

Culture and Innovation Fund Proposal

Executive Summary

Raising the Villages – Mawiomi W’Jit Mjuwajijk (gathering for our children) is a movement across Western Cape Breton Island connecting citizens to each other and our rich cultural heritage. By providing welcoming communities and spaces where everyone belongs from the beginning of life, citizens are able to gather, grow and share a rich and inclusive culture.

Traditionally in Cape Breton, and across the Maritimes, we strengthened our culture, language, music, skills, health/well-being and economy by working together and intergenerationally gathering around family hearths. Raising the Villages – Mawiomi W’Jit Mjuwajijk (RtV) is supporting communities to recapture that sense of belonging and reduce the growing social isolation many feel in our communities.

In January of 2017 a gathering was held to respond to the Province’s One Nova Scotia Coalition’s *Collaborative Action Plan*. The number one priority is stated as; “*The Early Years: Starting Strong*”, and the focus was specifically on the section *Community-Led Initiatives for Early Years, Welcoming our Youngest Children*.¹

At this initial gathering evidence was shared around the vulnerability and poverty affecting our children. Child poverty rates are 26% in Western Cape Breton and over 45% in Mi’kmaq communities. In Inverness County 32% of children are vulnerable socially, cognitively and physically when they enter school, (based on the Early Development Instrument results) and the majority of these children come from the middle class. Mental health and addictions affect all ages and will be experienced by 1 of every 5 citizens each year across NS.

While the evidence around the determinants of the health and well-being focused on the child, we soon discovered that we all need to connect, reduce isolation and enrich our diverse cultural values and expression by working together in this unique part of Nova Scotia.

Through the shared conversations around the changes we want to see in our communities, the Raising the Villages – Mawiomi W’Jit Mjuwajijk movement has grown throughout the year. Bringing together organizations, businesses, Wardens, Mayors, Chiefs, Municipal and Band Councilors, representatives of Mi’kmaq, Gaelic, Acadian and newcomers, to address the welcoming communities needed for all citizens, especially our youngest from the beginning of life.

The RtV organizing team, guided the work of research, data gathering, hosting community conversations and events. In January 2018 the RtV Planning for Action Summit was held culminating in municipal and band councils signing a declaration of action principles. (Appendix 1) to guide our next phase. Individual community coalitions formed and are now beginning to implement these principles.

The requested funding and support from the Department of Communities Culture and Heritage, Public Health, Municipalities, Mi’kmaq Band Councils and communities will be used to take this movement through the pilot phase over the next 2 years. Pilots in communities who are prepared and ready to

¹ One Nova Scotia Coalition's Collaborative Action Plan. Found on page 18 of the report at <https://tinyurl.com/gpyz7qa> . Accessed on March 31, 2018.

provide and sustain the welcoming spaces that ensure universal access to supportive services, programs, relationships and cultural connections from the pre-natal period onwards.

The excitement in our region is growing around the Raising the Villages - Mawiomi w'jit Mijuwajjik movement because it really captures the beauty of when we are at our best in community. From our infants to our elders we can all have a role in strengthening community settings and dedicated spaces that reduce social isolation, increase health and well-being, share, grow and celebrate cultures and truly making each community a place to connect and belong.

Business/Organizational Description

For the past year, Raising the Villages has been administered by the RtV Organizing Team which is comprised of elected municipal officials, community volunteers, service providers and private organizations. The full list of partners on the organizing team can be found in Appendix 2.

The geographic area and unique cultural diversity being served is extensive from Meat Cove to Port Hawkesbury, with a population of approximately 26,000 representing Gaelic, Acadian, Mi'kmaq and others across a largely rural region.



Raising the Villages Communities in Western Cape Breton Island

As the movement progresses the RtV Organizing team is evolving into the RtV Regional Coalition. The purpose of which is to support local coalition development, advocate as necessary and maintain the RtV network of communities. Funds for the movement have been administered through the Municipality of the County of Inverness.

For the past year, RtV Organizing Team has received grants from the Canada 150 Community Fund, Rural Communities Foundation of Nova Scotia, United Way Cape Breton, Strait-Richmond Community Health Board, North Inverness Community Health Board, and financial assistance from the Province of Nova Scotia's Department of Communities, Culture and Heritage through Support 4 Culture and the

Diversity and Community Capacity Fund.

The municipalities of Inverness and Victoria Counties, the Town of Port Hawkesbury, We'koma'q and Wagmatcook first Nation have each contributed \$1 per citizen to support the movement.

This has allowed us to host our events, develop promotional items, host an active website (www.raisingthevillages.webs.com), Facebook page, and conduct our data gathering. We are now in need of this multi-year funding to maintain our momentum to meet the needs identified in our research and support action in communities.

Description of Project

In January 2017 a group of municipal, Mi'kmaq and public sector leaders came together to explore the needs of our youngest citizens, a commitment was made and the Raising the Villages movement was formed.

Over the year Raising the Villages – Mawiomi W'Jit Mijuwajijk took shape across the region from Bay St Lawrence to Port Hawkesbury, Wagmatcook to We'koma'q through gatherings hosted to share the data, gather information from community conversations and inviting a greater understanding of who we are and how we need to work together to translate what we are finding into action.

Through the Declaration signed this January, local leaders have committed to supporting their communities in the collective efforts to become more welcoming for everyone, especially our youngest citizens.

Local coalitions are being established with service providers, not for profit organizations, businesses, elders, youth and elected officials in each community to implement the action principles of the Declaration. They will be mentored and guided by communications, engagement and reconciliation support staff. A Raising the Villages – Mawiomi w'jit Mijuwajijk checklist has been drafted to guide the coalitions actions towards becoming a welcoming community and providing the accessible welcoming spaces needed to gather and grow our sense of belonging and connections to what we need.

Currently there are 5 scheduled to come into being this year. Three coalitions are already holding meetings and terms of reference documents are being developed. A complete list of local coalition membership can be found in Appendix 3. Each community is unique in their assets and needs, as was discovered through our data gathering phase and yet each community will strive to align with the regional network of Raising the Villages. For example;

- The Port Hawkesbury coalition is building momentum by focusing on gatherings to connect community members to services they need. They are hosting events where service providers come together with families and community members to connect and learn.
- In Inverness and Baddeck the local coalition are in the planning stages, mapping out where the potential welcoming spaces are. Ensuring the space is universally accessible and big enough for the key population of pre-natal to school age children and their care givers.
- Bay St. Lawrence and We'koma'q are working on reducing social isolation and hosting events based on building connections with their youngest citizens. Their growing coalitions are also focused on the physical space that is big enough for all to join in, defining it as a place that is always open for people to find social connections, access services/programs and are grounded in their cultures.

Our three key coordinators will ensure the momentum continues both within communities and across the region and beyond. Through the year, events will be coordinated and there will be more opportunities for cross-cultural learnings using our rural transit partners at Strait Area Transit, arranging exchanges and visits for community events.

Setting regional goals is important to mark our journey and track the progress. Increasing social support and connectivity for families and community members, reducing childhood vulnerability and poverty as well as enhancing and celebrating our cultures, building bridges and taking steps towards reconciliation

are all being formatted. The local coalitions have representation at the regional coalition and by supporting a regional approach as well as local initiatives we are better able to align efforts, understand and advocate for what we need to continue to move forward and deepen the Raising the Villages movement.

As we progress, all people will be able to identify a hub in their community where they feel welcomed and are able to access the services they need. There will be reduced feelings of social isolation and a stronger connection to the communities and individuals in them. Youth and elders will be able to connect with young children and families, local governments will be able to address the needs of their citizens more effectively and there will be a greater cultural connection across the region. A more welcoming attitude will also be fostered in and across our region in all our institutions, organizations, and homes.

Additionally, we will use quantitative measures of population stability/birth rates/census data, decreased vulnerabilities on the EDI (Early Development Instrument), and reduced child poverty rates to track and inform efforts. Our goal for the next 5 years is to reduce the EDI from 33% in our schools down to 10%. We have researched examples in a few communities around Canada, such as Revelstoke, BC, and have learned a great deal from their experiences. In appendix 4 you can find the RtV Project Logic Model with indicators and outcomes.

Our youngest citizens deserve to connect and find attachment to all ages in their community; To hear the languages, songs and stories of Mi'kmaq, Gaelic, Acadian French, English and any variety from our newcomers. To connect to better coordinated services and programs that are often hard to find in rural communities. To find welcoming communities and spaces across the region that celebrate who we are when we are together helping each other to thrive.

Critical Path

RtV began in January 2017 and is on-going. Phase two, supporting welcoming community development and welcoming community spaces begins in April 2018. The movement will be built through the next two years and will include a variety of gatherings, activities and actions to support creating multi-generational spaces, reducing social isolation and strengthening relationships between the diverse cultures of Mi'kmaw, Gaelic, Acadian and Newcomers.

During year one, 6 cultural gatherings will be supported in 6 communities in western Cape Breton (3 in the spring and 3 in the fall). These gatherings will focus on connecting infants to elders and everyone in between. There will be a demonstration and celebration of the communities choosing and discussions on identified topics that support the RtV movement such as access to childcare, services, housing, transportation, etc. Transportation from partnering communities will be supported and food and childcare will be available at these free events.

In year two, the goal is for permanent gathering spaces to be established in a number of pilot communities. Spaces that allow children and families to connect with elders and youth, through culture, food and community development. Finally, a network throughout Western Cape Breton of welcoming community spaces where all are welcomed, feel safe and be able to connect to services they need will be created.

Additionally, each year 2 regional gatherings will be held to maintain connections, reflect on changes occurring and provide learning opportunities for community members. Training topics will be identified to support the welcoming communities we need like, connecting to local food, language and culture, the art of hosting, deep democracy, sensitivity, inclusion and reconciliation

Please see appendix 5 for timelines and milestones.

Financial Capacity

The CCH funding will be used help coordinate, connect and communicate with the regional and local coalitions, assist in bringing communities together to learn, share and celebrate our cultures.

The Raising the Villages - Mawiomi w’jit Mijuwajijk Municipal, First Nations and Public Health and community partners will provide the 25% contribution to the project funding over the 2 years. Including direct investments from the municipalities and numerous in-kind contributions from various community groups, organizations, service providers and volunteers.

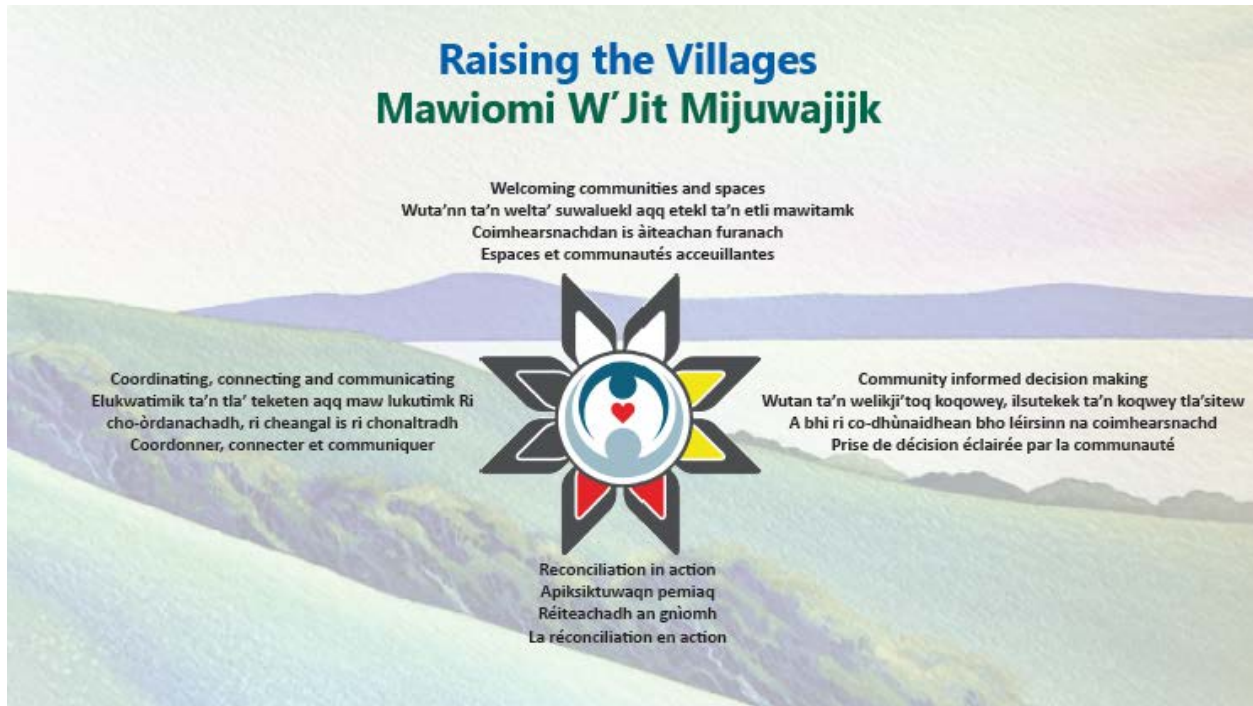
The following is our projected budget for each year of RtV. We are seeking \$71 300 from the Culture Innovation Fund each year, for a total of \$142 600.

Funding Sources	In-Kind per year	Cash Per Year	Total Per year
Municipalities, Mi’kma’q Band Councils, Public Health, Community partners	20,000	12,500	32,500
Community Innovation Fund		71,300	71,300
Total	20,000	83,800	103,800

Item	Description	Amount
Communication Officer	Honorarium, materials, media, Facebook, website	19,400
Community Development Officer	Honorarium, travel, meeting supplies,	36,000
Regional and local Community Gatherings	Travel, food, honorariums, facility rental, materials, childcare,	10,000
Reconciliation and Mi’kmaw cultural Officer	Honorariums, travel, meeting supplies and communication,	14,400
Regional & Local Coalitions	Travel, honorariums, food, meeting facility, communications	24,000
	Total	103,800

1. Appendicies

Appendix 1: Raising the Villages – Mawiomi W’Jit Mijuwajjik Declaration



**The people of Unama’ki/Cape Breton declare that our youngest citizens
become the North Star to guide this journey we are on together**

We commit to:

Providing welcoming communities and spaces
Fostering reconciliation in action as treaty people
Coordinating, connecting and communicating what is needed
Making informed community decisions to strengthen our collective health.

With open minds, compassionate hearts and a shared
responsibility to our North Star, our people and the seven
generations to come, we sign this declaration of action to
mawiomi w’jit mijuwajjik in
raising the villages.

Dated this 24th day of January, 2018
Port Hawkesbury on Unama’ki/Cape Breton Island

Town of Port Hawkesbury

Municipality of the County of Victoria

Municipality of the County of Inverness

Wagmatcook First Nation

We’koqma’q First Nation

Appendix 2

Regional Coalition/Organizing Team

Member Name	Position	Contact
Vickie Price	Wagmatcook Community Volunteer	Vickie_price@hotmail.com
Fiona MacEachern	Waycocomagh Community Volunteer	wizbang@yahoo.co.uk
Amanda Knight	Communications	amanda_derrah@hotmail.com
Christine Villneff	Public Health	christine.villneff@nshealth.ca
Jim Mustard	Inverness Municipal Councilor	jim.mustard@invernesscounty.ca
Brenda Chisholm-Beaton	Mayor Port Hawkesbury	bchisholmbeaton@townofph.ca
Perla MacLeod	Victoria County Municipal Councilor	District2@victoriacounty.ca
Melanie Garland	Nova Scotia Works, CCPD	mel@nedac.ca
Robert Bernard	Manager Wagmatcook Culture and Heritage Centre	rbernard@wagmatcook.com
Paul Strome	Cheticamp Community Volunteer	paulstrome@yahoo.com
Deidre Fraser	Bay St. Lawrence Community Coordinator	deidre5@hotmail.com
Rosie Sylliboy	Maw'itamk Society, Manager	mawitamk@gmail.com

Appendix 3

Local Coalitions

Port Hawkesbury

Member Name	Position
Brenda Chisholm-Beaton	Mayor of the Municipality of the Town of Port Hawkesbury
Christine Villneff	Health Promoter, Public Health, NSHA
Pricilla Pitre	Leeside Children's Support Counsellor
Danna McCormick Ferguson	Community Volunteer (chair)
Janelle Loader-Keough	Community Volunteer
Kevin MacEachern	Community Volunteer
Lesa Doucette-McHugh	NS Association for Community Living
Monica Ryan	Community Volunteer
Olivia Melnick	NS Early Childhood Development Intervention Services

Baddeck

Name	Organization
Penny Chapman	Eastern Counties Public Libraries

Rose MacIsaac	NSHA
Rev. Brian MacLeod	Baddeck Youth Group
Sharon McIntyre	Bras D'or Day Camps Association
Paul MacNeil	Victoria County Municipal Councilor
Perla MacLeod	Victoria County Municipal Councilor
Melanie Garland	NEDAC
Laura Rutherford	Eastern Counties Public Libraries
Patrick Austin	Community Volunteer
Holly MacInnis	Baddeck Nursery School Board

Bay St. Lawrence

Name	Organization
Norman MacDonald	Victoria County Municipal Councilor
Darcy Kimmitt	Community Volunteer
Deidre Fraser	Bay St. Lawrence Community Centre Coordinator

We'koqma'q

Name	Organization
Rosie Sylliboy	Maw'itamk Society
Ma'git Poulette	Community Elder
Chief Rod Googoo	We'koma'q Band Council Chief

Wagmatcook

Name	Organization
Chief Norman Bernard	Wagmatcook Band Council Chief
Vickie Price	Community volunteer
Robert Bernard	Manager, Wagmatcook Culture and Heritage Centre
Cornelia Peck	Band Council

Inverness

Name	Organization
Cindy O'Neill	Exec Director of Mill Road Social Enterprises
Jim Mustard	Municipal Councillor
April MacDonald	Inverness Oran
Christine Villneff	Public Health
Jen Ryan	Community Volunteer

Outcomes						
Objectives	Activities for 2018 - 2019	Partners	Audience	Activity Outcomes	Short Term	Long-term
					1-5 years	5-25 years
Increase awareness of Raising the Villages - Mawiomi W'Jit Mijuwajijk movement	Continue to send monthly newsletters, weekly social media posts and monitor local traditional media for coverage	Communications Consultant	All of the community	Increase mailing list by 20% through each year Increase FB interactions by 20% through each year	Reduce childhood vulnerabilities measured by the EDI from 1 in 3 to 1 in 5 Reduce the burden of poverty on children Stronger relationships between Mi'kmaq communities and settler communities Increased access to	Reduce childhood vulnerabilities measured by the EDI from 1 in 3 to 1 in 10 Eliminate the burden of poverty on children People are connected to their community through their entire life Communities are thriving culturally, economically,
	Develop some key messages that anyone involved in the project can share	RTV Org Team Consultants Identified community partners	Community partners	Key messages document developed All partners are aware of key messages and are able to communicate with their community		
	Meet with local leaders, organizations and individuals to promote the movement	RTV Org Team Consultants Identified community partners	All of the community	At least 1 presentation to each municipal and band council on RtV and its progress		

Secure funding to support pilot spaces to open and have coordinators in place to operate them	Develop an action plan	RTV Org Team Consultants Identified community partners	RTV Org Team	1 Action plan developed and set to be reviewed annually	necessary services etc Services are available in the community to meet the needs of our youngest citizens and their families
	Hire Community Coordinator Consultant	RTV Org Team	All of the community	At least 1 community coordinator consultant is hired and actively working in communities by year end	
	Open pilot spaces	Consultants Identified community partners	Community partners All of the community	At least 3 pilot spaces are open and functional by year end	
Increase relationships and partnerships in our communities	Host 5 events in identified communities from Planning for Action Summit	Municipal Councils RtV Org Team Community Volunteers	All of the community	5 events are hosted with at least 30 participants at each site to increase awareness of services in the community and connecting people to what they need	
	Hire Reconciliation Consultant	RTV Org Team	All of the community	1 Reconciliation consultant hired and advising project by year end	
Establish what it means to be a North Star Community	Develop charter for communities and spaces	RTV Org Team Consultants Identified community partners	Municipal Councils Pilot Sites All of the Community	Charter is developed and shared with community partners	
	Develop planning check list for communities			Checklist is finalized and shared with municipal and band councils	

Support the development of local coalitions and regional network	Develop Elder councils in each municipality	RTV Org Team Municipal Councils	All of the community	Elder Councils developed in each municipality by the end of 2 years		
	Develop Youth Council in each municipality	RTV Org Team Municipal Councils	All of the community	Youth council developed in each municipality by the end of 2 years		
	Hire Community Capacity Building Consultant	RTV Org Team	All of the community	1 Community Capacity building consultant hired by end of year and working with Org Team and Community		

Appendix 5

Raising the Villages – Mawiomi W’Jit Mijuwajijk Timelines and Milestones

Milestone Timeline

	2017						
Community	Call to Action meeting - January 24	Raising the Villages Community Meeting February 24	Training for Impact March 9 and 10	We'koqma'q Gathering/Data Gathering Piloting April 17	RtV Org Team Attended Community Event Jun-Aug	Service Provider's Gathering October 18	Welcoming our Youngest Citizen Event held in Community October-Novemeber
Port Hawkesbury/Strait Region							
Baddeck							
Bay St. Lawrence							
We'koqma'q							
Wagmatcook							
Inverness							
Margaree							
Iona							
Mabou							
Port Hood							
Cheticamp							
Neil's Harbour							
Troy/Creignish							
Whycomomagh							

2018

	2018						
	RtV Declaration and Planning for Action Summit January 24	Formed Local Coalition and Held first meeting/first event February-March	Local coalition Formed held first meeting First RtV community Event held April-June	Local coalition Formed held first meeting First RtV community Event held July-September	Community Cultural Event to Promote Connecting across cultures for all ages October-December	One Training Session Provided to all communities on identified topic - Reconciliation and Mi'kmaq Gaelic and Acadian history, traditions and culture, Art of Hosting, Deep Democracy, Etc.	Training Sessions provided to regional and local coalition members on Reconciliation, Mi'kmaq, Gaelic and Acadian history, traditions and culture, Art of Hosting, Deep Democracy, Etc. To support community connections
Community							
Port Hawkesbury/Strait Region							
Baddeck							
Bay St. Lawrence							
We'koqma'q							
Wagmatcook							
Inverness							
Margaree							
Iona							
Mabou							
Port Hood							
Cheticamp							
Neil's Harbour							
Troy/Creignish							
Whycocomagh							

Community	2019			
Port Hawkesbury/Strait Region	Formed Local Coalition and Held first meeting/first event January-March	At least 4 sites opened for permanent gathering spaces that support cultural and developmental connections for all community members, from the beginning of life	One Training Session Provided to all communities on identified topic - Reconciliation and Mi'kmaw, Gaelic and Acadian history, traditions and culture Art of Hosting, Deep Democracy, Etc.	One Training Session provided to Regional and local coalition members on Reconciliation and Mi'kmaw, Gaelic and Acadian history, traditions and culture, Art of Hosting, Deep Democracy, Etc. To support community connections
Baddeck				
Bay St. Lawrence				
We'koqma'q				
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