groundworkforchange.org: Initial vision and intention*

M. Woroniak
February, 2015
edited May, 2015

*Note: the text below has been edited from the original for style and clarity.

Context

At writing, racism as experienced by Indigenous peoples has been the subject of major media attention and of some wider public engagement. It appears that many non-Indigenous Winnipeggers are once again "primed" to receive information and hear new perspectives about the ways Indigenous and non-Indigenous peoples were meant to live in respectful, just relationships with each other.

There is a wealth of web-based information sources related to learning about the histories of Indigenous peoples, about current issues and about related topics such as responsible allyship and concepts such as colonialism and racism. However, a number of these resources are not known to many members of the general public and are not easily found if individuals are not familiar with topics and concepts.

In addition, many non-Indigenous Winnipeggers are not part of social or professional networks that allow them to find out about Indigenous-related events, whether those are a lecture, a performance or art exhibition, a political demonstration, or other gatherings.

Goal

The goal of the proposed website is to be an information source – geared to non-Indigenous Winnipeggers (but by definition of the Internet, available to anyone) – that serves as a "one stop shop" for finding reliable information to help begin:

to build just relationships between non-Indigenous and Indigenous peoples;

to learn about historical and contemporary issues related to Indigenous peoples and relationships with non-Indigenous governments and peoples in the Canadian state;

to gain understandings of colonialism, racism, privilege and other related concepts and topics.

If desired by Indigenous community members and organizations, an additional goal of the site would be to provide non-Indigenous Winnipeggers with event information so that they may further their learning and have the opportunity to build relationships.

Content
The site will not focus on creating original content but will work to bring together existing, reliable information about, among other topics:

respectful and responsible relationship-building
the histories of Indigenous peoples from the area
current issues and debates
community successes and accomplishments (past and present)
colonialism,
racism (focus will to provide information about racism as a systemic phenomenon) and White privilege the myth of reverse racism

Priorities
The site will prioritize sharing information created by Indigenous peoples.

The site will work to acknowledge and incorporate content that is reflective of the range of non-Indigenous persons living in Winnipeg, some of whom also suffer from racial oppression.

Insofar as some content will be original, the site will work to be accessible to the broadest range of literacy levels possible.

In providing linked content the site will work to provide written, audio and video content in an effort to acknowledge different learning styles.

Doing the work
The site will be maintained by a small group (2-3) of non-Indigenous peoples engaged in solidarity work with Indigenous peoples or otherwise having meaningful relationships with Indigenous community members. It will remain a priority to be in touch on an on-going basis with a range of Indigenous community members (different ages, genders, classes, sexual orientations, etc.) about the site's content and direction.

Timelines
The goal is to have the site launched, containing at least starter information about the topics above, by March/April, 2015.

The site would remain in existence as long as volunteer commitments allow and the site remains a relevant resource.

Site Maintenance

Apart from event information, it is not the intention to frequently update the site (e.g., not daily). The goal is to provide access to foundational resources that remain relevant over longer periods of time. The site may have a section for people to submit resources or may have an email address where people can send suggestions.