Relationship-building to Strengthen Indigenous Authority in Quality Assurance in Higher Education

Karen Belfer and Liwana Bringelson

with consultation from the Indigenous Thought Leaders Circle

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Ontario College Quality Assurance Service

Service de l'assurance de la qualité des collèges de l'Ontario

INQAAHE

INTERNATIONAL NETWORK FOR QUALITY ASSURANCE AGENCIES IN HIGHER EDUCATION

ACKNOWLEDGING THE LAND AND ANCESTORS

WHO ARE WE?

- Karen Belfer
  - Executive Director of the Ontario College Quality Assurance Service (OCQAS)
  - Primary role to support Ontario colleges through quality assurance
    - Program quality and funding
    - Institutional quality assurance

- Liwana Bringelson
  - Project lead on the Truth and Reconciliation in Quality Assurance (TRiQA) project

- Regina Hartwick
  - Member of the Indigenous Thought Leaders (ITL) Circle

- Carolyn Hepburn
  - Co-Chair and Member of the Indigenous Thought Leaders (ITL) Circle

WHY ARE WE HERE?

- Share insights from a project OCQAS started to work with Indigenous people toward reconciliation

- Consider how relationship-building is the centre of reconciliation and is required to move toward decolonization
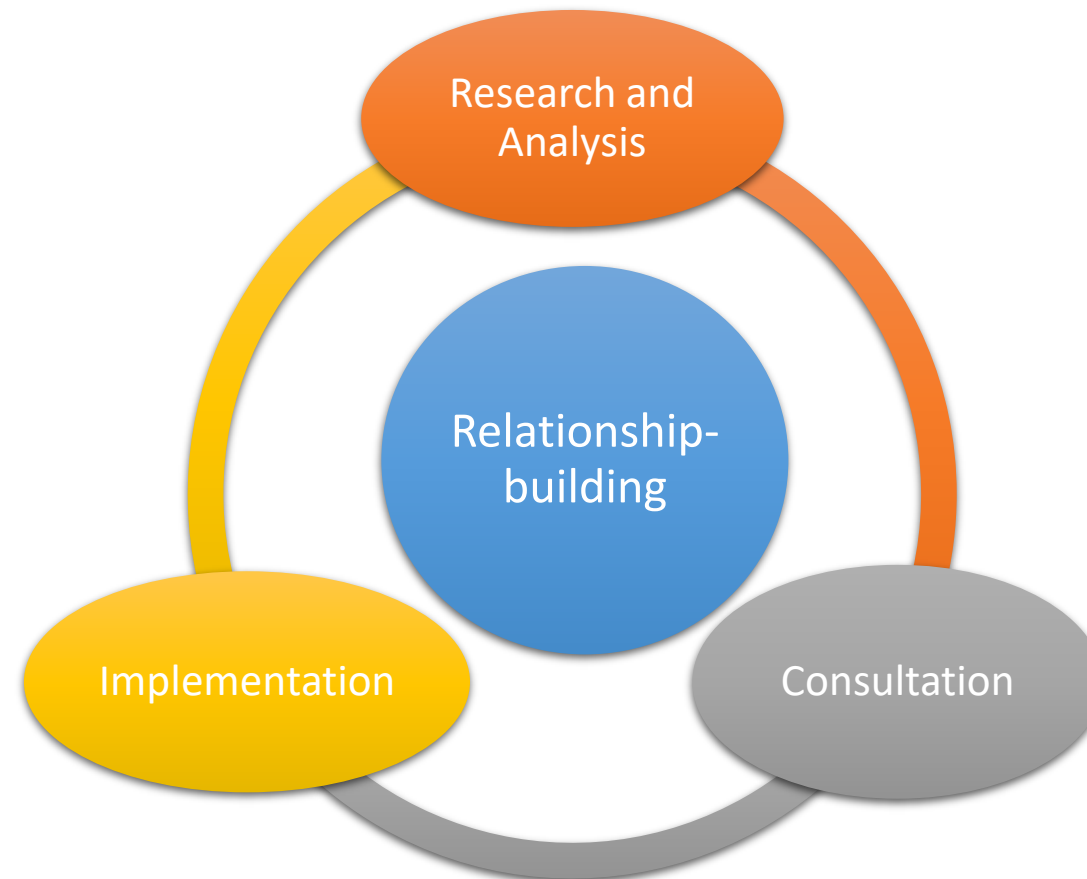
SNAPSHOT OF QUALITY ASSURANCE IN ONTARIO POSTSECONDARY EDUCATION

- Agencies accountable to provincial government to assure processes
  - Indigenous Advanced Education and Skills Council (IAESC) – Indigenous Institutes (II)
  - Ontario College Quality Assurance Service (OCQAS) – Colleges
  - Ontario University Council on Quality Assurance (OUCQA) – Universities
  - Postsecondary Education Quality Assurance Board (PEQAB) – Institutions seeking to provide degrees without University Act (II are exempt)
- Other special projects
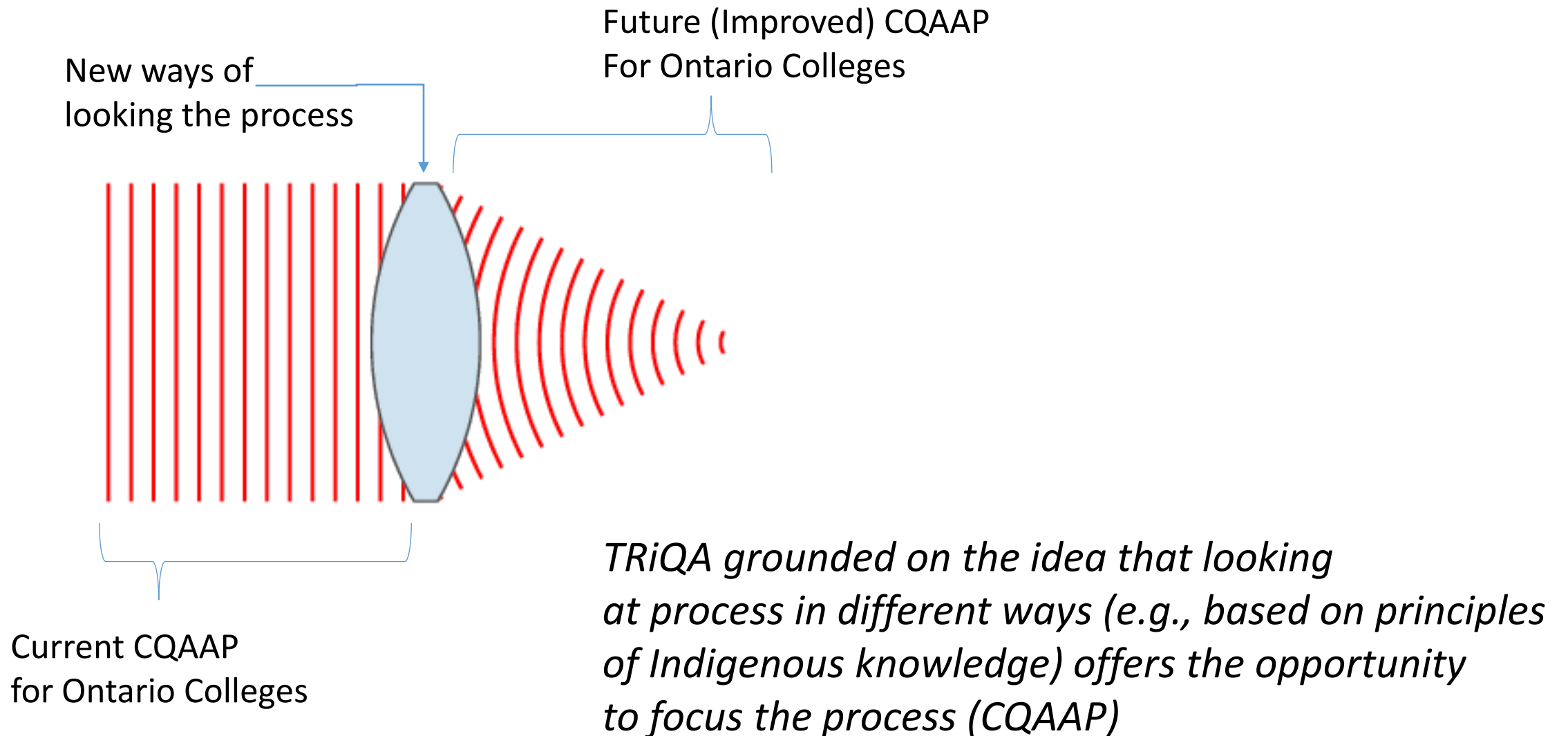 - Indigenous Quality Assurance Standards – Building a Strong Fire (2018)

WHAT IS THE OCQAS TRUTH AND RECONCILIATION IN QUALITY ASSURANCE (TRIQA) PROJECT?

- Partially funded (2019-2021) through the International Network of Quality Assurance Agencies in Higher Education (INQAAHE) Capacity Building Fund

- Grounded in:
  - Developing capacity through relationship-building;
  - Reflection and continuous improvement of CQAAP

- Engaging stakeholders:
  - Indigenous thought leaders – external and internal to colleges
  - Indigenous Peoples Education Circle (IPEC)
  - Heads of Quality Assurance
  - College Administrators
  - OCQAS Management Board
  - Quality Assurance Agencies – Ontario and Internationally

INITIAL PROCESS MODEL
TRUTH AND RECONCILIATION IN QUALITY ASSURANCE (TRiQA)

INITIAL PERSPECTIVE: "LENS" METAPHOR

Future (Improved) CQAAP
For Ontario Colleges

New ways of
looking the process

Current CQAAP
for Ontario Colleges

*TRiQA grounded on the idea that looking
at process in different ways (e.g., based on principles
of Indigenous knowledge) offers the opportunity
to focus the process (CQAAP)*

TRiQA Project activities – Initial Research and Consultations

Objective: To discern a model of Indigenous Ways of Knowing to use in mapping CQAAP

- Literature on academic programs mapped to Indigenous Ways of Knowing
- Sharing TRiQA goals and process with QA peers in Ontario
  - PEQAB
  - IAESC
- Initial consultation with Indigenous educators from within Ontario Colleges (6) and Universities (3)
  - Face-to-Face Group Consultation was difficult to schedule
  - Alternative channels (2019): Online survey and one-on-one meetings
- Invitation to present TRiQA to Indigenous Peoples Education Circle (IPEC)

Deductive Approach

Literature on Indigenous Ways of Knowing

Consult with Indigenous Educators

Map CQAAP

Implement Change

FINDINGS FROM INITIAL CONSULTATIONS

- Significant shift in perspective
  - Change the research process from inductive to deductive process
  - Relationship-building primary
  - Leadership shared between OCQAS and ITL Circle
  - ITL Circle established as advisory group to OCQAS

ITL Circle – February 2020

- Indigenous Thought Leaders (ITL) Circle was convened February 2020
  - with input from the IPEC
- Eleven people were invited, five people were able to participate:
  - Regina Hartwick, Humber College
  - Carolyn Hepburn, Sault College
  - Brenda Small, Confederation College
  - Mary Wabano, Canadore College
  - Elijah Williams, Sheridan College
- Key outcomes
  - Started building relationships through personal introductions
  - Overview of College Quality Assurance Audit Process (CQAAP) which all colleges have completed
  - Discussion of experiences of Indigenous educators with respect to the CQAAP standards and requirements
  - Established ITL Circle with college-specific membership

CHANGES TO CQAAP DOCUMENTS

Informed by Indigenous educators' experiences (ITL Circle)

CQAAP Standard - Summary	Proposed Change – Column	Proposed Change - Langage
1.3 – Program Quality Management / Data gathering	"Quality Assurance Mechanisms"	Stakeholders to include: • Add "community liaisons"; • Add a list of examples of students "(e.g., domestic, Indigenous, international)"
4.2 – Program Delivery and Student Assessment / Engaging faculty in best practices and development	"Evidence"	"Methods…diverse learning and exploration ("Indigenous ways of knowing and learning") and "Methods to support culturally appropriate learning for diverse audiences"
6.3 – College-wide resources / Mechanisms for academic and advising	"Guiding Information" and "Quality Assurance Mechanisms"	"Indigenous-specific support" as a source of data and "…applied consistently for diverse student populations"

Inductive Approach
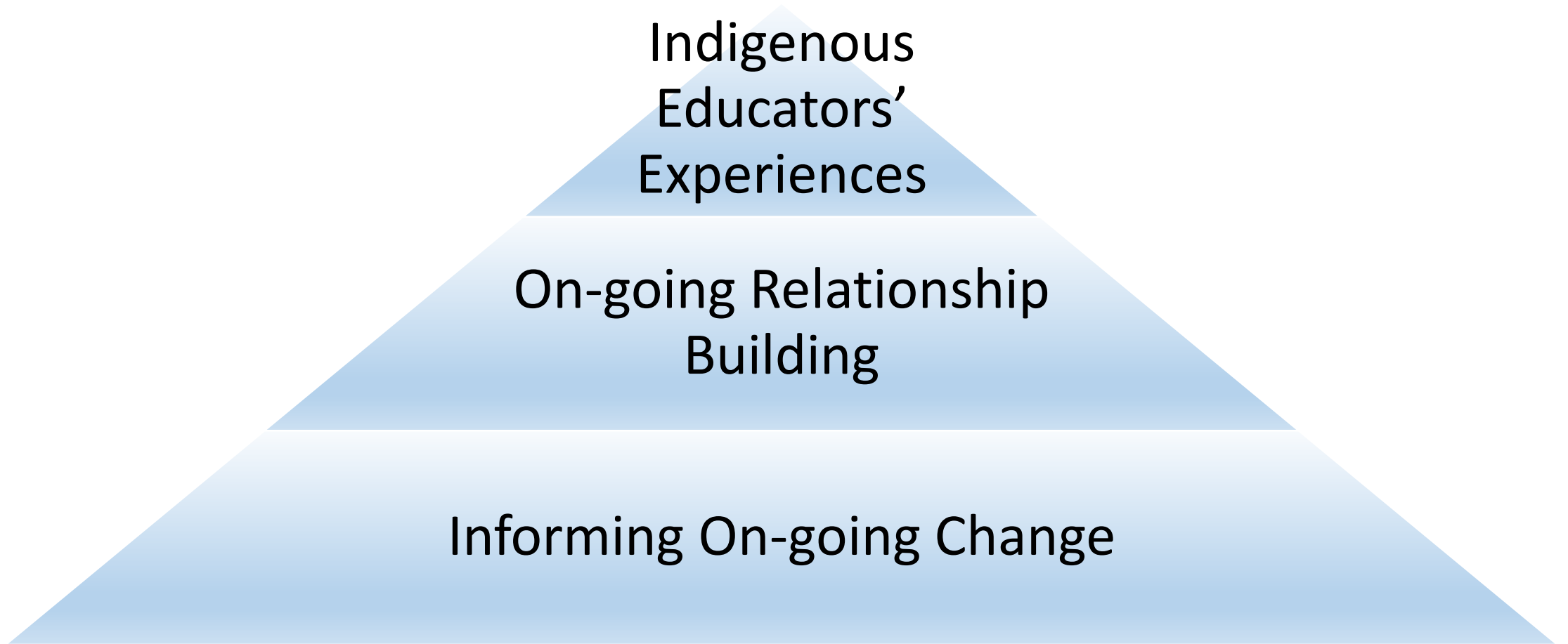
RESPONSE FROM COLLEGE SYSTEM

- Twenty-four (24) college virtual tour (October-December 2020)
    - Presidents
    - Vice Presidents
    - Heads of Quality
    - Curriculum Developers
- Overwhelming majority of colleges share positive remarks on the accomplishments to date
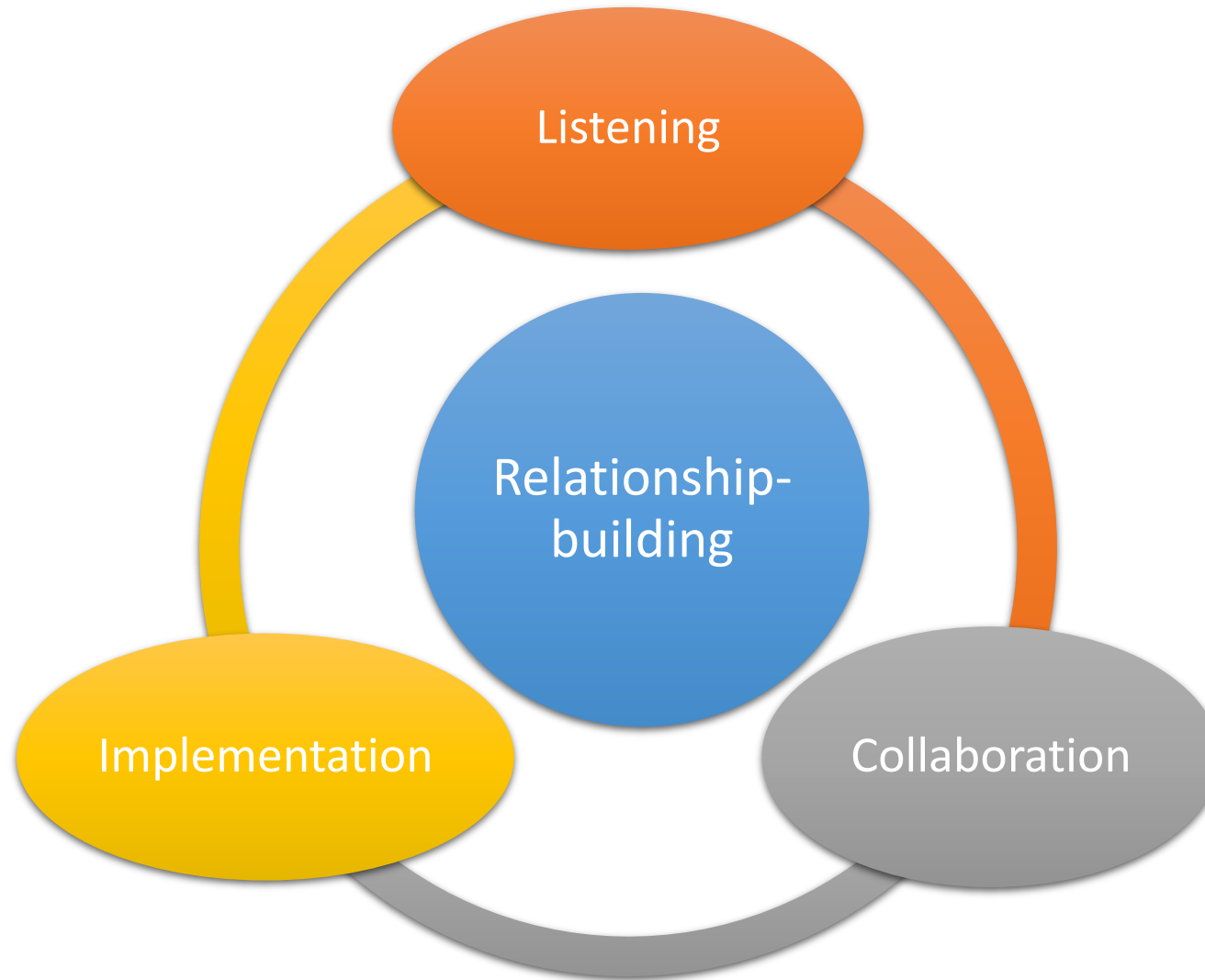- Recognition of importance of this work

WHAT DID WE LEARN FROM TRIQA?

- Engaging in reconciliation is not a project with a defined start and end, it is an on-going process

- Stories and experiences can provide strong evidence for improving delivery of educational experiences

- Quality assurance is the process of reflection and continuous improvement

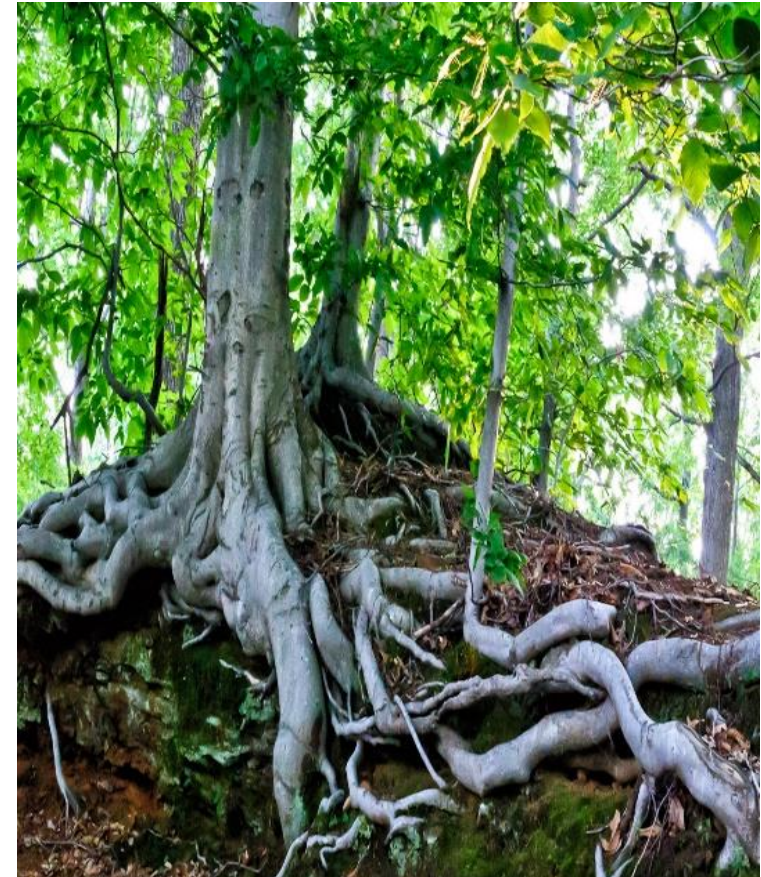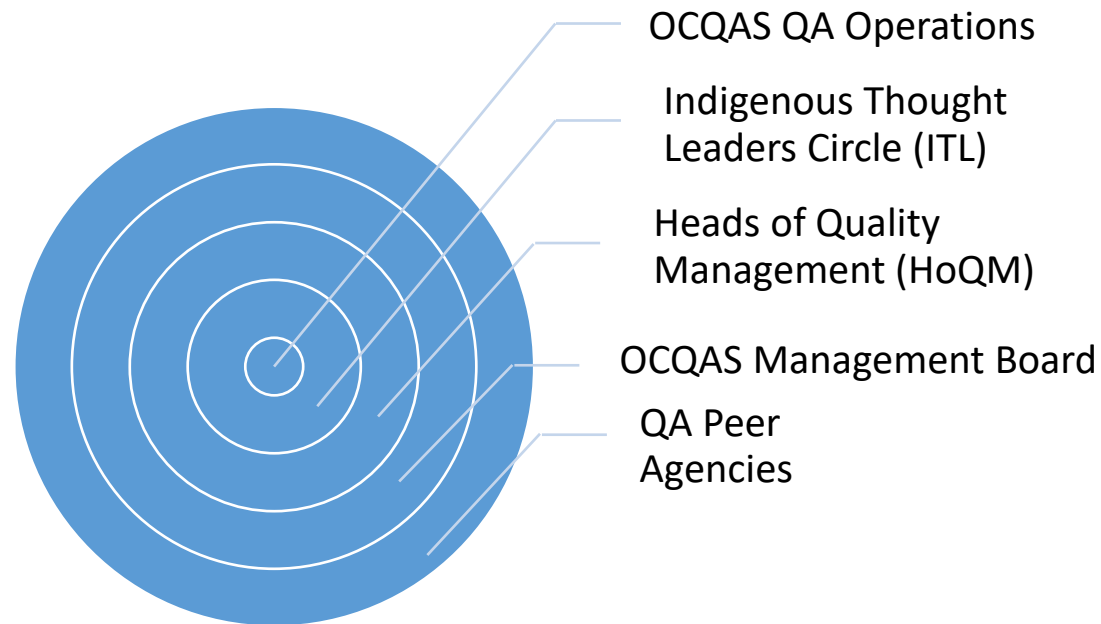- Relationship-building is a long-term commitment

REVISED MODEL

WHAT DID WE LEARN FROM TRIQA?

Model of Consultation is less of an "Onion" and more of a "Tree"

OCQAS QA Operations

Indigenous Thought Leaders Circle (ITL)

Heads of Quality Management (HoQM)

OCQAS Management Board

QA Peer Agencies

CURRENT ITL CIRCLE ACTIVITIES

- Develop safe process to gather Indigenous educators' stories

- Review Terms of Reference to widen ITL Circle membership meeting

- Consider next tier of potential changes to CQAAP

- Quarterly meetings

QUESTIONS AND DISCUSSION