



October 25 2024



# Growing & Harvesting Collective Action

## 2024 GATHERING FINAL REPORT



Canadian  
CED Network  
Réseau canadien  
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## Opening Statement

The Gathering 2024 was a significant day to connect our local community and social economy to a larger movement for change. Over 320 participants, presenters, and volunteers came together at Children of the Earth high school to learn, laugh, and experience Community Economic Development in action.

The Gathering Opening explored how communities are harvesting the rewards of collaborative economic transformation. We began with a song and blessing from Elder Mae Louise Campbell and Jamie Goulet from the Clan Mothers Healing Village. Elder Mae encouraged us to LISTEN hard, actively, and critically. We are called to be in the space in-between and we have the power to change ourselves.

Chiyi Tam, from the Toronto Chinatown Land Trust, explored the concept of community land trusts and encouraged us to shake up the status quo. Chiyi called us to IMAGINE economic alternatives rooted in community ownership, wealth, and economic justice. Chiyi offered us transformative solutions that work, and folks are already responding to the call, thinking about how community land trusts could be part of our landscape here.

Demian Lawrenchuk, from Food Matters Manitoba, shared teachings from the muskeg, the moss, and the roaring rivers of the North. These stories taught us our pursuit of social and economic change should be rooted in celebrating the beauty of life and the community that surrounds us. He called us to LOVE and RESPECT.

Our collective knowledge and experience grew with three workshop opportunities during the day. Workshops were presented by local community builders on topics like intercultural storytelling, creating inclusive spaces, rural CED, cooperatives, and social enterprise. Participants learned from panels and presentations, and from small group sharing.

Throughout the day, greater collaboration was facilitated, solidified, and propelled toward a collective vision for change. The Gathering continues to serve as a connector for community builders.



Michael Barkman, Marlis Funk, Genevieve Dack-Tittley

*~ CCEDNet Manitoba Gathering staff team*

## ABOUT THE GATHERING

The Gathering is an annual pay-what-you-can event where Manitoba's community builders connect, learn, and celebrate success. It is open to all from staff of community organizations to students, funders, civil servants, academics, or anyone interested in community development and community economic development.

For 22 years, Manitoba community builders have gathered every fall to connect over a shared meal, to learn from one another's work, and to celebrate the challenging but necessary practice of building stronger communities.

The goals of the Gathering are:

- **Network and Information Sharing:** connecting community builders to share our stories and foster partnerships
- **Mentorship & Peer Learning:** community-led learning focused on practices and strategies to build more inclusive, equitable, and sustainable communities and economies
- **Action & Innovation:** creating a space for sharing successes, challenges, and questions for community building work
- **Agenda Setting:** reinvigorating efforts for change in our communities and organizations toward the theme of the year



In community work, we are called to collaborate with our colleagues, stakeholders, funders, community members, or across movements. The Gathering helps to facilitate, solidify, and forge greater collaboration between and among community builders.

## Community-Engaged Planning

The Gathering Design Team was responsible for setting objectives, goals, and shaping the theme, identifying potential funding sources, keynote speakers, and considering the role of the Gathering in the wider community economic development context in Winnipeg. It was comprised of key CCEDNet members representing relevant funders and target sectors: Clan Mothers Healing Village, Fort Whyte Farms, United Way Winnipeg, Manitoba Research Alliance/Canadian Centre for Policy Alternatives, Manitoba League for Persons with Disabilities, Fireweed Food Co-op, Assiniboine Credit Union, Red River College Social Innovation and Community Development, Brandon Neighbourhood Renewal Corporation, and Portage la Prairie Community Renewal Corporation.

The Gathering has always relied on community stakeholders to provide the programming for the event. This year the Gathering was made up of programming contributions from 64 different community stakeholders, representing 38 different community organizations.

## Key Outcomes: Increased Knowledge & Collaboration

*“Great, incredible conference with many incredible workshops available to take part in. I was glad to be a participant and only regret not having more people from my workplace attend or that there were two of me so I could have participated in more workshops.” – Gathering attendee*



*“Listening to the success stories and impact of community-led initiatives reignited my motivation. It was inspiring to see that no matter the scale, our work has the potential to make a meaningful difference.”*

*– Gathering attendee*

*“One of the most accessible learning and networking events in the city.” – Gathering attendee*

*“The opening plenary was everything! Having the privilege to listen and be called into action instead of despair was the highlight of my week, month, etc. I love that they held us accountable, taught us, and renewed a sense of fire and hope within me to bring back to my community and work.” – Gathering attendee*

*“All three of the keynote speakers spoke to my soul and it was clear in the room that this was true for so many. So much humour, love and care was shared through each speakers words and stories. Thank-you for that.” – Gathering attendee*



Following the Gathering, a survey was sent out to all registrants asking for feedback. The responses are used to improve the Gathering and ensure that it continues to meet the needs of our community and sector.

350 people registered for the Gathering. 320 attended the day's events. Of the 320 participants who attended the day's events, 87 completed the survey, a 27% response rate.



The following are the results of the survey:

- 97% of respondents reported the Gathering increased their sense of collaboration for their work
- 98% of respondents reported that the learning offered at the Gathering was useful
- 95% of respondents reported they now feel more familiar with Community Economic Development and Community Development in Manitoba
- 83% of respondents reported they have achieved opportunities to network and build relationships and connections
- 67.5% of respondents found the Gathering overall very good, with 31.3% reporting a good overall experience. Resulting in a 99% positive experience of the Gathering

This year we saw a slightly lower survey response rate than last year (33% in 2023 compared to this year's 27%). From these responses we are thrilled to report that 98% of respondents reported an overall positive experience at the Gathering. A feeling that has remained steadfast through the years is the sense of usefulness of the event. These statistics are important because it shows practitioners in Manitoba continue to see the event as useful and a valuable piece of their work.

The Gathering continues to primarily be a space for connecting and learning, in the hopes of future shared action. Most respondents indicated that networking, building relations, and connections was their primary take away from the event (83% of respondents reported they achieved opportunities to network and build relations and connections). This is an increase from last year's survey. Furthermore, we saw the largest increase concerning participants' sense of collaboration. 97% of participants said the Gathering increased their sense of collaboration versus 2023's 88%. We are thrilled that connection and networking, pillars of the Gathering, were so well received.



# Audience/Attendance

## A GATHERING FOR ALL

Our vision of a future where there is “enough, for all, forever” really does mean for all. Increasing ease of access for people of every identity and ability and aligning our work with our values and vision of the future is at the heart of transforming our economy, systems, and practices. We acknowledge this is a practice we must keep working at, so we might not get it all right, but at the Gathering, this is how we work to support accessibility and align with our values.

- Offered a pay-what-you-can fee so financial access is less of a concern
- American Sign Language (ASL) interpreters during the Opening Plenary and available upon request
- Wheelchair accessible venue
- Reserved seating at the front of the main gymnasium for those who experience hearing or mobility issues.
- A quiet room for those needing a quiet place
- Scent-free event
- Offering both Gender-neutral and gendered washrooms
- We’ve attempted to include food for a variety of dietary needs. Leftover food was donated to the Leftovers Foundation.
- In efforts to reduce our environmental impact, all dishware and cutlery on site was compostable.
- Childcare available on site
- In every decision possible, we purchased and contracted with local suppliers, focusing on social enterprises and cooperatives creating job opportunities for local people.

Total registration for the Gathering this year was 350 people. During our planning, we set a goal of 320 registrants, 30 people lower than last year’s event as the venue this year was smaller. Of these registrants, 320 participated in the in-person event at Children of the Earth high school, representing 95 unique organizations.

Additionally, we asked participants if they self-identified with a selection of equity seeking groups, and the results were as follows:

Women	2SLGBTQ*	Indigenous	Person of Colour	Newcomer	Low-income	Person with a disability	Rural/Northern	Linguistic minority
57%	15%	21%	10%	8%	10%	9%	2%	7%

We also collected data on participants past Gathering attendance and history. Traditionally the Gathering is known as an introductory space for folks new to the sector and Network. The data below shows this assumption to be correct for the 2024 Gathering:

- 50% reported this was their first Gathering
- 35% attended 1-5 times previously
- 7% attended 5-10 times previously
- 5% attended 10+ times previously

While the data indicates an overwhelming majority of first-time attendees and confirms that the Gathering is a space for folks new to the work, it does show 47% of participants returning to the event more than once. We continue to consider how the Gathering can serve the needs of long-time leaders and community builders in the sector to learn and connect, while recognizing many attend the Gathering as an introductory space.

## Program

### INCLUSIVE AND INDIGENOUS PROGRAMMING

The Gathering Design Team and CCEDNet staff prioritized conversations about inclusive and Indigenous programming within the Gathering. This topic was a specific area of conversation during Gathering Design Team meetings, as well as at the foundation of all theme and programming conversations. Ensuring the Gathering priorities anti-oppression, equity, accessibility, and inclusion remains a constant focus, knowing that we need these voices and perspectives to fully understand community building in Manitoba. We consider the backgrounds and identities of those that speak or ‘hold the microphone’ at the Gathering to ensure communities are represented, particularly those made vulnerable or marginal by current systems.

We have noted areas of improvement against previous Gatherings, particularly concerning representation of Black, Racialized, and other People of Colour.

The Gathering Design Team and CCEDNet staff prioritized the inclusion of Indigenous culture and ceremony throughout the Gathering. This year’s Gathering started in a good way with a smudge from Jolene Wilson, an opening welcome and blessing by Elder Mae Louise Campbell, and a keynote address by Demian Lawrenchuk. Prioritizing Indigenous content and speakers was a key consideration in developing the programming. We are committed to strengthening relations and improvement to ensure the Gathering involves, prioritizes, and gives space to Indigenous wisdom and ways of knowing.



## LEARNING

Our programming goal was to build solidarity and belonging among the Network and community builders through peer-led learning and collaborative capacity building in service of a deeper understanding of challenges, priorities, and vision in our work in community economic development.

Acknowledging different learning styles was central in the program development. To accommodate different learning needs and preferences the program was designed with a mix of panels, peer learning, and training sessions. In total, the Gathering offered 39 learning sessions.

Below is the breakdown of the three types of sessions the Gathering hosted:

- Opening Plenary: Plenary style, all participants, speakers and attendees heard from the Gathering's Elder and keynote speakers.
- Panel Discussion: Primarily listening-only events, chat conversations encouraged, some audience Q&A.
- Workshops: More participatory, smaller group discussions, more direct learning and participation.

## OPENING PLENARY

The Gathering Opening was a chance to see that participant's work as a community builder is part of an even bigger movement for change. Our communities and economies face serious challenges. The Gathering Opening shared stories of how communities are growing collective action to tackle these challenges, whether it be the housing crisis, food security, climate justice, or more. Together, participants explored how communities are harvesting the rewards of collaborative work to ensure our communities are sites of economic transformation.





## Speakers:



**Elder Mae Louise Campbell,  
with Jamie Goulet**  
*Clan Mothers Healing Village*



**Chiyi Tam**  
*Toronto Chinatown Land Trust*



**Demian Lawrenchuk**  
*Food Matters Manitoba*

## WORKSHOPS:

WORKSHOP 1 (Morning)	FACILITATOR(S)
Economic Innovation for a Just transition	Marianne Cerilli
Your Impact Has Value: Earn Unrestricted Funds Through Social Enterprise	Matthew Rempel (Strategy Made Simple)
Ideal Communities and CED 101	Brendan Reimer (Assiniboine Credit Union)
Introduction to Harm Reduction	Erica McNabb (Manitoba Harm Reduction Network)
Cultivating Cultural Competence and Bridging Differences Through Folktales and Story-telling	Robyn Penner Thiessen (RTP Consulting), Amna Burki (StoriesMatter)
Entrepreneurship Initiatives for Muslim Women	Humaira Jaleel, Amna Iqbal, Afsheen Siddiqui (Healthy Muslim Families)
Social Justice and Taking Action	Sandra Krahn (The Manitoba Association of Rights and Liberties)
Fighting for Social and Economic Human Rights: Make Poverty History Manitoba	Molly McCracken (Canadian Centre for Policy Alternatives-MB), Desiree McIvor (Make Poverty History MB)
Thriving Organizations- Aligning Financial Strength and Community Impact	Kristi Rivait (Scale Collaborative)
Advocating for Equity: Harnessing GBA Plus to Drive Systemic Change in the Settlement Sector	Dr. Sally Ogoe, Erika Frey Moore (Manitoba Association of Newcomer Serving Organization)
People-Powered Cybersecurity: Cultivating a Culture of Digital Safety	Hernan Popper (POPP3R Cybersecurity)
Organizing and Advocacy: The Right to Housing Coalition Model	Kirsten Bernas, Shauna MacKinnon (Right to Housing)
A Guide to Tax Credits with CED	Philip Mikulec (Peg City Car Co-op)

WORKSHOP 2 (afternoon)	FACILITATOR(S)
Winds of Change: Living Strategy	Mathhew Rempel (Strategy Made Simple)
Pla, Grow, Sustain Your Social Enterprise	Sabrina Musto (Buy Social Canada)
Co-ops 101: Exploring Different Kinds of Co-ops	Vera Goussaert (Manitoba Cooperatives Association), Michelle Kirkbride (NorWest Co-op Community Health)
Harm Reduction Check-In for Community Organizations	Erica McNabb (Manitoba Harm Reduction Network)
Issues and Innovation at Construction Social Enterprises	Jonah Pearce (Sixteenth Letter Collaborative)
Supporting Refugee Claimants: Legal Clinics, Employment and Mental Health Services	Humaira Jaleel, Muhammad Zain Munshi, Omar Fahmawi, Hani A. Al-Ubeady (Healthy Muslim families)
The Walls to Bridges Program	Chanelle Lajoie (Walls-to-Bridges)
Working Across Differences: Applying a Lived Experience of Disability Analysis to our Work	Melissa Graham, Sheryl Peters, Ella Rockar, Debby McLeod (Manitoba League for Persons with Disabilities)
Mental Health Thinking: Leading People, Creativity, and Well-Being Over Profits	Uyen Pham (ArtBeat Studio)
Ageism: How to recognize and Confront the Last Acceptable Societal “Ism”	Kathy Majowski (HART/WHRA)
What is Social Finance and What it is Not	Carinna D’Abramo Rosales (SEED Winnipeg), Peter Cantelon (Jubilee Fund)

WORKSHOP 3 (afternoon)	FACILITATOR(S)
The Case for Rural Public Transit in Manitoba	Hannah Muhajarine, Bethany Daman (MB Climate Action Team)
Reflections on Transforming the Non-Profit Sector: Building Capacity for AOP in Your Organization	Erica McNabb (Righting Relations), Kelsey Guyot, Cara McCaskill (Heartwood Healing Centre)
Using ACT (Acceptance and Commitment Therapy) in Community Work	Rebecca Trudeau, Nicole Closs (YMCA-YWCA of Winnipeg Mental Health Services)
Community in a Changing Climate	Christy Allen, Erika MacPherson, Matthew Loxley (Prairie Climate Centre)
AI Uses and Ethics for Collective Action	Melissa Chung Mowat and Liz Cron (Blueprint Inc.)
Village Co-operative's Laundry Initiative: Community Built Together	Gerrie Prymak, Judith Harris, Virginia Hunter, Vivian Sence, Edda Livingstone (Village Co-operative)
Co-Creating with Youth in Supported Employment Programs	Connor Milligan, Kayla Penelton (Fort Whyte Farms)
Growing Collective Action Through our Strategic Plan	Laurie Ringaert (Change Weavers Consulting)
Community Collaboration...Collective Action	Linda Brown, Serena Bittner, Marg Fraser (MB Association of Senior Communities)
Renewing Community Development in Manitoba: Alternatives for Inclusive Community Renewal	Jesse Hajer, Holly Scotland (University of Manitoba), Michael Barkman (Canadian CED Network)



## Social Purchasing

In every decision possible, we purchased and contracted with local suppliers, focusing on social enterprises and cooperatives, then local businesses creating job opportunities for local people. Social enterprise Spruce Catering provided food for the event, and the Leftovers Foundation picked up our extra food. Green Action Centre's social enterprise Compost Winnipeg provided compost services for the event to help minimize our waste. Social Enterprise Happy Sprouts: Childminding Services (from West Central Women's Resource Centre) provided childminding during the event.

Local businesses that we contracted included E-Quality Communication Centre of Excellence for American Sign Language interpretation, Tracey O'Neil of Simple Life Designs for the Gathering's logo and graphics, Travis Ross for Photography, and Dave Sherman of Pop Entertainment for event planning assistance.



## Partners and Funders

The Gathering is possible through major partner and event founder, United Way Winnipeg, along with a host of other local and national partners. Partner contributions allow the Gathering to continue offering a pay-what-you-can registration fee, removing a potential financial barrier for community members and participants interested in deepening their understanding of community development. Offering a pay-what-you-can event with the support of sponsors allows the event to be as accessible and inclusive as possible.

### Thank you to our Gathering Founding Partner



### Inclusion, Equity, and Accessibility Partner



### Supported by



### Celebrating Partners



### Learning Partners



### Connecting Partners



Many thanks to our lead event partner United Way Winnipeg. We're grateful for the 2024 partners and funders The Winnipeg Foundation, Prairies Economic Development Canada, Assiniboine Credit Union, Buy Social Canada, Human Rights Internet, Research Manitoba, Manitoba Building Trades, Manitoba Research Alliance, Food and Beverage Manitoba, RRC Polytech, Me-Dian Credit Union, Manitoba Federation of Labour, The Manitoba Teachers' Society, University of Manitoba Faculty of Economics, Payworks, Mangrove, Brandon Neighbourhood Renewal Corporation, HTFC Planning and Design, Arctic Co-operatives Limited, and Community Futures Westman.



## Moving Forward

We were honoured to host the 22nd anniversary of the Gathering. For future years, our Gathering guideposts and goals remain necessary and relevant. Creative and deeply community-led learning and collaboration that strengthens action towards inclusive, sustainable, and equitable communities is the heart of this event. We will continue to host the Gathering Design Team as a representative body from the various communities and sectors, turning to them for guidance and accountability. Our decision making will continue to be guided by our strategic priorities, and we will continue to do our best to create a space for community builders to thrive.

**We are grateful that you are a supporter of this work.**

