

'SEEING' A PATHWAY TO RECONCILIATION:

Indigenous-led research plays important role in strengthening Indigenous business ventures

Reconciliation between Indigenous and non-Indigenous people is one of Canada's biggest challenges. Among its 94 Calls to Action, the Truth and Reconciliation Commission (TRC) called on corporate Canada to provide Indigenous peoples with equitable access to jobs, training and education opportunities; to commit to meaningful consultation and building respectful relationships with Indigenous peoples; and to ensure that communities gain long-term sustainable benefits from projects.

How Canadian businesses and corporations can address the Calls to Action in meaningful ways is not always clear to business leaders, government organizations and academic institutions.

Dr. Peter Moroz, an associate professor at the Hill and Levene Schools of Business, set out to address this problem by developing a collaborative partnership with Indigenous leaders and researchers. In the paper authored by Colbourne, Moroz, Lendsay, Hall and Anderson, *Indigenous Works and Two Eyed Seeing: Mapping the case for Indigenous-led research*, the co-authors examine the critical role that research and engagement led by Indigenous organizations and communities plays in advancing social and economic development that is responsive

to Indigenous needs, and respectful of Indigenous values and traditions.

Historically, governments and academic institutions have taken a colonial approach: research *for* not *with* Indigenous peoples. But when the rights of Indigenous peoples are addressed and when these initiatives are developed by, led by and engage Indigenous communities, Moroz and his colleagues' research finds that research and engagement has the potential to be more successful, as measured by all stakeholders.

To understand how Indigenous-led research may be successfully undertaken, the authors examine Indigenous and Western knowledge systems, demonstrating how we can incorporate both knowledge systems and ways of knowing in a decolonizing research methodology. Through this partnership, Moroz and colleagues explore how Indigenous Works (IW), a national Indigenous not-for-profit organization, facilitates Indigenous-led research and strengthens Indigenous research capacity.

IW recognizes the need to develop new ways to conduct research that draw from Indigenous worldviews as a pathway to reconciliation. One research method is the Indigenous practice of Two-Eyed Seeing, a guiding principle found in Mi'kmaq

Knowledge that was coined by Elder Alert Marshall. It is an integrative approach that provides guidance on how to bridge Western and Indigenous forms of science and knowing. In this practice, researchers value both knowledge systems equally, looking for a common thread amongst the sectors and a common ground for partnership in order to achieve stronger results, impacts and outcomes.

Through four case studies, this research analyzes IW's pioneering efforts to create an ethical space for engagement that actively incorporates community members and their ways of knowing throughout the research process. Findings show that IW is helping employers and employees to understand the purpose behind reconciliation, bringing clarity and resolve to corporate action, and providing closure to Indigenous expectations concerning the TRC's call to corporate Canada.

IW's use of the Two Eyed Seeing principle will play a growing role in guiding facilitators of Indigenous-led research that seeks to weave together different knowledge systems while advocating for and providing value to Indigenous communities and businesses in the Canadian marketplace.

Article overview written by Elsa Johnston

Dr. Peter Moroz; Peter.Moroz@uregina.ca
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