

## Question and Answer Summary

### *Project Planning: Giving Your Vision the Structure It Needs*

with Leah Anthony and Cindy Charleyboy

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**Q: I'm curious if you have any course recommendations for using software like Google or similar tools. I have lots of ideas and visions, but I struggle with computers. I've heard a little about Gantt charts, so I'm looking for suggestions to help organize myself. I'm also curious if there are any apps you use to stay on track and lastly, what tools you find useful for evaluation.**

**Leah:** Yeah, I think that's a great question because it depends on what you're doing. Personally, I'm a huge user of Google Docs and Google Sheets, so on any computer I'm using, I can log in and pull it up. I also recommend using Excel/Google Sheets for project planning. I was not an expert in Excel before I started needing to use it, and YouTube is a great resource for tutorials on how to use Excel. Excel can be used for budgeting but also for narrative planning, lists, sorting data, placing useful links you want to come back to, schedules etc. On a personal note, I'm a huge fan of the Reminders app on my phone. I have a million reminders keeping me on track with my projects.

**Cindy:** I don't know of any courses offhand. It really depends on where you're located. There are great free resources for First Nations people right now. I did a course in the spring through Indigenous Tourism BC. If you see something similar to what you want, reach out to an organization and ask if they provide a course on Gantt charts or evaluation. I've seen a lot of free courses offered through different organizations.

Personally, I don't use a lot of apps. I like to write. I always have a notebook on hand. I write notes in my phone and have a thousand voice recordings because I like to speak my thoughts. It helps me organize and understand problems better. I love looking at Gantt charts and visual tools. If you can learn those, they'll help people understand your project better and might inspire you and them.

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**Q: How can artists and organizations develop project timelines and deadlines that are intentionally flexible to account for the emotional weight of revitalization work, prioritize ceremony, community needs, and prevent burnout—moving away from colonial, rigid structures?**

**Leah:** I can start by answering that being realistic about your project and what you can accomplish in a certain timeline is key to developing your work plan and project planning. It is totally okay if the phases of your project need to take time, and consider time for rest or breaks from the project. A lot of the time projects need to shift and change as they develop, and that is okay too. The project might take a while to be accomplished in the larger sense, but you're completing smaller portions over longer periods of time.

**Cindy:** Many artists and organizations are planning their projects in flexible ways. People are pivoting a lot when they realize they've planned too much in a short period of time or that more support is needed. They are also taking care not to put people in a position where they have to take on a lot of emotional labor. I find that there are a lot of people who are intentional and prioritize ceremony and community needs. It's such a larger topic to think about when we think about burnout. It's important to build in self-care for ourselves if we're the ones working on the project—being reasonable about how much we can accomplish in a given time and making decisions to do less when needed and not take it all on ourselves.

I'm thinking of an example from community. I remember an Elder from Wuikinuxv, otherwise known as Rivers Inlet, showing us different types of art in their community and explaining that the art holds the language so well, so it's not all on us. Our culture is there to support us in our work.

We might not always be able to prevent burnout, and we might struggle with colonial structures or timelines, but when we work with culture and revitalization as part of our lifestyle, we really are supported—even though it's big work and a lot of heavy lifting.

There is definitely flexibility, and that's part of what we tried to include in our presentation. Seeing where you're at, evaluating how it's going, and adjusting—maybe doing less or spreading it over a longer period of time. Those things can help. It's really big work, and it does take time.

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***A participant shared that they offer daily rates, not hourly, for Elders' honoraria. In the community, it's \$300 a day and \$500 for on-the-land activities and programming. Their reason being that the knowledge and skills cannot be taught or learned from consultants, academics, or professionals. This is to honor their lived experience and resilience.***

**Q: Since revitalization is fluid, how flexible is FPCC in allowing artists and communities to adapt their structured project plan or their budget mid-cycle when community consultation or cultural protocols demand a shift in the direction?**

**Leah:** I can only speak to the arts program, and I oversee the individual artist program, so I think a lot about what individuals are facing. A big thing we ask is that folks reach out to us as soon as they know that there might be a shift or something will have to change. Then we can have a conversation and talk about what we can do to support in that instance. Projects change. Sometimes a project application is huge and ambitious, and it needs to be broken up into phases. We want to chat with you and work with you if things come up.

**Cindy:** I'll add that I've been working with First Peoples' Cultural Council for three years, and what I've seen is that we want people to be successful. We trust that they are the ones with their feet on the ground, doing the work, and they know what's really needed or possible.

One thing I often remember about being trauma-aware is that our people are going through a lot—chronic loss, chronic grief from sudden losses, and many other challenges. The world today is starting to become more aware of trauma and how it can make us feel like we don't have the full capacity we wish we had.

With FPCC, there are many things we do differently. We might sometimes ask less of people—not in terms of expectations, but by having less rigid requirements than other organizations. We want people to have the energy to put effort where it's actually needed and to do the things that are part of their vision. That's really important to us—that they're able to do their work.

***Participant shares how art and cultural practices are so healing for our people.***

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**Cindy:** 100%. Yes, when you combine art with anything you're doing, even if it's a very academic project and you're doing art on the side, you're able to access so much more of your brain and potential. You're able to deliver in a different way, which is part of why art is so powerful.

**Q: Is there a session like this, or an audio or video, about grant writing?**

**Participant shares about a project they'd like to launch and some of the challenges in figuring out how to organize. They are looking for direction and ideas.**

**Cindy:** Thank you, I love that. We just got to hear some of your vision, your descriptions, and your why—and you've already started project planning! That's great, you're already on the ball! I'll get Leah to share about our webinars that come up each year.

**Leah:** Once FPCC Arts grants are open, we will have a webinar available on the Arts program pages I'm happy to jump on a call anytime to chat through project planning or preparing for your grant application. Our program email where you can contact us directly in the Individual Artists Program is: [individualarts@fpcc.ca](mailto:individualarts@fpcc.ca).

**Cindy:** If you go onto our website and look under programs, you'll see the [Arts programs](#). There are three main types: some for music, one for individual artists, and some for strengthening arts. Each Arts program has guidelines you can review to see which fits your project. [Our YouTube channel](#) also has many previous videos about our grants, and those are still relevant. You don't have to wait for the next year's webinar—you can start looking there and begin developing your project now.

**Q: Are the grants specific to the province of BC, or do they extend across other nations?**

**Leah:** Thank you for your question. FPCC Arts grants are available to BC First Nations living in BC. Our moderator shared some other potential grant resources for outside BC in the chat.

*Please also feel welcome to check out additional Arts Funding Sources here*

<https://fpcc.ca/resource/arts-funding-sources/>

*Some grant opportunities for Indigenous artists outside of BC:*

<https://indigenousartscollective.org/grants-for-artists/P>

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**Q: I'm an adult student working on my degree, and I've been invited to participate at our university to inform, change, and make others aware of the decolonization and indigenization of our institution. There's been good work so far, but I'm trying to think of ways to add to policy changes using Arts as a forum to broaden people's thinking. If you can share wisdom or ideas to support this work, it would be deeply appreciated.**

**Leah:** That's an important question and thank you for sharing. There was a session hosted this Wednesday about seeing yourself reflected on your lands—having art in public spaces in your territory. [*Unceded Expressions: Seeing Yourself Reflected Back on Your Own Territory.*] I recommend checking out that webinar from the Online Learning Series. It will be posted to [our YouTube channel](#) when the series concludes.

**Cindy:** Thank you for sharing about the work you do—it sounds so important. I'm glad you have a committee working with you, so you don't feel alone. Our YouTube page has webinars beyond the Arts program and grants, including past Online Learning Series. Check it out for resources relevant to your work. Keep looking for resources. I'm so grateful that there are people like you in Universities and thank you for using language to describe the work you do—that's powerful.

**Q: In the presentation, it talked about the importance of reviewing. I'm curious how you approach that within a team context. You mentioned building relationships, and I was wondering how often you do this. In the organization I work for, we try to do something daily, so I'm curious about your approach and what kinds of questions you ask.**

**Leah:** What's really important in a team setting is not only having check-ins about progress—"we're on the path, moving forward"—but also having debrief sessions to reflect on what you've done so far, what you want to learn for next time, and how that informs moving forward. I recommend intentional, scheduled debrief sessions throughout the project. They don't have to wait until everything is wrapped up. Facilitate them by asking people to reflect on what they've done so far.

**Cindy:** We don't have a written recommendation like "review your project at this point," but I find that, like Leah, check-ins help me stay engaged. Personally, like I said earlier, I

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journal and make voice notes, and when I interact with someone to review together, it helps me stay connected to next steps and how things can look going forward.

Another point that came to mind was sometimes people work on a project without knowing the project plan. For example, a language teacher might deliver a program without knowing what was originally planned. Sharing knowledge about the plan can help people feel connected to the “why”. And being connected to the “why” can help some people avoid burnout.

Even if some parts of the plan are confidential, like maybe for some communities the budget, letting people see and engage with relevant parts of the plan that aren't confidential, and be part of reviewing it, helps them see progress instead of getting lost in details. That review process can be really helpful for everyone.