



ANISHINABEK
EDUCATION SYSTEM

NIIGAAAN GDIZHAAMI FUND PROJECT BOOKLET

2020 - 2021



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INTRODUCTION

The Niigaan Gdizhaami Fund (Fund) is an annual grant established by the Kinooaadziwin Education Body (KEB) and the Ministry of Education. The objective of the Fund is to support and invest in community and joint projects, that advance the objectives of the Master Education Agreement (MEA), through five guiding priorities:

(i) Increasing knowledge and understanding of Anishinabek histories, cultures, perspectives, languages, and contributions (“Bimaadziwin”) and traditional Anishinaabe knowledge passed down from one generation to the next through ceremonial teachings (“Kendaaswin”);

(ii) Enhanced opportunities for the engagement and participation of Anishinabek students, families, and communities to support Anishinabek student success and well-being;

(iii) Facilitating the successful transition of students between Anishinabek First Nations’ schools and schools in the Provincially-Funded Education System;

(iv) Innovation and introduction of leading practices in Indigenous education; and

(v) Supporting collaboration between the Anishinabek Education System (AES) and School Boards, including data and information sharing.

“On days when I am feeling down, I know I can count on Rose (Indigenous Academic Tutor) to brighten my day with her jokes and her contagious laugh.”

- FAYE KING,
BIINJITIWAABIK ZAAGING
ANISHINAABEK, INDIGENOUS
ACADEMIC TUTOR

One student registered at the Education Hub was high needs. Professional development and training were completed with a behavioural analyst. A behaviour plan was completed to assist the student.

“When this child goes back to the provincial school, there will be a big difference. The changes I see in the child is night and day. The child [has been identified as] autistic and did not want to attend school and the mother did not want to send the child to school because of past experiences. The child did not want to get on the school bus in the beginning of the Education Hub, but with utilizing the behaviour plan, the child eventually wanted to get on the school bus like every other student. This was a major accomplishment.”

- MARILYN NICHOLLS,
WAHNAPITAE FIRST NATION

The 27 projects funded by the Niigaan Gdizhaami Fund in 2020-2021 were all vital to the First Nations in the AES. These projects positively affected over 550 students throughout the AES. The greatest learning from this year's projects is that there is a clear need for student support positions within AES schools and provincially-funded schools where AES students attend. These student support positions have various names, but ultimately, they are Indigenous advocates. These Indigenous advocates support students and ensure the communication lines are open between students and teachers.

All projects under the Niigaan Gdizhaami Fund positively affected communities in the Anishinabek Education System. The projects addressed the following issues within Anishinabek communities:

- academic tutoring;
- student support for Anishinabek students attending school off-reserve;
- youth leadership;
- preservation of history;
- preservation of language;
- land-based learning; and
- cultural knowledge.

“**HOPE** is a strong word that was prevalent throughout the Niigaan Gdizhaami Fund project reports. Anishinabek students felt a sense of hope that their history, cultural knowledge, language, and way of life would not be lost. In addition, students felt a **SENSE OF BELONGING** and were empowered by the knowledge of understanding their identity and where they come from.”

- **FAYE KING,**
BIINJITIWAABIK ZAAGING
ANISHINAABEK, INDIGENOUS
ACADEMIC TUTOR



Four major themes emerged from the 2020-2021 Niigaan Gdizhaami Fund.

1. **Language Revitalization** with 5 projects
2. **Student Supports** with 11 projects
3. **Anishinaabe Foundations of Learning** with 8 projects
4. **Preservation of History** with 3 projects

LANGUAGE REVITALIZATION PROJECTS

Aundeck Omni Kaning

LANGUAGES IMMERSION CAMP

Target Audience:

Elementary students from grades 6 – 8.

Project Summary:

A youth cultural camp was offered to local students which incorporated Anishinaabe language and land-based activities. The activities allowed students to connect to Anishinaabe culture, community, and self.

Success Stories:

Fifteen students participated in the Languages Immersion Camp. Students were pleased and excited for the camp each day. Students expressed interest in future language programming. Parents were grateful that they had the opportunity to provide their children with the important experience of the Languages Immersion Camp.

Atikameksheng Anishnawbek

ANISHNAABEMDAA ENSA-GIIZHGAT

Target Audience:

Early learners (0 – 5 years old), home schooled children (6 – 13 years old), parents, families, other adult learners, and Elders.

Project Summary:

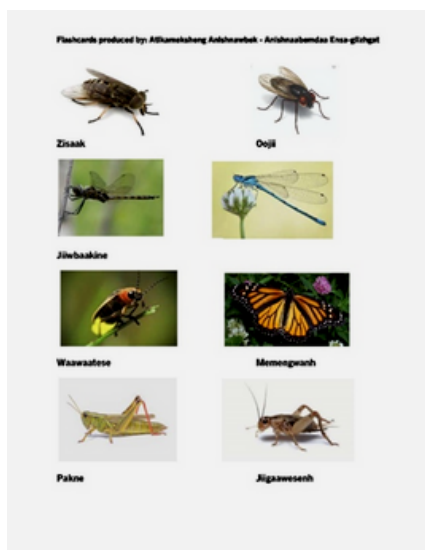
Atikameksheng Anishnawbek recognized that children receive limited Anishinaabemowin language instruction in the public school system. Atikameksheng Anishnawbek took action with Anishnaabemdaa Ensa-giizhgat which offered virtual Anishinaabemowin immersion learning for early learners (ages 0-5) and home-schooled children (ages 6-13 years). Being able to speak Anishinaabemowin will help instill positive identity in children and will contribute to their success. Atikameksheng Anishnawbek recognized that the most optimal way to transmit language is naturally in immersion learning environments. Learning was completed via virtual video platforms. Other adult learners who were looking to increase their language skills also participated. Learning took place 3 hours per day and 3 days per week for 22 weeks.

The virtual Anishinaabemowin immersion learning took the form of a zaswaan (language nest). In the zaswaan, the akinoomaajig began by welcoming the participants into the nest with a song. Then the akinoomaajig introduced themselves and talking about the weather conditions, followed by a discussion on how the participants felt. After some conversation, the akinoomaajig would tell a story, perform a puppet dramatization, act out a skit, or create songs. The topics discussed or presented related to seasonal activities. In the fall, the program covered topics such as giwseke (hunting) and skinning deer. In the winter, the topics included zhooshkwaade (skating), zhooshkjiwe (sliding), wewebinaabii (ice fishing), giigoohnsag (fish), agoodwaangizing (all one family), zaagedowin (love), ziizbaakidoke (making maple syrup) and bineshiiyag (birds). In the spring, the program covered topics such as naagidowin maadaa shkaakimikwe (taking care of mother earth), shkimaajigeng (sprouts), wiik tige'ang (planting a garden), mnidooshensag (bugs), mzinabiige (drawing), niimiwin (dance), and miinwaa miinan (berries).

QUICK VIEW

Anishinaabemowin Translations

- **zaswaan** - language nest
- **giwseke** - hunting
- **zhooshkwaade** - skating
- **zhooshkjiwe** - sliding
- **wewebinaabii** - ice fishing
- **giigoohnsag** - fish
- **agoodwaangizing** - all one family
- **zaagedowin** - love
- **ziizbaakidoke** - making maple syrup)
- **bineshiyyag** - birds
- **naagidowin maadaa shkaakimikwe** - taking care of mother earth
- **shkimaajigeng** - sprouts
- **wiik tige'ang** - planting a garden
- **mnidooshensag** - bugs
- **mzinabiige** - drawing
- **niimiwin** - dance
- **miinwaa miinan** - berries



Atikameksheng Anishnawbek
Anishnaabemdaa Ensa-giizhgat

In addition to the zaswaan, an evening session was offered once a week for parents, youth, and the community. These sessions helped parents, youth, and adults to understand more about the topics covered in the zaswaan and they would ask questions in English to help them understand and support their and their children's learning in the zaswaan.

Atikameksheng Anishnawbek's project Anishnaabemdaa Ensa-giizhgat had 36 children participate and 36 adults/parents participate. Children thrived from the project. Children learned new words and new phrases each class, which built on the confidence of the children.

Biigtigong Nishnaabeg

COLLABORATIVE INDIGENOUS STUDIES/LANGUAGE PROJECT

Target Audience:

High school students.

Project Summary:

Biigtigong Nishnaabeg recognized the need for Indigenous Studies/Language curriculum specific to their territory. With their Collaborative Indigenous Studies Language Project, Biigtigong Nishnaabeg formed a working group to develop units specifically from the perspective of Anishinabek people. In collaboration with Marathon High School and local community members, Biigtigong Nishnaabeg worked toward further inclusion of local history, culture, language, and perspectives to support curriculum.

Success stories:

The development of curriculum that is the perspective of Anishinabek people is a success in itself. As time passes, the successful delivery of the curriculum will be manifested in the knowledge the students of Biigtigong Nishnaabeg receive. Currently, the curriculum has been requested by other schools within the district.

Sheshegwaning First Nation

NAADMAADAA WII NISHNABE GAAGIIGADAYIN LANGUAGE REVITALIZATION PROJECT

Target Audience:

Students, families, Elders, and community.

Project Summary:

A community-wide language assessment survey was distributed. A large part of this project was dedicated to community engagement and introduced language planning in each community. Community engagement sessions were a vehicle to explain the importance of language planning, sharing results of language survey, filling in the gaps from the survey, recruiting volunteers and brainstorming sessions to identify goals of language plan.

Success Stories:

The number of Anishinaabemowin speakers are steadily declining. There is a critical need to revitalize Anishinaabe language. Language planning is an essential step in the development of language revitalization programs. The project has helped communities move closer to language revitalization. This project has increased community knowledge and understanding of Anishinabek histories, cultures, and language. There is a lack of opportunities for young people to learn the Ojibway Language. This project has opened an opportunity to collaborate with the schools and school boards.

Aamjiwnaang First Nation

ANISHINAABEK STUDIES DEVELOPMENT PROJECT

Target Audience:

Lambton Kent District School Board Anishinabek Students, non-Indigenous students, Indigenous and non-Indigenous teachers, parents, families, community educators, Elders, Language Speakers, school staff, and language authorities.

Project Summary:

Aamjiwnaang First Nation recognized that the Anishinaabe language is nearing extinction and with the continued loss of Anishinaabe fluent speakers, it was beneficial to address the needs of the teachers and provide an intensive language learning program to contribute to Anishinabek revitalization efforts. The Anishinaabe Studies Development Project provided Anishinaabe language, cultural expertise, and professional development to educators. The project enhanced access and development of curriculum, instructional systems, assessment and evaluation tools, and supporting resources through the development of a language learning continuum. Students participated in virtual language classes several times each week. Students had the opportunity to create language apps. Families participated in the Family Ojibway Language nights which had high participation.

Success Stories:

When educators are provided with professional development in language development and revitalization, the students succeeded and thrived from the knowledge the educators obtained.



Educators recognized the need for cultural & language professional development

“Many teachers involved with Indigenous Education have indicated that they require improvement and professional development to provide their students with rich and robust Anishinaabe learning activities. By improving teacher proficiency, students will have greater opportunities and understanding of local Anishinaabe language and culture.”

- **VICKI WARE,**
AAMJIWNAANG FIRST NATION

STUDENT SUPPORTS

Biinjitiwaabik Zaaging Anishinaabek

INDIGENOUS ACADEMIC TUTOR

Target Audience:

Students in grades 8 – 12.

Project Summary:

The Indigenous Advocate Tutor supports students from Biinjitiwaabik Zaaging Anishinaabek as they transition from grade 8 on-reserve into the provincial high school in Red Rock. Students were at risk of not obtaining enough credits to graduate. The Indigenous Academic Tutor provided a critical support system for students. The program offered monthly cultural activities, monthly Elder knowledge sharing, as well as a variety of Anishinaabek history and knowledge learning opportunities. Students received monthly visits from the Chief of their community. The project also offered an LGBTQ+ support group with an Elder.

Success Stories:

There is a direct link between support personnel and student achievement. The Indigenous Advocate Tutor assisted students with their three-pillar system of mental wellness, cultural support, and student achievement. One student graduated from Nipigon-Red Rock District High School and is now enrolled in the Early Childhood Education program at Confederation College. Not only do students understand the importance of having someone in their corner, but educators also recognize the importance of this critical role. Jennifer Rissanen, principal at Nip-Rock High School stated that “...it has been a great place for Rose and the students to come together. When the students are in the building, there are lots of students visiting during lunch and taking advantage of Rose’s support throughout the school day”.

Video of the dedicated space for Indigenous Students at Nip-Rock High School can be seen here at www.youtube.com/watch?v=2py7z8wwEA



BIINJITIWAABIK ZAAGING
ANISHINAABEK PROJECT -
INDIGENOUS ACADEMIC
TUTOR

“Having Rose in the building since making the move to high school has had such a positive impact on not only me but everyone in the school. She provides a safe space that allows us to get work done and not only that...it's also a place that we can just hangout in. She makes going to school a lot more comfortable.”

- MACKENZIE BECKER, BIINJITIWAABIK ZAAGING ANISHINAABEK

“Rose helped me through a lot in my semester by encouraging me to keep going and push forward when I wanted to give up. She is very helpful with basically whatever you might need. She helps to keep us focused on our goals and that we can accomplish whatever we put our minds to.”

- LENNZI KING, BIINJITIWAABIK ZAAGING ANISHINAABEK

“During my final year of high school, Rose was a great and helpful person to have at the school. She was always there to help and listen to the students' needs. Her office was a welcoming space where it was nice to sit and enjoy a snack and chat. Having Rose available for a ride home after school hours so I was able to participate in after-school sports was awesome. Just having her there at the school for the students from Rocky Bay was something I wish myself and past students could have had throughout my time at Nip-Rock.”

- CALEB HARDY, BIINJITIWAABIK ZAAGING ANISHINAABEK

Long Lake # 58

BIMAADIZOWIN CENTRE, YEAR 3

Target Audience:

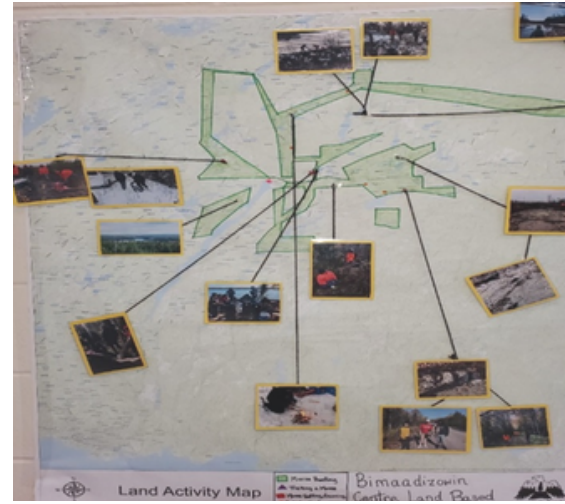
Students in grades 5 – 9.

Project Summary:

Bimaadizowin Centre was developed for students who struggle with a contemporary classroom. The Bimaadizowin Centre Project assisted students as they transitioned from elementary School into high school. Programming included literacy and numeracy, Seven Grandfather teachings, medicine wheel, life skills, and land-based learning. Students also had weekly sessions with a Graduation Coach. The Graduation Coach accompanied students for one month at the local high school. The project included "My Blueprint" – a plan specific to each student transitioning into high school.

Success Stories:

Surveys were completed by the students and showed that students enjoyed the land-based outings, sports, wellness, cooking, hunting, fishing, trapping, survival skills, and zones of regulation the most. The students of Long Lake #58 loved being outdoors and thrived with the land-based learning. Students were able to leave their issues behind at home. The students began to trust the staff and respect their authority. Parents attended weekly meetings and ate a meal prepared by the students.



BIMAADIZOWIN CENTRE
LAND-BASED ACTIVITIES MAP

Biigtigong Nishnaabeg

EDUCATION COUNSELOR / ACADEMIC ADVOCATE

“[...]having a familiar face to reach out to and that is from the community. The Education Counselor provided on-going support to high school students who left the community daily to attend secondary school. The Education Counselor was an advocate that attended student success meetings and made referrals to other services and communicated with parents.”

- EDUCATION
COUNSELOR/ACADEMIC TUTOR
AND ADVOCATE,
BIIGTIGONG NISHNAABEG

Target Audience:

Biigtigong Nishnaabeg High School students in grades 9 – 12.

Project Summary:

The Education Counselor/Academic Advocate provided support to students as they transitioned from grade 8 into the provincial high school. The Advocate created and maintained a connection between Biigtigong Nishnaabeg and the provincial high school which also created a sense of community. The Advocate planned and organized cultural events in the school community, assessed students' well-being, and identified support opportunities for students. Community members were brought into the school for special programming and to support curriculum. Support for students was also offered as they dealt with changes due to COVID-19. Support for students was also offered to those who opted to participate in remote learning. The Advocate also provided tutoring to students.

Student Reflection and Success Stories:

Not only did the Education Counselor assist academically with 80% of credits achieved by students, but the Education Counselor assisted the students with social supports, cultural support, and advocacy support.

Aundeck Omni Kaning

GRADUATION COACH/4 DIRECTIONS MODEL

Target Audience:

Grade 9 and 10 students with Rainbow District School Board.

Project Summary:

A Grad Coach Summer School program was provided that supported First Nation students entering Grade 9 to obtain additional credits during 2 weeks in August. The program was offered to students from Aundeck Omni Kaning, Whitefish River First Nation, Sheshegwaning First Nation, and Zhiibaahaasing First Nation.

Success Stories:

Eight students participated in the Grad Coach/4 Directions Model program. Students were exposed to and learned Anishinaabemowin language, culture, and values. One student had an increase in the desire to learn and improve their education. With the assistance of the Graduation Coach, the student began to demonstrate positive behaviours that improved their learning environment.

Wahnapiatae First Nation

WAHNAPITAE'S EDUCATION HUB CENTRE

Target Audience:

Wahnapiatae First Nation students in Junior Kindergarten to grade 8 who opted to continue with online learning.

Project Summary:

The Education Hub Centre (Hub) was set up for students completing studies on-line. Teachers were on-site and assisted students with their learning. There were two hubs set up including one hub for Junior Kindergarten to grade 2 and one hub for grades 3 – 8. The Education Hub provided students with a safe environment to learn and incorporates Anishinabek history, culture, Elders and Knowledge Keepers, language, and land-based learning. The Hub focused on education, culture, and student well-being. Teachers on-site at the Hub assisted students with their on-line learning.

Student Reflection and Success Stories:

Wahnapiatae First Nation's Education Hub saw major milestones in student success. The Education staff at Wahnapiatae First Nation were able to see first-hand which students required assessments. Students were assessed much earlier than they would have been in the provincial school which allowed the education staff at Wahnapiatae First Nation to navigate the resources required to assist students.

“Through our own assessments, we noticed some students were lacking in reading, writing, and math. We took action and brought tutors in to assist with reading, writing, and math. We saw major growth in these students over the school year with the help of the tutors.”

- MARILYN NICHOLLS,
WAHNAPITAE FIRST NATION

“One student really disliked reading. We worked with the student one-on-one, bought the student books that they had an interest in, and with the help of a tutor, the student now takes books home to read on their own time. Reading is fun for the student. This has really helped with the student's reading levels, but with their self-confidence as well.”

- MARILYN NICHOLLS,
WAHNAPITAE FIRST NATION

Magnetawan First Nation

LEARNING HUB

Target Audience:

Students in grades 4 to 12 at Parry Sound High School and Nobel Public School.

Project Summary:

The Learning Hub was a shared community vision for student success and well-being. The Learning Hub built a school-related connection between parents and children/youth. Over half of the homes in Magnetawan do not have internet and the Learning Hub provided students with the opportunity to complete their homework. The Support Worker attended the students' houses during the COVID-19 lockdown to offer assistance, tutor, and ensured the students were on track with assignments.

Success Stories:

The Learning Hub provided students internet rocket hubs in their homes which provided the students the opportunity to keep up with the schoolwork. Students also increased their reading and writing skills. Students that accessed the Learning Hub successfully completed their assignments and were ready for the next grade.

Moose Deer Point First Nation

STUDENT SUPPORT WORKER

Target Audience:

Students in Junior Kindergarten to grade 8

Project Summary:

A student support worker placed in the school enhanced student engagement and supported families while increasing the success of youth in the community. Students had behavioral needs and special education needs that the teacher cannot always meet while in class. Having a student support worker has allowed students to work one-on-one, work at their own progress, and have more engagement and encouragement with support from a worker.

Success Stories:

Having a student support worker in the school full-time created a one-on-one relationship between the support worker and students. This allowed the students to receive individual support when needed. The result was **less** student behavioural issues and a **higher** student participation in class and more tasks completed. The student support worker worked hard to ensure they understood each student's need and advocated for the students to ensure they received the support they required.

With the assistance of the support worker, the students did not fall behind on schoolwork when they did not understand something. The students felt more comfortable asking the student support worker questions when they were struggling. Further to this, the student support worker was able to gauge when a student was struggling because they noticed behaviours in students. Parents had a very good relationship with the student support worker. The parents felt comfortable explaining to the student support worker if their child was having a bad day and had peace of mind knowing the student support worker would keep an eye on their child.

Aamjiwnaang First Nation

SECONDARY YOUTH LEADERSHIP

Target Audience:

Secondary students in grades 9 – 12.

Project Summary:

The Secondary Youth Leadership project was designed to support student learning and leadership building. The project built a safe environment within the school and community for the students and focused on developing youth leaders in partnership with local Elders and Knowledge Keepers, connecting youth with the community, and building cultural competency across the school environment.

Throughout the project, students met with a local Elder and Knowledge Keeper to choose a topic personal to the group's needs for discussion (for example: Orange Shirt Day). Students built their sense of identity, belonging, and leadership skills. Students then planned how they would want to act upon what they learned to raise awareness across the school (for example: raising awareness about Orange Shirt Day through presentations and posters). Next, the students took action and brought awareness and competency to the classrooms and school (for example, held information sessions and rallies on Orange Shirt Day). Finally, the students reflected on their experiences, their learning needs and the successes of their learning and action plan.

Student Reflection and Success Stories:

Aamjiwnaang's Secondary Youth Leadership saw two school years of students participate in their Secondary Youth Leadership project. These students have carried on their leadership skills and used those skills to mentor other secondary students. For example, one student from Aamjiwnaang First Nation who participated in the Secondary Youth Leadership program moved on to post-secondary schooling. This student reached out to the program and asked if they could participate in the Secondary Youth Leadership program as a mentor for the secondary students because the Secondary Youth Leadership program had a profound effect on their life.

Vicki Ware, Education Director at Aamjiwnaang First Nation speaks passionately about the Secondary Youth Leadership project: "We are seeing a change in the way schools are delivering Indigenous education. We are starting to see that shift. It is really positive because it is Indigenous led. The Indigenous students have a say in delivering important messages to their peers, which is critical to reconciliation. For far too long, students have read textbooks that are inaccurate. The information the students are spreading comes from awareness. This is not some imposed curriculum that the school must deliver. This information is coming directly from the students and is being delivered to the school".



AAMIJWNAANG FIRST NATION
SECONDARY YOUTH LEADERSHIP

Students were actively engaged in learning opportunities presented to them. Twenty-five youth signed up for the Secondary Youth Leadership project. This project provided students with not only the academic support required to be successful in high school, but the spiritual, emotional, and cultural support also required to be successful in high school. Vicki Ware also shared that “connecting the youth with Elders and Knowledge Keepers has allowed for youth to develop relationships together with one another and with the Elders, Knowledge Keepers, and supporting caring adults connected”. The support provided to the students shows in their confidence and wellness. One student stated that “I brought my brother to this group because I know how much it is helping me and I want him to be part of it”. Another student stated that “I like when we connect. It makes me excited to learn more about who I am”.

The Secondary Youth Leadership Project has created a sense of community within the school.

“The thing that has stood out the most for me throughout the school year in connection with youth leadership was feeling connected to my peers and community, while participating in the seminars.”

- STUDENT,
AAMJIWNAANG FIRST
NATION, SECONDARY
YOUTH LEADERSHIP

Courtney Gore, student liaison, stated that “our Youth Leadership Program really stems from student voice. Students have the opportunity to have their opinions and their desires heard from community partners, educators, schools, and parents. Everything we work on are their ideas and hopes. From the beginning to end of a school year, students can see that their ideas come together”.

To view a heartwarming video created by Aamjiwnaang First Nation on their project “Secondary Youth Leadership”, please use link: <https://tinyurl.com/yckye93b>



Whitefish River First Nation

21ST CENTURY LEARNERS

Target Audience:

Shawanosowe School students.

Project Summary:

The 21st Century Learners project prepared grade 6 students at Shawanosowe School to transition to grade 7 at the local provincial school through technology, social activism, and inquiry-based projects. The students used Chromebooks to complete inquiry-based projects that focused on social activism. These inquiry-based projects assisted students to become critical thinkers and encouraged students to use technology to help promote change.

Success Stories:

The Teachers at Shawanosowe School in Whitefish River First Nation recognize that the transition is tough for students when leaving their home school to attend grade 6 at the provincial school in Espanola. For 12 students at the school, staff found there was a direct link between student participation and meaningful tasks/assignments with the project.

One student had experienced an emotionally tough year and the student was reluctant to participate in class lessons and outdoor activities. One of the projects that the students completed was a nature photography project. The photography project assisted the student to overcome the barriers they were facing. The student thrived and was able to tap into their artistic interests. The student opened-up and began to participate in class lessons and outdoor activities.

Staff at Shawanosowe School also saw a direct link between student participation and student wellness. Through the “21st Century Learners” project, staff began mornings with yoga outside on the land. At first, the students were reluctant to participate, but as time went on, all students were excited to participate and staff noticed a positive change in behaviour as the students started their day off connected to the land.

Netmizaaggamig Nishnaabeg

REMOTE LEARNING SUPPORT FOR STUDENTS AND FAMILIES

Target Audience:

High School students of Netmizaaggamig Nishnaabeg.

Project Summary:

With the primary intent of assisting remote learners in Netmizaaggamig Nishnaabeg, this project focused on supporting credit recovery during COVID-19 lockdowns. A dedicated support person worked with students who were attending high school in-person and remotely, but their support approach shifted when it became unsafe to gather with students. A variety of presentations were offered to the students about traditional knowledge, teachings, careers, and land-based activities. Students also participated in the Reach Ahead Program.

Success Stories:

Eleven students enrolled in the program. The Reach Ahead program was offered to any Netmizaaggamig Nishnaabeg students in grade 8 who wanted to obtain a grade 9 credit which included a Family Studies course and math. Reach Ahead programs are great for assist students with high school transitions. The program provided students with the opportunity to build confidence, show progress, and to academically prepare for high school. Students reported that they felt more motivated to start high school. Attendance was great and the Educational Assistants, parents, and principal were engaged on a regular basis.

The program also benefitted students’ mental wellness. Students participated in land-based activities such as outdoor cooking, community gatherings, hiking, making tobacco ties, and teachings. Students felt more confident at the end of the program. Along with the high school credit, students received an honorarium for successful completion of the program to purchase a new outfit for school. Nine out of the 11 students enrolled achieved a grade 9 credit in Family Studies.

Whitefish River First Nation

CURIOSITY IN KINDERGARTEN

Target Audience:

Kindergarten students and staff of Shawanosowe School.

Project Summary:

Curiosity in Kindergarten is a project that provided grade one students with inquiry-based learning activities that allowed them to build problem solving skills,. A large part of the project was conducted through outdoor learning. Curiosity in Kindergarten provided staff and students with more resources and knowledge that enabled students to be curious, creative, and confident learners. This project provided new resources and materials for the kindergarten program. The project also provided cross-curricular inquiry-based learning experiences which included a language speaker in the kindergarten class. This brought a stronger influence of Anishinabek language and culture, stronger self-regulation, and stronger problem-solving skills in kindergarten students.

Success Stories:

Whitefish River First Nation incorporated inquiry-based learning into their kindergarten class at Shawanosowe School. Through the outdoor learning component, students learned about nature and medicinal plants out on the land. Anishinaabe storytelling was also incorporated which allowed students to learn about Anishinaabe stories and then ask questions to find out more about the history of each story.

WHAT IS INQUIRY-BASED LEARNING?

A different approach to learning that emphasizes the student's role in the classroom. Inquiry-based learning encourages students to explore their environment, ask questions, and share ideas about the subject matter.

This approach to learning focuses on the curiosity of the students and is often guided by small-group discussions. Instead of memorizing facts and material, students learn by doing. This encourages knowledge-building through exploration, interaction, and experience.



WHITEFISH RIVER FIRST NATION
CURIOSITY IN KINDERGARTEN



Kindergarten students receive 50 minutes of Anishinaabemowin daily. Play-based activities and outdoor learning is incorporated into the Ojibwe block as well. Kindergarten classroom teachers and ECE's have also been working to learn and incorporate Anishinaabemowin into all aspects of the day.

ANISHINAABE FOUNDATIONS OF LEARNING

Whitefish River First Nation

TAKING OUR LEARNING OUTDOORS

Target Audience:

Students and families of Shawanosowe School.

Project Summary:

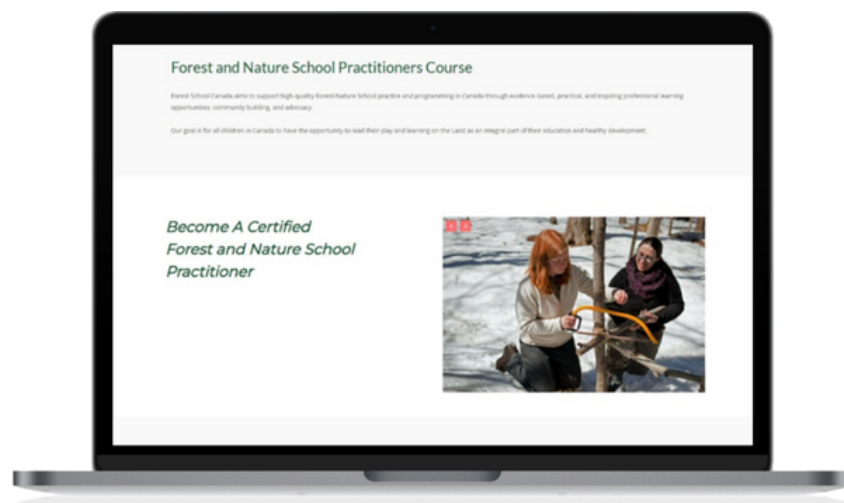
Taking our Learning Outdoors is a project that focused primarily on land-based learning. With the partnership of the Great Lakes Cultural Camp, students learned traditional teachings, survival skills, Anishinaabe culture, and traditions from community Elders. Parents participated in land-based outings with their children, which encouraged the strengthening of family relationships. At the end of the project, the students made presentations about their experiences at the school fair. Students received a Great Lakes Cultural Camp Certificate for completing the project.

Success Stories:

Staff of Shawanosowe School also received professional development to further their knowledge on land-based learning. By providing staff with more professional development on the land, students benefitted greatly from increased hands-on learning. Students gained experience on a fish hatchery project and staff took the Forest and Nature School Practitioners Course. The Forest and Nature School Practitioners Course is a year-long certificate course that consists of both in-person, outdoor experiential learning, as well as online self-directed learning.

For more information on the Forest and Nature School Practitioners Course:

<https://tinyurl.com/zx2pppw6>



Zhiibaahaasing

ZHIIBAAHAASING CULTURE CAMP

Target Audience:

Students in Junior Kindergarten to grade 8 and students in grades 9 – 12, parents, families, and community.

Project Summary:

The Zhiibaahaasing Cultural Camp was a successful hunt camp which involved the entire community. Elders and hunters taught students and community members traditional hunting skills which assisted with understanding the connection that Anishinaabe people have to the land. An Elder translated daily activities into Anishinaabemowin. The Animals harvested during the hunt camp were celebrated with a ceremony.

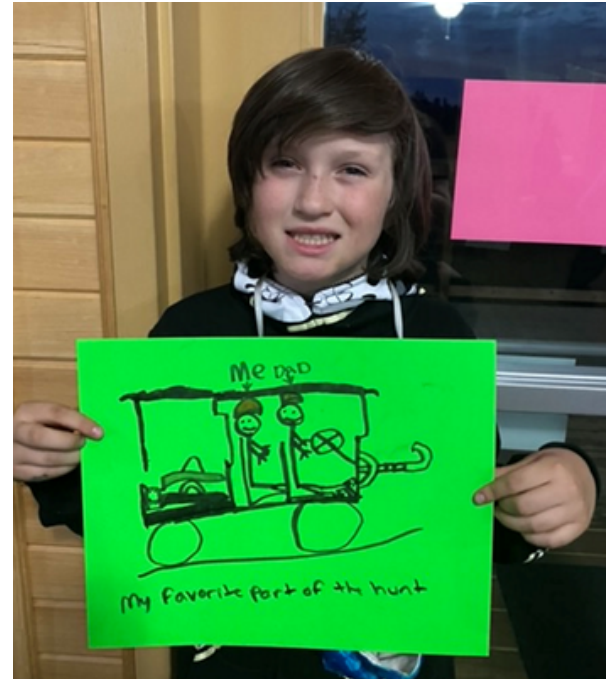
Participants received a special presentation by a Helicopter Pilot from Team Orange and an Ontario Provincial Police Officer who both shared stories about their education, careers, and how they stay in touch with their culture and traditional hunting. Participants received the Canadian Firearms Safety Course. Students completed a presentation to the community, reflecting on their experiences at the cultural camp.

Student Reflection and Success Stories:

The students enjoyed being out on the land and in nature, and spending time hunting with their fathers. They learned about traditional hunting, how to skin moose, and how to harvest hide. The students enjoyed the cultural camp so much that they asked to have it every year.



ZHIIBAAHAASING FIRST NATION
ZHIIBAAHAASING CULTURAL CAMP



ZHIIBAAHAASING FIRST NATION
ZHIIBAAHAASING CULTURAL CAMP

“As First Nations people we do not feel complete without our languages, ceremonies, and traditions. If one is missing, we do not feel whole. We have really been trying to get back to our way of life. Traditional hunting will give us back our connection to the land. Learning our language will help us connect back with our Elders.”

- ZHIIBAAHAASING
FIRST NATION,
ZHIIBAAHAASING
CULTURE CAMP

Atikameksheng Anishnawbek

TRADITIONAL HARVESTING PRACTICES

Target Audience:

Students from Junior Kindergarten to grade 8, students in grades 9 - 12, families, and community.

Project Summary:

Students and their families learned traditional harvesting practices based on seasonal harvest times in Atikameksheng Anishnawbek. The project promoted traditional knowledge and focused on preservation of language and ceremonies. The knowledge of traditional harvesting practices and language enhanced students' success and well-being. Students learned about science, math, and mapping skills through harvesting practices. Anishinaabemowin was incorporated throughout the entire project and students learned the Anishinaabe language through living the experience. Students received hands-on experience with hand tools and harvesting. Participants received the Hunter's Safety Course and Wilderness First Aid.

Student Reflection and Success Stories:

The community was very welcoming to the Traditional Harvesting Practices project and indicated they would like to see more projects like this in the community. Six moose were harvested for the community and the project sparked an interest in mapping in the students, who are interested in developing a game that involves mapping the traditional areas of Atikameksheng Anishnawbek.

The community also harvested maple syrup together with Elders, who participated in the sugar bush harvesting and spoke Anishinaabemowin to the community as they harvested together. There was a noticeable shift in the community. This project brought the community closer together. One mother indicated that she was having issues connecting with her son and this project **"was her way in with him. He was not responding to his worker"**. Something as simple as a sugar bush kit, enabled a mother to connect with her son again. This project helped change their family values.

The youth of Atikameksheng documented the Traditional Harvesting Practices through TikToks and a Canva presentation. To see the presentation, please visit: <https://tinyurl.com/2bhw7wnt>



“People who have been away in their longest addiction and mental health crisis are coming home. We are breaking the cycle of abuse,”

- ATIKAMEKSHENG
ANISHNAWBEK,
TRADITIONAL HARVESTING
PRACTICES

ATIKAMEKSHENG ANISHNAWBEK - TRADITIONAL HARVESTING PRACTICES

Nipissing First Nation

REVITALIZING CULTURE AND LANGUAGE THROUGH INNOVATIVE STRATEGIES

Target Audience:

Grade 7 – 8 students at Our Lady of Sorrows Catholic School.

Project Summary:

Nipissing First Nation teamed up with Nipissing Parry Sound Catholic District School Board (Our Lady of Sorrows Catholic School) to create the Revitalizing Culture and Language through Innovative Strategies project.

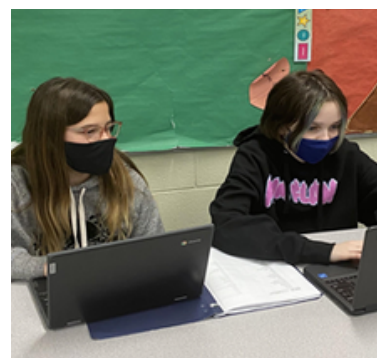
This project had two (2) goals:

1. to enhance cultural teachings and increase Anishinaabemowin to support student well-being and achievement; and
2. to create a safe outdoor learning space that supports land-based knowledge, Elder visits, and community engagement.

Nipissing First Nation's project, Revitalizing Culture and Language through Innovative Strategies, tied technology together with traditional Anishinaabe ways of learning culture, ceremonies, language, and traditional medicines. Through infusing innovative strategies, and a holistic approach to learning, with the use of individual technology devices, Nipissing First Nation and Our Lady of Sorrows School predicted that student engagement and achievement would increase. Based on past experience, Nipissing First Nation and Our Lady of Sorrows found that Anishinaabek students are more engaged when learning through land-based learning and learning about their own culture and heritage.

Student Reflection and Success Stories:

With the use of Chromebooks and Quizlet, Nipissing First Nation and Our Lady of Sorrows Catholic School **saw student engagement increase by 50 percent.** The Ojibway language teacher at Our Lady of Sorrows Catholic School saw the Anishinaabemowin vocabulary increase immensely in the students.



**NIPISSING FIRST NATION
REVITALIZING CULTURE AND
LANGUAGE THROUGH
INNOVATIVE STRATEGIES**

Students had many Elders visit (in person and virtually) and learned about:

1. identifying sacred medicines in the area;
2. Anishinaabemowin vocabulary related to medicines and gardening;
3. understanding and the uses of the medicines;
4. medicine wheel teachings;
5. connecting to Mother Earth through planting and harvesting; and
6. respecting and showing gratitude to Mother Earth.

“Ceremonies have a huge impact on my life because they bring people together and encourage us to carry out our traditions; learning from the Elders provided me with an opportunity to feel empowered to be a leader and feel proud of who I am.”

- STUDENT,
OUR LADY OF SORROWS CATHOLIC SCHOOL

Beausoleil First Nation

AGAAMING & EDUCATION MAAWAANGDOOBIWAG

Target Audience:

Kindergarten to grade 8 students, Christian Island Elementary School curriculum enhancement with Water First; grade 8 students, Summer Learning Experience Workshop with Water First; grade 9 – 12 students, summer work and learning experiences.

Project Summary:

Agaaming & Education Maawaangdoobiwag integrated a climate change initiative in the community into a learning experience for students of Beausoleil First Nation. The project had a significant emphasis on Traditional Ecological Knowledge. The project also had an emphasis on Anishinaabe language around data collection. The project delivered K-8 curriculum related to climate change developed by Georgian College and Lakehead University. The second target group was the grade 8 class who engaged in a summer learning experience which included an awareness piece that introduced career thinking and academic planning. This project also created an employment experience for two high school students that focused on data collection, monitoring skills, and a significant responsibility to teach community about climate change.

Student Reflection and Success Stories:

Beausoleil First Nation's project Agaaming & Education Maawaagdoobiwag was an extraordinary project with a lot of moving parts. Students were directly involved in the beach and water monitoring in their community. This project provided students the opportunity to achieve a Reach Ahead credit in geography.

Benefits of Agaaming & Education Maawaagdoobiwag to students:

- Youth described an increased sense of belonging;
- Youth were provided opportunity to make new friends and encouraged to develop healthy relationships;
- Students became water champions;
- Youth participation was rich in experiences. Youth gained work experience;
- Youth were more prepared to begin building a resume and increasing employability skills;
- Project created awareness of careers in environmental and Indigenous studies;
- Students engaged with the land through science and technology;
- Students felt responsible to their community by being directly involved in the swimming advisories;
- An awareness was created about social justice; and
- Students participated in the planning and implementation of a ceremonial water walk.

“I learned how to beach sample. I learned how to repair and extract the data from the wind stations.”

- STUDENT, AGAAMING & EDUCATION
MAAWAAGDOOBIWAG

13

STUDENTS REGISTERED
FOR AGAAMING &
EDUCATION
MAAWAAGDOOBIWAG

10

STUDENTS ATTENDED
REGULARLY

9

OUT OF THE 10
STUDENTS ACHIEVED
THE REACH AHEAD
CREDIT

*THE REMAINING STUDENT
WAS OFFERED THE
OPPORTUNITY TO ACHIEVE
THE CREDIT THROUGH
CREDIT RECOVERY.

Beausoleil First Nation's project was highlighted by Water First. The article "Inspiring Future Water Scientists" can be found at: tinyurl.com/2p8py3uw



BEAUSOLEIL FIRST NATION STUDENTS
HIGHLIGHTED IN WATER FIRST ARTICLE

Mississaugas of Scugog Island First Nation

KINOOMAAGE GAMIG (LEARNING BUILDING)

Target Audience:

Students from Kindergarten to grade 9.

Project Summary:

Like many communities, the Mississaugas of Scugog Island First Nation have faced many challenges due to COVID-19. To curve these challenges, the community had initially planned to create a learning space for students who opted to learn online, but due to lockdown restrictions, this was not possible. Instead, the community decided to create a teaching lodge while still focusing on education. The Mississaugas of Scugog Island First Nation strongly believe that a teaching lodge is vital to community and student wellness.

“In order to encourage wellness within people, we must first create a space to encourage that wellness.”

- DR. ED CONNORS, MISSISSAUGAS OF SCUGOG
ISLAND FIRST NATION, KINOOMAAGE GAMIG

Success Stories:

In addition to learning about their culture and language, students have benefitted from having a dedicated space. The Mississaugas of Scugog Island First Nation constructed a teaching lodge where students could safely learn about their culture and language. Twenty students have accessed the teaching lodge. This represents 13% of the population at Mississaugas of Scugog Island First Nation. In addition, five students participated in the construction of the teaching lodge. Shortly after introducing the teaching lodge, students reached out, came out of their shells, and requested Naming Ceremonies. The students reflected on what their Spirit Name means to them, what it means to their identity, as well as their pride in being Anishinaabe.

“Overall, the teaching lodge has enhanced the cultural growth within the community itself and the school community. The teaching lodge is a safe cultural space for all members of the community, centred around education. Since time immemorial, lodges have been used to pass cultural knowledge from one generation to another. To have success in learning, we need to have spaces that encourage learning. The teaching lodge is ideal as it is culturally appropriate and built in the Anishinaabe style.”

- MATTHEW STEVENS,
MISSISSAUGAS OF SCUGOG ISLAND FIRST NATION

Magnetawan First Nation

CULTURAL AWARENESS

Target Audience:

Students, parents, community, and Elders.

Project Summary:

Magnetawan First Nation students and staff in the Parry Sound District School Board received workshops and teachings on cultural awareness.

Success Stories:

Although COVID-19 placed a large damper on this project as the students spent much of the school year remote learning due to multiple lockdowns, Magnetawan First Nation still persevered.

Students, community, families, and Elders participated in cultural awareness workshops online. These workshops and teachings enabled parents to feel a stronger connection to their traditional ways.

Michipicoten First Nation

SHARING KNOWLEDGE

Target Audience:

Students from Junior Kindergarten to grade 8, students from grades 9 – 12, and community.

Project Summary:

Through ceremony, students learned the teachings of the teepee and the four sacred medicines. These ceremonies learned through the project reminded participants of the balance that must be brought to our lives and the powerful teachings we have. These ceremonies also provided guidance for the students on their life journey.

Success Stories:

Parents and families participated in the teachings and a community feast was held. Workshops included land-based activities such as trapping, fishing, and hunting.

PRESERVATION OF HISTORY

Biinjitiwaabik Zaaging Anishinaabek

POSTER SERIES

Target Audience:

Youth of Biinjitiwaabik Zaaging Anishinaabek.

Project Summary:

The Poster Series project was developed with the intent was to expose the youth of Biinjitiwaabik Zaaging Anishinaabek to the hardworking, talented, and inspiring people in the community who have tried their best to better the ways of the community and to remind the community of the positive and successful people in Biinjitiwaabik Zaaging Anishinaabek. The project resulted in a series of nineteen posters that celebrated community members and captured the community-based role models.

Success Stories:

One manager and two students were hired to complete the posters. The youth identified community members who could share their stories about their contribution to the community. The students successfully completed nineteen posters which were printed. A PowerPoint presentation was created for the community. The posters were shared in the offices of the community, three offices that the community is linked to, and Spirit Bay School. Students also collected scenic pictures from the local area and created a calendar that was given out to community members.

Long Lake #58

OUR HISTORY THROUGH THE ELDERS

Target Audience:

Elders who lived through the negotiations of all claims against the Federal, Provincial, Municipal governments, and the transition from the old site to the current site of Long Lake #58 First Nation.

Project Summary:

This project was heavily focused on recording the history of Long Lake #58. Elders' stories were captured to preserve history and knowledge of Long Lake #58 First Nation. The intended outcome is to enable children and youth to know who they are, where they come from, and to ground them so they can move forward to opportunities in the future.

Success Stories:

The people of Long Lake #58 First Nation researched and recorded part of their history with the assistance of Elders in the community. A digital library was created. A second application may be submitted to obtain a videographer to digitally document the research.

Munsee-Delaware Nation

HISTORY OF THE MUNSEE-DELAWARE MEMBERS

Target Audience:

Community members of Munsee-Delaware Nation.

Project Summary:

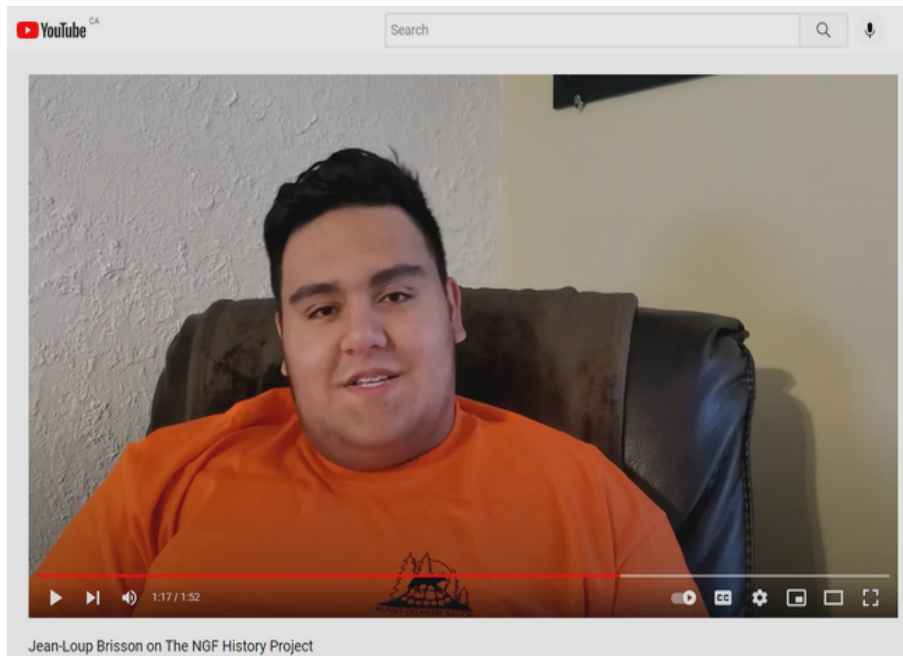
Munsee-Delaware Nation recognized the need to document their history which was lost through the residential school system. It was important that the people of Munsee-Delaware Nation know their history and provide an opportunity for their history to be taught in school. Once students discover their history and ancestry, they will be confident about who they are and will move forward with confidence in the future.

Success Stories:

Munsee-Delaware Nation has no formal account of its history. The community recorded stories from Elders with the intent of preserving their history. This recorded history will be used to create curriculum unique to the Munsee-Delaware Nation. Post-secondary students assisted in recording their own history. This project produced a written history and a video documentation of the Munsee-Delaware People.

“I am very happy that everything will be documented properly and will be put in a way that is most respectable to our history. Having everyone work on this as a group project is very important. It was a very fulfilling experience.”

- STUDENT, MUNSEE-DELAWARE NATION



This video can be found by typing in "Jean-Loup Brisson on The NGF History Project" on Youtube or by visiting <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=nZrIXUo-QRY>

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