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Canadian First World War Internment Recognition Fund

Strategic Directions

June 2015

By giving meaning to the experiences of those who were interned – hallowing their memory and fighting against forgetting – the CFWWIRF aims to ensure that no Canadian is ever subject to such treatment again.

BACKGROUND

Members of the Endowment Council (EC) of the Canadian First World War Internment Recognition Fund (CFWWIRF) met near Vernon, BC on Friday, May 22, 2015 for a daylong strategic planning session.

Endowment Council members participating included:

Ivan Grbesic, Chair
Douglas Davis
Suleyman Goven
Andrew Hladyshevsky Q.C.
Louise Kilby
Dr. Lubomyr Luciuk
Emil Yereniuk

Also in attendance were Andrea Malysh, the CFWWIRF Program Manager, and Lesia Szwaluk, Executive Director of the Shevchenko Foundation.

The day's discussions were facilitated by Bohdan Zajcew, managing partner with Siena Consulting, who was also asked to contextualize the deliberations through the filter of the Lord Report summarizing the proceedings of the 2010 Kingston Symposium on the CFWWIRF. The results of this synthesis are presented below.

The primary goal of the CFWWIRF is to make the First World War internment story an integral part of the historical narrative of Canada.

MISSION

Halfway through its 15-year term of oversight for the CFWWIRF, the EC used this session to take stock of its accomplishments to date and identify priorities heading into the future.

Members of the Endowment Council opened the day with a reflection on the *mission* of the CFWWIRF: its purpose, values, goals, and vision for the future. The intention of this review was to ensure member alignment on the essential principles that inform operations and decision-making regarding the Fund. Upon thoughtful discussion EC members confirmed the mission of the CFWWIRF as follows:

The Canadian First World War Internment Recognition Fund is a granting agency responsible for the administration of a \$10 million endowment designated for the support of projects to commemorate and recognize the experiences of ethno-cultural communities affected by the First World War internment. The objective of these projects – be they in the arts, education, research, or collections – is to make the first World War internment story relevant to the general public.

The work of the CFWWIRF is about justice, civil liberties, and human rights. By giving meaning to the experiences of those who were interned – hallowing their memory and fighting against forgetting – the CFWWIRF aims to ensure that no Canadian is ever subject to such treatment again.

The primary goal of the CFWWIRF is to make the First World War internment story an integral part of the historical narrative of Canada.

While well known in the Ukrainian Canadian community, the internment story is not as embedded in other ethno-cultural communities affected by the experience.

ENVIRONMENTAL SCAN

Endowment Council members then undertook a review of the key issues and trends impacting the operations and work of the CFWWIRF. An environmental scanning exercise identified the following strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats:

(a) Strengths

- Resources: approximately \$300,000 distributed annually
- Diversity of EC members: not only in terms of capacities/perspectives but also in the number of affected communities represented
- Staff: lean but capable
- Formal recognition of the internment issue: Bill C331
- Political alignment: all-party support
- Positive media profile: internment acknowledged as a “legitimate” Canadian story
- Community awareness/support: strong among Ukrainian Canadians, nascent in other ethno-cultural communities; within the mainstream community?

(b) Weaknesses

- Visibility: the internment issue (and, by extension, the EC) remain marginalized; many in the mainstream are still asking: “how does this relate to me?”
- Lean staffing model = limited capacity to take on projects/work
- Impact of projects funded by the EC is difficult to ascertain, as evaluation and metrics are underdeveloped
- Level of engagement with grantees is low
- Quality of grant applications is disappointing
- The primary goal of the CFWWIRF is to make the First World War internment story an integral part of the historical narrative of Canada.
- The internment story has not been picked up as a theme/context by mainstream writers like Anne Applebaum; it seems to lack resonance
- The internment story is not being told through music and the visual arts – lack of artist engagement

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- While well known in the Ukrainian Canadian community, the internment story is not as embedded in other ethno-cultural communities affected by the experience
- Champions of the internment story are few and far between

(c) Opportunities

- A number of sources of information about the internment experience remain unexplored
- There are still some milestones in the timeline or chronology of internment commemoration that could be used as cornerstones or anchor points in a national media strategy (e.g., for projects such as Centenary Moments)
- National Ethnic Press and Media Council could help share the story of the internment experience within the many communities its members touch

(d) Threats

- Prospect of political change with the next federal election; will a new government continue to support the work of the CFWWIRF?
- Global economic uncertainty impacts the returns from the Fund overseen by the EC; how best to manage these risks?
- The EC has limited resources/capacity to deliver on all the expectations of it; can a single employee, no matter how capable, action the EC's full agenda?
- The geographic distribution of EC members limits the number of occasions on which they can meet face-to-face annually; how best to overcome this limitation?
- Lack of succession planning; as existing EC members fulfill the terms of their appointments, what can be done to ensure they are replaced by new members with equally impressive pedigrees?

STRATEGIC DIRECTIONS

Upon concluding its environmental scan, EC members directed their attention to setting a course of action for the next three to five years. A number of strategic priorities were agreed upon, constituting an overarching strategic direction for the CFWWIRF in the years ahead. These are captured under the first priority. The remaining priorities represent supporting activities that will variously enable the ongoing success of the CFWWIRF.

Priority 1: Complete key initiatives already conceived or underway.

A number of CFWWIRF initiatives are currently in various stages of development and need to be concluded. In order of priority they are:

- (a) *Complete the roll-out of the Pivotal Voices educational curriculum.* Since April 2011, the Critical Thinking Consortium – supported by the CFWWIRF – has been working to develop and implement a strategy to educate young Canadians and educators about the country’s first national internment operations, using a diverse array of educational programs, resources, and professional development opportunities. Target: these materials are to be integrated into provincial educational curricula across Canada by September 2016, with the project completed by 2018.
- (b) *Establish permanent exhibits profiling the internment experience in major museums across the country.* Build on the successful template of the exhibit Enemy Aliens – Internment in Canada, 1914–1920, developed by the Canadian War Museum in Ottawa in partnership with the Ukrainian Canadian Civil Liberties Foundation, supplemented with local collections where appropriate. Work to partner with institutions such as the Canadian Museum of History (Hull), the McCord Museum (Montreal), the Glenbow Museum (Calgary), the Royal Canadian Museum (Victoria), the Royal Alberta Museum (Edmonton), Stanley Barracks (Toronto), Fort Henry National Historic Site (Kingston), Canada Place (Vancouver), and the Canadian Museum of Human Rights (Winnipeg). A second phase of activity, featuring smaller-scale (possibly travelling) exhibits to be developed for local museums in locations such as Amherst, Kapuskasing, Vernon, Sault Ste. Marie, Brandon, Niagara Falls,

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Mundare, and others. **Target:** permanent exhibits in place at four to five museums by 2017.

- (c) *Launch a knowledge portal featuring the internment experience.* This online resource would serve as a single point of access to an interactive repository for all manner of information having to do with the internment. Key elements include a virtual map of internment sites across the country, a searchable database of internment-related artifacts, multimedia educational materials, a series of film vignettes (two- to three-minute docudramas telling different internment stories), the Roll Call project (capturing the 5,000+ names of all those from affected ethno-cultural communities interned during the First World War), and an upgraded version of the CFWWIRF website. **Target:** launch by 2017.
- (d) *Produce a series of three to five Heritage Minutes featuring different stories/personalities of the internment experience.* Work with Historica Canada and other potential partners (e.g., the Hill 70 group) to supplement the Canadian legacy project consisting of 60-second short films depicting significant people, events, or stories in Canadian history. Possible subjects include Mary Manko Haskett (last known survivor of the Spirit Lake internment camp), Corporal Filip Konowal, descendants of internees, Calgary women/Castle Mountain, the internment of Ottoman Turks, and others. **Target:** produce three to five Heritage Minutes by 2018.
- (e) *Establish a visiting professorship in the social sciences and humanities on the subject of Canada's first national internment operations.* This legacy project will see a non-renewable position created (for a one-, two-, or three-year term, to be determined), salaried at an assistant professor level, at a post-secondary institution like the University of Toronto, which would become its "holder." **Target:** position to be established by 2020.
- (f) *Develop a youth engagement program to provide junior high and high school students with a direct personal experience of internment sites in different parts of the country.* Possible sites to be visited include Banff/Castle Mountain, Fort Henry, and Spirit Lake. **Target:** program development completed by 2017. Begin accepting applications from schools by 2018.

Priority 2

Continue evolving the CFWWIRF's role as a granting agency, supporting deserving project proposals received from the community.

- (g) *Identify internee cemeteries requiring attention and ongoing upkeep, and develop an accompanying plaquing program to commemorate internees interred in each.* Develop plans on a site-by-site basis, coordinating where appropriate with local historical societies to arrange for restoration and preservation of internee cemetery sites. Continue negotiating access to Spirit Lake site. **Target:** ongoing. Additionally, locate the resting places of all 107 men who died while incarcerated and provide the necessary restoration and commemoration plaque on each grave.

Each project noted requires a body of supporting work to be completed, including the identification of project leads and champions, the development of treatments, budgets, partnerships, and work plans, and the confirmation and engagement of human and other resources to complete the work.

Priority 2: Continue evolving the CFWWIRF's role as a granting agency, supporting deserving project proposals received from the community.

Going forward, the EC will continue to adjudicate funding applications received for historical and artistic exhibits, books and publications, films, research projects, and other worthy endeavours. To this end, it could pursue the action item from the 2010 Kingston Symposium recommending that the CFWWIRF “[f]acilitate connections and interactions among various stakeholders (artists, museum, library and archive professionals, academics, community groups, etc.) as a means of enriching the quality of project proposals and moving them into the mainstream.” The process through which such facilitation might occur remains to be determined.

Priority 3: Develop the processes, systems, and infrastructure necessary to build capacity and facilitate realization of the goals and objectives of the CFWWIRF.

Recognizing that the standard funding application process was producing a limited number of fundable proposals capable of achieving substantial public impact, EC members have acknowledged the need to become more proactive in generating and

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completing projects that will help fulfill the mission of the Fund. Indeed, this eventuality had been anticipated at the 2010 Kingston Symposium, where one of the recommended action items called on the EC to “[i]nitiate projects through a Request for Proposal process to help ensure that some projects it funds are directed toward the Council’s strategic vision.” A robust RFP process may prove invaluable in addressing some of the project gaps identified through the environmental scan, or as a means to seed projects in other ethno-cultural communities where awareness of the internment experience is lower than in the Ukrainian Canadian community. It may also prove useful in helping complete all or parts of the projects identified in Priority 1 above.

A second recommendation from the Kingston Symposium, yet to be acted on, would also contribute significantly to the success of projects supported by the CFWWIRF. Symposium participants called upon the EC to “[c]reate a partnership policy and a partnership culture to encourage working relationships with other like-minded institutions as a means of furthering the Fund’s goals and for leveraging the Fund’s limited sponsorship resources so that the Fund can play a role in supporting national, high-profile projects.” Such a policy could be a major legacy contributing greatly to the sustainability of the CFWWIRF over the long term.

One final consideration in terms of building capacity: the EC has limited human resources with which to realize an ambitious agenda. A single staff person will be hard-pressed to provide meaningful support for all areas of EC activity. Either the scope of activity must be reduced, or ways must be found to supplement capacity, possibly through intervention of key stakeholders like the Shevchenko Foundation. As the CFWWIRF is limited to 15 percent administration expenses, all added human resources would have to be secured through grant funding or other sources.

Priority 4: Develop an evaluation framework that will enable the measurement of the CFWWIRF’s outputs, outcomes, and impact.

The need for metrics was identified at the 2010 Kingston Symposium. To date, the development of a formal measurement system remains unrealized. By the EC’s own admission, it is uncertain what impacts

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the projects it has funded are having. Reporting to date has been limited largely to outputs – number of projects funded and the amount of money distributed. While useful indicators in and of themselves, such measures need to be supplemented with additional project results. For example, *outcomes* are the specific changes in the behaviour, knowledge skills, status, or level of functioning on the part of program or project participants. Short-term outcomes are usually attainable/noticeable within one to two years, while longer-term outcomes are generally achievable within a four- to six-year horizon. *Impacts*, on the other hand, are the fundamental changes occurring in communities or systems as a result of project activities, usually within seven to ten years. Impacts frequently occur after the conclusion of project funding.

Development of a strong evaluation framework is encouraged as best practice among funding agencies, and will reinforce the transparency and openness of the CFWWIRF's operations.

Priority 5: Initiate discussions regarding winding down the Endowment Council and preparing for the transition of the CFWWIRF to the full jurisdiction of the Shevchenko Foundation.

While only halfway through its 15-year mandate and with much work yet to be completed, the EC would do well to begin mapping out the process through which jurisdiction over the CFWWIRF is transferred to the Shevchenko Foundation by 2023. A step-by-step transition plan addressing all areas associated with governance and management of the Fund, accompanied by a critical path/timeline, will help ensure a seamless changeover at the appropriate time. This will ensure that the affected ethno-cultural communities have a voice in shaping the legacy of the Fund, including monies communities can access to maintain internee cemeteries in perpetuity. Plans should also be developed to ensure all CFWWIRF acquired artifacts have a permanent home by the time of transition.

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