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ODAAKE OGIMAA ENENDAMOWINAN (Executive Summary)

Anishnaabek have always been planners, strategists and successful as a peoples. Whether it be the Seven Fires Prophecy that foresaw the coming of European colonization, or the 500-year battle we have fought to maintain ourselves and our communities since their arrival, it is clear that we have the tools, prowess, and capabilities to take the steps necessary to care for communities and our children.

This strategic plan is no different. It represents Nogdawindamin’s visions for a better future for Anishnaabe binoojiinsag. The pages that follow provide a roadmap and performance indicators meant to support Anishnaabe children and their families in living *mino-bimaadiziwin*. It is based on two planning sessions, the first of which took place with Nogdawindamin leadership in Rama First Nation (November 2021), and the second with broader staff members in Sault Ste. Marie (March 2022). Together, Nogdawindamin’s board, executive leadership, directors and others came together to share ideas about what the future may hold for the agency.

And we have a name for that future: Niigaan Ganinaabangwaad (looking forward). The visions and ideas below represent Niigaan Ganinaabangwaad for the period 2022-27, a strategic plan that we refer to simply as Niigaan Ganinaabangwaad '27.

Niigaan Ganinaabangwaad '27 rests on five major bundles, as identified by Nogdawindamin representatives through the strategic planning sessions. These are: Gaa’wendshising Niigaanossewin (Consistent Leadership), Ishitoo-in Anishing Wiidookadaadziwin (Strengthening Pathways to Trust/worthy Relationships), Maamawi Niwiidosendiwaad’min (Walking Together to Ensure No-one is Left Behind), Weweni Anishnaabe Bimaadiziwin (Thriving Anishnaabe Way of Life) and Eshkiniigijic Shkitmaawaad (Youth Empowerment). These four bundles ground Niigaan Ganinaabangwaad '27 and provide the framework to best serve our children and communities for the next five years.

It is clear that Nogdawindamin is ready to respond to changes in the legislative landscape and the on-going commitment of the seven First Nations it serves. Our children and their welfare is critically important to the renewal of our Nations. And while Niigaan Ganinaabangwaad '27 sets the course for next five years, it also provides a platform for North Shore First Nations to continue practicing that long tradition of Anishnaabek strategic thought, promoting continued success and thrivance for our Nation though serving our children to the best of our abilities today and seven generations into the future.

In the spirit of looking forward,



Kerry Francis, CEO
Nogdawindamin Family and Community Services

GIINWEDGIIDBAADJIMOWIN (Our Story)

Throughout the preceding five years, Nogdawindamin Family and Community Services (NFCS) has worked toward achieving the overall vision and many of the deliverables reflected in its current strategic plan 2017-22. Niigaan Ganinaabangwaad '27 promises to continue on the trajectory of development, and to reflect a new and changing landscape of First Nations family and child services regionally and nationally.

Members of NFCS Board of Directors, as well as the Executive Team, technicians and Elders, gathered November 16 & 17, 2021 in Rama, Ontario to participate in a facilitated strategic planning session. We met again with approximately 70 staff (managers, directors, and front line) during a second planning session in Sault Ste. Marie, held March 2 & 3, 2022. The sessions were facilitated by Kingfisher Consulting in partnership with Gimiwan Research and Consulting Inc. We utilized Anishnaabek strategic planning exercises in hybrid form (in-person and virtual) due to COVID-19 public health restrictions and concerns that were very real throughout winter 2021-2022. The sessions were designed to be fun but also serious about the work at hand.

Niigaan Ganinaabangwaad '27 centres the knowledge and direction gathered throughout the two strategic planning sessions. This document is a fulsome reflection of the current state of NFCS, its ambitions, as well as the landscape in which it operates. Annex 1 features a “tear-away” that can be shared widely as NFCS continues on the path of Anishnaabek family and community service transformation and excellence.

ANOWENDJIGEWIN (MISSION)

Nogdawindamin Family and Community Services will assist the communities in their responsibility to strengthen families and communities for the safety and well-being of children by providing community-based services grounded in Anishnaabe values.

Strategic Plan Vision Statement

At the outset of the session, a facilitated exercise helped participants to formulate a vision statement to guide their work throughout the two days. It states:

We are here to ensure that our advocacy creates the best possible Anishnaabe bimaadiziwin for First Nations children, families and future generations.

Opiitendmowinan (Values)

NFCS follows the values of the Anishnaabek Seven Grandfather / Grandmother teachings:



Figure 1 - The 7 Grandfather / Grandmother teachings

STRUCTURE

NFCS is governed by a seven-member Board of Directors consisting of one appointed representative from each of the North Shore First Nations: Atikameksheng Anishnaabek, Batchewana First Nation, Garden River First Nation, Mississauga First Nation, Sagamok Anishnaabek, Serpent River First Nation and Thessalon First Nation. NFCS operates as a separate legal entity from Mamaweswen (North Shore Tribal Council) but is accountable to Mamaweswen through its governance structure. The NFCS Board’s Terms of Reference – and other governing documents – promote and honour this relationship of accountability. NFCS celebrates and relies heavily upon the Naadmaagejik (Elder’s Council). Each First Nation appoints an Elder; collectively, they offer expertise in enhancing service delivery in culturally grounded ways. Amongst innumerable gifts, the Elder’s Council provides names for programs, offers ceremony, and guides NFCS in versatile ways. Finally, the children and families we serve are at the core of our daily work, as well as at the top of our minds at all times.

POLITICAL AND LEGISLATIVE LANDSCAPE

Child and family services work takes place within an on-going context of colonization in Canada. It is well known that First Nation children have been targeted by the state and religious groups as part of Canada's effort to assimilate Indigenous nations. Such targeting is not simply about social assimilation whereby individual children are forced to leave their languages and worldviews behind and adopt those of the settler culture: it is also about undermining the political presence of Indigenous peoples as nations who have legitimate claims to the lands that Canada seeks to control. Against this backdrop, Indigenous control over child welfare is a key part of restoring Indigenous nationhood, including Anishnaabe nationhood. Thus, Niigaan Ganinaabangwaad '27 can be seen not only as a roadmap for 2022-2027, but also as a continuation of the inherent right to jurisdiction expressed within the formation of the Agency in 1990.

Preparations for Niigaan Ganinaabangwaad '27 strategic planning took place within a shifting legislative and political context that leaves us a bit more hopeful about the future of Indigenous-led child welfare. For one thing, in early 2022 the First Nations Child & Family Caring Society sealed its long-standing decisive win over the federal government regarding how Canada had discriminated against First Nations children.¹ The Caring Society and the Assembly of First Nations won a series of human rights cases against the government,² resulting in a \$40 billion package meant to compensate affected individuals and to reform the on-reserve child welfare system.

A second major but relevant shift deals with new federal legislation. Before 2019, control over family services was available to First Nations through a limiting and complex formula that bridges federal and provincial statutes. Essentially, First Nations could apply provincial child welfare law on-reserve via section 88 of the *Indian Act*, which allows provincial laws of general application to apply in First Nation lands.³ As a result, Ontario's *Child, Youth and Family Services Act, 2017* (as amended) governs First Nations' child welfare activities even though First Nations exist in a nation-to-nation relationship with the Canadian Crown. Nogdawindamin's legal authority makes use of these channels and does so through resolutions passed by each of the seven First Nation communities we serve. But the landscape has recently changed: as of 2019 a new federal law exists that allows First Nations, Métis and Inuit governing bodies to reach beyond the confines of provincial child welfare law. This law, known as *An Act respecting First Nations, Inuit and Métis children, youth and families*, offers "section 35 rights bearing" Indigenous governing bodies the opportunity to assert their own, inherent jurisdiction over child welfare. Specifically, First Nations

¹ Stefanovich, Olivia and Nick Boisvert, "Ottawa releases early details of landmark \$40B First Nations child welfare agreement," *CBC News*, January 4, 2022, <https://www.cbc.ca/news/politics/first-nations-child-welfare-agreements-in-principle-1.6302636>

² First Nations Child & Family Caring Society, "I am a Witness: Tribunal Timeline and Documents," accessed January 29, 2022, <https://fncaringsociety.com/i-am-witness-tribunal-timeline-and-documents>

³ See: Canada, *Indian Act (R.S.C., 1985, c. I-5)*, s.88, <https://laws-lois.justice.gc.ca/eng/acts/I-5/section-88.html>

can enter into a tripartite agreement with federal and provincial governments to “[exercise] their jurisdiction over child and family services [whereby] their laws on child and family services prevail over federal, provincial and territorial laws.”⁴ While debate about this Act continues,⁵ it potentially offers a way for First Nations to conduct child welfare work outside of provincial legislative confines.

The above developments speak to the fact that Anishnaabe sovereignty continues to exist. Anishnaabek have never given up jurisdiction over the wellbeing of their communities – including their children. This fact of continued sovereignty was summed up succinctly in 1978 by Anishnaabe leader Tobasonakwut Kinew-ba (Peter Kelly):

The Provincial Government may tell you that the Indian people no longer have sovereignty. That is because when my people were approached with guns, when my father and others living off the land were jailed, had guns and nets and game confiscated, they had no choice but to recognize other laws. But when the presence of guns was and is removed, the Anishinabaig [*sic*] returned to abide by our own laws again. It has always been this way. ... [This is] what people refer to as suppressed sovereignty. Because, when you remove that gun, the inherent sovereignty still remains.⁶

The question today is whether recent legal decisions and shifts in legislation will make it easier for Anishnaabek to express child welfare sovereignty in less suppressed ways.

The brief overview above suggests that Niigaan Ganinaabangwaad '27 is well positioned to support NFCS in serving North Shore First Nations. Legal wins such as that of the First Nations Child and Family Caring Society's, and legislative changes at the federal level demonstrate that the landscape is possibly shifting in favour of North Shore Anishnaabe communities. Moving forward with the understanding that Anishnaabe jurisdiction is valid, legitimate, and intact, this strategic plan provides a platform for NFCS to engage in conversations about child welfare devolution back to the First Nations and what this might look like. Niigaan Ganinaabangwaad '27 also makes room to explore how the federal *An Act respecting First Nations, Inuit and Métis children, youth and families* law might offer opportunities for increased Anishnaabek jurisdiction in child welfare. Such significant changes would likely not be complete within the current 5-year timeframe, but Niigaan Ganinaabangwaad '27 could be used as a platform to achieve such developments in the future.

⁴ Canada, Indigenous Services Canada, “Key highlights of the act,” accessed January 27, 2022, <https://www.sac-isc.gc.ca/eng/1568071056750/1568071121755>.

⁵ See: Metallic, Naiomi Walquan, Hadley Friedland, and Sarah Morales, “The Promise and Pitfalls of C-92: An Act respecting First Nations, Inuit, and Métis Children, Youth and Families,” *Yellowhead Institute*, July 4, 2019, <https://yellowheadinstitute.org/wp-content/uploads/2019/07/the-promise-and-pitfalls-of-c-92-report.pdf>

⁶ *Submission to the Ontario Royal Commission on the Northern Environment [transcript]*, by Tobasonakwut Kinew-ba (Peter Kelly) (Kenora Recreation Centre, Kenora, Ontario: Government of Ontario, 1978) at 2898.

STRATEGIC PLANNING SESSION PROCESS

In collaboration with our consultants, NFCS leadership and staff developed a strategic planning process based in Anishnaabe values with an emphasis on Anishnaabe kindossawin. As a result, the planning sessions centred the following:

Theory of Change

Theory of Change is a methodology that is commonly used in social justice movements as it allows for increased flexibility and maximum collaboration. The model underscores the importance of revisiting strategic plans as more evidence and knowledge becomes available, which results in more dynamic and responsive strategic plans. Theory of Change considers strategic plans as *living documents*, which allows for a spirit to be infused into organizations who seek to better the lived outcomes of specific populations.

Anishnaabe-centred Planning Exercises

Throughout the planning sessions, there was an emphasis on Anishnaabe worldviews. Guided by Elders, the following exercises were utilized to foster culturally accurate input into the strategic planning process:

Dkopjiganan Exercise

At the outset of the sessions, this exercise sought to establish the overarching goals for the next five years. The exercise asked participants to visit with Grandfathers (stones) and assign descriptors to them based on the prompt: *Where do you see NFCS in five years?* Participants then came together to gather and sort the stones into tea towels, which represented Grandmothers. The bundles of tea towels were then named by the group and became the overarching long-term outcomes of the strategic plan. Participants were asked to reflect on their impressions of the bundles as they were passed around the room.



Figure 2: Board Participant Reflections on Bundle Exercise⁷

It is important to note that as a participatory framework, often the long-term outcomes of the strategic plan come to life in the bundle exercise process. Under the banner of *Theory of Change*, emphasis is placed on what conditions must be in place in order for transformation to occur (as opposed to mainstream strategic plans, which often focus on simply meeting deliverables as the indicator of success). During the facilitated sessions, participants identified both the long-term outcomes (LTOs), as named in the bundles, as well as the pre-conditions necessary to fulfill the overarching strategic planning vision for NFCS. It should be noted that *pre-conditions* are states of being, behaviours, organizational culture, and attitudes that influence strategic transformation. For example, Figure 2 identifies LTOs and the pre-conditions that respective participants felt must exist to fulfill their visions. Each pre-condition will have actions associated with them (see Action Plan, below)

⁷ Note: these reflections represent the Board session only, as the exercise regarding preconditions only took place during that session. As such, the Youth Empowerment bundle, which came about after Sault Ste. Marie sessions is not represented in the graphic to follow.

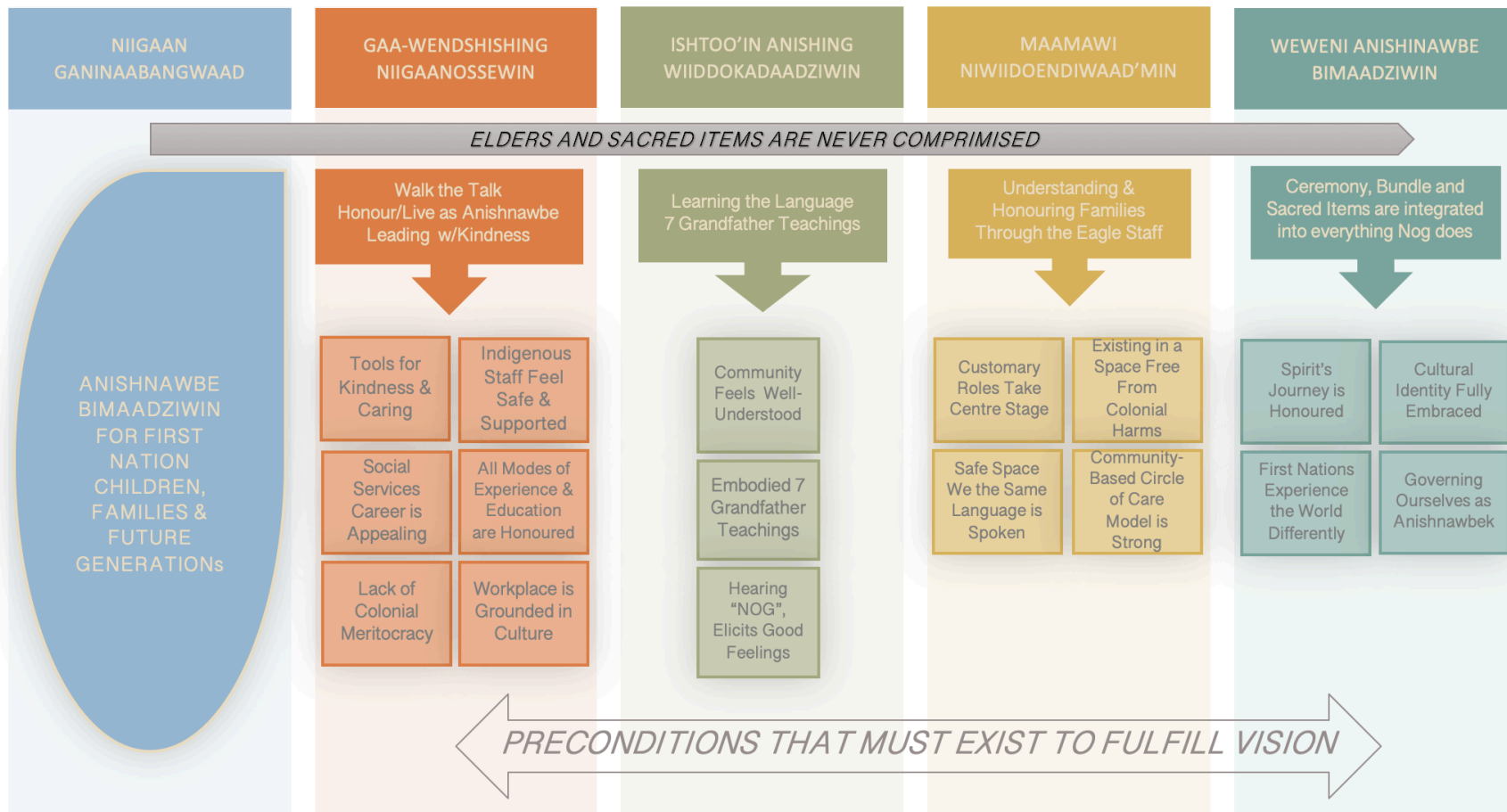


Figure 3: Board Bundle Exercise Model of Pre-Conditions

Storytelling the Vision

During the November 2021 session, participants were asked to participate in a *Storytelling the Vision* exercise. The purpose of this exercise was to draw out pride in the gifts that NFCS brings to its work in protecting children, and also to offer the opportunity for every participant to bring their story to the work ahead. Everyone had the opportunity to respond to the prompt: *when did you know you were doing your best work?* From the stories that were told, the following causes, impacts and outcomes emerged, which help strategic plans to identify areas of work and people that may have gone unnoticed in previous plans.

Another aspect of the storytelling exercise is that strategic plans are invigorated with pride, therein supporting ongoing organizational transformation. In essence, by bringing the spirit of employees and clients into the milieu of strategic planning, through narrating instances of pride and accomplishment, strategic plans become *living* documents. In particular, the *outcomes* portions of the exercise help centre discussions regarding implementation and evaluation, which will largely take place in the action-planning session to come.



Figure 4 - Results of Board Storytelling Exercise

SWOT ANALYSIS

During the Board session in Rama, a pre-emptive SWOT analysis took place that focuses on the strengths (gifts) that NFCS brings to the table.

Overall, participants felt that NFCS is a healthy workplace with rigorous policies and training opportunities leading to an environment of trust and collectivity. The nature of the work coupled with an identified lack of capacity creates an ongoing tension between managing workloads and moving toward overall transformation.

It was well-established that attracting and retaining child welfare staff is an ongoing challenge for the Agency. An ever-present theme in the session was the perception that some communities and front-line workers continue to have a negative perception and distrust of NFCS. In moving forward, NCFS commits to thinking strategically around what needs to happen to address said perceptions.

The practice of ceremony was central in discussions of strengths and weaknesses. It is clear that Anishnaabek ceremonies bring people back to the state of being that is a Creator-given right. While ceremony was never inferred as a weakness, its integration into every day organizational function was often inferred as a means of solving some of the gaps and weaknesses that were identified.

During the NCFS staff session Sault Ste. Marie a robust SWOT analysis session took place, and the image below provides a high-level synthesis of what was heard. Input from the session and corresponding survey have been synthesized into the action plan./

NFCS models wrap-around care and is willing to enter into a multi-service agency in order to meet needs. Employees come with diverse skills, education and experience. Staff are passionate, willing to adapt and go above and beyond. There are strong cultural values embedded in NFCS. NFCS dares to dream and builds relationships based on accountability and transparency. NCFS has strong leadership.



NFCS works with families with complex needs often under a lot of pressure. Staff can easily become overworked and exhausted, especially when there is a lack of staff. Caseloads can be very high and staff retention is challenging. Communication is sometimes lacking, and relationships could be better with First Nations. Collaborations between teams could use some improvement, as well as teambuilding in general.



Collaboration with First Nations is key, this can include visiting with and offering training in First Nation, and including communities in planning and other activities. Programs and services are expanding, which can lead the way for more job security and promotions from within NFCS. New investments in IT and business process solutions will help alleviate some of the weaknesses identified above.



Reliance on funding influences the operations of NFCS. Funding changes as well as the expectations of funders puts a lot of pressure on NFCS staff and operations. As well, when federal agendas change the impacts can be felt directly. There are some stigmas associated with NFCS that need to be addressed. The trauma and legacy of colonialism and child welfare are intensely difficult to grapple with.



OGE-NAKINAAGEWIN (Strategic Plan)

Naanin Dkopjiganan

Our Five Guiding Bundles



Figure 6: Naanin Dkopjiganan (Our Five Guiding Bundles)

ACTION PLAN

The plans below represent what participants shared during the November 2021 and March 2022 strategic planning sessions in Rama First Nation and Sault Ste. Marie:

1. Gaa'wendshising Niigaanossewin / Consistent Leadership

1.1 Leadership and staff are grounded in culture					
#	Objectives	Timeline	Specific Actions	Progress (C/IP/TD)	Notes
1.1.a	Increase transparency in decision-making across agency.	Immediate	Define what transparency looks like for agency using Anishnawbe aadiziwin as lens. Compare these to what is currently in place and determine if/where changes are needed.	TD	
1.1.b	Deepen cultural training opportunities for staff.	Immediate	Strike working group tasked with determining what aspects of Anishnawbe culture agency staff can/should be given access to. Variability is a challenge here. Working group to answer, among others: How to create opportunities for all? What aspects of culture should not be engaged? Which parts are relevant for the work at hand? Working group to develop training program with realistic solutions.	TD	

1.1.c	Recognize family and communities as leaders in child welfare.	Medium	Research ways in which other Indigenous child welfare agencies may be recognizing families and communities as leaders in child welfare. Assess what, if any, aspects of others' work are transferrable to Nogdawindamin. For example: Assess family circle and case conference frequency; restructure child welfare planning forms to lead with family and community input prior to circle of care. Use Anishnawbe aadiziwin to fill in the gaps where necessary.	TD	
1.1.d	Improve accountability (agency-community, internal to agency)	Medium	1. Define what accountability looks like through Anishnawbe aadiziwin lens. 2. Agency-Community: Engage community representatives in working group to define what agency-community accountability looks like. 3. Develop framework document that is posted to agency website. 4. Internal to Agency: Strike working group consisting of a variety of staff and leadership positions. Define what accountability looks like in this context. 5. Develop framework document that is posted to agency website.	TD	
1.1.e	All board members have ongoing participation in Nogdawindamin cultural events	Long	Board members are invited and encouraged to attend Nogdawindamin cultural events, including seasonal gatherings (e.g. schedule regular board meetings with cultural/seasonal gatherings in mind). Ensure funding is available for them to do so.	TD	

1.1.f	Continue to build leaders' (i.e. executive team, board) competency in culturally-rooted agency governance	Long	Board governance policies and procedures are reviewed and updated annually	TD
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2. Ishitoo'in Anishing Wiidookadaadziwin / Strengthening Pathways to Trust/worthy Relationships

2.1 All Nogdawindamin staff are knowledgeable about the histories and current affairs of the communities they serve					
#	Objectives	Timeline	Specific Actions	Progress (C/IP/TD)	Notes
2.1.a	Increase understanding of Anishnawbe culture with emphasis on understanding community stories	Medium	Deepen understanding of community histories. Emphasis on understanding that all First Nations are unique	TD	
2.1.b	Increase agency's understanding of communities stories in a colonial context	Long	Whereas objective 2.1.a focuses on communities, this objective focuses on settler colonialism. Define it, provide training that shows how it manifests in society in its various forms.	TD	
2.1.c	Increase agency's understanding of children's stories in a colonial context	Long	All staff and leadership receive new standardized training on settler colonialism in Canada, and how settler society views Indigenous peoples with emphasis on Indigenous children's experiences.	TD	

2.2 Communities value Nogdawindamin as a collaborative partner in the work of protecting children					
#	Objectives	Timeline	Specific Actions	Progress (C/IP/TD)	Notes
2.2.a	Make families central in our decision making	Immediate	Develop framework document for how to hold regular community information sessions with the communities.	TD	This must go beyond simply asking "What is working? What is not?" A framework document to guide community engagement on this objective should focus on preventing meetings from becoming "dumping grounds."
2.2.b	Respect / understand / follow community protocols	Medium	Engage the communities in accessible forms of relationship building (e.g. kitchen table conversations). Focus is on understanding clients' experiences when accessing Nogdawindamin services.	TD	

2.3 Nogdawindamin ceases to be described as a "brown CAS"					
#	Objectives	Timeline	Specific Actions	Progress (C/IP/TD)	Notes
2.3.a	Invest in frontline positions with transparent roles and responsibilities	Medium	Increase front line partnerships with communities. Focus on solidifying joint service provision (outside of authorized elements) and filling also staffing (e.g. After Hours roles)	TD	
2.3.b	Train staff in strength-based anti-oppressive practice	Medium	Hire accredited trainers to provide group-based anti-oppression workshops	TD	

2.3.c	Prevention plan with permanent funding and emphasis on staff retention	Medium	Develop living prevention plans that are adaptive to changing fiscal and political environments and specific to where First Nation direct service is required.	TD	
2.3.d	Restore relationship with the First Nations we serve	Long	Conduct research on whether agency is responsible for increase of child welfare cases in service area, or if it a result of something broader (e.g. settler colonialism, past government policies). Hire marketing consultant to differentiate agency from the source of the problem (see Objective 2.3.f, below).	TD	Nogdawindamin hired a contractor to complete some of this type of research in the first half of 2022. Such research could be deepened and expanded as part of meeting this objective.
2.3.e	Include communities, families, youth, elders in planning	Long	Define what "planning" means in the context of community direction (e.g. what is in scope, what is out of scope?). Transfer Pathways training to the families and communities	TD	
2.3.f	Messaging to the First Nations is predicated on partnership, strength-building, and sovereignty	Long	Market Nogdawindamin prevention services/programming	TD	This objective depends on the outcomes of research findings noted in objective 2.3.d, above.

<p>Guiding Principles</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Take a strengths-based approach to working with and learning about communities - Nogdawindamin staff see the First Nations as partners/collaborators in child welfare service delivery - Messaging to the First Nations is predicated on partnership, strength-building, and sovereignty - eep meetings as informal as possible as a means to promote community involvement - Use kinship-based approaches to our work to promote idea that Nogdawindamin is not working <i>against</i> communities, but <i>with</i> them - Make accountability a central feature of our work

3. Maamawi Niwiidosendiwaad'min / Walking Together to Ensure No-one is Left Behind

3.1 Nogdawindamin is a safe space for staff, leadership, and clients					
#	Objectives	Timeline	Specific Actions	Progress (C/IP/TD)	Notes
3.1.a	Promote staff self care	Immediate	Offer resources that define and promote self care, and evaluate workloads. Offer workshops and training that focus on creating a culture of staff self care within agency	TD	
3.1.b	Increase the quality of our service delivery	Long	Hire more employees to allow quality services. For example, fill After Hours roles on frontlines, maintain best-in-field staff training opportunities. Develop a plan that covers these within the 2022-2027 period.	TD	
3.1.c	Ensure team is felt, heard, and valued	Long	Front-line input more often. Conduct regular internal surveys that are consistent in delivery, reporting, and accountability of stemming actions. Find innovative ways to engage staff feedback and input.	TD	

Guiding Principles

- Greater collaboration between protections and voluntary community programs
- Ensure policy is followed and embedded in service delivery at all stages
- Uphold the 13 Rights of the Child
- Working towards safety is based in Anishinawbe-aadiziwin
- Meeting people/families where they are at

4. Weweni Anishnawbe Bimaadziwin / Thriving Anishnawbe Way of Life

4.1 Nogdawindamin's work is conscious of the spirit's journey

#	Objectives	Timeline	Specific Actions	Progress (C/IP/TD)	Notes
4.1.a	Nogdawindamin staff are comfortable with imbuing Anishnawbe spirituality in agency work	Immediate	Provide cultural competency training for new staff that express interest in it. Present all new staff and volunteers with sema and small gifts at orientation. Promote the idea that agency should be working itself out of a job.	TD	

4.2 Nogdawindamin has a fully embraced cultural identity

#	Objectives	Timeline	Specific Actions	Progress (C/IP/TD)	Notes
4.2.a	Support communities interested in restrengthening Anishnawbe aadiziwin	Medium	Provide ceremony in each service community when requested. Ceremonies might include naming, colours, clan, etc.	TD	
4.2.b	Foster a culturally-rooted environment for all personnel	Mediun	Policy development: Present all new staff and volunteers with sema and small gifts at orientation. Establish committee that reviews cultural-promotion activities as they evolve on an annual basis.	TD	

4.2.c	Reduce barriers for families to access cultural supports as needed	Medium	Provide families with knowledge to access services	TD	For example: Something similar to Clinical Intake re CMH, where within 48 hours of referral, someone reaches out from Anishinaabe aadzwin team to have initial conversation.
4.2.d	Increase land- and culturally-based activities for staff and clients	Long	Assess current levels of activities within agency; strike working group to determine whether more are needed on annual basis. Create action plan to implement. Focus on engaging all levels of staff.	TD	

Guiding Principles					
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - The 7 Teachings are embedded in everything we do - Medicine bundles are present at all board meetings - Honour the different ways people view the creator. Don't push views - Meeting people/families where they are at - Model the behaviour we want to see - Help clients find their own knowledge and not force knowledge on them - Utilize the family as the expert 					

5. Eshkiniigijic Shkitmaawaad / Empowered Youth

5.1 Foster youth leadership in child welfare

#	Objectives	Timeline	Specific Actions	Progress (C/IP/TD)	Notes
5.1.a	Consider youth perspectives/experiences	Medium	Assess agency for how youth perspectives/experiences currently inform our work. Draft internal memo detailing where improvements can be made.	TD	
5.1.b	Youth perspectives/experiences inform our work	Medium	Establish Youth Council; Recruit youth from local First Nations and those communities we serve. Youth Council to be given the task to provide youth-driven recommendations in all future strategic plans.	TD	

5.2 Youth empowerment through training and mentorship

#	Objectives	Timeline	Specific Actions	Progress (C/IP/TD)	Notes
5.2.a	Youth mentorship (eg. job shadowing)	Long	Assess if/how other Indigenous-led organizations mentor youth. Identify which aspects, if any, can be adopted by Nogdawindamin. Where gaps exist, create solutions and then operationalize the initiative. Increase numbers of youth already participating in Nogdawindamin mentoring.	TD	

Guiding Principles

Note: The "Empowered Youth" bundle was identified only after close analysis of all employee and board contributions to this strategic plan. Its emergence only became clear after consultants "found" it in amongst participants' statements on other topics. As such, the Empowered Youth bundle did not receive the same level of treatment during the planning sessions compared to the other four bundles. For example, because it was identified only after planning sessions had ended, Nogdawindamin representatives did not have the chance to brainstorm what principles should guide this bundle. As such, no Guiding Principles are listed here. Please see Guiding Principles listed in the remaining four bundles (or tabs in this Excel file) for guidance as needed.

ACTION PLANNING SESSION CONSIDERATION

In March 2022, Kingfisher Consulting and Gimiwan Research and Consulting engaged Nogdawindamin staff on the points below, and synthesized the results into meaningful insights on implementation and evaluation.

IMPLEMENTATION

Kingfisher and Gimiwan will solicit input from staff and leadership on how all actions should be implemented, by whom, and by when. The end product will be an Excel file or Gantt Chart in which all of these points will be trackable over the 2022-2027 period. Quality control will be tracked separately (see Evaluation, below).

EVALUATION

Kingfisher and Gimiwan will liaise with Nogdawindamin personnel in March 2022 to determine how the implementation and success of Niigaan Ganinaabangwaad '27 will be evaluated. That said, several key priorities are already apparent: leadership believes that validation of the plan and evaluation should be inclusive of communities, should be transparent, and should be responsive to the on-going roll out of the strategic plan between 2022 and 2027. Towards these ends, the March 2022 planning session will allow staff share their visions on 1) how communities can be included in evaluating this strategic plan and Nogdawindamin's work to implement it, 2) how milestones and goals and shortcomings will be communicated once reached/not reached, and 3) who will be doing formal evaluations and formal communications, among others.

Annex A: Tearaway

The tearaway of NFCS' strategic plan is available for printing on the page to follow.