

## CASE STUDY

# UNIVERSITY OF ALBERTA CASE COMPETITION

## INTRODUCTION

In the fall of 2021, Prepr Foundation had the opportunity to work with the Department of Kinesiology, Sport, and Recreation and its talented students at the University of Alberta in helping facilitate and run a Case Competition. This historic partnership saw the University and the Indigenous Sport Council Alberta (ISCA) collaborate on the concept, purpose, and implementation of the competition, and opportunities for students to learn-by-doing. Under the guidance of Indigenous mentors, student teams collaborated on different solutions designed to increase health, wellness, and physical fitness in remote Canadian communities with predominantly Indigenous populations.

The idea was to bridge this gap and create a real cross-cultural awareness, and have our students understand the different ways that they can interact with different communities that they have never engaged with before... We're actually going to be able to pilot our students' hard work and see it make an impact in a handful of communities.

- Tracy Whatmore, Practicum & Academic Advisor, Department of Kinesiology, Sport, and Recreation



Between our workshop facilitators' office hours, scheduled working sessions, and program-wide meetings, we helped 110 students across 22 teams identify their target audiences, vet their thinking, test their ideas, learn to perceive feasibility barriers to their proposed innovations, and work together to devise sound and market-ready solutions to this real-world problem.

**STUDENT**

**110**

**TEAMS**

**22**



## OBJECTIVE

Life in remote Canadian communities can be hard and lacking in infrastructure and resources, particularly for Indigenous peoples. From extremely limited Internet availability to often-sparse access to comprehensive health care, these challenges create barriers that make it difficult for First Nations Canadians to gain access to critical information that can compound already high feelings of isolation and abandonment leading to widespread depression, social withdrawal, a disengagement from physical activity and healthy lifestyles, and a resulting diminished quality of life.

"This competition showed me a lot... I grew up being told that there's lots of money and resources out there for these communities to help them better their lives. But when I did my research, a lot of these funds aren't actually helping. And many of the funds end up being misused. I also realized that these communities are suffering from generational trauma. So while we focussed on physical health it was very important for us to connect this to mental and emotional health."

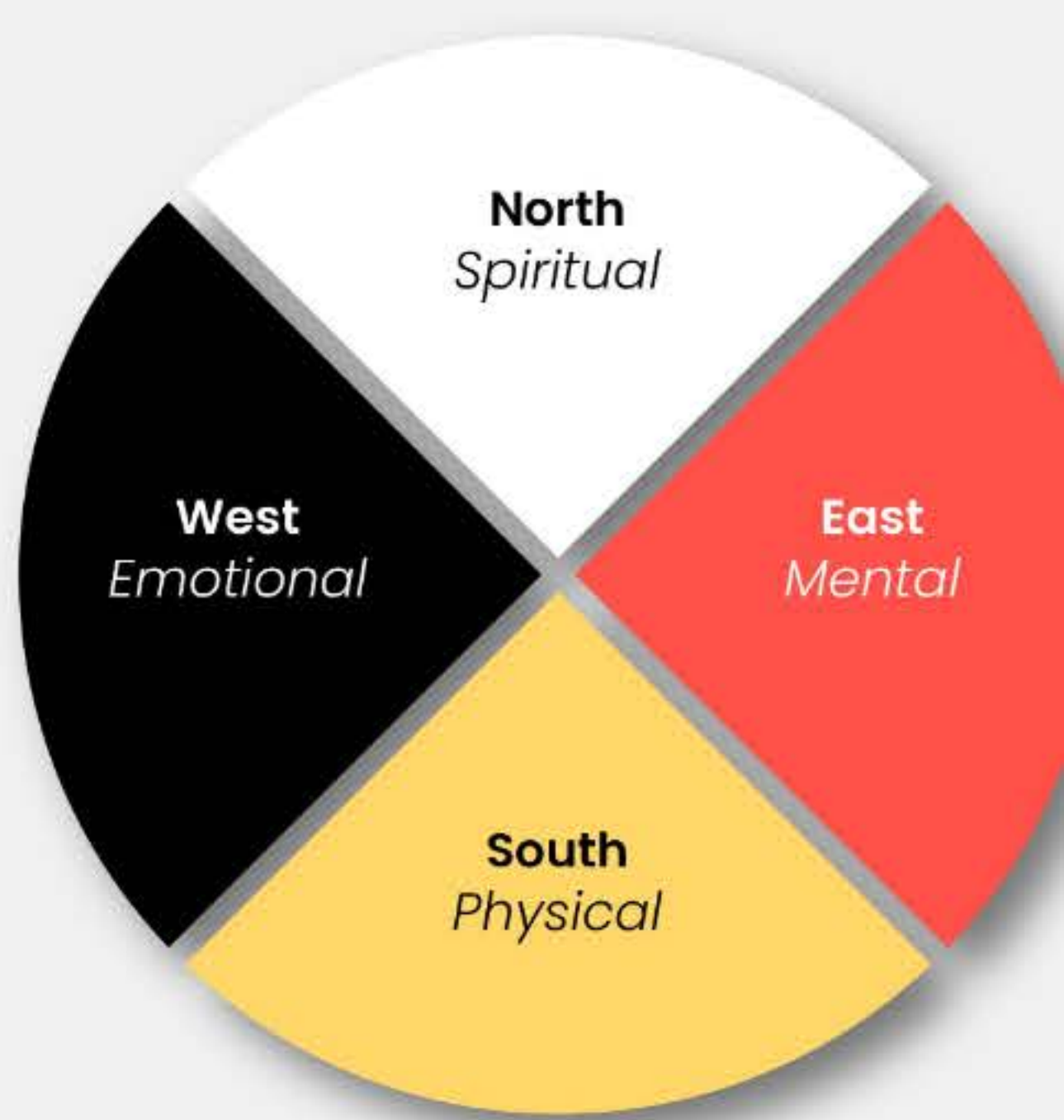
Recognizing the challenges that confront the Indigenous members of remote communities, The University of Alberta – specifically its Faculty of Kinesiology, Sport, and Recreation – saw an opportunity to innovate more effective solutions and provide its students with a unique learning opportunity at the same time.

## METHOD

The University of Alberta immediately recognized that in order for the engagement to be a success it would be necessary to have Indigenous community members involved to ensure a culturally sensitive approach. This would include an awareness of **Medicine Wheel** teachings in informing solutions that empowered First Nations communities to empower themselves.

"We did it! To have the capacity to have University students pour over the data was a tremendous blessing and was meant to be as a part of our journey... To come up with some of these amazing solutions and get these going knowing that they were 100% lead from the people themselves... That was really special. It was really inspiring."

- Jacob Hendy, Executive Director of ISCA



Reaching out to the Prepr Foundation, the faculty wanted to know how the Prepr team could leverage their learning resources along with P.I.E. – their innovation and problem-solving framework – assisting in program design and program facilitation across a six week period. Utilizing PreprLabs – Prepr's virtual collaboration and upskilling platform to submit student work for assessment, students earned awards and relevant microcredentials after delivery of their final presentations.

## RESULTS

Throughout the engagement University of Alberta KSR Faculty students worked independently in teams, organizing and managing their own time, delegating responsibilities, and collectively brainstorming new solutions to this very real and very significant problem facing the remote First Nation communities in question. With input and feedback from their assigned Indigenous mentors, they explored the existing landscape, analyzed the breadth and efficacy of existing solutions, discovered potential barriers to adoption, and recognized the differences in infrastructure between these widespread communities that would pose adoption and scalability challenges to their ideas.



Through this real-world, learning-by-doing experience University of Alberta students developed interpersonal soft skills such as communication, collaboration, creative problem solving, time management, effective speaking and presenting, empathy, in addition to hard skills including project management, presentation design thinking, strategy development, effective copywriting, competitive analysis, and even a little marketing.

We could not have been more impressed with the caliber of work that participating students produced. Their innovations were absolutely some of the most thoughtful and powerful innovative ideas that teams of young learners have ever created on the PreprLabs platform. Their projects displayed thoughtfulness, cultural sensitivity and tone-appropriateness, a mind to strategic thinking and promotion, itemized budgetary projections, and ultimately real-world viability that will truly make a positive impact on the health and wellness of First Nations community members in Canada.

Special thanks to the University of Alberta, the ISCA, and the Indigenous Canadians who selflessly offered their time and unique perspectives in making this joint endeavour a monumental success!