



NORTH ISLAND COLLEGE
INTERNATIONAL EDUCATION PLAN
2022-2026

Journeying Together Annual Report

YEAR 2 REPORT



JOURNEYING TOGETHER ANNUAL REPORT 2023/24

In September 2022, the Office of Global Engagement (OGE) collaborated with the Office of Indigenous Education (OIE) and the Indigenous Education Council to establish Canada's inaugural Indigenizing International Education plan, known as Journeying Together. This initiative was recognized in 2023 with the Internationalization and Reconciliation Award of Excellence from the Canadian Bureau for International Education (CBIE), following a previous award from Colleges and Institutes Canada (CICan) for Excellence in Global Engagement.

Our previous Journeying Together 2022/23 Annual Report and Dashboard are publicly accessible [here](#). These documents outline our progress and achievements, setting the stage for this Annual Report, Journeying Together, and Dashboard for 2023/24.

Global learning remains a top strategic priority for North Island College (NIC), focused on expanding and diversifying international enrollment and fostering international/ Indigenous partnership agreements while ensuring high levels of satisfaction among international students. OGE international student support has a stated objective (Build 5.4 c.) to "Maintain or increase % of international student responses (agree/strongly agree) that NIC provides a supportive learning environment above 81%." In 2023 we reported 84% agreement that NIC provides a supportive learning environment. Assistance is provided at each stage of an international student's journey to NIC, with pre-arrival information



OGE planning retreat 2024 Q̓əp̓ix̓ʔidaʔas, Campbell River

and sessions, support finding accommodation and full orientation on each of our campuses. We provide a strong welcome to the unceded territories where our students are studying, and students have access to full RISIA (Regulated International Student Immigration Advisor) supported immigration advising, program advising, personal counselling, on- and off-campus social activities and assistance with finding employment.

NIC's international admissions successfully piloted and implemented the new provincial attestation process with the Ministry of Post-Secondary Education and Future Skills (PSEFS) and continues enhancing engagement with

Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship Canada (IRCC) and the Provincial Nominee Program (PNP) to sustain our international recruitment and retention goals in a highly fluid environment.

*We are parallel with Māori people.
We are all one.*

— From a participant in 'Journeying Together - Te Ao Hurihuri' New Zealand Aotearoa field school



Camp Bob teamwork, May 2024

During 2023/24, NIC achieved record-high international enrollment with 769 students, marking a significant 46% increase from the previous year, and hosted students from 47 countries, up from 37 countries the year before. Despite recent regulatory changes impacting college enrollments, NIC remains vigilant in maintaining international student numbers in 2024/25 but cautious about recruitment through 2025/26 due to unknown results from IRCC changes.

NIC actively engages in international projects, study-abroad programs and partnerships. Over the past year, we supported 59 students, 17 faculty members, 2 Elders, and 5 administrators



Junko Leclair at a recruitment event in Ghana

in gaining international experience in Spain, Jordan, Germany, Japan, Kenya, Tanzania, Sri Lanka, Mexico, Romania and New Zealand/Aotearoa. Additionally, over the past 2 years NIC disbursed over \$580,000 in scholarships to 37 Indigenous and 49 non-Indigenous students for studying abroad, along with \$60,000 for faculty, staff and administrators' study-abroad project support.

Furthermore, NIC is currently involved in four major, funded international projects: the Indigenous-Serving Special Topics CO[1] IL Framework; Western Canada Mobility Network (WCMN); Kenya Blue Economy Skills Development (KBEST) KBEST 02 - Mombasa

(Electrical, Student Services); and KBEST 11 - Mombasa County, Kenya (Electrical, Welding, Student Services) and in Tanzania, the Employment Skills Program (electrical and women in trades).

These initiatives are financed through institutional funding, CIGan project funds, Global Skills Opportunity (GSO) scholarships, BC Scholarships and University Mobility in Asia and the Pacific (UMAP) scholarships, reflecting NIC's ongoing commitment to global engagement and educational excellence.

The concept of Arapera's (New Zealand/ Aotearoa) "100 cups of tea" symbolizes our commitment to ongoing dialogue and connection-building. Whether Western or Māori, the act of sharing tea embodies slowing down and nurturing relationships, laying the foundation for collaboration and understanding.

Acknowledging the rich stories and perspectives each person brings, we create spaces where spontaneity and open sharing can flourish. This approach reflects indigenous values of connection and respect, informing our decolonial approach to the work at hand. As [Sharon Stein \(2017\)](#) notes, "We cannot read one piece and think we have understood the complexities of decolonization; we cannot collapse thousands of different heterogeneous Indigenous voices, genealogies of critique, and placed-based knowledge systems into one 'Indigenous voice'." (Hunt, 2016)

*Inspiration to keep fighting
the fight.*

*— From a participant in 'Journeying
Together - Te Ao Hurihuri' New Zealand
Aotearoa field school*

Understanding terms like internationalization, Indigenization, and decolonization requires moving beyond language barriers to grasp their deeper implications. We seek to redefine these concepts within the context of NIC and our communities, ensuring they resonate authentically with our institutional goals and



Elder Fernanda Pare sharing cultural teachings with international students

values. In our pursuit of internationalization, we prioritize local engagement and community needs, challenging traditional colonial structures that often dominate global educational initiatives.

Together with OIE and the NIC community, OGE explores ways to enhance our global and local impact, fostering accessible knowledge-sharing opportunities. We aim to clarify the purpose and methods of global learning while weaving indigenous perspectives into our practices.

Indigenizing international student activities involves respecting and valuing indigenous knowledge and culture. By integrating experiential learning opportunities and cultural events into orientations, we aim to foster mutual

understanding and benefit among diverse student groups.

Through initiatives like the 'Button Blanket' project and community cooking events, cultural exchange and unity of purpose within NIC can be facilitated. These activities can promote storytelling as a powerful tool for transmitting compassion, love, traditional knowledge and enthusiasm across diverse cultural contexts.

Field schools, orientations and cultural sharing events weave vibrant tapestries of learning and connection within our community. Through storytelling, these experiences transcend mere words on a page, offering glimpses into the soul of our endeavors. They weave together

narratives of individuals, groups and projects – each contributing to the rich fabric of our shared journey.

In these narratives, students and faculty alike find their voices, expressing profound connections to the experience, their subjects and communities. These stories unfold through images, videos and live recounts, capturing the essence of passion and discovery that help define NIC's international education. They help to build the deep-rooted connections established between elders and youth in Indigenous communities, emphasizing the wisdom gained through intergenerational dialogue and the sustainable growth of communal ties.

I actually have Japanese heritage, and I was able to trace my family roots in Mio. I got to visit family properties and go to the grave sites of my great-great grandparents. People hadn't been there in probably between 30 to 40 years, so we cleaned them up. It was like honouring a part of me that I never really got to know before.

— From a participant in 'Fishing, Indigeneity and the Asia Pacific' field school



Diwali celebrations Comox Valley Campus

Amidst the complexities of international admissions and student engagement, we recognize the importance of making meaningful connections with students from the outset. Beyond the formal processes we follow to ensure compliance with federal study-permit standards, provincial Educational Quality Assurance (EQA) and institutional needs, we seek to build relationships that nurture and support students, acknowledging their vulnerabilities and cultural nuances early on in their journey to NIC. Advocating for policies and procedures rooted in human connection, we aim

to create inclusive spaces where all voices are heard and valued.

Central to our mission is the celebration and appreciation of diverse cultures and experiences. We strive to bridge gaps and challenge conventional definitions, fostering a culture that embraces humanity in all its forms. By questioning norms and advocating for individual needs within our policies and procedures, we endeavor to create environments where students feel empowered to seek support and voice their concerns without fear of repercussion.



At the Marae, Waikato, Aotearoa, New Zealand field school

Through these collective efforts, we aspire to cultivate a community where advocacy, cultural understanding and shared experiences converge to shape a more inclusive and compassionate future.

Our journey at OGE and NIC is guided by a commitment to Indigenization, inclusivity, collaboration and meaningful engagement. By prioritizing relationships and shared learning, we aim to redefine internationalization while honoring Indigenous perspectives.



Torii gate in Kyoto, Japan - From Mio field School

In Mio, this little fishing village, the link to Canada was very clear. That was really profound to me and it was impactful to see the connection for a lot of students as well. None of us will forget how we were treated in Japan, and particularly in Mio. You can't put a price tag on this type of opportunity.

— From a participant in 'Fishing, Indigeneity and the Asia Pacific' field school



For more information please visit: <https://www.nic.bc.ca/international/journeying-together/>