

Onigaman



Portage Trails

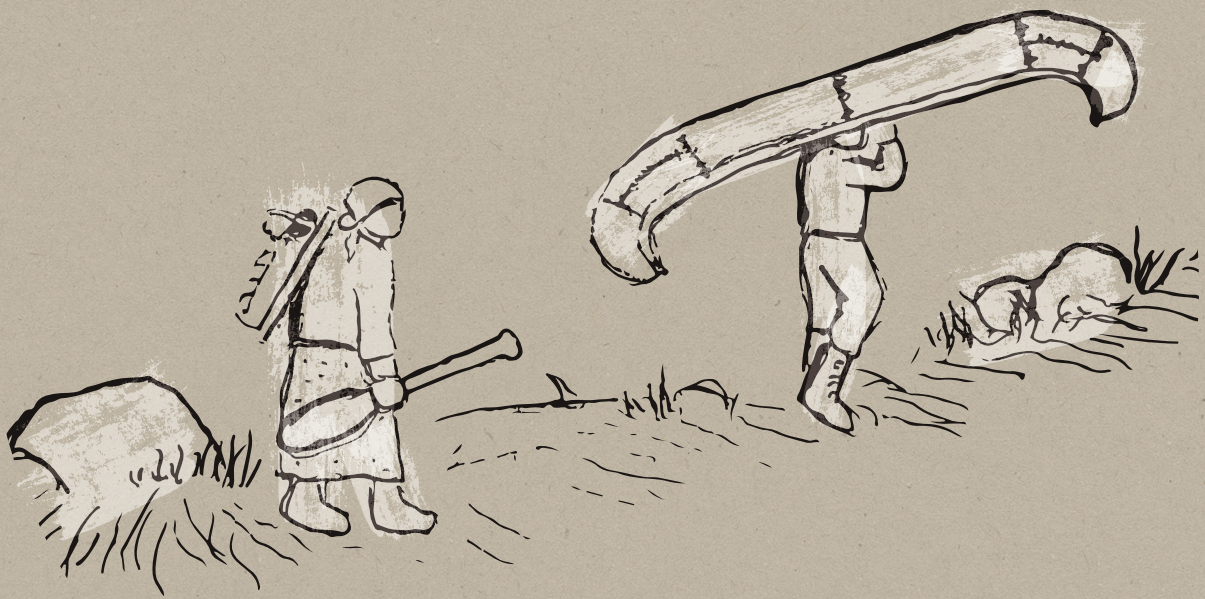


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Consultation on
the performing arts
dissemination in the
Anicinabe territory

Report prepared by Minwashin following consultations in 2021 with cultural actors from the 9 Anicinabé communities in Quebec, as well as with Indigenous creators and producers

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«We have to open up to the
world. We need people to
talk about us.»

Roger Wylde, professional Anicinabe actor and
vice-president of Minwashin



♦ ♦ ♦ OUR PROJET



› Dissemination of performing arts in the Anicinabe territory

As part of a pilot project, we carried out a consultation on the dissemination of artistic performances in the Anicinabe territory. We met with the various actors involved, both inside and outside the territory, to take stock of the situation and design a dissemination network adapted to our territory and in line with our values.

The objective of these meetings was to identify the resources, needs and wishes of the various stakeholders (artists, Anicinabe communities, producers, etc.); to recognize the obstacles that hinder the dissemination of performing arts in our communities; and to reflect together on possible solutions. It is a matter of bringing movement back to our territory and ensuring that culture circulates with the same fluidity as in the past.

Onigaman's objective is to:

- Increase access to performing and contemporary arts (shows and performances) in the Anicinabe territory
- Offer new dissemination opportunities to Anicinabe artists
- Establish meeting places to create, share and inspire ourselves among Anicinabek, with other First Nations, and with our non-Indigenous neighbours
- Enable the Anicinabe Nation to take part in the indigenous artistic boom that is taking place in Quebec and Canada

› Opening the way for action

Art reveals and expresses the essence of a culture. In all its forms, it is essential to community life because it gives us the means to recognise and express the intangible. Art is a way to affirm, explore and redefine our identity. It is important for the future of our culture that our people are exposed to multiple art forms.

In order for our children to grow up in a creative and innovative environment, we need to establish networks that facilitate the movement of artworks in our territory, to leave traces and to open a path for future generations.



Camp of Anishinaabe families, Kenora Agency. Original title: Kenora Agency, Indians in a camp. A woman on the far left, second row, holds a tikinagan (baby carrier). (National Archives of Canada)

«Visibility and access to Indigenous artistic expression in all our Nations and on every stage of Québec is the best medicine against racism and rejection. Indigenous artistic expression is an opportunity for self-determination, affirmation of identity, and a space of peace and hope.»

Yves Sioui Durand, author, actor, director, filmmaker, founder of Ondinnok Productions





*«Get up and out!
Walking and
portaging are the
very essence of our
identity.»*

Excerpt from the Manifesto for the advancement of Indigenous arts, artists, and arts organizations in Québec, Ondinnok, 2018

› Context

The Canadian and Quebec indigenous people's artistic milieu has been booming for several decades. Many consultations and research projects have been carried out to understand and support this phenomenon, notably on the initiative of the Canada Council for the Arts (CCA), the Conseil des arts et des lettres du Québec (CALQ) and the Conseil des arts de Montréal (CAM).

Our project is in line with these efforts and aims at complementarity, since the situation in our territory, which is complex and unique, remains poorly documented. Artists living in the communities lack resources and have difficulty promoting themselves. They are therefore little consulted. Moreover, there is a feeling among them that they are left out, that they do not participate in the artistic abundance that the large cities have.

The Anicinabe territory is vast and fragmented. The communities that inhabit it are not only separated by geographical distance, but also by a linguistic, social and political situation that is not conducive to inter-community support. While the traditional language is rapidly losing ground, 6 of the Anicinabe communities in Quebec speak English while the other 3 speak French.

This new round of consultations also follows the one we carried out in the summer of 2019 with artists and cultural carriers throughout the territory, which enabled us to paint a picture of our nation's needs in terms of cultural development.

We have seized the opportunity offered by the pandemic to consult with our communities and the arts community to work together to develop new meeting places in our territory.

› Our organisation, Minwashin

Au cœur At the heart of the Anicinabe territory, Minwashin is a non-profit cultural organization whose mission is to support, develop and celebrate Anicinabe arts, language and culture.



Minwashin is a forum for the valorisation, revitalisation, gathering and promotion of the Anicinabe language, arts and culture. Minwashin believes in creation as well as cultural and linguistic reappropriation.



◆◆◆ ANICINABE
CULTURAL LIFE



Onago/Yesterday

#territory #dance #music #movement #oraltradition

We asked the respondents to tell us how culture and the arts used to circulate in the Anicinaabe territory. Some shared their childhood memories; others echoed the knowledge of their Elders. Here is a summary of their accounts:

- The gatherings on the territory, punctuated by the seasons, are the epicentre of traditional Anicinabe cultural life. People used to converge by canoe in a place known to all and leave in the same way. The annual games, held during the summer, provided a moment of entertainment and relaxation for families who were reunited after a long winter in the forest. The occasion was used to celebrate weddings and baptisms when everyone was together.

*«I don't know where
we're going as a nation,
but I know where we
come from.»*

Excerpt from an interview conducted in
Kitcisakik during our 2021 consultation tour



- These gatherings also provided an opportunity for the Anicinabek to share knowledge and improve certain techniques. People set up to do all kinds of crafts and joined forces spontaneously when the situation required it. The activities of everyday life and on land were done in harmony.
- Dances have long been a part of the cultural and social life of the Anicinabek. The kitchens and community halls were alive with jigging, especially during the holiday season.

- Oral tradition is a primary vehicle of cultural transmission among the Anicinabek. The legends and stories told to children at bedtime or during meals are passed down through the generations and constitute a rich and precious heritage.

*«My mother could spend
sleepless nights telling us
stories: legends and things
that happened.»*

Excerpt from an interview conducted in Kitcisakik
during our 2021 consultation tour



Photograph of Ruth Chabot, of Maniwaki, at a Valentine's Day dance sponsored by the Club. Ruth is probably from Kitigan Zibi (National Archives of Canada)



*«We have come a long way
in the last twenty years and
this movement is only getting
stronger, and now everyone
is starting to accept our own
culture. People are prouder.
They know who they are.»*

Excerpt from an interview conducted at Timiskaming
First Nation during our 2021 consultation tour

Nogom/Today

#territory #language #reappropriation #transmission #music

Culture is central to the lives of First Nations. For the Anicinabek, it is manifested in all spheres of community life. The various departments of the communities - health, education, communications, etc. - offer a variety of activities to their members on a weekly or even daily basis. Each community also organises one or more annual events to mark the seasons. Each community also organises one or more annual events to mark the seasons.



Bark basket making workshop given by Tina Nottaway at the
Lac Simon community hall (June 2021)

The different sectors, including health and education, offer separate programming, but collaborate on certain projects such as the Cultural Days and Weeks. The Anicinabek integrate cultural and artistic performances - traditional dance, music, ceremonies, etc. - into their life events, such as graduation, seasonal gatherings, weddings, baptisms and funerals. Performances, including music, theatre and circus, are often part of community awareness-raising activities.

*«From birth to death, we
have various celebrations,
ceremonies and gatherings
where we bring in drummers,
dancers, singers, poets...
different types of artists.»*

Excerpt from an interview conducted in Kitigan Zibi
during our 2021 consultation tour

Each community has its own culture of events, with specific habits and interests. Spirituality, for example, is not given the same importance in each community: at the heart of some communities' events, ceremonies are rare - or practised in private - elsewhere.. However, there is a common desire among the nation to bring people regularly to the forest, to the territory.

➤ Overview of the Anicinabe cultural agenda

Cultural Days and Weeks

All communities hold at least one cultural day on the territory each year. These events consist of traditional craft workshops, activities related to life on the land such as fishing, moose hide tanning and fire cooking, games, ceremonies and sharing circles. Some communities organise youth camps, ranging from a few days to two weeks. Others also organise canoe trips, sometimes lasting several days or weeks.

Each community has access to a cultural site in the forest. These sites are essential in the eyes of all and the desire to hold more events on them is unanimous.

Annual Games

Most communities hold annual games, during which a variety of friendly competitions inspired by the summer gatherings of the past are held. These include horseshoe shooting, clay pigeon shooting and tug-of-war. Card tournaments and team sports are also popular.

Musical performances usually enliven the evening and it is not uncommon for participants to take the microphone and sing karaoke during the day. Traditional food stands are set up by community members.

Several communities also hold a winter carnival, during which games and activities are held on the land, such as snaring.

Pow Wows

There are currently 4 pow wows in the Anicinabe territory each year, in Kitigan Zibi, Lac-Simon, Pikogan and Timiskaming First Nation.



The pow wows are among the main venues for the expression of indigenous cultures. They are well known to the communities and to the members of the Nation living in urban areas.

Feasts are also important events in the Anicinabe cultural agenda. Artistic performances usually accompany these festive social events.

Music

Music, which is omnipresent in the territory, brings the Anicinabek together around a common interest that takes different forms.

Musical performances - covers of rock classics, country music, and Indigenous singers - are among the most frequent and popular artistic events in the communities. Hip-hop and rap are gaining popularity with teenagers and young adults, and many events are opting for dual programming to appeal to different generations. Performances are usually scheduled around major events such as seasonal gatherings and sports tournaments.



A number of Anicinape communities organise their own local festivals, such as the Kipawa Countryfest, which welcomed nearly 2,500 spectators in 2019. The emergence of new projects, such as the Anicinape Nigamowin Festival in Kitcisakik, which presented its first edition in October 2021, shows the nation's interest in organising such events.

Events featuring amateur musicians are also very popular in all communities. Karaoke nights, open mic nights and amateur band competitions enliven community life throughout the territory.

Dance

Jigging nights are still popular throughout the territory, although they attract a decreasing number of young participants. Jigging is in full swing during the holiday season, particularly between Christmas and New Year's Day. Dance floors are often set up at shows, especially at country events.

Traditional dance performances accompany many events in community life, such as graduations and inauguration ceremonies.

Humour and conferences

Comedy shows are very popular in all communities. Motivational speakers and lecturers sharing their life experiences are also of great interest.

All communities plan activities and artistic performances on National Indigenous Peoples' Day.

◆◆◆CHALLENGES



The efforts required to perform in the territory can be demanding for indigenous creation and production companies, who often have to do the training and dissemination on their own.

It is not always easy to find the right person to contact to organise a show in a community, as people regularly change jobs and many get involved on top of their regular job.

Infrastructures and equipment

- Limited access to electricity
- Insufficient or inadequate places to present performances
- Insufficient stage equipment
- Limited storage
- Limited accommodation options

These difficulties are compounded by remoteness and geographical isolation.

Financial resources

- Complex grant procedures
- Annual limit of project submissions per person/organisation
- Modest fees for artists
- Under-valuing of the arts

Smaller events must compete with the more established and better funded events by offering innovative leverage.

Excerpts from workshops conducted virtually with the Indigenous artistic community in March 2021



Language barriers

- Limited access to regional performance spaces
- Inappropriate cultural offer
- Limited collaboration between communities and with municipalities

Other factors

- Having had negative experiences in the past, some groups and individuals are reluctant to disseminate Anicinabe cultural knowledge.
- Social issues (mental health, addictions, insecurity)

When you are up against rapids, don't hesitate to stop your canoe and find a way around them. A generous and personalized welcome, an inspiring and peaceful place, or a rich cultural experience can compensate for a lower artist fee.



«We often feel stuck between the hosting needs and the resources we can provide.»

Excerpts from workshops conducted virtually with the Indigenous artistic community in March 2021

«Sometimes they have not yet defined their priorities. They just survive from day to day. But again, that doesn't stop the promotion of arts and culture.»

Excerpt from an interview conducted in Maniwaki during our 2021 consultation tour

Wabak/Tomorrow

#territory #language #gathering #transmission #movement #sharing

Our virtual meeting with the arts community highlighted the sincere interest of indigenous creators, producers and presenters in having their artwork travel across the Anicinabe territory. Our consultation tour revealed that this desire is echoed throughout the territory.

Developing the cultural offer to nurture the next generation

There was a unanimous desire among those consulted for more arts and entertainment to be offered to members of their community. As the Anicinabe nation is not homogeneous, the path and destination envisaged are not the same everywhere. The Anicinabe communities are nevertheless bound by a strong desire to strengthen and pass on their culture and language, to gather on the land and to nurture a sense of pride and belonging among their younger generation.

All the people we met were open to the idea of hosting indigenous theatre groups and other forms of performing arts. Many see this as a way to arouse the interest of young people and to help them discover new perspectives.

Hosting performances in the territory

All communities are interested in hosting performing arts events on their territory, but they do not all give the same importance to holding the event in the community itself. Priorities vary according to available infrastructure and resources, geographic location, and the habits of community members in terms of cultural consumption.

Hosting capacities and experience levels vary from one Anicinabe community to another. Here are some examples of initiatives that our communities have undertaken and found to be positive:

- Offer a tour of the community - and the cultural site - to the artists and include a meeting with elders and a traditional snack
- Invite artists who have come to perform in the neighbouring town to live an experience in the community
- Choose a resource person who is available to accompany the artists during their visit. This person should be familiar with the reality of his/her community and be able to help the artists navigate through the uncertainty.
- Involve teachers by organizing a workshop with students on the day of the performance.

› Offering adapted contents

Indigenous contents are a priority for all respondents, but the proportion that they should occupy in programming varies. Responses ranged from 50% to 85%, with a majority of respondents believing that 60% indigenous content would be an ideal proportion, with 40% content from different cultural groups in society.

«We want to build a warm and welcoming relationship with people so that artists will want to come back.»

Excerpt from an interview conducted at Timiskaming First Nation during our 2021 consultation tour



The Théâtre du Raccourci company presents the anicinabe history told by the Anicinabek at the MIAJA gathering for the anicinabe heritage in Pikogan (September 2021)

› Issues and themes raised

The future of the Anicinabe language is one of the main concerns expressed in the communities. The urgency to act is real and obvious in the territory, where speakers are becoming increasingly rare.

- Taking the time to adapt works travelling through the territory to include translations into anicinabemowin could help audiences to identify with them.
- Bringing in artists and works featuring different indigenous languages could stimulate curiosity and interest in learning the Anicinabe language.

Healing is identified as a priority by a majority of our respondents. Whether it is the «Every Child Matters» movement, addiction and mental health issues that affect communities, or restoring intergenerational ties, the arts are seen as an essential tool for healing.

- Pairing artists with cultural workers to develop works as part of awareness-raising and prevention programmes.
- Integrate art performances and workshops into cultural retreats and awareness-raising activities.

The transmission of anicinabe knowledge and heritage is a central concern.

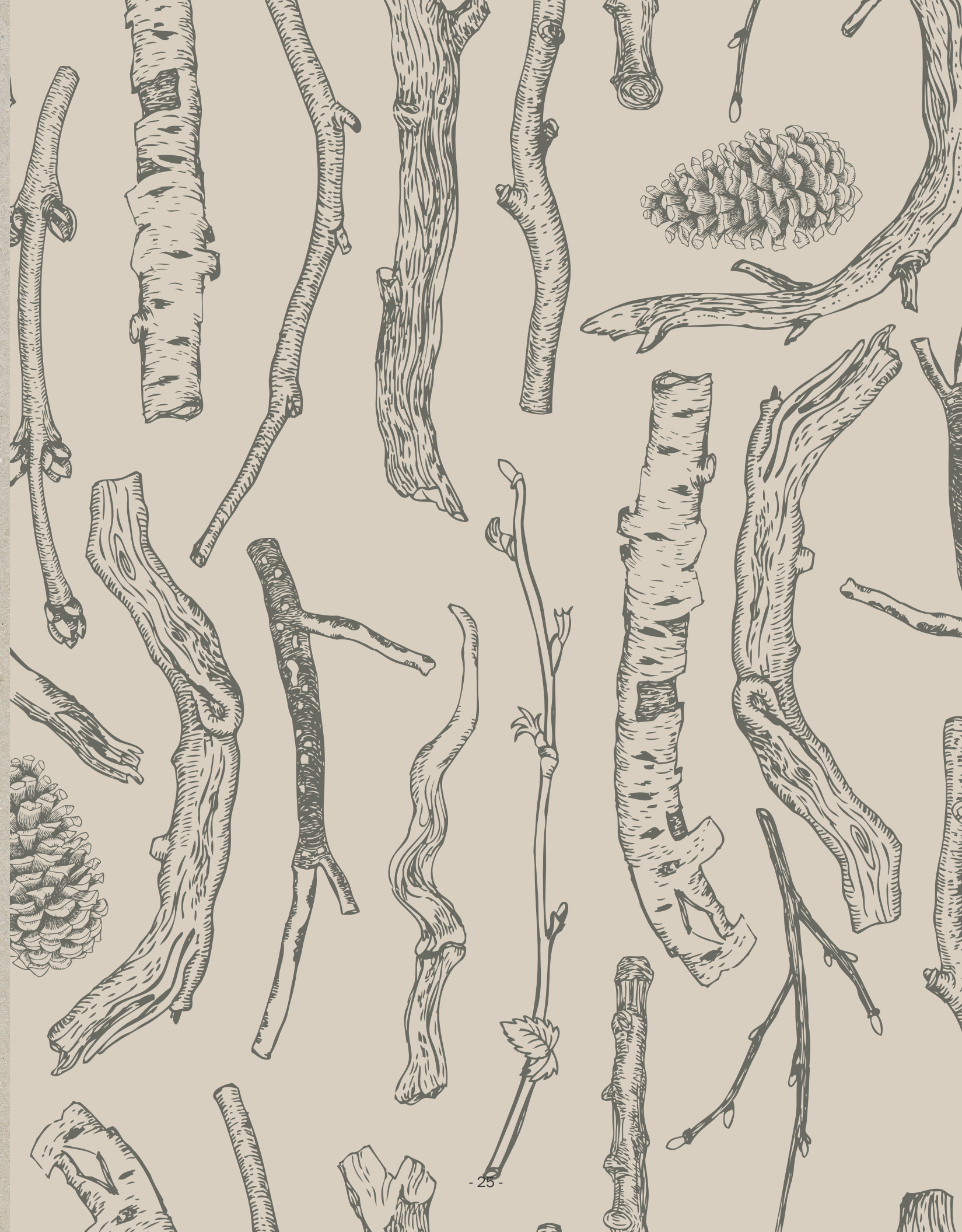
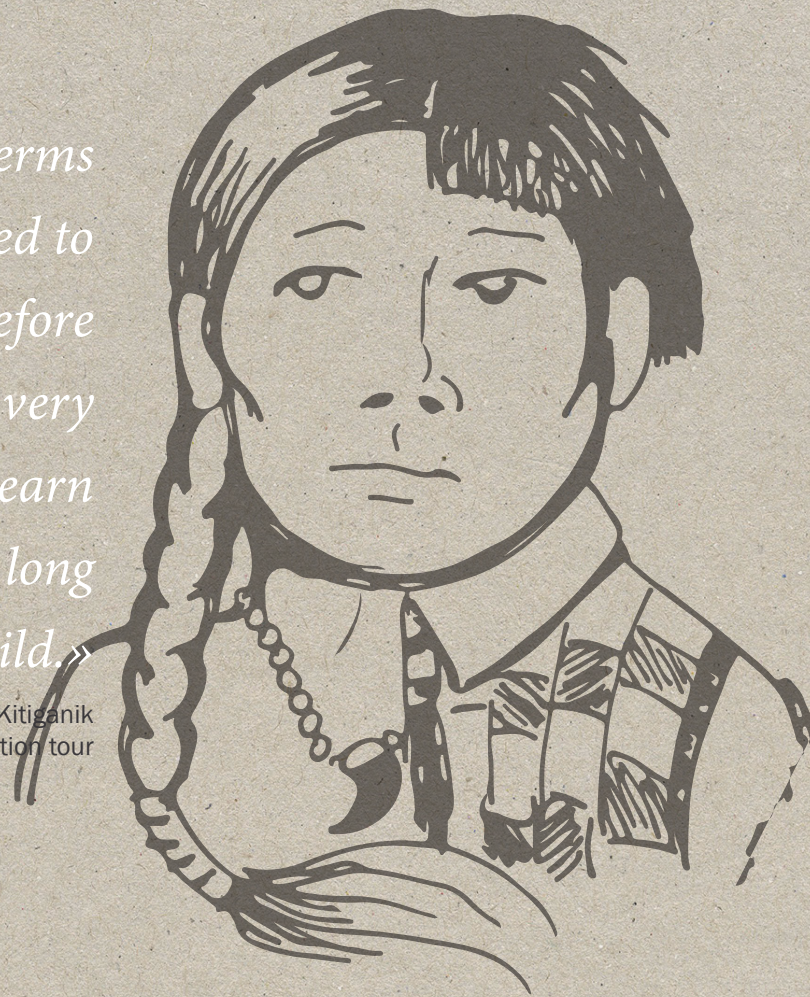
The Anicinabek are concerned about the cultural break between generations and the loss of identity, especially among adolescents and young adults.

- Indigenous music can act as a bridge to the younger generation, helping them to rediscover and engage with their culture.
- Telling the anicinabe history through artworks could help young people to understand and value their heritage.
- The living arts can help communities express their vision of the future and thus mobilise their members around common issues.

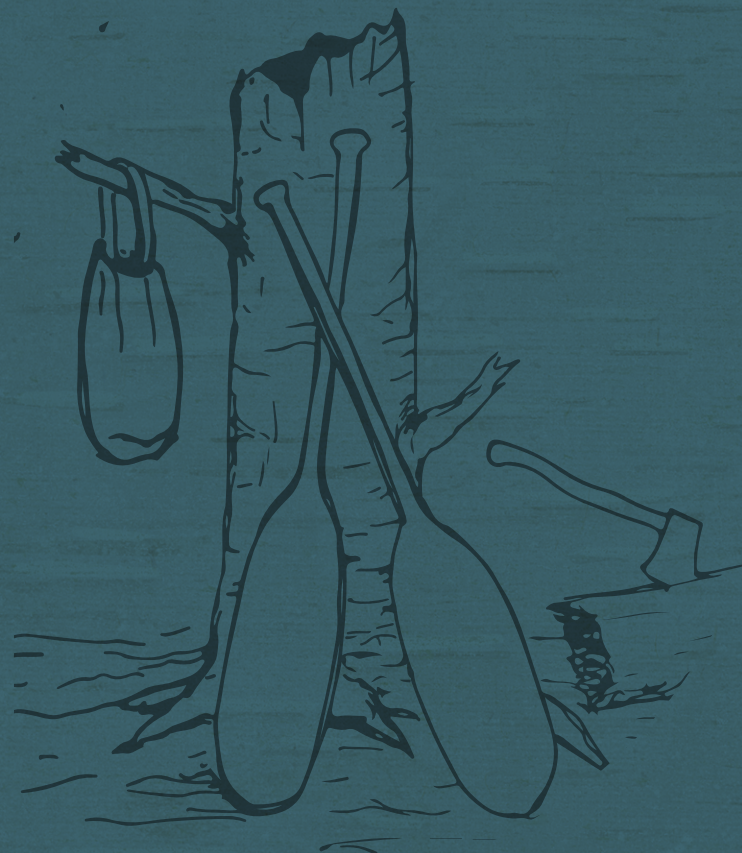


«I see a huge need here in terms of mental health. We need to address that need first before we can move forward. It is very difficult to make someone learn when they are in pain. As long as we fight that pain, we build.»

Excerpt from an interview conducted in Kitiganik (Rapid Lake) during our 2021 consultation tour



◆◆◆ KNOWING AND PREPARING THE GROUND



› Choosing a place

Communities located near an urban centre would show more interest in an event held in a neighbouring city. However, the language barrier may discourage English-speaking community members from taking part in activities offered in French-speaking locations, even if the event is offered in English or in both languages.

Members of communities that are more geographically isolated may be reluctant to travel to another location to attend a show or may see it as an opportunity to have a positive and special experience. An event held in a larger centre would be more likely to be attended, according to many.

The vast majority of respondents felt that transport should be provided or facilitated for an event held outside their community.

› Determining a time

All respondents agreed that there should be a minimum of two shows per year, one in winter and one in summer at the end of the school year. Several respondents suggested following the seasonal cycles and offering 4 to 6 shows per year. Most participants were in favour of starting small to validate their community's interest before proposing a more extensive programming.

«I think we need to build capacity so that artists respect and honour their own abilities, their own talents, and show their value in terms of what they produce and what they share with us, whether it's songs, paintings, poems, clothes, crafts or beadwork.»

Excerpt from an interview conducted in Kitigan Zibi during our 2021 consultation tour

It is crucial to be informed about events that may divert the attention of the community, such as sports tournaments, bingo or cultural week. Popular events can attract people’s attention as well as help to mobilise them.

➤ **Tips for creating a buzz**

- Present a performance at an event that has already been adopted by the community, such as a sports tournament or the annual banquet
- Raffle tickets on the radio or at the bingo
- Organize an event in a major urban centre before the holiday season and plan a shopping period
- Involve community members in different ways (create a welcoming committee, plan an activity with the elders, hire local catering, get the community to set up a camp, etc.)
- Involve students (welcome activity for artists, introductory workshop, preparation of the space, etc.)
- Integrate artists from the community (opening acts, performance for guest artists, exchange workshop, etc.)
- Listen to the community’s needs and concerns and do not hesitate to adapt the event

➤ **Setting the admission cost**

According to our respondents, a reasonable price for a show would range from \$0 to \$40. While some participants indicated \$5 as a reasonable price for a ticket to a show, others felt that this amount may make the event less attractive to members of their community.

This difference of opinion is partly explained by the financial disparity that exists between the communities, but the community culture also plays a role. While some communities choose to offer free events, other communities charge an admission fee based on the cost of the event. The former cover the bulk of the costs with a view to promoting access for their members. The latter aim to increase the cultural offer while making their members aware of the value of what is offered to them.



➤ **Promoting your event**

The Facebook platform is preferred by a majority of respondents to promote events in their community, specifically on Facebook groups adopted by their members to exchange on community affairs. This is sometimes the group run by the health centre. It is essential to ask a cultural worker or other resource person to access these groups and to include the poster and event program in these publications.

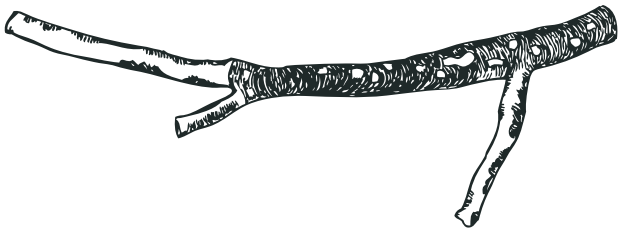
It is essential to have different promotional tools as some community members, especially the elderly, make little or no use of social networks. It is also important to bear in mind that access to the Internet is not the same in all communities.

Alternatives to social networks:

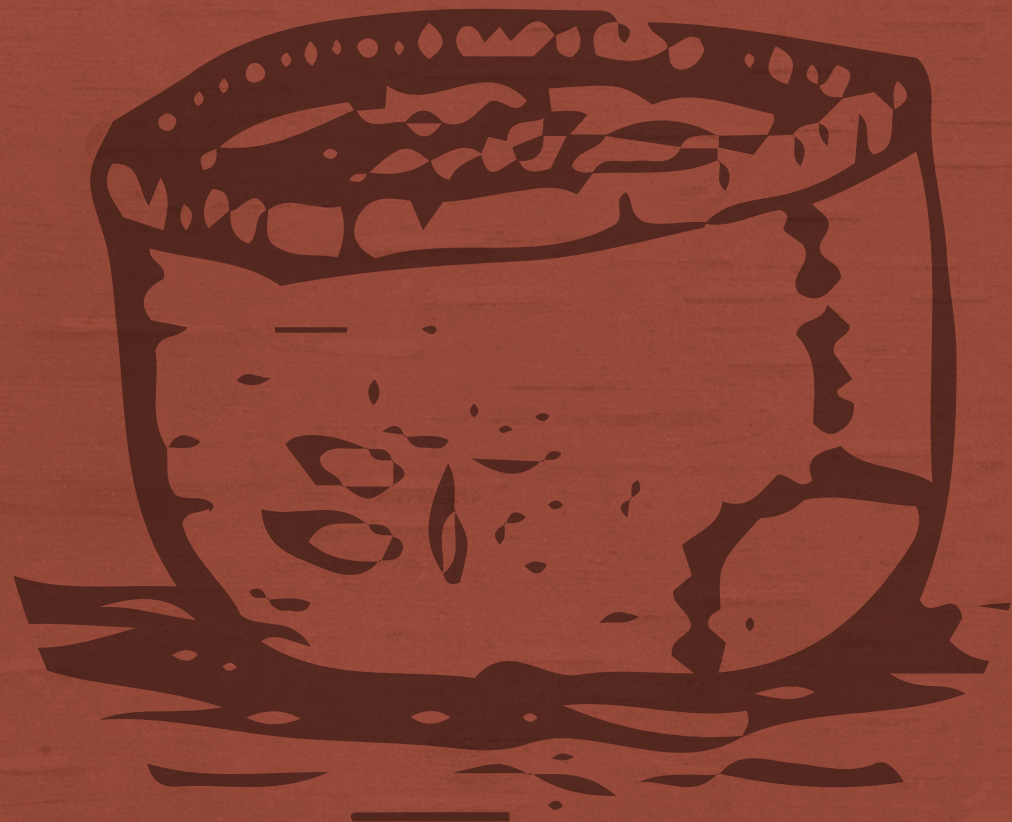
- Newsletters, distributed through post office boxes, are still very popular in Anicinabe communities. In some communities, it is possible to hire a person to distribute posters and other promotional material to every home. This is the ideal method, according to our respondents, to reach community members who do not use social networks. Some communities organise home visits, personalised phone calls and phone chains.



- Community radio stations play a central role in mobilising the Anicinabe communities. It is possible to make arrangements with them to promote the event on air.
- Word of mouth is very good in the communities! The key, according to those interviewed, is to have a project spokesperson within the community who promotes the event on a personal basis. This person can also share the event’s posts on Facebook and use their positive influence in the community to generate interest. It is often very difficult to keep communities engaged when the offer comes from outside only, especially if the content offered is something new.



◆◆◆ THE ESSENTIALS



Organizing and hosting a tour in the territory can be challenging. Here are some of the tips we have gathered from the Anicinabe cultural actors and from artists who have had experiences in the territory:

› Visiting the territory

- **Scouting:** find out about the power supply, identify a person responsible for the technical aspects, identify a contact person(s) in the community to accompany you, familiarise yourself with the road and its conditions, accessible service and refuelling points, etc.
- **Plan(s) B:** make a list of uncertainties (bad weather, power outage, etc.) with someone familiar with the reality of the host community and plan alternatives.
- **Needs:** clearly identify your needs (technical, accommodation, dietary constraints, health, language, etc.) before communicating them to the community. Ideally, identify a person in the community who can facilitate contact and organise the required labour.
- **Cultural adaptation:** learning about the customs, realities and particularities of the community before arriving can prevent some faux pas. Some producers offer pre-departure training on this subject. Above all, patience and humility are required, because mistakes are inevitable and an integral part of the encounter!

› Hosting in your community

- Form a committee of dedicated organisers;
- Make the event in your own image! Create something meaningful for the community, which respects its needs and reality (e.g. choice of date and place)
- Plan activities for different age groups (young children, teenagers, elders, etc.)
**Tip: teenagers can be put in charge of leading an activity for younger children while adults participate in a workshop.*
- Be creative in fundraising and ask for support from your community (health centre, school, radio, etc.)
- Be prepared for unforeseen circumstances (bad weather, technical breakdowns, power outage, etc.).
**Tip: Plan an alternative date in case of bad weather and inform participants at the promotion stage. For example: «In case of rain on the scheduled day, the event will be held the next day».*
- Create a welcoming and friendly environment: welcome the artists in person, indicate the means of transport and services available, offer a basic lexicon in the traditional language, provide transport for the participants, a snack and hot drinks, etc.

Nurturing the next generation of Anicinabe artists

At Minwashin, we believe that allowing young people to see and experience art is a way to develop a new generation of artists. All the people interviewed said they shared this belief. According to many, it is preferable to introduce children to different forms of art and cultural practices from preschool age through demonstrations and introductory activities. Many respondents also mentioned the positive impact that indigenous arts, including music, can have on their community's teenagers' and young adults' self-esteem and sense of identity.

«Let's have role models in these areas to show that we are talented, that we have a lot to offer, and that [art] is something that is viable for young people.»

Excerpt from an interview conducted in Kitigan Zibi during our 2021 consultation tour



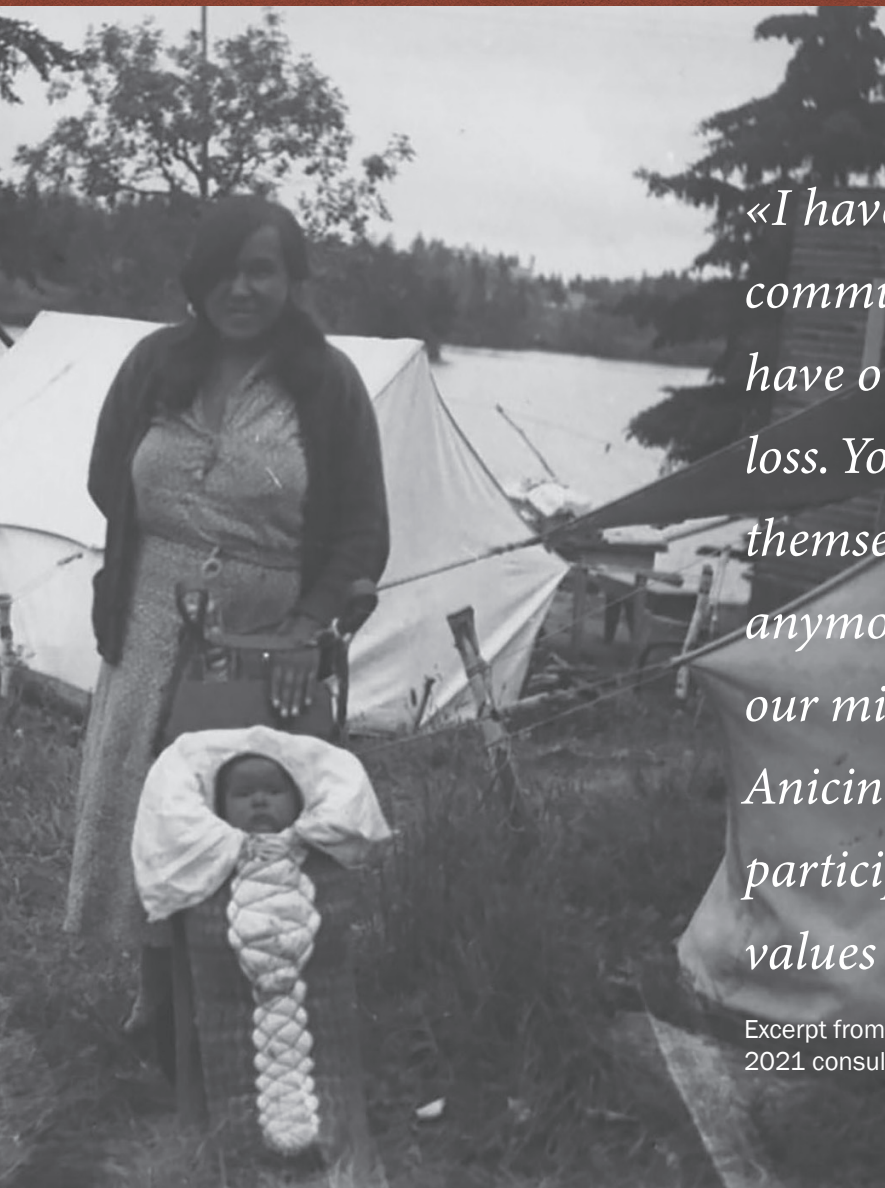
Participants at the MIAJA Anicinabe Heritage Gathering in Pikogan attend a jigging performance (September 2021)

» **How can we encourage the next generation of Anicinabe artists?**

- Integrate the performing arts into the classroom
- Make equipment (musical instruments, rehearsal rooms, etc.) accessible to young people
- Add introductory workshops to artistic performances
- Aim for short experiences with tangible results
- Let young people experiment and nurture positive attitudes
- Provide a rehearsal room for local bands and allow community members to attend rehearsals
- Provide opportunities for emerging artists from the community to perform as opening acts
- Build confidence in emerging artists by creating appropriate dissemination opportunities, primarily for and by the community
- Provide consistent, tangible presence and contact through mentors, resource organizations, curriculum and meeting places
- Listen to the interests of young people and include them in programming



Rudy Papatie as opening act for David Hart at the first edition of the Anicināpe Nigamowin Festival in Kitchisakik (October 2021)



«I have been working for my community for 25 years and I have observed a lot of identity loss. Young people don't see themselves in our identity anymore... That's what I think our mission is: to keep the Anicinabe identity. We have to participate! We have our own values and attitudes.»

Excerpt from an interview conducted in Lac Simon during our 2021 consultation tour

› Creating inspiring and safe meeting spaces



Slowing down

- Take the time to light a fire and communicate, let ideas and needs be expressed before developing common projects
- Allow growing time for the desire to meet
- Spend a few days together and experience different things

«For me, arriving a day earlier is not early, it's already late.»

Excerpt from a sharing workshop conducted virtually with the indigenous artistic milieu in March 2021

Sharing

- Provide opportunities for experiential learning
E.g., include an introductory workshop before the performance
- Allow the community to showcase its talent
E.g.: offer a performance by local artists to visiting artists
- Encourage intergenerational participation
E.g., invite the elders to share a story or to prepare a snack

Listening

- Integrate sharing circles between artists and spectators
- Make room for elders and their knowledge

Personalizing

- To enable participants from the community to get to know the artists as individuals, both before and during the event
- Ensure that the activities offered respond first and foremost to identified needs in the community

Accompanying

- Establish a clear framework for the performance and take time to explain it to the audience
E.g.: keep reactions and feedback for after the performance, turn off cell phones, avoid standing up during the performance, refrain from taking pictures, etc.
- Offer training to community cultural workers (understanding the project, welcoming, mediation)
- Mobilise schools and health centres, inform teachers

Building sustainable relations

- Developing partnerships between First Nations (directory of indigenous cultural offer, grouping of indigenous producers and presenters, facilitating organisations, etc.).
- Organise creation residencies and create together, artists and communities. Focus on the process rather than the end result.
- Exchange keys to understanding our respective environments
- Aim to create recurring events rather than one-off activities to provide more stability for artists and nurture trusting relationships
- Preserve records (photos, artworks, videos, etc.) and share them among collaborators

Create in the territory

- Create artworks in the territory that are designed to be presented outdoors and that tell the history of the land
- Use hunting camps, seasonal settlements, cultural sites
- Follow the seasons

«I think that's the most beautiful thing about a community is to use THE community as a stage.»

From a virtual sharing workshop with the indigenous artistic community in March 2021

«You have to see things from a territorial perspective. We create differently when we are in the city than when we are in the territory, because we are immersed in the environment. Digital technology is also a territory. We can create in a multi-territorial way.»

Excerpt from a virtual sharing workshop with the indigenous artistic community in March 2021



Viana Maranda supervising a group of young people during the Long Point First Nation cultural week (August 2019)

«I think if you hold the event in the forest, you have a better understanding of what is going on, because everyone is equal.»

Excerpt from an interview conducted in Kebaowek during our 2021 consultation tour

«There is a lack of indoor space in communities, but we have a great space which is the outside. We have always been outside on the land and we need to use it.»

Excerpt from an interview conducted in Pikogan during our 2021 consultation tour

Creating secure spaces

- Choose activities according to a clear value system
- Provide a space where artists can go to meet and relax
- Take care of the environment in which the artwork/performance is presented: limit distractions, create reference point
- Arrange for intervention workers to be present before, during and after the performance, and familiarise them beforehand with the content of the performance and the subjects addressed in it.



«We have to keep it honest. Above all, it has to be true. And it has to be well prepared, there have to be intervention workers involved. You have to be prepared for some people to experience emotions. The intervention aspect should be at the forefront; there should be a safety net from the start.»

Excerpt from an interview conducted in Kitcisakik during our 2021 consultation tour



› Concluding remarks

The journey ahead is complex, but there is a portage trail for every rapid. It takes commitment and patience to get there. We will face the unexpected, we will learn from our mistakes as well as our successes, and as we move forward together, lasting bonds of trust will be forged. Miaja, the time has come to get moving!

«At Minwashin, we try to do things the way our elders did. Minwashin is always on the move, from season to season. It's a circle with people getting into our canoe and portaging with us, connecting with us and adding their baggage to ours. That's how my father saw it and that's how I'm pursuing my path towards my culture and towards an art that will develop more and more. Mikwetc to all!»

Roger Wylde, Vice-president, Minwashin



«Culture, supported by the language, is a healing path. The return to the Anicinabe identity. We are beginning another marathon of repatriation and reappropriation. This marathon is a huge challenge. Ndeboèdan, I believe in this!»

Richard Kistabish, président de Minwashin

The process timeline



Virtual consultation

Sharing workshop with the Quebec artistic community

In spring 2021, we called upon the province’s indigenous creators, producers and broadcasters to learn more about their needs and realities. Since the health situation did not allow us to gather in the same physical space, we used the technologies at our disposal to bring our participants together by videoconference.

Some twenty artists and other actors in the indigenous cultural milieu took part in the exercise, as well as Anicinabe creators and culture bearers. Five observers from the Canada Council for the Arts, the Conseil des arts et lettres du Québec and Canadian Heritage joined the meeting to listen and learn from the experience of our participants.

We planned two workshops in small groups, followed by exchanges in plenary session. With the help of our moderator and facilitators, the participants first shared their experience of presenting a show by retracing the different stages of carrying out a tour in a given territory. Then we asked them about cultural mediation, gathering in the process treasures of good practices and promising ideas to experiment with.



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Excerpt from the Cahier du participant, handed out to the creators, broadcasters and observers meeting in March 2021:

Welcoming word

Ni minentananan eki nakwecitaiek kitci nakickotatiek mawisak!

We are honoured that you responded to our invitation!

We all join this sharing circle because of a passion we share for our cultures and arts. We are also coming together because we want to see our artists and cultural carriers thrive throughout Quebec, inspiring the next generation of artists and sharing our worldviews with everyone. It is vital that our arts and various means of expression have their rightful place on the stage and in people’s minds. Thank you for answering Minwashin’s call and for coming to share your experiences. Minwashin aims to bring people together, because together we are stronger and more resilient. A single branch can bend and break, but when woven with others, it can remain strong for many years. Through the arts and cultural actions, our culture and all those who carry it can be proud and flourish. That is why we are coming together, to combine our efforts and work side by side to contribute to their development. (Translation)
Roger Wylde, Vice-president, Minwashin

Field consultation

Anicinabe community consultation tour

Summer came with a relaxation of the sanitary measures that limited our access to the field. We therefore hit the road again and toured the 9 Anicinabe communities, interviewing some twenty resource persons from the Anicinabe cultural milieu.

These interviews allowed us to draw a profile of the territory’s cultural life - activities, performing spaces and resources - and to gather the communities’ ideas, experiences and wishes regarding the dissemination of the performing arts.

Concurrently, a series of technical specifications were produced for each of the communities.



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