

ICE Network CoLab Summary: **Initiating Community Energy Planning**

Event date: Wednesday, May 30th at 13:00 EDT

CoLab Team



From left to right: Our host Siobhan Slade (NunatuKavut Community Council) was joined by Colin Asselstine (Kluane Community Development Corporation), Michelle Myers (Xeni Gwet'in First Nations) and Adrienne Fox (Independent Electricity System Operator)

Kluane Clean Energy Projects

The Kluane First Nation Chief and Council have, with their community, maintained a ten-year mandate to move to more sustainable energy and reduce the reliance on fossil fuels. This mandate began in the late 1990s and has since resulted in six projects being developed as well as the establishment of a local fuel distributor. Colin described the importance of frequent and meaningful community engagement as a key driver for the clean energy projects that he and his group are working on because their help and support drive the projects forward to overcome challenges.



The Kluane First Nation territory is situated in the southwest region of the Yukon Territory

Colin's key lesson to take away is that Community Energy Planning is key to understanding the needs and priorities of the community and these community perspectives should have a clear and defined place in the project selection and planning. The success of this strategy can be seen in the enduring success of Kluane's many clean energy projects.

Community Energy Engagement in the Tsilhqot'in Nation

Michelle Myers is managing the community engagement on the Tsilhqot'in Nation's clean energy file, and what makes this project unique is that the Nation's six communities are spread out across the territory. Michelle described the importance of maintaining equal engagement resourcing for each community so that everyone involved could experience the same opportunities to learn and interact with Michelle and her team. Each community will be host to three community energy events, totally 18 engagement sessions across the Nation. During the planning for these sessions, Michelle shared that consideration was given to understand the perspective of that community so that she could anticipate the kinds of information that the participants would be most interested in and wanting more engagement surrounding.

The community engagement events were advertised on a local radio station with the dates and locations of the events. Following each energy education event, the radio station broadcasted a recap of the session so that the people who might not have been present could hear about what was presented and could also reflect on the success of the event.

Youth engagement was a central focus of the engagement strategy, which she identified as an opportunity to lay the foundation with the youth for a more sustainable mindset for communities that will have the principles of clean energy underlying future community planning as these youth come into adulthood and community leadership. The youth education series was the first of three engagement events that each community would host and was presented in an “energy fair” style with different stations, or booths, along with some games that Michelle customized for the communities.

Chris McConnell, Director of the Alaska Network of Energy Education and Employment (ANEEE), asked about measuring outcomes for community energy education for youth.

In her response, Michelle highlighted the overall need for more work in this area, because the process of community engagement involves youth education, the impacts of that engagement are not immediately apparent in all cases, and that the impacts in the short term are difficult to quantify. What she can agree with is that this is an area which needs more work across the clean energy space.

Eryn Stewart, Director of 20/20 Catalyst Program and CEP SME, joined the conversation and shared how broader metrics of community engagement can also be applied for youth engagement to form conclusions about types and level of involvements in any participants, including youth.

IESO Community Energy Champions Program

In 2017, the Independent Electricity System Operator (IESO) set out to evolve its Energy Support Programs which included refocusing the program to exclusively serve and benefit First Nation and Métis communities and organizations in Ontario. Through events hosted by the IESO and communities, IESO received feedback from 350 people from about 100 communities across Ontario. A key component of this feedback was the need for dedicated, long-term internal resources and capacity building within the energy portfolio. The Community Energy Champion (CEC) Program was therefore designed to support this need.

The objective of the CEC program is to support First Nation or Métis Organizations in planning, implementing and evaluating energy-related priorities by providing funding support to hire a designated community energy champion within their community or organization. This program is not available in other provinces and territories, but through the ICE Network and from the IESO, program information is available to identify the type of supports that communities could potentially access, as well as the kinds of guidelines such a program could entail so that communities can pursue opportunities with their local energy system operators and/or agencies.

CoLab Attendees

Jimmy Arqviq, François Boivin, Darrell Brown, Mariah Byers, Claire Cameron, Pamela Cookson, Chris Henderson, Charlene Holmes, Kathryn Jean, Kaelan Keys, Cody King-Poole, Jordan Kruhlak, Eric Labrecque, Corey Mattie, Chris McConnell, Hermann Meuter, Michelle Myers, Jennifer Ng, Mitchell Niles, Etienne Patenaude, Kamyar Pooyeh, Victoria Sandre, Deana Sappier, Jeff Schnuerer, Jenny Scott, Melanie St-Georges, Eryn Stewart, Bonnie Van Tassel, Rae-Anna Whiteduck