

STRATEGIC PLAN

2022

Continuity and Sustainability



INDIGENOUS EDITORS
ASSOCIATION

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About the IEA

The Indigenous Editors Association (IEA) is a membership organization formed by Indigenous editors and publishing professionals in lands claimed by Canada as a mutual support network. We are here to carry out the vision of our early organizers and to create professional development and networking opportunities.

2022 Council Members

Jeannette Armstrong (Past President)

Niigaanwewidam James Sinclair (President)

Karon Shmon (President Elect)

Suzanne Norman (Treasurer)

Rita Bouvier (Member-at-Large)

Amber Boyd (Member-at-Large)

June Scudeler (Member-at-Large)

2022 Staff and Volunteers

Nadine Ryan (Interim Director)

Jazz Cook

Lisa Frenette

Rhonda Kronyk

Deanna Reder

Rachel Taylor



History

First Nations, Inuit, and Métis Peoples and our stories, knowledges, and experiences are diverse, but we have always been storytellers. Stories are integral to our systems of knowledge and our ways of life; to our understanding of ourselves and our place in the world and on the land. But most books about us have been produced by outsiders with little understanding. The results, as Daniel Heath Justice says in *Why Indigenous Literatures Matter*, are a mix of “stories that wound, stories that heal” (2018, 1). Indigenous writers and community members have long pointed out examples of poor publishing practices. In some cases, our stories have been suppressed or distorted to fit the dominant historical account of settler/Indigenous interactions. In others, settler stories perpetuate racist stereotypes, collapse our diversity into a pan-Indigenous world, paint us as a vanishing race, and/or erase our part in the telling and steal our stories outright. Acts of “destructive editing” persist (Shield 2018). In a context of ongoing colonial violence and dehumanization, the resulting wounds echo through our lives and generations. The Indigenous Editors Association formed to ensure projects involving Indigenous stories and storytellers are led by, and benefit, the Indigenous communities from which they originate.

The first Circle (then known as the Aboriginal Editors Circle) was held in 2014 under the leadership of Saskatchewan Arts Board program consultant Joanne Gerber, an Aboriginal editors’ working group, and writers, publishers, and arts administrators, with support from the Saskatchewan Writers Guild. The workshop ran in what is now known as Saskatchewan, which lies

in the territories of the Niitsítpiis-stahkoi (Blackfoot / Niitsítapi), Michif Piyii (Métis), Nêhiyaw-Askiy (Plains Cree), and Očeti Šakówiŋ (Sioux) Peoples. In 2015, the group met again in Saskatchewan and established our Guiding Principles (below). Métis writer Rita Bouvier drafted the “philosophical concept paper” that informed the group’s discussions (Carter 2014). Indigenous participants and faculty emphasized the need to move from appropriation to collaboration. Gerber says, “We always had a rule, from the beginning, that there always had to be more Indigenous people in the room than non-Indigenous [...] We were never trying to proscribe. We were trying to learn” (in Carter 2014).

In 2017, the Circle was organized at Humber College in Adoobiigok as a pair of week-long workshops in two streams: the Indigenous Editors Circle for Indigenous participants, and Editing Indigenous Manuscripts for publishing representatives. Faculty were Warren Cariou, Cherie Dimaline, Gregory Scofield, and Gregory Younging. Attendees all gathered together in the mornings, then divided into two groups in the afternoons. Gerber explains, “Sometimes the topic would be the same but the conversation would be different” (ibid.). While trusted non-Indigenous publishing industry representatives were invited to share insight on panels, the focus remained on Indigenous storytellers and Elders and their knowledge. Overwhelming attendance at that Indigenous Editors Circle in 2017 demonstrated growing interest from the publishing and education fields in the diverse knowledge-keeping and storytelling practices of Indigenous people.



The Indigenous Editors Association (IEA) formed when Circle faculty and participants recognized the need for a dedicated place for Indigenous editors to gather and respond. Rhonda Kronyk and her son Dallas established the IEA website in 2018; and with the dedicated work of key organizers, Deanna Reder, Suzanne Norman, and Rachel Taylor, the IEA was officially incorporated as a not-for-profit society under the B.C. Societies Act in 2019. Shortly thereafter, the first planning meeting was held in February of 2020, bringing together more organizers and inaugural members, including Deanna Reder, Suzanne Norman, Rachel Taylor, Jazz Cook, Ann Doyon, Joanne Gerber, Mackenzie Ground, and Jónína Kirton, to develop the organization's bylaws, mission, vision, and values, and plans for the future.

Although the IEA's activities and momentum since have been affected by the COVID-19 pandemic, public interest and need have continued to grow. As the organization recovers from the limiting effects of the pandemic, and continues to build its structures and reach, the IEA relies on the work of volunteers who have dedicated time to building relationships and thinking through future plans.

The IEA is based on the traditional, ancestral, and unceded territories of the sə́lilwətaʔt̓ təməx̓ (Tseil-Waututh), Skwxwú7mesh-ulh Temíxw (Squamish), S'ólh Téméxw (Stó:lō), Stz'uminus, and šx̓məθk̓wəy̓əmaʔt̓ təməx̓ (Musqueam) Peoples.



References

- Carter, Sue. 2014. "Editing circle: empowering future generations of editors to better serve aboriginal stories," in *Quill & Quire*. <https://quillandquiere.com/omni/editing-circle-empowering-future-generations-of-editors-to-better-serve-aboriginal-stories/#search>.
- Justice, Daniel Heath. 2018. *Why Indigenous Literatures Matter*. Wilfrid Laurier University Press.
- Shield, Alix. 2018. "'I write this for all of you': Recovering the Unpublished RCMP 'Incident' in Maria Campbell's *Halfbreed* (1973)," in *The People and the Text*. <http://thepeopleandthetext.ca/10June2018>.

Guiding Principles

Our Guiding Principles are informed by our values as First Nations, Inuit, and Métis Peoples, including: respectful representation of Indigenous people in books and media; Indigenous leadership of and involvement in Indigenous projects; ethical principles honouring the traditions that govern Indigenous communities' collective ownership over cultural heritage and knowledge; sharing of resources among our communities; recognition of the People(s) on whose land you work; and ceremony as a resource for building collaborative relationships built on sacred trust.

At the 2015 Indigenous Editors Circle, participants developed the following draft guiding principles for working with Indigenous authors and editors in Canada. Later published in Gregory Younging's *Elements of Indigenous Style* (2018, 105), these principles guide the Indigenous Editors Association's work.



- Respectful representation of Indigenous Peoples in published books is a right protected by Section 35 of Canada's Constitution Act, 1982, and Article 31 of the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples.
- Literatures by Indigenous authors and about Indigenous Peoples ought to be edited by Indigenous editors.
- Ethical principles about Indigenous cultural heritage ownership ought to supersede copyright laws.
- Indigenous communities have collective ownership over their Traditional Knowledge.
- The publication of a book is all about clearly defined, transparent, respectful relationships.
- Indigenous authors are not necessarily bound by the conventions of established literary genres.
- It is the responsibility of the editor and therefore the publisher to mentor emerging Indigenous writers where possible.
- Ceremony is a potential resource for building collaborative relationships built on sacred trust.
- Vetting, reviewing, and consultation regarding Indigenous content needs to be completed by an Indigenous person.
- Publishing houses need to take an interest in, and safeguard and support, the cultural integrity of Indigenous editors.
- Teams of reviewers and vetters must include culturally competent members.

Reference

Younging, Gregory. 2018. *Elements of Indigenous Style*. Brush Education Inc.

Mission, Vision, and Values

Mission

To promote recognition of, and employment access and equity for, First Nations, Inuit, and Métis Peoples who work with stories, including editors, writers, knowledge keepers, Elders, language experts, and those with other specialized skills across lands claimed by Canada; and to ensure that publishing projects by, for, and about Indigenous people are Indigenous-led, follow appropriate protocols, and respect Indigenous knowledge systems and Intellectual Property rights.

Vision

Our vision is of a world where Indigenous knowledge is properly valued. We want to see editors, storytellers, and publishing professionals recognized and properly compensated for their knowledge and expertise. Indigenous publishing professionals should have all the resources they need to not only enjoy rewarding careers, but to fulfill their responsibilities to their communities and lands as storytellers, knowledge keepers, and relatives.

Indigenous stories and knowledge systems must be approached with Indigenous community-focused editing practices, employed with care by Indigenous editors. The IEA connects Indigenous people who work with stories with each other. In our diverse roles—as editors, proofreaders, knowledge keepers, Indigenous language and culture experts, designers, publishing professionals, and more—we will strategize, share, and learn together. We will take part in publishing and storytelling on our terms and with the needs of our communities at the centre of our work. We hope to share our stories in a good way with each other and the world—the stories that created us and the ones that heal us.

Values

Indigenous Peoples and cultures are diverse, and we as individuals bring a diversity of experiences and values to our work. Our communities remain at the centre of the work we do, and our shared values include:

- Respect and responsibility;
- Transparency and accountability;
- Representation and inclusion;
- Accessibility for our Elders, youth, and all our relations.

Recent Activities and Accomplishments

2022

- Hosted regular social gatherings for Indigenous editors and publishing professionals.
- Held a successful strategic planning session.
- Initiated our Digital Strategy Fund project: “Connecting Diverse Publishing Professionals and Employers.”
- Initiated our Long-Term Project: “Strengthening Creative Capacity.”

2021

- Awarded a Long-Term Project grant from Canada Council for the Arts. This project, titled “Strengthening Creative Capacity,” aims to strengthen the IEA’s infrastructure and build our creative capacity by researching, developing, and creating administrative and organizational structures and strategies over a 3-year timeline.
- Held a series of webinars, in place of our 2020 Indigenous Editors Circle, on topics of interest to emerging and established editors and publishing professionals. These have been published on the IEA’s YouTube channel and are accessible to event registrants and the IEA’s membership.
- Started hosting bi-monthly social gatherings with IEA Members to foster connection between Indigenous editors and publishing professionals. This event is an ongoing informal gathering, where IEA Members of all levels of experience can bring their questions, discuss challenges, and share experiential knowledge with one another.

2020

- Awarded a Digital Strategy Fund from Canada Council for the Arts. This digital strategy project is titled “Connecting Diverse Publishing Professionals and Employers,” and aims to transform how Indigenous people in publishing (whether professional, casual, or emerging) promote themselves and access opportunities.
- Migrated the IEA’s Wordpress-based website to Wild Apricot to streamline communications, event, and membership management.
- Began offering a job posting service in which employers can purchase an ad for \$10.00 that is sent to the IEA’s membership in our Jobs Newsletter.

Strategic Planning

Overview

In August 2022, the IEA Council, Interim Director, and volunteers met for a hybrid (in-person and virtual) planning meeting to discuss the IEA's next phase of development. The intention of this planning meeting was to set our focus on creating an operational framework, factoring in continued virtual participation, to set us on a path we can follow. We discussed the IEA's governance structure; the development of policies, protocols, and procedures; and plans for the future. This session was funded by Canada Council for the Arts through the IEA's Long-Term Project grant.

Future Visions & Intentions

The IEA's visions and intentions for the future involve program and event ideas that centre around the IEA's mission and values. Below captures the priorities and goals that came from the planning session.

Short Term Plans

A need for capacity building and community engagement were emphasized as primary goals.

- Hire a core team of staff and plan membership and volunteer drives to sustain the IEA's activities and continue its development.
- Continue hosting regular social gatherings for Indigenous editors to meet and share experiences in a safe space; add a Quarterly Newsletter into our communications; and plan and produce social media content.
- Develop a membership policy and protocols to help manage our growing membership.
- Develop communications policies and protocols to guide our communications practices.

Developing Plans

The importance of continuing the momentum of current CCA-funded projects was highlighted, as well as the need to expand our programming to create more opportunities for connection and community building. Doing so will enable the IEA to strengthen its foundations and will be crucial for establishing good relationships.

- Research, develop, and create administrative and organizational structures and strategies over a 3-year timeline, and create Human Resources policies, protocols, and procedures.
- Build a new portal (website and platform) to improve accessibility and engagement and establish our virtual office.
- Create partnerships with other Indigenous-led organizations.
- Develop a mentorship program between internal and external publishing professionals.

Long Term Plans

Begin growing our small team into a broader and inclusive community; work towards supporting the organization's continuity and ensuring sustainability by expanding our community engagement, outreach, and services.

- Host regular Indigenous Editors Circles.
- Continue partnership-building.
- Expand our programming to include webinars, workshops and/or classes, speaking engagements, and more educational and relationship building opportunities.

Conclusion

The IEA is moving carefully to create a sound infrastructure. With the development of policies, protocols, and procedures, we will build our capacity and establish a core team of staff and volunteers to continue our current activities and work towards our future visions and intentions. To do this work, we are seeking sustainable funding and committed partnerships. These elements will enable us to grow our small team into a broadly inclusive community and work towards supporting our organization's continuity and sustainability, maintaining our community outputs and supports.

We are grateful for the continued encouragement, interest, and support from our membership, Council, volunteers, and the public. We would like to extend our gratitude to the following organizations:

Access Copyright Foundation
Annick Press
Arc Poetry
Association of Canadian Publishers
Brush Education
Canada Council for the Arts
Cree Literacy Network
Fernwood Publishing
Groundwood Books
House of Anansi Press
Invisible Publishing
Literary Press Group of Canada
Metonymy Press
Second Story Press
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