



Community Circle
Scaling Business Innovation for Humanity

portfolio

Water Wellness, Economic Resilience: Reimagining Indigenous and Rural Futures Worldwide

The Community Circle, led by Indigenous communities and in strategic partnership with public and private organizations, has successfully addressed numerous long-term boil water advisories across Indigenous communities in Canada. Through this Indigenous-directed collaboration, we have implemented more than 60 pilot and case study projects featuring comprehensive water health initiatives that demonstrate sustainable, community-owned solutions tailored to local needs and environmental conditions. Our community-guided educational framework has trained over 240 students, building essential capacity within communities while creating meaningful pathways for the next generation of Indigenous water-health professionals.

This work is strengthened by Community Circle's extensive global knowledge network, which includes collaborations with more than 70 individual experts spanning multiple continents—Canada, the USA, Europe, Japan, and Africa—bringing diverse perspectives and innovative approaches to the complex water challenges facing rural and Indigenous communities. These international partnerships complement Indigenous leadership and knowledge, creating a powerful fusion of traditional wisdom and global expertise that enhances our community-centered solutions.

Community Circle on Scaling Business Innovation for Humanity: Program Delivery Portfolio

Introduction

The Community Circle on Scaling Business Innovation for Humanity (formerly RESEAU) has evolved since 2008 into a unique, independent not-for-profit organization operating Canada-wide. Headquartered in Vancouver, BC, we have funding relationships through the public and private sectors, including Innovation, Science and Economic Development Canada (ISED), provincial and federal governments, and growing participation and investment of like-minded allies from public and private organizations, academia, and communities.

We address complex water-health and economic challenges in Indigenous and rural communities. We ally with Indigenous people to create an Ecosystem Partnership, leveraging the collective creativity of diverse organizations and experts in an open innovation space to co-innovate pragmatic solutions addressing complex water-health challenges.

We administer a range of innovative programs to support the adoption of water-health technology solutions, foster and support the next generation of water-health professionals, innovate technology solutions for climate change and contamination challenges, and inform regulatory and policy frameworks to support enhancing economic well-being in Indigenous communities.

Successful Community Projects

The Community Circle has collaborated with over 15 First Nations across Canada. These partnerships have led to significant outcomes, including the lifting of six Long-Term Boil Water Advisories that had remained unresolved for over 12 years. These projects serve communities ranging from small villages of 10 residents to towns of 19,000 people. For smaller populations, decentralized point-of-entry systems provide a cost-effective solution at approximately \$12,000, while larger communities benefit from centralized infrastructure investments reaching \$750,000. Community involvement takes two forms: financial contributions or in-kind participation through time commitments from residents and local leaders throughout the entire project lifecycle—from initial problem definition through feasibility assessment, system evaluation, technical design, construction, installation, commissioning, and regular post-implementation monitoring to ensure sustainable operation. Learn more about these success stories via the links below.

Long-term Boil Water Advisories Lifted in 6 communities:



[Lytton First Nation \(Nickeyeah IR25\) - Commissioned in 2015 \(Video\)](#)

[Lytton First Nation \(IR3 Spintlum & IR11 Yawaucht\) - Commissioned in 2017](#)

[Dzit'lain'li \(Middle River\) IR9, Tl'azt'en Nation – Commissioned in 2018 \(Video\)](#)

[?aąam Community \(IR 1\) – Commissioned in 2019](#)

[Hupačasath First Nation \(Kleekhoot IR 2\) - Commissioned in 2020](#)

[Siska Indian Band - IR 5B - Commissioned in 2020](#)

[Lhoosk'uz Dene Nation \(Kluskus\) - Commissioned in 2021 \(Video\)](#)



Read about our organization's evolution in [Water Canada magazine](#)



Emergency Response Project:

[Zhiibaahaasing First Nation – Commissioned in 2020](#)

Research Projects and Collaborations with:

- T'it'q'et First Nation, Towinock
- Boothroyd Indian Band
- Kanaka Bar
- Lake Babine Nation
- Halfway River First Nation Community
- Takla Nation
- Bingwi Neyaashi Anishinaabek
- Norway House Cree Nation

The Community Circle has also successfully collaborated with the following non-First Nations Communities:

[Cowichan Valley Regional District](#)
[Van Ande Improvement District](#)
[City of White Rock](#)
[Gillies Bay Improvement District](#)
[Town of Osoyoos](#)



Recognition and Awards

The Community Circle model and its contributors have been recognized with twelve awards from the Canadian water industry, including:

- [2012 BCWWA - Excellence and Innovation in the Water and Waste Industry](#)
- [Water's Next 2015 award in the Academia/NGO category](#)
- [2017 Water's Next Award People - Academia](#)
- [2017 BCWWA, Excellence and Innovation in the Water and Waste Industry](#)
- [2018 Water's Next Award from Water Canada in the category of Non-government Leader](#)
- [2019 Schreyer Award goes to WSP for its Small Community Drinking Water project](#)
- [2019 Canadian Consulting Engineering - Outreach Award](#)
- [2020 with Water's Next awards for both Water Steward and Water/Wastewater Operator of the Year](#)
- [2021 National First Nations Water Leadership Award for his exceptional dedication during the wildfires and ongoing advocacy for water operator education](#)
- [2022 The Association of Consulting Engineering Companies British Columbia \(ACEC-BC\) Award of Engineering Excellence](#)
- [2023 National First Nations Water Leadership Award for his exceptional dedication during the wildfires and ongoing advocacy for water operator education](#)
- [2024 National First Nations Water Leadership Award for his exceptional dedication during the wildfires and ongoing advocacy for water operator education](#)

Capacity Building Projects

[Indigenous Youth \(K-12\) Potable Water Innovation Challenge](#)
[Indigenous Youth \(K-12\) Water Technology Workshops](#)
[Water Innovation Challenge, in collaboration with Canadore College](#)
[Braiding Knowledge Systems through Indigenous Youth Digital Circle](#)



Public Engagement and Awareness Initiatives:

[Treading Water – Research-based Theatre](#)
[Mobilizing Symphony – Water4Seasons](#)



Transforming the Delivery of Training in Rural Communities and the Path to Certifications

[Operators' Walkthrough Lab \(OWL\)](#) represents a unique digital educational platform co-created with First Nations partners, delivering culturally responsive water system training solutions. This First Nations-collaborative initiative is now accessible via iOS and Android app stores, ensuring Indigenous knowledge and perspectives are embedded throughout the training framework.

Direct project collaborations with nationally recognized First Nations' Water Operation Leaders [Katy Thorne](#), [Warren Brown](#), [Jonathan Riberdy](#), [Jim Brown](#), and [June Williams](#).



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- For 20 years, the Lhoosk'uz Dené First Nation has been trucking in bottled water. Now, thanks to a partnership with experts at the University of British Columbia, those days are over.

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After 14 years, Middle River celebrates official end to boil water advisory

Remote northern B.C. community hopes more people will move home now that the water is safe to drink

Chantelle Belrichard - CBC News - Posted: Dec 15, 2018 9:32 PM AST | Last Updated: December 15, 2018

In front of a new water treatment plant, a group of Tłá'ten First Nation members stand together alongside consultants, academics and an engineer from Indigenous Services Canada ready to cut the ribbon.

CBC

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B.C. First Nation latest to take control of water problems

Lytton First Nation among small but growing number finding solutions to drinking water problems

Tim Fontaine - CBC News



At last — Lytton First Nation gets safe drinking water

LYTTON FIRST NATION — An elder in the Lytton First Nation told Jim Brown a story of her own relatives, who died years ago after developing diarrhea.

Dan Furrano

Mar 20, 2017 6:32 AM

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Warren Brown, operations and maintenance manager for the Lytton First Nation (left), and Jim Brown, his uncle and the former manager, at the Niskeyah mobile water treatment plant.

Looking Forward

We recognize that water-health infrastructure cannot be separated from energy, connectivity, education, health, food systems, wildlife, and cultural impacts. This interconnected reality drives our expansion into comprehensive, centralized and decentralized community-driven infrastructure projects spanning water and sanitation, sustainable energy (including micro energy plants), digital equity, healthy water, education, climate resilience, and AI ethics initiatives that respect Indigenous knowledge systems and cultural values.

To uphold this holistic view, we navigate the complex task of transferring evidence between separate scientific fields and disciplines, as well as Indigenous science and laws.

What distinguishes Community Circle™ way of problem-solving

The Community Circle™ approach fundamentally breaks from traditional problem-solving paradigms by shifting from hierarchical, product-focused solutions to collaborative, service-oriented partnerships. While traditional methods involve centralized decision-making where organizations "tell communities what's best for them" through sequential, siloed processes, Community Circle™ uses **Research-based Theatre** to facilitate communities becoming active co-creators of their own solutions. This transformation from assumptions to validated learning has delivered measurable results where traditional approaches have failed. Community Circle™ has successfully lifted long-standing boil water advisories and built sustainable, community-owned solutions through transparent collaboration, recognizing that community experience is a critical measure of sustainability while creating capacity to build local economy. Meanwhile, decades of conventional top-down methods have left rural communities still lacking essential infrastructure—from safe water and reliable energy to broadband connectivity and adequate housing—and unprepared for emerging contaminants, climate change, and other evolving challenges, despite numerous organizational efforts and government pledges.