



NIN



Stories and reflections on the exhibition

This report presents a summary of the ideas, wishes, hopes and opinions of the Minwashin team, but more importantly of all the participants in the talking circles that took place as part of the Nin exhibition. We acknowledge their essential contribution to the production of this document and thank them warmly.

The people who took part in the talking circles agreed to have their comments recorded and broadcast in written, audio or video form. A few refused to have their comments recorded; their comments are not transcribed in this report.

The quotes are followed by their author's name and the name of the community where they took part in a talking circle, usually their home community. For the Minwashin team members, the name of the community indicates the place where the talking circle took place, not their home community. Their name is followed by «- Minwashin -».

Brackets and suspension points (...) indicate that a quotation has been partially cut. Square brackets [] indicate a clarification added to a quote.

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GLOSSARY

Anicinabemo8in/Anicinabemowin: Anicinabe language

Anicinabe Aki: traditional territory occupied by the Anicinabek

Culture bearers: people who have guided groups on their visit to the exhibition, and who have knowledge of the Anicinabe language and culture.

Anishinape / Ancinabe / Anicinape / Anishinaabe: a person of the Anishinabe nation. Also used as an adjective. Anicinabek8e or Anicinabekwe is the feminine form. Anicinabek is the plural form.

Te8ekan: large traditional drum grand tambour traditionnel

Tikinagan: baby carrier made of wood, leather, bark and fabric

UNESCO: United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization

As vocabulary and spelling vary from one community to another, words may be spelled differently in this report. This choice reflects our respect for the diversity and richness of anicinabemo8in.

The standards of anicinabemo8in have been respected as far as possible when writing this report. For example, the word «anicinabe» is not used in the feminine or plural form.

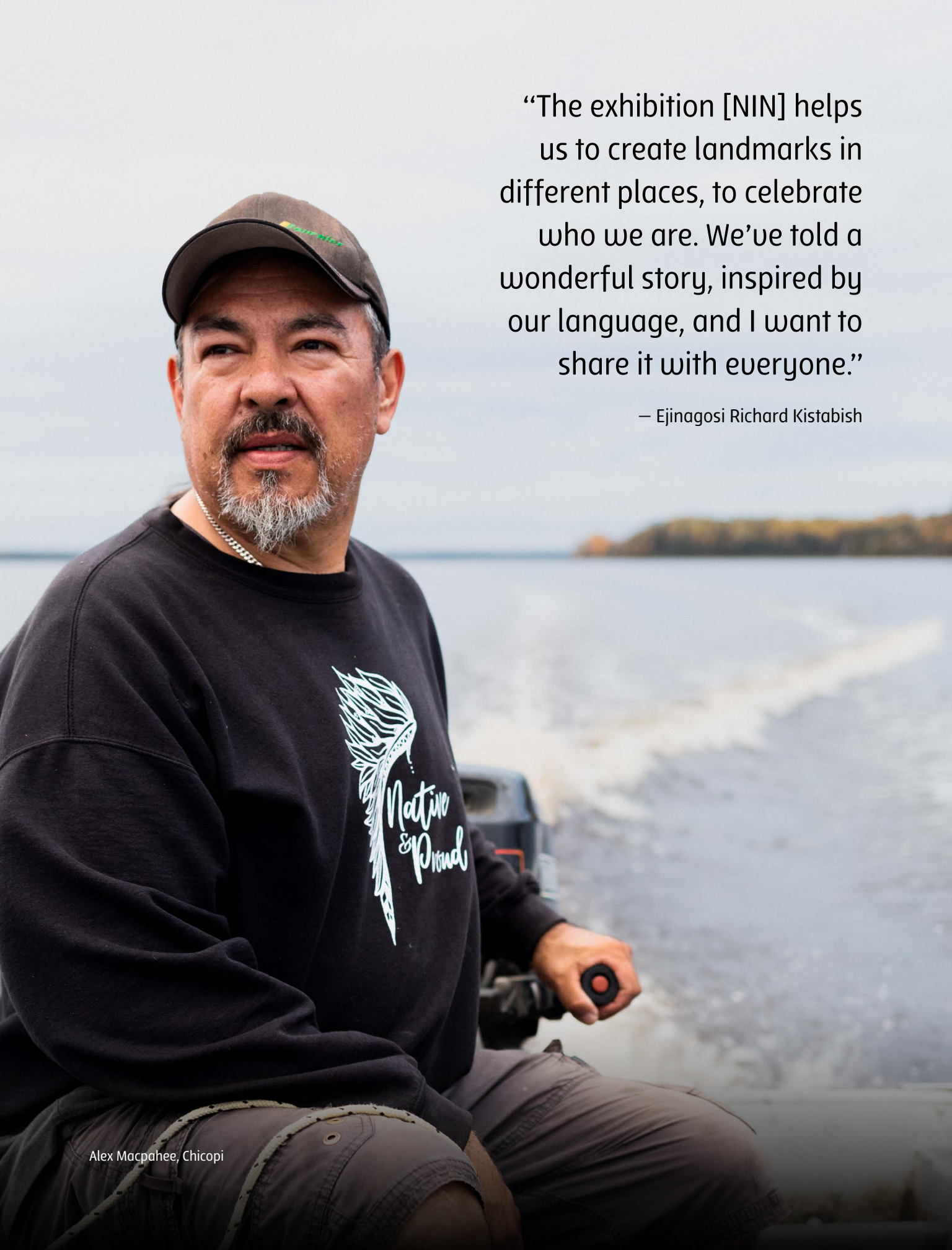
“Kipic kowatc mitik, kakina abidjihagani.
Mitokokan e minigowin kegon, kegin ki
mina kegon migwetc kidji inendamiwin.
Tcimankewin kakina kiga mikan pecotc
wakahi : wigwas, odibi, mackikwatik
pigiwo, kickadik, anitimik... kakina tagon.
Kicpin ickwa abidjitowin kakina kigiwe
pagidinan kagi odapinamin.”

– Karl Cheurier



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“The exhibition [NIN] helps us to create landmarks in different places, to celebrate who we are. We’ve told a wonderful story, inspired by our language, and I want to share it with everyone.”

— Ejinagosi Richard Kistabish



Text based on an interview with
Ejinagosi Richard Kistabish in April 2023



A landmark

I remember my parents' discussions, our thinkers' speeches. What they said revealed who they were, their way of being, their philosophy, their identity. Anicinabemo8in is much more than a language. It's our identity. It's deeply rooted in us.

With the NIN exhibition, we wanted to make our 10,000-year-old language visible. We wanted not only to highlight its words, but also its sound and musicality. We also wanted to assert and express our linguistic right to speak and protect our language. This right belongs to us, because we've been on this land since the very beginning, and because we're human beings.

We've been excluded and ignored. To heal and move forward, we need to ask ourselves: what is the opposite of what we've experienced? That opposite is the memory of our ancestors. The memory of who we were and who we are. This is what we must honor, this is what we must return to. We need to rediscover the same meaning that our ancestors knew. It's not easy: I myself have difficulty remembering the memory of my ancestors, because people have always put obstacles in my way. I have not been allowed to express the memory of my ancestors clearly and freely. But we have to pick up what we can pick up, acquire what we can keep and take this baggage of our ancestors' memory to start mending certain things. We must recognize, accept and share the responsibilities, duties and obligations involved in this process. We can't do it alone. We'll absolutely need the help and resources we should have, but don't have right now.

NIN has taken this form. The exhibition helps us to create landmarks in different places, to celebrate who we are. We've told a wonderful story, inspired by our language, and I want to share it with everyone.

The idea of producing an exhibition on our language, which is oral, seemed far-fetched at first. Then I remembered the outboard motor. I'll always remember the first time our people discovered the outboard motor. I remember it like it was yesterday. The Anicinabek called it just a piece of iron. It's a piece of iron that helps us row faster. It's absolutely extraordinary: this little two-stroke engine doesn't just pull one boat or canoe, it can pull fifteen, even twenty canoes. Our ancestors had fun with this engine, they played with it and laughed.

It will be the same with the revitalization of anicinabemo8in. We'll be using new technologies to talk about the beauty of our language and tell our stories. They will become indispensable if we are to fully assume our share of responsibility and obligations for the protection and vitality of anicinabemo8in. New technologies are like an outboard motor. Supported by these technologies, NIN is a boat that will take us far, far away.

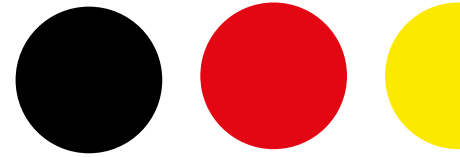
Ejinagosi Richard Kistabish
President of Minwashin



“We can, we must [display anicinabemowin]. It’s no longer debatable, or even questionable. (...) It’s our right to be able to express ourselves in our languages, to allow their transmission. We’re really the last generation to have access to first-language speakers, and we need to take advantage of every possible platform to express ourselves as Anicinabek. Our language is our true voice.”

— Nancy Wiscutie-Crépeau - Minwashin - interview

NIN development process



The NIN exhibition was developed following consultations with the Anicinabe communities in 2019. Nearly 300 people had taken part in a MIAJA gathering in Kebaowek, and many recommendations had been made, including the need for an exhibit that would, in the words of Ejinagosi Richard Kistabish, President of Minwashin, «stir the desire to revitalize the Anicinabe language». Artists, art directors, cultural bearers and Elders contributed to the development of content, performances and audiovisual material. The exhibition content was developed in Anicinabemo8in, French and English. The whole content was initially displayed in Anicinabemo8in, reflecting an intention to highlight and give priority to this language.

An integral part of the exhibition was the presence of cultural bearers, most of them Elders. Their role was to guide school groups and present the exhibition's content, relating it to their own experiences.

According to Ejinagosi, one question was at the heart of NIN's development process: how do you create an exhibition about a language that is more oral than written?


That's why we've created this exhibition, to stimulate the desire to revitalize the language. It can help us witness the return of our language to our communities. NIN is a tool for accessing the language.

— Ejinagosi Richard Kistabish - Minwashin in Long Point First Nation

A talking circle was organized in each community where NIN traveled. A total of nine sharing activities took place, bringing together members of the Minwashin team, cultural bearers and those responsible for guiding groups of visitors, and members of local communities. The following pages summarize these sharing circles.

NIN was first presented at the UNESCO office in Paris, then in various Anicinabe communities and Quebec towns.

Town or community	Number of visitors
Paris	425
Kitcisakik	250
Senneterre	250
Pikogan	200
Timiskaming First Nation	70
Ville-Marie	2000
Long Point First Nation	150
Kitiganik	120
Kitigan Zibi	100
Kebaowek/Wolf Lake	250
Val-d'Or	320
Amos	1187
Total	5322



“An exhibition like this is stimulating for us. It gives us the strength to work harder to pass on the language, with those who want to learn. I’ve been hearing some great messages since this morning. It encourages me to keep moving forward”

— Tom Mapachee, Pikogan



Talking Circles

WHAT WE MISS WITH WRITING

During the talking circles, in addition to providing feedback on the NIN exhibition, participants shared their views, fears and hopes for the Anicinabe language and culture. Many people expressed gratitude or felt honored to be able to take part in the discussions. Others were happy to contribute to the success of the exhibition, including those who acted as cultural bearers. Others wanted to participate in talking circles because their language and culture are important to them. Still others needed to speak, and specifically to speak anicinabemo8in. What was said in the circles provided a snapshot of the current and future situation of the Anicinabe language in the various communities, as well as rich information in the feedback on NIN.

The silences, the tears, the laughter: most of these elements disappear with the writing of a black-on-white text. The talking circles that took place as part of the NIN exhibition were full of strong, diverse emotions. Each person gave a little of themselves, sharing their experiences, ideas and wishes. Each circle took place in a unique place, time and atmosphere. The following pages present a summary according to the main themes that emerged.

This summary report inevitably conceals the uniqueness of the people who took part in the circles. To limit this effect, several quotations have been included in the following pages. In order to give each person their rightful say, where possible and with the necessary authorizations, these quotes are accompanied by a first name and the name of the community where the sharing circles took place.

FEEDBACK ON THE EXHIBITION

NIN received a very warm welcome in the vast majority of places where it traveled. Many thanks were given to Minwashin for their work on this exhibition. It responds to the Anicinabe people's need to hear about themselves, to be represented in a way that allows them to recognize themselves, to meet and exchange with each other. NIN has been described as empowering, contributing to a sense of pride, motivating in terms of language and culture learning.

The graphic design and layout of NIN were based on research into the visual arts, colors and symbols of the Anicinabek and concepts central to their culture, of which balance is one example. This contributed to a sense of well-being for visitors and cultural bearers alike: they recognized themselves in the exhibition. This is what Minwashin was aiming for, rather than mere aesthetics.

What I noticed, what I experienced when I entered, was the door that welcomed you, it was welcoming. I felt welcomed. As you move forward, you notice all the shapes, and in the end, it's like being born. It's "here" (points to her abdomen), and in your heart. It's your heart that explains how. You're all surrounded... It's the birth of a baby, it's the fetus. That's what I noticed: the territory is big and it's all ours.

— Alice Jérôme, Pikogan

The fact that the Anicinabe language is the first to appear on the signs is noticed and positively commented on by many. People report that hearing their language has a healing effect on them. The opportunity to speak and hear Anicinabemo8in during the exhibition or talking circles was also highly appreciated. For many visitors, the exhibition was their first opportunity to see their language in written form. The talking circles were, for some, a rare and precious opportunity to speak anicinabemo8in.

I listen; the Anishinape doesn't have to look at you, he listens. (...) Why do I say that, it's still useful, the language, it's useful. Sometimes I cry because I don't often hear Anishinabe spoken. I'm very happy with what we're doing today. (...)

— Norman Kistabish, Pikogan

The decision to use anicinabemo8in was a conscious choice on Minwashin's part.

We really need to raise public awareness of the fact that the language must be used everywhere, not just at school, but in all our lives. I think that everyone has something to contribute to this great social project: the speakers, the knowledge bearers, and also those who position themselves as defenders of the language.

— Nancy Wiscutie-Crépeau – Minwashin - interview

Although some of NIN's content highlights past and recent traumas and injustices towards the Anicinabe people, when visitors left the exhibition they weren't upset, but filled with positive emotions. The exhibition ended with a contact with the Te8ekan, the drum. The drum transmits positive energy and good vibrations. The children particularly enjoyed the Te8ekan.

NIN used innovative and relevant technologies, particularly sound recordings, which moved visitors and brought back old memories. Ambient sounds at the exhibition entrance and recordings that could be listened to through headphones created sound spaces to which visitors were taken.

During the exhibition, with the headphones on, there was a man talking. I was listening to him last night, and I could hear his message, which reminded me of my time as a young girl. When people gathered, they'd lie on the grass, or whatever, and they visited each other. It was mild weather, no rush. We were attentive to each other, and then language became music to our ears, because it makes us humble and sincere. These are my childhood memories: I used to listen to my ancestors talk, and although there were hard times, there were also happy times. I've always carried that in my heart. I remember my mother, my grandfather and my great-grandfather and the battles they had to fight. They started it and we have to keep it going, always moving forward in a positive way. Even when we have sad thoughts, like thinking our voice is worthless. Our voice is full of meaning. I'm grateful to be able to express and share it today.

— Noella Robinson, Kebaowek

NIN is motivating, encouraging, a tool for transmitting knowledge, culture and language. People testify to the impact of the exhibition on children and young people: it arouses their curiosity, they want to learn words and are amazed and proud.

I'm slowly seeing how we can recover our language. We want people to come and, like here, arrive in a beautiful setting that encourages children to learn. Seeing their eyes shine when they see their language written for the first time, and then seeing them write on the blackboard too, it's wonderful. It'll happen slowly, you can't always rush things.

— Lloyd Paul, Kebaowek

The teachers expressed their appreciation of the exhibition and its educational value. They testified to the interest of the children, who were absorbed during their visit and motivated to discover more about the Anicinabe language and culture. A pedagogical guide has been developed to facilitate the appropriation of NIN's content in the classroom.

Finally, the exhibition travelled over a vast territory, highlighting the family ties that span across the territory. The interactive maps on which visitors could leave their traces enabled them to describe their knowledge of anicinabe aki and the distribution of their family members across it. More than just an exhibition to present information to visitors, NIN served as a kind of tool for building a knowledge bank.

The exhibition was also visited by non-indigenous people. Some of them took part in the talking circles and expressed their appreciation for the quality and interest that NIN arouses in them. Many were interested in the Anicinabe culture and language, and in Indigenous peoples in general. Sometimes these people asked many questions, or made incongruous connections between their knowledge of these peoples and the content of the exhibition, showing nonetheless a great thirst for learning. In some cases, they wanted to be better equipped to collaborate with Indigenous organizations or ensure positive cohabitation with an urban Indigenous population. Others felt insecure about how to behave and interact with Indigenous people. Some interactions with the non-indigenous public were less positive. Some people contradicted the exhibition team's information about the Anicinabek, claiming, for example, that it's impossible for Anicinabemo8in to have been spoken for 10,000 years on anicinabe aki. However, the reactions of the non-indigenous public, particularly school groups, were generally marked by curiosity.

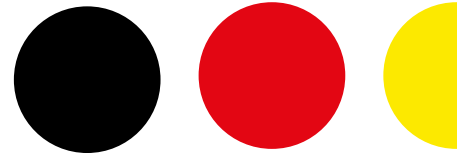
“When I walked in here the first day, I felt so good, with the birds hanging from the ceiling. And when I took the headphones with my partner, I could follow along with the images, I knew what it was about, the tikinagan, I loved it. Then there was the drummer, he explained it so well, it was so interesting. I really enjoyed it, thank you for stopping by.”

— Sylvia Mathias, Long Point First Nation





Sharing and discussion in the talking circles



IMPORTANCE OF THE LANGUAGE

Language is very important: it is intimately linked to the Anicinabe identity. It contains the philosophies, concepts, skills and knowledge of the people. It is important to protect it and pass it on.

**In French, it's fast, fast, fast,
always fast in French. The anicinabe
language, that's the real meaning**

— Emily Mowatt, Pikogan

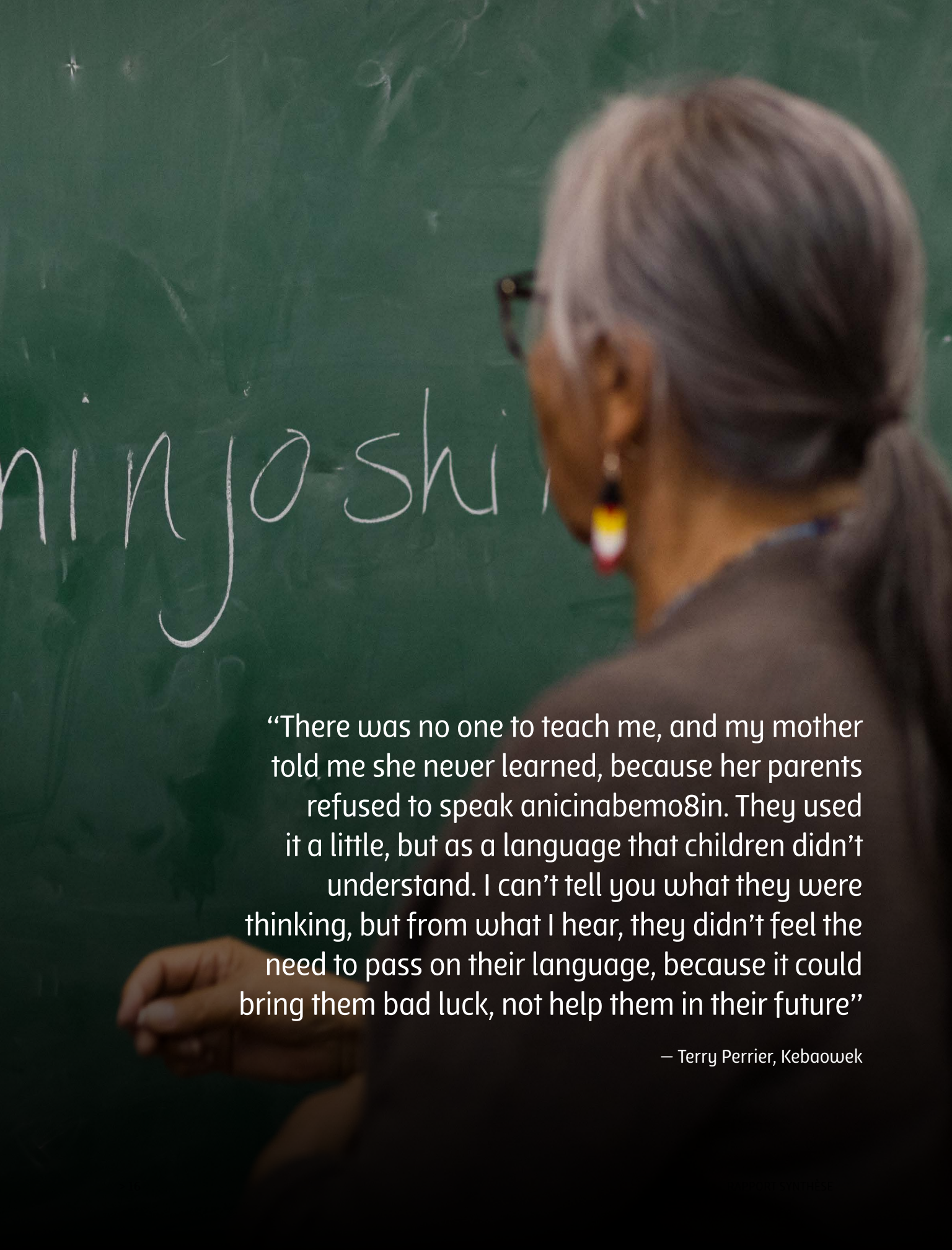
**We have to show that we're still alive, that our
language is still alive.**

— Norman Kistabish, Pikogan

**It's our mother tongue, if we lose it, it's our
values, our culture, the respect we've been taught
(anicinabe)... Don't abuse anyone, be happy**

— Linda Polson, Long Point First Nation

Despite all the importance many Anicinabek attach to their language, a variety of factors explain why Anicinabemo8in is currently in decline; colonial policies are at the heart of the problem.

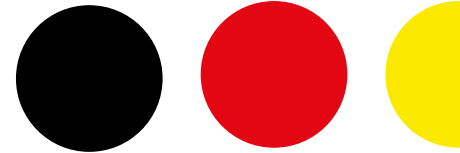


ningjoshu

“There was no one to teach me, and my mother told me she never learned, because her parents refused to speak anicinabemo8in. They used it a little, but as a language that children didn’t understand. I can’t tell you what they were thinking, but from what I hear, they didn’t feel the need to pass on their language, because it could bring them bad luck, not help them in their future”

— Terry Perrier, Kebaowek

Impacts of the colonial policies



The government has done a really good job of assimilating us.

—Rose Jawbone, Kebaowek

A variety of colonial measures profoundly affected the Anicinabe language and culture. In particular, their way of life was affected by forced sedentarization and the creation of reserves. Opportunities to speak and transmit the language were reduced by prohibitions on the practice of their rituals, songs, dances and ceremonies. The impact of residential schools on anicinabemo8in is obvious: not only have generations lost part or all of their language because they were forbidden to speak it, but these institutions also convinced some residents, when they became parents and grandparents, that their language should not be taught to their children, that speaking it would not be an advantage and would even be a disadvantage for them.

This internalization of the idea of the inferiority and uselessness of the Anicinabe language and culture, which continued in the school system after the closure of the residential schools and in Quebec society in general, continues to discourage today's Anicinabek from reappropriating and revitalizing it. The placement of Anicinabe children in non-Indigenous foster families also contributes to a break with language and culture. The ban on speaking Anicinabemo8in did not only occur in residential schools, but also in today's schools and other environments, and according to some people, it still occurs today.

PERSONAL STORIES AND COMMUNITY ISSUES

Family and community problems, such as alcohol abuse, were identified by various people as a barrier to the transmission of language and culture. Participants also testified to their difficult life experiences, such as being placed in foster care (particularly during the Sixties Scoop), experiencing traumas that led to drug and alcohol abuse, which for some people made it difficult or impossible to appropriate their language and culture. These experiences, which result from intergenerational trauma, partly explain why it can be difficult to mobilize or interest Anicinabe community members to participate in activities or to engage in learning their language and culture.

RUPTURES WITH LANGUAGE: LANGUAGE BARRIERS AND DIFFICULT EXPERIENCES

Not mastering Anicinabemo8in can create a barrier between family members, especially with older people who only speak this language. In some families, it was not taught to the children: either it was not spoken, or it was used to prevent children from understanding or when they were absent. Growing up in the city and outside a community is another factor that has made learning anicinabemo8in difficult or impossible. This barrier has meant that in some families, the younger generations don't really get to know the older ones, they don't access their culture, they don't participate in cultural activities as much as they'd like to.

What I've heard today is very moving, and I can see that in all the communities I've visited, we realize the extent to which language not only needs to be reappropriated, but is also linked to our relationship with family members.

— Pascale Cananasso-Trudeau, Pikogan

My grandfather didn't speak French, he spoke English. I didn't speak English or Anicinabemowin. There was no common language between us. My father and I spoke French, and so did my mother. With my grandfather it was English, but with my mother and grandfather it was Anicinabemowin. We managed to understand each other. As an Anicinabekwe, I was taught French in a French school system, and I've been in that bubble all my life. I never realized how much language is the link between generations. I didn't realize that I didn't necessarily talk to my grandfather all my life. We never had a simple conversation. You don't get to know your grandparents, to develop an attachment bond. It wasn't that long ago that I realized this rupture in my life, I knew it, but I thought it was normal, because in the normal state of things, in Quebec we speak French.

— Nancy Wiscutie-Crépeau – Minwashin – in Pikogan

Linguistic differences between communities bring their own set of complexities. Some use French as a second language, while others use English. In communities with few anicinabemowin speakers, these languages are spoken by the majority. This can create a significant communication barrier between «French» and «English» communities, although many Anicinabek are bilingual (English and French) or trilingual (Anicinabemowin, English and French). Moreover, the burden of learning English and French in addition to Anicinabemowin is very demanding for children.

We need to draw inspiration from our societies. (...) Our ancestors interacted with their neighbors in other languages than the official ones [French and English], in Atikamekw, Innu and so on. People spoke to each other, but [in] their own dialect. There was the whole question of mutual understanding. That's really important in the work we're doing together today. We mustn't limit ourselves. Just because I don't speak English doesn't mean I can't understand the other person, doesn't mean I can't make the effort

— Nancy Wiscutie-Crépeau – Minwashin – interview

Many people mentioned that they or people they know feel embarrassed about speaking anicinabemowin. Sometimes they are mocked for speaking it, or for speaking it with an accent or awkwardly. This discourages them from learning. Some young people say they don't want to speak anicinabemowin because they don't want to suffer any more.

I see a lot of embarrassment, and I don't know why. I tell them to come into the circle, that they can speak their language, that it's inside them! They say no, that they don't want to try, out of shyness.

— Wanda Crépeau-Etapp – Minwashin – in Kebaowek.





ka iji odziwiik, kida ijigewinan, ka inabidamiwiik aki tedago ki meckodjisenon. Kid anicinabe kikinohagewinan ka pagidinamowabik ki nidjanicininanak kipakise, anic kidi ijigewinan, kid anicinabe ijtawinan acitc ki tebwetamiwinan kiginedamagoman (kid ayanike pimadizidjik) kitci anicinabek (kokominanik ki mocominananiik). Kakina dac kigackitoman kidji madjitowik kagi nigadimagowik kidji kinendamik kidji tabibendamik. "Kokom te nogom kidji widokagowik adi kid ayanike pimadizidjik kabi todamawac. Kidi te na wabinak? Nogom dac kagwedjimadan kegona kidji nisitamik adi ka odji inenidamawac kidji ocki ojitawac ke inabidjitawac kid ayanike pimadizidjik".²

JE SUIS ANCESTRAL

« Ce que j'apprécie vraiment de ma culture, lorsque j'y travaille, c'est qu'elle permet d'apprécier l'intelligence de mes ancêtres. »
- Pinock Smith

Notre existence sur le continent remonte à des milliers d'années avant l'arrivée des Européens. Notre mode de vie et notre langue sont bien enracinés dans le territoire : « La culture fait référence à toutes nos pratiques de faire, quelles qu'elles soient. Nos ancêtres savaient comment faire et quand ils ne savaient pas, ils inventaient »¹. Depuis la colonisation, notre mode de vie a basculé. Nos rituels, nos droits, nos pratiques, notre économie, notre langue, notre vision du monde ont subi de profondes transformations. La transmission de nos savoirs ancestraux d'une génération à l'autre a été interrompue. Nos langues, notre culture et notre spiritualité ont été préservées par nos Aînés. Ensemble, nous devons préserver cette mémoire et nous réapproprier cet héritage : « Kokom est là pour nous aider à comprendre comment nos ancêtres inventaient... »

LE IKIDOMAGAK KIKINOHAMAGEWINAN TAGOK KA WAWIHK KAK?

wauijok tabodjimogon adi e jji momauw sigokosek ka disouinan pepejik anicnobe (wuiyau, omidandengon, e kaminziwuk ki samikomn, kono kodigiuok, ka pecouamauk acit i nabickogouk kid auanike pimatsidjik. Kakina doc e taciuik ki iuzozimin kidji mamidimenimauk kodigiuok ka uidi kidzomauk kidji keuma kidji kakca mino jigobuijout.

idandengon kidji kackitoun kidji kikinhomazuin, kidji nishamuisin, kidji midinendamiuin, kidji kijigobidamin kidji nicramin. Acit ki midandengon ka jji ditzouin kakina ke samickimin ka odji nikomouin acit: ke bi ijiqogauin.

ijuzouin ki uiluyau uin uedi, e jji mino modzirain acit ijinogauin. Adi kegin e jji ijinabe panimo kida mino todadzo, niseit, modjibuwok, onerimot, uisimot, mididitoun. Aki doc, e jji minuwoc kegin doc minuwoc, kegin doc minuwoc kin est bon pour toi, et ce qui est bon pour toi est toujours pour la Terre.

je manidoun, a tebutamouuin uedi uin manidok, kin pidjiui, kida tebutamouuin odjidbe ka jji tebutendamiuk kidji kijenidamouin. uedamouin inakonigouin mino modzouin odi. Ka ijiqokauk ogamouinan, ka tabine kipuzouik, kidji manidigok kakina modzouin, kida ayanké natcomanek acit enigokaukimigok (kijji).

e inimidjiuin, oue uin ki odeh kak acit, odi e inimidjiuin kidji odopinin ki jji ijinidjiuin. Mic oue ke uidiuigouin kin tabine, kodigiuok momauw ke ki. Acit iji nuzadamin ka jji inabidamin, ka jji inendamin, acit panimo kidji abidamin acit kidji minabidamin ki odeh kak ka otek acit kid otitacogak.

e endazindegan acit e ikidomagan e ijinogonizouik, inendamin, inimidjiuin, acit montouina kamin peijon ijinogonon auiejok acit ijiue- ijinouin.

kakina kin kak mackiuiak ka wauijok... jji odopinan ka kackiubikinan matjokoumakon (kin ka sagitan kono gat ke ijinamin).

ijigibidan ka mazindok ima ka kackiubikik
- Adi e inimidjiuin?
- Adi inimidjiuin (ki uigom kak, inimidamiuin, kanige inetimouin?)
ton ka kackiubikik macki uiuiejok kak kin ka sagitoun enandadek.

gilt kakina kiciku otamouak ka kikagobikim, adi e ijinogok tabiskotc pitendagouin ki nigotouan? Touegon na kamin tabiskotc optinidagouin? adinak kidji miho kidji ijinogok.

QUE SIGNIFIENT LES ENSEIGNEMENTS QUI SE TROUVENT DANS LE CERCLE?

Le cercle symbolise le lien entre les différentes formes de vie qui existent en ce monde. Il englobe les aspects de la vie de chaque être humain (physique, mental, émotionnel, spirituel). Chacune de nos actions a un effet sur nous-mêmes, les autres personnes de notre entourage et les prochaines générations. Nous avons tous la responsabilité de considérer les autres personnes autour de nous afin de leur laisser la place qui leur revient.

L'aspect mental (esprit) est en lien avec la capacité à apprendre, à comprendre, à réfléchir, à analyser etc. Il concerne aussi le savoir psychologique, etc. Il est tout ce qui se trouve dans l'esprit et qui influence les décisions et les actions.

L'aspect physique (santé) concerne ton corps, son état de santé et ses particularités. La façon dont tu prends soin de ton corps aura un impact sur ton bien-être. Pour bien vivre, nourrir, de boire et de se sentir en sécurité. Cet aspect concerne aussi l'environnement physique, le territoire et la manière dont tu interagis avec lui. Ainsi, ce qui est bon pour est bon pour toi, et ce qui est bon pour toi est toujours pour la Terre.

L'aspect spirituel (âme) : c'est la relation avec le monde des esprits, ton monde intérieur, les rêves, les croyances, les valeurs et la créativité. Dans la spiritualité se trouvent nos valeurs morales et notre véritable code d'éthique. Les cérémonies, les rituels et le sacré d'honorer toutes les créatures vivantes, nos ancêtres et le Cosmos.

L'aspect émotionnel (cœur) : c'est la connexion directe avec ton cœur et l'accueil des émotions que tu ressens. C'est cette relation avec toi-même, avec les autres et avec la Terre. Il concerne ton engagement envers les autres, les intentions et la réalisation de rêves des occasions pour visualiser et accomplir ce que tu veux dans ton cœur et dans ton être.

Les couleurs et les significations liées aux aspects physique, mental, émotionnel et spirituel peuvent varier selon les individus et les nations.

À partir de la roue de médecine derrière toi... Choisis un cube selon tes préférences ou au hasard. A l'aide d'un ou des matsi-mogéti qui se trouvent sur le cube.

Quel est ton état d'esprit? Comment te sens-tu (physiquement, mentalement, émotionnellement ou spirituellement)? Place le cube sur la roue selon la couleur qui te parle le plus.

Après que chacun ait placé son cube, à quoi ressemble l'équilibre du groupe? La roue est-elle déséquilibrée? Ensemble trouvez une façon de rétablir cet équilibre.

WHAT DO THE TEACHINGS IN THE CIRCLE MEAN?

The circle symbolizes the link between the various forms of life that exist in this world. It encompasses the aspects of each human being's life (physical, mental, emotional, spiritual). All of our actions influence us, others around us and future generations. We each have the responsibility to consider the others around us, to establish an egalitarian space where everyone has their place.

The mental aspect (mind) is related to your ability to learn, understand, reflect, analyze, etc. It also refers to your psychological health, which in turn is connected to all the other components of your life and influences your decisions and actions.

The physical aspect (health) concerns your body, its state of health and its particularities. How you take care of your body will have an impact on your well-being. The eating, drinking and feeling safe. This aspect is also related to the physical environment, the territory and how you interact with it. Therefore, what's good for you is good for you, and what's good for you is always good for the Earth.

The spiritual aspect (soul) is the relationship with the spirit world, your inner world, your dreams, beliefs, values and creativity. Within spirituality lies our moral values and our true code of ethics. Ceremonies, rituals and the sacred are dimensions that remind us of our personal responsibilities, such as honoring all living creatures, our ancestors and the universe.

The emotional aspect (heart) is the direct connection with your heart and the acceptance of the emotions you feel. It's this relationship with yourself, with others and with the Earth. It's about your commitment to your dreams, your intentions and the need to create opportunities to visualize and accomplish what's in your heart and soul.

The colours and meanings related to physical, mental, emotional and spiritual aspects may vary among individuals and nations.

From the medicine wheel located behind you. Select a cube according to your preference or choose one at random. Using the words/pictures on the cube.

What is your state of mind? How do you feel (physically, mentally, emotionally or spiritually)? Place the cube on the wheel according to the color that relates to you. Once everyone has placed their cube, what does the group's equilibrium look like? Is the wheel out of balance? Together, find a way to restore this balance.

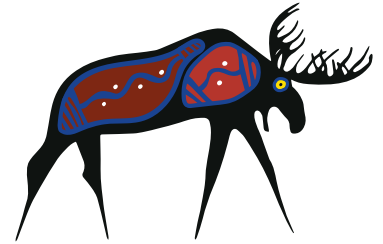


“The revival I’m experiencing today with this exhibition, I compare it to the rebirth, the return to my roots in the 80s.”

— Norman Kistabish, Pikogan



Grieving, healing and cultural revival



The decline of the Anicinabe language is alarming, and it saddens the Anicinabe people. Nevertheless, it seems important to take stock of this decline and to grieve. It may not be possible to restore all that has been lost. This painful stage will allow us to move on to healing and cultural revival. It is both necessary and possible to preserve anicinabemo8in and breathe into it a new vitality adapted to today's Anicinabe way of life.

Many Anicinabek are optimistic: they believe that there are young people today, especially young parents, who want to relearn the language and teach it to their children. There is a thirst for knowledge about the anicinabe language, history and culture:

What surprised me was that some kids at the Val-d'Or elementary school were singing a song in Anicinabe. Even a Val-d'Or mechanic answered me in Anicinabe, saying he loved our language

— Marie-Anne Cheezo - Lac-Simon

Certain individuals expressed their determination to teach and pass on their culture and language:

I'm teaching this to my granddaughter, who will soon be three years old. I have the honor of showing her a few simple words, then songs that I'm learning. She plays the drum and sings, and she attended her first full moon ceremony with us yesterday. That's what I want to do with her and the others. It's hard to get people to come, to participate, but I'm not going to give up even if I only have two people coming.

— Verna Polson, Kebaowek

Their optimism is heightened when they visit the NIN exhibition:

I've been observing the students who have come here over the last few days, and the look of wonder on their faces, their questions, it's very gratifying for me, because I feel the progress that's being made, from my own youth. In my younger years, we were told that we were worthless, so we felt that way for a long time. Today, for most of us who attended residential schools, we recognize our value, we are truly precious (...) we were programmed to believe that our words were worthless.

— Noella Robinson, Kebaowek

The exhibition itself and the communities' active participation in it are seen as encouraging.

We've heard a lot of things, a lot of sharing. Let me ask you something. Everyone here. I often hear people say, "We're losing the language." Can we stop saying that? If you say "we're losing the language", it's because we're going down that road, but can we say: "we're going to revive it, we're going to keep it alive"? I find that a little negative. Can we stop saying "we're losing the language"? We're not losing it, just look at what you're saying today.

— Frances Mowatt, Pikogan

If the difficult experiences faced by the Anicinabe communities affect the interest and ability to protect and transmit their language and culture, conversely, returning to them has helped many people to heal and live a good life, to be happy.

It's a bit like a band-aid, because we don't have our language, and we'd like to know if anyone has an idea of the right way to promote the language, because that's the method that will restore our strength as an Indigenous community.

—Rose Jawbone, Kebaowek

For many people, reconnecting with their language, culture, territory and family is closely linked to a personal healing process. It's a privileged way of healing communities. This movement, which can be described as a cultural rebirth, can take many forms. While healing can be difficult, it is seen as necessary.

Because that's what we're all fighting for. We share it, what we feel, it's part of the healing. Of what we've lost, in fact. There was a spiritual guide whom we went to see often (...) Every time he spoke, we cried. That's part of healing. Like laughter, like the emotions that we feel so often

— Roger Wylde – Minwashin – in Pikogan

Rebirth and healing are part of the realm of possibilities. Many people are actively engaged in these processes, and the Anicinabek already have the knowledge and expertise needed to bring them to fruition:

What I see is that everyone is an expert in their own field: some are land experts, some are history or lineage experts, some are emotional experts, balance experts [in] the arts, drumming, politics, language, wisdom, cooking. (...) We have a lot of potential. And we have to share that with our children.

— Julie Mowatt, Pikogan

ANICINABE AKI — TERRITORY AND MOVEMENT

For many people, cultural rebirth requires a return to the land: to learn the language and bring it to life, you have to go on the land. It's on the land that you can really learn, and it's there that you feel good.

As for the territory (...). We'll have to take the children there and tell them the name of the river. Where they come from, their parents, their fathers, their grandfathers.

— André Mowatt, Pikogan

I always go into the woods, make my own fire, boil my own water, there's everything you need. I like to sleep there too. I love the smell of wood

— Youth, Long Point First Nation

You also need to be in action, on the move. Activities linked to the land, such as fishing, trapping, making a fire, gathering plants and more, help to appropriate and keep alive a vocabulary that is not used in everyday life, which is marked by convenience and immobility. The names of places, plants, trees and animals are used as we move about, discovering, gathering and eating them.

If we had that many Anicinabe people speaking the language all the time, if we spoke Algonquin all the time, we'd get to a point where Richard would be talking about his tomatoes, we'd all be speaking the language again. Just hearing it, you learn and understand, even if you're not fluent. If you hit the water, it makes circles and the circles come back into your ears. That's the way I see it. I love this sharing circle. (...) Language is so important, I've lost it, but I've heard it. It's the ripples in the water that come back.

— Odette Poucachiche, Long Point First Nation

People living in urban areas feel particularly disconnected from the Anicinabe territory, language and culture. There is a need to create more and closer connections between urban areas and Anicinabe communities. In the words of Wanda Crépeau-Etapp (Minwashin), "the people aren't different, it's the territory that has changed". Anicinabe people in urban areas also want to reinvest in their culture and language, and should be able to take part in the cultural revival.

THE KEY ROLE OF SPEAKERS AND ELDERS

It is therefore essential to organize activities and opportunities for people to speak Anicinabemoshin. The language and many other skills can be learned through activities such as cooking, preparing animals, gathering medicinal plants and so on. Anicinabemoshin speakers, especially the Elders, need to be mobilized to pass on their knowledge of the language, the land and the culture. Elders have a much better mastery of the language and are indispensable resources for passing it on. They can also provide teachings and guide people through difficult experiences. They themselves find themselves isolated, with few opportunities to speak the language and share their knowledge. The need to learn from each other was underlined by many people, as was the need to create or reweave a network of solidarity.

My grandmother was Anicinabe, the medicine woman of the reserve, she delivered so many women that she was also the midwife. There are actually several people here who were welcomed into this world by my grandmother. My grandfather was an ardent trapper and hunter (...) When I would visit them here, they would share these things with me: grandma would show us the plants. She called me Bunny, because "You're always listening," she'd tell me. "That's why I have to tell you all these things, because you're going to remember. I'm putting you on this path, and one day you'll be teaching". When you're a little child, you don't understand everything. But all my life, I've taught and shared our culture.

— Annie Bernie Wabbie, Timiskaming First Nation

People who know the language can and must pass it on. This must be done in the context of everyday life, particularly within the family.

I often sit side by side with them, as it's better for teaching. Traditionally there are also ways of setting up to encourage sharing. This way, my grandchildren listen a lot and understand. When they talk to me, they try to use the language, and I don't correct them as such, I give them the right word.

— Janet Papatie, Lac-Simon

When my children were young, I used to talk to them all the time. "I'm going to change your diaper." I described out loud everything I did. Kids talk fast when parents talk a lot to them, even before they can understand.

— Virginia Dumont, Lac-Simon

Parents must also be part of the learning process, but many wonder how to go about it: through play? A syllabic system for forming words? Through applications? By creating sentences? It's essential to empower parents in their role as educators, to stimulate them, give them the tools they need and make them proud, so that they learn and pass on the language. Children need to be supported when they feel embarrassed or ashamed to speak Anicinabemoshin. This also applies to adult learners.



EDUCATION

In addition to efforts within families and communities, schools must be mobilized to ensure the sustainability of anicinabemo8in.

When placed in non-indigenous schools, children still want their freedom, but these schools don't work that way. There are a lot of misunderstandings; I guess non-Indigenous people don't realize the freedom Indigenous people allow themselves in a community environment. Parents don't have to watch their children every minute because all parents are watching. If someone sees a kid doing something he shouldn't do, he'll go up to him and tell him.

— Jerry Polson, Long Point First Nation.

Various methods are proposed to facilitate the teaching of anicinabemo8in, such as teaching a word a day, creating simple sentences and integrating this teaching into a variety of school activities. There is a crying need for materials to teach and transmit the language. Teachers, parents and grandparents feel that it would be useful to develop tools and resources, such as software and books.

Schools need to organize activities on the land to encourage the use of the language and facilitate children's learning. It's also important to bring the land into the school: activities on plants, animals and the land can be integrated into the various subjects taught at school. The presence of Elders and cultural bearers who know the language, and the participation of parents in an intergenerational approach, would facilitate the organization of activities along these

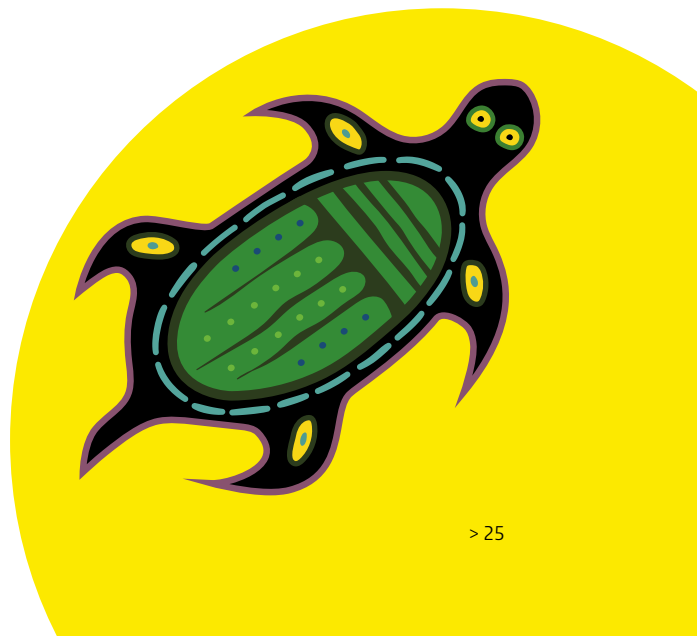
lines. Regularity is also important: activities should take place more than once a year, not just during cultural weeks. These measures should also be implemented in non-indigenous schools, so that Indigenous children attending these schools can benefit as well as non-Indigenous children.

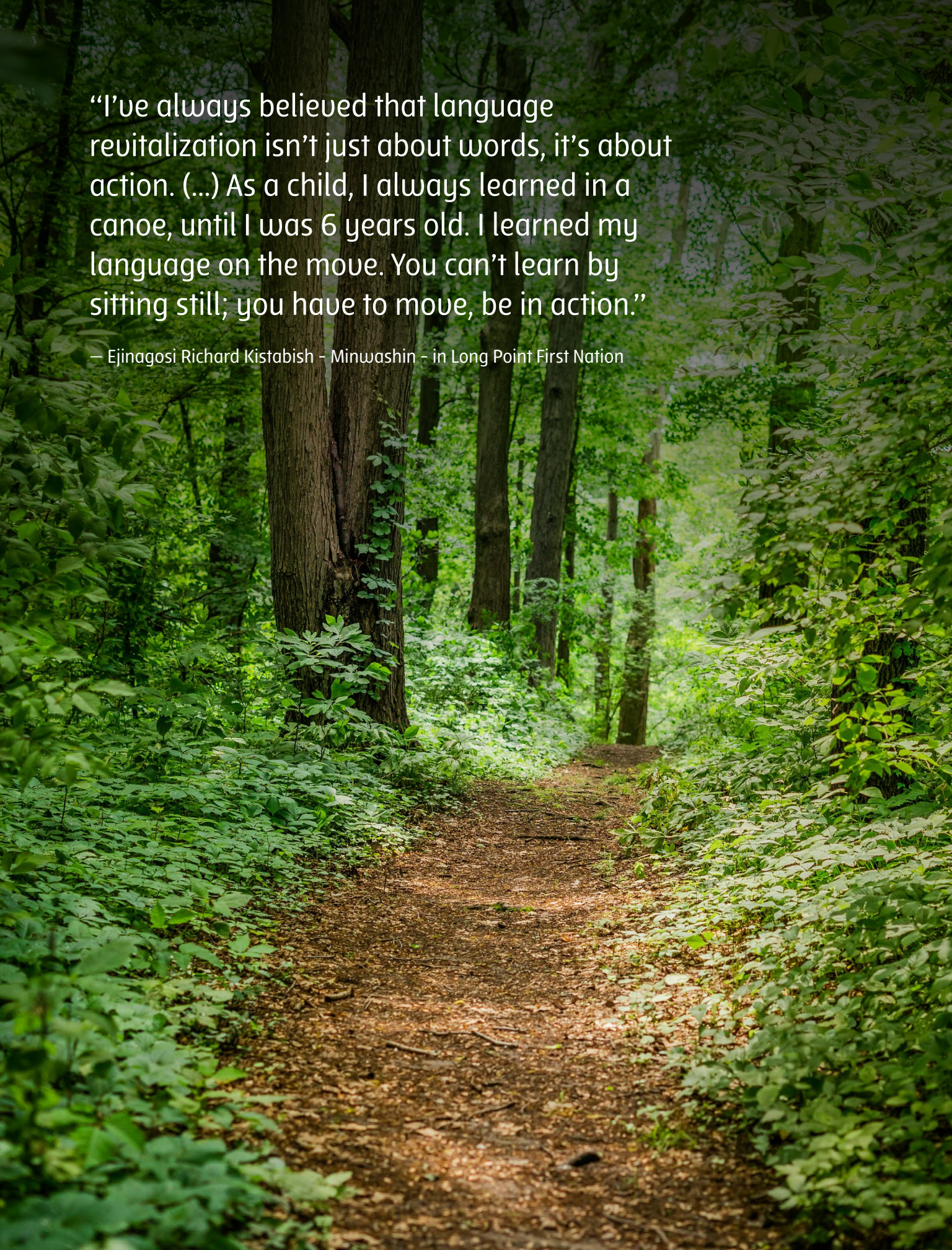
My priority now is to ensure that the rights of First Nations children are respected, that they have the right to learn their language, because school, for many of them, is perhaps the only place they will have to learn their language, where they will be able to learn the language. I also think it's up to us to change the current structure, to make more room for all (...) anicinabe ways of teaching the language, and to take children out of the classroom, because you don't just learn between four white walls, you also learn on the land, and that has to be recognized.

— Nancy Wiscutie-Crépeau – Minwashin - in Pikogan

It's quite difficult for me to teach my children about our culture because I don't know much about it. I think the idea is to make sure that children find their own way to reconnect with it. If we could create tools to help them, even if it's just a little something, and even for non-Indigenous schools.

— Amélie Brassard, - Minwashin - in Kebaowek



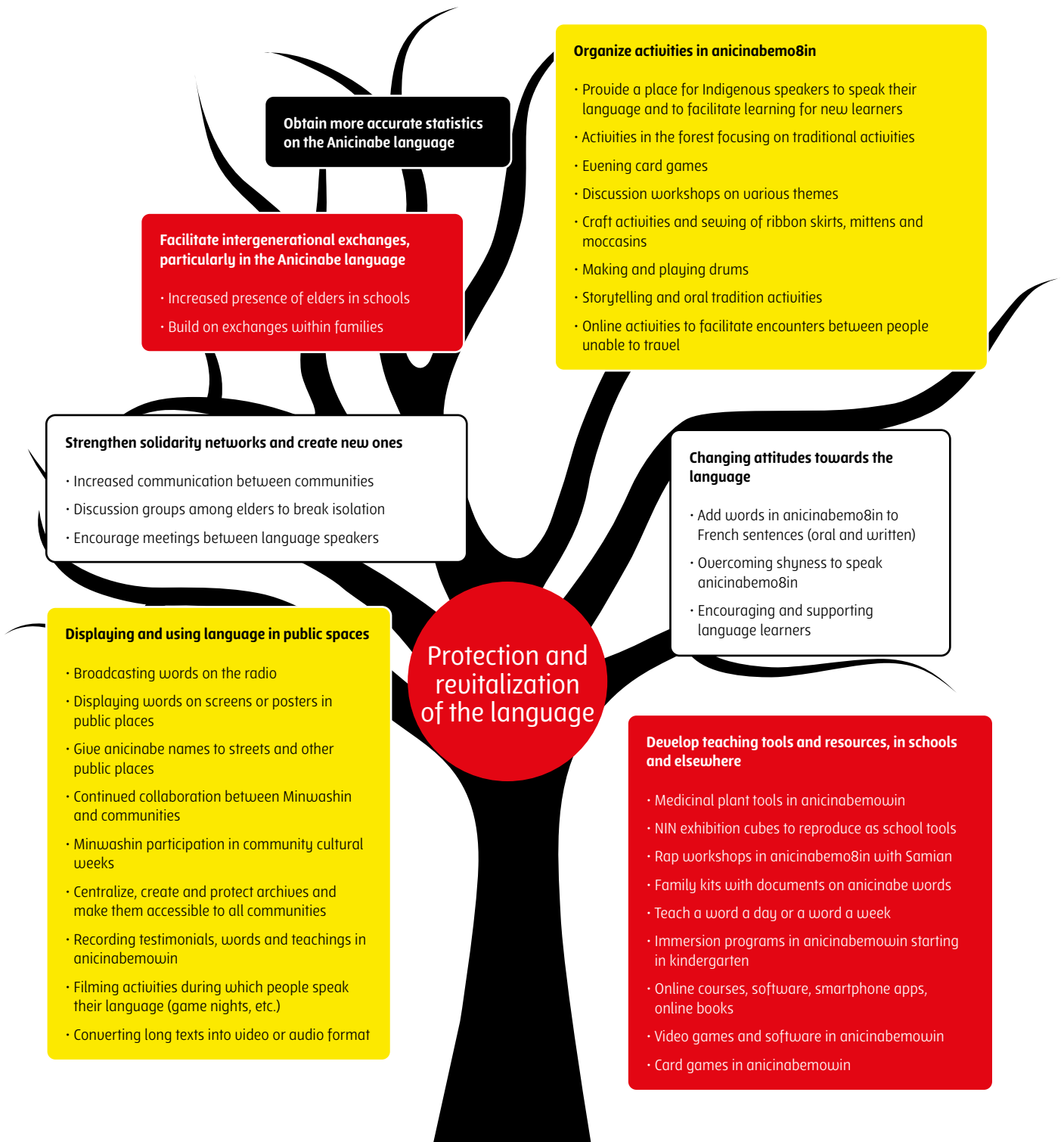
A photograph of a dirt path winding through a dense forest. The path is covered in fallen leaves and leads into the distance. The trees are tall and thin, with a thick canopy of green leaves. The lighting is soft and natural, suggesting a sunny day with some shade.

“I’ve always believed that language revitalization isn’t just about words, it’s about action. (...) As a child, I always learned in a canoe, until I was 6 years old. I learned my language on the move. You can’t learn by sitting still; you have to move, be in action.”

— Ejinagosi Richard Kistabish - Minwashin - in Long Point First Nation

➤ Paths to be explored

Numerous avenues for action to revitalize anicinabemo8in were highlighted at the Nin exhibition. Following is a summary:



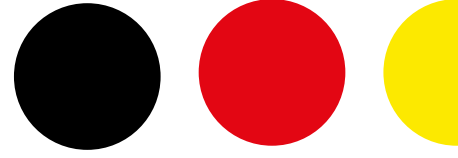


“Today, our languages are slowly weakening.
I’m not saying that our languages
will disappear. I think they’re sleeping
and it’s up to us to wake them up.”

— Nancy Wiscutie-Crépeau
Minwashin - in Lac Simon



Text by **Nancy Wiscutie-Crépeau**



There's one moment in particular that really stood out for me in relation to the Nin exhibition. When I was in Paris, when we entered UNESCO for the launch of the exhibition, we entered the black square. It felt like a funeral, like death. I thought there was something very solemn about it. It stirred up a lot of emotions in my inner world. My mother died the same year. It was a very powerful thing for me because I really realized that there was something that hadn't been done. There's a transmission that didn't take place in our family, and now we have to mourn that and accept what happened.

We won't necessarily become speakers like our ancestors were because we live in completely different, contemporary contexts. But I think we have to make an effort, to take responsibility for ourselves, to try to preserve, to recover as much as possible of what's left to us, to reinvent ourselves as individuals, as a people, in every sphere of our lives, whether it's in services, in our way of teaching, in our way of looking at health. Being Indigenous isn't just about showing visible elements of our culture, it's about everything to do with our worldview. Reclaiming our languages will shape that vision and our actions towards healing and reconciliation.

NIN makes people think about the decline of the language, because people immediately talk about their families. It's a very emotional thing. Inevitably, you go back to your family, to when you were a child, and it allows you to see what caused the language not to be passed on. Because there are all kinds of changes we've gone through: sedentarization, the fact that our parents went to residential schools. It echoes the way we were brought up. It brings back all kinds of memories. The impact of alcohol. It's also about not having had the opportunity, perhaps, to get

to know our grandparents. In my case, I was never able to speak with my grandfather because of this intergenerational break through non-transmission of the language, and that really marked me.

It's by talking, by explaining to people what you've been through, that you'll show them just how much healing means continuing to move forward and trying to repair these wounds as much as possible, then sharing with others. It's like a big ball inside you that sleeps, and then at some point, when you talk about it, it's an experience that's not easy to grasp, but it's a necessary step if you want to move towards healing. Then we have to understand this story, this collective experience. We have to repair, we have to repair ourselves, because not being able to speak the language with your grandparents is serious. Your very existence is based on languages, on your ability to express yourself, on your ability to be understood, on your ability to understand who you are and your own culture.

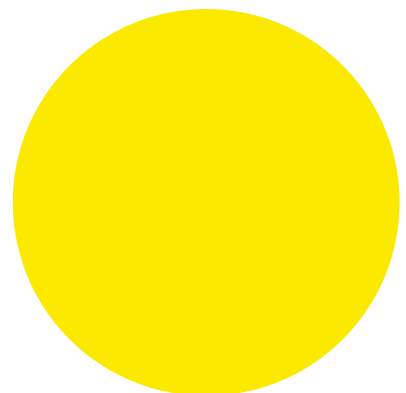
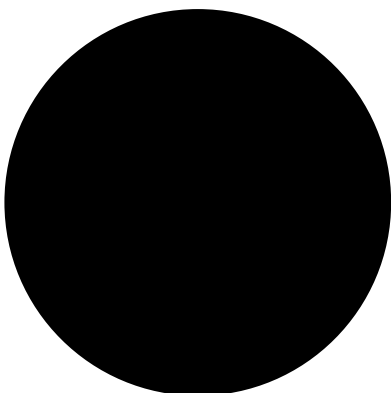
NIN is a powerful tool: it brings together Indigenous people who are not necessarily specialists, and who themselves, through this exhibition, are discovering their history. It allows them to share, echo and pass on their experiences. You really get the human aspect. Minwashin wanted people from the communities, from different backgrounds, to be involved in this sharing, because they have a wealth of knowledge and experience. Minwashin wanted NIN to enable them to go a little further in their knowledge, to be able to make connections and then rediscover themselves from another angle. We wanted to bring that pride of saying, "At the end of the day, our ancestors went through difficult things, but if we're still here today, it's because things have been passed on to us."

Official languages divide us in some ways. We mustn't turn them into barriers that prevent us from keeping our language alive. We need to draw inspiration from our societies. Our ancestors interacted with their neighbors beyond today's official languages, French and English, in Nehiromowin, Innu-aimun and so on. People spoke to each other, but in their own dialect. There was the whole question of mutual understanding. It's something that's really important in the work we're doing together today. We mustn't limit ourselves to saying that just because I don't speak this language, I can't understand the other, that I can't make the effort.

It's up to us to invite ourselves into the dialogue and into the public arena to promote Indigenous languages in our children's education. We are in the best position to know how this could be done. We have the capacity to innovate, to create. We need to raise public awareness of the fact that our language must be used everywhere, not just at school, but in all our lives. We can, we must publicize anicinabemowin. This question is no longer debatable, or even worth asking. It's our right to be able to express ourselves in our languages,

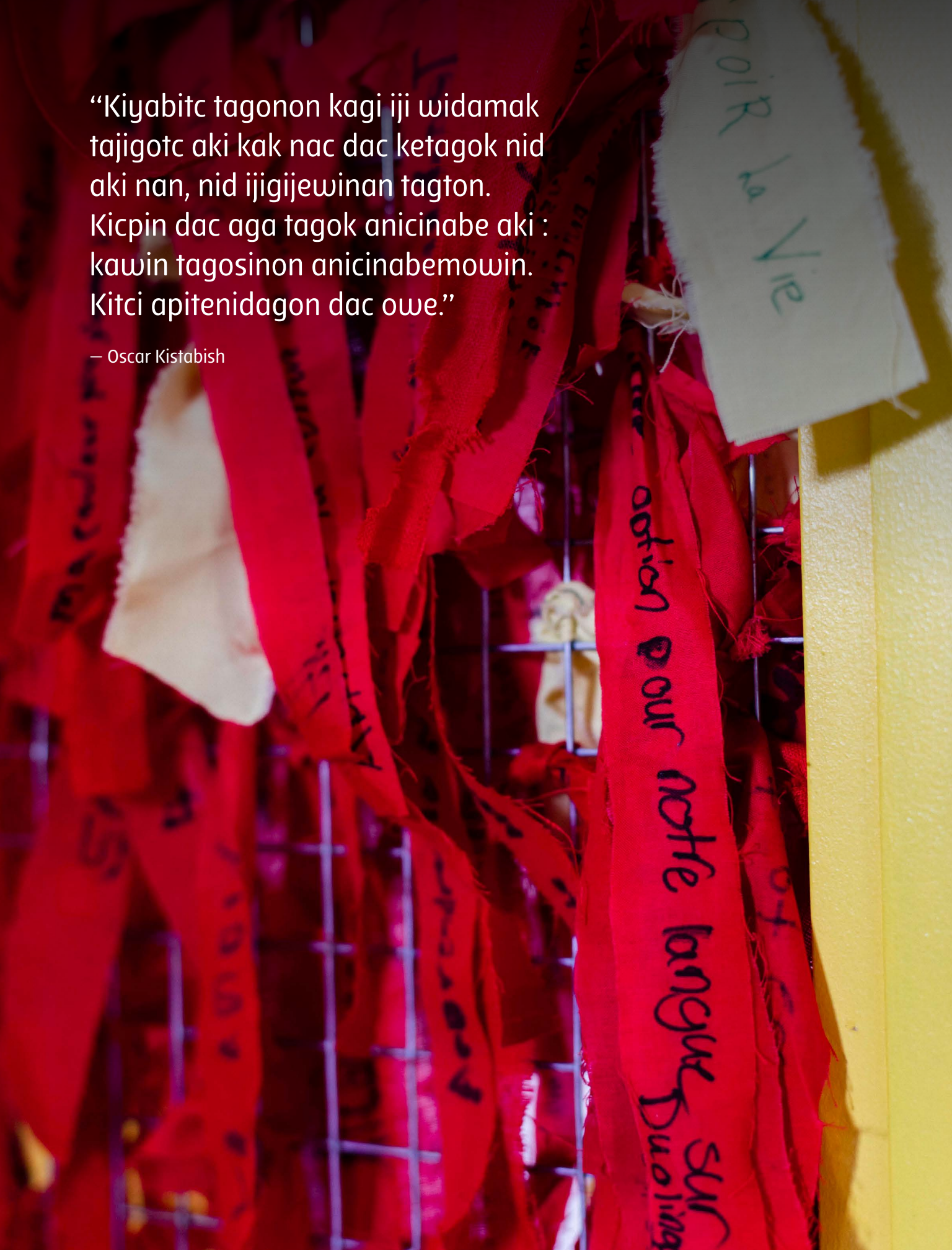
to enable this transmission. Everyone has something to contribute to this great social project: speakers, knowledge-bearers, those who position themselves as defenders of the language. We're really in the last generation to have access to mother-tongue speakers, so we need to take advantage of every possible platform to make our presence felt as Anicinabek. Language is really who we are, it's our identity.

For a long time, we've been put in a square frame, but we're returning to the shape of the circle through the process of transformation. We haven't had the chance, in our upbringing, to take the time to think for a long time, and then share and talk about it with other people. I think this is a very good way to go through the stages of healing, because reclaiming our language requires reflection and time. How can we reintroduce language into our lives, into every aspect of our lives? We have to be creative. We need to create that space for children. How can we do this? We can make ourselves known in public places. But first, we need to find our truth, know our history and digest it at our own pace.



“Kiyabitc tagonon kagi iji widamak
tajigotc aki kak nac dac ketagok nid
aki nan, nid ijigijewinan tagton.
Kicpin dac aga tagok anicinabe aki :
kawin tagosinon anicinabemowin.
Kitci apitenidagon dac owe.”

– Oscar Kistabish



“Ni pabamagimoseman kon kak, agim nida
abidjhanan, tciman acitc. Odibin kak niga
mayawinan, kiyabitc ni nanibwiman.”

— Norman Kistabish



Patrimoine
canadien

Canadian
Heritage

Québec