencing limits the weight or consequential element of speaking up. Elements of communication such as, intention, meaning and content, are being lost through these systematic silencing methods. Silencing can appear clearly through intimidation, interruptions, or language limitations, but also manifest in less obvious ways like the emotional toll related to speaking, the implied consequences of speaking up, or the fear of being misinterpreted or taken out of context when speaking up. If a participant can overcome limitations of locutionary and illocutionary silencing and provide their input, there is still the risk of not being believed or deemed credible enough.

"Doing impact assessments as Inuit is important. I would do it [participate in impact assessments] because of my children, my grandchildren, my daughter; you have to get your voice out there somehow". – (Innu woman, Interview Quote 2022)

Limited Engagement Methodology

The ministry and industry proponents typically conduct outreach with points of contact such as band councils, tribal councils and registered stakeholders in the region. The dissemination of information is limited primarily to emails, phone calls and radio advertisements in current Indigenous Engagement and Participation Plans, mainly due to Covid-19 restrictions, though commitments to engage in person in community remain on the horizon as restrictions are lifted on public gathering. We heard from Indigenous women in Northern Ontario that making the participation more equal and not only the people who are employed and directly working on project engagement activities in some capacity is needed. Women would hear of community meetings after they had already taken place, and that the frequency and availability of community meetings was not sufficient to learn enough about upcoming projects and to discuss impacts.

Social media groups are increasingly being used by bands to provide easy methods of reaching and maintaining membership connection to engagement activities. While this is an effective strategy to keep membership living in urban settings involved this method is not sufficient to reach specific demographics of women, primarily the older generation of women did not utilize social media platforms as frequently. We heard complaints of missed opportunities in job posts, community meetings and lack requests for more concrete outreach such as letters, phone calls and home visits. In most instances the band is tasked with the groundwork of engagement however, many people do not use Facebook or other social media platforms and a diverse method of community outreach about upcoming development is needed for effective community engagement.

"*For impact assessments, I think community meetings would help, I know there is COVID, but even if you did things virtually just knowing that there is a genuine concern [that helps a lot]. having an individual travel [here] and see for themselves the environmental impacts it would help because if [the people working on these assessments] are in a city* like *Ottawa or St. Johns or even Goose Bay they will not see the environmental impacts unless they actually travel as an individual. They would not be able to see the impacts or feel the impacts through a screen. There would be more of an impact if they were to witness it in person*". – (Inuk Elder, Interview Quote 2022)

Transportation in Remote and Rural communities

Expectations realistic for life in urban centers is often imposed on participants living in remote and rural communities. Limited public transportation options exist and where available run on inconsistent or infrequent schedules, imposing expectations for participants to take time off work and/or secure childcare to attend. These concerns were frequently mentioned in interviews with Inuit and Innu women in Northern Labrador. In these communities, transportation options change seasonally, forcing participants to depend on ice conditions to be able to travel by boat or to rely on significantly more expensive travel options like flying.

Often public meetings are held, and community members are invited to attend however, failure to identify lack of transportation systems to attend these public meetings creates a significant barrier. Without providing safe and accessible transportation options, public meetings continue to represent performative inclusion of Indigenous voices. To assure that engagement opportunities take place, transportation barriers must be addressed and resolved. This is particularly prevalent in rural remote communities that require travel to public spaces.

Systemic Barriers to Impact Assessment Engagement

Urbanization of Indigenous Membership

Urbanization is a common factor in engagement barriers, for Northern Ontario Indigenous women who did not live on reserve and did not have an up to date or permanent address logged with their band were not directly contacted with updates to participate in consultations. Social media platforms are increasingly being used to keep contact with wider membership with varying levels of success. We have heard from women in Kirkland Lake, Temiskaming Shores, and Timmins region that the information they received was delayed, or that they did not access social media regularly to be able to follow the posts in community engagement groups, this was a barrier in accessing jobs postings and current events in community meetings. Indigenous women and girls who live on reserve were, on average, more informed about upcoming meetings and generally had more access to current information through accessibility to the band office. This is indicative of the tendency of proponents and ministry to do outreach with a single point of contact such as, band leadership or tribal councils. Indigenous women who have band membership to local and impacted bands but live in town relied heavily on social media to stay current about community activities. For those who did not have consistent access, there is a significant gap in information transference to membership about Impact Assessment progress or industry project activities.

Among the women we engaged locally, a significant amount came from other territories but lived and/or worked in Labrador City, Happy Valley Goose Bay, Kirkland Lake and Temiskaming Shores. For KOTC outreach, women lived in and around Timiskaming District but came from First Nations communities such as, Attawapiskat, Fort Albany, Kashechewan, Moose Cree, Tagamou, Peawanuck, Wikwemikong, Mattagami, Timiskaming and beyond. For ATRIWA, Inuk women living in and around Goose Bay District and Labrador City were from remote Nunatsiavut communities such as Nunajnguk, Aqvituq, Kikiak, Marruuvik, Qipuqqaq, Ailik, Ittiliarsuk, Pinginak and beyond. For these women living in urban settings, we received reports of women having previously worked in mines, were currently working in the trades, or had direct family members in their households who did. We also heard about the impacts of industry activities on the land, through both negative and positive experiences of the women we spoke with.

Very few women living in urban settings have been involved in consultation activities or have been asked for their feedback about developments occurring nearby. This further indicates a gap in

outreach which affects Indigenous women, girls and gender diverse peoples from local bands who are living in urban settings. An additional gap in outreach to women living near development but whose communities are in other regions is observed. These women experience the same or similar impacts to their economic, social, and environmental health and well-being, however the engagement of women living in urban settings is scattered and inconsistent.

Disparities in Community Preparedness

Western knowledge systems define what constitutes progress, advancement and efficient determination of development, this process distorts what is for Indigenous people a multidimensional and relational process (Cajete, G. 2000). Indigenous science is communicated through customs, ceremonies, oral histories, traditions, stories, TEK and, dialogue of specific regions and place-based knowledge (Cajete, G. 2000). For communities who are at varying levels of capacity this presents a significant barrier in ability to inclusively connect with their membership and meet increased technical demands while simultaneously balancing other governance priorities. The data collection necessary to effectively engage in consultation proceedings places acute pressure on communities to respond quickly enough to the timelines in place. Nations are often forced to work on multiple projects at once and are stretched thin in capacity to respond to individual projects. Self-governance on a range of issues have increased independence and ability for self-determination in communities, however band leadership is also experiencing a significant level of governance and capacity issues to be able to keep up with new resource development projects arising in their respective regions. With each community there are differing levels of readiness to provide information to proponents and agency alike. Some communities have incorporated organized strategies to meet demands such as consultation protocols, works plans, territorial mapping and long-term strategies, while others have no documents prepared and continue to struggle to meet increased workloads, these disparities must be addressed, especially in regions with current and future resource development strategies.

Subsistence and Survival Needs of Impacted Women

Lack of Financial Resources

In thinking about subsistence and external pressures to provide for themselves and their families, women reported that their highest priorities were their work and their families. A civic engagement/ volunteerism approach is not a realistic or sufficient avenue for those who are trying to make a living. As the IAA process is new and largely unknown, as are funding opportunities through the Indigenous Capacity Support Program and other services. Indigenous women that want to conduct outreach and community organizing may apply for additional funds but are not guaranteed allocated sources. More advocacy around supportive opportunities for independent groups of women to do work is needed, this could positively influence more grassroots initiatives in communities and alleviate some pressures from Nunatsiavut and First Nations leadership.

Family & Caregiver Obligations

A common barrier that was repeatedly mentioned by both First Nations and Inuit women we spoke to was caregiver responsibilities. Indigenous women are often primary caregivers of children youth and dependent family members (Gibson, G. et al. 2017). When past opportunities have arisen for community meetings about development projects, it's often the women who stay home to take care of dependents while the men attend the meetings.

Time Constraints

Indigenous women reported that they did not have the time to keep up with project timelines or to read documents related to project because of several reasons. Some reported they had full time employment outside of the home. Exampled in discussing Wasamack Gold Mine and Upper Beaver Gold engagements we heard from women that all their time was spent working at their jobs and then having to do more work at home, it was difficult to find time to get involved in Impact Assessment processes when they had very little to spare. Others reported that they worked irregular hours or shift work and could not attend meetings or had the time to fill in community surveys.

Issues of Food Insecurity

Food insecurity is a major concern in Inuit communities, with traditional food gathering processes being interrupted and loss of cultural knowledge occurring. These conditions of food insecurity make other health problems more common, negatively impacting mental and physical health. The lack of access to country foods like seal, whale, and fish is reinforced by legislative policies. Limitations on traditional food gathering and hunting processes compiled with altered natural environments have imposed unanticipated declines in species that were previously existing in harmony with Indigenous communities for centuries prior to colonization. Offshore oil rigs like Bay Du Nord and the mega dam project Muskrat Falls have long term and serious consequences, yet the women we spoke with reported that they were never consulted about these projects.

"We used to eat a lot of Caribou but now there is a moratorium on Caribou. Space you are not allowed to harvest the food that we have become accustomed to eating. [If you do] then you will get fined, and all of your items will be taken away. [They will] take away anything you used to hunt your ski-doos, your trucks - just for harvesting your traditional food".
– (Inuk Woman Nunatsiavut Beneficiary, Interview Quote 2022).

Legacies of Intergenerational Trauma

Indigenous peoples trust in government agencies has been shaken from historically oppressive policies and can lead to resurfacing of historical trauma through engagement in processes like Impact Assessments (Salerno, T.; et. al. 2021). Understanding of impacts to health and wellness cannot begin

without consideration of historical contexts that have contributed to the contemporary lived realities of Indigenous women, girls and gender diverse persons.

Inuit women revealed a lot of pain when reflecting on their lack of inclusion in many institutions and those who take on the ideologies and behaviours of colonizers, as well as in society at large from experiencing colonial violence, environmental displacement from their homelands, loss of access to traditional food and lands causing food insecurity, and poor health because of pollutions and extractive, exploitative violence, and ultimately cultural erosion. The impacts of intergenerational trauma are historically and contemporarily present in Indigenous communities. Forced residential school attendance, exacerbated drug and alcohol addiction, lateral violence and imposed further loss of culture which imposed physical, mental, emotional, and spiritual health impacts. These impacts carry from one generation to the next, subjecting communities to widespread trauma, suffering and pain.

First Nations women have similar experiences in their lived realities and belief systems. Reconnecting human diversity to biological and ecological diversity, reconnecting culture and nature is essential for environmental protection and sustainable development. Indigenous women collectively acknowledges that there is no best way to live, and the way you live depends on where you are, who you are and what your traditions are (Wildcat, D. 2014). First Nations peoples have an intrinsic relationship to the earth, and land heavily influences their world views and ways of life. In the culture all are related, all relatives and each decision made should consider the impacts ranging now all the way to the seventh generation from now (LaDuke, W. 2016). First Nations women, girls and gender diverse persons live with the traumatic legacy of assimilationist policies. Indigenous peoples were forced into giving up their cultures in the name of religion and made to live in remote reservations in a sedentary lifestyle, a lifestyle of poverty and a chain of broken promises and control through the withholding of food and supplies. Children were sent to boarding schools and had their hair cut, their medicine bundles seized, and many died from neglect, hunger exposure and outright abuse. They were punished for using their language and forbidden from practicing spiritual ceremonies. They were denied legal representation and systematically stripped of their lands. Indigenous peoples are currently amid a type of cultural revival, rebuilding their nationhood and relationships to the land. The external pressures on Indigenous peoples to comply with the dominant world views create uncertainty about which notion of progress they should follow, the way of the traditional life or the way of technology and progress. Economic relationships that Indigenous peoples engage in can be positive (Wildcat, D. 2014) however, in many cases the systematic silencing, disregard and undercutting of Indigenous rights and livelihood is still taking place.

"While we think ahead, and we need to protect and care for those that are behind us"
-(First Nations Elder Quote 2022)

Discussion

Both the Government of Canada and other international legal councils have explicitly recognized Indigenous peoples right to consultation, and the right to obtain free, prior, and informed consent (Government of Canada, 2018). These principles serve as a starting point but, there is still much to be done to provide Indigenous communities fair and meaningful opportunities to participate in Impact Assessments. Without addressing the nuances related to the implementation and interpretation of these rights, space remains for the contributions of Indigenous communities to be silenced, overlooked, or ignored entirely in decision-making processes. Often, Indigenous communities are expected to provide consent based on limited project scope, key project details are excluded due to the restrictions of NDAs, or a lack of relationship building opportunities with other industry stakeholders exist. There are clear and significant limitations in the dissemination of information to communities, which impacts their ability to participate in fair and meaningful ways. Although existing policies call for consultation and consent to be acquired, these principles alone are insufficient in addressing other more discrete forms of exclusion.

Indigenous peoples are expected to make Indigenous knowledge palatable or understandable to suit the expectations of Western operational standards and timelines. When sharing, information is often taken out of context, with key points being redacted or misunderstood entirely by Western note takers. The unintentional bias towards Western ways of thinking imposes a constraint on the ability for Indigenous knowledge to be shared and understood. Whether these exclusionary tactics are intentional, or unintentional, the impacts are largely altering the ability of Indigenous Peoples to be consulted with and participate meaningfully in Impact Assessments. Moving beyond requiring Indigenous communities to be informed and consulted with means there must also be space created for communities to withhold consent, to require more information, or to provide insight that will be fully considered and included in decision-making processes. Cultural biases and comprehension of information through one's own worldview are inevitable however, space for multiple worldviews to coexist must be intentionally created to begin to develop trustworthy, fair, and meaningful opportunities. Indigenous knowledge must be respected as it is shared, without being altered to suit the needs of culturally distinct Western knowledge systems, only then will the Government begin to satisfy its commitments to its UNDRIP Act implementation strategy (Government of Canada 2021).

It is irresponsible to interpret the information we are presenting as laying responsibility for the barriers impacting Indigenous women on structural failures within communities nor, strictly within the advocacy and outreach shortcomings of both government agencies and industry proponents. Rather, there is a complex inter-dynamic of information exchange that is not being transferred from technical reports to digestible formats for Indigenous groups of all ages and stages. Nor is there effective advocacy and training platforms in place to generate sufficient interest in participation in Impact Assessments. This maintains a significant barrier of accessibility of information, only those who have existing expertise in the field, have job specific time to cover all the documents required, have a significant workload to then turn and try to pass on important information quickly enough for communities to process and formulate their positionality in any specific industry activity. The systemic recurring failures to include Indigenous priorities meaningfully and significantly into Environmental Assessment / Impact Assessment processes

by proponents and ministry alike have laid a poor foundation in nation-to-nation relationships. The implementation of IAA 2019 is a step towards reconciliation and within it a new and evolving process of implementation for everyone involved is created. Significant shifts in engagement processes will take time, and long-term investment into Indigenous communities across Canada are much needed to meet the increased demand of Westernized information parameters on communities. The inclusion of Indigenous women, girls, and gender diverse persons in Impact Assessment proceedings is shifting in positive ways through federal legislation such as, IAA 2019. Providing sufficient investment into communities proactively is a necessary component in the generation of meaningful dialogue and input from communities, and a step towards reconciliation to redress the past harms to Indigenous peoples. The community organizing opportunities that exist for Indigenous peoples are being actionized at various stages across Canada, they are a signal that interested parties to resource development activities are paying attention to how Indigenous peoples are engaged.

Terms & Acronyms

ATRIWA – AnanauKatiget Tumingit Regional Inuit Womens Association

CRGBA – Culturally Relevant Gender-Based Analysis

GBA+ - Gender-Based Analysis

IAA – Impact Assessment Act

IAAC – Impact Assessment Agency of Canada

IBA - Impact and Benefit Agreements

KOTC – Keepers Of The Circle

MMIWG – Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls

NDA – Non-Disclosure Agreement

TEK – Traditional Ecological Knowledge

UNDRIP – United Nations Declaration of Rights of Indigenous Peoples

2SLGBTQQIA– Two Spirit, Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, Queer, Questioning, Intersex, Asexual

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