



Road Map through Engagement Session 1:

Original Session July 24, 2019

Artwork and Roadmap by Dawn Marie Marchand

Background:

Dawn Marie was approached by members of the City of Edmonton-Indigenous Relations Office and Integrated Strategic Development to create an artwork that would encapsulate the essence of a community engagement session that would inform future work with the Indigenous Communities of Edmonton. She found upon reviewing all the support materials that the conversations at the various tables centred around 4 main themes; financial support, staff/training, ombudsman/advocacy office and culturally safe space/s. Once she organized them according to the main themes; she then noticed trends within them and in some cases underlying considerations that spanned all of them. The following is a short guide to how to read/engage with this artwork.

The Ribbons:



Set 1: Voices that need to be present/heard

Purple: Elders

Blue: Invested members of the Indigenous Community effected (Authentic Voice)

Yellow: Youngers



Set 2: Important Factors to bring to the work

White: Knowledge of Indigenous stories and histories

Red: Cultural Informed Practise

Pink: Trauma Informed Practise

Dark Green: Consistent Communication

Blue: Protocol



Set 3: Immediate Next Steps

Pale Yellow: Action

Based on

Royal Blue: Active listening

Blue: Protocol

Repetitive Patterns:



Hoof prints:

During the time of the Indian Wars in the South; many prisoners of war were given ledger paper and ink to offset the boredom of their incarceration by drawing. At first the drawings were considered a primitive novelty and sold by prison officials to raise funds. Using the oral history of the relatives of those incarcerated and careful analysis of the content in the later 20th Century, these drawing later were recognized as the stories of colonial history from the Indigenous perspective. There were certain symbols which later were recognized as universal representations to illustrate the two different groups of people. One was the reference of hoof prints:

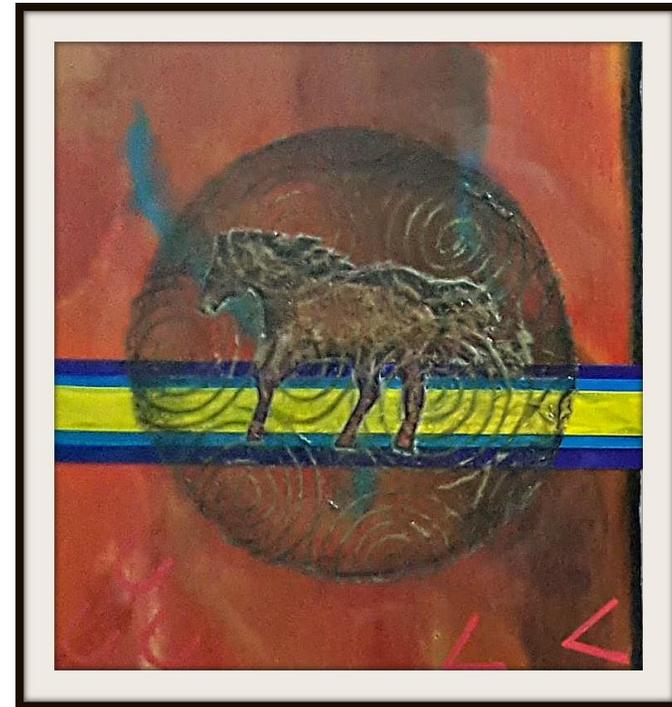
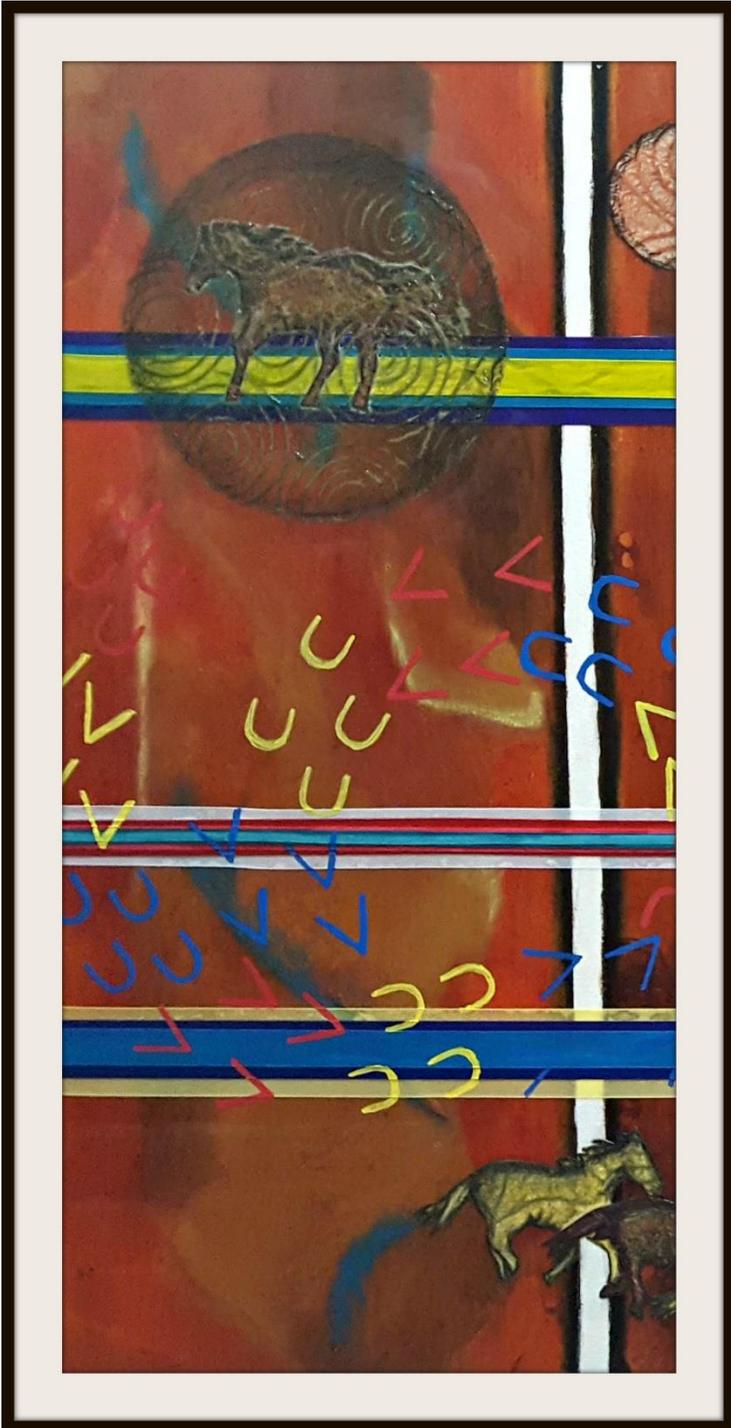
- Calvary horses were shod. They used horseshoes. For this image, she used them to represent the funding agencies.
- > Indigenous horses were not shod therefore, their hoofprints were shaped as a v. She used this image to represent the invested Indigenous community.



Dots:

Represents Indigenous governance and pedagogical structures. They start in the Training panel, through the Advocacy panel to the Homefire of the Space panel. This represents the use and influence of these things in the work. They are the heart of any work around culturally safe spaces.

Financial Support



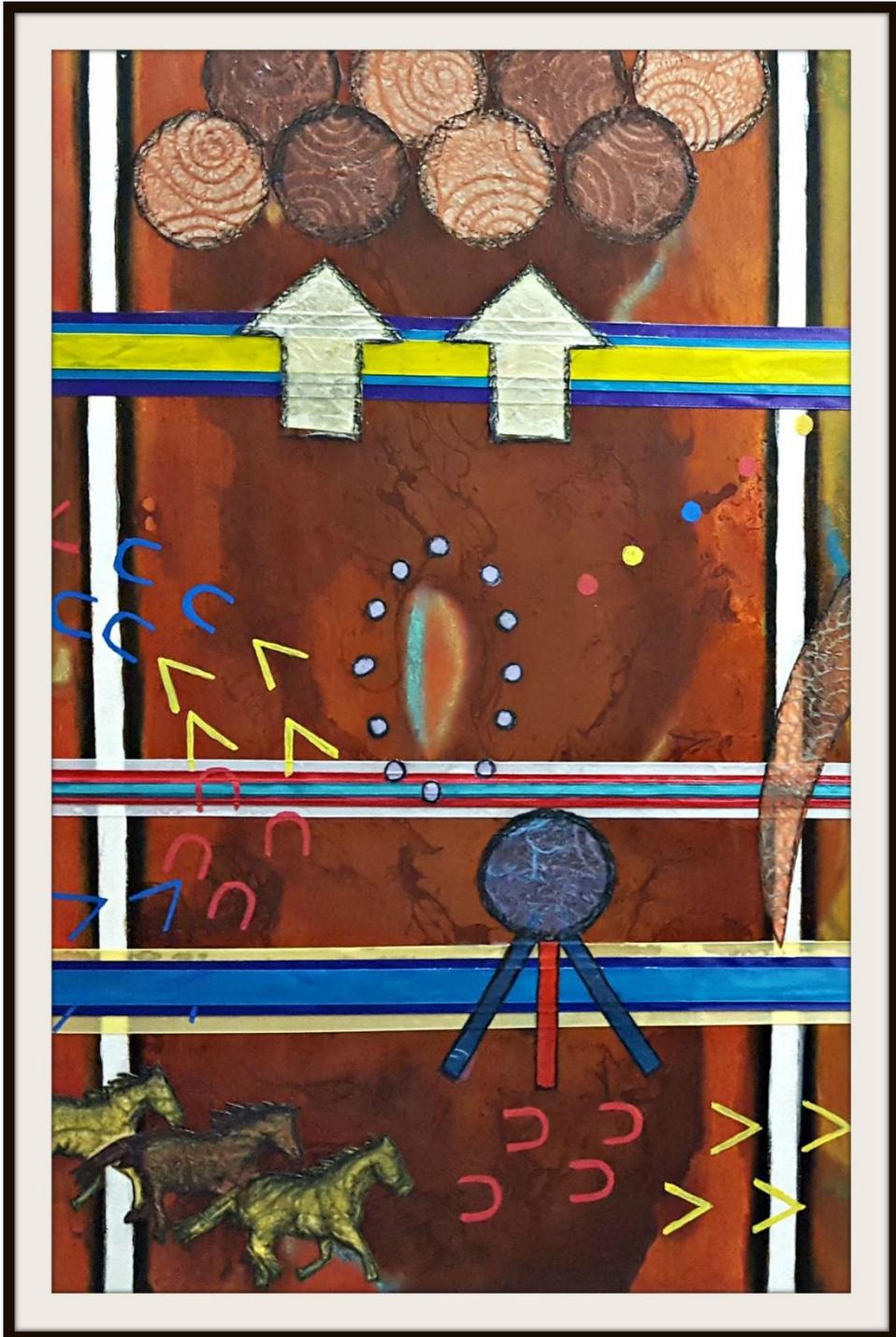
In pre-contact times, horses were used as currency and status symbols in this territory. She chose to use the horse to symbolize financial concerns that were raised. The above image has a dual meaning that were brought forward. The first meaning is that there seems to be funding applied in the start of a project but that the funding is not sustained leading to many promising projects started with little follow through. The second is that the funding model covers the horse, meaning that sometimes the funding bureaucracy or stipulations work to minimize effectiveness to the community by diverting funds or creating barriers.



This hoof print pattern represents that start up funding decisions must be made in collaboration with the Indigenous Community input. The funders must follow the community to understand the priorities and direction. Due to systemic imbalances what looks like moving backwards is actually regrouping to pick up on skills and capital that is often assumed by privilege. Once the community has closed the gaps they can continue the course.



The horses running to the end of the painting also has multitude of meanings. The setting of the course is represented by the 3 horses. The people set the tone, the speed and the destination. The funding still follows the people. The funding also must be sustainable and long lasting which is why it runs along the base of the painting. Finally, funding must be committed to all three quadrants; City staff and training, advocacy and space.



Training/Staff



This circle surrounded by purple circles represents Indigenous governance and pedagogy. According to the notes of this session some of the things focused on were:

Inclusion of Elders, women and youth perspectives.

Consensus building.

Recognition of Indigenous history and natural law.

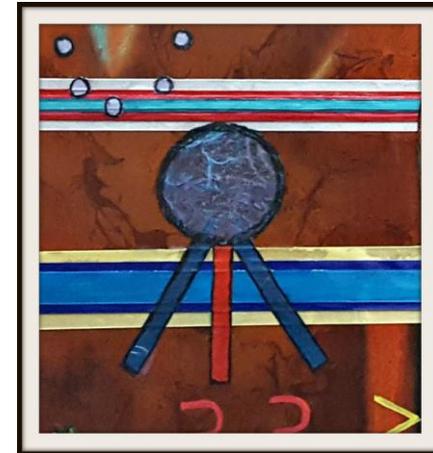
Protocol.

Staff professional development should take this into consideration. Ideally all Indigenous Staff would know this and general staff would have an awareness of it if working with the community.



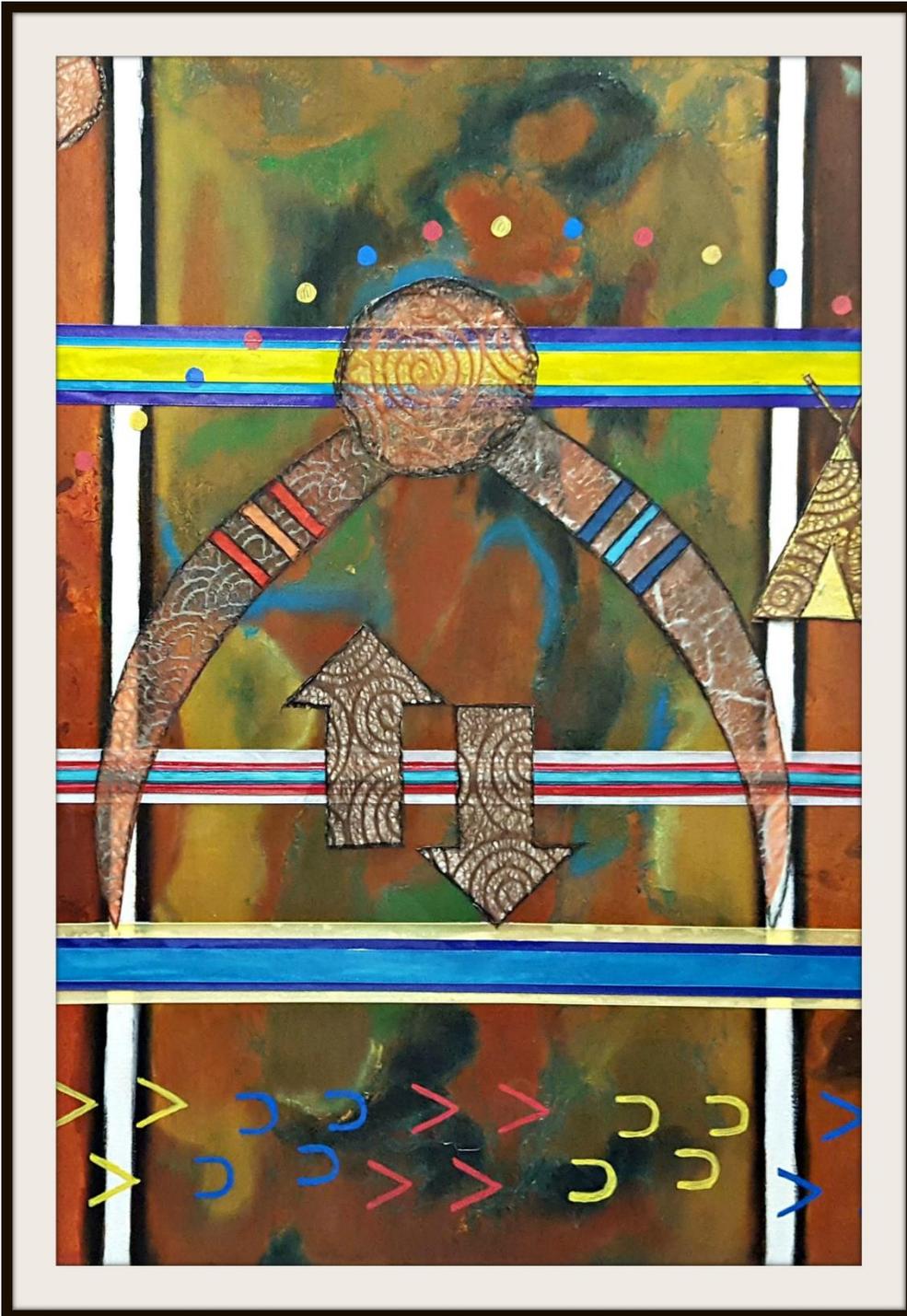
All staff working with the Indigenous community should have training in Indigenous History, Governance and Protocol.

City of Edmonton Indigenous Staff should be highlighted and supported.



There was a mention of the “personal work” required of staff to really be effective with understanding cultural and generational traumas that influence the Indigenous Community. The blue circle represents the personal work. The three areas that need to be recognized are: personal bias and prejudice against Indigenous people, personal and generational privilege and how colonial history erases or minimizes the intergenerational and structural violence imposed against Indigenous people.

Ombudsman/Advocacy Office



There were multiple references to a separate advocacy body that both listened to the community and was accountable to it. Some called it an Ombudsman. It was a space that allowed people to register their experiences within public City of Edmonton encounters where they feel that they have been unfairly treated. At the same time, this office would advocate to move the relationship towards meeting national and international standards and recommendations.



The arrow down represents the accountability down towards the community by advocating for and not limited to:

Implementation of the UN Declaration for Rights of Indigenous Peoples (UNDRIP)

Implementation of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission: Calls to Action

Indigenous history and voice reflected in projects affecting them.

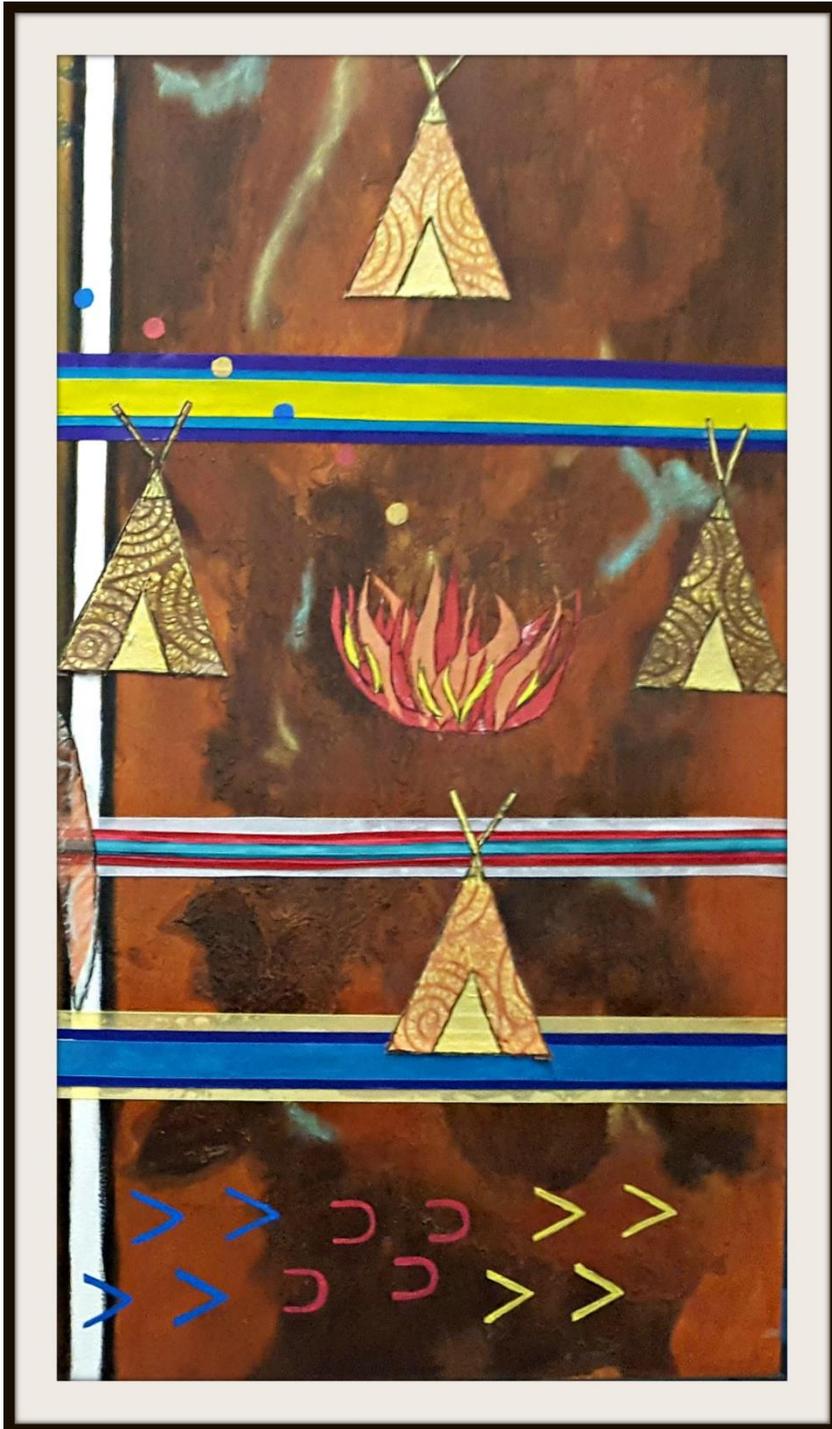
The arrow up represents the information from the community going up into the advocacy office. This includes and are not limited to:

People running into systemic barriers to limit access, deny access or delay access to City of Edmonton public services.

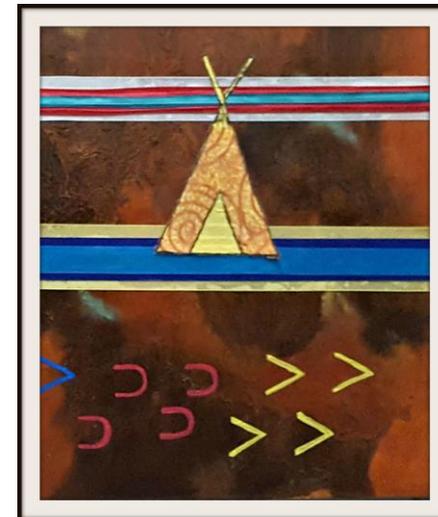
People running into discrimination and/or prejudice accessing City of Edmonton public services.

People running into ignorance of historical, generational and intergenerational trauma when dealing with City of Edmonton public services.

Space/Spaces



Two suggestions were prevalent. One was for a singular Indigenous space and the other was for multiple spaces. Dawn Marie used the homefire to represent the centralized safe cultural space indicated.



The tipis in the four directions indicate smaller, community driven spaces.

Personal Reflections:

The best I can do in a project like this is to reflect the information brought to me. I believe that I have done a fairly decent job of that. I think it is important to state that not every point was brought forward in this painting. For example, there were places where poverty and homelessness were directly implied as an issue. This is true, these are issues brought forward by generational and intergenerational trauma. However, generational and intergenerational trauma affect all and not all are homeless or poverty stricken. Not all poverty is represented by reliance on social programs and assistance. I would caution anyone working within this new framework to fall into a trap of convenience. Unwrapping the truth and the core of the relationship may mean that listening to the voice beneath the most overpowering one. Systemic underfunding has created an advocacy continuum where two very loud demanding voices with differing ideologies gain the most attention but most of us live somewhere in between. If you only plan your work around the voices of the homeless and poor, you will alienate working poor, middle class and entrepreneurs. If you only plan around middle class and entrepreneurs, you alienate working poor and homeless.

Consensus takes time unless you have the same people around the table all the time; then it becomes an echo and the work stagnates. It is also foreign to most people including Indigenous people thanks to Indian Residential Schools and the 60's Scoop. Do the homework to bring the invested voices to the table, not just someone who earns a wage advocating but lacks the actual recent lived experience. Model consensus building through diverse challenges.

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