



CANADIAN
MUSEUMS
ASSOCIATION

ASSOCIATION
DES MUSÉES
CANADIENS

MOVED TO ACTION PORTÉS À L'ACTION

Collaborative Pathways: Implementing UNDRIP in GLAM

Canadian Museums Association

May 13, 2026



Acknowledgement

The CMA acknowledges that its Secretariat is located on the unceded, unsurrendered territory of the Algonquin Anishnaabeg People. As a national association, our work takes place in the territories of all Indigenous peoples in what is known as Canada. We acknowledge the colonial legacy of museums and commit to recognizing and promoting Indigenous peoples' self-determination over their lands and culture through history and today.

Speakers



Stephanie Danyluk
Sr Manager Community Engagement



Nicole Henbrey
MTA Coordinator

AGENDA

- Background
- UNDRIP is Everyone's Job
- Lessons Learned in Practice
- Building Towards Authoritative Indigenous Governance
- Q & A

Truth and Reconciliation Commission

Call to Action #67

We call upon the federal government to provide full funding to the Canadian Museums Association to undertake, in collaboration with Aboriginal peoples, a national review of museum policies and best practices to determine with the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples and to make recommendations.

Indigenous Communities & Indigenous Museology Experts

Kanawayimik, Battiefords Tribal Council, Whitecap Dakota First Nations, Western Development Museum & Canadian Museums Association Roundtable
March 14, 2022

How Indigenous Youth Represented See Themselves Matters

The impact of residential schools is fresh for many

reclaiming history starts with holding space for the truth

Release the pressure to move forward too quickly

Institutions need to prioritize artifact identification & repatriation

Communities need to see tangible benefits as defined by them

communities are the best to collect & display items

WDM: a decentralized community resource centre

supporting communities in individualized, flexible ways

what can non-Indigenous people do to take on this work?

One relationship started in the gift shop. Things went well. We added new layers...

People can come in with unrealistic expectations of what a relationship should look like right away

MUSEUMS WE DON'T NEED THE STUFF WE NEED THE PEOPLE

WE WANT OUR PAST BACK! DOES OUR HISTORY BELONG IN MUSEUMS ANYMORE? I WOULD SAY NO.

graphic recording by tiaretai.com

CANADIAN MUSEUMS ASSOCIATION & MÉTIS CROSSING

RECONCILIATION LISTENING CIRCLE 1. MARCH 23, 2021

WE ARE A SAFE SPACE & PLACE

RESHAPING THE STORY

OBLIGATION OF PUBLIC INSTITUTIONS TO LEAD ON TRUTH & RECONCILIATION & LISTEN

STRUCTURAL CHANGES

Our museums are often a place where non-Indigenous people first learn about us

PAST - PRESENT - FUTURE

LIVING HISTORY

We need to get things RIGHT

DISCONNECT BETWEEN STORIES IN MUSEUMS & THOSE FROM OUR FAMILIES

Telling our own story is important

INDIGENOUS PEOPLE NEED TO BE HIRED AT ALL LEVELS

INVESTMENT in the stories we tell and how their told

DIVERSITY OF MÉTIS EXPERIENCE & STORIES

BREATHE LIFE INTO MUSEUMS

I'm Métis when I wake up, at work, and when I go to bed

LOOK TO EDUCATIONAL PRACTICES ON HOW TO DO THINGS IN A GOOD WAY

WOMEN NEED TO HAVE MORE OF A SAY

MUSEUMS OBJECTIVELY BELONGINGS RATHER THAN TEND TO STORIES OF PEOPLE

As a Métis woman I often have to go to museums with a steeled heart because of mistrusts & bias

BUT ALSO PLACES OF TRANSFORMATIVE EDUCATION

WORK WITH COMMUNITIES TO CREATE EXHIBITS RESULTS ARE MORE POWERFUL & SUCCESSFUL

MÉTIS CROSSING

CANADIAN MUSEUMS ASSOCIATION

ASSOCIATION DES MUSÉES CANADIENS

museums aren't always the experts

co-create
living spaces
take out the past tense

RECONCILIATION & UNDRIP FOR small museums

build
Partnerships
remove barriers

UPLIFT INDIGENOUS SELF-DETERMINATION

create access to space & cultural institution for Indigenous led exhibits

teaching how to do museum exhibits so Indigenous people can display living sacred items in the ways they want

Indigenous voice at governance level
board representation

self-representation
engage contemporary curators & artists in collections

offer Indigenous specific programs
developed & taught by Indigenous people

hire Indigenous repatriation coordinators

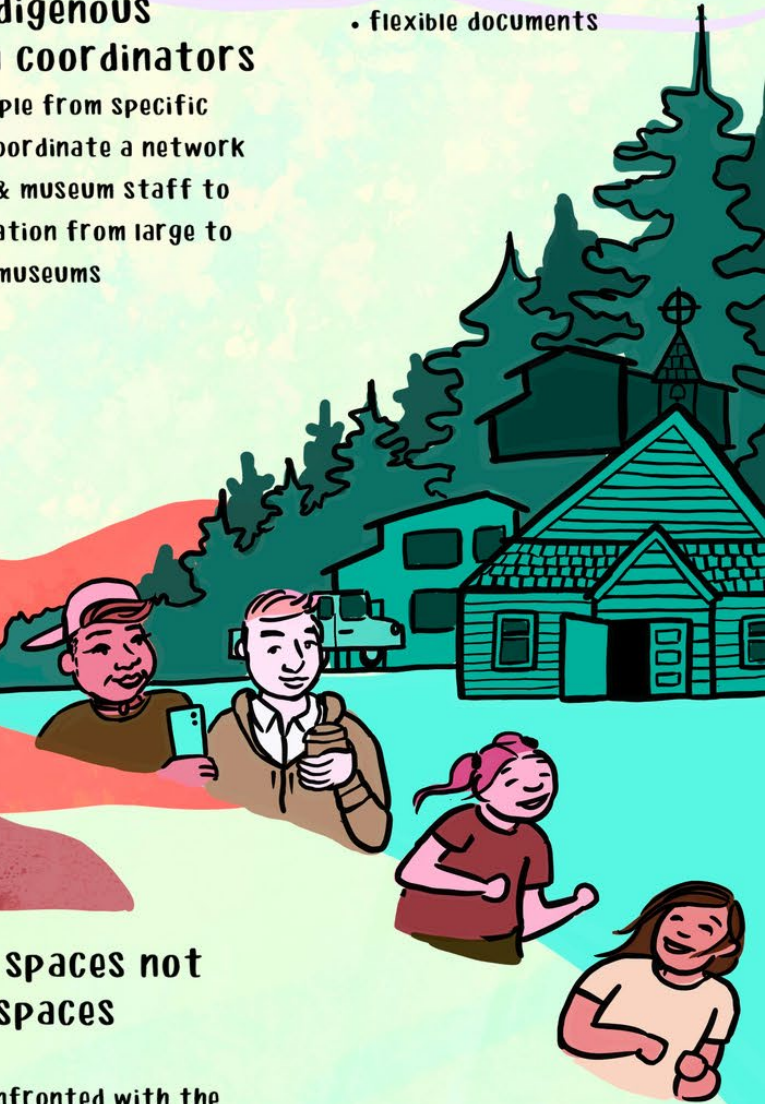
Indigenous people from specific communities to coordinate a network including Elders & museum staff to support repatriation from large to small museums

- memorandums of understanding
- long term loans
- flexible documents



for Indigenous People
"Reconciliation" is retraumatizing, being forced to relive

for non-Indigenous people
Reconciliation is & opportunity to build relationships



HOW TO SHOW UP FOR BETTER RELATIONSHIPS

our Indigenous partners say, "nothing about us without us"

No Indigenous policy, procedure, exhibits, or education without Indigenous consultation & leadership

we want to learn how to offer medicines

- What about a CMA Elder advisor?
- Before coming to Indigenous people, educate yourself to the best of your abilities

act on the courage of conviction

We will always be short staffed & under funded. We can still act.

focus on impact vs. intent

focus on brave spaces not just safe spaces

Some settlers being confronted with the truth of colonization resist seeing their careers in shame. I.e: museum workers, RCMP... how can we focus on the opportunity of new relationships together?

be ok with anger & discomfort

Let go of the need to be right. Acknowledge we do not have the knowledge to hold these things. Hire & welcome Indigenous input & all of the emotions that come with it.

urgency of white supremacy culture

boards or leadership rushing to enforce their timeline rather than pursuing authentic & sustainable relationships

lack of funding

lack of ongoing relationship

don't silo work into 1 job, it's everyone's job

short staffed

SHIFT THESE COLONIAL STRUCTURES



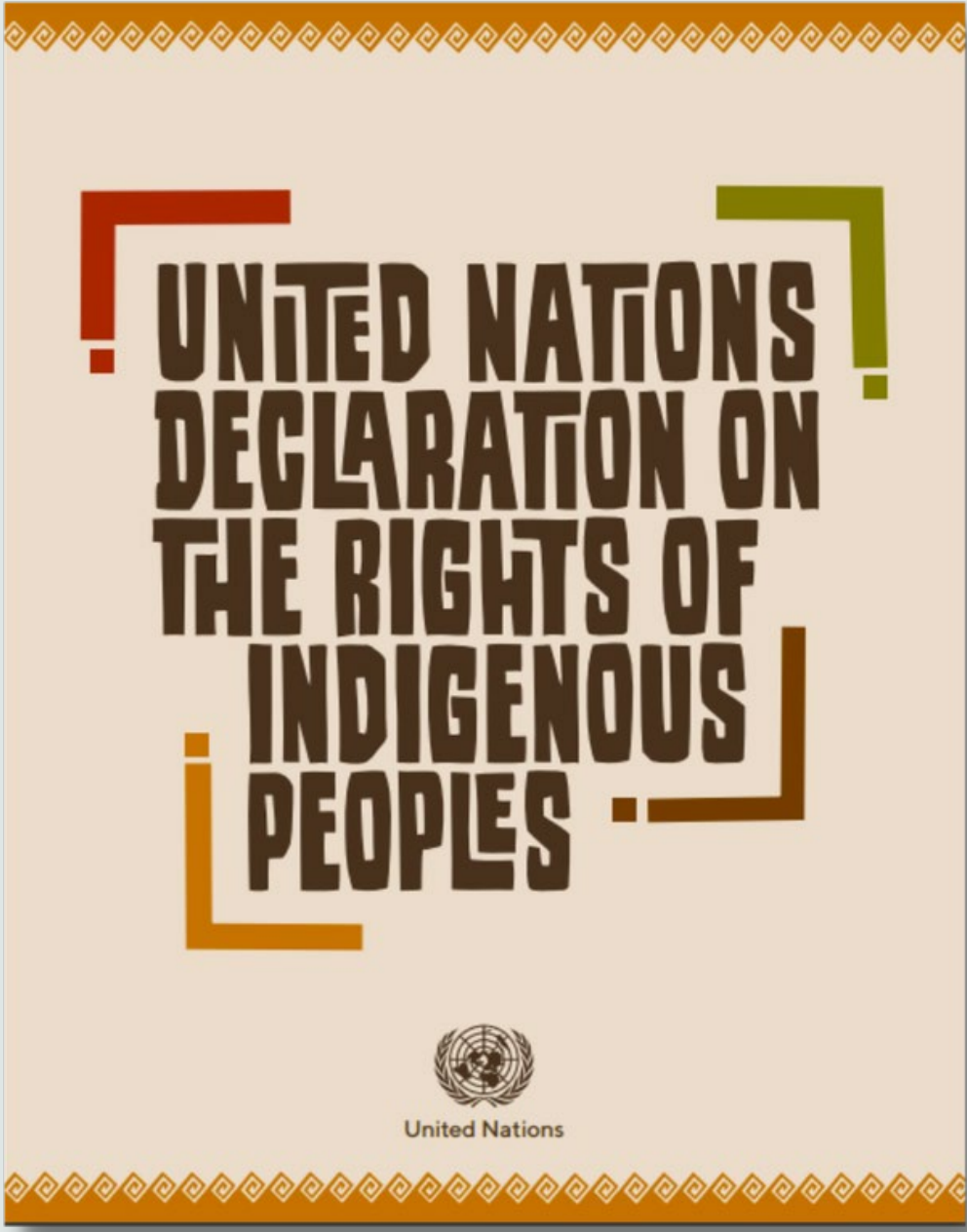
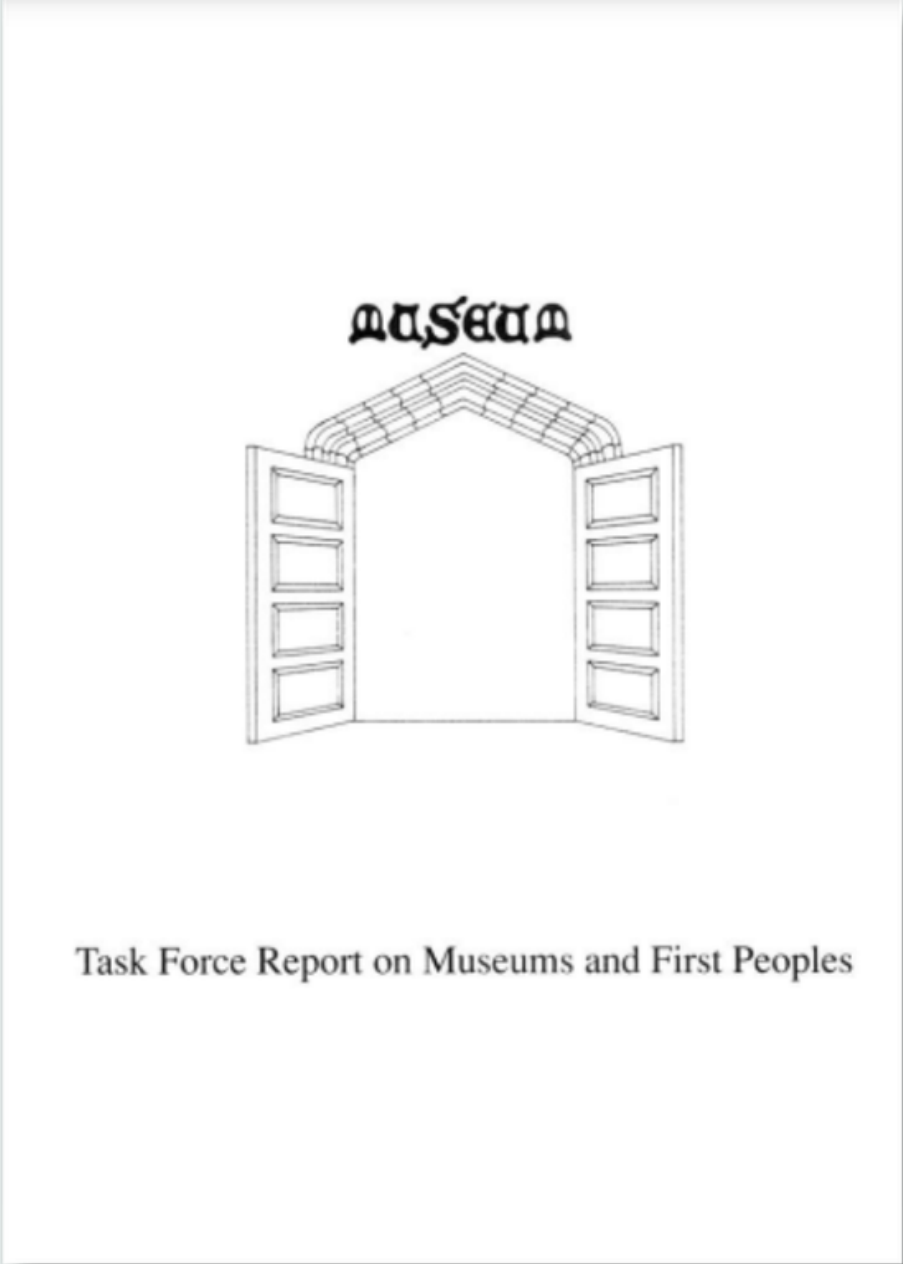
WHAT
ACTIONS
HAVE MUSEUMS
TAKEN
↓ since 1992?

We as Indigenous
people should
get to analyze
these actions.

Especially when
we ask to make
things right.

*Membertou Heritage Park
Listening Circle, March 2, 2021*

A NEW NATIONAL BASELINE



INDIGENOUS COUNCIL

The CMA acknowledges the guidance of:

Grant Anderson, Louis Riel Institute, Winnipeg, MB

Nika Collison, Haida Gwaii Museum, Skidegate, BC

Jonathan Lainey, McCord -Stewart Museum, Montreal QC

Lou -Ann Neel, Creative BC, Victoria, BC

Sharon McLeod, University College of the North, The Pas, MB

John Moses, Canadian Museum of History, Gatineau, QC

Sarah Pashagumskum, Oujé -Bougoumou, QC

Marie -Paule Robitaille, Musée de la civilisation (retired), Québec, QC

Theresie Tungilik, Government of Nunavut, Rankin Inlet, NU

Jeff Ward, Membertou Heritage Park, Membertou First Nation, NS

IMPLEMENTING UNDRIP IN GLAM SPACES



Textile Museum of Canada and the West Baffin Eskimo Cooperative exhibition Printed Textiles from Kinngait Studios, recognized with the Governor General's History Award for Excellence in Museums: History Alive!

Ni'isjoohl Rematriation panel discussion at the Bill Reid Gallery, the rematriation of the Pole was featured in a recent issue of Muse Magazine.





*Kanawayimik, Battlefords Tribal Council, Whitecap Dakota First Nations,
Western Development Museum Roundtable, March 14, 2022*

Operations

Everything Depends on Everything Else

Embedding Indigenous rights in everyday work.

“Working down instead of being at the bottom and working up is important.”

Métis Crossing Listening Circle

HOW DOES YOUR MUSEUM BENEFIT FROM SYSTEMIC RACISM?

Museums hide behind narratives they have created

learn your specific history. How has your agency harmed your community?

publicly acknowledge this harm... ie: Alaska highway' the goldrush


Addressing Institutional Barriers

- Policies & Procedures
- Resources & Capacity
- Operational & Administrative Barriers
- Organizational Culture



Membertou Heritage Park
Listening Circle, March 2, 2021

UNDRIP is Everyone's Job


- Ensure UNDRIP competencies are required at every level of leadership and staff.
 - Support non-Indigenous staff to build the skills to implement change respectfully and effectively.
 - Move beyond basic cultural competency training to embed anti-colonial, anti-racist, and decolonial practices
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UNDRIP is Everyone's Job

- Requirements or accountabilities for non-Indigenous staff to support self-determination
- Understanding for how position upholds systemic barriers and status quo
- Transparent processes for addressing discrimination or harm caused to Indigenous staff and partners



Centre Indigenous Self-Determination

- Develop and implement internal policies that align with UNDRIP.
 - Embed Indigenous rights in strategic plans and operational frameworks.
 - Create and sustain roles for Indigenous leadership in decision-making.
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THE WORK OF INDIVIDUALS, TOGETHER

- Requires participation from every role at every level. UNDRIP is everyone's job.
- If set out at governance level, empowers all levels of museum to support Indigenous self-determination

“Recognizing Indigenous Peoples as rights holders—as sovereign with their own governance systems and laws—is often not applied or looked to in a museum context. This requires moving toward shared authority, stewardship, and co-development.”

Karine Duhamel

Governance

- Supporting Indigenous self-determination is not a project.
- Involve Indigenous leadership in a manner that is appropriate for and guided by the communities you engage and represent.
- Make space and reduce tokenization through decision-making power.

Musée inu de Mashteuiatsh - Kakanauelitakanitshuap
Listening Circle, March 18, 2021




MOVED TO ACTION KPI RESEARCH (KPI) & 2019 SURVEY

73% of museums (KPI) Key Performance Indicator (KPI) research showcase Indigenous programming, only 10% have mandates or operationalized policies supporting Indigenous initiatives.

10% of these institutions publicly indicate that these operations are guided by Indigenous advisory bodies or the presence of Indigenous board directors.

Approximately 5% of respondents (2019 survey) shared instances where staff efforts on decolonizing were hindered by the museum Board of Directors.




COMMIT TO HUMILITY

- Museum leaders and board members must recognize the limits of their contribution.
- Humility means sharing authority and rethinking board dynamics.
- Leadership while implementing UNDRIP is not about taking charge but setting an example.
- Make long-term commitments.
- Don't showcase reconciliation work as "achievements."

"We are working toward a future of humbleness and restraint."

John G. Hampton




ACTIVATING INDIGENOUS AUTHORITY

Mechanisms may include by-laws, policy, MOU's, cultural protocol). Be aware of limitations (board representation, MOU's)

This includes understanding where obstacles lie within municipal, provincial or federal law, including charities acts.



CMA Indigenous Council Relational Agreement

- The Indigenous Council will provide authoritative guidance to the CMA on advancing Indigenous self-determination and transforming relationships between museums, universities, art galleries, and related institutions and the Indigenous peoples of Canada, grounded in the diverse worldviews of First Nations, the Métis Nation, and Inuit.
 - The CMA will uphold and implement this guidance by ensuring its actions, decisions, and initiatives advance Indigenous self-determination and reflect these diverse worldviews, committing through this partnership to reciprocal learning, accountability, and the transformation of museum practice in Canada.
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CMA Proposed Governance Changes


Indigenous Council holds defined authority within CMA's mandate on Indigenous self-determination and provides leadership and guidance to advance Indigenous self-determination across the museum sector.

Includes "witnessing" mechanisms to removed onus from Council to identify when their decision-making authority is required.

Includes honorarium requirements.



Key Learnings

- Indigenous Council authority must be clearly embedded in formal governance structures, not treated as advisory or consultative only
 - Authority should be codified through governance documents to ensure durability beyond leadership changes
 - Effective implementation requires alignment across Board, staff, and program -level policies to avoid parallel or competing authority structures
 - Resource allocation (budget, staffing, and support systems) must reflect and enable Indigenous Council leadership in practice
 - Accountability mechanisms should be co-developed to ensure Indigenous Council directives are enacted across organizational operations
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Final Thoughts and Gratitude

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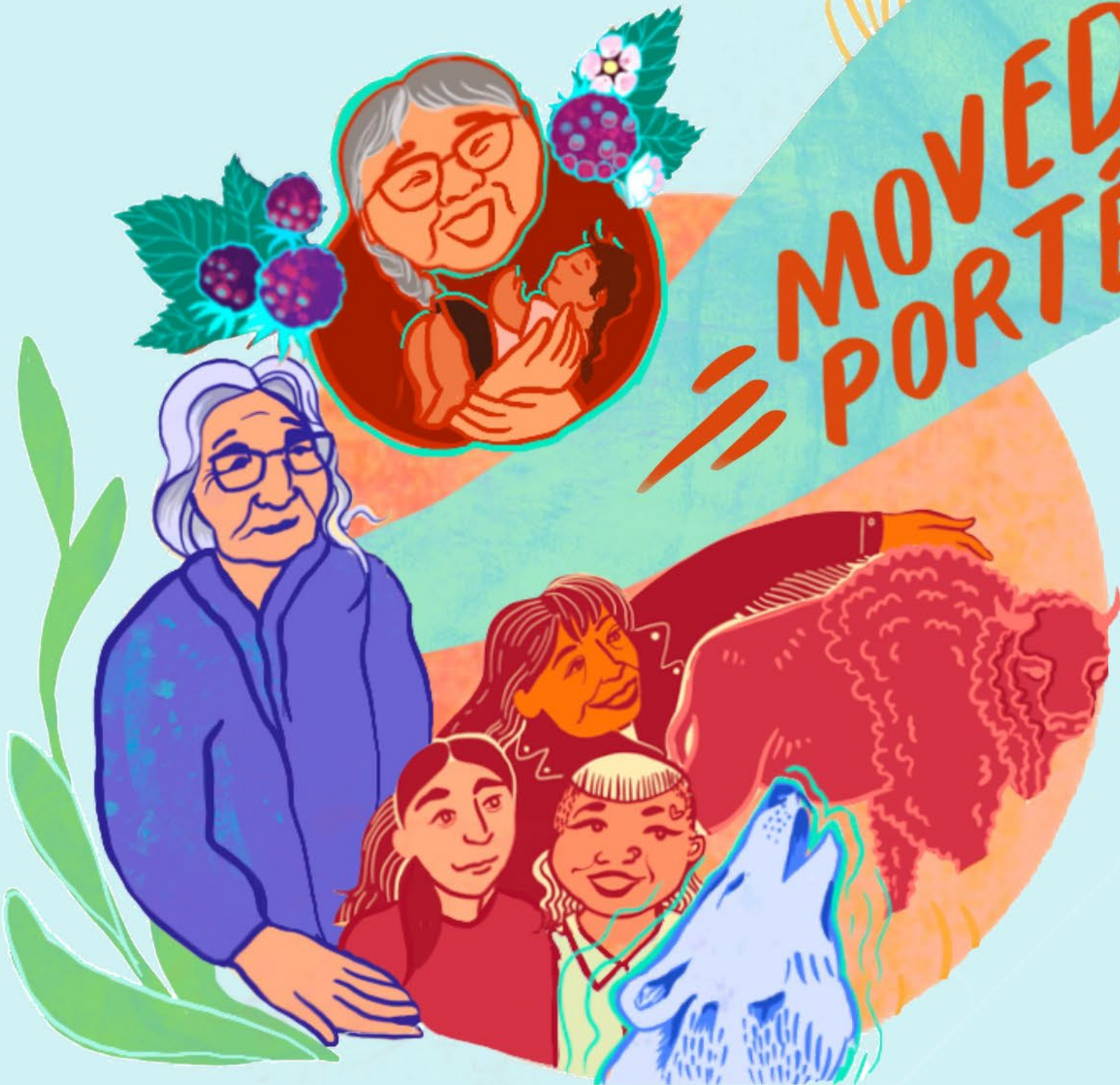




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Questions?

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