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An Indigenous-led Model for Inter-organizational Homelessness Prevention

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Résumé de l'article

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Giiwe: An Indigenous-led Model for Inter-organizational Homelessness Prevention

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Abstract

Preventing people from experiencing homelessness is a complex task requiring the coordination of multiple actors. There are various frameworks for homelessness prevention; however, there is no published example of an Indigenous-led model. We present the *Giiwe* model for systems homelessness prevention led by M'Wikwedong Indigenous Friendship Centre in Owen Sound, Canada. *Giiwe* hosted regular in-person meetings that use ceremony, Indigenous Knowledges, discussion, and follow-up actions to increase service access among a network of over 20 organizations. Building on *Giiwe's* experience, we discuss how Western and Indigenous worldviews impact inter-organizational collaboration. *Giiwe's* success suggests funding and policy contexts mandating partnerships between Indigenous and non-Indigenous organizations could benefit from ceding space for initiatives affirming Indigenous collaboration approaches.

Keywords

Indigenous homelessness, intersectoral collaboration, system approaches, homelessness prevention

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Giiwe: An Indigenous-led Model for Inter-organizational Homelessness Prevention

In the Global North, there has been a progressive paradigm shift in homelessness programs and policy from emphasizing crisis services to prioritizing prevention efforts (Culhane et al., 2011; Dej et al., 2020; Fowler et al., 2019; Lindblom, 1991; Mackie, 2015). However, preventing people from experiencing homelessness is a complex task requiring the coordination of multiple actors (Dej et al., 2020; Nichols & Doberstein, 2016). For this reason, collaborative approaches to homelessness prevention are increasingly studied (Borysow & Furtado, 2014; Buchnea et al., 2021; Fowler et al., 2019). Numerous terms refer to such collaborative efforts, including "systems approaches" in the homelessness literature (Fowler et al., 2019; Nichols & Doberstein, 2016); "intersectoral collaboration," or "intersectoral action" in health-related fields (Borysow & Furtado, 2014; MacDonald & Roebuck, 2018); and "working group," "committee," "network," "coalition," or "table" in community-led practice contexts (Buchnea et al., 2021). Notably, there are conceptual differences between systems approaches and intersectoral action. For instance, the former is closer to the sciences of complexity, systems thinking, and cybernetics (Midgley & Richardson, 2007), and the latter aligns with concepts like health equity and the social determinants of health (Ndumbe-Eyoh & Moffatt, 2013). To bridge such academic and community concepts, in this paper, we use the terms "inter-organizational" and "collaborative" to emphasize the multidirectional relationships among networks of organizations involved in changing the conditions that allow homelessness to exist.

It is also important to acknowledge ongoing conversations about the language surrounding homelessness (Ionescu, 2022; Robbins, 2022). While the term "homeless" may be preferred by some community members to describe themselves, this term may hold negative connotations. Indeed, the word "homeless" risks flattening people's *identities* by emphasizing a temporary experience of severely inadequate or insecure accommodations–an experience that may or may not be linked to an individual's sense of "home" (Ionescu, 2022). For this reason, we avoid using "homeless" as a noun in this paper.

As an alternative, advocates and community members suggest using adjectives like "unhoused," "unsheltered," and "houseless" to describe *conditions* that people may experience in the context of systemic barriers to sustaining adequate housing. Similarly, the last three decades have seen ongoing debates about what "homelessness" should mean in international contexts (Busch-Geertsema et al., 2016; Chamberlain & Mackenzie, 1992; Tipple & Speak, 2005). These definitions seem to agree on seeing homelessness as a condition that people experience when they are without accommodations, living in crisis or temporary accommodations, and living in severely inadequate or insecure accommodations. However, what counts as "severely inadequate or insecure accommodations" depends on context, including political will, societal norms, and community expectations.

With respect to Indigenous Peoples, examining the conditions that create and sustain homelessness necessitates attending to Indigenous-specific contexts, priorities, and worldviews. For example, colonialism and systemic racism have been identified as root causes of Indigenous homelessness that materialize through policies, practices, and distribution of resources (Buchnea et al., 2021; Gaetz & Dej, 2017; Oelke et al., 2016; Patrick, 2014; Thistle & Smylie, 2020). The impact of colonialism on homelessness is illustrated by notable inequities among Indigenous and non-Indigenous peoples. For example, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples in Australia accounted for 3% of the population

and 20% of those experiencing homelessness (Australian Bureau of Statistics, 2018). Similarly, in Canada, First Nations, Métis, and Inuit ("FNMI" from here on) represent about 5% of the population and nearly 30% of people experiencing homelessness (Employment and Social Development Canada, 2019). Despite recognizing inequities among Indigenous and non-Indigenous peoples concerning homelessness, Indigenous-specific considerations for homelessness prevention and reduction strategies are rarely discussed, with notable recent exceptions (Bomberry et al., 2020; Buchnea et al., 2021; Lawson-Te Aho et al., 2019; Vallesi et al., 2020).

Attending to Indigenous priorities in the context of homelessness prevention includes considering efforts toward Indigenous resurgence, self-determination, and land repossession. For instance, a self-determined definition of Indigenous homelessness in Canada goes beyond the lack of appropriate housing to highlight the importance of "All My Relations" for the health and well-being of FNMI at individual, family, and community levels (Thistle, 2017). The emphasis on All My Relations speaks to the relationships between FNMI individuals, families, and communities with the land, water, animals, kin, place of origin, culture, language, spirituality, and identities that need to be addressed in homelessness responses (Thistle, 2017). Furthermore, there is an increased recognition that the most effective programs and policies for addressing Indigenous homelessness are developed through Indigenous leadership that considers trauma-informed, historically rooted, culturally specific, and collaborative approaches (Buchnea et al., 2021; Canadian Observatory on Homelessness, 2019; Gaetz & Dej, 2017; Oelke et al., 2016; Patrick, 2014; Thistle & Smylie, 2020; Vallesi et al., 2020). By Indigenous leadership, we mean initiatives that are designed, run, and refined by Indigenous Peoples, collectives, organizations, or nations. Despite the recognized value of Indigenous-led responses to Indigenous homelessness, to the authors' knowledge, there is no previously published example of an Indigenous-led homelessness prevention model in the peer-reviewed literature. Such models could provide vital guidance for communities across the globe who are seeking to prevent Indigenous homelessness from happening.

In this paper, the authors aim to share and discuss a model for Indigenous-led collaborative homelessness prevention in Owen Sound, a small urban centre surrounded by a large rural area in Southwestern Ontario, Canada. For this purpose, we reflect on *Giiwe,* an initiative led by the M'Wikwedong Indigenous Friendship Centre (M'Wikwedong) and supported by researchers affiliated with the Centre for Environmental Health Equity (CEHE), a community-based research program supported by a co-author's Canada Research Chair. The project name was inspired by "*Giiwe,"* an Anishinaabemowin word that may be translated to "s/he goes home" (The Ojibwe People's Dictionary, 2015). Through this paper, M'Wikwedong offers the *Giiwe* model to other Indigenous communities interested in modifying it according to their context–including renaming it–or incorporating some of its components into their practice. A lay-language version of the model is available on M'Wikwedong's website (https://mwikwedong.com/program/giiwe-2/). Additionally, our discussion of the *Giiwe* model intends to support the creation, evaluation, and implementation of programs and policies that

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embrace Indigenous-specific worldviews and decentre modern[1] Western assumptions of reality, knowledge, and collaboration. While the bulk of our article draws on FNMI and Canadian sources, our choice of theoretical frameworks facilitates discussing the potential implications of this model for Indigenous Peoples internationally.

The paper is structured as follows: we provide a literature review on the emergence, state, and challenges of FNMI involvement in inter-organizational responses to homelessness. Then, we present the theoretical lenses through which we discuss the *Giiwe* model. We discuss relevant typologies of homelessness prevention and relational approaches to inter-organizational work. We also detail a metaphor on bricks and threads to illustrate the diverse worldviews that may underpin inter-organizational collaboration. Subsequently, we present the Giiwe model and map common participant responses to it, using the bricks and threads metaphor. Finally, we discuss *Giiwe's* policy and practice implications, highlighting the need for policies and programs that affirm the contributions of Indigenous knowledge systems.

Literature Review

FNMI Involvement in Inter-organizational Homelessness Responses

FNMI-led initiatives on homelessness prevention are positioned within a more extended history of leadership and community building in urban settings. Canadian urban centres were established through historic and ongoing attempts of land dispossession, dishonouring treaties, cultural genocide, and imposition of heteronormative and patriarchal values (National Inquiry into Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls, 2019; Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada, 2015; Yellowhead Institute, 2019). After the Second World War, there was a rapid and sustained increase in the number of FNMI living in urban centres (Peters, 2002). With growing FNMI urbanization, FNMI created grassroots groups and organizations to foster a sense of community and provide support. For instance, the Friendship Centre Movement catalyzed the establishment of urban FNMI infrastructure and programming, including leveraging responses to housing inadequacy and homelessness as one of its major priorities (Langford, 2016; National Association of Friendship Centres, n.d.). Despite such efforts, FNMI living in cities continue to experience and confront anti-Indigenous racism in the housing market, as well as in the social service, health care, and government sectors (Abele et al., 2012; Langford, 2016; Peters, 2006; Turpel-Lafond & Johnson, 2020;), with additional barriers for women and girls, 2SLGTBQ+ individuals, youth, and those living with disabilities (Canadian Observatory on Homelessness, 2019; Kidd et al., 2019; Rodrigues et al. 2020).

[1] In this paper, "modern" refers to *modernity* as the imaginary basis that binds global processes of colonialism, capitalism, and scientific reason (Machado de Oliveira, 2021). Modernity naturalizes its assumptions about reality, knowledge, and relationships while dismissing alternative assumptions (Lander, 2000). Key modern assumptions include the desire to know the world in its entirety, the use of knowledge to control the world, and an emphasis on anthropocentric agency (Ahenakew et al., 2014).

Considering the historical and ongoing settler colonial[2] violence inflicted on FNMI, it is no surprise that FNMI organizations report several challenges in collaborating with non-FNMI organizations (Bomberry et al., 2020; Environics Institute, 2010). The literature thus points to an urgent need to improve relationships and coordination between FNMI and non-FNMI organizations to better respond to homelessness and prevent it from happening. Such tasks will require more significant leadership roles for FNMI organizations within collaborative work and adopting FNMI protocols and methodologies (Buchnea et al., 2021; Oelke et al., 2016; Thistle & Smylie, 2020). Unfortunately, the academic literature discussing FNMI-led collaborative homelessness prevention initiatives in Canada is scarce, which reflects a broader paucity of literature on Indigenous homelessness internationally (Anderson & Collins, 2014; Patrick, 2014). Existing examples name some of these joint initiatives and describe some of their activities but do not discuss their approach to inter-organizational collaboration (Abele et al., 2012; Bomberry et al., 2020; Fitzmaurice, 2012; Hanselmann & Gibbins, 2005), with the exception of gray literature reports that outline some principles for engagement with FNMI partners (City of Toronto Shelter et al., 2018; Shelter, Support and Housing Administration, 2019). We offer Appendix I to provide a snapshot of such initiatives from the information we could gather from public websites and reports. Notably, the initiatives reported in Appendix 1 are predominantly based in large urban centres, with little information about smaller communities and rural areas. In international contexts, there are a few examples of Indigenous-specific models for responding to homelessness in Australia and Aotearoa/New Zealand (Lawson-Te Aho et al., 2019; Vallesi et al., 2020), but such examples lack the leadership of an Indigenous organization in their implementation.

Although there is no clear picture of the extent to which FNMI organizations participate in inter-organizational initiatives on homelessness reduction, there are indications that the involvement of FNMI is actively pursued across Canada. For instance, Reaching Home, Canada's homelessness strategy, expects collaboration between FNMI and non-FNMI representatives within its Community Advisory Boards, which prioritize local initiatives (Infrastructure Canada, 2022). However, it is known that FNMI organizations often feel tokenized or excluded from collaborative homelessness initiatives (Buchnea et al., 2021). For example, FNMI may report being invited to joint initiatives with already-set agendas, non-FNMI leadership, and Western collaboration approaches (Bomberry et al., 2020; Oelke et al., 2016). This context leaves little space for FNMI organizations to affirm their leadership and address the specificity of Indigenous homelessness in Canada.

Homelessness Prevention Definition, Typologies, and Relational Approaches

Internationally, there are several definitions and models of homelessness prevention (Apicello, 2010; Culhane et al., 2011; Dej et al., 2020; Fitzpatrick et al., 2021; Lindblom, 1991; Nicholas & Henwood, 2018; Shinn et al., 2001). This paper highlights typologies and approaches to homelessness prevention developed in Canada (Dej et al., 2020; Gaetz & Dej, 2017; Nichols & Doberstein, 2016; Oudshoorn et al., 2020) due to their geographical alignment with the context of the *Giiwe* model. Outlining the elements of these homelessness prevention typologies is meant to support the reader in understanding

[2] In settler colonialism, the colonizers "come to stay" (Wolfe, 2006, p.388). Settler colonialism operates like a structure that continually seeks the elimination of Indigenous populations and the assertion of its own governance structure and claims to land ownership (Wolfe, 2006).

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the type of intervention *Giiwe* represents within a broader landscape of homelessness prevention initiatives.

Dej et al. (2020) defined homelessness prevention as the "policies, practices, and interventions that reduce the likelihood that someone will experience homelessness" (p. 402). These authors published a typology for homelessness prevention to propose a common language on the nature of homelessness prevention. The typology is rooted in public health prevention frameworks that distinguish between diverse types of prevention, including primary (e.g., diminishing all people's risk of experiencing homelessness and strengthening protective factors), secondary (e.g., targeting those at high risk of experiencing homelessness), tertiary (e.g., supporting people to maintain housing stability), and quaternary (e.g., addressing unintended consequences of homelessness prevention and reduction initiatives). The typology is formed by six interdependent elements—structural prevention, systems prevention, early intervention, eviction prevention, housing stabilization, and empowerment—that operate more effectively when integrated within cohesive homelessness and social support systems (Dej et al., 2020; Oudshoorn et al., 2020). The focus of this paper on collaborative approaches to homelessness prevention makes it crucial to unpack the systems prevention element. Dej et al. (2020) specify that systems prevention acts on the institutional failures contributing to the risk of homelessness. The strategies associated with this form of prevention include enhancing service access, removing service barriers, and discharge planning from institutions such as hospitals, prisons, and child protection (Dej et al., 2020).

There is also scholarship that discusses relational approaches to inter-organizational collaboration that share some similarities with the *Giiwe* model. Relational approaches highlight the value of human relationships as the basis for catalyzing new ways to see housing-related issues from multiple viewpoints and foster innovative action. For example, Bopp et al. (2016) used communities of practice to cultivate policy learning and systems change for FNMI women living in Canada's north. Moreover, Phipps et al. (2021) used innovative methods for individuals with lived experience with housing inadequacy (which they refer to as "grounded expertise") to share their knowledge with people working in professional roles. Their project used participatory action research activities incorporating First Nations teachings, theatre-based exercises, and ample unstructured time to explore new ways of understanding housing issues and finding common ground. Proponents of relational approaches to inter-organizational coordination emphasized the human aspect of inter-organizational collaboration; reflecting on the extent to which people collaborate to better understand system gaps and policy biases; and creating the human connections that will guarantee that collaborative work is prioritized and followed through (Bopp et al., 2016; Phipps et al., 2019).

Using Metaphors to Convey Indigenous Worldviews in Homelessness Prevention

Jimmy et al. (2019) offer a metaphor about bricks and threads to engage in conversations about the tensions and opportunities of collaboration between Indigenous Peoples and non-Indigenous institutions. We present this metaphor to help convey the kind of worldviews that guide *Giiwe*'s operation (i.e., threads, which resemble characteristics frequently associated with various Indigenous knowledge systems) as distinct from brick-oriented approaches, which share qualities frequently attributed to modern Western thought. The bricks and threads are not meant to represent non-

Indigenous and Indigenous peoples. Indeed, Jimmy et al. caution that many Indigenous peoples may use "brick sensibilities" to navigate their daily lives as they face the legacies of colonialism and that some non-Indigenous peoples have managed to embrace "thread sensibilities." Thus, Jimmy et al. (2019) recommend that readers see this metaphor as a tool for thinking about institutional contexts of Indigenous and non-Indigenous collaboration rather than an objective description of reality or people.

Brick sensibilities divide reality into bricks or boxes that help people delineate different things in the world. Bricks can be organized according to their type and hierarchies. Similarly, relationships among organizations are structured around mandates and professional hierarchies. Brick sensibilities assume that everything that exists can be described through language. These assumptions lead to interventionist approaches to change. It is assumed that mapping the bricks of the world will enable engineering solutions that will foster adequate social relationships among humans. Brick sensibilities are objective-oriented, prefer fast solutions, and often align with Western approaches to collaborative homelessness prevention and substantive ontologies (i.e., views of reality that see discrete entities as the fundamental aspects of reality).

Thread sensibilities see a world composed of relationships that are symbolized as threads. Threads are interwoven, so it is difficult to know where one aspect of reality ends and the other starts. Humans may be seen as one being of Creation that relies on the work of all other beings to sustain their lives. Relationships among organizations are valued due to a sense of interdependency and a search for collective well-being. When facing an issue, knowledge can have practical uses (e.g., helping someone get something they need) and metaphorical applications (e.g., it is up to everyone to find their meaning in stories). However, there will always be aspects of reality that will remain unknown. Furthermore, sometimes the best knowledge will come from non-human and spiritual beings. In collaboration contexts, thread sensibilities may embrace slow-paced and non-interventionist approaches to change that prioritize maintaining balanced relationships. It is assumed that only relationship-building can create the collective capacities needed to imagine shared actions and solutions. Thread sensibilities resonate with features commonly associated with Indigenous knowledge systems and other relational ontologies (i.e., views of reality in which relationships among entities are more fundamental than entities themselves).

Given the international audience of this journal, the bricks and threads metaphor can offer readers the flexibility to take from it what makes sense for their context and knowledge traditions. In our case, the bricks and threads metaphor offers accessible language to convey the idea that modern Western thought is not the only way of knowing and being in the world, and that inter-organizational collaboration models like *Giiwe* can be better understood through the FNMI worldviews and experiences that have informed its development.

Giiwe's Approach to Homelessness Prevention

This paper builds on six years of collective experience designing, implementing, evaluating, and adjusting the *Giiwe* model. A developmental evaluation during *Giiwe's* first year supported M'Wikwedong in pilot-testing this model (Sanchez-Pimienta & Masuda, 2019). The *Giiwe* model was adjusted according to the input of M'Wikwedong's staff, *Giiwe* participants, Elders and Knowledge

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Keepers, individuals who have lived experience with Indigenous homelessness, and CEHE researchers. In this section, we situate the intervention setting, the authors' positionality, as well as the emergence, key elements, and contributions of the *Giiwe* model.

Intervention Setting

The city of Owen Sound and its surrounding region have seen tangible examples of colonial land dispossession and racism, but also FNMI leadership, resurgence, and land stewardship (McLaren, 2005, 2007). The area in which M'Wikwedong operates is part of the *Saukiing Anishinaabekiing*—the territory of Saugeen Ojibway Nation (SON), a collective of both Saugeen First Nation and Chippewas of Nawash First Nation. However, the Canadian state claims jurisdiction over the area where M'Wikwedong operates through treaties 45 ½, 67, 72, 82, and 93 (Saugeen Ojibway Nation, 2016). Notably, in 1857, treaty 82 displaced the Nawash village—the largest SON settlement of the time—to leave more space for the growth of the non-Indigenous community of the Sydenham Township, today Owen Sound (McMullen, 1997). After treaty-making, SON reserve territory was reduced to about 1.5% of the overall *Saukiing Anishinaabekiing* (SON Environment Office, n.d.). Despite these disruptions to SON's relationships with the land, the Saugeen Ojibway and other Indigenous Peoples have continuously established their home and community in Owen Sound's region, such that they are deeply woven into the city's social fabric, albeit often not visibly so from the perspective of the non-Indigenous community.

Among the 21,341 inhabitants of Owen Sound, 890 reported FNMI identity according to the 2016 census (Statistics Canada, 2019). As is common in other Canadian jurisdictions (Environics Institute, 2010; Rotondi et al., 2017), FNMI service providers perceive that the size of the FNMI population in this city is underestimated. Since Owen Sound is the regional hub for employment, education, health, and social services, there is a significant flux of FNMI in this population centre, including SON members who live on-reserve or other FNMI who visit Owen Sound for access to social and health services, education, and leisure, among other personal or business reasons. There are also several flows into homelessness in the region, including hospital discharge, prison releases, and the inability to live on reserve. Evidence shows that SON members continue to face overt and covert forms of racism in the Grey-Bruce region (Henderson, 2014; McLaren, 2007). In the housing context, the expression of anti-FNMI racism includes racist assumptions about the ability of FNMI to be "good tenants" and a lack of accommodation of cultural practices such as extended family visits or traditional medicine use (Phipps, 2019).

The Grey-Bruce region has a longstanding tradition of inter-organizational collaboration, with committees that focus on falls prevention, climate change, healthy communities, physical activity promotion, violence prevention, a drug and alcohol community strategy, and a poverty taskforce with a housing-specific sub-committee. Notably, before *Giiwe's* inception in 2018, no FNMI-specific collaborative initiatives were operating in Grey-Bruce. However, after the release of the final report of

the Truth and Reconciliation Commission (TRC, 2015),[3] FNMI organizations experienced a spike in requests for collaboration, as all sectors of Canadian society were called to act on reconciling their relationships with FNMI. Despite such increased interest in cooperation, FNMI organizations in Grey-Bruce found it challenging to participate in inter-organizational initiatives due to busy schedules, an overload of invitations, concerns about tokenistic involvement, and limited space to discuss FNMI-specific needs and preferences.

Organizational Context and Team Positionality

M'Wikwedong is an urban FNMI organization that, as of 2024, delivers about 18 social support programs to FNMI and other interested community members who live off-reserve in Owen Sound and the Grey-Bruce region. Almost all M'Wikwedong staff and board members identify as First Nations or Métis. *Giiwe* is an Indigenous-led model because it is run and administered by M'Wikwedong. The CEHE is a research laboratory with researchers and trainees affiliated with the University of Victoria and the University of Toronto, Canada, at the time of this writing. This research laboratory centres on community-driven knowledge and practices to understand and act on the structural and socio-spatial antecedents of environmental health inequity, with a research portfolio in areas related to housing and land dispossession, collective rights, and decolonial public health.

Those engaged in the planning and development of *Giiwe* activities hold various Indigenous and non-Indigenous backgrounds and experiences with colonialism. Diane Giroux was the *Giiwe* Coordinator at M'Wikwedong. Diane was born and raised as a French-Canadian person. She received cultural guidance from Elders and Knowledge Keepers from SON and other FNMI to plan and facilitate *Giiwe* activities. Renee K. Abram is Haudenosaunee from the Oneida Nation of the Thames. As the Executive Director of M'Wikwedong, Renee provided strategic guidance on the programmatic development of *Giiwe*. A changing cadre of M'Wikwedong's Cultural Resource Coordinators provided guidance on using traditional knowledge and helped liaise with guest Elders and Knowledge Keepers, including Lorne Pawis, from Wasauksing First Nation. From CEHE, Jeff Masuda is an academic with expertise in environmental health equity and *Sansei* (third generation) Japanese Canadian. Jeff advised *Giiwe's* initial program design and oversaw the developmental evaluation of earlier stages of *Giiwe* while he worked at Queen's University. Carlos E. Sanchez-Pimienta is a Mexican *mestizo*—a non-Indigenous identity category that occupies a position of privilege in relation to Indigenous Peoples—with mixed Indigenous and Spanish heritage but little information about the originating communities of his ancestors. Carlos was a grant writer and developmental evaluator for *Giiwe*, and supported this initiative through consultancy and model drafting. Because *Giiwe* is a model that seeks to improve coordination

[3] The Truth and Reconciliation Commission investigated the impacts of the Indian Residential School System (IRS) in Canada. The IRS was a network of boarding schools that sought to assimilate Indigenous children into Euro-Canadian culture. Residential schools were active from 1883 to 1997, with an estimated 150,000 children attending them and thousands never returning home. The TRC Final Report characterized residential schools as an attempt of "cultural genocide" (TRC, 2015). In 2021, over 200 potential unmarked burials were discovered near the former Kamloops Indian Residential School in the province of British Columbia, which generated public outrage and triggered searches for other burial sites across Canada (Lewis, 2023).

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and understanding among FNMI and non-FNMI organizations, we believe that our diverse backgrounds, knowledge traditions, and personal talents were fundamental for the success of this model.

Model Creation

The impetus to create *Giiwe* stemmed from M'Wikwedong's work assisting individuals involved with Canada's criminal justice system in 2017. M'Wikwedong's Court Worker faced challenges coordinating with external organizations, mainly when supporting single adult men who experienced mental health challenges and substance use. Even though several local organizations could offer housing, food, clothing, and transportation-related support, M'Wikwedong staff found it difficult to liaise with such support services. For this reason, M'Wikwedong's Court Worker spent a considerable amount of her time securing essential living support rather than addressing the mandate of her position. Similar stories of discomfort among FNMI staff in other local organizations were common. There was a sense that coordination among FNMI and non-FNMI organizations needed to improve. Unhoused individuals were a priority for M'Wikwedong due to the severe negative impacts that homelessness and recidivism can cause for such community members, particularly in a regional context of increasing housing financialization and degrading habitability of rental stock.

As a gesture of gratitude to M'Wikwedong for supporting his Master's thesis fieldwork, Carlos volunteered to write a funding application for a M'Wikwedong-led project to tackle this issue. M'Wikwedong staff connected Carlos with FNMI and non-FNMI social service staff for him to seek guidance in the creation of a funding proposal tailored for a provincial government funding stream. As a result, the funding application focused on bringing together FNMI and non-FNMI organizations to foster trusting and coordinated relationships and share knowledge on FNMI contexts and priorities. Upon funding receipt, M'Wikwedong hired Diane as the Program Coordinator.

The Giiwe Model

Through the lens of the homelessness prevention typology of Dej et al. (2020), *Giiwe* could be understood as a collaborative initiative that centres on systems prevention. As such, *Giiwe's* overall goal was to better coordinate existing services and foster change in institutional policies that may benefit Indigenous home seekers, both within and outside the homelessness-specific sector. To advance towards its goal, *Giiwe* focused on (1) sustaining a M'Wikwedong-led partnership that prioritizes FNMI knowledge and approaches to collaboration; (2) sharing knowledge about FNMI-specific contexts from the perspective of Elders, Traditional Knowledge Keepers, service providers, and individuals with lived experience with homelessness; (3) improving institutional coordination and awareness of the nature and extent of existing support services, including FNMI-specific programming; (4) offering non-judgemental spaces for attendees to ask questions and learn from FNMI; and (5) healing relationships between FNMI and other groups through community-building activities.

The core activity of this model was hosting in-person meetings called "*Giiwe* Circles" that last about two hours each. The frequency of the *Giiwe* Circles ranged from monthly to quarterly, including a period when *Giiwe* activities were suspended to redirect its resources to COVID-19 housing relief efforts during 2020 and 2021. In addition to the *Giiwe* Circles, M'Wikwedong hosted yearly "*Giiwe* Retreats"

that allowed for more time to learn from FNMI guest speakers and occasional community celebration events.

Organizations participating in *Giiwe* extended outside of the homelessness sector to include any interested organization and individuals who may play a role in supporting FNMI when seeking to find or sustain their housing. Additionally, considering the definition of Indigenous homelessness in Canada (Thistle, 2017), organizations that may support the connections of FNMI with community, land, kin, spirituality, and other desired services could also join *Giiwe*. The sectors involved in *Giiwe* as of 2022 included housing provision, utility bill support, mental health, legal support, public health, health care provision, FNMI-specific services, on-reserve organizations, children youth and family services, harm reduction, women's aid, emergency first responders, police, environment and conservation, community funding, and government. Notably, with the growth in the number and type of organizations involved in Giiwe, this program organically expanded to address reconciliation- and sustainability-related initiatives from 2022 until March 2024, when the Giiwe program ended due to lack of funding. This paper focuses on Giiwe's contributions to inter-organizational homelessness prevention.

The *Giiwe* model embraced a "multi-epistemic" approach because it fostered respectful interactions among people who embrace diverse knowledge systems. Indeed, each *Giiwe* circle invited guest Elders and Knowledge Keepers to guide the circle's activities from the perspective of their specific knowledge systems. Given that M'Wikwedong operates in the *Saukiing Anishinaabekiing*, most of *Giiwe's* invited speakers were from SON or other Anishinaabe Nations, with occasional participation of other FNMI, including Haudenosaunee and Métis speakers. *Giiwe's* multi-epistemic approach to inter-organizational collaboration was significantly different from other partnerships in M'Wikwedong's region. For this reason, we leverage the bricks and threads metaphor to map potential participant reactions to the *Giiwe* model components. Mapping potential participant reactions allow us to show potential communication misunderstandings that may arise at *Giiwe* Circles due to its purposeful attempt to bring together brick and thread sensibilities. Notably, all mapped participant reactions *make sense* within the internal assumptions of their corresponding sensibility. However, being explicit about these potential misunderstandings is vital because the value of FNMI-led initiatives is often assessed through non-FNMI criteria.

We base our account of the *Giiwe* model on six years of collective experience with the program. The model we present describes what happens at the *Giiwe* Circles through five core elements that are illustrated by Figure 1. The figure should be read clockwise, starting from the east. We proceed to describe the model components:

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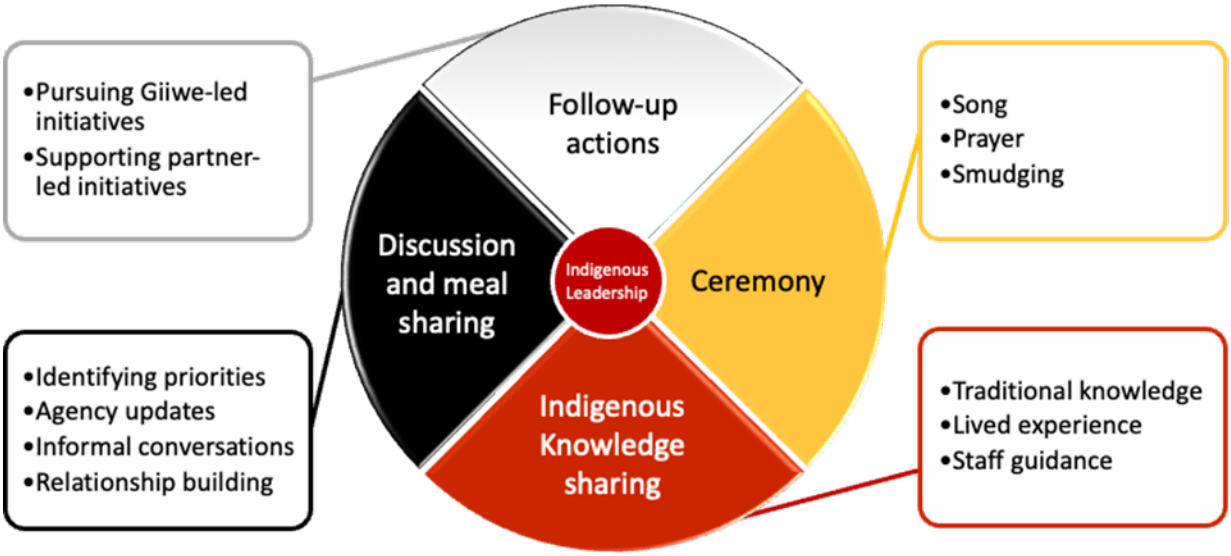

Figure 1. **The *Giiwe* model for inter-organizational collaboration on homelessness prevention**

- FNMI leadership. FNMI leadership is at the centre of the model, as FNMI-led initiatives and policies tend to provide better results in reducing and preventing FNMI homelessness (Oelke, 2016). With their desire for context-free knowledge and practices, brick sensibilities may struggle to understand the need for an FNMI-led initiative on homelessness prevention in a region that already had a multi-agency partnership tackling housing. However, thread sensibilities cannot ignore that Indigenous homelessness is not only about housing loss but about disrupted connections with community, land, and All Our Relations. Given the state of relationships between FNMI and other communities in Canada, FNMI leadership and self-determination is necessary to foster accountability and FNMI buy-in.

- Ceremony. *Giiwe* Circles started with an invited Elder or Knowledge Holder offering introductory words, a prayer, a song, or a smudging ceremony, according to their specific cultural tradition. Invited Knowledge Holders and Elders stated that their openings and closings helped to honour all of Creation, bind participants at a spiritual level, ask for guidance for the work to be done, and contribute to creating space for a successful meeting. Individuals operating within bricks sensibilities may be used to secular approaches to inter-organization collaboration and to a professionalized, instrumental role of collaboration. From this perspective, ceremony may be seen as an add-on "cultural" display, with its contributions to fostering adequate relationships for collaboration remaining largely unintelligible. Rather, when seen from thread sensibilities, ceremony emphasizes the importance of spirituality, non-human relationality, and non-human knowledge; a tying together of "whole" persons in reciprocal dependency and support.

- FNMI Knowledge Sharing. Following the meeting opening, an invited speaker shared knowledge on a topic of relevance to the intentions for that *Giiwe* Circle. Topics included the history of Turtle Island (North America) from an Anishinaabe perspective, the history of land dispossession and community displacement of the Saugeen Ojibway, the power of the

circle, the interconnectedness of all things, the Indigenous definition of homelessness, and the Seven Ancestral Teachings. The invited Elder or Knowledge Holder could take as long as they needed to share their knowledge. Within a context in which FNMI have faced cultural genocide, this component emphasized the need to provide opportunities for people to familiarize themselves with FNMI knowledges and practices that have much to offer to inter-organizational collaboration. Guest speakers operating from thread sensibilities could use story and metaphorical language, enabling listeners to find their meaning according to their lived experiences. Such use of language may disconcert individuals operating from brick sensibilities, who may prefer uses of language that privilege unequivocal descriptions and abstract concepts.

- Structured and Unstructured Conversations. *Giiwe* offered opportunities for structured dialogue using the sharing circle methodology, also called learning circle (Nabigon et al., 1999). Sharing circles were facilitated by an Elder, Traditional Knowledge Holder, or the *Giiwe* Program Coordinator. All attendees could speak freely for as long as they wish. When it was someone's turn to speak, that person held a talking stick or feather while the rest remained silent, listening. Once that person finished, they passed the object to the next person until everyone had at least one chance to speak. When using Anishinaabe protocol, the object was passed clockwise. This structured format contributed to levelling professional hierarchies because all participants joined the circle as equals. Themes discussed at *Giiwe* Circles included identifying priorities for collaboration, planning for ongoing collaborative initiatives, providing updates on new support services and policies relevant to Indigenous homelessness, and offering guidance on FNMI-specific processes to organizations that request it.

- *Giiwe* Circles also used open-ended conversations instead of a structured sharing circle. For example, when *Giiwe* moved to an online format due to the COVID-19 pandemic, a few participants were asked to provide updates on their work, while the last part of the session was open to any participant to speak. Additionally, *Giiwe* Circles offered opportunities for unstructured interactions among its participants by providing a meal at in-person sessions. Meal-sharing was meant to be a space for participants to build relationships with each other and show attendees that *Giiwe* organizers cared about them. Strengthening the personal relationships among participants was an indirect approach to improving inter-organizational coordination that hoped to increase the chance of FNMI accessing the support they seek.

- Through the lens of brick sensibilities, discussions may be oriented toward identifying a shared viewpoint about an issue. The viewpoints deemed to be "objective" (more closely aligned with reality) will be considered "the truth," and alternative views may be dismissed. However, using thread sensibilities may allow discussions to admit and act on a plurality of truths because people's knowledge is seen as situated, insufficient, and interdependent. Creating trust is necessary to understand each other and eventually collaborate on a shared endeavour.

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- Follow-up Actions. Structured and unstructured conversations identified areas for service creation, inter-organizational coordination, capacity building, and policy improvement. Such ideas needed time outside the *Giiwe* Circles to plan and pursue their completion. Examples of *Giiwe*-led initiatives included the collaborative creation of new services for FNMI. Similarly, partner-led initiatives included cultural competency staff training sessions organized with the assistance of the *Giiwe* Coordinator. There could be significant challenges to addressing follow-up actions through thread sensibilities. Indeed, funding opportunities tend to be framed through brick sensibilities. This situation forces thread sensibilities to be "boxed" into containers that brick sensibilities can readily understand. However, collaborative action also provides opportunities to seek relationships in which both brick and thread sensibilities are "braided" so that they can provide their best gifts towards a shared goal without fitting one sensibility into the other (Jimmy et al., 2018).

Practical Contributions of the Giiwe Model

In this section, we highlight *Giiwe's* contributions to the areas of FNMI leadership in inter-organizational collaboration, FNMI and non-FNMI coordination, awareness of FNMI contexts, social service policies, and service creation. Table 1 provides a summary of Giiwe's achievements.

FNMI leadership	Service coordination	Awareness of FNMI contexts	Social service policies	Social service creation
Founded and sustained the only FNMI-led inter-organizational collaboration in Grey-Bruce	A reported sense of stronger relationships among social service organizations	A reported increased knowledge about the intersections between settler colonialism and service provision	Development of the *Shko Naaniibwida* policy ideas document	Leverage for the creation of a bi-agency Homelessness Outreach Program
Growth to 20 core organizations and liaising with Saugeen Ojibway Nation	A perceived increase in the number of referrals of FNMI individuals	Collaborative organization of ongoing training opportunities for local organizations	Establishment of inter-organizational Memorandums of Understanding	Provided support for collaborative funding applications related to homelessness

Table 1. Summary of Giiwe Contributions in Relation to Homelessness

One of *Giiwe's* most significant contributions is having founded and sustained the only FNMI-led inter-organizational collaboration in Ontario's Grey-Bruce region. Seeing FNMI leadership in *Giiwe* was empowering for many FNMI staff, community members, and individuals with lived experience who saw themselves in this initiative. For their part, non-FNMI staff members often see *Giiwe* as a valuable source of guidance for addressing the FNMI-specific considerations of their work. The local buy-in that *Giiwe* has achieved is illustrated by its growth. *Giiwe* started with 11 institutional partners in 2018, and

its work was limited to Grey County. In 2019, *Giiwe* expanded to Bruce County by request of organizations that wanted to join the initiative. In 2023, *Giiwe* brought together over 20 core organizations of the Grey-Bruce region and liaised with SON housing and social services. Furthermore, *Giiwe* generated an impact beyond colonial political boundaries by not relying on County boundaries and allowing the involvement of occasional participants from Simcoe, Muskoka, Peterborough, and Wellington in Ontario. *Giiwe's* mailing list reached approximately 400 individuals, and its most well-attended activities have gathered over 60 participants. *Giiwe's* growth was supported by generous financial contributions from Grey County and Bruce County.

Regarding FNMI and non-FNMI coordination, *Giiwe* participants reported a stronger sense of coordination among their organizations. *Giiwe* improved coordination by identifying staff members who could be reached for collaboration requests at each participating organization, clarifying the preferred communication methods of each organization (e.g., email vs cellphone), and hosting a periodical community space to share updates and build relationships. As a result, *Giiwe's* participants reported a perceived increase in the number of referrals of FNMI individuals. Additionally, some *Giiwe* partner organizations requested M'Wikwedong's support in hosting ad-hoc *Giiwe* Circles for their organizations or sectors. Indeed, the Giiwe Coordinator organized *Giiwe* Circles for organizations linked to family services, community safety, community funding, health, municipal government, and environmental conservation. The positive feedback from these activities suggests that the *Giiwe* model may be successfully adapted to address FNMI and non-FNMI coordination and community-building in areas different than homelessness.

Giiwe fostered increased awareness about FNMI knowledges, history, experiences, and practices. For example, *Giiwe* participants reported increased knowledge about the intersections between settler colonialism and service provision in the context of Indigenous homelessness. Encouraged by the Calls to Action of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission, *Giiwe's* FNMI participants acknowledged that pursuing reconciliation required an ongoing commitment to hearing the perspectives of FNMI on service provision. Some *Giiwe* participants built relationships with FNMI guest speakers and invited them to share their knowledge within their organizations. Similarly, the *Giiwe* Coordinator supported non-FNMI organizations hosting staff training sessions for their agencies. Furthermore, some *Giiwe* participants contacted FNMI guest speakers to ask for support in their *personal* healing journeys. For the *Giiwe* Coordinator, positive personal changes can improve *professional* customer service for FNMI looking for housing and related support.

Regarding policy, *Giiwe* followed a non-interventionist approach consistent with thread sensibilities. For example, the *Giiwe* Coordinator compiled a list of ideas for organizational improvement that FNMI speakers shared at *Giiwe* Circles. While the list could be seen as a series of recommendations, in consultation with Elders and Knowledge Keepers, including Lori Kewaquom from Saugeen First Nation, M'Wikwedong chose to name the list *Shko Naaniibwida* in Anishinaabemowin, which can be translated to "Standing Strong Together." *Shko Naaniibwida* offers ideas that organizations can consider, interpret, and act on if they choose to. *Giiwe's* indirect approach to policy change was also exemplified by some *Giiwe* participants who developed and implemented FNMI-specific policies for service delivery within their organizations. Such policy changes sought to reduce service barriers and

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improve access. *Giiwe's* embracement of thread sensibilities did not prevent M'Wikwedong from adopting collaboration channels that may be more closely related to brick sensibilities. For instance, staff rotation was a barrier to Giiwe's slow-paced and relational approach to inter-organizational coordination. For this reason, M'Wikwedong offered *Giiwe* participants a Memorandum of Understanding template should they wish to establish institutionalized channels of coordination with this Friendship Centre.

Finally, *Giiwe's* contributions went beyond the systems prevention level. For example, a *Giiwe* Circle fostered momentum for M'Wikwedong and another FNMI organization to join forces and create a new program that addressed a gap in FNMI housing outreach. Both organizations successfully obtained funding for two full-time Homelessness Outreach Workers, rent supplements, and emergency funds. Serendipitously, the new collaborative program was already running when the first waves of the COVID-19 pandemic hit. This program was essential to respond to an increase in housing-related requests during the pandemic, a period that saw the number of households served doubling from 2019-2020 to 2020-2021. Moreover, M'Wikwedong collaborated with its *Giiwe* partner organizations in multiple collaborative funding applications, albeit not always successfully. For example, organizations in Grey-Bruce applied to the Designated Communities stream[4] of Reaching Home to bolster their collaborative housing and homelessness-related programs. Unfortunately, their application was not successful.

Discussion and Future Possibilities

In this paper, we presented the *Giiwe* model and its contributions. Through Western frameworks on homelessness prevention and inter-organizational collaboration, we characterized *Giiwe* as a systems prevention initiative that embraces a relational approach to improve social service access for FNMI living off-reserve in a small city surrounded by a large rural area in Canada. Additionally, we introduced the bricks and threads metaphor to help readers grasp potential differences in how Western and Indigenous worldviews approach inter-organizational collaboration. The *Giiwe* model is undoubtedly inspired by Indigenous ontologies, as illustrated through the thread metaphor. For this reason, our account of the components of the *Giiwe* model emphasizes relationships between FNMI and other communities, spirituality, FNMI knowledges, potential misunderstandings when collaborating across knowledge systems, and the relevance of fostering trusting relationships before acting. Our account of *Giiwe's* achievements highlighted the ability of this model to act as a platform of inter-organizational FNMI leadership, foster coordination among FNMI and non-FNMI organizations, increase awareness of FNMI knowledges and contexts, and promote the use and adaptation of FNMI-specific policies for service provision.

Our insider account of *Giiwe* used various theoretical lenses to situate and discuss the specificity of the presented model within contexts where a modern Western view of reality is often taken for granted. We found the metaphor of brick and thread sensibilities (Jimmy et al., 2019) helpful in highlighting potential differences between modern Western and Indigenous knowledge systems in the context of inter-organizational initiatives. However, our use of the bricks and threads metaphor is not without

[4] Designated Communities is a stream of Canada's homelessness strategy. This stream provides long-term stable funding to urban communities that experience significant challenges with houselessness.

caveats (Jimmy et al., 2019). When applying this metaphor to specific knowledge systems, it is essential to remember that components of brick and thread sensibilities may interact in any given program or policy, whether such initiatives stem from a particular Western or Indigenous context. Further, it is essential to reflect on the possibilities and constraints of language. Our writing of this paper in English privileges a brick sensibility, since English is a noun-oriented language that is consistent with substantive ontologies and their attention to *things*. Contrastingly, Indigenous languages such as Anishinaabemowin are verb-based (Borrows, 2018) and likely better able to convey the *relationships* and *movements* prioritized by relational ontologies.

As an inter-organizational collaboration approach grounded in root sensibilities, *Giiwe* excelled at building and nourishing relationships among Indigenous and non-Indigenous organizations. However, an intrinsic limitation of the model is that the creation of collaborative initiatives to address community priorities had to take place largely outside of the *Giiwe* circles. The creation of new programs to address community needs often happened through the language of brick sensibilities, which were better aligned with the criteria of funding competitions. Emphasizing this limitation is important, because it points to the complementarity of brick and thread sensibilities in inter-organizational collaboration processes.

This paper offers four main contributions. First, *Giiwe* adds to international examples of Indigenous-specific homelessness prevention models (Lawson-Te Aho et al., 2019; Vallesi et al., 2020), and methodological approaches proposed for collaboration with FNMI in the context of housing and homelessness (City of Toronto Shelter et al., 2018; Shelter Support and Housing Administration, 2019). In this regard, the contribution of our paper is to present, to our knowledge, the first published example of an inter-organizational homelessness prevention model led by an Indigenous organization. In doing so, *Giiwe* enacts previous policy recommendations on Indigenous homelessness published in this journal. Indeed, Oelke et al. (2016) suggested Friendship Centres–like M'Wikwedong–could be key in facilitating cultural safety and collaboration between FNMI and non-FNMI organizations. Second, our paper addresses a gap in inter-organizational collaboration approaches in small urban centres surrounded by large rural areas. This context has been favourable for *Giiwe* to establish and sustain relationships among staff and organizations that may play a role in homelessness prevention. Further research may explore the applicability of the *Giiwe* model for larger urban areas where it may be more challenging to improve inter-organizational coordination by nourishing person-to-person staff relationships.

The third contribution of this paper lies in the originality of its theoretical approach. The existing literature on systems and intersectoral approaches to homelessness prevention (Apicello, 2010; Culhane et al., 2011; Dej et al., 2020; Lindblom, 1991; Nicholas & Henwood, 2018; Shinn et al., 2001) primarily draws upon public health prevention models initially designed to address health issues from a *biomedical* standpoint; that is, to reduce the incidence and severity of disease related to the lack of adequate housing. However, homelessness is a complex *social, cultural, and political* issue for which biomedical prevention frameworks may be insufficient to redress the root causes of homelessness. In the context of Indigenous homelessness, there is a clear need to engage with theoretical orientations that actively engage with living legacies colonialism, including the increasingly financialized housing market that continues to dispossess Indigenous people from home and land. The brick metaphor allowed us to

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render visible modern Western assumptions that inevitably shape understandings of inter-organizational collaboration in the face of these larger structural forces. Similarly, the thread metaphor allowed us to convey the specificity and contributions of the *Giiwe* model in ways that may better resonate with Indigenous knowledge systems from across the globe. Presenting both brick and thread sensibilities is vital to highlight that neither orientation is inherently better than the other. Yet, the contributions of inter-organizational processes grounded on thread sensibilities are inadvertently overlooked by existing homelessness prevention frameworks that do not acknowledge the existence and relevance of non-modern ontologies.

The fourth contribution of this paper lies at the intersection between the *Giiwe* model and relational approaches to inter-organizational coordination stemming from scholarship aligned with modern worldviews (Bopp et al., 2016; Markoff et al., 2005; Phipps et al., 2020). Both approaches pay attention to how human relationships impact coordination among organizations. However, there are also significant differences. For example, the *Giiwe* model embraces spirituality and non-human relationality, metaphoric uses of language, and establishing an explicitly multi-epistemic collaborative space—aspects absent in the modern relational approaches. Conversely, modern relational approaches emphasized concepts like service integration, health equity, mutuality, authenticity, and learning across professional differences. Our comparison of relational approaches to homelessness prevention is not meant to inquire whether there is an approach that is inherently better than the other. Instead, we encourage further dialogue on the similarities and differences among relational approaches to inter-organizational collaboration that draw on brick and thread sensibilities. Such discussion could offer fresh insights to position the relevance of relationships when addressing complex issues like homelessness and inter-organizational coordination.

Taken together, the four contributions of this paper have significant implications for Indigenous policy and practice in contexts where a modern Western view of reality is dominant. If Western institutions are serious about embracing Indigenous knowledge systems, the worldviews within which programs and policies are created, implemented, and evaluated need to be pluralized so that those operating from thread sensibilities have more room to flourish. In Canada, the *Giiwe* model may interest organizations involved in funding, designing, or implementing collaborative homelessness prevention initiatives, including those involved in Reaching Home. Internationally, the *Giiwe* model may interest funders, policymakers, and social service organizations that strongly encourage or mandate Indigenous and non-Indigenous partnerships in the context of homelessness prevention. Finally, in assessing the applicability of the *Giiwe* model within international contexts, it is crucial to notice that most sources we have cited in this paper come from English-speaking countries linked to the British Empire, including Australia, Aotearoa/New Zealand, the USA, and Canada. Communities impacted by French, Spanish, Dutch, and other Empires likely face context-specific governance and Indigenous resurgence efforts that need to be accounted for.

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Appendix I - Selected Indigenous-led inter-organizational partnerships addressing homelessness in Canada

Name and location	Type	Highlights
Aboriginal Standing Committee on Housing and Homelessness (ASCHH) Calgary, Alberta	Homelessness-specific committee	*Has operated since 1999 and in 2011 had 50 committee members from both FNMI and non-FNMI organizations (ASCHH, 2011). *Published a plan to end FNMI homelessness in Calgary (ASCHH, 2012).
Indigenous Homelessness Steering Committee Metro Vancouver, British Columbia	Homelessness-specific committee	*Works with other organizations in a systems-based approach to addressing homelessness for the Greater Vancouver Region (Greater Vancouver Community Homelessness Plan, 2020). *Created a homelessness community plan articulating policy priorities (Doberstein, 2016).
Montreal Urban Aboriginal Strategy Network (MUASN) Montreal, Quebec	Network with a housing and homelessness subcommittee	*Published a report on FNMI housing needs and preferences (Latimer et al., 2018). *Published a report on recommendations for the wellbeing of FNMI experiencing homelessness (Tam et al., 2020).
Toronto Aboriginal Social Services Council (TASSC) Toronto, Ontario	Council with work on housing and homelessness	*A research, policy and advocacy organization formed by 18 FNMI member organizations (TASSC, 2022). *Published reports on engagement strategies (City of Toronto Shelter et al., 2018), improving social service delivery for FNMI (TASSC and Well Living House, 2019), and the homelessness experience of Two-Spirit, LGTB*QIA Youth (TASSC, 2014).
Ottawa Aboriginal Coalition (OAC) Ottawa, Ontario	Coalition with work on housing and homelessness	*Has successfully achieved policy changes to housing allowance eligibility criteria (OAC, 2019), and involved in point-in-time homelessness counts (OAC & The City of Ottawa, 2022).

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Inuvik Interagency Committee Inuvik, Northwest Territories	Committee with work on housing and homelessness	*Network of over 30 FNMI and non-FNMI organizations operating since the early 2000s (Christensen, 2013). *Published two reports on the state of homelessness in their region (Christensen, 2013).
Ottawa's Aboriginal Working Committee (AWC) Ottawa, Ontario	City Advisory Committee	*Founded in 2007, it comprises nine non-FNMI organizations and ten FNMI organizations (City of Ottawa, n.d.). *Reported achievements include increased funding on case-management and improvements to Housing First services (OAWC, 2018).
Toronto's Aboriginal Affairs Advisory Committee (AAC) Toronto, Ontario	City Advisory Committee	*Formal advisory body to Toronto's City Council and composed of fourteen organizations serving FNMI in Toronto (City of Toronto, n.d.). *Collaborated with city departments to provide permanent affordable housing for FNMI residents in the downtown's core (Abele et al., 2012).