



**SAMUEL CENTRE
FOR SOCIAL
CONNECTEDNESS**

Samuel Centre for Social Connectedness Fellowship Program

Partner Organization: Misipawistik Cree Nation

Project Title: Reviving ininiw kiskinomakēwin (Cree education) protocols in
the Misipawistik Cree Nation Health Authority Doula Program

SCSC Fellowship 2023:

Project Proposal

Partner Organization: Misipawistik Cree Nation

Misipawistik Cree Nation (MCN) is located 420 km north of Winnipeg on the shores of Lake Winnipeg in the Manitoba Lowlands. Misipawistik (ᑭᑦ ᐱᑦᐱᑦᐱᑦᐱᑦ) means “Rushing Rapids” in our language. The rapids were a Canadian landmark prior to the development of the Manitoba Hydro-electric Dam in the late 1950s. The rapids were important to the people in many ways, they were an abundant source of food and a place where we felt a strong spiritual connection to the land and water. Early traders who came through our area noted the health and abundance that blessed the people at Misipawistikohk. In the late 1700s Métis families working in the Fur Trade settled in the area as well. MCN is signatory to treaty 5 which was signed just downstream of the rapids in 1875. Following the signing of the treaty the government of Canada assumed authority over the people of Grand Rapids through the Indian Act. The provisions of the act were and are contrary to the agreements made at treaty discussions. Older provisions that have since been repealed denied personhood to First Nations people across Canada paving the way for discriminatory and harmful policies aimed at breaking up families and forcing First Nations people to give up their identities to be accepted into Canadian Society.

As the foundation of our nationhood, Cree identity and language preservation is very important as it represents the relationships between our people, territory, and world. As the governing body, our elected Chief and Council oversee a variety of tasks, including administrative, economic, educational, land conservation, health and social services, and liaising between external services in the area. MCN has been working on reasserting jurisdiction in its territory in the areas of land management, education, financial administration, and child and family services.

Learn more at:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=KoeUC1my658&t=7s>

<https://misipawistik.com/programs-%26-services>

Location of the Project: Misipawistik Cree Nation/Grand Rapids, MB

This project will work directly in community, and will involve in-person work as such applicants must be from Misipawistik Cree Nation, Grand Rapids or surrounding area. If within the surrounding area, applicants must be willing to commute regularly to MCN.

PROJECT INFORMATION

Section 1: Description of the Project

This project will build on the previous work of Elders and knowledge keepers of the kiwētotētān working group and SCSC Fellows to document the benefits of land-based education and define ininiw kiskinomakēwin (Cree education) specifically as it relates to the Doula Program. The ininiw kiskinomakēwin model differs from Western education in that it is life-long and holistic including mental, physical, emotional and spiritual aspects of learning and growth. Ininiw kiskinomakēwin identifies important teachings shared/learned in each stage of life from oskawāsis (~0-1 years) to oskāpēw/oskayiskwēw (early adulthood). With the support of the First Nations Health and Social Secretariat of Manitoba (FNHSSM), Misipawistik Cree Nation (MCN) has piloted the Doula Program to train Indigenous birth helpers, and reclaim birth traditions for new and expectant mothers.

This project will continue building the connections between kiskinomakēwin and the Doula program, working with the MCN Lands Department and MCN Health Authority to further define and implement oskawāsis teachings to be shared with new and expectant mothers through the Doula Program.

Through the duration of the project the Fellow can expect to:

- Work with Elders and knowledge keepers to learn about protocols for ininiw kiskinomakēwin (Cree education) specific to oskawāsis stage (first year of life)
- Create 1-2 resources to be shared (i.e. calendar of teachings for oskawāsis stage)
- Support the Doula program in integrating teachings from Elders by helping with some of the activities such as:

- Cradleboard teachings
- Placenta ceremony and teachings
- Walking out ceremony
- Summer solstice ceremony
- Cree language teachings
- Participate in one of or both community-led Sundance ceremonies
 - Shallow Bay July 13-16
 - McKay Lake July 17-20
- Survey or interview past and present participants in Doula program

Section 2: Goals of the Project

1. Foster belonging of MCN citizens in the Canadian State through revival and advocacy for Cree education principles.
2. Foster belonging and social connectedness by bringing new and expectant mothers together in ceremony and workshops.
3. Foster and support new and expectant parents' connection to traditional knowledge.
4. Highlight the benefits of programming and practices through formal and informal communications with mothers in the Doula Program, Elders from the kiwētotētān working group, and MCN Lands and Health Authority staff.

Section 3: Guiding Questions

- What are the key teachings shared with new and expectant mothers?
- What teachings resonate most with new and expectant mothers, and what teachings do they want?
- How does being on the land add value to the programming?
- How does integrating language teachings add value to the programming?
- How do these teachings affect the sense of pride of the people (mothers and babies, fellow?)?
- Lessons learned for the future or sharing with other communities?
- How does land-based and traditional knowledge help build social connectedness and belonging for MCN citizens, and for Doula practitioners?

Section 4: Key Deliverables

- 1 blog post (500 – 1,000 word), posted to SCSC’s website.
- Community Engagement Initiative (CEI) - 1 or more
 - Engage past and present mothers in Doula program with the goal of assessing the benefits of Doula programming and practices.
 - Create 1-2 resources to be shared with community on oskawāsis stage
- A Final Output [2 options, pick 1]
 - A 25 – 35-page research report supported by primary or secondary source data
 - A creative or practical output coupled with an accompanying written component. This could include the community resources developed as part of the project.
- A Final Presentation with the Cohort

Applicant Information:

About the Fellowship/What the Fellowship Offers

The Fellowship empowers young people, recent graduates, and community leaders to engage in meaningful research and community action. At the Samuel Centre for Social Connectedness our mission is to build connectedness within and between communities through partnerships, research, programming, learning initiatives, and advocacy. Belonging is central to our work, and the Fellowship offers the opportunity to apply the lens of ‘Belonging’ to intersectional issues, writing, and problem solving.

This is a paid full-time opportunity from May 8 – August 28, 2023 [16 weeks]. The Social Connectedness Fellowship is a research and community action summer program focused on understanding & integrating social connectedness.

SCSC Offers:

- Competitive wages
- Work with national & international community partners

- Capacity building, skills development, & mentorship
- Meaningful work where your research has impact

Equity Statement:

The Samuel Centre for Social Connectedness is an equal opportunity employer, and we encourage applicants to apply even if they do not meet all the criteria. We believe all candidates have something to bring to the organization and the role. If you have skills outside the job description that you think can benefit the project, let us know in your cover letter. We encourage all equity-seeking groups such as immigrants, Black people, Indigenous people, people of color, women, young people, 2SLGBTQ+ community members, and people with disabilities to apply. Please let us know if you need any accommodation throughout the application and interview process and we will be happy to support you.

Key Attributes and Skills in the Applicant:

Skills required for this project, including:

- Minimum Gr 12 education, University education is an asset
- First Nations background and/or knowledge in Cree ceremony and teachings
- Familiar with computer technology i.e., Email, Microsoft Word, Microsoft Excel, Microsoft Teams
- Written and verbal communication skills
- Priority and time management skills
- Ability to work with minimal supervision

Any additional hard or soft skills:

- Class 5 driver's license
- Must be willing to travel if not based in community