

The May 7-8, 2017, Homalco First Nation gathering¹ was the fourth of five regional events that will culminate in the convening of a national three-day conference in Ottawa. On Sunday, May 7, around forty community members and presenters from across British Columbia converged for a radio training, welcome dinner, and film screening with Doreen Manuel in honour of her brother Arthur Manuel. The film is about his work condemning Canadian colonization: 1) dispossession; 2) dependency; 3) oppression of First Nations people because it violates their Human Rights by not recognizing Aboriginal and Treaty Rights. First Nations are made systemically impoverished by the Canadian government's Indian Act. The film, *Arthur Manuel* (2017), is available for viewing online.²

Monday, May 8, began with Homalco First Nation councillor Darren Blaney,³ who opened the gathering by introducing a bench carved by Bill Blaney. The carved bench will be installed in the new Homalco First Nation radio station among other cultural wood. He also announced the radio station symbol will be the raven because in “our culture the raven is always the one that calls people together to resolve issues.” This is a “powerful symbol,” according to Blaney, because the Aupe Cultural Enhancement Society that houses the radio station promotes reconciliation and healing from residential schools. He said, “the ultimate goal of our radio station is to educate listeners about who we are as Homalco people and First Nations.” He also described how the radio station will serve young people. “Because of the history of colonization,” Blaney said, “our young people are hurting and the residential school experience has created a lot of shame. This is a deep wound and a lot of our youth do not ever have the chance to find hope.” Blaney stated that the radio station will allow youth and the whole community to grow “our potential.” Blaney said, “We want our people to have a future, a chance,” describing how the new radio station will do this by connecting its programming “to our culture, the land, the language, our spirituality and teachings.” According to Blaney, the residential schools tried to “kill all that.” He shared from the history of the Homalco First Nation:

Our governing structures have never been returned, we are still under the *Indian Act*. We had our own structures here and we are re-building them now. Homalco went down from over 1000 to 87 people. The church came and offered us the remedy for small pox if we would give up all our masks and dancing. The last potlatch we hosted lasted for a month with people from all over the place. It was in 1870 and after that we became Catholic and began living in a minimized way because we did not have our culture.

For Blaney, the new radio station will help “revive our culture, languages, and overcome this colonization.” In conclusion, Blaney thanked the participants for attending and requested that no footage be recorded of the Blanket Exercise⁴ facilitated by Devin Pielle with Rae Dene and Zoë Ludski.

After the Blanket Exercise and lunch, John Gagnon, CEO of Wawatay, began by welcoming everyone who came out, and especially thanking the elders who came out, including Daisy, Ralph, Moses, Vera, Gladys, Marina, and he thanked Curtis for putting together the excellent meals, the Homalco people who invited the gathering, and Darren Blaney, the host of the gathering. He then read from the project team's speech about how these events came together. He also commented on the CRTC's *Native Broadcasting Policy* and Canada's *Broadcasting Acts*, “None of the policies were based around our

1 <http://indigenoustradio.ca/Campbell-River.php>

2 <https://vimeo.com/216440349>

3 <http://salishseasentinel.ca/2016/04/homalco-radio-station-tunes-in/>

4 <https://www.kairosblanketexercise.org/>

needs” Gagnon said, so this partnership is an opportunity to harness expertise in policy and broadcasting for Indigenous people. He also described the project goals in his own words, stating, “I am proud to say ... this is a First Nations created policy and for our future generations.” He also shared Wawatay's views on these gatherings so far: “Our board who are all language speakers, all survivors of residential school, one is an elder -- are very proud to be leading these policy gatherings. We were the leaders of communication in northern Ontario.”

Gagnon also commented on the “destabilized lives” of Indigenous people in Canada, who through various acts, like the *Indian Act*, the *Broadcasting Act*, “are just a commodity,” he said, “but the whole system is fake and does not exist on our territory. This is a sovereign state.” Gagnon cited Louis Bird, an elder who spoke about using radio broadcasting to organize the Nishnawbe Aski Nation laws across the territory. Gagnon recalled Bird stating, “The radio helps us assemble.” He described how Wawatay started with trail radios in the 1960s, connecting communities link to link.⁵ Today, Wawatay is a national broadcaster, with a “national voice,” that audiences can tune-in on Bell satellite. He also spoke about Wawatay's efforts to apply for FM licensing in Toronto and Ottawa to broadcast Indigenous languages, views, and music in the city. The goal, according to Gagnon, would be to “the ability to teach Canadians who we are in our own words.”

Addressing the policy goals for the gathering, Gagnon described the cultural practices of Indigenous journalism at that make Wawatay news programs distinct from mainstream journalism, like not cutting off an elder or questioning a person's truth. He noted that these gatherings should focus on “how policy fits us.” He suggested that a percentage of in-language broadcasting could be a condition of licence required to be called an Indigenous radio station. For Gagnon, “If you are just broadcasting in English or French, then you are just another Canadian radio station.” He also spoke of the need for practices and policies that help Indigenous broadcasters “distinguish ourselves as a community broadcasters” and support “linking up locally, regionally and nationally to exchange content.” He also concluded that for him, there is a link between funding, reconciliation, and equality for Indigenous people. Gagnon said, “We have \$8 million to share across Canada. We are roughly 8 percent of the population, but with appropriate funding we can do more for our people.” He concluded by suggesting that these regional gatherings are a great start, stating “this was true dialogue exchange and a form of consultation. And that's because consultation has to go a lot further.”

Banchi Hanuse began the presentations, speaking about her experiences as the current station manger and founder of Nuxalk Radio⁶ in Bella Coola. The idea for Nuxalk Radio came out of the Idle No More resistance movement. As Nuxalk people, Hanuse said, “what was most important was maintaining our language and at the time we had 12 language speakers remaining. We felt this was important and would do what ever we had to do, even running a pirate station, to save our language.” She describe how Nuxalk Radio founders had heard about how Hawaiian people had utilized radio to maintain the Hawaiian language.⁷ She shared the story of how Nuxalk Radio got started with a grant to renovate a trailer and buy some equipment. Hanuse also shared that the station received a licence is from “our

5 Mohr, Lavinia (2001). "To Tell the People—Wawatay Radio Network." In *A Passion for Radio: Radio Waves and Community*. Retrieved from: <http://www.comunica.org/passion/pdf/chapter3.pdf>

6 <http://nuxalkradio.com/events/2017/07/indigenous-day-action>

7 <https://www.culturalsurvival.org/publications/cultural-survival-quarterly/making-waves-hawaiian-language-air>

hereditary leadership.” She said, “They have given us licence to operate on our Nuxalk territory. That is what is important to us, not a licence from the CRTC or Industry Canada.” Hanuse also described how when the station started broadcasting, Industry Canada phoned and said they did not have a certificate. The station was told to apply for a licence exemption through the CRTC. Nuxalk Radio has an exemption and that is how the station operates.

Hanuse also described how Nuxalk Radio “struggled to get language on air.” While the language is documented, she said, “with the language keepers, there is an issue with sharing our language online.” Because the station broadcast on the FM dial and online, and the Nuxalk language is “unique to us,” Hanuse said when broadcast online will could be taken and shared. She also shared the advice of a Nuxalk Radio board member and cultural leader who said “if we hold on to things too tightly then we kill it.” For this reason, Nuxalk Radio broadcasts in-language. Another challenge is having only 5 language speakers. The station has hired a language speaker to do lessons for radio hosts and the hosts share what they learn on air. Nuxalk Radio also utilizes First Voices on air, an online dictionary run out of the University of Victoria.

She also spoke of the goals of Nuxalk Radio programming. This includes sharing positive information, not tragedy or bad news. The station focuses on news that is “positive or constructive.” Hanuse, used the example of a house fire, “We talk about how that family might need donations. We don't announce deaths on air, we don't want to be a trigger.” She also described the station's focus as “upholding our hereditary leadership and our nationhood and the stewardship of our home land.” This is the reason, she said, the motto of the station, “*Lhulhamktulhs ala ts'ktaliwalh alh ti s-kulhulmcilh t'ayc n wa sulutilh ats*” and roughly translates to “Broadcasting the laws of the lands and waters.” Hanuse described how Nuxalk laws stem from the nation's relationship with the land that have been passed on for 1000s of years. For Nuxalk Radio, she said, “Our shows try to build Nuxalk people up psychically, mentally, spiritually, emotionally. We use the station as a tool to heal our people. We also share information about our neighbouring nations and our common goals. We are trying to do what our ancestors wanted for us and that is maintain who we are and getting back to our relationships with the lands and the waters.” For Hanuse, climate change necessitates broadcasters sharing tools, like food sovereignty, on air. Nuxalk Radio started June 21, 2014, and Hanuse said, “We are building and growing still. Nuxalk people are very shy so it has taken time for people to warm up and come on air.” She added that “We want to collaborate with other indigenous broadcasters because it is a lot for a small community to operate 24/7.” Hanuse called for an Indigenous radio network, “where we can all come together and share programming that can help strengthen us all.”

Natasha Bob, spoke of family connections in Bella Coola and shared that she was happy to hear the story of the Nuxalk Radio. Bob stated, “I hear from Nuxalk people who are listening and connecting to that radio from abroad and being impacted in a positive way. It really is impressive and demonstrate what can be achieved when we are anchored in our culture and identity.” The name of her award-winning show is *Siem-nu-ts-lhhwulmuhw*,⁸ which translates to “my respected native people.” After meeting Kenny Brault at a reconciliation through media event in Nanaimo, Bob was excited by the opportunity to broadcast a show by and for Coast Salish nations with people who were passionate about history, language, and culture. The program included her, Geraldine Manson, and Buffy David, a

8 <http://www.nanaimo-info-blog.com/2015/06/local-first-nations-show-wins-national.html>

language expert. One of Bob's first experience with advocacy was asking for a time slot on CHLY in Nanaimo. The station airs unique, authentic content as a community radio station, but according to Bob, they wanted to push Indigenous content further.

She acknowledged the many people who have brought their ideas and vision to help develop *Siem-nu-ts-lhhwulmuhw*. Bob also stated that Snuneymuxw, Snaw-naw-as, and Stz'uminus people have "an ancient history together, but through colonization and the way things have been for our people, we have gone off in our own factions and worlds, and lost that connection." She described the radio show as a chance "to reconnect and re-establish those ties" through programming that focuses on the "language and culture that binds us." Bob also shared stories of non-First Nations neighbours, speaking in local Indigenous languages because of the radio program. For her, "*Siem-nu-ts-lhhwulmuhw* has a far reaching ripple effect and I feel grateful." Bob added, also described the negative aspects of sharing her culture and history in a world that is so impacted by a "Western worldview and at times racists." She concluded, "Sharing our truth can build understanding and shift minds, away from racism, ignorance, and change the way people view Indigenous people."

Devin Pielle, a programmer at CJMP, shared her first experience hearing *Siem-nu-ts-lhhwulmuhw* on air. She said she recognized the prayer and the music that opened the show. She listened to Bob speak on-air about curating a library of songs in local Indigenous languages. Pielle went on to meet Brault, who invited her to share Tla'amin, Klahoose, and Homalco legends and songs on air. Soon after, CJMP also started broadcasting the program simultaneously on CJMP in Powell River. Courtney Harrop, then a staff member of CJMP, told about her meeting with Brault and learning about his struggle to get the show on air at CHLY. She observed, "He persevered and was determined, and after three years he was successful." In addition, Zoë Ludski, a CJMP programmer, described how the licence of CHLY required that the station air content in Indigenous language and music. Ludski stated, "They did not. Kenny found that in the policy and kept asking." Bob added, "Kenny also fought to have territorial acknowledgements in our policy at CHLY," and she concluded "that is a big victory for CHLY." About broadcasting *Siem-nu-ts-lhhwulmuhw* over CJMP's airwaves, Harrop said, "It was great for CJMP to connect with a sister station and to have Tla'amin community members tuning into hear the program on CJMP."

The next presentation was by Gunargie O'Sullivan,⁹ a volunteer programmer at Co-op Radio CFRO in Vancouver for over twenty years. She also programs at CJSF, the Simon Fraser University Campus station, and CiTR, the campus station at the University of British Columbia in Vancouver. Around 2007, O'Sullivan got re-engaged with Coop radio and she was ask if she wanted to go to the National Campus-Community Radio Conference in Montreal. She said, "The place was buzzing, I found a few people who took me in and lifted me up. There was a lack of representation on the board and from station to station across the country." O'Sullivan shared her personal history within the community radio sector, "The National Campus-Community Radio Association can only take Indigenous representation so far, and it is not easy sometimes there is only one person holding down the fort. What isn't being used can be lost."

For her, it is important to have a Indigenous presence in media. "We are all displaced," O'Sullivan said,

9 <http://ncra.ca/management/resonating-reconciliation-outreach-coordinator-gunargie-osullivan>

"I was born into a family of dysfunction and because of the residential school abandoned. Then I was in foster care, then put in a residential school and then I was adopted out." For her, this displacement is not uncommon for Indigenous people who are in foster care, adoption, or prisons. This is problematic for O'Sullivan because "We are in the mists of land negotiations. But if we are displaced and don't know where we come from how does this impact the independent assessment process, with Kinder Morgan and all the resources extraction that goes on without our consultation. All of those who have been adopted out. It seems impossible, but this is why community radio is so important." She also added, addressing Bob's story of getting Indigenous programming on air at CHLY, "To have so much struggle to have space at a community or campus station is disgraceful."

O'Sullivan shared challenges she faced in community radio. "I did a documentary with one of these stations," she recalled, "and one of our residential school survivors was treated disrespectfully. The station left the survivors hanging." In her opinion, a lot of work still needs to be done in creating awareness of Indigenous people and within community radio. O'Sullivan believes, "We need transparency and to create policies and procedures to protect the interest of First Nations peoples." She also shared her experiences as a board member of the NCRA, where she led creating funding for 40 producers to make 40 documentaries across the country with residential school survivors and inter-generational survivors. "People received training and skills on technical production and how to be sensitive," O'Sullivan said, "This was about building relationships." She also shared her experience participating in national broadcasting with programs like the Homelessness Marathon, a 14-hour community radio talk show about poverty in Canada aired live on over 40 stations.. Because of these experiences, she developed the Red Jam Slam -- a national Indigenous artists broadcast hosted by O'Sullivan. CiTR provides a live feed and stations carry it across the country. "Red Jam Slam gives the artists," she said, "17,000 listeners at one time." She also asked, "what if this kind of broadcasting happened live from a chiefs meeting?" According to O'Sullivan, this kind of community based broadcasting needs to happen "by any means necessary." She stated, "Don't wait for the money or funding, we don't have time. We need to find creative ways to broadcast now."

Following, Doreen Manuel shared the history of Secwepemc Radio¹⁰ that started around 2002, when Arthur Manuel was travelling and he shared his concerns about "our ability to capture the media" as Secwepemc people. A radio enthusiast he met came and installed a transmitter in Art's house. Many youth, according to Manuel, came by the new radio station because they were interested. They were trained, she said, and they volunteered. One of those was Neskie, her nephew and Art's son. Manuel said, "Neskie uploaded music, did interviews, and worked with those who were interested. When it would go down, Neskie would help bring it back up. When Neskie passed away, it went down, and it hasn't been back up." Secwepemc Radio recently contacted the original person who set it up and he is coming back again to set it up. Manuel is excited to produce programming for Secwepemc Radio live from her home in Vancouver. "We are brand new all over again." she said. Adding, "It was never with a licence. It was free. And that is they way we roll. We don't want to go and apply for stuff." Manuel said, the only challenge is Secwepemc Radio's low range. The station only broadcast halfway to Kamloops and Salmon Arm. She also shared encounters with people in town, commenting positively about hearing Indigenous music from around the world news or local current events from an Indigenous perspective. Sharing her views on the future of radio and Doreen's presentation, O'Sullivan stated, "We

10 <https://pbs.twimg.com/media/C9yRORfUQAEi2eT.jpg:large>

have young people, like Neskie, brought up with a strong upbringing and all the technical training, skills and abilities, and relations. It is ten times easier for them to have networks.” She concluded, as Indigenous people, “We need to grow with technology.”

David Danos and Devin Pielle the presented on Indigenous languages. Pielle shared about her experiences programming Tla'Amin Word of the Day¹¹ on CJMP. She uses radio programming to help revitalize language. For Pielle this work is important because there are few Tla'Amin language speakers left. Danos¹² then presented his work researching the history of manual (sign) Indigenous languages for his studies at UBC in Vancouver.

The final presentation of the gathering was by the CiTR Indigenous Collective¹³ members present. Lisa Girbav introduced herself and the communities she comes from. Today she lives between Price Rupert and is a student at UBC in Vancouver. She is the Indigenous Collective coordinator at CiTR where she helps produce Unceded Airwaves. Mario Parent, also introduced himself and his relations, he has lived on Musqueam territory in Vancouver for 10 years. He has worked on the collective show for a couple of year, and this year he is the Youth and Elder Coordinator, On the Land Correspondent, and Segment Coordinator. Josh Kioke also introduced his family relations, and spoke of his experiences volunteering with the collective since last fall. He wanted to get experience in radio broadcasting. The fact that there was an Indigenous collective set up made it easy to get on the air. Victor Sauca introduced himself as a Quechua Indigenous person from Ecuador in South America. He is a student at UBC and member of the collective.

Sauca presented a short history of the collective that started in 2015. The goal was to create an Indigenous space in the station. With a grant CiTR hired a coordinator who started recruiting members and setting up protocols for the collective. The first season, the format was more improvised and focused on arts content. With Girbav as the new coordinator, the format was more structured, including a scripted introduction, two twenty minute interviews on news and current events, and Indigenous music. Another aspect of the program's structure is self-locating or collective members stating on air where they from, and locating their place as broadcasters. Additionally, the collective also introduced a new protocol to arrange gifts for guests, especially elders who have come on the program and helped to guide the show.

One of the benefits of the shows structure, Sauca said was that it allowed new members to contribute easily, by co-hosting and reading a script to gain broadcasting skills. He stated, “Work is distributed according to each persons skills, contributing in their own ways in different roles.” Girbav added, “We had 21 people come through the show and maybe 8 of those who were consistent.” The collective described how they tried to fit the most people possible into the tiny studio space. The largest panel for Unceded Airwaves was around 11 people. It was the Winter Solstice Holiday Special and the program featured 11 voices talking about different experiences around the holidays, in the city or on the reserve, whether they were religious or not. The goal was to bring as many voices on as possible. Parent described how the collective would also invite people to sit in on the show and freely be in the

11 <https://twitter.com/tlaaminWOTD>

12 <https://twitter.com/daviddanos?lang=en>

13 <http://www.citr.ca/radio/unceded-airwaves/>

space while the show was on to become familiar with what the tools are and knowing it is an open space. "Making a welcoming studio space." Girbav added, "is beneficial."

Some of the challenges experienced by the CiTR Indigenous Collective, according to Girbav, include "too much content for a 1 hour timeslot." The program only has one hour per week to cover Indigenous views, current events, Indigenous issues, and entertainment. Other the institutional challenges identified were that the collective has only been around with two years and there was a lack of shared understanding on what Indigenous programming entails. The first year focused on making sure Indigenous voices were heard and Indigenous content was aired, but for Girbav, her coordination focus was on process. "In recruiting volunteers," she said, "I wanted to make sure there was a food budget, not too much, but enough to buy snacks. Hosting the weekly meetings with food helps create a communal space and for Indigenous students on a university campus who face food scarcity, so this is needed." Girbav shared that in her community, a feasting society, one teaching she has learned is having food at events allows your mind to better absorb information. She said, "So you are feeding the mind and the body at the same time. This is important culturally." Management at CiTR initially did not understand why this was important or believed that it was special treatment. Girbav described this as a challenging discussion between a non-Indigenous institution and an Indigenous program within that framework. Another challenge, identified by Parent, was finding out more history about Indigenous content at CiTR. He stated, "By chance, I found some original tapes from a stranger from the 1980s. At CiTR, they only knew of content from 2000 onward." He felt this lack of history made it difficult to have a sense of space in the station. The limitations of the role of the Indigenous Collective Coordinator was also suggested as a challenge because of the amount of time spent coordinating student volunteers and the show, and the station. Girbav believes CiTR needed someone to "decolonize the station as a whole." She said, "I wanted to focus more on the show. There could have been at least two more people doing that work at the station." The collective also strove to do more language programming institutionally, for example a word of the day program like Pielle produces for CJMP, but there was not enough time with coordinating the show.

Successes for the collective include being acknowledged for what the show does for Indigenous communities by listeners. The collective made suggestions for CiTR to delegate responsibilities for the Indigenous Collective Coordinator, like the liaison role to work with local Indigenous communities. The collective has recommended a volunteer position, but funding is needed to guarantee stability for that role according to Parent. More workshops are needed for UBC students and students from the community. Parent shared his experience hosting several workshops for youth about the Indigenous Collective at CiTR. The collective produced a short video tour of the station "to bring the station to these workshop spaces." Other benefits are speaking their Indigenous language on-air. "It is nerve racking," Girbav recalled, "but it helps build confidence." The collective wants to do weather checks in their languages. According to Girbav, "This will not only help in learning the language, but also help the listener identify who we are as Indigenous people. Success according to Kioke, is that radio is now accessible to Indigenous people. "This collective is for you" he said. He added, that there is a need for CiTR to expand Indigenous content to other shows, like Indigenous law or Indigenous science programming. Kioke believes "more avenues are needed to make good radio," adding "more Indigenous radio can help dispel ignorance."

In discussion, ideas were exchanged between CiTR and Wawatay about "camp calls." Wawatay airs

community open line programming and many listeners, according to Gagnon, would love to hear their grandchildren in the urban centres call into the radio station. Parent added his idea for a live phone-in from Commercial Drive, a hub for Indigenous people in Vancouver. For Parent, this kind of live “on the land” broadcasting is a way to take space as Indigenous people on the street and in the media. “Doing weather checks from the corner as a way to let people know that we are out there making media,” Parent said, adding “Being in the neighbourhood gets huge response from listeners.” The community support, according to collective members, has been phenomenal. They are also working on a best practices manual. For Girbav, who went to broadcasting school, journalism education is taught in a “very western way--you don't share questions in advance or being unbiased.” She believes considering how media systems have represented Indigenous people, “we did not want to replicate that.” The collective's approach to Indigenous journalism includes giving interview guests questions in advance or a chance to listen to an interview and provide comments before it goes on air. These practices are to help the guest feel comfortable and cultivate self-representation on the airwaves.

To conclude the day, Blaney shared words of thanks and appreciation. He mentioned some of the youth who want to DJ on the Homalco First Nation radio station. The radio station, he affirmed is “a chance to work for a reconciliation for our own understanding of our aboriginal rights, of our territories and our language.” Blaney added, “Our young people don't get to hear about the strengthen of our rights. Canada has no more arguments.” Manuel also offered her closing comments, sharing about language. She said, “There is a who generation of people who are having a very hard time, because of residential school, to learn the language.” adding, “A psychological mindset has affected multiple generations. Cultural shame is a block and a struggle. This is not being talked about with language.” She spoke of her sister's work identifying the psychological blocks among survivors and inter-generational survivors of residential school. Manuel recommended Indigenous media makers read “radical readings, beyond what is right in front of you.” “It is tough,” she concluded, “There is a need to be the best, to prove we are good enough. All nations have this struggle. The workaholic behaviour also comes from residential school because we need to work harder to advance our people. We are helping the whole community by being strong. But too far in and that can kill us young ... There is so much complexity in being an Indigenous person today.”

This review was prepared by Gretchen King, reviewed by Chris Albinati, and translated by Lauriane Tremblay. Sources include:

@radioautochtone (2017). Tweets retrieved from: <https://twitter.com/radioautochtone>

Audio Archive (2017). The 4th Event for The Future of First Nations, Inuit, and Métis Broadcasting: Conversation & Convergence (Homalco First Nation). Audio retrieved from: <http://indigenoustradio.ca/Campbell-River.php>