
REPORT ON GOVERNANCE



NATIONAL ABORIGINAL NETWORK FOR ARTS ADMINISTRATION
(NANAA)

HONOURING INDIGENOUS ARTS LEADERSHIP

PREPARED BY FRANCE TRÉPANIÉ
FOR NANAA NATIONAL WORKING GROUP
JUNE 2011

TABLE OF CONTENTS

| | |
|--------------------------------------|----------|
| INTRODUCTION | 2 |
| PRINCIPLES OF GOOD GOVERNANCE | 3 |
| INDIGENOUS GOVERNANCE MODELS | 5 |
| WIIDOOKODAADIWIN | 7 |
| <i>VISION, MISSION AND MANDATE</i> | 8 |
| <i>DECISION-MAKING PROCESS</i> | 9 |
| <i>GOVERNANCE MODEL</i> | 9 |

INTRODUCTION

The National Aboriginal Network for Arts Administration (NANAA) is a collective composed of First Nations, Métis and Inuit arts leaders, arts administrators and artists.

In 2001, the Manitoba Arts Council, with the support of the Canada Council for the Arts, organized a gathering of Aboriginal staff members of the federal, provincial and territorial arts funders. This meeting provided an opportunity for Aboriginal people, working as program officers, to network and strategize about the funding of Aboriginal arts in Canada.

Over the years, the format of the gatherings was modified to focus on the work of Aboriginal arts administrators rather than the arts funding institutions. The themes of these meetings have been informed by the artistic and cultural work carried out by Aboriginal Elders, youth, administrators, scholars and artists.

In July 2008, the National Working Group (NWG) undertook organizational development for NANAA. This exercise provided the working group members with an opportunity to:

- look at the history of the gatherings
- articulate the vision of the collective
- examine the general goals and the annual themes of the gatherings
- examine the values, skills and strengths that NANAA can build on
- define short term and long term objectives

Over the years the organizational structure has remained informal while benefiting from the capacities found in the communities that have hosted the gatherings. This absence of a formal structure has allowed for a flexible approach and kept the administrative costs extremely low.

In 2010, a capacity building retreat was held in Toronto, thanks to a grant from the Aboriginal Arts Office of the Canada Council for the Arts. The members of the NWG spent three days together, developing guiding principles, values, vision, mission and an organizational structure.

The current vision of NANAA is:

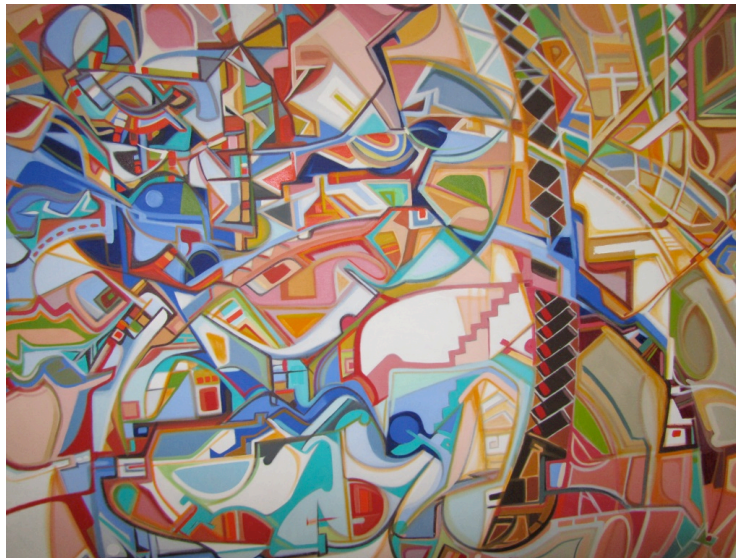
“Indigenous Art Leadership is Honoured”

The purpose of the current document is to propose a governance model and an organizational structure that will serve this vision.

PRINCIPLES OF GOOD GOVERNANCE

Governance is the traditions (norms, values, culture, language) and institutions (formal structures, organizations, practices) that a community uses to make decisions and accomplish its goals. At the heart of the concept of governance is the creation of effective, accountable and legitimate systems and processes whereby citizens articulate their interest, exercise their rights and responsibilities, and reconcile their differences.

The National Centre for First Nations
Governance, Principles to Support Effective
Governance, 2008.



Untitled, Alex Janvier, 2010

In their publication *'Aboriginal Governance in the Decade Ahead'*¹, John Graham and Jake Wilson state that good governance is about achieving desired results, but achieving them in the right way. Since the 'right way' is largely shaped by the cultural norms and values of the organization, there is no universal template for good governance. The authors insist that each organization must tailor its own definition of good governance to suit its needs and values.

¹ Institute on Governance, 2004

Nevertheless, there are guiding principles for good governance. The United Nation Development Program (UNPD) has defined nine of them. They are:

- participation
- consensus orientation
- strategic vision
- responsiveness
- effectiveness & efficiency
- accountability
- transparency
- equity
- rule of law (policies)

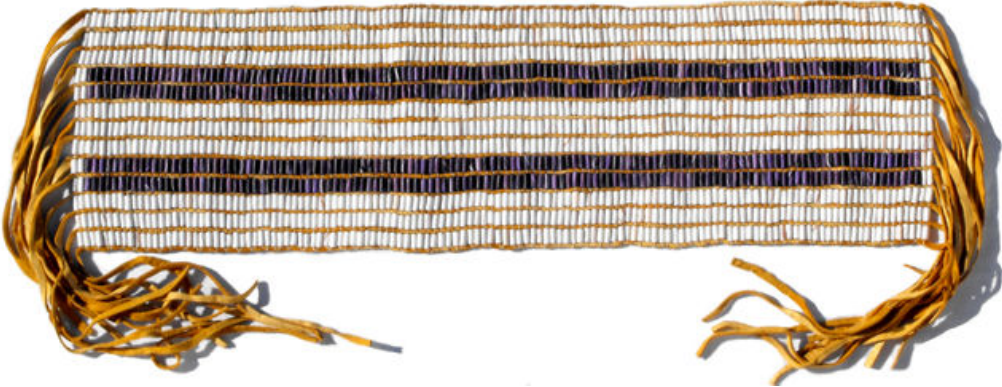
These principles are ideals to which an organization can aspire. They overlap and sometimes reinforce each other. Some may conflict and, as a result, require balance and judgement in their application. Rather than simply imposing these, the process - always culturally based - plays an important role how these principles play out in practice.

The Institute on Good Governance (IOG) uses five principles as its touchstone for thinking about governance issues. These principles are inspirational. They should be seen as a goal of the unending approach to good governance. They are:

- legitimacy and voice
- direction
- performance
- accountability
- fairness

These principles are compatible with those Values and Principles articulated by the NWG and so it is proposed that these principles be reflected in the governance model adopted by NANAA. They should also inform the manner in which the organization delivers its mandate and activities.

INDIGENOUS GOVERNANCE MODELS



The field of Indigenous governance is flourishing as more and more Aboriginal knowledge keepers, scholars and educators come together. They are creating models informed by a deep respect for Indigenous knowledge and traditions and by a profound understanding of the realities of Aboriginal communities. Their work is widely applied in the field of education, justice, social development and the environment. Aboriginal arts organizations are also developing Indigenous governance models.

The National Centre for First Nations Governance has done important work in the field of Indigenous governance. In a document entitled ‘Principles to Support Effective Governance’ the centre has defined five components and 17 principles of effective Indigenous governance.

| GOVERNANCE COMPONENTS | GOVERNANCE PRINCIPLES |
|-----------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| THE PEOPLE | Strategic vision, meaningful information sharing, participation in decision making |
| THE LAND | Territorial integrity, economic realization, respect for the spirit of the land |
| LAWS | Expansion of jurisdiction, rule of law |
| INSTITUTIONS | Transparency and fairness, result-based organizations, cultural alignment, effective relations |
| RESOURCES | Human resources capacity, financial management capacity, performance evaluation, accountability and resources, diversity of revenue sources |

These principles of effective governance blend the ancient principles and values of many First Nations and their cultures.

In her paper *'In Search of Common Ground: Reconciling Western-based Governance Principles and First Nations Traditions'* Jodi Bruhn² also speaks of principles of governance emerging from Indigenous creation stories and myths, such as:

- attunement
- responsive, responsible leadership
- harmony
- helping ourselves
- respect

These principles have informed the work accomplished by NANAA. They are reflected in the vision and mission statements of the collective.

They are at the centre of each annual gathering. Over the years, hundreds of participants have experienced the sacredness of coming together on the land to share knowledge and to cultivate understanding. These interconnected relationships are essential to the building of an Aboriginal arts infrastructure in Canada.

The work accomplished during the NANAA 2010 capacity building retreat confirmed the desire and determination of the National Working Group members to adopt a governance model informed by Indigenous knowledge and tradition.

², Institute on Governance, May 2009.

WIIDOOKODAADIWIN

GOVERNANCE PRINCIPLES AND MODEL

Wiidookodaadiwin is an Anishnabe word meaning alliance, partnership, association and mutual assistance. *Wiidookodaadiwin* is at the core of NANAAs' vision and purpose.



This section of the document presents NANAA's purpose, vision and mission, based on work done by the NWG, by distance, and especially in 2008 in Fort Simpson, 2009 in St-Albert, and at the 2012 NWG retreat in Toronto. It offers a description of the values and principles that sustain the collective.

In this section, I propose a specific governance model for NANAA. It is a proposal only and can be modified as NANAA changes and grows. This section is deliberately written in a manner that could be part of a template for funding applications.

INTRODUCTION

The National Aboriginal Network for Arts Administration (NANAA) is a multidisciplinary arts alliance composed of First Nations, Métis and Inuit arts leaders and arts administrators. Its' purpose is to support Aboriginal artistic and cultural practices in a leadership, managerial and administrative capacity. NANAAs' main activity is the organization of an annual gathering hosted in different Aboriginal communities across Canada. The alliance members are individual arts leaders.

NANAAs' commitment is to:

- support a network of professional Aboriginal arts leaders with extensive regional and tribal representation
- be a catalyst for knowledge sharing by creating opportunities for emerging and established arts leaders
- raise awareness in Aboriginal communities of the importance of the arts
- provide an economic boost to the hosting community
- value the connection between spirituality and the arts

VALUES AND PRINCIPLES

The National Aboriginal Network for Arts Administration (NANAA) is a nomadic alliance of Aboriginal arts leaders and administrators who share the following values:

- *The land* - We honour the land which sustains the people and the community. We value the relationship of Aboriginal people to the land.
- *Respect* - We respect Indigenous knowledge, traditions and cultures. We respect our Elders and each other.
- *Transparency* - We value the sharing of complete and accurate information and knowledge.
- *Openness* - We recognize the vital diversity of Indigenous languages, cultures, protocols and artistic practices.
- *Integrity* - We uphold the integrity of Aboriginal arts, cultures, traditions and history.
- *Balance* - We value representation of nations, regions, gender, generations and arts disciplines.

NANAA's work is also guided by the principles of honouring and commitment. Using a bundle as a depository for gifts and stories, the alliance remembers, and then honours, the leaders and Elders from each community that has hosted all of the gatherings over the years.

During each gathering, participants are invited to make a commitment for the coming year and to speak it in front of the group. A written version of each of these commitments is placed in the bundle. These individual commitments are powerful tools for stimulating the collective growth NANAA.

The bundle is the responsibility of the hosting community. At the end of the gathering, it is passed on to the next host who will look after it leading up to the following year's gathering.

VISION, MISSION AND MANDATE

NANAA's vision defines the way the alliance looks into the future.

INDIGENOUS ARTS LEADERSHIP IS HONOURED

Our mission defines our fundamental purpose as an organization. It is:

*TO ENHANCE, INSPIRE AND SUSTAIN AN ALLIANCE
THROUGH ANNUAL GATHERINGS IN ORDER TO
SHARE KNOWLEDGE AND RESPONSIBILITIES*

Our mandate defines the means by which the alliance will put its vision into action. It is:

*TO BE A HUB FOR COMMUNICATION, RESOURCES
AND SUPPORT FOR INDIGENOUS ARTS LEADERSHIP*

DECISION-MAKING PROCESS

Mohawk scholar Taiaiake Alfred³ has delineated widely accepted essential characteristics of how Indigenous peoples tend to approach decision-making. For Alfred, this approach centres on the achievement of consensus and the creation of collective power, bounded by six principles, where governance:

- depends on the active participation of individuals
- balances many layers of equal power
- is dispersed
- is situational
- is non-coercive
- respects diversity

The Indigenous principle of consensus is the basis of NANAA's decision-making process. It is a relational process for reaching decisions through the open and respectful sharing of views. It often reveals a direction that would be in the best interests of the collective, in the present and the future. The responsibility to make decisions is shared among all members.

GOVERNANCE MODEL

The governance model of NANAA is based on the traditional Indigenous alliances between nations and peoples. The annual gathering is the fire in the middle of the alliance. Driven by the importance of the connection to the land, NANAA is nomadic. The gatherings are hosted on Aboriginal territory by different Aboriginal communities and organizations.

The governance of NANAA is maintained through the work and commitment of the National Working Group (NWG) and 6 caucuses.

NATIONAL WORKING GROUP

The purpose of the NWG is to ensure that NANAA fulfills its mandate and remains a wise steward of its resources, while preventing actions and situations that are contrary to NANAA's stated principles of good governance and values..

The responsibilities of the NWG include:

- establish, evaluate and update the vision, mission and direction

³ Alfred, 2009: 50-51

- produce, evaluate and update policies and protocols
- ensure the financial health of the collective
- ensure that the collective has sufficient and adequate human resources
- provide direction and support to hosting communities
- maintain effective relationships with members, communities and stakeholders.

The National Working Group is composed of a minimum of 7 members to a maximum of 11 members. They represent these regions:

- British Columbia
- the Prairies
- Ontario
- Quebec
- the Atlantic
- the North

At least one representative of the hosting community is invited to join the NWG for the year of the gathering. NWG members are appointed through active recruitment and nominations/recommendations.

The NWG members will serve 2-year terms, to a maximum of 3 consecutive terms. Members are expected to:

- understand the vision, mission and mandate of NANAA
- be aware of issues that are relevant to the collective
- understand legal, financial and budgetary matters
- communicate effectively and in a timely manner
- provide notice to NWG members of any extended times of unavailability
- keep NWG discussions confidential
- use their skills and expertise in making decisions
- honour all commitments made
- encourage a diversity of viewpoints
- foster mutual support
- avoid and declare conflicts of interest
- commit to excellence in governance, including monitoring, assessing and improving the NWG performance

The NWG meets in person once a year and by teleconference every month. Additional meetings might be required during the period leading up to a gathering. Members that do not participate to more than 3 meetings might be asked to resign from the NWG.

The NWG is committed to ethical and lawful conduct. The work, responsibilities, expectations and actions of the members of the NWG should be described in a document and shared with NWG members. They should also be encouraged to sign a code of conduct and a conflict of interest statement.

Two rotating fire keepers organize the work of the NWG, from one gathering to another, serving a one year term. They maintain the integrity of the board process and assure

that discussions and decisions are fair, open and timely. The fire keepers chair the NWG meetings and exercise the accepted power and responsibilities of those positions.



CAUCUSES

The NWG will be assisted by 6 thematic caucuses:

- Planning and Capacity Building
- Gatherings
- Communications & Storytelling
- Outreach & Succession
- Funding and Legal Affairs
- Member Services

The caucuses will be chaired by one member of the NWG as a liaison and composed of other members (to a maximum of six). The caucuses will meet at the annual gatherings

and work via e-mail and teleconferences throughout the year. Each caucus will establish its own working priorities.

The presence of the six caucuses brings additional knowledge and resources to NANAA. It also acts as a recruitment mechanism for future NWG members. Caucuses report periodically to the NWG through the NWG liaison member.

MEMBERS

The members of NANAA are individual Aboriginal art leaders, executive directors, administrators and cultural mediators who are committed to supporting and contributing to the work of the alliance. It is recommended that NANAA formalizes its membership categories, requirements and benefits.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

ALFRED, Taiaiake. 'Peace, Power, Righteousness: An Indigenous Manifesto', Toronto: Oxford University Press, 1999.

_____. 'Wasase: Indigenous Pathways to Action and Freedom', Peterborough: Broadview Press, 2005.

BRUHN, Jodi. 'In Search of Common Ground: Reconciling Western-based Governance Principles and First Nations Traditions', unpublished report for the Institute on Governance, Ottawa, ON, 2009.

www.iog.ca/sites/iog/files/2009_Traditions.pdf

CORNELL, Stephen, Catherine CURTIS and Miriam JORGENSEN. 'The Concept of Governance and its Implications for First Nations: A Report to the British Columbia Regional Vice-Chief, Assembly of First Nations', Native Nations Institute for Leadership, Management and Policy, August 2003.

<http://nni.arizona.edu>

GRAHAM, John, Bruce AMOS and Tim PLUMPTRE. 'Principles for Good Governance in the 21st Century', unpublished report for the Institute on Governance, Ottawa, ON, 2003

www.iog.ca/sites/iog/files/policybrief15_0.pdf

INSTITUTE ON GOVERNANCE. 'Towards a New Aboriginal Governance Agenda (TANAGA), 2004-2005 series.

<http://iog.ca>

M. JULIEN, D. ZINNI and B. WRIGHT, 'Keeper of the Drums: Female Aboriginal Leadership and the Saliency of Gender', *Advancing Women in Leadership Journal*, no 27, 2009.

NATIONAL CENTRE FOR FIRST NATIONS GOVERNANCE. 'Principles to Support Effective Governance: Discussion Document', Summer 2008.

<http://fngovernance.org>

UNITED NATIONS DEVELOPMENT PROGRAMME. 'Governance for Sustainable Development: A UNDP Policy Document', 1997.

<http://mirror.undp.org>

WESLEY-ESQUIMAUX, Cynthia and Brian CALLIOU. 'Best Practices in Aboriginal Community Development: A Literature Review and Wise Practices Approach', The Banff Centre, 2010.