

# Elisabeth Miltenburg 3MT Transcript | University of Guelph Campus Final 2020

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**Advisor:** Dr. Kim Anderson

**Title:** Growing Together to Strengthen Urban Indigenous Food Systems

**Transcript:** We all have a relationship to the land, whether we recognize it or not. Most of us can recall a memory of walking through the woods, or growing vegetables in our own backyard. Having grown up on a farm, I am aware that knowing the land is important, because it is the land that allows us to grow crops and sustain ourselves.

Now imagine someone came and set up a tent on our land. They're unfamiliar with the area and just need some help getting settled. But what if more people showed up and they need more of our land. What if these newcomers start dividing up our land, selling it off, building roads and then they relocate my family to a small, un-useful section? We have been separated from our land; no longer able to grow our crops and we are unable to sustain ourselves.

This attempts to explain the realities of Indigenous people today – People who have been dispossessed of the Land that once sustained them. This is significant for Indigenous people – who's knowledge and identity is tied to the Land. But, because food comes from the land, food is one way to rebuild these relationships.

There are many Indigenous communities, who are growing, hunting, harvesting, and sharing food in traditional ways. However, the majority of Indigenous People live in cities, where there is limited access to land. In fact, there are nearly 20,000 Indigenous people living in the Waterloo-Wellington region, and many have been asking the question: "How do we connect to the land in urban spaces?"

My research aims to address this question. I am working with an urban Indigenous garden collective that maintains several gardens across the region. These gardens are growing traditional foods, medicines, produce, and serve as a teaching site. From the food produced in these gardens, we are offering cooking and preserving workshops. For example, we made traditional corn soup on campus to then share with Indigenous students.

By conducting interviews with people involved in these efforts I hope to learn how the urban setting impacts Indigenous food systems. My goal is to amplify the voices of Indigenous people doing this important work and identify ways forward so more urban Indigenous people can connect to the land and participate in their food systems.

This research is important for all of us, as we all have a responsibility to who's land we are on. In this region, we are on the Treaty lands of the Mississauga's and the Haldimand tract – land that was promised to the Six Nations of the Grand River. Food is a starting point where we can grow together in rebuilding our relationships to the Land and to each other.

**[End of Transcript]**