



May 5, 2025

Re: Embark Board of Directors Recognizes and Reaffirms MMIWG2S+ Awareness Day

Content Warning/Trigger Warning: Indigenous harm and trauma, colonialism, systemic racism, misogyny, homophobia, intergenerational trauma

We must acknowledge that we are all working and studying together on the Unceded lands of the xʷməθkʷəyəm (Musqueam), Sḵwxwú7mesh Úxwumixw (Squamish), səliłilwətaʔt (Tsleil-Waututh), kʷikʷəłwəm (Kwkwetlem), qíćəy (Katzie), Qayqayt, Kwantlen, Semiahmoo, Stó:lō (Sto:lo), W̱SÁNEĆ, Stz'uminus, and Tsawwassen Nations. This land acknowledgment is not merely a remark; it is an obligation to understand and recognize the true history and current state of settler Canada. Our responsibility extends beyond acknowledgment. As an organization situated on these lands, we understand that our work is inseparable from the histories and ongoing impacts of colonization. Land is not a neutral backdrop to food justice and climate equity. It is a living, relational space that holds the stories, knowledge, and sovereignties of Indigenous peoples who have been stewards since time immemorial.



Since first contact, First Nations have been impacted by colonization. We identify colonialism as a key driver of the inequities that exist in food systems and those that are reproduced in the climate crisis. Namely, the erosion of Indigenous governance structures and forced displacement and dispossession of Indigenous peoples from their ancestral lands to justify settler living and resource extraction. As settlers and uninvited guests, we must listen with open hearts to Indigenous families and survivors of violence, honouring their stories, practices, cultures, and histories, while working to ensure the safety of Indigenous individuals, families, and communities. We send strength and solidarity to those Indigenous to Turtle Island, not just today but every day and recognize the ongoing harms that continue to occur.

Embark Sustainability Society (ESS) is committed to unlearning settler frameworks, supporting Indigenous-led solutions to climate inequity and food injustice, and embedding land-based knowledge into our programs.



History

May 5th is the National Day of Awareness for Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women, Girls, Two-Spirit, and LGBTQIA+ people in so-called Canada. This is a day to mourn their lives and call attention to the ongoing genocide, violence, and systemic neglect faced by Inuit, Métis and First Nation women, girls, Two-Spirit, and gender-diverse individuals. This day is also known as Red Dress Day, tied to [The REDress Project](#), initiated by Métis artist Jamie Black in 2014, where red dresses were and continue to be used to visually represent the painful and stark number of individuals lost to gendered and racialized colonial violence.

ESS recognizes the ongoing crisis of MMIWG2S+ and subsequent trauma affecting Indigenous communities. We acknowledge that colonialism and systemic racism, entrenched since first contact, have profoundly harmed Indigenous women and remain the primary drivers of ongoing violence against Indigenous peoples and communities. We also want to amplify that Indigenous Matriarchs, Elders, Chiefs and Indigenous families affected have been at the helm of challenging the government's inaction, bringing their loved ones home, and addressing this ongoing crisis.

Recently, the identified remains of Morgan Harris on March 8th, 2025 and Mercedes Myran on March 18th, 2025, women of the Long Plain First Nation, were recovered from the Prairie Green Landfill. Morgan Harris and Mercedes Myran and two additional women, Rebecca Contois and Mashkode Bizhiki'ikwe, were murdered by a serial killer targeting Indigenous women in 2022. This heavy confirmation came after three years of the immense efforts of their families, Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women, Girls and Two-Spirit advocates and First Nations whose collective calls for action gave rise to the International Day of Action to Search the Landfills and to the government-funded investigation into the Prairie Green Landfill following Premier Kinew of Manitoba's promise to Search the Landfill. Before this, CBC news indicated that families and Indigenous leaders demanded a search of the landfills, but the Winnipeg Police and the previous provincial government refused, prioritizing budgets over justice for these women and the reunification of Indigenous women with their families and communities. The Assembly of Manitoba Chiefs, who have been advocating for the families, said, "For far too long, First



Nations women have been treated as though they are disposable. We have always said — our women are sacred. Mercedes deserved to live a full life surrounded by love and possibility. We will continue to honour her spirit and stand firmly with the Myran family as we work to end the violence faced by First Nations women, girls, and Two-Spirit people.”

Facts

A 2023 [Statistics Canada](#) report shows that “the rate of homicide against First Nations, Métis, and Inuit women and girls was six times higher than the rate among their non-Indigenous counterparts.” The same report found that Additionally, the report found that “police were less likely to lay or recommend a charge of first-degree murder—the most serious type of homicide charge—when the victim was Indigenous (27%) compared to when she was not (54%)” ([Statistics Canada, 2023](#)). These numbers do not capture the names, faces, and relationships of the daughters, granddaughters, sisters, aunts, mothers, grandmothers, friends, and loved ones whose lives have been taken by ongoing colonial violence. The crisis of Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women, Girls, and Two-Spirit people continues to devastate families and communities across so-called British Columbia and all of Turtle Island (colonially known as Canada), where Indigenous lives are too often disregarded and justice remains elusive.

Actions

[The National Inquiry into Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls](#) identifies four interlocking pathways that uphold colonial violence (pp. 111-118):

1. Historical, multigenerational, and intergenerational trauma;
2. Social and economic marginalization;
3. The status quo reinforced by institutional indifference; and
4. The dismissal of the agency and expertise of Indigenous women, girls, and 2SLGBTQIA people.

These structures leave Indigenous communities unheard and disproportionately harmed. It is our collective responsibility to dismantle them and advance Indigenous liberation, justice, and the return of land. **We therefore amplify the voices of Indigenous women and Indigiqueer people and call for justice through measures such as self-determined, Indigenous-led solutions and services (p. 171), cultural safety (p. 173), trauma-informed approaches (p. 173), and other concrete actions found [here](#).** In

taking steps to learn about the depth of MMIWG2S+, ESS board members further suggest listening to "[Finding Cleo](#)," a CBC true crime podcast centred around the death of Cleo, a young Indigenous girl, which was found useful in strengthening understanding of emotional trauma attached to this crisis, that statistics fails to convey.

ESS strives to decolonize our practices, challenge systems that perpetuate harm, and build relationships based on respect, accountability, and solidarity with Indigenous communities. Sustainability without decolonization is incomplete.

**Embark Sustainability Society Board and Staff**

May 5th, 2025

Actions you can take today ([Formulated by the SFU Indigenous Student Centre](#)):

- Wear Red on May 5th to show your support and raise awareness;
- Attend a MMIWG2S Awareness Event to learn more;
- Hang a red dress in your window to support women who are on the frontlines fighting for all of us everyday;
- Read the [final report from the National Inquiry on MMIWG2S](#);
- Donate to initiatives that support Indigenous women in our community:
 - [Downtown Eastside Women's Centre](#)
 - [Native Women's Association of Canada](#)
 - [Aboriginal Mother Centre Society](#)

Learn more about Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women, Girls and 2SLGBTQIA+ People; Indigenous communities, and other reflective pieces:

- [Missing & Murdered: Finding Cleo](#)
- [Amnesty's Report on Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women](#)
- [Reclaiming Power and Place: The Final Report of the National Inquiry into Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls](#)



- ["Ending the critical situation of violence, disappearance, and murder of First Nations women, girls, and gender-diverse people."](#) From the Assembly of First Nations
- [The REDress Project](#) by Jaime Black (Métis artist)
- [Forever Loved: Exposing the Hidden Crisis of Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls in Canada](#) edited by D. Memee Lavell-Harvard and Jennifer Brant - This collection brings together the voices of Indigenous and non-Indigenous academics, frontline workers and activists who weave together academic and personal narratives, spoken word and poetry in the spirit of demanding immediate action to honour the missing and murdered and their families, to honour their lives and their stories.

Wellness help line for individuals who may need mental health support related to MMIWG2S:

- National, toll-free 24/7 crisis call line for those affected by the issues related to MMIWG2S (1-844-413-6649)
 - <https://www.mmiwg-ffada.ca/contact/>
- Hope for Wellness Help Line available 24/7 for Indigenous people (1-855-242-3310)
 - Online chat option available: <https://www.hopeforwellness.ca/>
- Support for Families Impacted by Missing & Murdered Indigenous Women & Girls - <https://www.irsss.ca/missing-and-murdered-indigenous-women-and-girls>

Support Indigenous communities at SFU:

- **SFU First Nations, Métis & Inuit Student Association (FNMISA)**
 - Website: <https://fnmisa.ca/>
 - Instagram: <https://www.instagram.com/sfu.fnmisa/>
- **SFU Indigenous Student Centre**
 - Website: <https://www.sfu.ca/students/indigenous.html>
 - Instagram: https://www.instagram.com/sfu_isc/
 - Connecting with an Indigenous Counsellor: Book an appointment with Indigenous Counsellor, email isc_well@sfu.ca and ask to book with either Jennifer Reandy or Tanu Gamble, HCS Indigenous Counselors
- **Office for Aboriginal Peoples**
 - Website: <https://www.sfu.ca/aboriginalpeoples.html>