



Indigenous Law Research Unit
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Completed Projects

North Coast Indigenous Land and Resources Research Project (2015-2017)

Funded by the Coastal Stewardship Network (Tides/Great Bear Initiative)

This project focused on articulating legal principles and processes of territorial and resource governance within two nations: Gitxaala and Gitga'at First Nations. In separate collaborations with each community partner, the ILRU analyzed relevant narratives, oral histories, stories, and other textual sources, as well as the views and voices of community members. Two reports and casebooks were produced in this project, each of which includes nation-specific information about authoritative decision-makers, legal processes, general underlying principles, relationships, rights and responsibilities, enforcement, natural consequences and teaching.

Legitimus Legal Pluralism Research Project (2013-2018)

Funded by the Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council and the Indigenous Law Research Unit

This international research project supported our Indigenous Law research partnerships with Cree and Secwépemc communities over three years, and helped scope and deepen conversations with members of other legal traditions as well. The ILRU's community research partnerships focused on Indigenous legal traditions relating to child welfare, adjudication, civil procedure, and lands and resources. We also provided legal methodology training to communities and our researchers, and developed and employed an Indigenous law lands and resources research methodology. Our community partners were provided with all research materials, analyses, and casebooks, and the ILRU will maintain this research as a resource from which to develop curriculum for the proposed UVIC JID Program.¹ In addition, we provided legal methodology training to other national and international project collaborators.

¹ This is a professional degree program that will offer dual law degrees in Canadian law and Indigenous law over four-years. See: <http://www.uviclss.ca/blog/wp-content/uploads/2016/02/JID-Background-26-January-2016.pdf>.

We acknowledge, with respect, the history and legal traditions of the Lkwungen-speaking peoples on whose lands the Indigenous Law Research Unit stands, and those of the Songhees, Esquimalt and WSÁNEĆ peoples whose relationships with the land continue today.



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As part of this grant, we completed a year-long research project in collaboration with the Shuswap Nation Tribal Council to articulate Secwepemc Land and Resource Law. We created a 100+ page analysis incorporating our analysis of 28 Secwepemc narratives and discussions with 24 community members, as well as a casebook that included the stories and case briefs completed for the analysis and a glossary of Secwepemc terms used in the analysis. The comprehensive analysis includes information about authoritative decision-makers, legal processes, general underlying principles, relationships, rights and responsibilities, enforcement, natural consequences and teaching. This analysis is being used by the Shuswap Nation Tribal Council as part of their larger governance initiative and to create a code of ethics respecting environmental decision-making.

Indigenous Laws for Resource Stewardship: A Gathering of Nations (2016)
Funded by the Nature Conservancy of Canada

Led by the Nature Conservancy of Canada, ILRU co-organized a two-day conference to bring together a number of First Nations currently working to articulate their Indigenous laws related to marine and water stewardship. The gathering was organized to celebrate the ground-breaking work they are undertaking, learn from each other, share challenges, establish relationships, strategize about application of Indigenous laws and identify opportunities for moving forward to strengthen and uphold the work. The ILRU participated during the gathering by facilitating some sessions and creating the final report for all participants.

Gender Toolkit Project (2015-2016)

Funded by the BC Law Foundation with additional support from the Swift Foundation

We created the accessible, plain language *Gender Inside Indigenous Law Toolkit* and *Gender Inside Indigenous Law Casebook* aimed at enabling communities and others to navigate questions of gender and sexuality in their Indigenous law revitalization work. The Toolkit includes background information, ten lessons and 16 activities, a glossary, templates for using the methods of analysis, and a short film: “skirt short”. The Casebook includes the twelve stories or oral narratives from three different legal traditions (Cree, Dane-Zaa and Secwépmc) that were analyzed to create the Toolkit, along with “case briefs” and Indigenous feminist legal analyses of the stories, and a thematic index of the issues raised in those narratives.

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Indigenous Law Videos on Demand (2014-2015)

Funded by CIRA (Canadian Internet Registry Association)

We produced the Indigenous Law On-Demand video series along with a discussion guide. There are three 6-8 minute videos on different topics: (1) Indigenous Law Introduction, (2) Gender and Power Issues in Indigenous Law, and (3) Tough Questions in Indigenous Law. In addition, there are ten full-length interviews and one lecture in an accessible video archive. The project involved Indigenous and non-Indigenous women and men of different ages – students and academics, leaders, and community activists. Already the videos are being used in many university classrooms and events (for example, at the University of Alberta, University of Victoria, Indigenous Bar Association, University of Waterloo, University of Ottawa).

Matrimonial Real Property On-Reserve Dispute Resolution Toolkit (2015)

Funded by the Matrimonial Real Property Centre of Excellence.

We developed the Matrimonial Real Property On-Reserve Dispute Resolution Toolkit for the Matrimonial Real Property Centre of Excellence, a resource for First Nations in Canada.

Accessing Justice and Reconciliation Project (2012-2014)

Funded by the Ontario Law Foundation (in collaboration with the Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada and the Indigenous Bar Association).

The ILRU's inaugural project was a national Indigenous law research project led by Dr. Val Napoleon and Dr. Hadley Friedland. We worked with seven Indigenous partner communities to research legal responses to harms and injuries within six different legal traditions. Our partners were: Coast Salish, Tsleil-Waututh Nation and Snuneymuxw First Nation (BC); Tsilhqot'in: Tsilhoqot'in National Government (BC); Northern Secwépemc, T'exelc Williams Lake Indian Band (BC); Mountain Cree, Aseniwuche Winewak Nation (Alberta); Anishaawbe, Chippewas of Nawash Unceded First Nation (Ontario); and Mi'kmaq Legal Services Network (NS). Working collaboratively with each community, we produced seven Indigenous law reports, developed and provided training for our researchers, community researchers, and community leaders on Indigenous law, research issues, community dynamics, interviewing, and we designed, developed, and taught an Indigenous research methodology. Two summary reports, in Cree and Anishinabek law, are available online.

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In addition to two Indigenous law conferences and a symposium, we also produced:

- **A graphic narrative, *Mikomosis and the Wetiko* (2013).** We developed and wrote a historic/contemporary narrative on Cree criminal law which is currently being taught in universities and colleges across Canada in law and other faculties. It is also widely used by communities generally and most often with youth. We have received orders from across Canada as well as the United States.
- **Teaching Guide for *Mikomosis and the Wetiko* (2014).** Under the leadership of Dr. Snyder and law student, Lindsay Borrows, we produced a 100-page teaching guide with history, resource materials, and lesson plans for post-secondary students, law students, and communities and youth. This teaching guide may be purchased through the UVic bookstore, and it is [available free](#) online.
- **Three large posters (2014).** We designed these to generate critical conversations about Indigenous law. These posters are available for free download at the [AJR website](#), or can be ordered by contacting ilru@uvic.ca. Each poster contains a scene from *Mikomosis and the Wetiko* and quotations from published papers co-written by Val Napoleon and Hadley Friedland.
- **Indigenous Law Booklet (2014).** This is a colourful, plain language product with art as well as text and questions about Indigenous law.
- **AJR Website.** We created a website with free and accessible Indigenous law resources. The [ILRU website](#), housed at UVic Faculty of Law, which contains many of these as well as other resources.
- **Law as Performance Event:** One of our partner communities presented the key Cree legal principles from the research at a one-day seminar with 300 youth from across Canada. This was a powerful event as community members and youth articulated Cree legal principles through storytelling, music, art, life narratives, drama, and photographs.

Other select project documents are available online through the AJR website:
www.indigenoussbar.ca/indigenouslaw.

Coast Salish Civil Procedure Resource Report (2013)

Funded by the Law Foundation of British Columbia

We worked with the Snuneymuxw First Nation to research and develop a Coast Salish Civil Procedure Resource Report and course outline for the proposed UVIC JID program.

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