

PLANNING AND ENGAGING...AT A DISTANCE!

At the heart of community planning is the notion of preparing, together, a better future. Giving ourselves a collective vision and the means to reach it. Regaining a collective meaning for our lives.

How can we live and embody community without touching each other or gathering in person? How can we engage people if we can't get together physically?


What if this crisis was an opportunity to realize how truly connected we are, how community is at the center of our lives?

What if it was giving us the opportunity to regroup, to reflect on what is truly important for our community?

What if this was the right moment to ask some key questions to your community and to see how your people want to participate in...

- Living their language and their culture?
- Taking care of children, youth, women, men, Elders?
- Discovering and sharing history?
- Reflecting on your collective vision, on what's most important to you all?
- Giving yourselves resilient infrastructure and systems?
- Protecting the land and water and keeping those relationships alive?
- Ensuring your food sovereignty?

Together with my amazing colleague Sabryna Godbout (Wendat), project officer for languages and culture, we started this list of engagement activities. Please add your own, so we can keep inspiring each other! Also, please keep in mind that this list is for inspiration purposes only, and everything should be done according to your own protocols and teachings.



TOGETHER, LET'S FIND OUT WHAT'S ON
THE OTHER SIDE OF THE RAINBOW

COMMUNICATIONS

There are multiple options to communicate while respecting physical distancing:

- Social media
 - Facebook (groups, pages, livestreaming, etc.)
 - Twitter
 - Other social media used by people younger than us 🤖
- Community television
- Community radio
- Phone calls
- Sound system mounted on a vehicle
- Posters
- Messages in windows (posters, paintings, etc.)
- Online web conferencing services (ex. ZOOM, Skype, etc.)
- Online surveys (ex. SurveyMonkey)
- Online quiz (ex. Mentimeter)
- Mailing lists
- Door to door delivery (no contact)
- Meetings “everybody stays on their porch or balcony”
- Drones to take pictures of the land or of the community
- Individual street shows

You could create a survey and ask community members what their favorite means of communication are. Remember to ask people of various demographics, as preferences vary a lot depending on the person’s age and context.

ACTIVITIES: LANGUAGE AND CULTURE

People often find a lot of strength when they root in their identity. Here are some ideas to keep feeding their roots!

- Virtual craft group to share techniques, teachings and designs (and maybe a purchasing group to place group orders for supplies)
- Short videos on language
- Songs and dances by individuals or families living together under one roof: videos, podcasts, livestreams, etc.
- Daily word or sentence in the language
- Podcasts or videos of Elders sharing stories
- Online language classes for families
- Directory of available resources for language, history, culture, etc.
- Only creation of traditional instruments, toys, etc.
- Singing and dancing classes
- Sharing of forgotten stories
- Puppet or mask shows (ex. Corn dolls, leather dolls, etc.)
- Treasure hunt with language clues
- Drawing or singing contest using sentences in the language
- Labels for items in the house in the language
- Blindfold game using words in the language
- Organizing phone gatherings between kids/youth and Elders
- Contests: stories, jokes, animal calls, etc.
- Collective song or cry, everybody staying on their porch or balcony
- Photo montages of community members practicing their favorite activities
- History club: collective online timeline, sharing of photos and stories, etc.
- Quizzes on history, culture, language, etc.

ACTIVITIES: HEALTH

Health is at the heart of most people's preoccupations and is generally one of the top priorities in terms of community planning. Here are some ideas around health that also contribute to promoting language and culture.

- Directory of resources on healing, health, etc.
- Sharing of teachings on traditional medicines, ceremonies, etc. (as appropriate for your community)
- Virtual rendezvous for ceremonies at a distance (ex. Sunrise prayer, drumming, etc.)
- Online or text support network for youth, Elders, people living alone, young parents, etc.
- Ideas of safe outdoor activities that respect physical distancing, including schedules to avoid overcrowding if sites are limited
- Community freezer for meat and traditional food
- Food support network for youth, Elders, people living alone, young parents, etc.: sharing of prepared meals, group purchasing, etc.
- Physical or sports challenges to complete at home
- Pow wow-style training
- Virtual focus groups on health and wellness, survey on priorities, etc.
- Spreading positive and inspiring messages in the community (posters, painted rocks, etc.)

ACTIVITIES: ON THE LAND

For many people, rooting in the land is a source of comfort and healing. Here are some ideas to feed your roots and embody your relationship to the land.

- Short video or audio clips on protecting the land: tips, best practices, teachings on species, etc., with Elders and youth
- Creation of photo albums of activities on the land
- Online classes on creating objects related to the land
- Discussion groups
- Collective mapping (online or door to door without contact)
- Drawing contests
- Virtual contacts with neighbors (ex. City or municipality) to present your land-related issues and create spaces for discussion
- Short video or audio clips on the history of your territory, on rights and responsibilities associated to the land, etc.
- Group purchasing of seeds and gardening supplies
- Identifying a site for a community garden (virtual engagement) and planning the garden for the coming season
- Creating a community greenhouse project
- Developing a community directory of people with land-related skills who are willing to share and teach (ex. Collecting and conserving plants, hunting, fishing, etc.)
- Creating a calendar of traditional activities (ex. Harvests, ceremonies, etc.)
- Survey on the state of the territory, on priorities, etc.

ACTIVITIES: PLANNING PROCESS

A community planning process includes many activities which can be done without physical contact: online, by phone, by mail, on the radio, etc. Here are some ideas to keep your planning team active and your community engaged.

- Live video activities to present the planning process and answer questions (make it fun!)
- Create collective online documents
- Online or paper surveys on issues, priorities, potential actions, etc.
- Virtually contacting neighboring communities to present the process, your community history, etc.
- Keep in touch with community organizations and build or maintain relationships (ex. Piggy backing for community engagement, data sharing, etc.)
- Create a canvas for your community plan
- Create and/or update the database for collected data and documents
- Learn to use various software: graphic design, Excel, databases, etc.
- Learn new skills: graphic facilitation, data analysis, project management, etc.
- Put out a call for volunteers to participate in the process or be part of the planning team
- Create a directory of community members with skills related to the community planning process (ex. Graphic design, facilitation, translation, communication, etc.)
- Offer online courses to planning team members, to all community members, to youth, etc.
- Create and/or update your community engagement plan, with special focus on the demographics who have been less engaged so far
- Contact planning colleagues from other regions to hear what they're doing and offer/receive mentoring
- Ask local youth to create a storyboard for a CCP video for your community, and/or other demographics
- Acknowledge individual people's involvement in the process: thank you messages on social media, gratefulness calls, hand-delivered cards (without contact)
- Share the results and what has changed
- Research your history : how did your ancestors plan?
- Celebrate community achievements. What are community members most proud of?
- Contest to create a CCP logo

VISION STATEMENT

- Videos of youth and kids sharing their dreams for their community
- Wave of gratitude: I'm grateful for this person's....I'm proud of this person because...
- Survey on community vision and priorities
- Individual or family interviews