4 QUALITY EDUCATION

Toward Quality Education
in Nogojiwanong | Peterborough

Project Team

Julie Cosgrove
Executive Director, Kawartha World Issues Centre

Brianna Salmon
Executive Director, Peterborough GreenUP

Shaelyn Wabegijig
Project Coordinator, Kawartha World Issues Centre

Hayley Goodchild
Project Coordinator, Peterborough GreenUP

Margaret Zou
Researcher, Kawartha World Issues Centre

Phyllis Williams
Elder Advisor

Anne Taylor
Indigenous Consultant

Gary Pritchard Jr.
Indigenous Consultant

Frolic Design
Graphic Design & Layout

Quality Education Action Team

Faith Mwesigye
M.A. Sustainability Studies Graduate and Action Team Co-Chair

Liz Stone
Academic Chair, Indigenous Perspectives, Fleming College, Action Team Co-Chair

Reem Ali
Local Educator

Paula Anderson
Fleming College

Cam Douglas
Youth Leadership in Sustainability (YLS) Program Founder/Coordinator & Teacher, KPRDSB

Cathy Dueck
Pathway to Stewardship and Kinship Project

Anya Gwynne
Education Consultant

Rhonda Keenan
Peterborough and the Kawarthas Economic Development

Kelly King
Outreach and Education Coordinator, TRACKS Youth Program

Hanah Howlett McFarlane
Compass Early Learning & Care

Dean Smith
Pictou Landing First Nation, KPRDSB Indigenous Education Consultant

Patty Thompson
Program Coordinator and Professor for Education Support, and Program Coordinator Community Integration Through Cooperative Education Program, Fleming College

SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT GOALS

What are the UN Sustainable Development Goals?

The 2030 Agenda was adopted by the United Nations general assembly in 2015. It is a framework of seventeen interconnected goals, referred to as the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). The SDGs focus on economic, social and environmental themes including sustainable development, poverty, and climate change. At the heart of the 2030 Agenda is the idea of equity, or 'Leaving No One Behind.' For more information about leaving no one behind and the Sustainable Development Goals Framework, please visit the UN SDGs website.

About this project

In March 2019, Kawartha World Issues Centre (KWIC), GreenUP, Fleming College, and Trent University hosted a Community Forum called Understanding the UN Sustainable Development Goals: Canada's Commitment and the Local Connections. Later that year, KWIC applied for Sustainable Development Goals Program Funding, in partnership with GreenUP, to build upon the foundation established at this forum. The grant was awarded in March 2020, which coincided with the start of the COVID-19 pandemic. These circumstances created unique challenges, constraints and opportunities for the project, which was reorganized to become fully virtual.

Advancing the 2030 Agenda Peterborough / Nogojiwanong has four main objectives:

1. Raise awareness of and support for the 2030 Agenda;
2. Enhance multi-stakeholder efforts toward the Agenda by building partnerships and bridging efforts across sectors;
3. Ensure that progress on the 2030 Agenda leaves no one behind, including vulnerable and marginalized groups; and,
4. Foster and integrate Indigenous knowledge into approaches and efforts to achieve the 2030 Agenda.

Five Action Teams were established to further these objectives, based on priorities identified at the 2019 forum. Four of the teams focused on specific SDGs: No Poverty (SDG 1), Quality Education (SDG 4), Clean Water and Sanitation (SDG 6), and Climate Action (SDG 13). The fifth group, called the Indigenous Leadership Action Team (ILAT), guided and supported the work of the other four teams. The Action Teams each met remotely as a group three times, and worked toward the results shared at the 2021 Forum and in this report. Each Action Team made remarkable contributions, particularly given the constraints of the COVID-19 pandemic, and we are extremely grateful for their expertise, experience, and generosity.

The Quality Education (SDG 4) Action Team emerged from a strong interest amongst participants at the 2019 Community Forum in place-based and experiential education. Since then, the Action Team has imagined ways to build momentum toward SDG 4 while centering Indigenous knowledge and leadership and leaving no one behind. This report introduces SDG 4 to the wider community and summarizes the Action Team's insights and recommendations.

Place-based education is an approach to education that uses local environments and communities as a context for learning. In a survey circulated by the Quality Education Action Team, 78% of respondents (n=25) strongly agreed that place-based education is important for achieving quality education locally.

WHAT IS SDG 4 AND WHERE DO WE STAND?

SDG 4 seeks to ensure inclusive and equitable quality education and promote lifelong learning opportunities for all. This broad and ambitious goal connects with many, if not all, the other SDGs. Gender equality and education for sustainable development are key features of SDG 4, as defined by its sub-targets (see table on pages 6 & 7).

Canada is a world leader in equitable access to education. According to the British Columbia Council for International Cooperation (BCCIC), "91% of the population aged 25 to 64 have completed secondary education, and almost two-thirds of adults in Canada have completed postsecondary education." However, Indigenous peoples in Canada are less likely to finish secondary education or attend post-secondary institutions compared to their non-Indigenous peers. In general, students living in poverty experience greater challenges accessing and benefiting from education (BCCIC, 2019).

Completion rates tell us little about the quality of education available to learners of all genders, abilities, and ages. Local communities can and should play an important role in defining in defining, shaping, and measuring the quality of education available in our region.

DID YOU KNOW?

- In 2016, 14% of people 15 years of age or older in the Peterborough census metropolitan area (CMA) had not completed secondary school, which was slightly lower than the rate for Ontario (16%) and Canada (17.3%).
- A Kawartha World Issues Centre research project in 2010 found that 76% of students (grades 9-12) felt connected to their school, and that "youth who identified as newcomers, LGBTTQ+, Aboriginal, or racialized were more likely to feel unwelcome at a community or school event" (R. Edge and J. Reid, "Why Youth Don't Get Involved," in Vital Signs 2016).
- A pilot study conducted by the Pathway to Stewardship and Kinship Project in 2018-2019 found that "access to outdoor and nature-rich spaces is challenging for teachers and parents" in the Greater Peterborough region, a barrier that could be overcome through increased busing subsidies, access to public transportation, and more neighbourhood play spaces that are rich in biodiversity.

Our approach

The Quality Education Action Team met three times between October 2020 and January 2021. Together, we discussed what quality education means within our communities, began adapting the global SDG Framework to the local level, and through a community mapping exercise, identified dozens of initiatives that support quality education in our region, particularly place-based and experiential education. By drawing on our collective knowledge and support from the Indigenous Leadership Action Team, we prioritized leaving no one behind and Indigenous knowledge and leadership throughout our discussions.

In addition to virtual, interactive sessions, and as a result of the constraints created by the ongoing pandemic, the Action Team circulated a survey to solicit further input from the wider community about quality education in Nogojiwanong | Peterborough. We received thirty-two responses from local educators, community organizers, adult learners, and parents of learners under eighteen years old. Results from the survey are integrated throughout this report.

Who gets left behind in our shared community when it comes to quality education?

Non-male, non-cisgender people
Single parents
People who struggle with addictions
People living with visible and invisible disabilities
Students who prefer non-traditional learning environments
Those without skills or capacity to access education
People and families with low incomes or socioeconomic status
Black, Indigenous, and racialized communities and individuals
Indigenous youth
Women
International students
Newcomers to Canada
People who speak English as a second language
Refugees
People who work non-traditional hours
Children and adults with exceptionalities
Children from single-parent households
People without secure housing
Rural communities
2SLGBTQIA+
Middle age learners
Seniors
Children who have experienced trauma or abuse
First Nations, Métis, and Inuit learners
At-risk youth
Non-human beings

KEY THEMES

The following themes emerged from the Action Team's discussions:

- Supporting a diversity of Indigenous and non-Indigenous approaches to education is critical to ensuring that all members of our community have access to quality education throughout their lives.
- The importance of decolonizing the concept of quality education as it is framed within the 2030 Agenda, from the language used to re-imagining the very places where education happens.
- Education for regenerative development, meaning education that encourages reciprocity, balance, and harmony, and nurtures diverse, healthy communities where all living things can thrive.
- Authentic engagement with groups who are left behind and centering Indigenous knowledge and leadership.
- Recognizing the richness of educational opportunities and initiatives in our shared community.

LOCALIZING THE SDG FRAMEWORK

Each SDG consists of a series of global sub-targets and associated indicators that are meant to guide implementation. National governments are encouraged to localize each goal to better align with their national contexts. In Canada, the federal government has identified the following ambition for SDG 4: Canadians have access to inclusive and quality education throughout their lives (Government of Canada, 2021).

The Quality Education (SDG 4) Action Team began the process of adapting the global framework to better suit our local context. We evaluated the framework for its local relevance, before rephrasing some of the targets to better reflect our local needs and priorities, keeping in mind who tends to be left behind. Organizations and committees that continue localizing the SDG Framework in the future are encouraged to build on the work presented here.

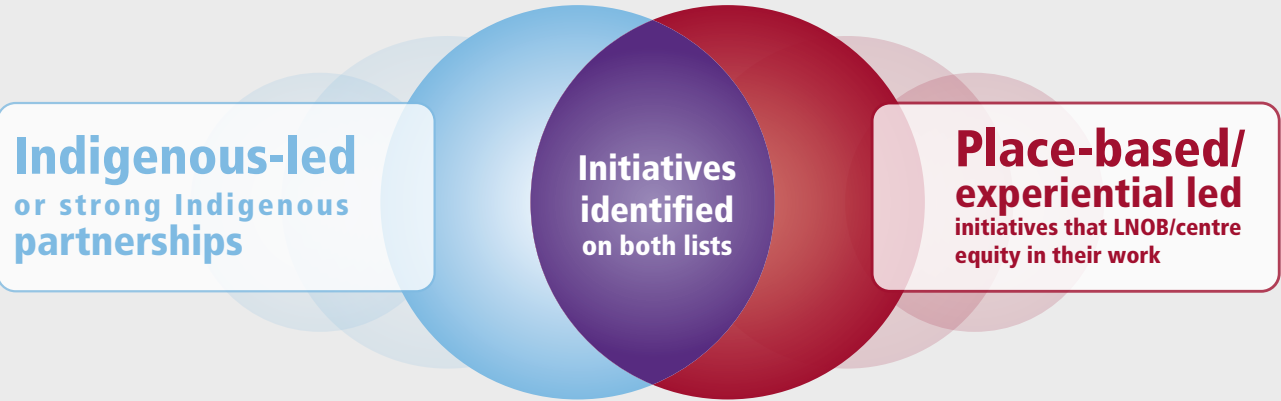**Note: bolded text represents a change to the original language.**

UN Sub-target	Localized Targets (working drafts)
4.1 By 2030, ensure that all girls and boys complete free, equitable and quality primary and secondary education leading to relevant and effective learning outcomes.	By 2030, ensure that **all children and youth** complete free, equitable, and quality primary and secondary **(or equivalent?)** education, leading to **culturally appropriate** and effective learning outcomes.
4.2 By 2030, ensure that all girls and boys have access to quality early childhood development, care and pre primary education so that they are ready for primary education.	By 2030, ensure that **all children** have access to quality **and diverse forms of** early childhood development, care, and pre-primary education that **fosters a sense of wonder and fondness for learning**, in addition to preparing them for primary education.
4.3 By 2030, ensure equal access for all women and men to affordable and quality technical, vocational and tertiary education, including university.	*Future work related to SDG 4 should include developing a localized statement for this sub-target.*
4.4 By 2030, substantially increase the number of youth and adults who have relevant skills, including technical and vocational skills, for employment, decent jobs and entrepreneurship.	*Future work related to SDG 4 should include developing a localized statement for this sub-target.*

UN Sub-target	Localized Targets (working drafts)
4.5 By 2030, eliminate gender disparities in education and ensure equal access to all levels of education and vocational training for the vulnerable, including persons with disabilities, indigenous peoples and children in vulnerable situations.	*Future work related to SDG 4 should include developing a localized statement for this sub-target.*
4.6 By 2030, ensure that all youth and a substantial proportion of adults, both men and women, achieve literacy and numeracy.	By 2030, ensure that all youth and a substantial proportion of adults achieve **multiple** literacies and numeracy, **including ecological literacy.**
4.7 By 2030, ensure that all learners acquire the knowledge and skills needed to promote sustainable development, including, among others, through education for sustainable development and sustainable lifestyles, human rights, gender equality, promotion of a culture of peace and non-violence, global citizenship and appreciation of cultural diversity and of culture's contribution to sustainable development.	By 2030, ensure that all learners develop the knowledge and skills needed to promote development that is **regenerative, not just** sustainable. Achieve this by educating about **regenerative lifestyles**; human rights; gender equality; promotion of a culture of peace and non-violence; **truth and reconciliation;** global, **local, and digital citizenship;** and **the importance of** cultural diversity and culture's contribution to **regenerative** development.
4.a. Build and upgrade education facilities that are child, disability, and gender sensitive and provide safe, non-violent, inclusive and effective learning environments for all.	By 2030, **provide learning spaces (including outdoor, land-based learning spaces) that honour diverse needs** and provide safe, **welcoming,** inclusive, **joyful,** and effective learning environments for all.
4.b. By 2020, substantially expand globally the number of scholarships available to developing countries, in particular least developed countries, small island developing States and African countries, for enrolment in higher education, including vocational training and information and communications technology, technical, engineering and scientific programmes, in developed countries and other developing countries.	*Future work related to SDG 4 should include assessing this sub-target for local relevance, and if necessary, developing a localized target statement.*

Examples of local educational initiatives that center Indigenous knowledge and leadership, and leave no one behind

The Action Team members and survey respondents identified more than fifty projects, programs, organizations, and initiatives that offer quality education in our communities. This list is not exhaustive; rather, it reflects the input of the groups and individuals involved in the conversation through the Action Team meetings and public survey.

Once we finished brainstorming, the Action Team assessed the list through the lenses of Indigenous knowledge and leadership, and leaving no one behind. Through this activity we developed a shorter list of educational initiatives that offer useful and innovative models for advancing Quality Education (SDG 4).

Indigenous-led or strong Indigenous **partnerships**

Initiatives identified on both lists

Place-based/ experiential led initiatives that LNOB/centre equity in their work

● Indigenous-led or strong Indigenous partnerships

- Alderville Black Oak Savannah
- Anishinaabe culture-based education (former Anishinaabe Bimaadiziwin Cultural Healing and Learning Program)
- Annual Elders Gathering at Trent
- Camp fYrefly
- CEDI and the Ezhi-Wiijikiwendiyang Friendship Accord Signing
- Community Race Relations Committee workshops (Angela Connors)
- Crown Lands used for ceremony and harvesting
- Gr. 11 NBE (Contemporary Indigenous Voices in Literature, KPRDSB)
- Homeward Bound (Peterborough Housing & Nogojiwanong Friendship Centre)
- Indigenous Fleming
- Ishkodehwin Indigenous Peer Mentorship Program at Trent Student Affairs
- Jiimaan'ndewemgadnong (Depave Paradise project at King & Water Sts.)
- Kagita Mikam
- Mississauga Nation Anishinaabe Reclamation Strategy
- Nimkii Aazhibikong (language revitalization)
- Peterborough Native Learning Program
- Pinnguqaq (coding for Indigenous youth)
- Serpent Mounds Project (Hiawatha First Nation)
- KPRDSB Virtual Indigenous Learning Sessions (bi-weekly)

● Initiatives identified on both lists

- Adventure in Understanding (Rotary Club)
- Anishinaabemowin lessons
- Canadian Bushcraft (Caleb Musgrave)
- Chiapas Education project (emerging initiative)
- Community Voices for Manoomin
- Creators Garden
- Curve Lake First Nation Cultural Centre
- Daycare Island (Oshkigimong Early Learning Centre)
- First People's House of Learning (Trent)
- Kawartha World Issues Centre programming
- Land-based activities and workshops for Indigenous women (Lovesick Lake Native Women's Association)
- Lang Pioneer Village (including Aabnaabin Camp)
- Nogojiwanong Friendship Centre

- Nourish food security programming (growing and cooking workshops)
- Pathway Project
- Peterborough Children's Water Festival
- Sacred Water Circle
- TEACH Outside the Box
- TRACKS Youth Program
- Trent Traditional Talks
- Rainbow Youth (PARN)
- Trent Indigenous Studies and Indigenous Environmental Studies programs
- Wonders of Water (GreenUP)
- Youth Leadership in Sustainability
- Nimkii Aazhibikong (language revitalization)
- Peterborough Native Learning Program
- Serpent Mounds Project (Hiawatha First Nation)

● Place-based/experiential led Initiatives

- Be a Watershed Steward (Otonabee Conservation)
- Camp Kawartha
- Ecology Park school programs (GreenUP)
- EcoMentors
- Five Counties' Therapy Garden (emerging project)
- Girls' Climate Leadership Camp (GreenUP)
- Jumping Mouse Outdoor School
- KPRDSB (gardens, outdoor classrooms and education centres, and other experiential programming)
- Mandatory Indigenous education at Trent and Fleming
- PVNCCDSB (outdoor classrooms, EcoSchools and other experiential programming)
- Rowantree Preschool
- Timbernook Peterborough
- Time in My Shoes (Council for People with Disabilities)

WHAT'S NEXT?

There is excellent work happening in our communities related to quality education. However, much remains to be done if we're to reach SDG 4 by 2030. It is critical that no one is left behind, which means matters of equity, including a central role for Indigenous knowledge and leadership, should be at the core of community-wide partnerships and initiatives to advance quality education.

At the Action Team meetings and the 2021 Community Forum, many suggestions and ideas were raised about how to continue this work. While it is not the purpose of this report to outline a robust action plan, the Quality Education (SDG 4) Action Team would like to recommend the following next steps:

- Develop or build upon existing collaboratives, partnerships, and networks (including this Action Team), to ensure there are ongoing avenues for diverse stakeholders to advocate for quality education;
- Circulate an amended survey to engage with more members from communities that get left behind, especially youth members of traditionally marginalized groups;
- Synthesize existing data about quality education, in order to identify baselines and, where necessary, set specific quantitative and qualitative targets for goals 4.1 through 4.b.;
- Identify opportunities to coordinate with actions and initiatives related to other SDGs, especially No Poverty (SDG 1), Clean Water and Sanitation (SDG 6), Gender Equality (SDG 5) and Climate Action (SDG 13), in recognition of their fundamental interconnectedness.

For more information about how to continue the conversation about SDG 4: Quality Education, please visit the Kawartha World Issues Centre and GreenUP websites.

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