

OPITCIWAN

Agricultural initiation and training in an Atikamekw context



CISA
SOCIAL INNOVATION
AGRICULTURE • FOOD
INAB | CÉGEP DE VICTORIEVILLE

Toward a semi-specialized diploma

The geographic isolation of the Atikamekw community of Opitciwan, combined with high food prices, limits access to fresh and healthy food. To help address these challenges, CISA has been working with the community since 2017 to co-create initiatives that diversify the local food supply in ways that reflect community needs and interests. As part of this effort, 8 gardening spaces have been developed, including a community garden and a greenhouse at Mikisiw Secondary School. Since 2021, a close collaboration between CISA and the school has introduced students to agricultural production. This project has progressively integrated agricultural activities into the school curriculum through the semi-specialized trade training (FMS) and the preparatory work training (FPT) programs. In 2023, a work-study program leading to a semi-specialized trade diploma in agriculture was introduced at the school. After 450 hours of training, students now graduate with a recognized diploma.

A three-part learning program



The outdoor gardening component introduced students to establishing and maintaining a community and collective garden.

The indoor production component familiarized students with starting and caring for sprouts, microgreens, and seedlings grown inside.



The "innovation and techniques" component ensured the quality of training delivered to both teachers and students, focusing on research and the transfer of specialized techniques adapted to the Opitciwan environment and climate.



Learn more about the project and discover similar initiatives

PROJECT PARTNERS

- First Nations Education Council (FNEC)
- École secondaire Mikisiw
- Conseil des Atikamekw Opitciwan
- Développement économique Opitciwan inc.
- Secrétariat aux relations avec les Premières Nations et les Inuit

PROJECT START
SEPTEMBER 2021

PROJECT END
JUNE 2023

RESSOURCE PERSON

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ACTIVITY PLAN AND SCHEDULE

2022

WINTER

- 6 agri-food workshops offered to teaching staff (on sprouting, microgreens, and crop rotation)
- Filming of educational video capsules carried out with students from Mikisiw School

SPRING

- Introduction to indoor production
- Introduction to outdoor gardening work
- Introduction to entrepreneurship (with FPT and FMS groups)

FALL

- Launch of work-study program

2023

WINTER

- Several activities took place as part of the work-study program: seed starting, greenhouse maintenance, cooking, and building growing beds
- 124 hours of workshops were delivered by a CISA agricultural technician (15 hours per week), in addition to agricultural internships