



DENE NATION
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Regional Office
**ASSEMBLY
OF FIRST
NATIONS**

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Dene Nation and the Gordon Foundation partnered to support future leaders as Dene Youth to commemorate the 100th anniversary of Treaty 11– FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

August 18, 2021, Denendeh, NWT – 18 Dene youth, from across the NWT, spent five days virtually learning about Treaty 11 from knowledge keepers like John B. Zoe and negotiated an education chapter for a fictitious land claims agreement for a self-governing First Nation.

The Dene youth, along with advisors such as Ethel Blondin-Andrew, Daniel T'selie, Stephanie Irlbacher-Fox, and Larry Innes were assigned to three negotiation groups representing the Government of Canada, the Government of the NWT, and an Indigenous Government. They worked to negotiate an education agreement that included control over Kindergarten – Grade 8 education and the integration of culture and language into the backbone of all schooling on the First Nation.

Once the negotiation was concluded, teams were then switched to a different group to develop an implementation plan for the agreement. The Dene youth learned many leadership skills during the exercise including the importance of wording and common understanding when negotiating agreements. They also realized the difficulty in representing a government whose mandate does not match with Dene values and beliefs. The five-day youth leadership event ended with the youth sharing the final agreement, implementation plan, and their reflections with Indigenous leadership.

Mahsi to the Gordon Foundation and Indigenous Services Canada for their roles in supporting our next generation of Dene leaders. All youth strongly valued the knowledge shared with them throughout the week by the many knowledge keepers. They also recognized the need to continue to develop leadership skills to step into negotiation roles soon.

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