

Decolonizing Community Land Trusts

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SPEAKERS

Miriam Berndt, Lisa Neil, Dr Kaitlyn Patterson, Nat Pace (CNCLT), Norm Leech, Andy Bond

Nat Pace (CNCLT) 00:00

Hi, my name is Nat. I'm the network director for the Canadian Network of Community Land Trusts. I'm super excited to be here today to help hosting a discussion between some really incredible people that are part of the Canadian Network of Community Land Trust. So, thank you to all speakers for joining us today. Before I begin, I want to, I want to acknowledge that I'm calling in from Montreal or Jajaga, known in the language of the Nat Hall Nation, who I recognize and thank as the stewards of the land and the water, which I benefit from every every day. The Canadian Network of Community Land Trust really takes seriously that all that community land trusts in Canada are operating on stolen indigenous lands, and in that spirit, we're steadfastly committed to supporting land-back decolonization, repatriation of land, whether through a land trust model or not. And we also strongly encourage our members to align their own organizations in solidarity with indigenous struggles across Turtle Island. I also want to thank the International CLT Center for inviting the network to put on this webinar, giving us a lot of creative discretion with its direction, and also congratulations to the huge feat that is the Global CLT Virtual Summit. It's so many important discussions happening, I'm sure a lot of first time discussions and ideas being put on the table, so it's really incredible work. And so I'll tell you a little bit about the framing of the webinar, how it's going to go, and then we're going to get into the conversation. It's going to go for about an hour and a half today, and at the end there's going to be a bit of an exit survey, so if you stayed at the end, you can fill out that survey and let us know how, how you, how you enjoyed the webinar areas for improvement, etc. And I already see it happening in the chat, but please feel free to introduce yourself. Where you're calling in from, it'll be really amazing to see where folks are joining us from. And so today we've brought together land trusts from across so-called Canada, each united by a shared goal, Decolonizing through collective stewardship of land. We're going to be talking about a wide variety of topics today, such as repatriation, voluntary land taxes, land back, cultural resurgence, language resurgence through shared stewardship, and we're going to be exploring both the opportunities and the tensions of shared land stewardship within a settler colonial system, so all I'm going to turn shortly to our questions, but I just wanted to give a brief overview of our panelists before turning it over to them, so we have Miriam Burt from the Cultural land trust joining us, and the cultural land trust is an emerging initiative in British Columbia, focusing on securing space for artists and cultural organizations. It's being supported by the organization 221 A, and its emerging research is exploring strategies land trusts can employ to foster reciprocal relationships with host nations, really amazing work. Next, we have Andy and Norm joining us from the Downtown East Side, also in Vancouver, and they're working to secure deeply affordable housing in Vancouver's Downtown East Side neighborhood, and this, the organization frames community ownership as part of a broader effort to decolonize housing systems. Next, Lisa is joining us from the Tamas Gammon District Community Land Trust, which is forming to address housing insecurity faced by Indigenous women and Two-Speed Spirit people in Northern Ontario. It's grounded in in matrilineal governance, and the emerging land trust will be engaging and including indigenous women and two-spirit people to design, build, and steward their own housing. And last, but certainly not least, we have Dr. Caitlin Patterson joining us from Allah Relations Land Trust. This is an urban indigenous land trust taking direct action and reclaiming land for the purpose of biodiversity restoration and cultural resurgence in Kingston, Ontario. So that's the overview of who we have joining us today, and our questions are quite simple as well. We'll hear a little bit of from who each of these panelists are, and their projects. Then we'll start by

exploring the opportunities for CLTs within the realm of decolonization, as well as maybe what elements of community land trusts and land trusts more broadly need to actually be decolonized. So I'm going to go ahead and get the conversation started. I think we'll just merge introductions in with this answer to this first question, and perhaps we can also go in the order of which I just introduced those projects. So, my first question is for us to start off, by learning more of about the land trust projects you, you each are involved with, so could you tell us a little bit about the land, the community, and how you're, you're, you're making the trust happen, what the governance may be, sort of looks like. So I'll pass it first to Miriam to kick us off. Thanks.

Miriam Berndt 05:41

Okay. Thanks, Nat. I'm going to start with a little self intro. That's how I like to do it. My name is Miriam Bert. I'm Irish Canadian on my dad's side, probably with a bit of like mystery mixed European happening there, as is common in Canada. On my mum's side, I'm Cree from Kakawisto First Nation, which is on Treaty Four territory in southwestern Saskatchewan, but I grew up off reserve and largely disconnected from my home community, my home nation on Haudenosaunee territory in a small city called Brantford in Ontario, and so I grew up a lot more connected to the urban indigenous community there through the Friendship Center, and my mom actually married a Mohawk man from Six Nations when I was very small, and so I grew up with my step siblings and him in our little neighborhood called Eagle Place, and so I have much more connection to his family and his community, and so I feel like my migratory or my family's diasporic indigenous story really informs the way I think about land and place, and so I like to kind of foreground that that's my perspective that you come to this work. Yeah, so I work with the Cultural Land Trust in Vancouver, which is an initiative started by 220 To Two and A is an arts organization that manages seven leasehold buildings, artist studios primarily, and there are gallery spaces within as well. We also have one artist housing project, which is exciting for us, but that's also lease held, and so the idea really came out way back in 2017 long before I was involved at 220 where the board was feeling the tension, tension of having to continually negotiate, negotiate lease terms and renewals, and advocate for our tenants, and in this kind of space of precarity, and of course, I think across Canada, we're seeing it, the pressures of the financialized real estate market, it became more and more obvious that the loss of art space was becoming really widespread, and displacements just really becoming common for artists in the city, so that's how the idea came about early on in that process of understanding, like, what is the land trust, what is a cultural and trust, do we even want to do this, to does our community want this? Three local researchers led a Jedi study, and with BIPOC artists, practitioners, folks from arts organizations, just in our community more broadly, and the question of like rights recognition, land back reparations, reciprocity came up again and again and again, and it's this kind of like tension of well, if you're going to be land owners, how do you still, how do you still do right relations, and so that's kind of where my role comes in. Is I am a cultural space planner, and I lead what we call an Indigenous Reciprocity Research Initiative, which is really a name that just came about because we had to be able to describe what we're doing, and when we're writing grants, but it's something that we embed to all of our products, is looking for opportunities to decolonize, to recognize the sovereignty of the nations, whose, whose lands we're on here in Vancouver, and the Musqueam, Squamish, and Sweet, the Tooth, and and then also urban indigenous communities, and yeah, so that, that's kind of my job, that's what we're

Nat Pace (CNCLT) 09:30

Was it? Yeah.

Lisa Neil 09:43

Okay. Yep. Sure. My turn. Hi everyone. An in Bouzou. Hello, my name is Lisa Neil, and I am of indigenous and settler ancestry, much like Miriam. My settler ancestry is Irish, and my indigenous ancestry is Algonquin, Ojibwe, and Cree. My spirit and traditional name is Moshka de Boschway, which

is translated as Sage Woman, and I live in North Cobalt, Ontario, on the traditional territory of my ancestors, who were from the Timiskaming First Nation, and this territory is also known as Territory Treaty Nine territory. I'm a housing researcher with Keepers of the Circle and the project lead of the Timiso Ming District Community Land Trust, and I want to acknowledge just as I begin here that I'm speaking to you today, and that our land trust is situated on the traditional lands of the Anishinaabe people and shared by the Ojibwe, Algonquin, Cree, and Natty people, and we always keep that at the forefront of everything that we do in our work here with our land trust. So our land trust is currently called, as I mentioned, the Temismith District Community Land Trust, but it will soon be renamed to a traditional indigenous name. And we're working with our soon to be newly instituted circle of directors. We've called our board of directors a circle of directors, so we're working on working on a new name through our board and with our community members. So the our land trust is a local grassroots solution for creating affordable housing for indigenous women and Two Spirit people and their families in Northern Ontario. The land held in the affordable housing created by our land trust will be indigenous led, indigenous designed, indigenous built, and indigenous owned, and it will also be safe, secure, and culturally appropriate. Some dire things that we need up here in Northern Ontario. So the main one of the main objections, objectives of our demonstration project was to pilot the development and of indigenous women-led land trusts within the districts of Timiskaming and Cochrane up here in Northern Ontario in Canada, that will support and enable indigenous women-led housing. So, through the insights and outcomes gathered from this project, and we actually, I drafted during this project about an 80 page case study that is very, very detailed. So, if anybody is ever interested in getting a copy of that, I'd be more than happy to. If you put your name in the chat or reach out to me personally after, I'd be happy to share that with you. It's quite detailed. So, through that, through those insights and outcomes gathered in our project, we've begun to create a roadmap and framework for Indigenous women-led and indigenous women-governed land trusts to be scaled across Canada, and which we are hoping will build capacity among Indigenous women and Two Spirit people in our region and across the country to own, manage, and build on land trusts with the purpose of building affordable and community-led housing projects, and part of our goal is to also to reclaim and steward traditional lands in our areas and to develop food sovereignty and relearn cultural knowledge and teachings, so it's a pretty broad mandate that we have, but we're working, and we believe that it's circular and it's holistic, so all of those things come into the development of our land trust and the housing that we're going to create through our beautiful land trust. So affordable housing is key for indigenous families in our districts of Timiskaming and Cochrane, and many regularly face poverty and homelessness, and indigenous women and two-spirit people experience it at disproportionate, disproportional rates, and they also suffer very high rates of gendered violence, which we've proven much research has proven that housing can address, so those are some of the issues that we're dealing with up here, so really the three key innovations that we're hoping to accomplish with our land trust is that our land trust will primarily consist of indigenous and two spirit people in the region, so that's going to be the membership and the people on our board will be all indigenous, all women or two spirit people from our region. The land trust will hold and collectively govern land for indigenous women led housing solutions within our two districts, and the land trust will be a tool to support land reclamation and indigenous women ownership, and to address homelessness in Northern Ontario. And our project, as I mentioned, is located in Northern Ontario, and that's about five and a half hours directly north of Toronto, so that's at the region where we're in, and right near the Quebec border. And our communities that we're working with are very rural and very, I would say lower middle class, and they, and specifically through our program, and through our organization, Keeps of the Circle, we work with indigenous women and their families and Two-Spirit people, and mainly off-reserve Indigenous people living off reserve in the Timiso Ming district. So, yeah, that's what we're doing here. Thank you.

Nat Pace (CNCLT) 13:58

Awesome, thank you so much, Lisa. I'll pass it next to Andy and Norm.

Norm Leech 14:16

Okay, so thanks everyone. So we, of course, want to deal with affordable housing issues in the Downtown Eastside, which is ground zero for multiple crises that are hitting Vancouver at the same time, whether it's homelessness, affordability, the opioid crisis, COVID, food security, mental health crisis, but it's, it's housing is just one of the issues. The rest, as far as I can see, and indigenous people can see, are all just different aspects of colonized systems. As far as indigenous people in BC are concerned, all our troubles, all our traumas started about 200 years ago, when colonization arrived full force in British Columbia. So, housing affordability is just one of the issues, the wealth inequity, gender inequity, racial racism, discrimination - they're all rooted in the same systems, which are colonized systems, and we didn't have any of these problems before colonized systems arrived. So, to understand housing on its own didn't make a lot of sense to me. So, fine, we can create a different relationship with land and property, but underlying that is the relationship with land and the understanding that the land is the source of everything, and everybody's name for themselves as people means people of the land, and for indigenous people it's included in the saying nucleop all my relations, all our relations, which means all our relationships with everything, everywhere, everywhere, the land, the water, the air, the people, every molecule of this land is we're part of, we are not separate from, and the colonized system has done its best and has been very effective at convincing everybody that you are separate from the land and that the land is not you and you are not the land, and that has had devastating effects on indigenous people around the world. That separation is the original trauma that everybody is trying to heal from ever since colonized systems arrived on your ancestors' doorsteps, and the solution is to reconnect, and so we build that within everything that we do to that relationship with land and each other and the building and in the water and the community is at the root of healing.

Norm Leech 17:00

and help and medicine and health for everyone, so we build that into the governance. We use guided meditations. We help people understand the connection to land. We reference research like Gabor Nate's research on connection as the solution to disconnect to mental health and substance use issues, we examine colonized systems as to why they are so harmful, why they are so good at dividing and separating and isolating people not only from each other but from the land, and then we work at ways that counter that, so we are not an indigenous land trust because we incorporate more than just indigenous people, and in my mind I have to convert everybody anyways, eventually. So we are decolonized land trust, and so we take those approaches to moving away from colonized systems, and the colonized systems of land relationship is property, and that's terrible. So that's the underlying, my underlying goal. Let's hear how Andy Andy gets to implement some of that,

Andy Bond 18:12

and I'll just sort of add on to that context, I guess. You know what our land trust is doing in terms of projects, and you know, we met for before we even had a building. We got our first building only a few months ago, but for three years we met with what we call an indigenous tenants and elder circle. So this is a group of 26 or 27 people in total, with indigenous elders with representation from all three host nations, as well as tenants living in SROs, and basically there's a lot of learning that happens norm leads different trauma-informed sessions for tenants. We sort of walk through different voting pair examples for how to make decisions, and we sort of continue to build off of that, and then you know we now bought the first building that we were able to acquire, so we're sort of bringing slowly those tenants into this, the circle to learn. The circle helps inform a lot of the decisions we make, and we're also in the process now of sort of formalizing that into our actual constitutional bylaws, so that that circle has real tangible power. They can actually, they will be able to select the and basically veto board members, they make decisions, final decisions on properties that we're buying, so it's sort of like Norm is saying, we're moving away and we keep growing and sort of strengthening the indigenous governance aspect, so it's not just sort of an advisory circle that has no real power, we're really trying to give it power, and

we do have the one building we bought. There's a second building that the province bought that we're going to operate, and we're working on transferring that to our ownership. And then we actually just got a grant for our third building that we're starting to fundraise for, and then each building we get is very much based on deeply affordable income assistance level housing, so yeah, I'll stop there.

Nat Pace (CNCLT) 20:06

Well, thanks so much. I think I think we, I think, yeah, I really admire the work that you guys, that you guys are doing there. And I just want to address, because I saw in the Q&A there was a few requests for the report Lisa had mentioned, we'll be arranging the to send out the report after the webinar to all registrants, so we'll make it easy that way. So, thanks so much. I also just, it occurred to me that we might have, I mean, we likely very much do have callers coming in from outside of Canada, maybe outside of outside of North America, and just to set a bit of context, also, or you know, the speakers today are also from vastly different geographies, working on, you know, different territories of different nations, as well. So, you know, in Vancouver, when, when Andy and Norm and I were referring to all three host nations, there's shared stewardship between three, three different nations in Vancouver. I just thought, maybe, maybe if someone's not familiar, they might have gotten a little like, what was that? That's that's what we're talking about here. And Norm, you also mentioned all our relations, so that's the perfect segue then into our final speaker here, Dr. Kaitlyn Patterson, who's coming in from All Our Relations Land Trust. So, please, Kaitlyn, take it away.

Dr Kaitlyn Patterson 21:21

Thanks, Norm, and I think I met Norm, actually, before, maybe the only speaker I've met before in Toronto, I think, another kind of gathering of land trusts and community and indigenous land trusts, bit of both. Okay, so Bonjour, everyone, Kaitlyn Dishnikas. Meanwhile, Wahba Washka, Chiquina Dinikas, Mangadorna, Madawan, and Dojiba Elgin and Diane. So, my name is Kaitlyn Patterson. I'm mixed ancestry Algonquin. My mom's Algonquin from Madawa. My dad has, like, mixed European ancestry, and mainly from the Kingston area, Rita Lakes area, which is where I grew up, and my mom's family is all still up in Mattawa, Ontario, so kind of close to Miss Coming. Little jump, skip, and hopping away, so it'd be nice to connect Lisa about that, your land trust, your work there. Yeah, so I'm a board member and a founding board member of All Our Relations Land Trust, which is an indigenous-led land trust in the Kingston area, and it was created back in 2021 and we incorporated in 2022 and we became a cherry in 2023 and there's right now five board members, but that number has been scheduled, scheduled to increase this this summer to kind of expand the work that we do, build our capacity amongst more community members, and also thinking about governance, we just this year developed a, even though it was already kind of there, we developed a grandmother's council to kind of operate beside the board that we meet with kind of ad hoc all the time because their grandmothers in community in the urban indigenous community in Kingston but also more formally once every three months to just get feedback on what we're doing on our plans on answer questions, look for advice, because we're all kind of right now our board is younger people, like 30s, 40s, and yeah, we're just, we just need more help than then what we're able to do based on our life experiences, so we're, you know, the board makes the votes, but as per our, you know, policies, we follow the grandmothers. It's kind of strange to work in a place that we've created that has like policies to follow the grandmothers, even though we've done, we did that before without the policies, but okay, they're there now. So, if others come in and need a bit of guidance and I have, like, more of a nonprofit mind, then that's easy for them to step into, and then we can work on deconstructing some of those thoughts as they work with the land trust. So, the land trust, it's guided by the Grandmother's Council. It has a board of five indigenous people from all over the place, so I mentioned I'm all Gonquin from Matawa. I'm registered on 817 Generalist Sudbury, which is a list of status Indians on a list that don't belong to a band. If you don't know what it is, most people don't. It's you can find it in the Indian Act. Take a Google, take a gander at that. Very complicated. I won't go into that, but that's where I'm from. From and then there's Jeff Kiyoshi Gras, who's from Opal Island First Nation, Natasha Darling from Tyndana, Sheldon Travis from his

ancestries from Six Nations, and Sheil McGinty, who's from Garden Lake, that's right now, and I mentioned we're going to be expanding that, and then our Grandmother's Council is made up of grandmothers who are, who have lived in the urban indigenous community in the Kingston area, but of course are from all over the place, so Maureen Buchanan, she, she was one of the co-founders of the Land Trust, as well, and she is from Bochuana, but lives in, has lived in Kingston for 30 years. Deb San Amont from Penetangushine and Henry Inlet, Nikki Nikki Auton from Tyendinaga, Karen Labresh from Pickwalk, Negon, and Kathy Grant, Kathy Brandt, sorry, from Tangana, and those are kind of key mentors. What we do is we, we try to change how people view the land, so not as property but as a living relative, right, that's where our name comes from, all the animals and plants, all the aspects of the earth were connected, and we rely on each other for survival, and humans especially rely on others for survival and for our well-being, so we try to change how people see that, and mostly we do that through trying to having moments of connection like this, but then also bringing people to the land and inviting them to contribute in some way. It doesn't have to be physical, you know, kind of physical work like planting and gardening and growing trees and forests. It could be spiritual care of the land, offering semi offering tobacco, and putting good intentions into what we're doing. It could be language people are developing languages, language resources for families on the land. The core of what we do is to learn how to care for the land and remember those knowledges that have been lost for a lot of people through colonization, so we have an indigenous food sovereignty garden. We grow a lot of kind of conventional, you know, market foods that people readily, you know, recognize and are able to pick up, but then also some traditional foods, or some older foods, indigenous native plants medicines that we can draw and distribute, and we are, we distribute those foods with, with partnerships throughout the city, with other kind of like allied food organizations, and then also we're trialing a food box kind of distribution system with, with some low-income families, indigenous families in the area. Yeah, and so we distribute medicines to grandmother circles, and we save them for our own use, for ceremony on the land. We have ceremony there regularly - moon ceremonies, sunrise ceremonies, all kinds of things happen there. People just come out to the land. It's a very small space. It's about it's less than two acres, and it was a pasture, like a hay field, for 30 years before we, you know, took ownership. It was gifted by the United Church in a kind of an act of reconciliation. That conversation took about eight years with members of the urban indigenous community, and then just a handful of years ago we created the land trust in order to host that gift. We, we will talk about this, I'm sure, in a little bit, but we recognize what a contradiction that is like to hold land as a piece of property through a land trust kind of mechanism, and also like recognize it as not, not a piece of property, it is all living relatives. So, how do you do that? And right now it's like a compromise in vision that we are accepting and hoping that we will be able to move beyond this in the future, maybe we don't do the land trust model, maybe it's something else. There's all kinds of mechanisms for holding land, and all of them have deep flaws, unfortunately, in modern times. So I'm happy to talk with others to make what we're doing like the doing it in the best way we can, you know, and benefiting the most people, and not just people. Maybe I'll pause there. There's lots more I could say about, like, we've been building relationships with other communities, and not just urban communities, but urban communities as well, and nearby First Nations and communities to talk about shared governance and shared responsibilities with this land, it's, you know, it's a small space, but it's also in a place where there's a lot of development happening, and so the more, the more allies we can, we can, more friendships we can have with each other, the stronger kind of advocacy we can, we could have, and also like thinking about putting our minds together to think about food distribution and doing everything we're doing in the best way possible, or at least in a half decent way. And I just came from the garden this morning, so I'm tired. You can see it on my face, I'm sweaty and tired. I was weeding the raspberries from Skoll Monuk, so yeah, you'll have to forgive me. I'll pause there. I've been talking too much.

Nat Pace (CNCLT) 30:42

Thanks, so much, Kaitlyn, for that great overview, and, and, yeah, I was also, I was planting some strawberries this morning, so no worries there, always a good day to get hands in the soil, so thanks so

much for introducing your project, thanks to all the speakers, that was a really, really rich introduction to all these amazing projects that that are happening, so let's get in. Let's get into our second question here. So community land trusts attempt to shift our relationship to land from one that is profit driven and individualistic to one rooted and shared stewardship and the understanding of land as maybe public good, or as Kaitlyn just said, understanding land as a living relative. So, from this understanding, from this place, in your opinions, how can land trusts contribute to the broader decolonization movement, and you know, where are the opportunities? Where is this making sense? And, as much as possible, if you want to, like, ground it in your, in your own work, that's that's great. We love examples, but yeah, all, let's do this popcorn style. People can feel free to unmute, and please feel free, like, if you want to add on to something somebody else just said, to get in there, we can have kind of an organic conversation. So, do I.. do I have any first takers for the opportunities that the land trust model can present? We put a few on the table already.

Lisa Neil 32:20

I can go for, I have a lot of notes, so I'll go through. I have some notes generally about that question, Nat, that you had given us. And then I also have some specific examples from our land trust that I think I can maybe sort of relate, like relate the Decolonizing aspect to. So, taking land and housing from being a commodity to be, to becoming a shared resource to be used and stewarded by everyone, so exactly what Kaitlyn was just talking about, and what Norm was talking about previously, because in European models we see land as something to be owned and you know, like taken over and used for your own purposes, and Mother Nature is never really part of that, that thought process, or all of our relations, right, including the animals and all the people, and you know, the rocks and the water in the air, so taking land from, you know, that sort of ownership to a stewardship and a joint ownership with all of our relatives having a piece of that stewardship. I have to get out of the.. I'm trying to change my language a lot, because that's the decolonized, that's the colonized language of ownership. So that would be one of the first things, the most powerful things, and just to put a little bit of a legal spin on it. When Kaitlyn was mentioning that it's still not a perfect vehicle for what we're doing, because you do still technically own the land and fee simple with the land trust, I feel that, like, as, like, the lawyer in me is so excited about the land trust movement, because the land trust owning, owning property, even in fee simple, when it's through a land trust mechanism, is the closest thing we have to actually the way indigenous people used to steward and take care of the land, so it's legally we still have that one little tip toe in the colonized world, but it's very much a decolonized principle, because you have a board of directors, and in our case, like Caitlin's doing, we also have a circle of grandmothers, we have a circle of youth, there are feather carriers, we have a circle of like people like membership from the community, so there are all these circles that are involved in our new governance model, which we'll talk about in a second, but anyway, so it's just a very different way of owning, and you're owning it for the collective good, for time, you know, like it for forever, basically, right? So that those are all concepts that come from very much indigenous land stewardship, and way back to, you know, for 1000s of years, so I love that about the land trust model, and right now it's the closest thing we have to, to that in the, in the, like, you know, in the government, both federally and provincially in Canada. So I love it, and I think it's something that we can really use to, you know, we can really, we can really do a lot of cool things with with the land trust, and we can build on it, and maybe it will become actually like inherent, you know, ownership by indigenous people, so back closer to, you know, that sort of land ownership, that's not - we don't have that in Canada quite yet, but we're getting some really cool decisions out of the Supreme Court about land ownership all over the place, especially out there in BC and Alberta, Norm. So, where you guys are, there's some really wonderful things happening. So, eventually, I think maybe we'll have inherent title back, but for now, the land trust model is a beautiful way for us to sort of own steward land altogether for the best of everybody, so some of the other things are changing the view of housing from a commodity and a wealth building mechanism to a shared stewardship and a right to care for and live on the land, and by promoting that housing as a human right, so those are all concepts that are very different, and at the land trust promote, like, lets us decolonize based on that

one other important aspect is by putting Mother Nature first in our building projects and connecting to the land and connecting land back to the housing, so always considering, and actually this is something that came from Norm, so I'm always happy to be in his, and I feel grateful to be in his presence, and I've taken everything he says, and I've actually incorporated a lot into our land trust model, so one of the things that he mentioned one time during one of these round tables that we were doing, or one of these sharing circles with the Indigenous Land Trust people, was that he said that Mother Nature should be on the board of directors, and so I took that and I ran with it, and actually Mother Nature, Mother Earth is the honorary chair of our board of directors, so so she, she forms a really important place in the government, our governance model, and that's because of Norm, and I actually cited him in my case study, which you guys will see if anybody gets it, and so anyway, he's he's just such a special person and a great mentor and a great elder in my mind, so like a lot of things he says I really stick to. So, so taking us out of the two wide seeing approach, so Norm once said to me, when after he read my case study, he said, Lisa, just something to consider, maybe the two wide seeing approach isn't really the best way, and as many of you know, our funders always want the, you know, because we had CMHC as our funder. Wonderful, we love them, but I mean they wanted still the two-eyed seeing approach, right? So the Western approach with the indigenous approach, and we just kind of, sort of like, gotten rid of that. So now I really just try to, I use the Western approach the little bit that I have to, to keep our land trust legal, and to do everything, of course, under the laws of the country, but other than that, I'm with Norm, and we're always using our indigenous, beautiful eyes rather than having, you know, our Western eye and our and our indigenous eye on things. So, no more really two-eyed seeing approach in our projects, and that was thanks to, again, Norm's contributions. What we do, so building houses using gentler technologies, and those that are better for Mother Earth. So, green technologies pass the building to harness the power of Mother Earth instead of harming her, building housing that is more traditional in design and materials to reconnect indigenous women to the land and to their ancestors' teaching and to traditional skills, and then we're going to create spaces within our tiny homes that we're building, our smaller homes that we're building, that will have like spaces for connection, so community kitchens and community outdoor spaces, so that children and women can reconnect with their culture, as well as having housing, so it's like a, it's a very circular wraparound sort of model of care that we're going to incorporate with our housing, connecting people to the land and keeping the land in the hands of the ancestors of those who originally inhabited it, so that's one of the ways that land trusts are being used to decolonize, reincorporating indigenous governance models, matriarchal governance models, connecting land and housing to culture, reintroducing traditional uses of the land, growing for growing all different kinds of things, but especially our sacred medicines and our sacred foods, and by that way we can reintroduce traditional food growing, planting, tending, harvesting, and cooking, which is also a form of therapy, as Norm and Andy probably know, right, connecting to the land is a form of trauma, you know, like help with trauma and help with dealing with intergenerational trauma, and so, like, we're because a lot of the women that come to us for housing issues also have trauma, mental health issues, trauma issues, addiction issues, so we need to have a very cohesive blanket of services, which we kind of do, so just quickly, just some of the cool things that we're doing are in our land trust, we do have an indigenous and matrilineal governance system, so a little bit like the one Kaitlyn described. So, we have circles of directors, the Sacred Grandfather, so we follow the Sacred Laws, indigenous laws in our, in our policies and procedures. We use the seven grandfather teachings, the 13 Grandmother Moon teachings, and we have a circular reciprocal governance model, as, as I mentioned, with Mother Earth as our honorary chair, I just love that part of it so much, and land bank, so this is a way that of Decolonizing by giving land back right in a way that sometimes it's not so obvious, and so sometimes it's painful for settler people to think about land bank because they think it's unfair and it's not, you know, it's not, it's not good for them in some way, and we sort of form it as you're helping to create housing, you know, and we're creating models that are going to be able to use and be scaled all across the country for non-indigenous people as well, right. So that's how we sort of say it. So, and then addressing the very serious issue of housing availability and affordability in the gender-based violence and missing and murdered and indigenous women and two-spirit peoples here in

Northern Ontario. So that's something that's a very massive problem up here. We have human trafficking, and we have the MM IG W WG at 2s is very, that's that's a very serious problem up here. So, it can be addressed by housing, is what our research is telling us. If there's affordable housing, there's emergency housing, and there's more shelters built, which we plan to do up here with our land trust, then these are all things that are going to be able to be addressed by a land trust, so very decolonizing, creating culturally focused, trauma-informed intersectional housing through our land trust is a way we're decolonizing, creating a culturally focused, trauma-informed, intersectional blanket of care model, like I mentioned, so we'll be addressing in our housing projects and developments, mental health, addiction, provide training for jobs, financial literacy programs, cultural healing programs, cultural programs, and skill building, food forest, and gardening opportunities, and child care, too. So people can get out there and, and get jobs, and get housing, and get to get into the places that we're trying to build. We're going to try to create investment and a different funding model for our land trust that will take us out of the colonized world, so we'll be creating, we'll be trying to create social enterprises to create financial sustainability that can take us out of the loop of federal and provincial funding and municipal funding that's pulled all the time, and it doesn't, it doesn't sustain us with a regular staffing, it's really hard from year to year, so we'd like to do something where we're doing good in the community in a whole bunch of different ways, we're looking at greenhouses, and we actually have this beautiful brand new 40,000 foot factory that we're building in Kirkland, like here, and it's a passive panel factory, and it's being - it was - it's created, it's being run by a nonprofit through Keepers of the Circle, and we eventually will be connected to the Land Trust in some way, but those panels that we're building, and they're all indigenous women that are being trained in this factory, and all of the important positions at the factory are all indigenous women led, and so we're going to be building these passive panels to build small homes on the land that we're going to be buying through or being donated to the land trust. So it's a whole, like, really, when we say we're building from the ground up to the whole way, it's from, you know, like from the panels that we're going to be sourcing from indigenous communities that would appear, so it's very much like indigenous built, so we hope someday to have, you know, a woman that worked in our factory opening the door, you know, the key to her door of her tiny home that she built herself, right? So, and through our projects, we're also, we're also going to be training, we also are right now training women in all the red seal trades, so like construction, plumbing, electrical, passive, passive energy. So we have a big solar program right now, so we're going to be, we're changing all of our buildings up here to like to be zero net zero. So I'm going to do that with our build. So anyway, it's a whole like, we're decolonizing, we're using our land trust to do all kinds of really cool things and really innovative things, and so yeah, so that's how we're decolonizing. And I have a lot of other things, but I'll say that later. Thank you.

Nat Pace (CNCLT) 42:06

Go for it, Norm.

Norm Leech 42:07

Yeah, first of all, oh my god, that's fantastic, Lisa. I, I often say that the systems of colonization are diabolically ingenious in their construction and design, and how effective they are at separating the original people from their original land and separating them from everything, but those colonized systems don't stand a chance against people like Lisa. This is awesome. I also love the irony of using a tool created by colonized law, the land trust against itself to decolonize the relationship with land. Most people don't know that probably the oldest land trust in Canada is the Indian Reserve System. All those lands are held in trust by the federal government in trust for status Indians in this country, so I like the irony of using that as a, as a tool of healing rather than a tool of separation and isolation and disconnection. I also think that the property issue is a challenge, but if we reframe it as more like a marriage ceremony, when you take responsibility for a piece of land and that land also has a sense of responsibility for caring for you, because it's going to house you, it's going to feed you, it's going to hold you, and it's more like a marriage ceremony than then then a deed and a property transfer, even

though the colonized marriage ceremony is a property transfer or is designed that way. So I love using colonized systems back against itself, and it looks like Lisa has really taken that to heart and is using every system at her disposal to do that to decolonize everything, and I just raised my hands up to that. Thank you. Thanks, Lisa.

Nat Pace (CNCLT) 44:10

Go ahead, Kaitlyn.

Dr Kaitlyn Patterson 44:12

Thanks. Well, I don't know if I will compare the land trust like I'm like the system to, like, a marriage rather than a purchase. Maybe it's because I just got divorced. I don't know. Maybe in my mind it's like, just kidding, all's good. Oh, I did just get divorced. But, anyways, anyways, back to the task. So, like, some of the things that our land trust is doing like I recognize we recognized just what, like Norm was saying, and something I said before is like, you know, the two ideas don't don't really go together, but you can also use these tools to kind of go back on the system and the structure, I think there's debate around that, but I think so, and some of the things that we can, that we've been able to do right now is like one, shift some of the power and shift some of the, or increase our self-determination as like an urban indigenous collective, when our self-determination has been a lot of ways stripped down, like we know that in urban spaces about half of the indigenous population in Canada lives in urban spaces now, and that number is increasing. We know that indigenous women have been disproportionately disconnected, this displacement that's happened from their communities and have come to these urban areas, and so it's not surprising that a lot of these initiatives are indigenous woman led or two spirit led and grandmother led, not surprising to me, and so we've been able to gain back some of that self determination by having a place to gather, a place to brainstorm, a place, a place to grow, and I think of it like, yes, there's like a repatriation that's happening, land transfer, but really it's like a rematriation. People have probably heard that term, that strengthening of relationships between us and the land, and of course all our relatives we've talked with that. So it may be a purchase, but I think there is a lot of benefit that does align with our world views. And then the other thing I'll mention to right now is like

Dr Kaitlyn Patterson 46:30

actually, there's one, there's one other advantage I will mention is, and that's like, you know, like with urbanization and lots of development happening, and like we can see lots of development projects happening all over Canada with Bill Five and c5 and like land trusts can give indigenous peoples power to advocate alongside these ownership kind of mentalities and logics, because you have to now consult this random indigenous urban group that would have otherwise no quote unquote rights to consultation, even if those that consultation is deeply flawed, and there's all kinds of problems with that. Now we have that as an owner, and in the East End of Kingston, there's lots of development happening, and we've been able to advocate and reshape in a lot of ways the process that development is happening in these areas, and ideally we'll be working with these other landowners in the area to decrease the environmental impact on development, change the way it happens, so that it actually supports life rather than demolishes it. I'll stop there. Thank you.

Miriam Berndt 47:43

Oh, this is such a fun conversation. We're like a non-indigenous-led organization. Our board is 100% BIPOC. We have an Indigenous advisory committee and a tenant advisory committee, and I lean a lot on our Indigenous advisory committee. They ought to be commuted for most of the work, the ideas that we come up with, but I really like what you're saying, Kaitlyn, about reshaping the development process. I think Norm also mentioned, like, the tools, the tools of this system, and so that's that's kind of where I focus a lot of my efforts, is taking a lot of the conventions that are the conventional tools that are used in a development process or in acquisitions, and turning them against themselves, like

reshaping them, and so, like, one, what are the early ways that we looked at this was when designing a pro forma, and so Barn from Parkdale Land Trust once said that he sees the perform as a story, a story of the place, and I just loved that so much, and I really took that to heart, and so that's something that we've looked at, is like, how do we, how do we take this financial thing, like we all have to spend the money and get the money, capital stack it up, so we can do what we want to do, and so how do you actually start adding line items to reflect your values and reflect a spirit of reciprocity? I worked in the profit for, like, private for-profit world for eight years as a landscape architect, so I was in a lot of those like early performer planning spaces with big, big developers in Vancouver, and I used to leave so upset, so like seeing them cut down unit sizes so quickly, like affordable unit sizes going as small as possible, and giving them back, like the worst views, and all these really dehumanizing things happening so quickly just by changing a figure, whether it's a square foot or \$1 amount. So I really love this idea of like co-opting the tools, and when you're crafting your performance, that you can bake in affordability, like deep affordability. One thing that we look at is like revenue sharing, so taking a portion of our revenues and returning those funds to the nations or indigenous urban indigenous organizations that are closely related to the land that that we would be inhabiting or owning, and then really cool one we we have looked at was building a recovery model, we call it a recovery model, but it's partnering with values-aligned tenants who can pay more, can pay market market rents to offset costs, costs that we can provide what we're calling self-determined space use, which is just free or nominal space for either the host nations, we keep saying that that's the thing we see in Vancouver, Musqueam, Scottish sail tooth, to take, take on those spaces, like trying to do land back with what power we have by giving them free access to space, or in for us indigenous artists and practitioners and organizations, and prioritizing those voices so early on in the process, so that square footage budget to craft and design and build environments that are culturally appropriate for their future success and self-determination at any space that the cultural land trust will operate, and so we do that through things like the performer. I recently started kind of a new project looking at like an acquisitions framework that's another tool that's really common in this whole property ownership thing. How are we deciding if a, if a property is the right one for us? And so we're really breaking that down and trying to look at it as land first, so instead of seeing the property as an opportunity for our interests as an organization or the interests of our community, broadening that up, seeing it as our, our relations, seeing the land as a, as a, as a place that we have a connection and responsibility to uphold those relations, so breaking like the questions down of like whose land is this that tells us what kinds of relationships will come into play later in the development process or operations. What is the history of that place? What, what are the cultural and ecological significance of those lands? Is it something that we should even be taking on? Like, is it such? Is it a sacred space? Does that mean if we were to take on the acquisitions, that partnership with host nations or organizations is absolutely essential? And then, how do we do that? I think doing this early research of really understanding the place-based nature, like a land-based nature of a site, helps you really to start to unpack the opportunities that we have as we kind of have to go through some of these like conventional tools to get to the end result, which is to share access to land for the benefit of many, yeah. Hope that makes sense.

Nat Pace (CNCLT) 53:06

Yeah, absolutely. Okay,

Miriam Berndt 53:07

not cool.

Nat Pace (CNCLT) 53:09

Yes, thanks, Miriam. Yeah, and I don't know if I forgot or didn't know you were working as a landscape architect. We got a landscape architect, got a lawyer, we got a nutritionist, community leaders, we got out there, we got this. It was a great conversation, guys. I really am enjoying it. And thank you again for

taking the time. Before we go on to the next question, I guess I just wanted to hold a little bit of space in case anybody wanted to respond or dig into anything that just just was shared. Otherwise, I'm happy to move on. I'll just take a five second break here. Okay, cool. Oh yeah, Kaitlyn, go ahead.

Dr Kaitlyn Patterson 53:51

Oh, I think one other thing that we, that helps us, like with like governance in, like Kingston is, is shared territory, like it's historically been a meeting place. It's like Haudenosaunee, Anishinaabe, here on Wendat territory, all different kinds of nations as they exist today. And so it exists on, you know, the city of Kingston, where we work, is also on Dish with One Spoon Wampum territory, and so, like, there's all kinds of cultural differences amongst all of these different communities, and, like, in Kingston, it's like, as sure, the numbers are bigger in Vancouver and elsewhere, but we have about, you know, eight ish 1000 indigenous people living in the city from all over the place, and so, like, we try to focus in our work on similarities, honoring differences, seeing the gifts that people can contribute to a space, to the garden, our space there, and feeling aligned on our wampum teachings that come from this territory, like taking what we need, leaving some for everybody else, and keeping the dish clean, and that kind of like guiding vision is what helps us, along with like natural law, like what we do has consequences, not just now, but looking ahead into the next seven generations. So trying to think about shared principles that can actually guide us towards, as Maureen says, the continuation of life. The end.

Nat Pace (CNCLT) 55:26

Thanks. Thank you so much. The end of this question. And just a shout out to our participants, I'm seeing some questions come in in the Q and A. Feel free to share more. We're going to keep on rolling for another 35 minutes here, while five minutes for closing reflections, so another 30 minutes for question time here, and it's been really rich so far. So, my final question, and I'll also rope in an audience question into this. It was, you know, we were just talking about opportunities for decolonization through land trusts. Now the title of the webinar was, was Decolonizing community land trusts, rather than, you know, I first called it decolonization through community land trusts, and I was like, well, that can be kind of presumptuous. What about maybe we needed to colonize the model itself? So, in your opinion, where does the land trust or community land trust model, I guess, hinder or block indigenous self-determination or decolonization land back? Do you have examples on how the CLT model or land trust model itself needs to be decolonized? And in the chat, we had a question, you know, we were hearing a lot of.. I was loving it, like the Grandmothers Council, the Elders Council, Elders Council, Circle of Directors, Circle of Youth. The question was, are there examples where indigenous governance models have fundamentally reshaped the CLT structure itself, rather than being, you know, included within, within the typical structure. How has what kind of how are we actually like, yeah, I guess changing the model, so again, like what elements of the model really need to actually be taken apart, or what can we keep, and what needs to be, you know, dismissed, I guess, in your opinion. So I'll, I'll leave it to the floor, and yeah, go for it. Kaitlyn, kick us off here. Thank you,

Dr Kaitlyn Patterson 57:22

Norm. You can go first. I think we've tied in the hand raise.

Norm Leech 57:31

I've run into this question in multiple boards and organizations that say that they want to decolonize, whether it's a settlement agency or a community center, or or a police department, and it becomes a matter of can an organization decolonize without the people first decolonizing, and it's a process. It's first recognizing how absolutely completely colonized we are. The air we breathe is colonized every our education system, the language we speak, the entire legal system is not one law was written by us. So to recognize how colonized we are, and then to see how diabolically ingenious the systems are. So one example is Canada's implementation of UNDRIP. Its implementation uses a distinction-based

approach, which separates people based on whether they're in their traditional territory or not. So, Vancouver recognizes Musqueam strong or slave with you, but not the 70,000 urban Indigenous people who, who are not on their traditional territories, so that separates and divides and pits us against each other, so we are not an indigenous land trust, we are decolonized, so that we don't end up triggering some sort of claim on someone else's territory, which would create conflict and perhaps confrontation, so we say decolonized with also representation on our board from the three host first nations, but we have to do that now because Vancouver and British Columbia and Canada treats those three nations differently in Vancouver than everybody else, and it's, and it's a bit of a problem, and it's going to be eventually, so, but it's, it's a brilliant strategy. So, those are some of the things that we, we see that when someone else controls the writing of the laws, boy, that's a powerful tool.

Nat Pace (CNCLT) 59:46

Maybe I'll circle back to Kaitlyn, then we'll throw it to you, Miriam.

Dr Kaitlyn Patterson 59:49

I've been thinking a lot about that, actually, Norm, about UN drip implementation and following a distinctions-based approach, and like, how it might, might, as it's rolled out in law and policy, kind of like underrepresent or completely ignore the self-determination of indigenous peoples in cities, and everybody has the right to self determination. Every indigenous person has the right to self determination, and that just doesn't, it doesn't disappear when you move to the city or you're forced to the city. And the reality is that indigenous people do get together in the city and do stuff together, like that's the reality, and it doesn't mean like creating a new nation in the city, and like creating a citizenship and fighting, and Whose territory is this, Whose property is this? The reality is that it's everybody's relation, and I think going forward, like I would love to be involved in, you know, having some of those discussions with other, other indigenous people who are also involved in rolling out UN drip, and like making sure that it, the UN drip process doesn't already add to the discrimination that many indigenous women have faced, who are now disproportionately displaced, you know, have been, and so, like, yeah, I just think that going forward it needs to focus on similarities, common cause, and a collective future, like we have to work together, because we're in a climate crisis, a biodiversity crisis, and no matter whose land it is, we're still in a crisis, and focusing there rather than on the continuation of life, as Maureen says, like, I think we're making a big mistake. So, yeah, like, I love that you just said that. So, Mig Watch for that. And just on a very, very smaller scale, some of the stuff that our land trust is doing, in terms of like decolonization, I do that because I'm not sure at how much it contributes, really, but I like to think it does a little. Is that we try to remember that, like, the land trust is a vehicle, like, is a tool that we, the community, use, and so, like, this isn't us, this is something we do and we use, and that this community exists, no matter what, irrespective of this tool, and we can just use this tool that, as much as possible, as it aligns with our own values and worldview. And then we also just, you know, sometimes you just have to do the thing, because you have to do the thing, you have to file your CRA taxes, and blah blah blah. Another thing, too, is we kind of push back on some of the the mindset of the chair of charities, like for example, charities in Canada, you have to create them to benefit humans, so like even if you want to help animals, that help to animals has to benefit humans in the end part of your mission statement, or you know, your whatever, I forget the name of it, the core thing that you send in, this is what we, this is what we do, your activities, and so we push against that, like we know that's not true, and so the way we've written our values is that it's benefiting all our relations, and that government can choose to interpret that how they wish to make themselves feel better, and then also, How we write our bylaws, like we have to write a bylaws. Okay, fine. We make that compromise. We write our bylaws and policies in ways that support what we're already doing in community, writing the grandmother policy, for example, ridiculous, and also something what we're doing, and then bylaws, for example, like decisions by consensus, we're not like out competing each other with vote, we talk it out, and if we can't make a decision, we'll come back to it, and if you know down the road, down the road, we have to have a vote, hasn't happened yet, but that's still in place, so

again the colonial system check mark, but we're actually a community and have values, and we're doing things the way we want to do them within limits, I suppose.

Miriam Berndt 1:04:18

There's like eight things that I want to say, what to say. What should I go with? Yeah, I really appreciate you both bringing up the urban indigenous self-determination and sort of the complexities of recognition politics. I thought I kind of maybe agree with Lisa. I get really dorky about land trust, because I, I think of how, like, alternative property dynamics, like alternative ways of performing, or like doing property, is actually a way that we can self-advocate for our rights, and and uphold rights to self determination while still aligning with the leadership and protocol of the nations who have rights and title to the land that I'm on, yeah, that that's how I sort of like conceptualized this thing, and I think it's like a part of being indigenous, like no matter where you go, like you don't like, you, the relationship with the peoples whose territory you're on is like so important, like it's always a part of I think the way that we relate to place, the way that we like situate ourselves, like we're aware, we're away, we're aware when we're not on our own territories, you know, and so I, I feel like sometimes there's this like contention that recognizing our indigenous rights is a slippery slope towards rights and title and like land reparations, and I don't see it that way. I see them as very different. It's just we, it means that we have to think outside of the binary of property, and I think when Canada thinks about rights, they think about land and property instead of about, instead of thinking about community and gathering access to space, and Andy describes it as being self-determining of our, like, cultural, economic, social well-being, that that doesn't necessarily mean that we have to be owners of land, it can be something different, and I think the land trust is a space where we can start to conceive of communal, communal ways of stewarding place and and recognizing those rights, so yeah, big nerd about it too, Lisa. Um, yeah, what would I do away with? Um, I feel like I often hear like non-indigenous-led land trusts talk about integrating indigenous people, integrating, which usually means they're like, let's do a mural, or let's do some like kind of art thing, or like a native garden on the boulevard, and that stuff's really great. It's like it's really lovely, and it does do something, but I think there are deeper ways that we can actually pursue rights recognition. I think that that in itself requires learning, though, like reading UNDRIP, seeing what, like, the local communities are saying, like indigenous communities and nations are saying around you about their rights, and then, and then more deeply embedding that recognition into the way that we practice what we do, and then I think also like finding ways where indigenous ontologies actually can change the approach to development and to operations beyond the surface level kind of designy choices that we can make, yeah.

Andy Bond 1:08:14

I guess I think everything, you know, everyone's covered everything pretty well. I would say for us it's just what Norm always says about the diabolical systems, where we're always having to be creative to comply as other people are, and others have talked about with charitable status, for example, which we do not have, but we're in the process of getting, and our elder tenant committee, we do compensate people for their time, we've always done that for the tenants and the indigenous elders coming that creates issues with the charitable rules around compensating directors on the board, so it's part of why we sort of have this dual structure of, you know, yeah, having the board, the traditional board that you would have, but then having this, this other board that is still paid, but trying to create this hybrid structure that allows them to still have actual power, so we think we're close to getting this all in a way that works, but it's just sort of been a lot of work to figure out how to do what we're trying to do within this system, that makes it challenging. Likewise, with donations, because we didn't have charitable status, we received a donation through Aboriginal Front Door, which is a close partner. But then to get that fund transferred for us to buy our building within the colonial system was required lawyers to look at multiple agreements and working something out that made sense legally, that would not jeopardize Aboriginal front doors charitable status until we get our own, so you know those are areas I guess that are just still challenging that we're you know stuck in this system trying to do something else

Nat Pace (CNCLT) 1:10:02

I Lisa, do you want to want to jump in?

Lisa Neil 1:10:07

Yeah, sure. Everything I was going to talk about, everybody already sort of covered, but I'll just build a little bit on that. Everything that Andy, Norm, Miriam, and Kaitlyn had mentioned, but I think one of the places where we can still do a lot of work, and that we've developed pretty robustly in our land trust is definitely changing the governance models, like changing, incorporating these governance models, where we have a mind of stewardship and of joint ownership and communal ownership for the greater good, and so we've really, really done that in a really pretty, pretty comprehensive way, so we're not really following any of the traditional policies and procedures that we would see in a normal not for profit, our board system, as I mentioned, is completely circular, completely different than the top down sort of pyramid structure that you see with the chair and the secretary treasurer. We've called things different ways, we've kept the things that we needed to, like Andy mentioned, because we have to report to the, you know, the government of Ontario, and we have to do all these other things and comply, but we're really, really, really at every like opportunity using the land trust model and using our governance model to be a matrilineal and an indigenous governance model, so like completely changing the face of how we govern at all, like in it's a completely different mindset, as both Miriam and Kaitlyn mentioned, or Miriam, yeah, and Kaitlyn mentioned, sort of norm, but like it's not about like we're buying a piece of property to make money off this property to sell it to the highest, you know, it's not a commodification of property, like, you know, and no land trusts really do that, as far as I'm aware, but we could really change the concept of how we do, you know, how we do the land trust modeling, and with these governance models that I think we can take a lot from, even even non-indigenous land trusts can use these, you know, these really awesome concepts and, and models to get out of, out of the thinking that we have, the colonial settler mindset. So that's a really important piece that I think more land trust could do with, with, with all the, you know, the good things that we're developing. And then the other thing is, I mentioned about, I mentioned I talked about it quickly, but the funding models, so typically we're funded with charitable donations, and you know, like money from the municipality, money from the province, money from the feds, you know, and we get, you know, like, and it's really hard to, I'm constantly looking for money to be able to get our land trust really up and go, because we need several staff members, and we need, so what we're really, really heavily focusing on is, like, I mentioned, like the social enterprises to be able to, like, make money to be able to pour it right back into our housing, and we're like just jumping out of the colonial, like, framework completely, like, we're that's why we, we got the funding to develop our own factory, to create our own panels, to create our own housing, and we're training indigenous women to do that, so we're going right out of the colonial model of making these developers rich, right, it's like, okay, here's our land trust. We have this beautiful land, you know, Mother Nature sort of gave us the okay, you know, we'll go through all of those, you know, like sort of front line, you know, like, you know, like to get like ceremonies and making sure we're doing everything right. But then we have this like billion dollar horrible settler corporation coming in there and building houses and making all this money, right? So instead, we're like, we're going to cut that, those people right out of there, and we're just going to have our own not-for-profit that's going to build on our land, so the money that we make from that social enterprise we can pour back into creating more housing, and so we're really cutting out a lot of the colonial aspects, you know, in our, in our land trust by doing that our way, you know, and then eventually we hope to just, you know, build houses on all kinds of different land trusts for people in different communities, and then we can make more money, and we can create more, you know, affordable housing, and that's sort of the ways that we're going to keep our housing deeply, deeply affordable, because it's not from help from a colonial government, right? Like Norm points out, that we're going to get the help that we need, because they don't see it as everything has to be for profit, everything has to be to make money, it's not, you know, we believe strongly that housing is a human right, and everybody deserves it, just like clean water and food and

the air we breathe, like it's definitely, you know, like a fundamental human right to be able to lay your head somewhere safe, and to, you know, have a space to call your own, and you know, that looks a whole bunch of different things, right. We're going to do rental housing, we're going to do elders housing, we're going to do, you know, emergency shelters, we're going to do emergency homeless shelters, but gender-based violence shelter, like there's a whole bunch of things, healing lodges, right, like there's all kinds of things that are components of this that make housing, you know, doable, affordable. And then we'll have, like, you know, like a loop of funding, and we're looking at, you know, small-scale farming. We're looking at the greenhouses, are really popular up here because it's so hard to grow in Northern Ontario and have fresh food over the, for like, 365 days a year, especially up the coast, you know, like, we're way far in northern Ontario, so if we can develop these greenhouses, we could, you know, like, they can scale that in the communities, and they can, you know, then they can make money, they can sell to the fancy, you know, like, well, us up here, it's exploration, right? So all the man camps that are up here that are causing problems, anyway, we could be selling them all the food instead of trucking it in from Cisco, and all these, so anyway, we have a lot of ideas, and we're like, why don't we just take the colonial models, and flip them, you know, put our traditional eyes on them and lenses, and we'll make money, and then we'll be able to put it back into all the social services that we want to have, and we want to produce for our people, right. So, and another thing, why we've addressed the urban indigenous question, which is a legit, very serious question, we have representation, or we're hoping to have representation on our circle of directors of all of the indigenous communities, like within a 500 mile radius, so it doesn't address all of the indigenous communities in Northern Ontario, but a great portion of them will have an indigenous woman sitting on the circle of directors that will be able to make a decision about what we're doing, right, and guide us, so they have a voice and they have, you know, a say, and it's a little bit of land, you know, a piece of the land stewardship for all of the communities, so you know we're working, and it takes them outside of the reserve model too, because as many of you know, in Canada, if you're a reserve, you can't own property unless you go through the government, unless you get it stamped approved, and then it's really never your own, because it's owned by the government, and you only have a certificate of possession, right, and leasing it is a pain in the butt, and if there's all kinds of problems, but if these communities catch on to our model, they can start to buy and get land back in a way that makes them own it in fee simple through a land trust, so it's way better than the reserve system. So it's kind of like I have this elder, I think she's actually on here today, her name's Marie Penawaniquat, and she's the chair of the National Indigenous Women's Housing Network, and she always, she, she likes to call it Norm, is like, does sort of the same thing, but the sneak up dance, so we use the colonial policies and the colonial laws and the structures to just sneak up and you know get things back and get things back into the way that we want them to be without them actually even noticing that we're using you know their own laws and their own institutions and their own like creations that you know are bad in there in the way they use them but they'll be beautiful and good in the way that we use them so anyway that's just yeah that's my contribution.

Nat Pace (CNCLT) 1:16:23

Wonderful, Lisa. That you know, you guys got it. You're not playing up there, is all I can say. When

Miriam Berndt 1:16:32

you had said before that you have a factory, I thought that you meant like somebody who, like, you're gonna get like an agreement to hire people. No, you have your own factory.

Lisa Neil 1:16:44

Yeah, it's going to be operational. It's not, and this is not just me, like this is Keepers of the Circle. This is not just our.. this is not our land trust. There's all.. there's 130 people that work in our organization at the Keepers of the Circle, and we're an urban indigenous hub, basically. And anyway, and we

partnered with CMHC, and we created a separate not for profit that I think is going to be a charity as well, and it's, it's a 40,000 square foot, yeah, like actual panel passive panel factory that we created, and it has like a dormitory, because up here in Northern Ontario, sometimes it's hard to get people to the factory, like, because the roads get closed and whatever, and then we also have a daycare, so that women can, indigenous women can actually come and work with us, and we can, they can have childcare while they're doing their 12 hour shifts, or whatever, their weekend, their week out, like we're not exactly sure how we're still in progress of all these things, right? But it's scheduled to open at the end of July of this year, and we'll have panels off of the factory, like by the end of this year, and we'll be building for the land trust, hopefully by the middle of next year, pass it

Nat Pace (CNCLT) 1:17:38

on. Incredible work, really, Kaitlyn, I'll throw it to you. You still muted there.

Dr Kaitlyn Patterson 1:17:49

Sorry, Lisa, I just wanted to say your mind moves so fast, I can't barely keep up. It's like so incredible what what everyone here has accomplished. It's really cool hearing about all the stories. Yeah, that's

Nat Pace (CNCLT) 1:18:05

all. Love it. I'm looking at the audience Q and A here, and mindful of the time, so I'm not sure we'll be able to get into all of these. Some of them are some interesting ones. Maybe it's a tricky one, though. I feel like we could spend a few hours on here. Felicia wants everybody to know that you're all rock stars, and it's given her hope for the future. So, thank you for that. Here's one from Marie, which you just mentioned, Lisa. There, several, and we only have 10 minutes and I want to do some closing remark time, so maybe we'll just like tackle this one really, really quickly, even though I know it's very complicated. Several rivers globally have been given, have been granted legal personhood status by courts or legislative bodies. What would it take to have land granted legal personhood by those courts here in Canada, and Lisa, I just want to direct. There was a question about the panel factory, and if, like, there's web presence, if people can learn about it. But first, yeah, let's, we can get to the legal personhood over over land. What would that, what would that take? And I don't know. Go for it, Norm.

Norm Leech 1:19:22

Well, in a parliamentary system, you get a majority in parliament, you can write any law you want. So that's the shortcut to because if you put together all the people who are not part of the small interest group that rules colonized systems, which are the old wealthy educated colonized men, which means those not in the group are the young, poor, the uneducated, the indigenous women. Well, that's the majority, and so if you unite those groups under an uncolonized banner system, a platform of values and principles, and you win a majority in parliament, you can write any lie you want in a majority parliament, very

Nat Pace (CNCLT) 1:20:12

practical norm, practical and true. Anyone, anyone else want to jump in on that one? Got the lawyer in the room, so

Lisa Neil 1:20:24

okay. Well, I'll just quickly, I'll just say that I think it's definitely something that can happen, and we can base it on the models that have already been done with the, with the rivers that have been given personhood. So, I think we're just a very short step away from actually, like Norm says, it just has to be sort of introduced, it has to be researched, and it has to be, we're going to have a lot of fighting, like, there'll be a lot of lobbyists against us, right? Because, and I'm just saying us, because I'd love to be included in that legal research, and the, the, like, the legislation drafting, and against us there, but I

mean, honestly, the land trust model, and I know I seem like, like, I totally am in love with the land trust model, I really am, because, as a lawyer, I see it as such a, such a great tool, and so flexible, and so many things we can do with it. I think that's kind of the first step, to you know, what once that lands in a land trust, it's already got a special designation, sort of, you know, like we've already said that it's especially if you have a conservation land trust, right? You sort of have, like, a you know, there's something called like a conservation easement, they have them in different municipalities across the country, you know, we're getting close to, you know, like that's a different sort of land ownership, a light, a different legal sort of person, not personhood, quite, but I mean a different legal entity is a land trust land, you know. So I think it's only one one more step to call that an actual give it personhood, you know. And I don't know that we actually want to give land personhood, maybe we want to give people land hood sometime. Do you know what I mean? Like, I think it needs to be more like all of our relatives, like I think, you know, maybe people need to be more like the land and more like the animals and more like the, you know, the four-legged, like, because sometimes, as people, we're pretty selfish, and you know, we only really think about, you know, ourselves, and we don't think about all of the different elements, so just something to think about. But I think we're a very, very close, it's just, it would take the initiative of somebody to do something, and I think those students that are actually fighting the provincial government here in Ontario, saying that they have a human right to, like, a healthy, like they're fighting them on the environment, they're fighting Doug Ford and his government. So I think they're going to be the generation, probably, that will actually say, "Well, why can't this piece of land, or why can't North America be Turtle Island, which it is, and which is a living entity, right? So, like, why can't we actually create that, or make laws to protect land on such a great scale? So we'll have a big fight, because all the corporations, and the, you know, what I mean, the drilling, and the mining and the oil and the minerals, they won't want the minerals people, they won't want us to do that, and the rare earths mineral people won't want us to do that, but I mean, like, if there's enough of us, we can change the world, right, which is what we're doing through these land trusts. So

Dr Kaitlyn Patterson 1:22:34

pass it over to you, Kaitlyn. I just wanted to add on to what Lisa was saying, that, like, yeah, maybe we don't want to give it personhood. I think there's benefits to that, though. Like, just, again, another legal tool, but we, you don't have to call it personhood, you don't call it land hood, you could call it motherhood, right? It's a joke. Okay. Anyways, just as a, like, another step, our garden recently went through this evaluation process through Environment and Climate Change Canada, and just became a protected area, even though it's like less than three acres, it's like highly biodiverse, but there's also people on the land doing all kinds of things, it doesn't exactly align with the regular kind of characteristics of a protected area in Canada, and yet we were given this, this title, and so I'm working on imagining it and drafting it as like an indigenous protection and conserved area, and thinking through the possibilities of that, working with other communities nearby to think about how we could advocate for this space with this other kind of legal label on top of it. Right now, there aren't, you know, conservation laws that protect this space, but I think through the IPCA model there could be indigenous rights kind of protections that would apply to this space, so kind of just exploring that, and like along the same lines of, you know, personhood for a river or land, or could be like a first step into that, that other kind of legal vehicle.

Miriam Berndt 1:24:17

Yeah, we have at 220 we have a small urban like indigenous-led garden space called Hashuai, and that's something that, like, the manager on site, which is a local urban indigenous.. well, they started as a youth. I don't think there's much youth anymore. They're like getting married and stuff now. They're like full-grown adult at this point, but started managing the site when they were a youth, that's a path that they've been going down, and so they got a Canadian Wildlife Federation habitat certification, because there's sometimes still this conception that the space is vacant, that it's like it's not, you know, it's not performing in the way that it should, because it's in the middle of Chinatown and Vancouver, and

yeah, I think that actually has been really impactful for people to kind of like rethink the narrative of when property is vacant or not, that like land just being land, land being nature, is also valid and real, so those kinds of accreditations, like I think with public opinion, can go a long way with like garnering support.

Nat Pace (CNCLT) 1:25:30

Well, thank you everybody for such a great, a great conversation, and thanks, Marie, for that, that last-minute question there, that kind of stretched our minds even, even broader. I think there's a lot of really amazing stuff put on the table, and though I say stretch the mind, or you know, we're very visionary, what we're talking about is certainly not impossible, and so I thank all of you each for the leadership and the energy and heart and soul that you're putting into your projects, and I wonder, maybe as a, we can do a final goodbye, and just to remind those watching, there'll be a survey that comes up, so you can give any sort of feedback or thoughts on today's webinar, but maybe we can just do a closing round, and if you can tell folks a bit about where they maybe could find your project online, or if they want to support where they can check out some more, and just so everyone knows, we'll be sending out some of these this information after the webinar as well. So, yeah, why don't we go for it? Whoever wants to go first, last three minutes here. Thank you. Bye. Okay, I'll tell people, let's do, let's do Lisa, Kaitlyn, Miriam, and then Norm and Andy.

Lisa Neil 1:26:52

Okay, I just want to say very quick Chi Migwich to all of my panelists. I always learned so much being in a circle with really brilliant people like all of you, and thanks so much, and I always love seeing Norm, and I'm sure that I've been in circles with Kaitlyn and Miriam, now that I think about it too, so and I always, I always take something away from it, and I build upon your beautiful ideas, so I really appreciate all of all of everything that you do in the Land Trust realm, and also to everyone that attended today, and I've thank you to Ben and the International Land Trust organization, I've attended almost all of the webinars and presentations, and they've just been amazing. And again, I've learned so much, like I have so much extra stuff now to add to everything we're already doing. So, and just to put out there that Land Trust really are a beautiful vehicle, and they're a way you can do all kinds of really cool things, like, as I mentioned, a whole bunch of things. I didn't even get to, like, half the things that we're planning to do, so reach out anytime if anybody ever wants to, to know anything, or you know, to work with us, or to work with me, or for me to share any of my knowledge, and, and, yeah. Thank you very much for having me today.

Dr Kaitlyn Patterson 1:27:55

Oh, it's me. Sorry, yeah, thanks for having me. It's been a pleasure to hear from all of you, and we didn't get to too many like audience questions, but you have, you have any, if you want to connect with me, I can put my email in the chat. And looking forward to working together, and whatever that looks like. Watch,

Miriam Berndt 1:28:20

yeah, thanks for having me, for inviting me, Nat into the space. Yeah, really fun conversation. And I'm always like, I want to be friends now. Please like me anyway. Yeah, like Kaitlyn said, if you do any of the folks, I wish we could see you, because I don't even know how many there are of you, but if you want to get in touch, I'll put my email in the thread as well, and you can find the Cultural Land Trust at cultural.landtrust.ca or two.to.one.ca yeah.

Norm Leech 1:29:12

join the Canadian Network of Community Land Trusts. You'll find us there. We're all easy to find, and once you find them, you'll find out that land trust people are party people, and then come to the annual

summit and meet everyone, and it's kind of a blast. And I'm also going to say that doing Decolonizing work is actually the most healing work that you can do. The more you do, the better you understand where your healing really is, it comes from the land, and so that's, you know, the greatest motivator possible. And then one last thing is everyone be careful, whatever hair brain scheme you mentioned in front of Lisa, because she's just going to go ahead and do it, she's just gonna say take it as a, as an instruction and make it happen, so fantastic way to go, Lisa. All right, thanks everyone. See you soon.

Andy Bond 1:30:12

Yeah, thanks everyone for coming. Yeah, great to be a part of it. Thanks for the organizing, Ben, and everyone else, and I see we're at time, so I'll leave it at that.

Nat Pace (CNCLT) 1:30:25

Thanks, Andy. Thanks, everybody. If I'll just do a quick plug that our annual summit there that Norm mentioned, we're doing a full day dedicated to amplifying indigenous-led land trusts and decolonization through land trusts, so you can, if you check out the Canadian Network of Community Land Trust, you can either maybe attend, or we're going to live stream the day as well, so you can come and join us that way as well. So, thank you everybody. Thank you, Ben and team. Thank you, panelists, and I hope everybody enjoys the rest of their day, and it's a beautiful one. Take care.