Community Commitment Agreement

Territorial Acknowledgment

In conducting our work, we recognize that we operate as uninvited guests on the traditional, unceded and ancestral homelands of Tk'emlúps te Secwẻpemc within the Secwepemcúl'ecw (Secwepemc Nation). We would like to acknowledge the detrimental impacts of colonization and displacement of First Nations communities, and the over-representation and disproportionate impacted of systemic barriers created by dominate systems that enable and facilitate racism and gender inequity. We acknowledge that the Tk'emlups Peoples' continue to develop and nourish their relations with these lands and waterways, as always since the beginning and forever. We are dedicated to do better, listen more carefully, and work towards developing and supporting authentic and truthful reciprocal relationships.

Nation-to-Nation Acknowledgment

We want to acknowledge all Indigenous people of British Columbia including urban First Nations Peoples' who live away from their homelands, Métis Peoples, and The Inuit. We recognize and acknowledge the Two Rivers Chartered Community of Métis Nation British Columbia. We are truly honoured and grateful to improve our learning and understanding of your traditional ways of knowing. We stand alongside your Nations and are dedicated to honest relationship building.

Purpose

The purpose of the Community Commitment Agreement (CCA) is to establish a firm and unanimous understanding of what gender equity means for Tk'emlúps te Secwẻpemc, the City of Kamloops, and surrounding communities within the Secwepemcúl'ecw. The success of the Gender Equity Project is dependent upon listening, hearing, and learning from the diverse voices within our represented communities to better understand and acknowledge the issues and experiences of those facing gender inequity.

The Agreement

I / we, _____ agree to commit to enhancing gender equity in the community, organizations, businesses, and institutions of Tk'emlúps te Secwẻpemc, the City of Kamloops, and surrounding communities within the Secwepemcúl'ecw. This entails acknowledging and understanding the shifting dynamics of power structures and the need to constantly be listening to and learning from those facing oppression within the community because of their identified gender or sex; this is often compounded by intersecting factors that lead to marginalization such as sexuality, race, ethnicity, culture, (dis)ability, socio-economic status, violence, substance use, and ageism, amongst other factors. By listening to and understanding the issues in the community that lead to gender inequity, I / we will work to empower women and gender diverse folks to overcome barriers that impact their success and inclusion while also working towards addressing, dismantling, and rethinking the

systems that create these barriers. To do this, I / we agree to strive to acknowledge, understand, and address the following to enhance gender equity in our represented communities:

Understanding Gender Equity:

- Gender equity is not just about those who identify as women. Inequity harms everyone and therefore must be addressed through deep and meaningful change from the individual and organizational level.

- Learning from, listening to, understanding, and acknowledging those with living/lived experience of gender inequity is essential to understanding its impact.

- Intersectionality - we need to include, engage and amplify the voices of those among us who are marginalized by dominant inequitable practices and perceptions. Gender identity, race, socio-economic status, sexuality, and other factors that result marginalization, are interrelated, and those with intersecting identities are affected most.

- We need to create a safe space, that is culturally sensitive, accessible, and inclusive of our representative communities and individuals.

- Encouraging and supporting open discussion and addressing power dynamics is a key to naming some of the imbalances that are at the root of gender inequity.

- Two-Spirit, Trans, and gender diverse individuals face the some of the greatest challenges and marginalization in our community because of gender inequity.

- Misguided views on what gender equity entails are harmful but can be addressed through raising awareness and shifting mindsets towards acceptance and away from discrimination.
    - "you don't have to understand to treat people with humanity".

- Gender inequity stems from cultures of domination (i.e., colonialism and patriarchy) and unhealthy competition.

- Power holders[i] must be accountable for enhancing gender equity. Rather than calling out those who hold power, we must call them in as allies to this cause. We must all hold ourselves accountable for dismantling structures of oppression.

- Honouring vulnerability helps to reframe discourse on gender equity. It creates space for

understanding ways of experiencing gender inequity as perpetrators, allies, and experiencers of oppression and everything in between.

- Supporting the shift from harmful masculinity[ii] to healthy masculinity[iii] practices will help to dismantling structures that result in gender inequity.

- We must move away from defining and understanding gender equity within the framework of a masculine/ feminine binary[iv] only. Gender equity can only exist within a framework that recognizing that, not only does gender exist on a spectrum, but it is only one way of identifying and navigating within the world and not everyone identifies on the gender spectrum. There are many ways to orientate oneself in the world and none should be excluded from gender equity work.

- Institutions and organizations within Tk'emlúps te Secwẇpemc, the City of Kamloops, and surrounding communities within the Secwepemcúl'ecw operate within a larger colonial[v] and patriarchal[vi] social structure. Gender equity work is stifled within this structure and therefore dismantling these systems of oppression is a key piece of gender equity work.

- Gender equity (and equity more broadly) incorporates environmental and social issues. We need to support the voices of women and gender diverse folks to address the multitude of issues in our society.

- Rather than speaking on behalf of women of colour, we must include, make space for, and move aside so that the voices of women of colour are heard. "Nothing about us, without us"

- Bringing our "whole selves" to the work, acknowledging that we have bodies that need rest and food, acknowledging the strength that lies in emotion and compassion, and recognizing our connections with each other, other living beings, and the spaces we inhabit.

I/ we _____(written name) agree to adhere to the above commitment to enhance gender equity in Kamloops and district.

_____(signature) _____(date)

[i] Power Holders: "the ability to control others, events, or resources; to make happen what one wants to happen in spite of obstacles, resistance, or opposition…Power is a thing that is held, coveted, seized, taken away, lost, or stolen, and it is used in what are essentially adversarial relationships involving conflict between those with power and those without." (Crossman, Ashely. 27 August 2020. "Power Definitions and Examples in Sociology." *thoughtCo.*

[ii] Harmful Masculinity: "a term often used to describe the negative aspects of exaggerated masculine traits… negative aspects of traditional and outdated"; "he constellation of socially regressive [masculine] traits that serve to foster domination, the devaluation of women, homophobia, and wanton violence". (Johnson, Jon. 21 June 2020. "What to Know About Toxic Masculinity." *Medical News Today.*; (Ingram, Katherine M. et al. 7 October 2019. "Longitudinal Associations Between Features of Toxic Masculinity and Bystander Willingness to Intervene in Bullying Among Middle School Boys." *Journal of Psychology* 77: 139-151.).

[iii] Healthy Masculinity: "Healthy masculinity means being honest with oneself about your own feelings, needs and desires. It also means treating all others with the kindness and respect that you deserve" (Carabello, Jor-El. "What is Healthy, Respectful Masculinity?". *The Thrive Global.*). Ex. Asking for help, expressing wife-range of emotions, developing healthy relationship skills, calling out/in other men. (UMatter Princeton University. N.d. "Healthy Masculinity." *Princeton University.*

[iv] Masculine/ Feminine Binary: "The gender binary refers to the notion that gender comes in two distinct flavors: men and women, in which men are masculine, women are feminine, and, importantly, men are of the male sex and women are of the female sex... The gender binary is such a prevalent and well-accepted concept within our society that we tend to get upset when we are unable to place something or someone into one box or the other." (Blair, Karen L. 16 September 2018. "Has Gender Always Been Binary?" *Psychology Today.*

[v] Colonial Social Structures: Although there are different forms and approaches to colonial power structures and how they operate to enact domination and subjugation, one definitions of colonialism in the context of European Colonialism is: "European colonialism became inextricably connected to exploitation of Indigenous populations and, very often, their displacement and resettlement. Some of the colonies established in the first two hundred years after contact were highly aggressive in this respect, some less so. The fundamental features, however, could be observed in every instance: the transfer of European humans and associated biota (including animals, plants, seeds, and germs), the establishment of settlements that were distinct and separate from Indigenous communities (and often defined by that very separation), and the exploitation of landscape and ecosystems with an eye to enriching imperial homelands". (Belshaw, John Douglas, Nickel, Sarah, Horton, Chelsea. 2020. *Histories of Indigenous Peoples and Canada.* Creative Commons Attribution.

[vi] Patriarchal Social Structures: Simply, patriarchal structures exist when "men have more power, dominance, and privilege than women. Patriarchy is a social system in which men hold primary power and predominate in roles of political authority. It occurs in both one's personal life and within the workplace"; and also, the "systematic domination of women by men in some or all of society's spheres and institutions…[the] Patriarchy is reproduced in many different ways such as male violence against women, stereotypical representations in the media and even everyday sexism. (Guy-Evans, Olivia. 19 August 2022. "Patriarchal Society According to Feminism." *SimplySociology*); (Thompson, Karl. 31 August 2017. "What is Patriarchy". *Revise Sociology.*