

Webequie Supply Road HIA: An Indigenous-Led Assessment to Tackle Mis/Disinformation



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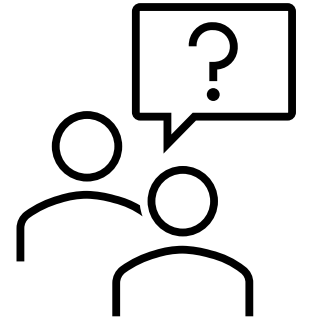


Introduction

- **Objective:** Discuss how the Webequie Supply Road (WSR) HIA, as an Indigenous-led HIA, ensured relevance to local priorities and avoided colonial framing that misrepresents Indigenous worldviews

- **Key Questions:**

1. How did the WSR as an Indigenous-led HIA counter misinformation and disinformation throughout the stages of scoping, assessment, and making recommendations?
2. How did the WSR HIA build trust, equity and a shared understanding to support participation and risk communication?



Understanding Misinformation and Disinformation in Indigenous-led EAs

- Inaccurate or incomplete information may arise from misunderstandings of Indigenous perspectives, health concepts, or project impacts
- Often reflects colonial framing of health, prioritizing narrow biomedical or economic metrics over holistic wellbeing
- Misinformation simplifies complex projects into single issues, spreading quickly through social media and informal networks
- Indigenous health should be addressed with culturally appropriate research and analytical methods



Building Trust Through Meaningful Engagement

- **Early, Ongoing Engagement:** Indigenous communities participate in and/or lead project inception, and there is respect for timelines and decision-making processes.
- **Respect for Traditional Knowledge:** Integrate Indigenous Knowledge to ground assessments in locally trusted and relevant information.
- **Shared Decision-Making:** Establish structures where Indigenous communities have meaningful influence over assessment and outcomes.
- **Mutual Benefits:** Ensure outcomes reflect community priorities and deliver real benefits, strengthening credibility and trust.
- **Long-Term Relationship Building:** Foster sustained partnerships beyond the project lifecycle to support ongoing dialogue and accountability.



Building Trust – Community Voices

- Indigenous-led
- Engaged diverse community groups to ensure a wide range of perspectives and concerns were heard
- Used Webequie’s definition of health and wellbeing to guide the assessment
- Focused on what matters most to the community, including cultural, social, and environmental priorities
- Recognized the strong link between environmental and ecosystem health and community wellbeing
- Highlighted the importance of knowledge transfer across generations and the impacts of its disruption



Indigenous-Led Environmental Assessments (EAs)

- **Self-Determination:** Indigenous peoples should lead or co-lead assessments on their lands, respecting their governance and legal systems.
- **Two-Eyed Seeing:** An approach that respects both Indigenous and Western scientific perspectives in environmental management.
- **Capacity Building:** Provide resources and training to empower Indigenous communities to fully participate in EAs.

SOLELY
INDIGENOUS-LED



Indigenous Protected and Conserved Area (IPCA)
(2023):
<https://ipcaknowledgebasket.ca/resources/ipca-governance-scan/>

Webequie Supply Road HIA

- The WSR HIA was led by Webequie First Nation, prioritizing cultural and holistic understandings of health and wellbeing
- Centered around the community's worldview of health and wellbeing
 - Health was viewed broadly, linking it to land, culture, safety, social relationships, and economic conditions – holistic understanding of Indigenous health
- The process embedded ongoing engagement and validation, ensuring community voices shaped health impact identification and responses
- Created transparent and culturally relevant processes to address and reduce misinformation



Indigenous Primary Health Care Council (IPHCC):

<https://www.allianceon.org/blog/Steps-Taken-Towards-Indigenous-Health-Indigenous-Hands-Transfer-services-Guelph-CHC-Southwest>

Centering Webequie First Nation Worldviews of Health



Role of Indigenous Knowledge

Indigenous Knowledge guided identification of health determinants to be assessed and informed impact understanding.



Culturally Relevant Assessment

Health assessment aligned with community concerns (e.g., mental health, substance use, food security, etc.) for accurate and meaningful results.



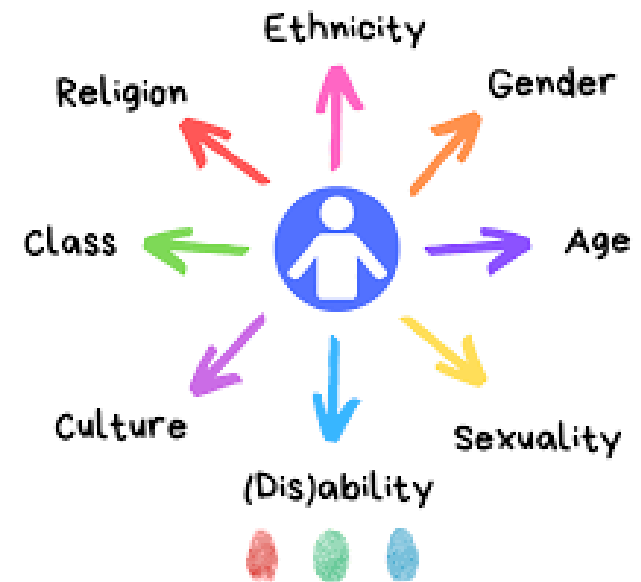
Situating Perspectives

Situating Indigenous perspectives next to western science reduces misinterpretations and enhances understanding.

WSR: Consultation and Community Engagement

- Heard from diverse populations and listened to their concerns – used a GBA Plus approach
 - Indigenous identity
 - Impacts to Treaty rights and traditional territories
 - Youth
 - Women
 - Men
 - Older adults
 - 2SLGBTQIA+ individuals
 - Individuals with disabilities, including youth with learning difficulties
 - Lower socioeconomic status individuals (especially single moms) or families – socioeconomic and environmental justice

Intersections
between these
identities



WSR Assessment & Recommendations

Integration of Knowledge Systems	Indigenous Knowledge and evidence-based methods combined to create a comprehensive health impact evaluation
Community Engagement	Ongoing communication and community involvement ensured data reflected current realities and reduced reliance on outdated information
Culturally Relevant Mitigation Measures	Measures aligned with community priorities and relevant health outcome indicators, increasing legitimacy and effectiveness
Iterative Validation Process	Repeated validation cycles ensured findings accurately reflected community experiences and reinforced trust

Community Voices, Outcomes, and Key Takeaways

- Community-Centered Impact
 - Webequie's voices guided the assessment, reflecting priorities such as safety, housing, and economic opportunities
- Enhanced Community Participation and Knowledge of Health Assessments
 - WSR HIA promoted active involvement, empowering communities to lead and shape the assessment process effectively
- Intergenerational Knowledge
 - Assessment honored intergenerational knowledge transfer as a priority to the community and vital to health and wellbeing
- Transparency and Resilience
 - Embedding transparency and engagement strengthened community resilience against misinformation
- Indigenous-led Assessments
 - Indigenous-led HIAs foster culturally appropriate, balanced, and trustworthy development conversations





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QUÉBEC CITY, CANADA

Let's continue the conversation!

Message me your questions or comments in the IAIA26 app.

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