

## **First Principles Protocol for Building Cross-Cultural Relationships**

Produced by the Indigenous Circle  
of the People's Food Policy Project

Food Sovereignty continues to be inherent to Indigenous Peoples the world over. The First Principles Protocol for Building Cross Cultural Relationships was produced by the Indigenous Circle to provide a solid foundation for the advancement of the People's Food Policy Project. The principles are reflective of the historical and current lived experiences of Indigenous peoples in Canada. We recognize that the complexity of colonial history and the impacts are not fully reflected here. Rather, we would like to refer readers to the documents referenced below that have informed our thinking.

The principles outlined have guided the work of individuals and organizations involved in the Peoples Food Policy Project in building an inclusive and just food system. It is a living document, one that can be revised and updated.

### ***The primary principle that guides our work***

We respect and honour Indigenous peoples' knowledge, land and worldview. We recognize Indigenous peoples as the original inhabitants of this land. The longer people have inhabited a place, community, bioregion, food system the more expert they are in that place. We look to Indigenous people for guidance and to work in partnership in changing destructive relationships with Mother Earth to healthy relationships for everyone and future generations.

### **THIS WE KNOW...we accept this as truth**

1. History matters. History continues to live today in our memories, relationships and institutions.
2. We recognize Indigenous peoples' right to self-determination. Colonization of this land has been and continues to be a great injustice to Indigenous communities. However, Indigenous communities have remained strong through ingenuity, resilience, knowledge, values and maintaining their worldviews.
3. Indigenous peoples in "Canada" share similar worldviews, values, beliefs, and cultural harvesting strategies, however each nation/group (98 nations and 11 major language groups in total) has its own distinct culture, language and traditions.
4. Food sovereignty in Indigenous community has been a living reality for thousands of years and has contributed to the food security Canadian settlers since Europeans arrived.
5. We are bound to the Earth; we depend on it to sustain us, for this reason maintaining ecological integrity in Indigenous land and food systems is an important part of our work.
6. The situation is urgent. We are at a critical historical moment in terms of the need to protect the land that feeds us and it is thus more important to assume responsibilities than it is to demand rights.
7. Indigenous people have a special relationship to the land, sea, rivers, non-human animals, etc. Through thousands of generations, this relationship has been nurtured and acknowledged in songs, dances, language, stories, names, art and spiritual practices, as well as in hunting, fishing, gathering, and cultivation practices. We recognize the traditional nature of these practices and their importance to all of us.
8. Racism and discrimination are both systemic and personal in our society, and we will strive to uncover and confront them as we seek social & environmental justice & food sovereignty for all human and non-human members of our society.

9. The relationship between governments and Indigenous people is colonial in nature. Neocolonial structures and processes continue to assert “control with no soul” over Indigenous land and food systems. We refuse to allow the imposed neocolonial structures and processes to govern the way in which we live and work. This is the base from which we address what is called “Aboriginal title and rights” and 'self government” in section 35 (1) of the Canadian Constitution.
10. Colonialism has affected the food sovereignty of all people around the globe through institutions and policies that promote neoliberal trade in the global economy. While seeking to influence and change the policies of these neocolonial institutions, we do not condone their arbitrary assertion of control over Indigenous land and food systems.

## **THIS IS THE ROOT OF OUR BELIEF**

### **Mutual Recognition**

### **Mutual Respect**

### **Mutual Responsibility**

1. We recognize that Indigenous people are the original inhabitants and caretakers of this land and have special relationships and responsibilities that flow from that status.
2. We accept that non-Aboriginal peoples are also of this land, by birth and by adoption, and have strong ties of affection and loyalty here. Some have also chosen to assume deep responsibility for the land that sustains us.
3. We strive to extend courtesy, consideration and esteem to people whose languages, cultures and ways differ from our own but who are valued fellow-members of the larger communities to which we all belong. Respect is the essential precondition of healthy and durable relations between people.
4. We believe we have a shared responsibility to care for each other and our shared world.
5. We believe we have a shared responsibility to deepen our understanding and work towards respectful relationships.
6. We know that the identities of Indigenous people are strongly related to the places where they live, that the Creator placed them here with the responsibility to care for life in all its diversity. This responsibility is timeless.
7. We believe all things are connected.

## **TO THIS WE ARE COMMITTED**

We strive to embody the above principles in the following ways:

1. We ensure to invite and encourage participation from our Indigenous colleagues, neighbours, friends and relatives. The food sovereignty experience of Indigenous communities enriches the learning experience for all participants.
2. There is a wealth of knowledge, values and wisdom to share, and we hope to engage in activities and policy creation that is not ‘about’ Indigenous peoples’ food systems but learns from and is informed by the experiences and expertise gained through a multi-millennia of practice.
3. To engage in honest and open cross-cultural dialogue in the spirit of learning so that we may heal the food system and our relationships, together.
4. To acknowledge Indigenous peoples on whose land PFPP events are held.
5. To require that all PFPP partners adopt these principles.

### *References:*

- (2009). Declaration of Indigenous Peoples for Food Sovereignty. Global Forum for Peoples Food Sovereignty, Rome, Italy.
- Morrison, D. (2006). 1<sup>st</sup> Annual Interior of B.C. Indigenous Food Sovereignty Conference. Unpublished final report. Interior of B.C. Indigenous Food Sovereignty Conference Planning Committee.
- Morrison, D. (2008). B.C. Food Systems Network – Working Group on Indigenous Food Sovereignty Final Activity Report (unpublished). Provincial Health Services Authority and the B.C. Food Systems Network – Working Group on Indigenous Food Sovereignty.
- Indigenous Environmental Network statement on the Right to Food and Food Security, From the Indigenous Environmental Network’s 12th Annual Protecting Mother Earth Conference “What We Do Now, Touches the Next Seven Generations” Penticton Indian Band Okanagan Nation Territories, Penticton, British Columbia, Canada, August 2-5, 2001, available at: [www.ipcb.org/issues/agriculture/htmls/2003/ien\\_food\\_sec.html](http://www.ipcb.org/issues/agriculture/htmls/2003/ien_food_sec.html)