



EntrepreNorth: eLearning Journey

Learning and Reflection Report for
the Future Skills Centre (FSC)

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RECIPROCAL
CONSULTING.



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1.0 Introduction

This report tells the story of EntrepreNorth' e-learning journey funded by the Government of Canada's Future Skills Centre (FSC). The first section of this document summarizes the project background, while the second section of this document details the methodology. The third portion of the report includes the findings outlining EntrepreNorth's progress on their e-learning journey. The fourth and final section of the report includes next steps and recommendations for EntrepreNorth's ongoing growth and development. Data gathering tools are included in Appendix A.

1.1 About EntrepreNorth

The following section provides background information regarding EntrepreNorth as an organization.

EntrepreNorth's Vision, Mission and Values

EntrepreNorth has a vision to create "a movement of Northern Indigenous entrepreneurs who are innovating solutions to strengthen economic resilience and community wellbeing for generations to come". EntrepreNorth's mission is to empower Indigenous entrepreneurs to build sustainable businesses and livelihoods across the North. Since the project's inception in 2018, EntrepreNorth has worked with over 250 Indigenous entrepreneurs in the Northwest Territories, Nunavut, and the Yukon who are innovating solutions to strengthen economic resilience and community wellbeing for generations to come. EntrepreNorth believes that Northern Indigenous entrepreneurs can become catalysts of prosperity and drivers of social change within their own communities, and that the development of sustainable enterprises can create local economic opportunities to help break through poverty, address social challenges, and strengthen Northern ways of life. EntrepreNorth is guided by the following values:

- ⇒ Be gentle to one another: EntrepreNorth strives for excellence while uplifting each other with dignity, kindness and respect.
- ⇒ Stay rooted in who you are: EntrepreNorth honours the lived experiences, gifts and teachings that we all carry into our work.
- ⇒ Go deeper to heal and grow: EntrepreNorth centers personal wellbeing and acknowledge the courage it takes to walk in power.
- ⇒ Seek alignment in life and business: EntrepreNorth focuses their energy on solutions that hold purpose and meaning for communities.
- ⇒ Adopt business practices that are sustainable: EntrepreNorth teaches business practices that demonstrate care for the land, water, and animals.
- ⇒ Shift systems that create harm: EntrepreNorth embraces ideas that promote greater self-determination and economic justice.
- ⇒ Tell stories that inspire a better future: EntrepreNorth amplifies narratives that inspire new ways of doing business where we all grow and benefit.

As an Indigenous-led organization, EntrepreNorth recognizes the importance of building a culture of innovation that is rooted in Indigenous knowledge and Northern capacity to deliver

culturally relevant business education and mentorship in a restorative and healing way. Through EntrepreNorth's phase 1 of the work funded by FSC, technology was developed to support Indigenous entrepreneurs and social innovators who want to build and grow sustainable businesses with purpose. EntrepreNorth's tool, currently titled the EntrepreNorth App, offers a place for users to develop circular business models, hone their business strategies, and create intentional social change with the support of an online community.

EntrepreNorth's Four Directions of Change Theory

EntrepreNorth's impact goals are expected to contribute to four long term goals related to Northern policy and advocacy, community mobilization and connection, sustainable businesses and livelihoods, and economic justice.

1.2 About EntrepreNorth's Taking IT Digital Project & the eLearning Journey Project

The following section describes EntrepreNorth's Taking IT Digital Project and the eLearning Journey Project.

About Phase One of EntrepreNorth's Work with FSC: The Taking IT Digital Project

The Taking IT Digital project ran from November 2022 to March 2024 and was foundational to the work discussed within this report. It focused on the need for creating a multi-user applied business app tool that supports entrepreneurs and social innovators with investment and impact readiness and ongoing business planning and strategy. EntrepreNorth wanted to offer entrepreneurs in their programs a more streamlined process of applied learning and a way to engage online with a network of certified EntrepreNorth facilitators, mentors, and coaches to support their business growth journey and scale their community impact. The intention was to develop new insights and learnings around the development, testing, and launch of an online technology that is accessible to Northern Indigenous entrepreneurs and that makes business education, mentorship, and investment readiness support more available to those in remote locations where there are increased barriers to finding and using services. Plus, EntrepreNorth wanted to create an online environment that builds a community of practice using their proprietary curriculum pathway and offers a tool for business practitioners to support entrepreneurs in a more streamlined and user-friendly way.

EntrepreNorth's team set out to create an inclusive online space for the spectrum of entrepreneurs from aspiring to seasoned business owners to help entrepreneurs overcome barriers and to enable a pathway towards sustainable prosperity, cultural integrity, and holistic well-being. Fostering digital inclusion, cultural integrity and community safety are foundational aspects of this project. The end goal of the Taking IT Digital project was to present a pathway for making business learning and supports more accessible and inclusive in Northern and remote communities; capture new insights on how to best mobilize a community of practitioners to support Northern entrepreneurship and innovation; and identify how to strengthen the connections between EntrepreNorth facilitators, mentors, entrepreneurs, and investors.

It is important to note that the App features EntrepreNorth's proprietary Multi-Directional Business Compass framework as its main user interface. The 'Compass' is an Indigenous-centered business model that offers a multi-dimensional perspective on value creation, business development, and systems thinking. It serves as the foundation for EntrepreNorth's program design and offers a powerful tool for thinking about business, community, and economic impact in a more circular and holistic way.

About Phase Two of EntrepreNorth's Work with FSC: The eLearning Journey Project

EntrepreNorth's eLearning Journey is phase two of the organization's work with FSC following the Taking IT Digital project and the focus of this report. In this phase of the work, EntrepreNorth set out to produce culturally relevant and engaging eLearning content designed for Northern Indigenous entrepreneurs in rural and remote communities. Additionally, EntrepreNorth aimed to continue development of the EntrepreNorth's App tool. By producing and delivering online business education that is accessible and inclusive, EntrepreNorth envisioned being able to reach a growing network of Indigenous learners in rural and remote communities and empower them to build sustainable businesses and livelihoods across Northern Canada.

Four project outcomes were formulated by EntrepreNorth at the beginning of this project to help guide their eLearning Journey:

- High Quality Distance Education: To provide greater access to high quality distance-based business education in rural/remote communities so that Northern and Indigenous SMEs and entrepreneurs feel supported and empowered to develop their skills.
- Culturally Relevant Education: To deliver culturally relevant education that centers Northern & Indigenous voices, experiences and worldview so that learners feel engaged and included in their learning journey.
- Digital Content for Skill Building: To produce high-quality and engaging digital content for learners in rural/remote communities so that they access training and skills development without having to leave their communities.
- Connecting a Larger Community: To connect with a larger community of emerging entrepreneurs who are ready to grow their business impact but who feel isolated and excluded from existing education systems, business support services, and financial institutions.

2.0 Methodology

This section describes the approach and methodology for achieving the research deliverables including the project scope, the approach to the work, and the methods utilized.

2.1 What We Measured

The purpose of this research is to report on EntrepreNorth's e-learning journey and reflect on their online content's reach, design and delivery, and outcomes and impacts.

The following learning questions guided EntrepreNorth's work and this report:

1. How does EntrepreNorth create engaging eLearning content and skills-development resources that meet the diverse needs and learning styles of Northern Indigenous entrepreneurs who feel isolated and excluded from existing education systems, business support services?
2. How does EntrepreNorth empower learners to apply their new knowledge and skills to develop their ideas and grow their businesses?
3. How does EntrepreNorth foster human-to-human engagement and mentorship across the North through a distance-based learning format?
4. Through this work, how can EntrepreNorth support Indigenous entrepreneurs to demonstrate impact in ways that align with their worldview?

2.2 How We Measured

This research utilized a qualitative approach. Data was collected through primary sources. Primary data sources included a focus group and interviews with EntrepreNorth's staff and contractors. Table 1 below outlines the data collection activities, target groups, and number of participants.

Table 1: Data Sources and Collection Methods

Target Group	Data Collection Method	<i>n</i>
Staff and Contractors	Focus group	6
	Interviews	2
Number of Participants		8
Program Documents	Provided by EntrepreNorth	1
Number of Program Documents		1
Total		9

Limitations to the data collection were a result of condensed timelines and a primary focus on the content development for this project. As a result, direct outreach to former learners and entrepreneurs was out of scope for this report. Additionally, secondary data did not directly relate to answering the learning questions. EntrepreNorth is seeking to collect and learn from this information more broadly in an ongoing way through impact measurement and reporting.

2.3 The Approach to the Work

Reciprocal Consulting's research approach is guided by the 5 R's of *Respect, Relevance, Reciprocity, Responsibility, and Relationships*. As Indigenous peoples and allies, we are committed to research and evaluation that lifts up the work of our communities and holistically supports the self-determination of Indigenous peoples and more broadly, individuals who are targeted to have the least access to resources and opportunities. Reciprocal Consulting took a collaborative, participatory, and strengths-based approach to the methodology and approach to ensure that they were appropriate and relevant to the needs of EntrepreNorth and other key partners in this work. The work of Reciprocal Consulting is grounded in the following:

- ⇒ *Indigenous worldviews*
- ⇒ *Strengths-based*
- ⇒ *Participatory methods*
- ⇒ *Culturally relevant and responsive*
- ⇒ *Developmental*
- ⇒ *Social Justice*

Qualitative data from the interviews, focus group and program documents provided by EntrepreNorth were analyzed using thematic analysis.

This report was produced collaboratively by Reciprocal Consulting Inc. and EntrepreNorth.

3.0 Findings

In the previous report to FSC, a number of barriers were discussed, and it was highlighted that the approach to building and utilizing technology in the North would need to work to break barriers, be digitally inclusive, maintain cultural integrity and foster community safety. The following findings detail EntrepreNorth's e-learning journey and how their approach to developing online content and tools (EntrepreNorth App) supports these priorities and fosters access to business education, mentorship and engagement with others for Northern Indigenous entrepreneurs. Findings also discuss how EntrepreNorth meets diverse needs online through culturally-rooted programming.

3.1 Meeting Learners' Needs

EntrepreNorth team members discussed how EntrepreNorth meets the diverse needs and learning styles of Northern Indigenous entrepreneurs who frequently feel isolated and excluded from existing education systems and business support services. EntrepreNorth's approach to inclusive and accessible programming centres on programming that is grounded in Indigenous worldview and culture, is guided by elders, is pilot tested by Northern Indigenous community members, and is responsive to feedback from participants.

Culturally Rooted Programming

The EntrepreNorth team shared that they provide culturally-rooted programming to help meet diverse needs through their online content and resources. They noted that this works to combat feelings of isolation and exclusion from existing education systems and business support services in entrepreneurs. The culturally-rooted programming is reflected in the use of EntrepreNorth's proprietary Multi Directional Business Compass as the app's interface and as a key component of EntrepreNorth's online learning strategy. Further, EntrepreNorth worked with a digital content creator to include culturally grounded graphics in instructional videos and accompanying online learning tools. Finally, the app was designed to include Indigenous languages so that users can enter their information in their own language.

We've had to work towards changing mindsets. Going from scarcity to abundance. Lots of it comes from knowing your own values, overcoming trauma responses and being aware of the path to heal those traumas. That wasn't something we were much aware of at first, but it's something we gradually became more aware of over time. We are incorporating wellness in the content.

Northern and Indigenous Voices

The EntrepreNorth team shared about the strong inclusion of Northern voices in their design process, which was found to be an asset in order to create culturally relevant and responsive curriculum. The design process involves engaging with community to ensure that the product is useful and relevant. For example, feedback on what matters most to users was gathered at the very beginning of the app development. The app was then tested by various Northern people from different walks of life. Feedback from this engagement was gathered and centered in the design of the app to ensure the product development is responsive to the needs of its users. Further, Northern Indigenous thought partners reviewed the curriculum to ensure that the program is relevant and accessible to Northern Indigenous peoples. The app is one of the few softwares that is developed in the North by Northern people for Northern people. The app was also tested later in its development by an advisory group that provided feedback.

If we are creating content about leadership and business, we are talking about Indigenous leaders, leaders from their own community, and adapting the content to the learners. We really recognize that Indigenous entrepreneurs are interested in hearing about entrepreneurs with similar life experiences as them, people like them.

Elder Involvement

EntrepreNorth also enhances inclusion of Indigenous worldviews and knowledge systems in its course content through engaging Elders and knowledge keepers in teaching and curriculum development. Team members shared that bringing in Elders and knowledge keepers helps make conversations deeper and more holistic and grounds the content. Further, staff shared that they discussed the curriculum, intended quotes and scripted lessons plans with an elder to record their feedback and ensure the content was appropriate, responsive to the needs of learners, as well as culturally relevant. Feedback from one elder led to removal of content, the addition of a powerful Raven story being centered in EntrepreNorth's "Identifying Your Gifts" lesson, and further reflection on how ceremony can be incorporated into EntrepreNorth's online offerings.

Having been part of a cohort, all the sessions where we had group things and gatherings, those were great, but having elders in the group [...] was so impactful. It really helped affect me positively as an Indigenous person, it connected with me. It was so valuable to have those elders there and have their worldview, I really respect him. It was critically important to have that aspect. They speak to where we come from and how things are changing. About how to adapt to these things. It gives people a really good base to do things. I worked with my elders to map out traditional territories. I gained a lot of perspective on where we as a people came from and how grounded we were. If we can continue to include elders and knowledge keepers, it would be one of the most important pillars. To keep our worldviews, respect for all lifeforms, is the key to our survival, it's so important.

In addition to Elder involvement behind the camera to shape the online curriculum, Elders are also involved in front of the camera through video production. As a part of this work, EntrepreNorth shared that they did six full days of filming in July. Filming took place in Yellowknife with on-camera talent including staff, program alumni, entrepreneurs, and Elders. Efforts were made to ensure that this work also contributed positively to the North including working with entrepreneurs and program alum. The videographer was a program alum and EntrepreNorth's Curriculum Lead and Digital Content Creator organized and led the whole shoot. They have also been working closely with the videographer on the post-production editing of the footage for the online curriculum. EntrepreNorth noted that program participants and alumni have consistently shared that Indigenous voices, perspectives, and stories are essential to the development of culturally-relevant curriculum. Participants need to 'see' and recognize themselves within the content in order for it to resonate and feel relevant and authentic. Fortunately, EntrepreNorth now has a large network of alumni from across the North who are keen to share their business knowledge and lived experiences in order to uplift the next generation of emerging entrepreneurs.

To support the video production EntrepreNorth also created an eLearning digital content development plan and a curriculum script and storyboard. Learner input was gathered through a survey to support the development of the online curriculum to ensure that it is grounded and responsive to the needs of entrepreneurs in the North. Other pieces actioned by EntrepreNorth include creating an eLearning production and logistics plan, a video production template, working on filming and sound design along with other digital content creation (graphics, illustrations, animations, graphic recording, etc), and preparing the app to host the eLearning content. In terms of next steps, EntrepreNorth highlighted they are set to pilot some of this new video content with their upcoming Indigenous Language Innovation cohort.

Challenging Western Approaches

Team members also discussed the holistic approach to business development that EntrepreNorth prioritizes. They shared that the Western approach to business was not aligning with the worldview of the entrepreneurs they work with and highlighted the unique nature of the wholistic, relational and circular approach to business education that EntrepreNorth offers. For example, the curriculum theory and framework focus on decolonizing approaches to business education, fostering cultural integrity in learning and cultural pride in business.

Engagement with elders also supported centering Indigenous worldviews and challenging western approaches to business education. One team member shared that having elders in the

As a complete package, it's going to look really well. I want to add, I am in it to see [EntrepreNorth's] success on that. There are many Indigenous entrepreneurs who feel there isn't support out there. There's people that don't have access and we need to bridge that gap. We are creating an avenue where people can connect and access supports. It's encouraging to see the building and creation of this fund. This will help in the future. [From where I am] sitting on the wayside, only involved to some extent, I like what I am seeing and the direction it's heading.

classroom for a session on Indigenous leadership and worldview helped shift the conversation about wealth and finances away from financial literacy and towards discussing Indigenous peoples' trauma surrounding money and why they view it and feel about it the way they do.

Responsive to Feedback

Team members also shared EntrepreNorth meets diverse needs online by being responsive to participants' needs, experiences and feedback. EntrepreNorth's team shared they approach content creation and students' learning journey from a relational approach so entrepreneurs relate to the content. Participants also shared that both in the curriculum and app development process, they have sought out feedback from Indigenous entrepreneurs and created or modified content based on their insights and needs. For example, EntrepreNorth took into account entrepreneurs' feedback in the development of the app regarding the need for frequent autosave and minimal bandwidth to address connectivity issues in the North, and strong privacy settings to protect entrepreneurs' intellectual property and the business model they worked very hard on.

3.2 Empowering Entrepreneurs

EntrepreNorth team members discussed how EntrepreNorth empowers learners to apply their new knowledge and skills to develop their ideas and grow their businesses. EntrepreNorth's approach to empowering entrepreneurs include working to ensure curriculum, programs, and the app are directly applicable to entrepreneurs and supporting them holistically.

Applied Learning

EntrepreNorth's highly applicable programming helps empower learners to apply their new knowledge and skills and grow their business. Team members shared this is part of the organization's core vision for business education and that it's about getting potential entrepreneurs the education and support they need to launch and grow their business as soon as possible. With content focused on being engaging for auditory kinesthetic learners and informed by Northerners, EntrepreNorth's team shared that their programming takes a deep dive into business and provides a lot of experiential learning.

Holistic Support

The team stated that EntrepreNorth will empower entrepreneurs through the development of a wellness

We want folks to feel that the learning and engaging can continue once they are done with the program, which is why we created the app. This is also why we are developing an investment fund, so there is potential for entrepreneurs to access capital if needed.

I had the pleasure to recently work with an alumni cohort. The messaging I got was that EntrepreNorth gave them the springboard needed to get that confidence and push to start their entrepreneurial work, so in that sense, I see them reaching the people. The messaging I am getting from everyone is: "I will do everything for EntrepreNorth because they really supported me."

framework, which was developed during the course of this project. Participants explained this wellness framework aims to support mental health to ensure students feel supported and seen. They shared that this wellness serves to remind EntrepreNorth to take a step back, acknowledge the impacts of intergenerational trauma and ensure entrepreneurs are met where they are at and offered the support they need. A goal of the wellness framework and EntrepreNorth's programming more broadly was also said to be to help learners overcome their limiting beliefs and go from a scarcity to an abundance mindset in business and entrepreneurship.

EntrepreNorth's Wellness Framework

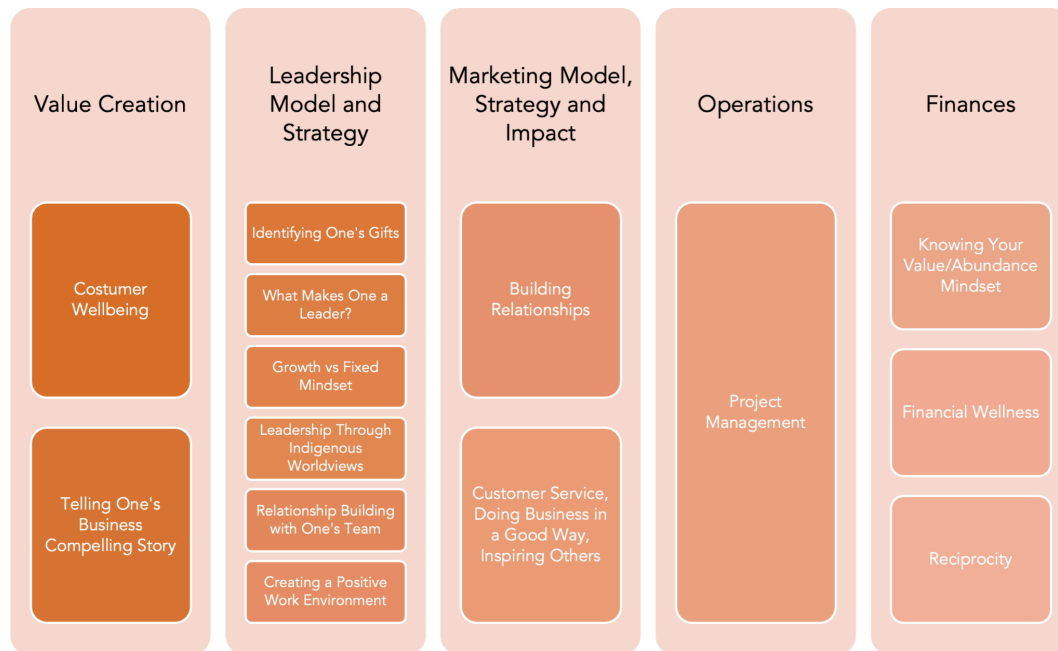
The Wellness Framework is intended to provide strategies that can be used to ensure learners are prioritizing their holistic wellbeing throughout their e-learning journey, and their broader journey of becoming an entrepreneur. Core goals of the wellness framework include teaching learners how to develop a toolkit of strategies and affirmations to deploy as needed throughout the program, and supporting them in acknowledging and celebrating their journey thus far and prepare for the road ahead. The core elements of the Wellness Framework are Gratitude, Affirmations, Values, and Movement.

During a filmed interview with an elder, EntrepreNorth received feedback on how to include ceremony and promote wellness through their wellness framework. They noted the elder they spoke with encouraged them to reflect on how ceremony is incorporated into EntrepreNorth's online offerings and suggested they follow wise practices from another program she knew of that sent its participants a care package of sage, tobacco, cedar and sweetgrass as grounding support for the online portion of the program. She shared they did so to ensure learners could have something physical to ground themselves in ceremony where they feel more isolated. Since receiving this feedback, EntrepreNorth has been exploring offering students something similar as part of the wellness framework they have developed. To do this, they have added information about various medicines to the framework along with activities learners can do using them to promote their wellness. During discussions with staff, the projected importance of the wellness framework in supporting students on their eLearning journey was highlighted. Its roots in Northern Indigenous ways of being and living were also discussed.

The framework is divided into lessons. Each lesson centers around a goal and is accompanied by a wellness quote, wellness questions or prompts, tools, strategies and/or activities, a wellness affirmation, helpful tips and supportive resources. The wellness framework is comprehensive and designed to cover a range of experiences and priorities of wellness include:

- five core goals to shape the framework
- sixteen quotes to inspire learners
- thirty questions or prompts to guide learners through
- sixteen tools, activities and/or strategies for learners to apply
- sixteen wellness affirmations to foster learner use
- seventeen tips and twenty-five supportive resources to support learners.

While the framework will continue to grow, lesson topics and their associated sub-lessons are listed below:



To ensure accessibility, EntrepreNorth's team shared that they create engaging videos for the online content to better connect with auditory leaders.

3.3 Engagement and Mentorship

EntrepreNorth team members discussed how EntrepreNorth fosters human-to-human engagement and mentorship across the North. EntrepreNorth's approach to fostering engagement and mentorship includes networking, community building, and both direct and indirect mentorship opportunities.

Building Connections

EntrepreNorth's team members shared that networking and community building are central components to the design and delivery of their programming. Community building is a piece of EntrepreNorth's programming that has always worked well and results in lifelong friendships and relationships.

Connection and community building between program participants has been one of EntrepreNorth's greatest successes. It's more than a cohort program. Bringing entrepreneurs together is always an uplifting experience. We had the opportunity to travel to other territories and communities and it's great to be building relationships across the North. The online format is new to us and I think our thought process with this app is that it will be an effective tool for learners to be actively engaging with a mentor or an EntrepreNorth team member. [As an example,] I can add you to my business, we can see the same stuff and you can leave me comments. That hasn't existed before.

Team members suggested that the app will serve as a strong space for community building between Entrepreneurs, mentors, facilitators, coaches, and other community members, and that these connections will support engagement and offer the entrepreneurs valuable feedback as they build out their businesses in the app. Team members added that they hope to create a strong connection between participants and the cohort early on in their learning journey aided by the app and wellness framework and by including Indigenous entrepreneurs' experiences into the curriculum and offering elder support.

Mentorship

The EntrepreNorth team noted that individualized mentorship is a strength of the program, but can be challenging to implement in an online forum. There is a need to balance offering enough mentorship opportunities without overwhelming learners. Further, there is a need to be able to articulate the benefit of a mentorship model to learners and gain their buy-in so it does not feel like an extra task. EntrepreNorth's approach to addressing these potential challenges includes ensuring the work with mentors is about goal setting and creating a highly applicable workplan.

A lot of entrepreneurs have a sense of overwhelm so when they think about connecting with a mentor, if they don't have proper context, they see it as they have to build a new relationship with some person and they don't know where the support comes in. A common theme with program participants is they have too many ideas and try to do too many things. They have four different business ideas and aren't able to lock into a specific vision. Nothing really happens but it doesn't have a lot to do with mentorship. A coach could support you to prioritize tasks. The learning roadmap did not exist with the program before, so entrepreneurs did not have clarity on what they are working towards and what they should be achieving. If we're clear on that, then we could say your mentor can help you achieve "x", "y", "z".

It was also noted that the nature of the mentor/mentee relationship generally evolves over time and the app will need to be able to adapt to this. It will be important for the app to provide mentors with the necessary information and structure to keep up to date with their mentees on different steps of their journey.

Indirect mentorship was also mentioned as an avenue EntrepreNorth is planning to use to offer mentorship online. Indirect mentorship already exists in the online curriculum through the voices and stories included in it. Further, the app enables partners, mentors and collaborators to add comments, react and reply in the business feed. The intent of this feature is to foster peer support and advice without direct interaction.

3.4 Enhancing Impact

EntrepreNorth team members discussed how EntrepreNorth supports Indigenous Entrepreneurs to demonstrate impact. EntrepreNorth's approach to supporting Indigenous entrepreneurs to demonstrate impact includes utilizing the Compass model to guide

participants through business planning, utilizing an applicable learning model, and helping to catalyze a movement across the North.

Multi Directional Business Compass Framework

The Multi Directional Business Compass Framework brings together both the program curriculum and the online app. As mentioned by EntrepreNorth in previous reporting, the 'Compass' is an Indigenous-centered business model that offers a multi-dimensional perspective on value creation, business development, and systems thinking. The Compass supports all of EntrepreNorth's work, including the curriculum and the App. The team stated that it is a big task for the EntrepreNorth team to build content on all of the aspects of the compass, but that the content that has been delivered so far has been a big success. The Compass is the foundation for the app and provides the structure to guide program participants through the crucial steps in producing a good business model.

Applied Learning

When discussing the applied learning model that is utilized, the EntrepreNorth team emphasized that its programming is designed to have more immediate impacts on people's lives and their business by focusing on how knowledge can be used in practice.

Catalyzing a Movement

The EntrepreNorth team discussed witnessing EntrepreNorth's impact in catalyzing a movement of Indigenous entrepreneurship across the North. EntrepreNorth continues to expand its reach, including most recently into Nunavik. Team members described how they have witnessed an increase in Indigenous representation in business in the North, which in turn has resulted in impacts related to community wellness and support for territorial economy.

EntrepreNorth has catalyzed a movement of Indigenous entrepreneurship across the North. It's happening all over Canada, but I will say EntrepreNorth, while we can't take all the credit, we see entrepreneurship become a possible choice in the North. The community change there is clear. Not only do we offer education, but it's also a safe space to develop your emotional and social capital. We have all these Northern entrepreneurs out there kicking ass and getting many opportunities.

3.5 Reflections and Lessons Learned

The following section provides reflections and lessons learned to date including

Flexible Approaches

Team members described EntrepreNorth's nimble approach to education which enables swift adaptation to learners' needs. The iterative process for the app content development that involved user feedback before finalization is an example of this. Further, the Compass and the App were designed to adapt to people's needs and include multiple pathways for learning.

The online learning strategy is another component of EntrepreNorth's flexible approach. Despite well documented connectivity challenges in the North, having online offerings does increase EntrepreNorth's reach. New internet services such as Starlink are working to address this, however, the new online offerings are designed to take into account any connectivity challenges as well as the access needs of those living in rural and remote communities. Given that the development of the online learning component is new, the EntrepreNorth team is taking an approach of learning as they go. Team members are aware that there are different learning preferences and even levels of receptivity to online learning, which can make it challenging to create tools that work for each cohort. To date, team members feel the app and the online content development are going in the right direction and that having tools available will provide entrepreneurs with more tools to fit their needs and preferences. Aspects of the online program that are still in development include how to promote the creation of community and connection when entrepreneurs are utilizing the app and online offering asynchronously.

Program Structure and Planning

Currently, the EntrepreNorth team has identified the need to develop culturally relevant student learning outcomes as well as a clear program structure. To date, the program has had a flexible structure focused on developing business models and strategies and then conducting a pitch event. The program has had implicit objectives that have not been articulated to participants. This has resulted in mixed levels of success depending on the individual entrepreneur. The team continues to work on clarifying the curriculum pathway and articulating the objectives. A strong reliance on guest speakers can make it challenging to create a program outline and an approach that prioritizes students finding their own answers can serve as a challenge to having pre-developed student learning outcomes.

EntrepreNorth doesn't do much [course development that follows] the western outcomes-centered course [model]. I think a lot of what EntrepreNorth does is reverse engineer this course through the Compass framework. As far as I know, objectives are the clearest way to help people understand the goals and revisit them at the end, so we're working on building those now.

We relied a lot on guest speakers. It became a logistical challenge to get them lined up at the right time and to make sure it hit the mark. Having a clear curriculum pathway is something we are working on. We are working on creating clarity with the learners, so they know what they are signing up for. I think we always envisioned the pathway being a tool for self-development and business development. The idea is to teach people things and hopefully they can apply those things to their business.

It was also noted that part of strengthening the structure is a modular learning structure EntrepreNorth is currently creating to help people better learn and apply bite-sized chunks of the content to their business as they progress through the course.

EntrepreNorth's team also intends to finesse the volume and type of content of the program to better suit future learners. Team members shared that they want to be more mindful of not overwhelming program participants with too much information or irrelevant questions as they work through program content. They hoped to better determine the critical lessons, need-to-know, and relevant questions for entrepreneurs. To achieve this, one of the team members shared that the connections made by EntrepreNorth with others over the years are paying off because people are engaging in the development process of the course content and are invited to provide feedback.

Another aspect the EntrepreNorth team hoped to improve is learning continuity. A team member shared that they want to work on the curriculum to ensure learners do not associate EntrepreNorth's assignments with school homework and toss them after the program is done. This is feedback that was received from some former program participants which reminded EntrepreNorth of the importance of recognizing the history of schooling and the trauma learners may have in relation to learning and assignments. The hope is that assignments are pertinent and applicable to launching and growing businesses that positively impact community in the long-term. EntrepreNorth also hopes to increase the continuity of learning following the end of the program through the EntrepreNorth App and the EntrepreNorth investment fund that is currently being developed.

It was also shared how wonderful the filming process had been and how creating content for the filming process engages and supports future learners. Team members noted that creating content and sitting in front of a camera can be intimidating and challenging, but recognized that it is worth it and looked forward to seeing the impacts of this work. One team member did share the hope to see more time built in for content creation as the process from content creation to filming has gone very quickly so far and learners could benefit from having more time to grasp everything being etched in stone.

Organizational Growth

EntrepreNorth team members shared that they had witnessed significant development and growth at the organizational level, especially when it comes to improving capacity and processes. The team noted this was a positive change, highlighting how the organization has grown from a team of five to fourteen since September 2023. As a result of this capacity expansion, EntrepreNorth is now able to have a team focused on the app, curriculum development, and the impact fund noticeably improving EntrepreNorth's potential for impact and offerings.

Team members also witnessed growth in the program and EntrepreNorth's adaptability when serving Indigenous communities. It was shared that as EntrepreNorth grows, it is able to better

EntrepreNorth is always pushing and supporting to make sure its entrepreneurs are shining and have that platform to show their work. I am not sure I can speak to change, but there has been a lot of support and growth from what I've seen. The biggest change I have seen is the team's growth, but also recognizing that systems change does not happen by focusing on one specific path. It's about ensuring that all sectors are populated and focused on. I'm happy to see the team has grown so much and has a strong foundation to shift how things have been done and how they will be done in the future.

adapt to communities' needs without losing its grounding in a belief of centering Indigenous worldviews. The importance of ensuring the organization's grounding remains long-term through company bylaws, policies, and procedures was highlighted.

As entrepreneurs, we have been blessed by EntrepreNorth's efforts. It's a fresh drink of water to be supported by people who clearly care. It's important to make sure the roots and vision stay.

While growth and development has been witnessed within the organization, EntrepreNorth is still working on various aspects of organizational growth. It was noted that the organization is currently working on improving its online presence, policy, research and development work in order to improve capacity and processes. This work is expected to have an impact on EntrepreNorth's operations and how the organization celebrates the growth and success of partners in the markets, specifically when it comes to offering more resources to the people that need it. EntrepreNorth is aiming to continue to involve entrepreneurs at every level of the organization through EntrepreNorth's transitional goal of becoming its own legal entity.

The ripple effect of what they do is super important. They create a cohort based on community needs and interest and then that cohort goes off and inspires others to do things. Their skills and talents trickle down into families, services, communities, systems even. It's giving hope to people too, to people who do not necessarily fit into the systems as they are. EntrepreNorth is inspiring people to provide for their families in ways that call to them.

This could be a huge shift that could change systems. Through the work they do, it connects people to themselves, their cultures, their skills, gifts and talents. There is a wide range of benefits not just for EntrepreNorth, not just for the economic health of our communities, but also on a personal and cultural level. It's more than just professional development, it's also personal development rooted in language and culture. It trickles down into our communities and contributes to the healing of our people.

4.0 Future Work and Recommendations

The following section outlines future work considerations for EntrepreNorth as well as EntreNorth's recommendations for other organizations doing similar work.

4.1 Future Work

The following section presents EntrepreNorth's future work on their eLearning Journey. This section describes future plans for learner expansion, program development and app development.

Learner Expansion

EntrepreNorth's team members indicated that the organization reaches the right people, but can continue to increase its reach. Team members added that more could be done to increase reach to remote and underserved regions of the North. Reaching regions like the Eastern Arctic was said to be a notable goal of EntrepreNorth because it aligns with their mandate to go to the places where the gaps are the widest. In terms of demographic expansion, it was noted that some of EntrepreNorth's target audiences over the years have been determined by funders, resulting in most participants of the program having been female-identifying because funders often request for women and youth to be targeted. There is an opportunity for EntrepreNorth to expand reach to more non-binary and male identifying people in the program. This can also be supported by a recommendation shared from an elder who asked how the team will support men specifically through their curriculum. In this regard, the team noted they have plans to engage with a male elder from the eastern arctic with the next round of powerful quotes, interview footage and lesson content, and hoped to re-engage some key informants.

In terms of reaching learners and Indigenous entrepreneurs, EntrepreNorth will always offer in-person programming, however the focus and planning in this project to develop and implement the eLearning strategy will enable EntrepreNorth to expand reach and program delivery significantly. As more program options become available in an online format, more learners across the North can participate in the way that best suits their location, priorities, learning needs and current lifestyle. The eLearning strategy investment now will support EntrepreNorth to build these offers sustainability for years to come.

Program Development

Thinking to the future, EntrepreNorth's team shared they are looking forward to EntrepreNorth's growth and future work, and to seeing the impacts of the work currently underway. It was noted that the app is expected to contribute to being able to track some of EntrepreNorth's impacts over time. Team members also shared that they are excited to see the videos for the online content come together and the app being used and populated by users. With regards to both the app and the videos included in the curriculum, team members

commented that they were not only looking forward to seeing the content in itself, but also its evolution.

One team member also noted they hoped to see more non-resource industry focused employment opportunities in communities thanks to EntrepreNorth's work. They discussed how they hoped to see businesses scaled and entrepreneurs receive some mentorship surrounding technology so they can adapt to how the economy is changing and not be limited to resource-focused endeavors.

App Development

When team members shared thoughts about the app thus far and where they hoped it would go next, they shared it will increase the accessibility of the programming. Having the app should help make programming more convenient and easier to access, especially in rural or remote areas. EntrepreNorth is creating online and offline options to use for areas with low bandwidth so connectivity is less of a challenge in accessing programming. To address connectivity issues and make the app more accessible, it was also mentioned that the team is working to enable users to export data out of the app.

Team members also shared they are figuring out how to make the app as useful as possible to staff and entrepreneurs. EntrepreNorth is creating the app with the hope of making the programming more convenient for learners and providing staff with features that help them in their work. Features such as giving staff the ability to manage users and act as moderators or allowing staff to group users by cohort or theme were mentioned as ways the team is hoping to increase the usefulness of the app for users. Grouping people by cohort or theme and giving staff the ability to moderate the app are likely to enhance impact measurement and allow staff to note trends and patterns by cohort.

The potential for connection, relationship building and mentorship enabled through the app was highlighted. Currently, business partners working together on the same business model can both add information on the app, but not at same time, which is something EntrepreNorth is hoping to address by creating new features such as simultaneous collaboration. Other opportunities for new features that can support collaboration and mentorship include new formatting options within text fields, a new page layout that simultaneously shows what the user is working on and how others can support the journey, and templates in case a user is stuck. Further, giving staff the ability to moderate the app can help staff identify learner needs more readily and collaborate with learners to reach their goals.

One challenge noted was determining how prescriptive to be when building the app. It was shared that when EntrepreNorth makes decisions such as whether to offer a text box or a check box on different pages, defining who should be in the system as an expert, and determining if

What does it look like to be reaching indigenous entrepreneurs in rural and remote communities? This is a tall order and I'll signal that we're figuring it out as we go. It is a new phase of learning for us, we're excited by it and we recognize that for EntrepreNorth to have the impact we want it to have and to be sustainable in the way we want to be, online learning is going to be critical.

certain aspects of the app will be used for accountability measures or mentorship assignments, relationality is always prioritized.

EntrepreNorth is also working to balance security and accessibility in its programming, especially given the business plans that will be on there and the discomfort people can have with using an app without having a clear knowledge of its security and how it will impact them and their work. Currently there is a need to balance competing needs between wanting to make the app very secure to protect entrepreneurs' intellectual property and giving enough access to the content to allow entrepreneurs to create a network, share about their work and support one another on the app.

With sustainability in mind, in future the app may offer the potential for revenue generation through tiered offerings. To exemplify their point, it was noted that there could be a system in place where users pay after the initial product offering or where users in the South pay to access the App.

There are lots of challenges in rethinking and redesigning business curriculum. It requires a lot of deep thought, reimagining, revisioning and decolonizing approaches, so it takes time and effort. It also requires deeper understanding to do that work. There are so many things we can do, step by step.

It's about cultivating cultural connection even though we offer business support. I remember at the get go, the advice we were given was that we never wanted to come into a classroom and be the authoritarian figure. We wanted to come into the room and discuss, get away from the Western education approach. We wanted to make it more of a co-creative approach, and then obviously the framework was born to help decolonize it.

4.2 Recommendations

The following section presents EntrepreNorth's recommendations for others going on a similar journey as the one they have taken with their eLearning Journey.

Based on the findings of this report, EntrepreNorth recommends for others doing similar work to:

1. Center the voices of community members impacted by the work at hand in the design and delivery of online programming. Acknowledge and adapt to the history and realities of the people you are hoping to work with.
2. Welcome and be responsive to feedback at different steps of your content development process.
3. If possible, offer both in-person and online programming to fit different learners' needs and circumstances.
4. Ensure any app or software used is safe and protects users' intellectual property.
5. Maximise opportunities for mentorship and relationship and connection building in app and online content development.
6. Remain flexible and aware of targeted learners/users' needs (e.g., build in mechanisms or opportunities to gather feedback and discuss with learners).
7. Recognize systems change is challenging and persevere on your journey, grounding your work in a strong vision, framework and Indigenous-centered worldviews.
8. Approach your eLearning Journey with humility and an open mind.
9. During app development, build in features for staff to be able to moderate and control this space, along with features that will allow your organization to measure impacts and track metrics that may be helpful to your team.
10. Ensure online content is applicable, culturally-grounded and relevant at different stages of the entrepreneurial journey to help learners relate to what they learned, apply it to their business and continue to use and revisit the content over time.

Appendix A: Data Collection Tools

A.1. Focus Group Tool

Introductions
1. Could you please share about your role and work with EntrepreNorth?
Reach
2. In your opinion, is EntrepreNorth reaching the right people with its education program, resources and other offerings? (e.g. is there a population or sub-population that is missing)
Design
3. We know that many of the learners and entrepreneurs that you work with can feel isolated and excluded from existing education systems and business support services. Tell us about your approach to meeting diverse needs with your online content and resources? ⇒ Follow up – what has the reception by learners been?
4. Describe your approach to developing the program – curriculum, course structure etc. ⇒ What is working well? ⇒ What would you change the next time you develop a program? ⇒ If not answered, how do you ensure that it is culturally relevant and centers Northern and Indigenous voices?
5. Can you tell us about your approach to building connection and mentorship in an online format? ⇒ What is working well? ⇒ What has been challenging?
6. What role has the app played in supporting Entrepreneurs and program delivery? Where would you like to see it go next?
Outcomes and Impact
7. Can you tell us a story of: How the programs enabled learners to apply knowledge and skills to grow their business?
8. What is the most significant change you have witnessed since your involvement with EntrepreNorth? a. Why is this change significant?
Wrap-up
9. What shifts are needed in the business, finance and education sector so that these systems work better for Indigenous peoples in the North?
10. Anything else you'd like to share with us?

A.2. Staff Interview Tool

Introductions
1. Could you please share about your role and work with EntrepreNorth?
Reach
2. In your opinion, is EntrepreNorth reaching the right people with its education program, resources and other offerings? (e.g. is there a population or sub-population that is missing)
Design
3. We know that many of the learners and entrepreneurs that you work with can feel isolated and excluded from existing education systems and business support services. Tell us about your approach to meeting diverse needs with your online content and resources? ⇒ Follow up – what has the reception by learners been?
4. Describe your approach to developing the program – curriculum, course structure etc. <i>Probes</i> ⇒ What is working well? ⇒ What would you change the next time you develop a program? ⇒ Did anything not go as planned/unintended outcomes? ⇒ If not noted in some way, how do you ensure that it is culturally relevant and centers Northern and Indigenous voices?
5. Can you tell us about your approach to building connection and mentorship in an online format? <i>Probes</i> ⇒ What is working well? ⇒ What has been challenging? ⇒ Did anything not go as planned/unintended outcomes?
6. What role has the app played in supporting Entrepreneurs and program delivery? Where would you like to see it go next?
Outcomes and Impact
7. What is the most significant change you have witnessed since your involvement with EntrepreNorth? b. Why is this change significant?
8. Can you tell us a story of: How the programs enabled learners to apply knowledge and skills to grow their business?
Wrap-up
9. Anything else you'd like to share with us?

A.3. Tech Staff Interview Tool

Introductions
1. Could you please share about your role and work with EntrepreNorth?
Reach

<p>2. In your opinion, is EntrepreNorth reaching the right people with its education program, resources and other offerings? (e.g. is there a population or sub-population that is missing)</p> <p>⇒ Prompt specifically about users of the app</p>
<p>Design</p>
<p>3. We know that many of the learners and entrepreneurs that you work with can feel isolated and excluded from existing education systems and business support services.</p> <p>Tell us about your approach to meeting diverse needs through the app?</p> <p>⇒ Follow up – what has the reception by users/learners been?</p>
<p>4. Describe your approach to developing the app?</p> <p><i>Probes</i></p> <p>⇒ What is working well?</p> <p>⇒ What would you change the next time you develop a program?</p> <p>⇒ Did anything not go as planned/unintended outcomes?</p> <p>⇒ If not noted in some way, how do you ensure that it is culturally relevant and centers Northern and Indigenous voices?</p>
<p>5. Can you tell us about your approach to building connection and mentorship through the app?</p> <p><i>Probes</i></p> <p>⇒ What is working well?</p> <p>⇒ What has been challenging?</p> <p>⇒ Did anything not go as planned/unintended outcomes?</p>
<p>6. Where would you like to see the app go next?</p>
<p>Outcomes and Impact</p>
<p>7. What is the most significant change you have witnessed since your involvement with EntrepreNorth?</p> <p>c. Why is this change significant?</p>
<p>8. Can you tell us a story of:</p> <p>How the app has support other areas of eEntrepreNorth's work?</p>
<p>Wrap-up</p>
<p>9. Anything else you'd like to share with us?</p>

EntrepreNorth is a project on MakeWay's shared platform, which provides operational supports, governance, and charitable expertise for changemakers.