

Strive to Thrive

Tips For Ted Rogers School Students

These reports leverage the expertise of BCH staff to share best practices for students & alumni.

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The Rise of Indigenous Entrepreneurship: Shaping Canada's Economy

Indigenous tourism includes activities and enterprises owned, managed and operated by Indigenous people. These businesses offer tourists with distinctive cultural experiences, including storytelling, art performances, and nature-based tours which reflect Indigenous customs, values and way of life.



What is an Indigenous Entrepreneur?

Entrepreneurs in Indigenous tourism are essential to creating authentic experiences while preserving their cultural identity. They create businesses that reflect their cultural heritage and promote sustainable, locally driven tourism.

Indigenous Businesses in Ontario

 [Wikwemikong Tours](#)

 [Manitoulin Brewing](#)

 [Aaniin](#)

 [Kokom Scrunchies](#)

 [Cheekbone Beauty](#)

Common Roles

-  Fashion Designer
-  Cultural Interpreter
-  Event Coordinator
-  Marketing Specialist
-  Guest Services Representative

The Economic Growth of Indigenous Tourism by the Numbers

Indigenous tourism in Canada has experienced significant growth, emerging as a vital sector that not only contributes to the economy but also supports cultural preservation. This industry reflects a rising demand for authentic cultural experiences, providing Indigenous communities with valuable opportunities for economic development and cultural revival.



\$1.3B

Total Contributed
Revenue in 2023



40K+

Jobs Created in
Canada



23%

% of Annual
Industry Growth

Meet a Student Entrepreneur



Sierra Lefave 

Incoming ENT Student
Owner & CEO, House of
Seven Studio



What methods did you incorporate to grow the business while maintaining cultural integrity?

It's vital to consult with other Indigenous businesses and elders to ensure the business aligns with community needs and cultural integrity. I focus on giving back, especially through youth involvement, and maintaining an active presence in the community to avoid exploitation and meet its needs, rather than just focusing on profit.



How would you go about ensuring the authenticity of cultural representation for businesses?

Authenticity comes from lived experience or working in conjecture with communities that maintain traditional practices and perspectives. I would consult with elders, friends, and community members, as I didn't grow up in our culture. It's important to understand your lineage, and for the community to recognize and accept you before claiming cultural status.



What resources can you share with future First Nations, Métis, and Inuit young entrepreneurs?

I try to empower youth to believe in their potential and encourage reaching out to the community for support. There are many opportunities, even if others don't see them. While barriers exist, they can be overcome, and businesses must invest in the community and ensure that the youth's voices and ideas are heard.

Resources on Campus



[Gdoo-maawnjidimi Mompil Indigenous Student Services](#)



[Indigenous Student Association](#)



[Treaty Relations in Business Education \(TRIBE\)](#)



[Indigenous Law Students' Association](#)



[BIPOC Students' Collective](#)



[Indigenous Entrepreneurship Podcast](#)



Experiencing Indigenous Heritage

Indigenous tourism is reshaping Canada's travel landscape by offering unique and immersive experiences that connect visitors with the rich cultural heritage and natural environments of Indigenous communities.



[Eco-Tours](#)



[Events and Festivals](#)



[Art Exhibits](#)

Want to Learn More for Free?



Indigenomics Institute

The *Indigenomics Institute* promotes Indigenous economic growth through collaborative dialogue and positive leadership.



Canadian Council for Indigenous Business (CCIB)

The *CCIB* helps bridge the gap between Indigenous businesses and Corporate Canada, cultivating shared prosperity.



Women Entrepreneurship Knowledge Hub (WEKH)

The *WEKH* is a national network that supports diverse women entrepreneurs through research, resources, and leading strategies.

Visit the Business Career Hub

Employer Events

The BCH hosts several employer events to prepare you for your professional career. Refer to your weekly BCH Careers Newsletter for a list of upcoming [events](#).

Bootcamps/Prep Programs

Advance your technical and soft skills, earn digital badges, and gain an advantage in today's workforce through Bootcamps. [Click here to register for current Bootcamps](#).

Coaching & Mock Interviews

For career coaching, interview prep and more, [schedule a 1:1 appointment](#) with a Career Consultant or a Co-op Coordinator.



Career Consultant Contributor **Alethia Davis-Hecker**

Career Consultant and UWindsor Alumni with 6+ years of experience in the career services industry. She is the founder of SMILE (nonprofit). She is passionate about encouraging students to live fruitful lives and aspire to greatness.



Student Contributor **Adrienne Gail Pagsanjan**

Gail is an Accounting student participating in the Co-op program. She is currently working as a Project Coordinator at the BCH, and is the Vice President of Events for Toronto Met Accounting.

References

1. Lack of capital restrains indigenous tourism growth in Canada. *Business in Vancouver*. (n.d.). <https://www.biv.com/news/economy-law-politics/lack-capital-continues-restrain-indigenous-tourism-growth-8295343>