

**ELSCD 2019 – Written submissions**

David Pereira  
*New Zealand*

This week has been a transformative moment for me in my life. The entire experience involved lessons from multiple sources from teachers, participants and other organizations. We worked together in collaborative ways that have made us into a sustainable group of individuals. These experiences compel me to take action...

I will be more. I will commit to take the lessons I have learned here and educate others. I will be an agent of reconciliation in my organization, Canada and around the world. I will listen to all sides and endeavour to aid in Sustainable Community Development. I will seek to have more engagement with my community and those affected on all sides in Canada's journey to reconciliation. I will set an example for my children so that they can be a part of reconciliation in Canada.

Jordan Wapass,  
*Ottawa, Canada*

As organizations develop and progress, the prerequisite for success, now more than ever, is to develop viable sustainability plans and practices. Those organizations who remain complacent and succumb to the status quo will not only do a disservice to their mandate and vision, they will also play a role in diminishing community development. Sustainability is a key facet of a healthy, forward thinking, prosperous and conscious community. Those leaders who view development through this lens and encourage dialogue and innovation among their teams will be contributing to a thriving and sustainable planet for generations to come.

Karen Lablans  
*Toronto, Canada*

One of my many key learnings from the leadership program was about reconciliation. My knowledge was limited because it came from a place of ignorance. I knew of some of the horrible atrocities that occurred as a result of colonialism and residential schools. However, I believed that indigenous people were simply fighting for equality and getting back things that couldn't be undone. I have come to learn that reconciliation is far more complex. The laws are not in favor for indigenous people as the Indian Act and other legislation limit their lives - this has been a long-standing limitation that continues to exist to this day. I understand now that reconciliation is challenging not only because of the hurt and history but also because each side is speaking a different language. The Canadian government has not engaged in a nation to nation dialogue, and until that table is set there will be no reconciliation.

Jason Quinn  
*Ottawa, Canada*

Throughout the ELD Program on Sustainable Community Development a common theme appeared repeatedly.

Without consistent and reliable funding, sustainable community development becomes very difficult if not impossible. Changes in government every four years, whether it is at the Federal/Provincial or Municipal level, leads to an unpredictable cycle of peaks and valleys in funding, which then puts employment, programs, and communities at risk.

Social welfare agencies, universities and even our museums, depend on government funding to some degree. Community leaders need to hold the three levels of government to account and bring an end to the unpredictable funding model currently in place.

Diane Gauthier  
*Ojibway from Batchewana Bay*

I came to this program with no expectations, I had no clue what I was going to embark upon. I have made connections with cross sectorial professionals and people of multi age groups. The insight that everyone brought to the table, the one on one conversations, the sharing of experiences is among the best learning experiences I have ever had.

I take back with me new ideas and hope. Ideas of new ways to conduct conversations that could lead to a more sustainable work environment. Hope that nonindigenous people learned a little more of the realities that Indians face and the history behind our mistrust and actions.

I am amazed and grateful for my newfound friends and having connected with new brothers and sisters.

Miigwetch

Catherine Pennington  
*Canada*

A letter to my fellow participants:

Reconciliation. Leadership. Sustainably. Innovation. Community development. Collaboration & partnerships. These themes, listed as words on a brochure in high gloss, mean so much more to me today than they did a mere ten days ago. My friends, I'm struck especially with the life lessons you have gifted me with. Your experiences, expertise, vulnerability and courage are embodied, elevated and personified. I am a better person for knowing you. A better leader and a better Canadian.

As I reflect tonight on our time together, the places we have visited and lessons we have learned it strikes me how representative we are of our global community. Diverse in our ethnicity, gender, experiences, culture and thinking. This diversity, and our ability to lean into it, is what has paved our way to higher learning and awareness. We have met head on the critical issues of our era; sustainability, reconciliation and collaboration. The challenges that we will face will demand of us a new leadership. A leadership that calls upon our collective diversity and strengths. My call to action and alumni pledge to support and assist this organization in order to advance leadership skills rooted in curiosity, innovation, awareness, courage. Fuelled by a passion for a better, sustainable world.

Janet Johnson  
*Tourism Development Corporation of The Bahamas*

Having worked with CCELD on the 2011 itinerary for The Bahamas tour; as well as served as Co-Chair of The Bahamas Steering Committee in 2015 when we received The Princess Royal, Princess Anne on the first leg of her Caribbean tour; and again on this year's 2019 Committee for the cohort in Jamaica in March; I would say that I have demonstrated steadfast commitment to this august body as an honorary alum.

Now, as part of the alumni in my own right, having had the privilege of participating alongside sixteen amazing individuals, all of whom brought their own unique and special contribution to the cohort this week here, at the ELD on Sustainable Community Development in Victoria, British Columbia, I am fully vested.

Notwithstanding the fact that I am committed to the task of continuing to identify and help with fundraising efforts to support outstanding Bahamians who can benefit from the exposure to innovative thought and best practices that this incredible experience affords; I will be taking back with me, new insights that will inform fresh approaches to enhance our touristic ecosystem. Furthermore, this opportunity has certainly given me an even greater appreciation for sustainable community development that we can immediately begin to apply within our unique context, in The Islands of The Bahamas.

Shauyagaye Panton  
*Jamaica*

Throughout the week, as I watched various personalities find their place within the space and context, I observed varying elements of leadership, values and worldviews on display. Even more so, as I became immersed in the programme through in-class modules, site visits and exposure to various models of sustainable development, all the while finding my own place within this heterogeneous group; I learnt that each problem, approach and resolution can be found inwardly. In this realization, I bow in deep gratitude for this transformational experience shared with exceptional human beings. I accept that I am a warrior and therefore, life's greatest principles of love, respect, patience and gratitude, must become the foundation of my warriorship as I stand fiercely with deep love for what matters most to me in a world of differing views and competing interests.

Shayla Point  
*Musqueam, Vancouver, Canada*

As an alumnus, I will...  
Carry the lessons learned and put them into my everyday life - both work and personal. I will stand fiercely, with deep love for Reconciliation for all Canadians. It matters because "we are all here to stay". We must collectively take responsibility. The solution to reconciliation will only present itself if it is based on the notion that no one is to blame, and everyone is responsible.

Manpreet Mudhar  
*Toronto, Canada*

I came to understand that the Reconciliation process has the power to invoke change, but that change has been slow. We visited several organizations this week but the one that sticks out in my mind was the Songhees Innovation Center. They are a self-governing center and they assist their community members with several resources ranging from an open gym, to a self-sustaining garden to a technical innovation center. I was impressed by the sense of community and I am hopeful that others can learn from their success.

Vivienne Seiler  
*Hong Kong- Canada*

As an alumnus, I will commit to sharing the knowledge I have gained through this unique program, within my organization in the hope of continuing the dialogue. The collective experiences throughout the week from peers, speakers and facilitators allowed for personal growth, leadership development and effectively cultivated the ability to sustain and channel my enthusiasm throughout my career. Most importantly, it has shifted the way I reflect and the way I see multiple sectors promote relationship building, collaboration and reconciliation between indigenous and non-indigenous individuals and communities. A program like this is essential to passing the baton to the next generation of leaders.

Maureen Scott  
*Canada*

I am not a religious or spiritual person; however, I have a higher power that guides me. In my mind I see this higher power as a patchwork quilt of people I have met throughout my life who inspired me - people who are true leaders. Each person has a quality that I admire and draw on to guide me through my life journey. Every one of my cohorts are now part of this quilt. Here are their qualities that inspire me.

- Cecilia warm hearted  
Catherine eloquent  
David proud  
Diane candid  
Emily delightful  
Janet inquisitive  
Jason sincere  
Jordan playful  
Karen poised  
Lorelei brave  
Major nic quick wit  
Manni kindness  
Garry humility  
Shauyagaye intuitive  
Shayla spirited  
Vivienne tactful

My commitment to reconciliation is to have the courage to engage in dialogue with people when they speak disparaging about indigenous people out of a place of ignorance or fear.

Lorelei Williams  
*Skatin Nations/Stsa'iles*

Reconciliation requires ACTION, hence the term RECONCILIATION! Until Canadians stop being racist and being in denial about the genocide against our people, there is no reconciliation. Genocide continues today with the over-apprehension of Indigenous children, and lack of police protection. Reconciliation is the typical white man/boss (Curtis) from Salish Sea Industries who went out of his way to help his Indigenous employee/single mom and prevented her from going missing and being murdered. He stopped the vicious cycle of her child being taken away by child welfare services, which could've resulted in her losing her home and her job. Reconciliation is the typical white men/bosses at South Island Prosperity Partnership who are working on a transportation project that could help prevent Indigenous women and girls from going missing and being murdered. That's what reconciliation is!

Emily Noel  
*Ireland- Grenada*

A letter of reassurance:

As we walk through life, we are faced with challenges that make us question our values, our choices and our path. We wonder whether we are fulfilling our purpose, whether people are proud of us, whether we are good enough, strong enough, loved enough. We meet people who change our lives, we grow fierce and passionate, winning battles we never thought we would even fight. We are bold. We are inspired. We are resilient. We are courageous. We are compassionate. We are standing fiercely, with deep love for what matters.

Norman Garry Sam  
*Songhees Nation*

Dear self,

This week, I learned about what sustainable communities could mean for the future. My cohort met with companies and leaders, who work hard, to develop economic and socially aware practices to promote healthy and sustainable growth in business and planet friendly approach. There was much discussion around environment, and with support/growth strategies. The cohort were lucky to have connected with companies, and in discussion, they would share how working on a more beneficial relationship, businesses like Topsoil and Boom + Batten is a great example of relationship exchange. Which encourages me to take seriously the value of a solid connection to peers who share a same passion.

Sincerely yours,  
Norman Garry Sam

Nic Soontiens

*Canada*

Reconciled

Their pain I will never feel;  
The impact I will never understand.  
Like a far-reaching overcast cast over generations of man  
smeared image-bearers like a stain of shame  
yet now, I hold the bag.

My fault, it can never be.  
I wasn't there; it wasn't me.

Could this pain unfelt be my stain?  
Well now, this is man's shame today.  
But tomorrow's hope is the break in the clouds,  
Sun shines in and lifts the shroud.

So man, it's time to arise.  
Not by watching, standing idly by  
but being there; coming along side.

It's true: my fault, it cannot be.  
But I'm the light, it starts with me.