



# RAVEN CAPITAL IMPACT REPORT

—  
FOR YEAR ENDING 2021



**RAVEN INDIGENOUS  
CAPITAL PARTNERS**

This report was published April 2022 on the traditional territory of the Lekwungen speaking Peoples, the Songhees and the Esquimalt First Nations

-Authors Paul Lacerte, Managing Partner; Jonas Hunter, Director of Impact; and Misty Ireland, Investment Associate / Design by Eclipse 360



# SPIRIT OF THE RIM

*"The driving force behind our impact measurement learning journey is the need for us to ensure that everything we do at RICP ultimately contributes to an improved well-being of life for Indigenous Peoples. We are always seeking to better understand and measure the impact that Raven Indigenous Capital Partners is having with our invested businesses, within communities, with our investors, and at an eco-system level."*

*"We take this engagement with you to be a ceremony and we are committed to doing this work in a good way. In that spirit, the information that we're asking you to share with us is considered as a form of medicine and will be treated with respect."*

*\*Raven Impact Measurement Framework*



## A LETTER FROM RAVEN INDIGENOUS CAPITAL PARTNERS

On behalf of the team at Raven Indigenous Capital Partners, we are proud to present our 2022 Spring Indigenous Impact Report for the year ending 2021. This is part of our on-going effort to build meaningful relationships, to practice radical transparency, and to help build a reconciliation-economy that advances the well-being of Indigenous Peoples. We are honoured to share an update on our impact learning journey, elaborate on our impact practices, and celebrate our portfolio companies.

In this Report, we are sharing the incredible impact resulting from the work of Raven's invested companies. As we witness their growth and transition to scale, our hypothesis is that we will see an exponential increase in their collective impact at a community, enterprise, and eco-system level. As invested Partners in this work, our commitment is to continue to provide culturally grounded supports alongside patient, flexible capital. As an Indigenous financial intermediary, we will also continue to explore ways to build bridges between our investors and Indigenous change makers in both the spirit and the beautiful complexity of Reconciliation.

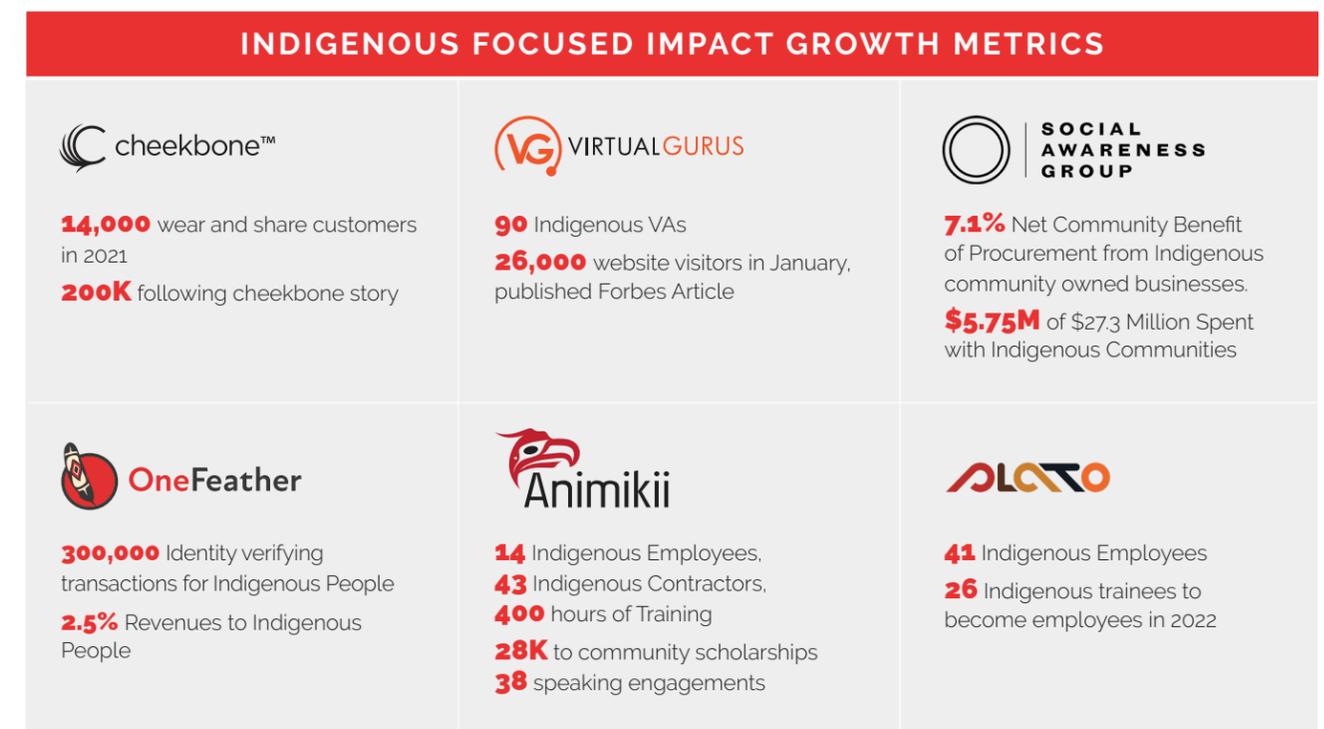
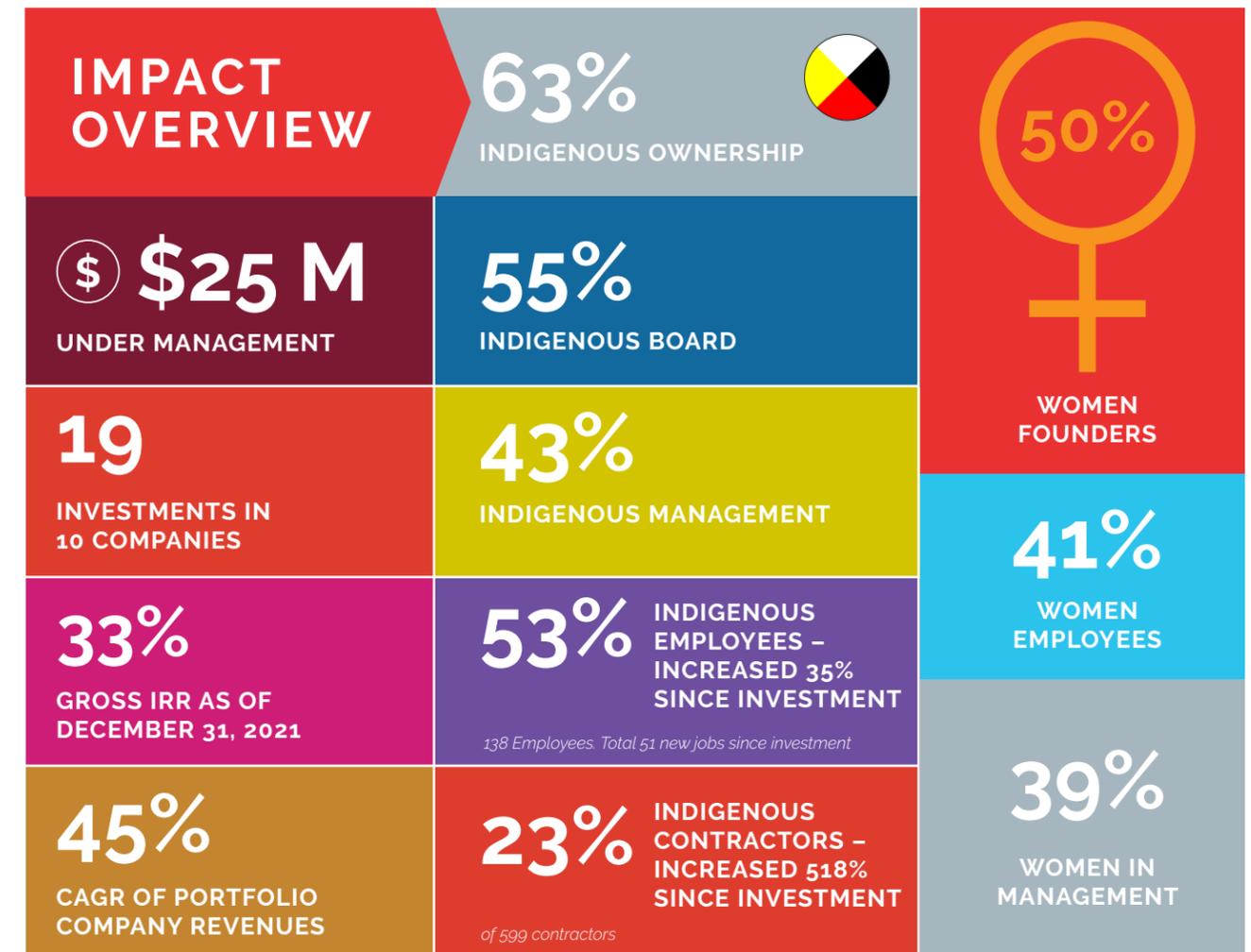
This continues to be a challenging time for all of us as the Covid 19 pandemic begins to wane and interest rates rise. We raise our hands to all the incredible individuals who have worked tirelessly within each of the invested companies in the Raven portfolio. Through their hard work, brilliance, and dedication their enterprises have been able to survive and thrive through an extremely challenging period for business.

We send our best wishes to each of you for good health and we hope this summer brings you and your families much joy and prosperity.

**JEFF CYR**  
Managing Partner

**PAUL LACERTE**  
Managing Partner

**STEPHEN NAIRNE**  
Chief Investment Officer



## A LETTER FROM THE IMPACT TEAM

In our learning journey over the past two years of developing our impact approach and framework, we have centered the wellbeing of Indigenous People and approached this work from a two-eyed-seeing lens.

To Raven Capital, Two-Eyed seeing means we walk in two worlds – Indigenous and non-Indigenous. Through a lens of decolonization and re-culturalization, we're deepening our practice in this space; we've held ceremonies and developed our own words and way of speaking to describe our impact in a way that makes sense to Indigenous Peoples.

We have also built capacity and clarity in articulating our impact in a way that makes sense to our LPs and the rest of the Impact Measurement ecosystem so that we can bridge our two worlds and ensure that our Portfolio companies are supported and seen to be on a level playing field.

### Appreciation and Acknowledgement

We are grateful to have the support of our key partners, who have been collaborators and have joined us in our learning journey.

We honor Carol Anne Hilton for her capacity-building support, guidance, and leadership through the Indigenomics Institute. We would also like to express our gratitude to Denise Williams and Clint Davis, who have provided important thought leadership as members of the Raven Capital Investment Committee.

We would like to thank and acknowledge the Common Approach, specifically Dr. Kate Ruff and her team, for their support, partnership, and kinship.

We have been participating in the Impact Frontiers learning cohort and we want to thank and acknowledge Mike McCress at the Impact Management Project and Kelly Gauthier at Rally Assets for their leadership, collaboration, and support.

### Aligning with the United Nations Declarations on the Rights of Indigenous People (UN DRIP)

Impact measurement work has focused on the UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples (UN DRIP) in terms of our impact alignment and attribution, however, we also acknowledge the critical and sacred role of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission's (TRC) 94 calls to action. We are acting in the spirit of the TRC, and we honor the survivors of the Indian Residential Schools in Canada and the United States (and those that did not survive).

This report signals our accountability and commitment to giving expression to both the UN DRIP and the UN SDGs. Quantifying our contribution to the expression of the UN DRIP is a corporate priority rather than an aspiration. We will undertake measurement according to the articles of the UN DRIP as a practice with our LPs, impact practitioners, and others in the ecosystem.

## Placemats and Narrative

This Impact report communicates the impact from each Portfolio Company in a placemat that includes elements of the Impact Management Project with a summarized Theory of Change and Alignment with the UN DRIP articles and SDGs. Alongside each placemat, we share stories from the company that bring color and context to the placemat and indicators. We have worked closely with each Portfolio Company through a series of workshops to understand the areas of impact and to develop indicators to measure them. We are deeply grateful to be in service of this work.

**Jonas Hunter,**  
*Director of Impact*

**Misty Ireland,**  
*Investment Associate*

**Paul Lacerte,**  
*Managing Partner*



## Raven's Approach to Impact Measurement

Raven's Impact Framework, presented here, is centered in Indigenous wellbeing and incorporates and applies frameworks and processes to express the impact in a good way. We honor story telling as well as indicators and metrics and are presenting each company within this context. Our work is aligned with the UN DRIP, the UN SDGs, OCAP, IMP, GIIN, and the Common Approach.

<b>INDIGENOUS APPROACH</b>	<b>Indigenous Wellbeing</b> centers our Impact Measurement approach. Raven's Impact Measurement approach is unique because our work is grounded in ceremony that guides our theory of change and impact workshops, our story sessions, traditional summer and winter feasts, and the annual impact report. Two-Eyed-Seeing is a way that we incorporate Indigenous ways of knowing and being, and non-Indigenous impact frameworks.				
<b>IMPACT SCREENING</b>	<b>The Indigenous Screen</b> ensures an Indigenous integrity and commitment to Indigenous outcomes as well as an understanding of Raven's approach to Indigenous impact management.				
<b>CHANGE STORY</b>	<b>The Why</b> is represented in the change story and impact desired through a theory of change. This includes a company narrative, the problem that the company is addressing, and the desired impact and outcomes that the company aims to realise.				
<b>INDICATORS AND MEASURES</b>	<b>The Impact</b> is Measured across the five dimensions of the Impact Management Project and measured in alignment with the UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples.				
<b>INDICATORS AND MEASURES</b>	<p><b>WHAT</b></p> <p>outcomes, in the form of insightful indicators, do the business activities drive and the importance to the beneficiaries experiencing them?</p>	<p><b>WHO</b></p> <p>are the stakeholders who experience the outcomes and how underserved are they?</p>	<p><b>HOW MUCH</b></p> <p>of the outcome occurs in terms of scale, depth, and duration?</p>	<p><b>CONTRIBUTION</b></p> <p>attributed to the enterprise</p>	<p><b>RISK</b></p> <p>if outcomes do not occur as expected</p>

## UN DRIP Alignment

### RAVEN CAPITAL PORTFOLIO IS AN IMPLEMENTATION OF ARTICLE 3 OF THE UN DRIP.

The Theme of SELF-DETERMINATION is aligned with UN DRIP Article 3 and is at the center of Raven's desired Impact. The Indigenous Navigator has described UNDRIP Article 3 as "Respect for Indigenous Peoples' right to self-determination".

**UNDRIP ARTICLE 3 STATES: INDIGENOUS PEOPLES HAVE THE RIGHT TO SELF-DETERMINATION. BY VIRTUE OF THAT RIGHT THEY FREELY DETERMINE THEIR POLITICAL STATUS AND FREELY PURSUE THEIR ECONOMIC, SOCIAL AND CULTURAL DEVELOPMENT.**



## UN DRIP Alignment

### RAVEN PORTFOLIO COMPANY UN DRIP ALIGNMENT

We have worked to align and attribute the primary impacts for each of Raven's Portfolio Companies with a specific UN DRIP article. Our intention is to export this practice to the rest of the eco-system.

PORTFOLIO COMPANY DESIRED IMPACT	UN DRIP ARTICLE	INDIGENOUS NAVIGATOR DESCRIPTOR
<b>Virtual Gurus</b> - People often left behind are set up for success and lifted up.	<b>Article 21(1):</b> Indigenous peoples have the right, without discrimination, to the improvement of their economic and social conditions, including, inter alia, in the areas of education, employment, vocational training and retraining, housing, sanitation, health and social security.	The right to work and equality in employment and occupations
<b>Plato</b> - Economic opportunity and increased self-respect and dignity for Indigenous people		
<b>OneFeather</b> - Indigenous Identities are celebrated, and Indigenous People are empowered, sovereign, and lifted up.	<b>Article 5:</b> Indigenous peoples have the right to maintain and strengthen their distinct political, legal, economic, social and cultural institutions, while retaining their right to participate fully, if they so choose, in the political, economic, social and cultural life of the State.	Self-government and autonomous institutions
<b>SAG</b> - Companies engaged in economic reconciliation with and for Indigenous communities actively hold themselves accountable to their agreements and trust relationships.	<b>Article 32(1):</b> Indigenous peoples have the right to determine and develop priorities and strategies for the development or use of their lands or territories and other resources.	The right to development
<b>Animikii</b> - The Next generation of Indigenous youth is inspired by Animikii to choose technology and entrepreneurship	<b>Article 31(1):</b> Indigenous peoples have the right to maintain, control, protect and develop their cultural heritage, traditional knowledge and traditional cultural expressions, as well as the manifestations of their sciences, technologies and cultures, including human and genetic resources, seeds, medicines, knowledge of the properties of fauna and flora, oral traditions, literatures, designs, sports and traditional games and visual and performing arts. They also have the right to maintain, control, protect and develop their intellectual property over such cultural heritage, traditional knowledge, and traditional cultural expressions.	Cultural heritage, traditional knowledge and intellectual property
<b>Cheekbone</b> - Creating a space which includes products and services of other Indigenous Brands, for Indigenous youth to feel safe and proud of where they are from.	<b>Article 15(1):</b> Indigenous peoples have the right to the dignity and diversity of their cultures, traditions, histories and aspirations which shall be appropriately reflected in education and public information.	Effective measures to combat prejudice & discrimination against indigenous peoples & to promote tolerance, understanding & good relations



# INTRODUCING PLACEMATS AND NARRATIVE

We're very honored to be able to present this year for the first time an integrated picture of all of the work that we've done with portfolio companies to understand the problem they are trying to solve, how they are bringing medicine into their work and how to honor it.

We describe their theory of change and indicators that we've designed with them in workshops, and we've honored Indigenous ways of knowing and being by sharing their stories in their own words.

*Image of the First People's House, University of Victoria, on the territory of the Songhees, Esquimalt and WSÁNEC Peoples*

IMPACT THESIS ACROSS FIVE DIMENSIONS OF IMP

CHANGE THESIS	<p>Indigenous People are still disenfranchised and experience biases and harm because of the historical relationship in Canada. Indigenous People face barriers in proving their identity which is needed for everyday tasks like banking, voting, and updating status cards.</p> <p>As a National leader in dedicated Indigenous mobile solutions, OneFeather is a truth center for digital Indigenous sovereign identity and data, community engagement, and election and voting services.</p> <p>OneFeather's Desired Impact is that Indigenous People are happier, healthier, and more resilient, through care, trust, attention and respect. OneFeather aims to:</p> <p>Cultivate change to enhance Indigenous resiliency by working to eliminate the pains of colonialism, systemic racism, and enable Indigenous sovereignty.</p> <p>Return power to communities by innovating tangible change and prioritizing Indigenous voices throughout Canada.</p>		
	WHAT	<p><b>OUTCOME</b></p> <p>OneFeather's primary outcome is Indigenous Sovereignty: Indigenous Identities are celebrated, and Indigenous People are empowered, sovereign, and lifted up.</p> <p><b>OUTCOME LEVEL</b></p> <p>The outcome level is the removed barriers of proving identity or exemption (travel, paperwork, delays, etc.).</p>	<p><b>SHARED RAVEN THEMES</b></p> <p><b>Ownership / Employment</b> OneFeather is an Indigenous company.</p> <p>Indigenous Representation:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 80% Ownership</li> <li>• 7 of 16 Employees</li> <li>• 2 of 4 Managers</li> <li>• 100% Board</li> </ul> <p><b>Honorable Harvest</b></p> <p>Reduction in paper to mail out thousands of ballots.</p> <p>Reduction in travel to voting stations.</p> <p><b>Ecosystem</b></p> <p>Cultivating Change and Enhanced Resiliency within the Ecosystem</p> <p>Stories shared through articles, social media, and through the stories of communities. Millions of engagement points.</p>
WHO	<p>First Nations, Métis, and Inuit Peoples of Canada.</p>		
HOW MUCH	<p><b>SCALE</b></p> <p><b>335,000 Indigenous users</b> through OneFeather Member Registry including member registrar services, digital voting events, status card renewals and banking services.</p>	<p><b>UNDRIP Article #5</b></p> <p>Indigenous peoples have the right to maintain and strengthen their distinct political, legal, economic, social and cultural institutions, while retaining their right to participate fully, if they so choose, in the political, economic, social and cultural life of the State.</p> <p><b>UNSDG #16</b></p> <p>Peace, justice, and strong institutions</p> 	
	<p><b>DEPTH AND DURATION</b></p> <p>Expressed in Story, members experience an increase in quality of life, trust, feelings of belonging, and reduction in isolation and loneliness over the long term.</p>	<p><b>SUPPORTING INDICATORS</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 43,000 verified indigenous user accounts</li> <li>• 16,000 status card renewals in process as of March 13, 2022</li> <li>• 2.5% revenues set aside for donation directly to Indigenous People in 2019, 2020, 2021</li> <li>• 249 active First Nation client communities</li> </ul>	



ONEFEATHER IMPACT STORIES

Words from Lawrence Lewis, Founder and CEO

Impact Highlights

In 2021 we grew our team, started implementing systems around team functions and operations, and introduced key metrics to guide progress. We launched our status card application process in September growing to 14,000 applications, of which 11,000 moved to the final stages in a few months.

Launch of the status card application process

Our discovery, design, and deployment process is designed and built by and for an Indigenous audience, and our People are ready to take advantage of it. Once we deployed the status card application, it resonated, and uptake was quick and aggressive -- it's a celebration that finally someone is doing something in this space to lift our people up.

*"We get many messages from folks we work with who are thankful for our work that makes things easier and removes barriers to participation. For example, we used to hear a lot about the challenges people have around electronic voting, and now people see it as an expected service."*

Cultural Training

- \* Anti-bullying / anti-harassment session held internally (required).
- \* Indigenous reconciliation online course completed by numerous staff through the University of Alberta
- \* Indigenous declaration letter created by a non-Indigenous staff member

Marketing and Indigenous-centered promotion

We're challenging modern marketing and strategy while looking from an Indigenous perspective at who we're collecting information for and whom it benefits.

As a way to compare an Indigenous and mainstream approach to marketing, we hired a marketing firm to help us understand our market reach, and using a CBC interview, they told us we had 10 million media engagement points in Canada -- which was fascinating, but it didn't translate into sales. At the same time, one of our Indigenous staff from Ahousaht shared one of my posts, saying, "Hey, this is my boss, check out this status card renewal thing we launched!". In a few days, we had 3,000 shares, and in two weeks, 2,000 status card renewals started.

When we sell products and services to Indigenous People, and it's their own people who are telling our story, this resonates with them. Whereas when the CBC or another magazine tells our story, it helps us with mainstream exposure but doesn't necessarily result in people using our services.

*"In my culture, other people tell your story. You don't get up and talk about yourself. If you're doing well, you put your head down and do your work. It's at the heart of Indigenous People to be genuine and relevant in the lives of their people daily and do good work and let others tell your story for you and celebrate you."*

### Depth of experience

Indigenous folks are very aware of the nuances in everyday interactions where racism and other artificial systemic processes limit, oppress, isolate, and cause harm to their psyche. OneFeather's services remove these barriers so that Indigenous people don't have to do things like self-identify in front of 10 non-Indigenous people to access an entitlement that their historical relationship with Canada through negotiated treaties owes to them.

There's an endless flow of Indigenous folks on TikTok and Instagram that are crying the abuse and shame (often with satire and humor) that they experience over the intolerance of an institution when they try to take advantage of their entitlements. Most of the time, when Indigenous folks are trying to engage with Canada, they are treated as a nuisance.

With our online SCIS renewal, for example, we're doing things that others don't. We acknowledge that you have started this process, and we're here to support you if you need it. We're tracking the submission and progress, and then we're checking in with you: Did you get the card yet? Did anything happen? Here's an update on where you're at ... and can we help you? They don't get this from Canada -- they don't even get an acknowledgment that the submission was received.

*"Let's redefine the whole interface, let's treat people like human beings, let's be respectful with love and appreciation: "we're here for you, let's rock and roll."*

### Environmental

We're looking at reducing environmental impact in three areas: reduction in the postal mail to members -- such as mail ballot packages, reduction in member travel for banking or voting services, and reduction in our team's air travel. The reduced environmental impact becomes significant when thousands of members can access services online rather than through mail or travel.

### Product innovation

GST withholding is an example of a service we are looking to address. Every year, Indigenous folks pay about \$200 million worth of unnecessary GST or Harmonized taxes that are often not reimbursed, essentially bankrolling Canada. Our system can address this from a banking solution. When our members make a purchase with the OneFeather app or pay-card, the app will automatically remove GST from the transaction since it knows if the member lives on the reserve and should be exempt under provincial or federal rules.

The member benefits because they don't need to self-identify as First Nations and experience commentary that often includes racism. The retailer benefits from a digital solution at the point of sale through reduced transactional and HR costs, elimination of tax liabilities due to fraud or error, and overall delivers a much better purchase experience.

### Our Impact journey

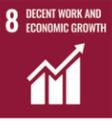
Funders and investors traditionally define success through institutional parameters rather than impact. We need to combine institutional and impact metrics to demonstrate success and take into consideration the pivots we need to make and the timeframes that change. The goals and metrics should consider the stage we are in; for example, we have been tame in our marketing as we don't want 100,000 people downloading the wallet right now, we want 100 people using it and giving us feedback.

### Looking forward to 2022

We intend to bring on three new people in 2022 to help us get the message out and grow awareness inside the Indigenous community and our ecosystem.



**IMPACT THESIS ACROSS FIVE DIMENSIONS OF IMP**

<b>CHANGE THESIS</b>	Virtual Gurus is a marketplace of talented Canadian and American virtual assistants, on a mission to create employment opportunities for underrepresented individuals.			
	Many people struggle to find work because of who they are; they don't believe in themselves, they are transitioning genders, have disabilities, or live in remote communities.			
	Virtual Gurus is serving the underserved, helping to build up people's confidence and setting them up for success through reskilling, and providing work experience so they can be their own boss.			
<b>WHAT</b>	<b>OUTCOME</b>	<b>Sovereignty and Belonging – People often left behind are set up for success and lifted up. Virtual Gurus' people are its North Star.</b>	<b>COMPANY, CULTURE, DIVERSITY</b>	<b>UNDRIP Article 21(1)</b>
	<b>OUTCOME LEVEL</b>	Employment and experience of sovereignty and belonging	Company, Culture, Diversity — People can come to work and be themselves and are set up for success	Indigenous peoples have the right, without discrimination, to the improvement of their economic and social conditions, including, inter alia, in the areas of education, employment, vocational training and retraining, housing, sanitation, health and social security.
<b>WHO</b>		Virtual Gurus is committed to Diversity as represented through Indigenous Peoples and Equity deserving groups (new Canadians, BIPOC, LGBTQ2S, and those along the Gender continuum).	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• (Highlighted in Primary Outcome)</li> <li>• 43.6 % indigenous Ownership</li> <li>• 228 Women VAs</li> </ul>	
<b>HOW MUCH</b>	<b>SCALE</b>	31 Employees: 6 Indigenous, 28 from Equity deserving groups. (goal of %35 Indigenous)  506 VAs: 90 Indigenous, 328 from Equity deserving groups. (Goal of 35% Indigenous) All Indigenous employees in Teepee training program.	<b>Ecosystem</b> Economic justice, self-sufficiency, and equitable outcomes for Indigenous Peoples  7 Speaking engagements	<b>UN SDG #8</b> Promote sustained, inclusive and sustainable economic growth, full and productive employment and decent work for all
	<b>DEPTH</b>	Stories of change	Brand visibility: 26,000 website visitors in January 2022; Forbes article in July 2021.	
	<b>DURATION</b>	Long term Impact on the person's career and community		
	<b>SUPPORTING INDICATORS</b>	# reserves using Indigenous VAs		



**VIRTUAL GURUS IMPACT STORIES**

Words from Bobbie Racette, Founder and CEO

"We believe that providing employment for Indigenous People is a way of increasing their sense of Sovereignty and Belonging. It's supporting People to believe that they can do it. Often when I talk to our Indigenous workers, they thank me for believing in them, they often make statements like, 'nobody gave me a chance, and now I'm loving this.' I think that is part of my medicine. I always want to be that person lifting people up, and I want everybody who has struggled like I have to have a chance. Our vision and values here stand true, and every employee here feels that."

**Bobbie Racette** – Founder and CEO

**Giving people a chance**

*"Our employment is giving people a chance who deserve it, but they have to show us that they want it and they typically do because we believe in them."*

*"Leona, one of our all-star VAs, just got a Five-Star review on Google because of the quality of her work. She's struggled to find work for many reasons and sent me a heartfelt thank-you card. She now truly feels that she belongs somewhere."*

*"We have a new Muslim woman on our sales team, named Nadia – who shared for the first time since she's immigrated to Canada that she actually feels like she belongs somewhere."*

**Training Indigenous People**

Our Indigenous Talent Manager created our TeePee program which is very spiritual and is about putting together your TeePee: How do you work with your clients and take care of them in the same way that you would build your TeePee? They get free access to 42 academy courses as we work to upskill and train them to be remote workers and give them clients.

**Hiring Indigenous / Diverse employees**

A way that we're increasing our Indigenous talent pool is by reaching out to Indigenous people through friendship centers and Indigenous Universities to let them know we have work, that we have an indigenous talent manager, and then she'll talk them through it. We have one Indigenous Recruiter, and we plan to hire more recruiters to hire Indigenous and Black employees.

**Hiring – Partnerships**

Native Women Lead has done speaking engagements with us to find indigenous talent. We've partnered with Elevate Talent to train 30 person cohorts monthly, starting in Toronto. All of these people will go through our workforce academy and then we get them to work as VAs.

**Diversity**

We consider diversity beyond indigenous people. We're learning and talking about how to include everyone under one big umbrella, such as Equity Deserving Groups. It's not just about Black and Indigenous Peoples here; we have veterans, and we have Muslim people that had to flee their

## Impact Stories



country, and we're trying to make sure that we get the language right because we don't want anyone to feel that they're less than anyone else.

*(As a part of Indigenous culture, we believe that everyone belongs and should feel equal – which is why there are four colors represented equally in the medicine wheel, representing four races. –Paul Lacerte)*

### Ecosystem

Our visibility is growing through the media that we receive such as in the recent article in Forbes magazine. Most people now find us through the media. We had 26,000 website visitors in January 2022.

### Environment

We're working with a firm to understand how much gas and carbon footprint we are saving on all the remote workers working entirely from home.



## PROSPERING ON THEIR OWN TERMS



Lauri Forcade,  
*Métis with family ties to the Papaschase Cree, Lives in Sturgeon County, Alberta*



Stacey Wells,  
*Squamish First Nation, Lives in Wetaskiwin, Alberta*



Leona Sayer,  
*Métis-Cree-Saulteaux from Treaty 4 territory in Saskatchewan, Lives in Edmonton, Alberta*

Whether faced with limited work opportunities in their communities, tired of long commutes, craving more variety or seeking more flexible ways to earn an income, more and more first nations peoples are building rewarding careers as Virtual Assistants (VAs). We spoke with three of them to learn more about this new form of work.

### WHAT MADE YOU DECIDE TO BECOME A VA?

**Lauri:** When I came back to Alberta after working in Inuvik for a few years, I knew I wanted to work from home so I didn't have to commute. I kept seeing ads for Virtual Gurus, thinking I should apply. I found out they would be able to give me work right away with clients in different provinces, and I liked the idea of trying different things.

**Stacey:** I was laid off after working in administration for many years. Our community is small, so there's a lot of competition for any job that's posted. After looking for a while without any luck, my stepson suggested I look into Virtual Gurus.

I liked that I would have control over my schedule and who I worked with, and the freedom to be

able to step away and support my family when they needed me. I have a son who needs some extra support, and my mom has some health challenges. Being able to take my work with me if I have to travel, and even work while I'm away, those were all huge selling points for me.

**Leona:** When the pandemic came, I lost my job. I knew about Virtual Gurus and I liked that it was contract work and that I would be able to choose my own hours. Also the concept of working from home, it saves a lot of time if you don't have to drive or take the bus. It's a lot easier, and good for mental health too.

### WHAT DO YOU LIKE ABOUT WORKING AS A VA?

**Lauri:** I like that I can work as much as I want. If I want to work more hours, I let them know and they'll give me more hours. If I want lots of clients, I'll get them. Or I can take a break when I need to.

The flexibility of hours is great too. Sometimes I'm wide awake from 11 pm to 1 am. With everything being online, I do a lot of my work then. It gives me the chance to spend time with my grandkids in the afternoon, then do my work later. And I don't have to spend hours commuting on the bus; I can just wake up and do it from home. It just fits better.

**Stacey:** Every day is different. I like the variety and the diverse challenges. I've had two of my clients for over a year, so they trust me with a lot of different things. I like to be able to work by myself but also to know that I'm not necessarily alone since there is a great VA community online.

**Leona:** I like that my clients have been all over Canada and are from different kinds of organizations. I like the fast pace, and I never get bored. I haven't felt burnout; I feel I have the right work-life balance. It's also appealing to me that I'm learning new skills, and I'm using them too.

#### WHAT HAVE YOU LEARNED THROUGH YOUR VA WORK?

**Lauri:** When you work with different types of organizations, it gives you new skills. I've been able to expand into different areas beyond my original focus in legal, whether it's managing emails, recording meeting minutes or working with different apps and software.

**Stacey:** I've learned that I know a lot more than I used to give myself credit for. But if I don't have the answers, there's always somebody else out there in the Virtual Gurus community who does.

**Leona:** Definitely a lot about communication and dealing with different people. I have taken several courses, including one on how to be an executive assistant, which I'm putting to use with a client already.

#### ANY ADVICE FOR NEW OR ASPIRING FIRST NATIONS VAS?

**Lauri:** Go into it with an open mind. A lot of us doubt our abilities based on how we've been treated in the past. It might not seem easy at first, so take your time, keep talking to other VAs, ask questions and hang in there. Take some of the courses they offer. And if you're wondering about it, just apply! You never know what could happen.

**Stacey:** Be open and be real. Even if my kid or my dog comes into the room when I'm on a video call, my clients understand and even appreciate it. We're all human; don't try to hide it.

**Leona:** Be grateful for everything that you have. When you're given a client, work hard and give 'er! And don't be afraid to ask for help if you're stuck. The community is really supportive.

**Virtual Gurus** is a talent marketplace that leverages proprietary technology to match organizations with highly skilled Canadian and American virtual assistants. For more information visit: [thevirtualgurus.com](https://thevirtualgurus.com).



IMPACT THESIS ACROSS FIVE DIMENSIONS OF IMP

CHANGE THESIS	Animikii believes that investing in technology is the path forward for economic justice, self-sufficiency, and equitable outcomes for Indigenous Peoples and they advocate that economic development initiatives transition away from resource extraction to knowledge-based economies.				
	Animikii achieves this impact every day through its work in supporting the Indigenous Innovation and Reconciliation movements with their skills and resources. By being an example of an Indigenous-focused tech company, Animikii hopes to inspire the next generation of Indigenous youth to choose technology and entrepreneurship as a career path.				
WHAT	OUTCOME	<b>The Next generation of Indigenous youth is inspired by Animikii to choose technology and entrepreneurship</b>	<b>Growth in Indigenous Innovation and Reconciliation movements</b>	<b>Employment; Setting an example of an Indigenous-Focused tech company through employment and culture-centered practices.</b>	<b>UNDRIP ARTICLE 31(1)</b>
	OUTCOME LEVEL	Indigenous youth experiences of support towards a career in technology or entrepreneurship	Indigenous Entrepreneurs are empowered through Products and services	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 100% Indigenous ownership</li> <li>• 35 team members, 19 new Thunderbirds hired in 2021, including 4 Indigenous hires</li> <li>• 1,000 recorded acts of love (example of recorded value-aligned actions)</li> </ul>	Indigenous peoples have the right to maintain, control, protect and develop their cultural heritage, traditional knowledge and traditional cultural expressions, as well as the manifestations of their sciences, technologies and cultures, including human and genetic resources, seeds, medicines, knowledge of the properties of fauna and flora, oral traditions, literatures, designs, sports and traditional games and visual and performing arts. They also have the right to maintain, control, protect and develop their intellectual property over such cultural heritage, traditional knowledge, and traditional cultural expressions.
WHO		Indigenous Youth	Indigenous Entrepreneurs		
HOW MUCH	SCALE	\$21,529 Added to the scholarship fund \$1,000 Awarded to 2 Indigenous Students 38 Speaking engagements (30% for Indigenous youth)	99% Indigenous-connected Projects 46 Indigenous organizations 8 First Nation community projects	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 406 hours of Professional Development across our team</li> <li>• Dozens of companies inspired to adopt Animikii policies</li> </ul>	<p><b>Honorable Harvest</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Paperless organization, reducing commuter costs</li> </ul>
	DEPTH	<i>Stories from Indigenous youth</i>	<b>Stories from Entrepreneurs</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 120 Hours of Time-based Giving and Volunteer Opportunities</li> </ul>	<p><b>UN SDG #8 AND #10</b></p> <p>#8. Promote sustained, inclusive and sustainable economic growth, full and productive employment and decent work for all.</p> <p>#10. Reduce inequality within and among countries</p> 



ANIMIKII IMPACT STORIES

Words from Jeff Ward, Robyn Ward, Ian Capstick, and Danielle Barry

2021 Impact highlights - Animikii accelerates scale, growth and their deep commitment to social impact

Ian Capstick: In 2021 our primary outcomes were inspiring Indigenous youth, and moving into 2022, we are moving to a more product-focused company that will help amplify and focus our impact.

Jeff Ward: By shifting towards a more product or technology focus, we're scaling our vision because we can only support a certain number of projects with our team as a services agency. For example, if we launched 20 websites last year, maybe we can launch 200 or 2,000 through our product and empower hundreds of agencies that looked like us three or four years ago with similar localized impact within many communities. Our products can save weeks and weeks of time off each project, enabling faster data management for our partners.

Jeff Ward: With Raven's support, we Invested heavily in advancing our products in 2021, both Chinuk and Niiwin. We're also building a robust partner ecosystem where we can support and amplify Indigenous organizations, agencies, and entrepreneurs. One example is supporting the creation of smaller Indigenous agencies. Our vision is to support groups that can create a living for themselves and their families using products, training, funding, and even support in finding clients.

By being an example of an Indigenous focus tech company, we can inspire the next generation of Indigenous youth to choose technology and entrepreneurship as a career path.

Ian Capstick: We've implemented two key policies that have created a lot of dialogue internally and dozens of other companies who have adopted them. In one case, a company got to bring up the TRC Call to Action Number 92 for the very first time in their organization.

1. Our new statutory holiday policy allows all of our Thunderbirds to choose more meaningful days for them.
2. Our CEO, Jeff, and Robyn championed the board equity policy since boards across Canada are only 23% women, with more than half of boards 100% men (MacDougall et al., 2021). Our company now has an equity policy where 50% or more of the board will always be Indigenous, women, non-binary, or folks on the gender continuum.

Danielle Barry, Robyn Ward: We're looking at how to measure across four levels of the individual, family, community, and the land for some examples:

- **Individual:** We have a retreat committee that selects gifts for our team based on the Medicine Wheel and puts together activities based on wellness for our team. For example, one day we did yoga, we had soup for our team so they could cook together if they wanted to. We had an Elder come and talk about the medicine wheel.

- **Family:** Acknowledging our thunder babies as they enter the world and including kids in gift-giving.
- **Community:** The partners that we support, their families, and their communities.
- **Land Impact:** Being a paperless organization, reducing commuter costs because we're working from home

Jeff Ward: We worked with Indigenous Matriarchs through our pathfinder service. They train indigenous youth to program in augmented and virtual reality (XR). This year, we helped them scope out a training program and pivot from training in person in their community to online due to Covid. When a project comes along like this, it's right on the target of our social impact statement.



MacDougall, A., Valley, J. M., & Jeffrey, J. (2021, October 13). Report: 2021 Diversity Disclosure Practices – Diversity and leadership at Canadian public companies. Osler, Hoskin & Harcourt LLP. Retrieved March 30, 2022, from <https://www.osler.com/en/resources/governance/2021/report-2021-diversity-disclosure-practices-diversity-and-leadership-at-canadian-public-companies#mid-year-results-women-on-boards>

IMPACT THESIS ACROSS FIVE DIMENSIONS OF IMP

CHANGE THESIS	<p>By creating a space in the beauty industry where Indigenous youth feel seen and feel their enormous value in the world Cheekbone is injecting good medicine and providing representation.</p> <p>Cheekbone Beauty Cosmetics is a socially and environmentally conscious colour cosmetics brand that exists to make a difference in the lives of Indigenous youth.</p> <p>Through Jenn's story and Cheekbone's product innovation, Cheekbone is a north star in the cosmetics industry.</p> <p>Cheekbone is on a sustainability journey to respect people and planet through packaging and sourcing innovation.</p>		
	WHAT	<p><b>OUTCOME</b></p> <p>Creating a space which includes products and services of other Indigenous Brands, for Indigenous youth to feel safe and proud of where they are from.</p>	<p><b>SHARED RAVEN THEMES</b></p> <p>Company, Culture, Diversity - Cultural sustainability in hiring Indigenous people, using Indigenous languages, and training and development programs for all employees</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 98% Indigenous Ownership</li> <li>• 50% Indigenous Management</li> <li>• 40% Indigenous Employees</li> <li>• 90% Women Employees</li> </ul> <p>(10 Employees)</p> <p><b>Honorable Harvest</b></p> <p>Sustaining our people was the first layer of our mission, and that starts with our kids. Cheekbone is setting the example of a Sustainable cosmetics brand:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Indigenous Suppliers and Full-Circle sourcing</li> <li>• Biodegradable packaging</li> <li>• Refill options</li> <li>• Raw ingredients from bio-sources</li> <li>• Working on an internal sustainability calculator to be Planet Positive.</li> </ul>
WHO	OUTCOME LEVEL	Youth experiences of being safe, valued, seen, proud of where they are from.	<p><b>UNDRIP Article 15(1)</b></p> <p>Indigenous Peoples have the right to the dignity and diversity of their cultures, traditions, histories and aspirations which shall be appropriately reflected in education and public information.</p> <p><b>UN SDG #8 and 12</b></p> <p>Promote sustained, inclusive and sustainable economic growth, full and productive employment and decent work for all.</p> <p>#12. Ensure sustainable consumption and production patterns.</p>
	HOW MUCH	<p><b>SCALE</b></p> <p>10,309 new and 3,643 returning customer experiences in 2021 (customer growth: 57% from 2020; 537% from 2019)</p> <p>5.2k Right the Story views and shares</p> <p><b>DEPTH</b></p> <p>Stories of change</p> <p><b>DURATION</b></p> <p>Long term Impact on the person's career and community</p> <p><b>SUPPORTING INDICATORS</b></p> <p>Audiences of 25+ podcasts and 66+ news articles</p> <p>~200K following across social channels</p> <p>Shared story through Sephora and Sephora-Cheekbone Billboards across Canada (information not available on Sephora marketing)</p>	



CHEEKBONE BEAUTY STORIES

Words from Jenn Harper, Founder and CEO

Right The Story

When I was growing up between 7 and 11 years old, living in low-income native housing subdivisions, I'd drive up and down the highways between the homes of my parents, who were separated. I'd see these billboards on the road without anyone like me on them, and I would never have imagined that there would be one with Indigenous faces on it -- until much later before Sephora gave us the ability to create these Right the Story billboards that create the brand awareness trigger for people to understand Cheekbone Beauty's story and message.

It was a big moment for me when I came to this realization: if I had seen myself on that billboard, would my life have been different? My life is not so bad right now, but there are ten years of struggle with alcohol abuse that I may have avoided if I felt like I belonged.

*We've received a lot of stories from people who have seen the billboards, such as someone watching TV who saw our commercials who told us, "I teared up and was so proud," or "I hit pause and pulled my daughters into the room to see it."*

That's what I want for the next generation — I want them to avoid the messy, heartbreaking chunk. Going forward as part of our Impact measurement, we're seeking stories from youth who have experiences of belonging with our brand.

We want Indigenous youth to feel seen through different Indigenous business owners in other industries and spaces. We've partnered with other Indigenous brands over the years and together we are creating a space where Indigenous kids can feel safe and be proud of who they are and where they are from. It's not just our brand that we're creating awareness about; it's indigeneity, Indigenous People, and all Indigenous businesses --- people are then triggered to look for more of this.

We're a part of the collective community, and when we win awards as we did for the Right the Story campaign, we're a part of growing this community a little bit bigger and bigger and bigger. And then you hope other brands get to do something that will make the community bigger and bigger and bigger as well.

Sustainability

We're in the next round of B Corp certification and have a volunteer developing a sustainability calculator so we can become Sephora-Planet-Positive approved. We're working on our energy usage to become carbon neutral, but we want this to be real and don't just want to pay an offset to check a box.

**Packaging:** There are so many nuances and variables within the complex category of packaging; it depends on the product if we go Post-Consumer Recyclable (PCR) aluminum or biodegradable. We've spent time investigating the perfect sustainable solution for each

product, yet at this time in history, even our new brow and mascara are clearly packaged in plastic. You could choose to buy lipstick in biodegradable paper or in black plastic, which will end up in a landfill, or you could choose mascara that comes in a tube rather than a glass pot where the product can go wrong or become contaminated. We're not doing what other brands do and putting bamboo or aluminum on top of a plastic insert, we'd rather show you that we had to choose plastic for this product at this time because there's no other solution.

**Sourcing:** Our goal for all our ingredients is to convert byproducts from the beauty industry as well as from other industries into either a packaging solution or a raw ingredients solution.

*"I know the science and the planet's present state, but I want to be honest and it's hard to sell sustainability to people right now, but it's what we're trying to do. It's incredibly challenging, so we're using simple language, like Sustainable by Nature."*

People often think that sustainability has a silver bullet, but we're on a journey, and it's going to take time. We're not going to figure out how to make everything sustainable, especially when it comes to consumer goods. We're completely honest with people about the steps we've taken; we're not Mother Nature, but we can try to make the best decisions along the way.

### Leading as an Indigenous and Sustainable brand

Sephora USA\* wants us to scream our Indigeneity loud and clear from the rooftops while also hosting our brand in the Clean Section in Canada. We had shifted some of our packaging to focus more on sustainability, but we are working to bring more of the Indigenous branding back into the product packaging as well. Our customers in the States can have zero questions that we are a Native American brand.

Some of our audience doesn't care about sustainability, and we've lost some engagement. But we've transitioned to a clean vegan makeup because this is what 85% of the market wants. By 2025 every brand at Sephora will be sustainable but we have the edge because we've done the sustainability work in conjunction with making everything clean. There is still some confusion because while some customers demand vegan products, this doesn't mean that we don't want people to hunt traditionally or for survival.

\*(\$300 Million Sales in November and December 2021. Sephora USA makes most of the decisions about Sephora Canada. Cheekbone Beauty has had three meetings with the Clean Director of Sephora USA)



IMPACT THESIS ACROSS FIVE DIMENSIONS OF IMP			
<b>CHANGE THESIS</b>	<p>SAG believes Industry and Government play crucial roles in mending the bridges between Indigenous people, Equity seeking Groups and those who have had their rights impacted in the past.</p> <p>SAG seeks to provide the innovative tools necessary to facilitate more meaningful, objective, and transparent conversations between corporations and Indigenous communities. SAG tools provide objective results of industrial and government supply chain strategies and provide a means to celebrate the actions of companies doing good work and hold companies accountable through data transparency.</p> <p>Companies that work with Indigenous communities can articulate how their project will involve and impact the community.</p>		
	<b>WHAT</b>	<p><b>OUTCOME</b> <b>Indigenous People and communities are empowered and able to make informed decisions and have a say over what happens in their territories.</b> Companies engaged in economic reconciliation with and for Indigenous communities actively hold themselves accountable to their agreements and trust relationships with the Indigenous communities.</p> <p><b>OUTCOME LEVEL</b> Increased money flow from companies to Indigenous communities.</p>	<p><b>SHARED RAVEN THEMES</b></p> <p>Ownership / Employment – Indigenous representation:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 1 of 1 Employees</li> <li>• 3 of 7 Contractors</li> <li>• 2 of 4 Managers</li> <li>• 100% Board</li> <li>• 40% Ownership (2 of 5)</li> </ul>
<b>WHO</b>	<p>First Nations, Métis, and Inuit Peoples and Communities of Canada.</p>		
<b>HOW MUCH</b>	<b>SCALE</b>	<p>Total Net Benefit: 7.8% of revenues towards Indigenous communities, projects, and employment in 2021 (\$27.3M)</p> <p>Net Community Benefit: 7.1% of Procurement from Indigenous community owned businesses (\$5.75M)</p>	
	<b>DEPTH</b>	<p>Stories of change</p>	
	<b>DURATION</b>	<p>Depth in Story: youth and community stories of hope and transformation due to projects and opportunities</p>	



**SOCIAL AWARENESS GROUP STORIES**

Words from Aaron Lambie, and Jacqueline Cardinal (directly noted)

**2021 Highlights**

SAG helps companies understand their impact on Indigenous communities and the stories they need to share. They can look back across 30 projects and understand the story, the community involvement, the impact they are hoping for, and what they achieved or didn't achieve.

*"Two of our customers have spent \$500 million on projects and \$200 million on subcontract opportunities with Indigenous vendors and suppliers in the marketplace. These two companies have many projects in the north that likely affect 50 to 90 Indigenous communities we all rely on for a strong, healthy Canadian economy."*

SAG is helping organizations and communities forge strong relationships. Companies can use our data to start conversations to connect with the community.

*"One of our customers has 5 million dollars of employment data with the Tahltan First Nation and 8.5 million dollars of employment information with Indigenous Generals. They're taking this information and holding themselves accountable; they're printing a report for leadership and saying, we were partners, we got this project, these are the results. How do we do better? How do we get 6 million dollars of employment next year?"*

The stories are the result of the relationships between the companies and the community, how they transpire, and what they created as a result.

**Indigenous Hiring**

We're committed to hiring Indigenous talent and where we recently had difficulty in finding Indigenous marketing talent, we looked outside and contracted Creative Fire, an Indigenous creative agency, to help us with some of our brand alignment.

**SAG Primary Indicators**

Spend with Indigenous Vendors (supply chain spend) is how many dollars companies spend with Indigenous vendors, diverse vendors, and their vendors. Indigenous spend on its own is \$800 million. We want to know who is benefitting, so we look at the percentage of the total supply chain spend for the company.

Tangible Net Benefits is the most important aspect for organizations to focus on if they want to strengthen the relationships with Indigenous communities – it becomes a catalyst for strengthening and supporting this relationship. Tangible Net Benefits measures the company's project spend with the community which becomes usable money by the community in areas like Indigenous employment, Indigenous leadership, underfunded programs, projects, scholarships, cultural events, and help with heating homes.

*"If I'm a project owner and I want to choose between two vendors who have visibility in the community -- if I know that for every dollar we spend with them, 6% goes back to the Indigenous community compared to 16% with another one, there's an incentive for me to choose the vendor that spends more with the community."*

### Going Forward

The entire market has to do a better job of creating quality relationships. We're moving towards digitizing corporate disclosures. We need to have metrics and disclosure information that speaks to the quality of relationships between publicly traded companies in Canada and local communities.

We're talking with BC housing to help them increase the money they spend with Indigenous communities and secure more funding from the Federal government to build more homes. With our tool, they can understand the total impact that their supply chain has on the Indigenous communities where they build homes down to the smallest vendor and supplier.

Deep supply chain is all about circular economy and seeing the challenge from all different sides and levels and enables us to think through and solve challenges in ways that other companies would not consider. This thinking is informed by how we work with Indigenous communities while acknowledging and appreciating the complexities of Indigenous community engagement.

We're allowing vendors and suppliers to track this information more granularly by the community, which then can be produced into reports that companies can take to the community and ask how they did. The value for us is seeing these numbers for multiple years and helping the company and community see how and where things are going.

### Collaboration with Raven

Jacqueline Cardinal and Paul Lacerte have been cultural Northstars for us in a marketplace without a precedent for how a company like SAG can be authentic and credible to the market to solve some of the challenges facing us. Raven has helped us be a strong ally to the community and be a leader in the space through their leadership and guidance.

### Impacting the Ecosystem

*"Jacqueline Cardinal: SAG is framing the role of non-Indigenous allies in Truth and Reconciliation."*

SAG is getting people talking about how to support Indigenous communities in their business who would not otherwise be thinking about this. I think the wave and the wind is here and once we get beyond the threshold, we won't have to think about it anymore.



IMPACT THESIS ACROSS FIVE DIMENSIONS OF IMP			
<b>CHANGE THESIS</b>	<p>Plato Testing achieves this impact every day through its work in supporting outsourced testing solutions to clients throughout North America, with a focus on projects that would have previously been sent offshore, bringing economic opportunity for Indigenous people through training and employment.</p> <p>After 200 years of planned segregation, there are high suicide rates, and many people don't see options. Plato creates person-to-person reconciliation by providing opportunities to people to have honest pay for work, to earn and generate their own wealth and stability, and then become mentors for young people.</p>		
<b>WHAT</b>	<b>OUTCOME</b>	<b>Economic opportunity and increased self-respect and dignity for Indigenous people</b>	<p><b>SHARE RAVEN THEMES</b></p> <p>Company, Culture, Diversity - Wealth is generated for Indigenous People. The company is staffed, led, and owned by Indigenous people.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 15% Indigenous Ownership</li> <li>• 100% Indigenous Employees of 41</li> <li>• 39% Women Employees</li> </ul> <p><b>Honorable Harvest</b> – Good relationship with the environment and with each other.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Reduced company and team GHG</li> </ul> <p><b>Ecosystem</b> – Economic justice, self-sufficiency, and equitable outcomes for Indigenous Peoples</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Numerous conferences attended/presented, articles and interviews published.</li> </ul>
	<b>OUTCOME LEVEL</b>	Experience of increased confidence and opportunity though — Job and skills to work	
<b>WHO</b>	Indigenous Community Indigenous Youth		
<b>HOW MUCH</b>	<b>SCALE</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 26 planned Indigenous cohort graduates from 2021 classes (in January and April 2022) – 13 to become employees.</li> <li>• 41 Indigenous employees</li> <li>• 2 Indigenous promotions</li> </ul>	<p><b>UNDRIP ARTICLE 21(1)</b></p> <p>Indigenous Peoples have the right, without discrimination, to the improvement of their economic and social conditions, including, inter alia, in the areas of education, employment, vocational training and retraining, housing, sanitation, health and social security.</p> <p><b>UN SDG #8</b></p> <p>Promote sustained, inclusive and sustainable economic growth, full and productive employment and decent work for all</p> 
	<b>DEPTH</b>	<i>Story of impact in the life of the person and within their family and community.</i>	
	<b>DURATION</b>	<i>Length of career</i>	
	<p><b>SUPPORTING INDICATORS</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 3 Referrals from other cohort members in 2022</li> <li>• 6,000 training and upskilling Hours (not including learning alongside a trained and experienced employee)</li> <li>• Graduates often move to high-paying tech jobs (business analyst, programmer, etc.)</li> </ul>		



**PLATO STORIES**

Words from Keith McIntosh (CEO), Scot Kennedy, and Britt Mockler

**Stories about impact in 2021**

Keith: Plato's work is about giving people hope for something better or safer -- whether someone is a manager or a tester, you see the positive results of their work with Plato ripple out to their family and community.

In our communities, issues like suicide are real. Suicide can feel abstract, but when you get close to people experiencing it, you realize that people need hope that something will change for the better to give them a possibility for a better future.

Here are a few stories that we'd like to share.

*Keith: While living in a safe house with her child, Natasha came to a class. She had a deadline to move out in a week, and we were able to help her get a better and safer place to live.*

**Benefit from the partnership with Raven**

- We were able to do two classes in 2021 rather than just one.
- Support for becoming an indigenous-owned company
- Increased brand awareness through partnership with Raven
- Participating in the feast reminds us that we're not alone

*Brit: "A student who's had a lot of ups and downs told the instructor just a few days ago that if it wasn't for the other students supporting her in this class, she doesn't know if she would have been able to keep going." It's a constant inspiration to me that because of these students, together as a group, we are helping people succeed and create opportunities for themselves.*

### Words from Denis Carrigan

Plato started out finding skilled people in parts of Canada that weren't as prosperous as other areas and bringing the work from across Canada and around the world. We have stumbled upon undiscovered Indigenous talent in our communities, and it's just a matter of providing a course and opportunity — a hand-up rather than a handout.

**It's isolating to step into a new professional space**, but even more so for an Indigenous person without a technical or professional background. The idea was to build a company that would train, employ, support, and coach Indigenous People with the expertise that Plato had built up in its 18 years of business. We invest in people from the community, providing them with the skills and support to realize opportunities.

We hear people tell us things like, "I can be who I am where I live; I can be Anishinaabe, Mikmaq, Dene. If I'm good at what I do, if I deliver good value, meet deadlines, and am easy to get along with, the world will provide for my living."

My mother worked in an inner-city school in Regina, and she would lament the absence of hope, the role models, and connection to the buildings downtown. When I was in fifth grade onwards, parents and folks who were physicians, bankers, accountants, and other professionals would come into my class for career day. Knowing people that worked in the buildings downtown at Royal Bank or TD Bank, created in me the possibility that I could work there as well.

*"Plato is giving young people a vision and confidence through an example."*

While our employees are delivering on projects often for big corporations on very technical systems, you don't see behind them their children, nephews and nieces, their brothers and sisters and aunts and uncles telling them how much they want them to succeed. These employees are succeeding, creating a pathway for the next generation to come. In five, six, or ten

years, the next generation will be in school and following their path into a technology program somewhere being inspired towards an even more advanced skill set.

The biggest challenge is not getting the education but getting the experience, and we're offering both in our program. We have employees going into their sixth year of professional experience with us. They see the career-path forward, the knowledge and confidence they've built up behind them, and the desire that helped them this far past uncertainty. They can now stand up in front of strangers who they don't know from other countries and present with confidence.

The change that needs to happen and that we're supporting is for them to wake up one day and say, I'm going to do something different today, I'm going to work on myself, and I'm going to scale up, and I'm going to try to be who I think I can be. And we're giving them the opportunity forward.

We are looking at a person-to-person reconciliation, how with change, individuals become more autonomous. Then there is a trickle-up effect to the family and the community and region becoming more autonomous — and a stronger country.

### A pathway to opportunities

Software testing might be the path forward for our employees, but getting as many individuals as we can into careers is most gratifying for us. Some have started as testers and realized that they wanted to become a developer, analyst, scrum master, or project manager, and we have given them the foundational skills to move into that work. We see our people who we trained on LinkedIn who now work for telecom companies, banks, or other large organizations, and have been promoted to project managers or senior business analysts.

One of the most powerful metrics we have is when someone has graduated from a junior to an intermediate. It might take three or four years for a junior to become a senior, and sometimes six

years to have the experience needed in this field, but then they become a leader in our company and train others.

The first trainees were brave to come through our program to the end. When those who come in now see a relative or someone from their community who has been here for two or three years and is succeeding, that's incredibly motivating because it's a path to follow.

### Staying in the community

One of our testers with only a secondary education had some experience with computers and taking them apart, but for some reason he never went into computer science. Prior to COVID-19, he received his first assignment in the financial industry. He was able to move back to his community in Northwestern Saskatchewan and work remotely and has gone on to work with other clients who love him and support him staying in his community, bringing new work to his community.

### Isolation to individual autonomy

We were able to provide remote training for 25 First Nation and Metis students from Alberta to Nova Scotia. We established a partnership with BMO to pay for the training and to hire our trainees for a six-month internship with the aim that they will become part of their development team in the future.

A group like this is more likely to succeed as there is less cause for isolation or feeling alone in the crowd; if they have questions or challenges, they are more likely to talk together and bring their questions forward. The training helps to build up confidence. Even if an employee ends up on an isolated project, they have the skills and connections for strong individual autonomy.

*"One key message that came back from the 2019 survey was the difficulty in landing a job with BMO without leaving home, especially when their home*

Reference: Globe and Mail, <https://www.theglobeandmail.com/business/article-bmo-program-aims-to-open-windows-for-indigenous-recruitment/>

*was a reserve or remote community. Respondents also said they were interested in more than entry-level jobs." (The Globe and Mail, 2021)*

*Kyle Moore, 24, is Métis and lives in Winnipeg. He'd previously taken a college computing course and was drawn by the opportunity to get into cloud computing. He said he feels "culturally welcomed" in the BMO program, while college could feel distant, especially during the COVID-19 pandemic. A bank internship and the possibility of a job sold him on the program. "Getting your foot in the door is difficult ... getting a training program that starts you from the bottom, and onboarding you and training you from the ground up, is difficult to do [on your own]," he said.*

*Ms. Goulet, Cree Métis, grew up in Treaty 6 territory in northern Saskatchewan, sees potentially significant benefits from the program for BMO and students and their communities and hopes it will become a template for future generations' training. "There are two facets of this that are new — one is the reskilling and focusing on diverse and disadvantaged communities. And the other is the virtual environment, which enables people to work from anywhere," she said.*

Many people in business, government, and institutions want to do something positive, but often the knowledge of how to do that isn't there. As we grow we've tried to create a service offering where the procurement of services helps create a job and learning opportunity for an indigenous Canadian.

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*We'd like to express gratitude to the Portfolio Companies and their CEOs and to all those in the Raven Family; the Investors and supporters who have joined us in this partnership and Impact learning Journey.*

*We look forward to growing this work together and would love to hear any thoughts you might have about this report.*

*Mussi Cho / Thank you*

*Raven Indigenous Capital Partners Family*



Money is like water, it's a precious lifegiving resource. Money should be a tool of love that facilitates relationships and helps us thrive rather than something that hurts and divides us. If we use it for sacred lifegiving purposes it can be medicine.

**Edgar Villanueva, Decolonizing Wealth**



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