

FROM PLANNING TO ACTION:

Building Change for British Columbia's Urban Aboriginal People



JULY 2014

ANNUAL PROJECT REPORT

Submitted to:
**Ministry of Aboriginal Relations
and Reconciliation**

Prepared by:
**International Institute for Child
Rights and Development**

Table of Contents

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY	3
INTRODUCTION	7
<i>Methodology</i>	7
<i>Organization of the Report</i>	8
A. OFF-RESERVE ABORIGINAL ACTION PLAN: BACKGROUND	9
<i>The Context for ORAAP</i>	9
<i>ORAAP Purpose: Theory of Change</i>	11
<i>Collaboration: Who is Involved</i>	13
<i>Map of Key partners</i>	14
B. KEY ACCOMPLISHMENTS	15
<i>Pathway 1: COORDINATION</i>	16
<i>Pathway 2: CAPACITY</i>	18
<i>Pathway 3: ENGAGEMENT</i>	23
<i>Pathway 4: INTERCULTURAL PARTNERSHIP</i>	26
C. LEARNING AND INNOVATION	30
D. LOOKING FORWARD	32
ABBREVIATIONS AND ACRONYMS.....	34

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The Off-Reserve Aboriginal Action Plan (ORAAP) is a government-community partnership initiative focused on bringing together collective resources, knowledge, and creativity – at local and provincial levels – to contribute to positive changes for urban Aboriginal people living in British Columbia (BC). The partnership involves a network of more than 70 organizations ranging from Aboriginal organizations, businesses, educational institutions, health care providers, law enforcement, youth led organizations, and all levels of government (municipal, provincial and federal).

ORAAP engages urban Aboriginal people by bringing together collective resources, knowledge and creativity at local provincial and federal levels to focus on three shared priorities: increasing employment recruitment and retention, education and training opportunities and engaging the growing youth population. It is important to note that these priorities are seen within a holistic context whereby success in jobs and training can only happen when foundational supports such as housing, health, child care and justice-related matters are also in place.

KEY ACCOMPLISHMENTS:

Through ORAAP, we are seeing signs of increasing awareness of Aboriginal people (their culture and history) as well as contributions to address the long term systemic challenges faced by urban Aboriginal people. The capacity of citizens, community agencies and ORAAP partners are also growing and becoming more resilient.

In 2013-2014, ORAAP achieved significant progress in demonstrating its value and innovation in moving the Off-Reserve Aboriginal agenda from *talk to action*. Following last year's rich process of deep consultation and listening to the voices of Aboriginal people, communities are starting to build new or strengthening existing networks of coordination and services. ORAAP, and its partners, are seeing signs of promising change, despite only really beginning work at the community level on ORAAP less than two years ago.

Key highlights from 2013/14 include:

1. Intersectoral Planning and Support: A Model for Government Collaboration

As lead coordinating body, the ORAAP Provincial Coordination Team is responsible for building effective work together across sectors. In doing so, it is creating a unique model worth replicating and attracting the interest from Aboriginal and Government counterparts in other Provinces.

2. Surrey: A Success Story – Jobs, Skills and Training for BC Aboriginal People – Models for the Future

The Fraser Region Aboriginal Friendship Centre Association (FRAFCA) is establishing an innovative and successful program called Individual Opportunities (IO). The program uses an intake process to better inform the complex needs of clients and employment staff. This complex assessment assists in planning the training program based on the individual barriers and challenges they face with respect to readying themselves for the workforce.

This model of pre-employment development was applied to **64 individuals** in a short two month intake period, while **48 youth** obtained training in various areas. As of May 2014, 13 graduates (20 per cent of the initial cohort) decided to further their education in career track programs at various levels and eight have obtained employment since progressing through the program.

3. Vancouver: *Service Delivery Coordination Model*

The need for more information to circulate in the community on what services and events are available to Aboriginal, Métis and non-Aboriginal people is a constant in ORAAP. One innovative approach to bridge this gap between Aboriginal people and services is the Metro Vancouver Aboriginal Executive Council's (MVAEC) Community Navigator program. Under ORAAP, MVAEC is employing two community navigators to assist in store front like service coordination for many Aboriginal people, particularly those affected by chronic addiction and/or homelessness. In some cases, these navigators are also helping to strengthen community-based Aboriginal organizations to stabilize their funding base or service provision. One Aboriginal community member noted: *"MVAEC Navigators (are good at) seeing where the need is and making them known to each organization based on what they offer. We see they are making an impact already"*.

4. Duncan: *Becoming Job-Ready*

In Cowichan, youth are being given great opportunities for growth and grounding with a full suite of training programs addressing multiple aspects of their lives in order to achieve job-readiness outcomes. A portion of this includes practicums with local businesses and organizations. Mentorship is emerging as a clear theme across all ORAAP communities.

In 2013-2014, accomplishments include:

- 12 youth aged (15 to 30) entered and 11 successfully completed the STEP program
- 9 youth aged (15 to 20) completed Kitchen Connections, a pre-employment and healthy living program

5. Kamloops: *Creating Community Partnerships*

The Friendship Society in Kamloops founded and convened the Kamloops Off-Reserve Advisory Committee (KORAC). This brings together member representatives from various sectors of the Aboriginal community — including health, education, employment and training, housing and homelessness, arts, language and culture, justice and children, youth and families. Further, since inception, the group has expanded to include representation from the City of Kamloops and the Kamloops Chamber of Commerce, and has an open door policy to welcome new members that have a vested interest in the health, wellbeing and advancement of urban Aboriginal people. KORAC meets once a month to discuss key community issues and priorities and explore emerging opportunities for partnership or collaboration. KORAC is using both a terms of reference and operational guidelines to formalize its long-term commitment.

The Kamloops Aboriginal Friendship Society has also struck up a partnership with the Thompson Region Division of Family Practice to improve the overall level of care for urban Aboriginal families by increasing access to services and exploring ways to better align mainstream healthcare with traditional healing practices.

6. Prince George: *Honouring Partnerships, Culture and Tradition*

By convening Elders Circles of Wisdom, Circles of leadership, Eighth Fire Cultural nights, a Community wellness Fair and events for youth, the Prince George Native Friendship Centre (PGNFC) has been able to **bring together 590 individuals and generate closer relationships** with a multitude of actors and communities including non-traditional partners like the RCMP and business leaders as well as Métis associations and Band Councils. Culture valuation has played a central role here as well as that critical connection between youth and Elders. This constructive engagement in Prince George did not go unnoticed by the Federal Government. As a result of ORAAP, among many other important PGNFC service contributions, Public Safety Canada is partnering with PGNFC to conduct a Community Safety Plan. This was an unexpected result.

7. BC Association of Aboriginal Friendship Centres (BCAAFC): *Creating Jobs through Coordination and Capacity development – 5 X 5 Strategy*

The BCAAFC is responding to a call to action to create and/or place 5,000 British Columbian Aboriginal citizens in jobs within a five-year time frame, hence the Five by Five Aboriginal Jobs Strategy. This BCAAFC Aboriginal Jobs Plan comes after commissioning an extensive Labour market survey for the cities of Prince George, Kamloops, Surrey, and Duncan, to serve as a baseline of the Aboriginal labour market in those communities and measuring stick for the future. Access and support to participate in the economy is recognized as a significant opportunity for both Aboriginal people and the province of BC.

As an organization representing 25 urban Aboriginal service delivery agencies, the BCAAFC is uniquely positioned to develop an integrated strategy to implement evidence based solutions contributing to a greater number of Aboriginal people able to find and maintain gainful employment in the coming years. The business case for this ambitious plan is rather simple: Investing in getting Aboriginal people ready, able to work, and stay in jobs leads to more savings in the long term due to a decrease in Aboriginal persons needing social assistance and other forms of income support by multiple levels of Government.

8. Métis Nation British Columbia (MNBC): *Capacity Building through Workshops and Micro-Grants*

The MNBC Proposal Writing and Social Enterprise Workshop was a direct response to the need identified last year concerning a desire to gain skills and a strengthened capacity in Proposal Writing and Project Management. Participants found the workshops to be “very helpful”. MNBC is leveraging this capacity building by distributing up to \$40,000 in community-based funding grants to successful Métis participants at the Proposal Writing Workshop. This not only helps apply new skills, but is also allowing participants to contribute to their Community through tangible action.

9. Union of British Columbia Municipalities (UBCM): *Year of Reconciliation*

The UBCM engaged ORAAP partners to conduct a successful workshop in the lead up to the UBCM Annual Convention in Vancouver last September. Over 60 provincial and municipal leaders from across BC participated in this workshop. During the convention, momentum developed and culminated in the endorsement of a motion calling for a Year of Reconciliation with Aboriginal people across BC. This motion was presented as part of UBCM’s Expression of Reconciliation at the Truth and Reconciliation Commission’s National event on September 19, 2013.

UBCM’s role in bringing BC’s municipalities and Aboriginal people together did not stop at the convention. It also led to a commitment for a partnership with MARR, BCAAFC, and Reconciliation Canada to help organize one hundred (100) Aboriginal reconciliation sessions in dozens of BC communities over the next year.

LEARNING AND INNOVATION

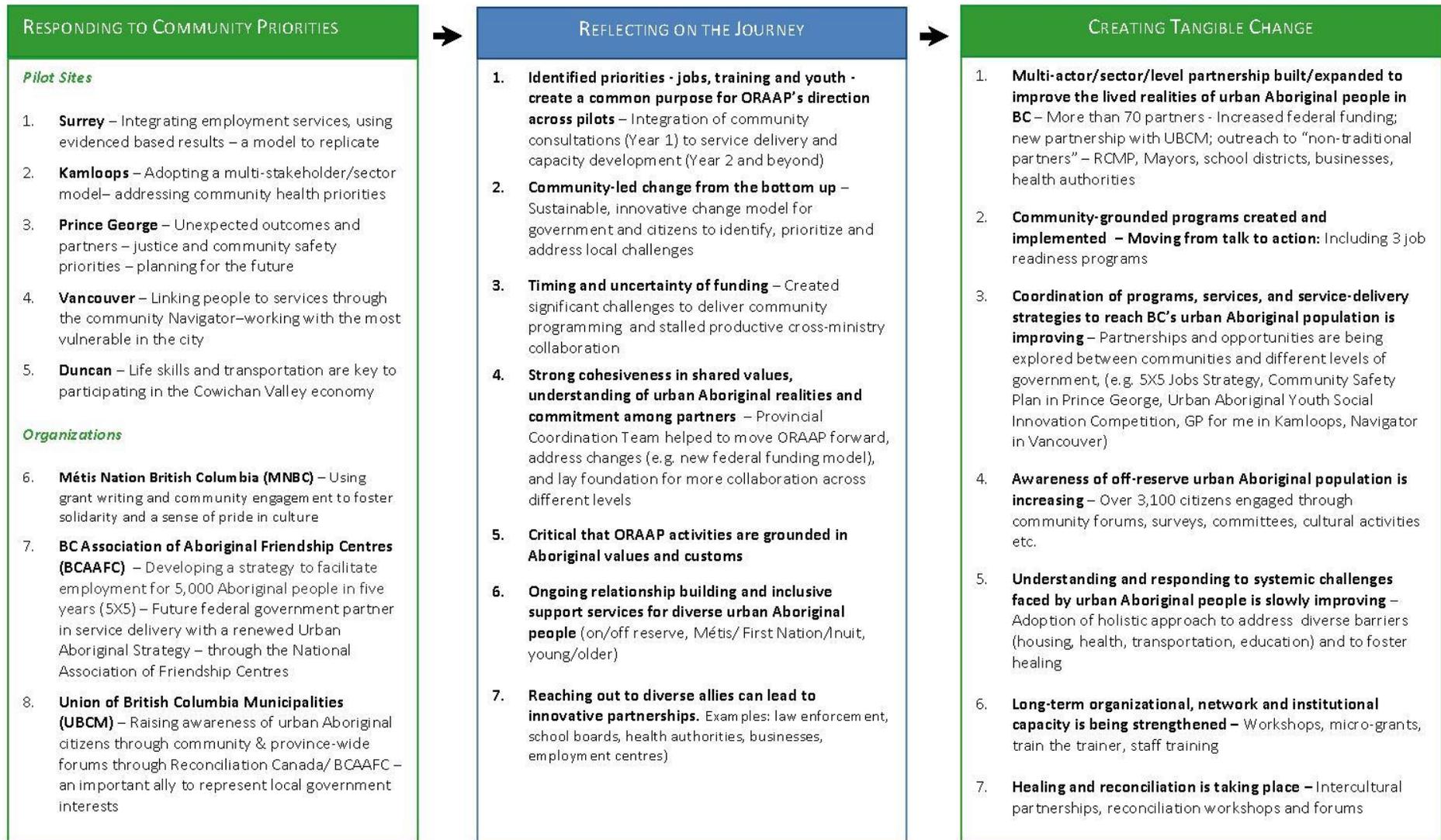
In 2013-14, learning focused on the strengths, challenges, and innovations emerging from the initiative. Key lessons included:

- In the Aboriginal context, many adults beyond the age of 30 also have a need for the same services provided by agencies preparing youth for entry into the labour market.
- Sustainable, meaningful change occurs when diverse partners – especially urban Aboriginal people - are involved in all aspects of designing, implementing, and evaluating programs and services designed to meet their needs.
- Strong cohesiveness in shared values and an intercultural perspective are critical in understanding the urban Aboriginal realities and commitments among partners.

Culture needs to be carefully woven into all aspects of the initiative including the design, implementation and evaluation of ORAAP.

OFF-RESERVE ABORIGINAL ACTION PLAN (ORAAP): DEVELOPMENTAL PROCESS 2013-2014

Emerging themes identified from interviews (13), document review and workshop



LEADERSHIP AND LEARNING

→ **Provincial Coordination**

Community Planning

Community Engagement and Programming

Connecting and Collaborating

INTRODUCTION

“By strengthening relationships through the Provincial Coordination Team, it is possible to enhance understanding among agencies, promote reconciliation, and improve service delivery and outcomes for off-reserve Aboriginal people in BC.” – Union of BC Municipalities

This annual report reviews the activities, accomplishments, and lessons emerging from the Off-Reserve Aboriginal Action Plan (ORAAP) — a government-community partnership involving five communities in BC, and is spearheaded by a multi-sector Provincial Coordination Team (PCT).

The purpose of this annual review is to:

- Demonstrate ORAAP’s collective progress—particularly across pilot sites—to improve the lives of urban Aboriginal people in BC
- Reflect on learning to help make sense of the ORAAP journey
- Explore opportunities for moving the initiative forward

Methodology

In telling the ORAAP story, partners have opted for using a slightly different way of *thinking* and reporting about change, as ORAAP is a slightly different way of *doing* for government and communities. Developmental Evaluation (DE) is a useful way of evaluating projects when outcomes are constantly changing, situated in a complex social environment and are influenced by many contributing factors. In particular, a more flexible approach is needed to evaluate initiatives, especially those with multiple stakeholders, high levels of innovation and creativity. It is also apt for fast-paced decision-making and areas of uncertainty within systems and relations between actors, structures, and processes. This is where DE becomes a useful evaluation tool – it is ideal for systems change and situations where people are trying out new approaches. Using a DE lens supports ongoing development and learning rather than only focusing on end results, and helps monitor connections between short-term outcomes and efforts to achieve long term social change.

These situations are abundant in the context of ORAAP: government and community partners are directly engaging with community members to understand and prioritize their current issues, while simultaneously promoting the change that is necessary for healthier and more resilient residents across Aboriginal communities. Thus, using a DE lens in this report helps demonstrate how ORAAP partners and communities are working differently and creating change together.

The specific DE steps included:

- Interviewing all of the main ORAAP partners (13)
- Conducting a thorough desk review of documents and partner reports
- Facilitating a workshop to discuss the implications of the results with the PCT

The International Institute for Child Rights and Development (IICRD), a child and youth rights non-profit organization based in BC, was asked to analyze ORAAP’s accomplishments and produce a report that will be used to both share the learning and celebrate the successes for British Columbians and partners alike. Through this reflection, the IICRD and ORAAP PCT team are pleased to present this year’s annual report on progress towards creating positive changes for Aboriginal people living, working, and studying in British Columbia’s urban areas.

Organization of the Report

This annual report is organized into four sections:

- **Section A, Off-Reserve Aboriginal Action Plan (ORAAP): Background** provides an overview of the ORAAP initiative including the pilot sites, partners at the provincial and community levels, as well as a Theory of Change to outline the purpose and thinking underpinning the ORAAP initiative.
- **Section B** focuses on the key outcomes where ORAAP is making a difference in the lives of hundreds of Off-Reserve Aboriginal people in five pilot communities and throughout BC. The **Key Accomplishments** section features several memorable stories, highlighting how ORAAP is moving from talk to action.
- **Section C, Learning and Innovation**, discusses lessons identified by key partners and identifies some seeds of innovation and opportunities for growth in ORAAP.
- **Section D: Looking Forward**, highlights priorities and next steps for ORAAP in year three and beyond.

A Note on Terminology

The term “urban Aboriginal people” is used frequently in this report. The term refers to First Nations, Métis and Inuit people living in off-reserve/urban areas in British Columbia.

SECTION A. OFF-RESERVE ABORIGINAL ACTION PLAN: BACKGROUND

The Off-Reserve Aboriginal Action Plan (ORAAP) is a government-community partnership initiative focused on bringing together collective resources, knowledge, and creativity – at local and provincial levels – to contribute to positive changes for the 128,000¹ urban Aboriginal people living in British Columbia (BC). The partnership involves a network of more than 70 organizations² ranging from Aboriginal organizations, businesses, educational institutions, health care providers, law enforcement, youth led organizations, and all levels of government (municipal, provincial, and federal).

Since 2012, the ORAAP initiative is being piloted in five communities across BC: Prince George, Vancouver, Surrey, Kamloops, and Duncan. Lead partners are engaging a cross section of citizens and organizations to better understand the unique priorities, challenges, and opportunities facing urban Aboriginal people living in each community.

Collectively, the government-community partnership is focusing on three priorities across the province: **employment, training, and youth**. In particular, the partners are taking action on these priorities to respond to needs and opportunities identified through the consultation process as well as to build on achievements from 2012-2013.³



Our vision for ORAAP is...

A world where all urban Aboriginal communities, families, and children are empowered to achieve their full potential by living healthy, self-sufficient, and more economically viable lives in a way that meets their individual and community interests and cultural traditions

The Context for ORAAP

In British Columbia, an increasing number of Aboriginal people (First Nation, Métis, and Inuit) are living, studying, and working in urban areas. They are finding new ways to connect, engage, and contribute to the cultural, economic and social vitality of BC's urban communities. More specifically, just over 60 percent of Aboriginal people currently live in urban communities. Aboriginal youth (nearly 50% of the population) will play an important role in the work force in the near future. Also, the Métis population in BC (30%) is rapidly growing compared to all other Aboriginal populations.⁴ Several programs aim to support and serve BC's urban Aboriginal people. Yet, poor socio-economic conditions (e.g. health, education, housing, employment, and justice) continue to exist due to many, multi-generational barriers. A different, comprehensive approach is needed to enable communities to address the unique opportunities and challenges facing BC's urban Aboriginal populations.

To facilitate dialogue between urban Aboriginal interests and Government, the Province of British Columbia is:

- Developing ORAAP to improve the socio-economic outcomes of off-reserve Aboriginal people in BC, fulfilling its commitment made after the 2011 Speech from the Throne
- Coordinating ORAAP through MARR
- Establishing partnership agreements and protocols, including with the federal government and the BCAAFC
- Integrating ORAAP into province-wide priorities, including BC's Skills for Jobs Blueprint and Social Innovation Council, among others
- Supporting community partners to identify and address locally defined priorities through programming and planning

¹ Ministry of Aboriginal Relations and Reconciliation (MARR) website: <http://www.gov.bc.ca/arr/social/strategy.html>, accessed May 2014

² This is a compilation of strategic governance and/or programming partners highlighted from various ORAAP reports. This number would be much higher if considering organizations/representatives participating in events, surveys, etc.

³ ORAAP Backgrounder, MARR, 2012: <http://www.pgnfc.com/off%20reserve%20links/oraap%20backgrounder.pdf> See "What's Next for ORAAP".

⁴ Statistics Canada, National Household Survey, 2011

Box 1: Changing the Cityscape for BC's Urban Aboriginal People

"With increased movement of Aboriginal people into urban centres comes the opportunity to strengthen and align our efforts with urban Aboriginal communities. The Government will work with Aboriginal partners, the Federal Government, and local governments to develop an Off-reserve Aboriginal Action Plan to achieve better education and job training, healthier family life, and strengthened cultures and traditions". – Speech from the Throne, 2011

The Off-Reserve Aboriginal Action Plan is not just another project or program. Rather, it is a **culture shift** in the way that governments work with Aboriginal communities in BC. It is about activating Aboriginal partners to engage with local youth, Elders, service agencies, businesses, schools, and others to address the issues that matter to urban Aboriginal people. Provincial and federal governments, on the other hand, play supportive roles to coordinate their efforts to invest in community driven solutions.

To support this approach, the ORAAP initiative is guided by several principles and practices:

- **Collaboration** – promotes a collaborative approach involving Aboriginal groups, service providers, all levels of government, and the private sector.
- **Community based Priorities and Shared Values**– reflect an approach that is community driven, whereby Aboriginal groups will lead and build their own holistic, sustainable, and creative solutions.
- **Healing and Reconciliation** – aims to address the root causes linked to the socio-economic disadvantages of Aboriginal people and communities.
- **Social Innovation** – generates solutions to complex problems that will address the key socio-economic challenges facing Aboriginal people.
- **Integration of Programs and Services** – supports ways of integrating programs more effectively, to better serve off-reserve Aboriginal people.
- **Capacity Building** –to enhance positive outcomes for those delivering and receiving services at the community level.
- **Focused and Measureable Outcomes** – achieve measureable results through the comprehensive monitoring and evaluation of joint community based and province-wide initiatives.⁵



Visioning Activity, ORAAP 2013 – Graphic facilitation by Colleen Stevenson

"Instead of bureaucrats talking about models and bringing them back to communities, we are turning the traditional model upside down." -

Representative of the Ministry of Social Development and Social Innovation

"ORAAP is unique and the momentum is huge, especially to have the grassroots involved in the planning – that is the key to this. This is not a normal way of doing things..." – Fraser Region

Aboriginal Friendship Centre Association Rep.



Participants of a community engagement event in Vancouver, MVAEC, 2014

⁵ ORAAP Backgrounder, MARR, 2012: <http://www.pgnfc.com/off%20reserve%20links/oraap%20backgrounder.pdf>

ORAAP Purpose: Theory of Change

A Theory of Change defines all the building blocks required to bring about a given long term goal. This set of connected building blocks—interchangeably referred to as outcomes, results, accomplishments, or preconditions is depicted on a map known as a pathway of change/change framework, which is a graphic representation of the change process.” See Centre for Theory of Change (<http://www.theoryofchange.org/what-is-theory-of-change/>). Through this review, the Developmental Evaluators suggested that a draft Theory of Change may be useful to encourage discussion about the broader purpose of ORAAP, particularly amongst the PCT and other partners more broadly. The illustration on the following page is from a facilitated session in Vancouver.

Several **ASSUMPTIONS** underpin our understanding of how change might happen through the ORAAP process. These assumptions focus on the approach, willingness and capacity of all partners and participants involved to enable transformative, sustainable change. ORAAP partners implicitly, and at times explicitly, believe that with effective multi-sector coordination; meaningful engagement with communities; strengthening the capacity of both individuals and organizations; and, by building intercultural awareness through partnering for development, Aboriginal people will grow and prosper with a renewed sense of self and community.

VISION/LONG TERM OUTCOMES: Ultimately, we want a world where all urban Aboriginal communities, families and children are empowered to achieve their full potential by living healthy, self-sufficient and more economically viable lives in a way that meets their individual and community interests and cultural traditions. Through this experience, we want urban Aboriginal people in BC to have access to high-quality education and employment opportunities as well as supportive health, housing and justice services. We aspire a holistic, cultural approach in order to put urban Aboriginal people at the centre of all coordinated programs, services, policies and strategies. This requires more system-wide, institutional, organizational and practitioner capacity to meaningfully engage urban Aboriginal populations. Finally, we want to increase the awareness of Aboriginal people choosing to live in urban areas, including a better understanding of their history, culture and traditions.

PATHWAYS OF CHANGE: The ORAAP initiative engages urban Aboriginal people, connected to five BC pilot municipalities, by bringing together collective resources, knowledge and creativity – at local, provincial and federal levels – to focus on three shared priorities: 1) Increasing employment recruitment and retention, 2) education and training opportunities, and 3) engaging the growing youth population (under 30). This involves four, integrated change pathways:

Pathway 1: Coordination

This pathway focuses on:

- Building active coordination across multiple sectors through collaborative strategic *planning* (BC’s Skills for Jobs Blueprint, Community Safety – Prince George, and the BCAAFC – 5X5 Strategy). This includes outreach with diverse allies such as schools, RCMP, academia, businesses.
- Creating an overall steering committee in the Provincial Coordination Team to provide ORAAP’s vision and leadership to move it from talk to action.
- Integrating diverse resources together to support ORAAP, (e.g. staffing, funding and support from multiple sectors within both the Federal and Provincial Government – through coordination).

Pathway 2: Capacity

This pathway focuses on:

- Providing skill-building and practical experiences for diverse practitioners involved in ORAAP. Examples: Pre-employment programming for youth (Duncan and Surrey), grant-writing workshops (MNBC), community forum facilitator training (MVAEC).
- Convening workshops and presentations to increase knowledge and understanding of urban Aboriginal peoples.
- Supporting partners to enhance their own organizational capacity (e.g. MVAEC – human resources manual).

Pathway 3: Engagement

A supportive environment involves:

- Culturally sensitive outreach in each community to identify, understand and take action on local priorities such as through forums and surveys.
- Integrating Aboriginal perspectives into ongoing municipal/provincial planning and policymaking (e.g. Transportation Committee – Duncan, GP for Me – Kamloops).
- Bringing Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal people together through activities that celebrate culture and foster healing (e.g. Cultural Nights – Prince George, Reconciliation Workshops – UBCM).

Pathway 4: Intercultural Partnership

Key strategies include:

- Creating mechanisms for meaningful collaboration and community building across First Nation, Métis and non-Aboriginal worlds as well as across bureaucratic and non-governmental cultures of doing and being.
- Applying an inter-cultural/community based lens to map each site’s geographic, demographic, historical, economic, and social assets & challenges.
- Facilitating opportunities for reflection, reconciliation and innovation, such as through cross-community gatherings and developmental evaluation to support collaborative partnership.

Guiding our Voices: Theory of Change - Off-Reserve Aboriginal Action Plan

→ Vision

A world where all urban Aboriginal communities, families and children are empowered to achieve their full potential by living healthy, self-sufficient and more economically viable lives in a way that meets their individual and community interests and cultural traditions

→ EXPECTED OUTCOMES

1. Improvements in a range of socio-economic areas	2. Improved coordination of programs, services, policies and strategies	3. Increased institutional and organizational capacity	4. Increased awareness and understanding of who off-reserve/urban Aboriginal people are including their history, culture and traditions	5. Improved relational capital (through relationship building at all levels)	6. Improved understanding and response to the root causes – leading to healing and reconciliation
--	---	--	---	--	---

CROSS-SECTORAL PROVINCIAL COORDINATION

British Columbia Association of Aboriginal Friendship Centres, Métis Nation British Columbia, Union of British Columbia Municipalities, federal government (Aboriginal Affairs and Northern Development Canada), and provincial ministries: Aboriginal Relations and Reconciliation; Jobs, Skills and Training, Social Development and Social Innovation; Children and Family Development

PATHWAY 1 - COORDINATION:

- Establish multi-sectoral partnerships
- Identify and act on community-specific and provincial priorities
- Share human, social and financial resources

128,000 Urban Aboriginal people in British Columbia, with 46% under age of 25

PATHWAY 2 - CAPACITY:

- Build and/or enhance skills and practical experiences
- Increase knowledge and understanding
- Strengthen organizational infrastructure

SHARED PRIORITIES: JOBS, TRAINING AND YOUTH



PATHWAY 3 - ENGAGEMENT:

- Facilitate community consultation
- Participate in municipal/provincial planning and policies
- Host cultural and reconciliation exchanges

Live, learn, work or play in:

Vancouver, Surrey, Prince George, Kamloops, and Duncan (91,535 self-identified people)

PATHWAY 4 – INTERCULTURAL PARTNERSHIP:

- Mechanisms for meaningful collaboration and community building
- Understand realities of urban Aboriginal peoples
- Foster culture of learning and innovation

COMMUNITY-DRIVEN PLANNING & ACTION

Metro Vancouver Aboriginal Executive Council, Fraser Region Aboriginal Friendship Centre, Prince George Native Friendship Centre, Interior Indian Friendship Society, Hiye'yu Lelum Society (House of Friendship)

To bring together our collective resources, knowledge and creativity – at local, provincial and federal levels – to make positive changes for urban Aboriginal peoples and communities

→ GOAL

→

→ CONTEXT

CHALLENGE:

- Urban Aboriginal peoples are experiencing poor socio-economic conditions (health, housing, employment) due to many, multi-generational barriers
- Aboriginal youth will play a key role in the future work force and they need better supports for labour market entry
- Poor conditions persist despite many programs targeting Urban Aboriginal peoples—Systemic change is clearly wanted and needed.

COMMITMENT

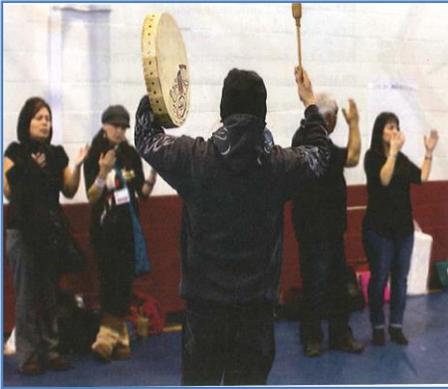
- Speech from the Throne 2011 commits BC to work with federal government, Aboriginal and local governments to develop ORAAP
- Ministry of Aboriginal Relations and Reconciliation tasked with coordinating initiative
- Partnership agreements and protocols established
- Integration of ORAAP into government/community-wide priorities (e.g. Skills for Jobs Blueprint and Social Innovation)

ASSUMPTIONS:

- Holistic (medicine wheel), culturally grounded, community-driven approach will lead to sustainable changes for Aboriginal people at individual, local and provincial levels
- Broad-based partnerships and allies will lead to innovative and collaborative responses to support BC's Urban Aboriginal people
- Selected pilot communities (including lead agencies) are willing and capable to convene complex change initiatives
- Governments can coordinate human and financial resources to support community-driven activities

Collaboration: Who is Involved

“ORAAP goes beyond building partnerships because it supports the system and the structure...I don’t think a strategy like this has been developed and applied before in the Aboriginal context.” – Fraser Valley Aboriginal Friendship Centre Association



The Off-Reserve Aboriginal Action Plan is a British Columbia focused government-community partnership involving more than 70 representatives from a cross-section of organizations, sectors, and levels.

Partners include Aboriginal organizations, government (municipal, provincial and federal), businesses, foundations, education institutions (schools, universities, training institutes), health care providers, law enforcement, and youth led organizations.

The initiative is guided by teams of diverse, collaborative partners who oversee aspects of the development, implementation and evaluation of ORAAP at the community, provincial, and federal levels.

- **Local Level:** In five pilot communities across BC, ORAAP is working closely with four Friendship Centres in Duncan, Kamloops, Prince George, and Surrey, and with the Metro Vancouver Aboriginal Executive Council (MVAEC - 24 members) in Vancouver. Through these five community based organizations, ORAAP engages a variety of strategic partners who support urban Aboriginal populations, ranging from tribal councils, universities and colleges, Métis Societies, health departments, school districts, municipal housing, Chambers of Commerce, and others.
- **Provincial Level:** The Ministry of Aboriginal Relations and Reconciliation (MARR) convenes the Provincial Coordination Team (PCT – 8 institutional members), including four provincial ministries: Ministry of Aboriginal Relations and Reconciliation, Ministry of Jobs, Tourism, and Skills Training, Ministry of Social Development and Social Innovation, Ministry of Children and Family Development, the Federal Government (Aboriginal Affairs and Northern Development Canada), and three provincial umbrella organizations: British Columbia Association of Aboriginal Friendship Centres, Métis Nation British Columbia, Union of British Columbia Municipalities.
- **Federal Level:** Aboriginal Affairs and Northern Development Canada participates in the PCT, but also liaises with other federal departments (e.g. Justice Canada and Public Safety Canada) and large industries (e.g. shipping, extractive sector) of interest to BC.

The following map highlights:

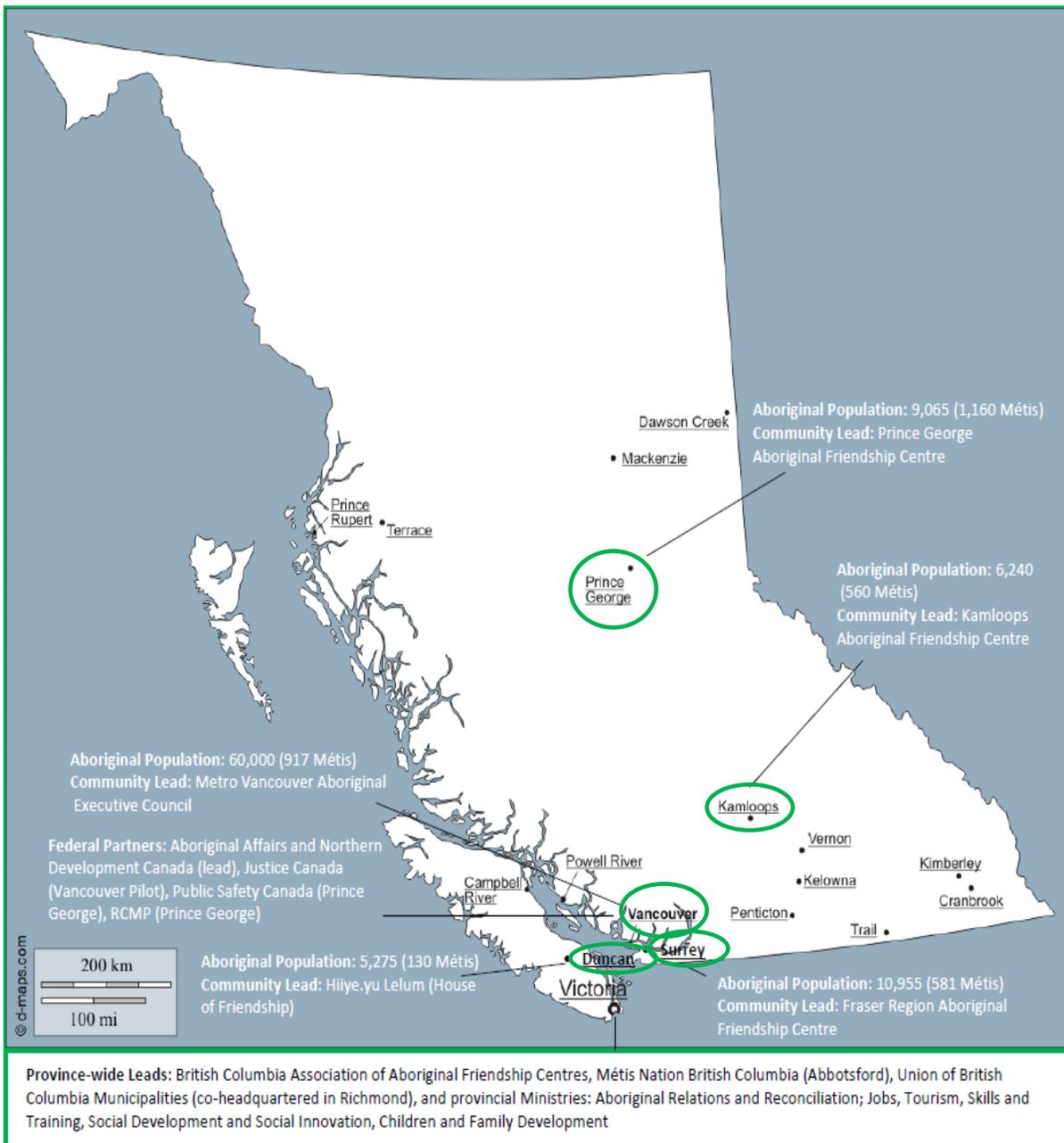
- Five pilot communities, including Statistics Canada 2011 census data on the number of urban Aboriginal people living in each area
- Locations of each of the lead agencies involved in ORAAP



“Everyone understands the problem, because we have had the time together – everyone is on board with the same goal/had the shared experience. Everyone understands the problem better. Everyone comes at it from a similar perspective and we are willing to collaborate.”

- Prince George Aboriginal Friendship Centre (Quote & Photo)

Off-Reserve Aboriginal Action Plan: Map of Key Partners



“The PCT is a success as a model for multi-sector, multi-Ministerial collaboration and understanding the reality of what Aboriginal people face.”

– Ministry of Jobs, Tourism, and Skills Training

SECTION B: KEY ACCOMPLISHMENTS

“Community ownership means that when we (the facilitators) leave here, we leave here – it’s yours. We leave the tools with you. And you guys then get to share those tools, and implement those tools”. - Prince George community facilitator

Creating Tangible Change for BC’s Urban Aboriginal People

In 2013-2014, ORAAP has achieved significant progress in demonstrating its value and innovation in moving the Off-Reserve Aboriginal agenda from talk to action. Following last year’s rich process of deep consultation and listening to the voices of Aboriginal people, communities are starting to build new, or are strengthening existing networks of coordination and services. ORAAP and its partners are seeing the signs of promising change, despite only starting their work in the community on this initiative less than two years ago.

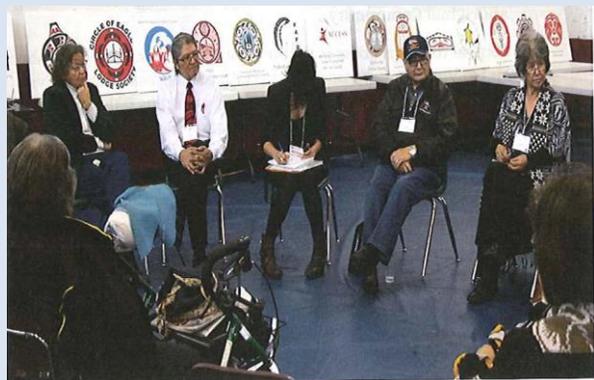
These changes are organized through four interconnected pathways, as previously described in Section A’s Theory of Change: 1) Coordination; 2) Capacity; 3) Engagement; and, 4) Intercultural Partnership. Key accomplishments for each pathway are identified, including case study vignettes.

PATHWAY 1: COORDINATION

The Ministry of Aboriginal Relations and Reconciliation is actively working to bring various Federal, Provincial, and community partners together at the institutional level to coordinate a collaborative process of engagement, planning, and action leading to whole scale change. What is clearly emerging is that this way of collaborative coordination and leadership is transforming itself into a pathway to change.

KEY ACCOMPLISHMENTS:

- **Mechanism for multi-sectoral actor/sector coordination supported**
- **Collaborative funding model established**
- **Shared priorities identified**
- **Outlet created to address broader issues**



ORAAP Coordination in Vancouver

“I think we [PCT] have done a good job of being inclusive by involving the BCAAFC and MNBC. It is important to have these organizations represented at the table in the PCT. I think that has been very positive. That is, it is a new way of doing business including civil society organization sitting at the table [with Government] together right throughout the whole process. It is more common to have federal-provincial tables for a shared program in each province rather than this sort of interaction between different colleagues, including representative Aboriginal Organizations; that is what is unique...”

– PCT Member representing the Ministry Social Development and Social Innovation

1.1 Supported Mechanism for Multi-sectoral Actor/Sector Coordination

ORAAP's Provincial Coordination Team is becoming a model for building a shared space where trust is being established and continues to grow, sometimes by having frank and often difficult conversations. By engaging key Ministries and NGOs across the sectors, the PCT is identifying a shared vision for ORAAP. In turn, this is snowballing into extensive networks that identify the right partners to help implement its action plan across the Province.

1.2 Established Collaborative Funding Model

In addition to coordinating cross-sectoral representatives through the PCT, funding is being pooled together from various provincial ministries and the federal government. This is significant and is essentially creating a new collaborative funding model to support innovative Aboriginal programming in BC.

Box 2: Intersectoral Planning and Support – A Model for Government Collaboration

As lead coordinating body, the Ministry of Aboriginal Relations and Reconciliation is responsible for building the container for effective work together across the sectors. In doing so, it is creating a unique model worth replicating, and it is attracting the interest of Aboriginal and Government counterparts in other Provinces.

This new way of working is generating a multi-actor and multi-sector coordination mechanism to improve and change the reality of off-reserve Aboriginal people. As the lead MARR official remarks:

“ORAAP represents a different way of linking the problems and the solutions... The process of coordination and collaboration creates better results and you can't separate the two. For instance, the transportation investment would have come out in different ways if communities and partners were not as involved in the process of development.

The process through which people solve problems will determine the level and scope of the types of solutions that you will get, and this is an important piece and result. In some ways, the process becomes a result itself. This is a great example of the concrete way of working inspired by ORAAP.”

1.3 Identified Shared Priorities: Jobs, Training, and Youth

Another important accomplishment is MARR's coordination efforts to identify shared priorities for ORAAP across the province. In particular, the PCT is integrating ORAAP into and contributing to *BC's Skills for Jobs Blueprint* – a province-wide initiative to move many BC residents from low employment or even unemployment into gainful full-time work. In many ways, ORAAP partners are structuring their programming within this global vision to create viable opportunities for young Aboriginal people throughout the province. In doing so, partners are applying a holistic approach to community and individual needs that are in line with the priorities identified during the first two years of community engagement.

Box 3: Service Delivery Coordination Model: Vancouver

In its capacity as coordinating body representing 24 member organizations, the Metro Vancouver Aboriginal Executive Council is focusing their ORAAP work on forming a comprehensive consultation process and accountability model worth sharing. In addition, it is doing so in a way that is building capacity in the city to continue engaging its constituencies into the future.



MVAEC members discuss ORAAP

The dual focus of meaningful engagement coupled with capacity development is creating momentum in Metro Vancouver. In particular, MVAEC is focusing its efforts through four themes:

- Education, Training & Employment
- Justice
- Homelessness and Housing
- Aboriginal Arts Culture, Language and Elders

This is a solid outcome for ORAAP in showing how multi-organizational and multi-sector coordination can be effective and collaborative. Over **435 participants** are getting involved in seven forums and/or participating in the surveys implemented by MVAEC. This is creating a promising coordination and engagement model.

1.4.1 Created Outlet to Address Broader Issues

Not only are individuals and institutions being engaged through the PCT, but ORAAP is also building province wide institutional partnerships with other levels of Government and agencies, NGOs, service delivery agencies, First Nations Band Councils and businesses to realize the broader vision of ORAAP. In short, ORAAP is creating a shared space for coordination. In the Interior, the Friendship Society is convening the Kamloops Off-Reserve Advisor Council (KORAC). This brings together member representatives from various sectors of the Aboriginal community— including health, education, employment and training, housing and homelessness, arts, language and culture, justice and children, youth and families— to meet once a month to discuss the issues and priorities, and to explore emerging opportunities for partnership or collaboration. Further, since inception, the group has expanded to include representation from the City of Kamloops and the Kamloops Chamber of Commerce, and has an open-door policy to welcome new members that have a vested interest in the health, wellbeing and advancement of urban Aboriginal people.

PATHWAY 2: CAPACITY

“Before kids just came to be fed and hang out. Now we are providing training to help them make the shift from dependence to giving back to community.” – Hiiye’yu Lelum Representative

Accomplishments in this pathway focus on strengthening the capacity of urban Aboriginal citizens, local partners, and ORAAP partners. The needs and priorities identified by community stakeholders during the consultation phase are being integrated into programming and planning efforts. Applying a holistic lens, partners are also addressing challenges such as commuting from work/school as well as necessary childcare to support urban Aboriginal people to contribute to the workforce. In particular, there is a concerted effort across the sites to focus on jobs, training and youth as central capacity development areas, through culturally grounded and community based programming.



Pre-employment program graduation class (STEPS, Duncan)

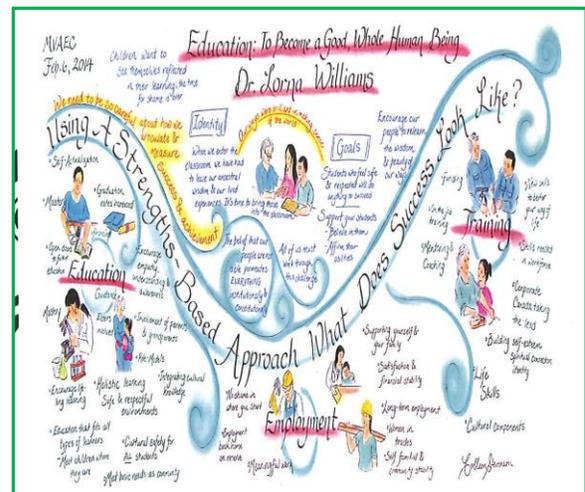
KEY ACCOMPLISHMENTS:

- **Creating safe and supportive learning environments**
- **Three job readiness programs are being designed and delivered with urban Aboriginal people**
- **Filling gaps between services and people needing assistance**
- **Strengthening long term organizational, network and institutional capacity**

2.1 Creating Safe and Supportive Learning Environments for Capacity Building

By engaging with community stakeholders, partners are exploring several strategies at different levels. For example, the Kamloops Aboriginal Friendship Society is engaging with the School Board and youth across School District 73. Young people recommended that the formal education system should include more practical experiential approaches.

In Vancouver, Dr. Lorna Williams spoke about the necessity of creating learning environments where Aboriginal students feel safe and confident enough to bring their ancestral teachings into the conversation.



Education graphic, Employment and Training Forum, Vancouver, MVAEC

Box 4: Creating Jobs through Coordination and Capacity development – 5 X 5 Strategy - BCAAFC

The BC Association of Aboriginal Friendship Centres (BCAAFC) is responding to a call to action to achieve job placements for 5,000 British Columbian Aboriginal citizens within a five year time frame, hence the *Five by Five Aboriginal Jobs Strategy*.

This BCAAFC Aboriginal Jobs Plan comes after commissioning an extensive Labour market survey for the cities of Prince George, Kamloops, Surrey, and Duncan to serve as a baseline for the Aboriginal labour market in those communities, and a frame of reference for the future. Access and support to participate in the economy is recognized as a significant opportunity for both Aboriginal people and the province of British Columbia.

As an organization representing 25 urban Aboriginal service delivery agencies, the BCAAFC is uniquely positioned to develop an integrated strategy to implement evidence based solutions contributing to a greater number of Aboriginal people able to find and maintain gainful employment in the coming years. The business case for this ambitious plan is rather simple: Invest in Aboriginal people to train, attain and retain employment can lead to saving more in the long term from the decrease in Aboriginal persons needing social assistance and other forms of income support by multiple levels of Government.

This Plan focuses on five pillars:

- 1) Social and economic innovation including supporting the creation of social enterprises and social impact bonds
- 2) Education – both adult basic education and family literacy
- 3) Employment services that will include support for childcare
- 4) Broad based government, industry, colleges and universities and Aboriginal service delivery agencies and partnerships
- 5) Operational capacity to manage, coordinate and effectively track and measure the project's influence in assisting Aboriginal people to integrate into the workforce.

Through ORAAP and other initiatives, the 5X5 Strategy will create a strong foundation for inter-sectoral planning, coordination, and action to strengthen the capacity of Aboriginal people throughout BC.



BCAAFC's Five by Five Strategy of intersectoral coordination for Aboriginal job creation, 2014

2.2 Designed and Delivered Job Readiness Programs for Urban Aboriginal People

Three examples are emerging from pilot ORAAP communities. Interestingly, each of the pre-employment readiness programs share an important component of creating connections between youth and Elders, as well as between culture and community. This is highly beneficial, not only for youth, but also the Elders in the community, as it strengthens their sense of responsibility, connection, and purpose in assisting the young to find their way.

Box 5: Profiling Job Readiness Programming through ORAAP – Models for the Future

Program 1: Surrey – Delivering Basic Pre-employment Skills Program for Aboriginal Youth

The Fraser Region Aboriginal Friendship Centre Association (FRAFCA) is establishing an innovative and successful program called Individual Opportunities (IO). The program uses an intake process to better inform the complex needs of clients and employment staff. This multifaceted assessment helps to plan the training program based on the individual barriers and challenges they face to prepare themselves for the workforce. Outcomes are then tracked to better adapt the program to the evolving nature of the clients' progress and dynamic needs.

The IO program intake assessment process is largely inspired by the medicine wheel approach to health and development, and is divided into various domains. This categorization of individual needs follows an in-depth interview that covers their health, employment, education, and housing history, while ensuring that adequate youth and culturally appropriate stimuli, Elder guidance, and community development experience are addressed in the IO training plan.

A Surrey Success Story.

A young woman started attending the Individual Opportunities program. She has had addiction challenges and had been in and out of recovery. Through the comprehensive intake assessment process, FRAFCA staff encouraged her to attend other support services offered by the organization. She followed their advice and attended Early Childhood Development Drop-in, Cultural Night, Native Education College Adult Basic Education, and Homeless Outreach. Since joining the IO program, she has completed Grades 8-10 and is now working on completing her grades 11 & 12. Further, she is interested in pursuing the Aboriginal Best program to start her own business. She has done all of these things in only a few months. Offering a variety of services and clearly tracking progress is a model that is showing some strong signs of great success to support young people to gain a renewed sense of self and community.



Individualized Program participants, Surrey

Early results from the Individual Opportunities program (since May 2014) include:

- **64 individuals participated in the 2-month intake period; 48 youth obtained training**
- **13 graduates (20% of the initial cohort) furthered their education**
- **8 have obtained employment since progressing through the IO program**

(...Box 5 cont'd)

Program 2: Becoming Job-Ready in Duncan

In Cowichan, youth are being given great opportunities for growth and grounding with a full suite of training programs addressing multiple aspects of their lives in order to achieve job-readiness outcomes. A portion of this includes practicums with local businesses and organizations. Mentorship is emerging as a clear theme across all ORAAP communities.

One student comment from Duncan attested:

“This program was one of the best programs in years. I would recommend this program to people. It was truly amazing, opened my eyes to positive things in life, great instructors”.



Youth gain work experience through Duncan's STEPS Program

Program 3: Duncan – Holistic Approach to Pre-employment.

The Hiiye'yu Lelum Society (House of Friendship) is focusing on secondary school aged youth and young adults to provide pre-employment skills and knowledge, build their confidence, and provide greater support for their development and sense of identity. In recent years, there has been an increase in youth suicides that led the Cowichan Tribes Band Council to declare a crisis situation in the Valley, requiring special attention by the community, its service providers, and all of their allies.

The youth (15-30) pre-employment programs entitled *Kitchen Connections* and *STEPS to Employment* applies a holistic approach to its educational philosophy and content by using the four realms of the traditional First Nations world view in the design and delivery (the physical, mental, spiritual, and emotional realms of the medicine wheel).



Duncan's Kitchen Connections Program

In 2013-2014, accomplishments include:

- 12 youth (ages 15 to 30) entered and 11 successfully completed the STEP program
- 9 youth (ages 15 to 20) completed the Kitchen Connections pre-employment and healthy living program

2.3 Bridging the Gap between Services and People Needing Assistance

A common challenge for any citizen living in an urban area is to find out what services exist and how to access them in a timely fashion. One innovative attempt to bridge this gap between people and services is MVAEC's Community Navigator program. Under ORAAP, MVAEC is employing two community navigators to assist in store-front like service coordination for many of the most vulnerable Aboriginal people, particularly those affected by chronic addiction and/or homelessness. In some cases, these Navigators are also helping to strengthen community based Aboriginal organizations to stabilize their funding base or service provision.

“MVAEC Navigators [are good at] seeing where the need is, and making this known to each organization based on what they offer. We see they are making an impact already”.

– Vancouver Community Member

“In regards to housing, don't put all your eggs in one basket. Don't depend solely on BC Housing, hit up Craigslist and Kijiji. Housing Navigators will give you a list of what potential landlords have a right to ask you and they will give you a list of questions to ask that landlord. Housing Navigators that are helping.”

-Vancouver Community Member



Focus group discussions in Vancouver

Box 6: Capacity Building through Workshops and Micro-Grants

MNBC hosted a multi-day workshop on Proposal Writing and Social Enterprise Workshop and Métis Youth BC Annual General Meeting involving 15 Métis youth and 30 Métis citizens, representing 26 Chartered Communities from across BC. All the participants were then given the opportunity to take the knowledge and skills gained in proposal writing to apply for small grants offered by MNBC to all Métis people across the province. Of those participants, 16 were awarded community health grants and six youth were awarded community engagement grants.

Participants found the workshops “very helpful”.

[I] felt pride in representing my community to the larger Metis Nation British Columbia community. [I] created a proposal in conjunction with another citizen from my region. This increased the sense of community.”

MNBC is leveraging this capacity building by distributing up to \$40,000 in community based funding grants to successful Métis participants at the Proposal Writing Workshop. This is not only helping to apply new skills, but it is also allowing participants to contribute to their community through tangible action.



Participants in Metis Nation BC play the amazing race game to warm up to a grant writing skills workshop

2.4 Strengthening Long term Organizational, Network, and Institutional Capacity

ORAAP is strengthening capacities at many different levels – from individual citizens, service based practitioners, community based organizations, and government ministries, as well as networks focused on improving the lives of urban Aboriginal people.

In Vancouver, for example, community navigators are strengthening the capacity of member organizations in MVAEC, directing the entire engagement process over two years, training community facilitators, recorders and coordinators, and delivering engagement for the membership. This is effectively building recognized capacity in delivering a comprehensive community engagement process and becoming a resource to the community beyond the Aboriginal communities that MVAEC’s membership serves. This conscious effort to leverage ORAAP’s investment is leading to institutional and organizational development throughout BC, with seven implementing organizations that are able to find out more about the populations they serve, diversify their funding sources, and strengthen their convening and engagement capacity both for Government and for themselves. They have also provided various models for how to better serve youth and residents by delivering a particular brand of pre-employment training to younger and older Aboriginal people. These are important results that will long outlive the ORAAP program.

For Métis Nation British Columbia (MNBC), for instance, the challenge is a more fundamental one: simple recognition and inclusion. This is a challenge for the organization, Métis charter and non-charter communities, and residents across BC. MNBC is focusing on institutional development, particularly to engage young Métis to learn about available programs and how to access them. MNBC has played a unique role in the initiative both sitting at the PCT table to influence the course of the program, while also implementing activities on the ground with communities and Métis youth.

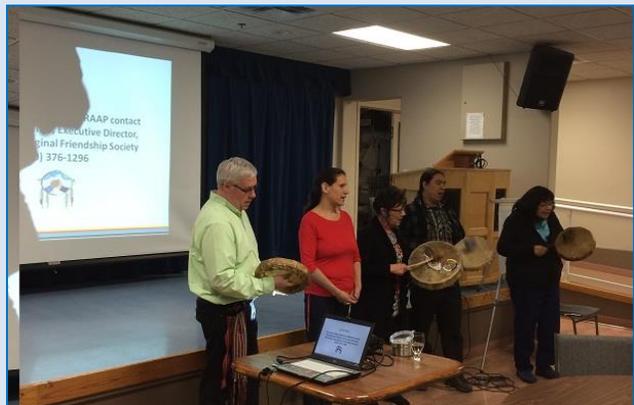
PATHWAY 3: ENGAGEMENT

Multiple partnerships are emerging where they may not have existed before, along with new attitudes towards working together. The extensive consultation process is contributing to these changes. Constructive and deep engagement is building the foundation for trust and understanding. Sustainable changes are occurring in ORAAP – leading to a steady and gradual increase in the understanding and response to the systemic challenges faced by urban Aboriginal people in BC.

KEY ACCOMPLISHMENTS:

- Engaged thousands of BC residents through forums, surveys, committees, and cultural activities
- Improving understanding and priority responses to systemic challenges faced by urban Aboriginal people
- Increasing awareness of the off-reserve urban Aboriginal population

“I know that in the past, I have been almost invisible to mainstream organizations, and now I am invited to share my voice with them.” – Duncan Representative



Performing a farewell song at the conclusion of the ORAAP Community Forum in Kamloops

3.1 Engaged Thousands of BC Residents through Forums, Surveys, Committees and Cultural activities

In 2013-2014, partners engaged over 3,100 citizens to make positive changes for urban Aboriginal people in BC. Engagement took the form of community forums (16 in total), youth and child engagement and workshops, surveys, focus groups, and inter-sectoral committee work as well as cultural events and community meals to bring people together. In general, these activities covered a wide range of Aboriginal strengths and challenges to community building and individual economic self-sufficiency, using a holistic approach to identify topics for exploration and work. Topics included:

- Child and youth education and workforce preparation
- Culture, arts, and intergenerational connections
- Transportation
- Health and community welfare
- Justice and healing
- Homelessness and housing
- Jobs, training, and employment

3.2 Improving Understanding and Priority Responses to Systemic Challenges Faced by Urban Aboriginal People

Various community partners are seeing the need to connect and engage with various communities and diverse partners through culturally appropriate ways while taking the time to invest in documenting these processes. Implementing an effective and meaningful engagement process and linking this to service planning ensures that solutions to real-life problems are community driven and implemented in full collaboration with those most affected by the strategies developed. This is how we move from talk to action.

Box 7: Community driven Change through Traditional *Witnessing*

This innovative partnership model seeks to foster sustainable change for government and citizens to identify, prioritize and address local challenges. They do so, not by having the Government decide what and how to invest, but rather communities begin by helping to define the problem and the solutions that make the most sense for them according to their view of the world and how they relate to it.

This process makes connections across communities and offers opportunities for '*witnessing*'. In Vancouver, the Metro Vancouver Aboriginal Executive Council (MVAEC) recognizes this traditional Coast Salish practice throughout ORAAP's multiple levels. By *witnessing*, ORAAP partners are ensuring mutual accountability to fulfill their goals.

- MARR, AANDC and other Provincial Coordination Team (PCT) members are *witnessing* the work going on in each community
- Community leaders are engaging with citizens throughout the consultation process
- Community partners and residents are *witnessing* the commitments and efforts made by governments and other provincial partners to support them.

This is the power of mutual accountability. In this way, building an understanding from the bottom up is helping to transform the relationship into a mutually respectful partnership that is community driven.



MVAEC adopts the Coast Salish principle of *witnessing*. It is an approach to ensure reciprocal accountability between partners. Responsibilities include: listen attentively, to remember, communicate what transpires, and the responsibility to act. *Witnessing* is happening at many levels throughout ORAAP.

3.3 Increasing Awareness of Off-reserve Urban Aboriginal Population

Through engagement activities in the pilot communities, ORAAP is contributing to increasing awareness and understanding of who off-reserve/urban Aboriginal people are, including a better understanding of their history, culture, and traditions. Greater opportunities for dialogue and listening can lead to greater understanding, and eventually, empathy for others.



Vancouver hosts cultural gathering

“For many elected people, Aboriginal culture and issues are confusing. It is about encouraging conversations to talk about the citizens in their community.” – UBCM Representative

“When I go to a restaurant for lunch, people are talking about ORAAP. There is a possibility to create the process and [the desired] change.” – Prince George Representative.

Box 8: Community Level Coordination – A Way Forward for Transportation in the Cowichan Valley

The Transportation Planning Committee in Duncan is coming together to build a comprehensive Regional Transportation Plan that will meet the needs of all citizens. In the past, a lack of coordination hampered efforts in the region due to the administrative divisions among four separate municipalities and governing bodies, including: the Cowichan Valley Regional District (CVRD), the City of Duncan, Cowichan Tribes, and the District of North Cowichan. There was a tendency to work in isolation.

In taking a holistic approach, representatives from the various bodies are encouraging greater coordination by inviting representatives from the Hiiye’yu Lelum Friendship Centre, following ORAAP engagement activities this Spring. Now, the Hiiye’yu Lelum representative is participating in the CVRD’s Community Safety and Advisory Commission to advance the *Safe Youth Cowichan* and *Inviting Voice, Creating Space* initiatives.

“I believe it is through the sharing of both our strengths, accomplishments, struggles, and visions that the relationship is strengthened, discrimination and isolation are lessened, and true collaboration can excel...and... that the objective for this initiative has been met and has been key to moving from the identification of barriers to the “planning” and then the “action” of eliminating those barriers”.

Strengthening relationships is leading to understanding and greater coordination in many parts of ORAAP seen in these small but important steps in the Cowichan Valley.” - Hiiye’yu Lelum ORAAP program coordinator



PATHWAY 4: INTERCULTURAL PARTNERSHIP

The fourth pathway to change is creating intercultural partnerships. This usually manifests itself by coming together to share Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal experience in a culturally respectful, strength based, and joyous manner. This means actually coming together to celebrate our cultures. By intercultural, we mean that there is more than a simple recognition and tolerance of difference, but an actual understanding and valuing of our differences – leading to a new form of viewing and acting in the world. This leads to resilience oriented solutions and creative, restorative partnerships based on mutual understanding and respect.

KEY ACCOMPLISHMENTS:

- **Inter-cultural/community based lens embedded into ORAAP delivery**
- **Mechanisms created for meaningful collaboration and community building**
- **Reconciliation activities facilitated to foster collaborative partnerships**



“As we work through this process, we’re basically all feeling the same thing, we’re basically all writing the same thing, and that’s for the improvement of ourselves – our ancestors are with us, by our side, guiding our work, encouraging us to work in truth as we move forward.”

– Elder Facilitator, Prince George

4.1 Inter-cultural/community based Lens Embedded into ORAAP Design and Delivery

Across the community pilot sites, intercultural partnerships are putting children and ancestral teachings at the centre of the design and delivery of the ORAAP initiative. This lens is supporting each community to better understand its unique geographic, demographic, historical, economic, and social assets & challenges. Examples include the Coast Salish tradition of *witnessing* in Metro Vancouver, integrating the holistic medicine wheel into job readiness programming in Duncan, consulting with Elders in Surrey, celebrating community forums through drumming in Kamloops or hosting community-wide cultural evenings in Prince George.

Box 9: Celebrating our Cultural Diversity is also about Building True Partnership

The Prince George Native Friendship Centre (PGNFC) continues to build on the success of its reputation as a community convener across cultures. “Nez Key bulh nus ts’edulh” translates to “we are walking into the future with our children”. By convening Elders Circles of Wisdom, Circles of leadership, 8th Fire Cultural nights, a Community wellness Fair and events for youth, PGNFC has been able to bring together 590 individuals and generate closer relationships with a multitude of actors and communities including diverse partners like the RCMP and business leaders as well as Métis associations and the Band Councils (on reserve Aboriginal people). Culture valuation plays a central role, in addition to the critical connection between youth, Elders and the knowledge keepers.

PGNFC’s *Nez Key bulh nus ts’edulh*...*We are Walking into the future with our children* has created a rallying call to action for members of multiple communities to come together around the future of their children and devise joint planning to address issues affecting their future accessibility in society – their “safety” in community. By applying an intercultural lens, ORAAP contributes to building true partnerships.



“It is our hope at the end of that process, that our community partners, friends of the Friendship Centre, people who have a vested interest in the best interests of the people in our community, will come together and will make the commitment to develop a community safety plan.” – Executive Director, PGNF

4.2 Mechanisms Created to Foster Cross-Sectoral Community Building

Through ORAAP, partners are creating mechanisms for meaningful collaboration and community building across First Nation, Métis and non-Aboriginal worlds as well as across bureaucratic and non-governmental cultures of doing and being. In Kamloops, for example, the KAFS is building relationships with local school boards for better access to engage potential youth participants as well as to influence policies and curricula. As a result of ORAAP, among many other important contributions, Public Safety Canada is partnering with Prince George Native Friendship Centre to conduct a similar process to develop a Community Safety Plan. These are unexpected results worth sharing with ORAAP partners.

Box 10: Including Métis People in ORAAP

The ORAAP initiative is making intentional efforts to include Métis people at both the local and provincial levels. In 2013-2014, we are seeing some positive changes from these efforts. For instance, MNBC-PCT member states:

“I would say that there is increased awareness at least [. . .]. Even at the ORAAP table, you’d see people catching themselves as they would say, ‘First Nations, oh, and Aboriginal.’ So there is some change because of the awareness level of ORAAP, at least seen in my work.”

However there is still much work to be done, as evidenced by MNBC’s year-end survey report concludes:

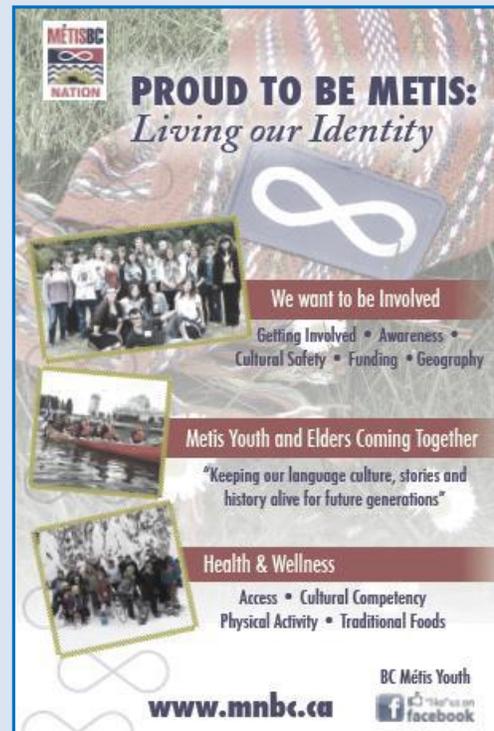
“The findings indicate that although there are some significant positive changes at the provincial level in the relationships between MNBC and the PCT members, there is still much work to be done at the regional and community level. Moreover, it is clear that many of the policies and formal processes informing service delivery in multiple sectors need to be revised in order to foster culturally-safe spaces for Métis people.”

Métis people are feeling discriminated against because they are not considered recipients of First Nations designed programming, and do not always feel welcome in non-Aboriginal service institutions. Métis people see hope in turning this situation around by creating processes, policies, and spaces that recognize the uniqueness of Métis culture and strong communities across BC. Sometimes this is an easy effort, as one young Métis youth observed:

“If we could just start with a Métis symbol on the door or something just to show that we are welcome there”.

In other cases, that may mean demonstrating a commitment to Métis inclusion by providing an intercultural approach to service delivery in practice. This may take the form of employing Métis people who provide services, which is the case in one ORAAP Community seen in the KAFS, as a Métis Chartered Community member mentioned:

“The Kamloops Friendship Centre in particular is run by a Métis man . . . I certainly would feel comfortable accessing the services if I was going as a Métis person. Even the logo of the Kamloops Friendship Centre has a sash in it or not a sash, but a First Nations person and a Métis person shaking hands and you can tell by the beadwork on the gauntlet”.



Sharing resources for Métis people

This sort of intercultural recognition and effort contributes to reconciliation between First Nation, Métis, and non-aboriginal communities, and will lead to sustainable change in the long run.



“I see some amazing progress with ORAAP. It’s really exciting to have a chance to sit down and work with other urban Aboriginal people because we face a lot of the same barriers, but this has created an opportunity where we can get to know each other and work together and form those relationships. –Youth delegate at Gathering our Voices, Métis Nation of British Columbia

4.3 Facilitated Reconciliation Activities to Support Collaborative Partnerships

In 2013-2014, several intercultural partnership activities including workshops, gatherings, developmental evaluation/research are providing opportunities for reflection, reconciliation and innovation. These reconciliation events are not insignificant or random activities. They demonstrate a general movement leading to greater societal reconciliation. There is no question that this work is being influenced by ORAAP’s success in promoting constructive change through a culturally sensitive partnership.

Box 11: Partnership through Reconciliation – UBCM

The Union of British Columbia Municipalities (UBCM) engaged ORAAP partners to conduct a successful workshop leading up to the UBCM Annual Convention in Vancouver last September. During this workshop, over 60 provincial and municipal leaders from across BC heard from the Minister of Aboriginal Relations and Reconciliation, the Honourable John Rustad, UBCM Councillor Murry Krause and BCAAFC's Paul Lacerte, among other members of the PCT, speak to the collaboration occurring in ORAAP and the focus on the opportunities and issues facing the urban Aboriginal community.

Opportunities to engage leaders can contribute to raising awareness about urban Aboriginal people and those organizations that support them, with diverse allies at a provincial level. Greater awareness and understanding contribute to reconciliation. This is generating unexpected results from ORAAP. Evidence can be found in the UBCM contribution to the annual report.



Reconciliation workshop held in Victoria, an ORAAP-inspired initiative to help organize 100 Aboriginal reconciliation sessions across BC



Photo: Reconciliation Canada, Vancouver Walk

“Through these sessions, and other Reconciliation Week events, a momentum developed during the convention that culminated in the assembly endorsing a motion calling for a Year of Reconciliation with First Nations across British Columbia. This motion was presented as part of UBCM’s Expression of Reconciliation at the Truth and Reconciliation Commission’s National event on September 19, 2013.”

Later that week, the National Truth and Reconciliation Commission organized a parade through the streets of Vancouver’s downtown area.

In addition, the role that UBCM is playing in bringing together BC’s municipalities working with Aboriginal people did not stop at the convention but led to a commitment to partner with MARR, BCAAFC, and Reconciliation Canada to help organize 100 Aboriginal reconciliation sessions in dozens of BC communities over the next year.

This is a significant action in light of creating greater awareness and understanding from an intercultural perspective between Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal British Columbians. We are looking forward to seeing the outcomes from this collaboration in next year’s report.

SECTION C: LEARNING AND INNOVATION

“ORAAP is not just about funding. We are learning and sharing to build the capacity of everyone involved in the process. We need to learn more about the people that we serve. This process helps us to do just that.” – Prince George Aboriginal Friendship Centre

As part of this annual review, partners reflected on their personal and collective journeys through ORAAP. Learning focused on the strengths, challenges and innovations emerging from the initiative. Key lessons are highlighted below.

1. Identified priorities - jobs, training, and youth - create a common purpose for ORAAP’s direction across pilots.

Throughout the consultation process (Year 1), stakeholders identified several issues specific to the unique characteristics of each pilot site’s urban Aboriginal community (e.g. safety, health, housing, transportation). At the provincial level, economic development is seen as a high priority in BC’s Skills for Jobs Blueprint Together, the three 2013-2014 ORAAP priorities create a ‘shared lens’ to better coordinate programs, services and strategies targeting urban Aboriginal people across the province (Year 2 and beyond). In this shared priority, youth job readiness training is being implemented in a number of pilot communities. However, we are learning that in the Aboriginal context, many adults beyond the age of 30 could also use the same services provided by agencies preparing youth for entry into the labour market.



Engaging the community in Vancouver

2. Community led change from the bottom up.

Sustainable, meaningful change occurs when diverse stakeholders are involved in all aspects of designing, implementing, and evaluating programs and services designed to meet their needs. This model is recognized as a different approach for governments and communities to work together to support an Aboriginal-driven change agenda.

“ORAAP is helping us to deal with the fracturing in our community. It is important to come together as a community, even to include those that are reluctant.”

3. Strong cohesiveness in shared values, intercultural perspectives, understanding the urban Aboriginal realities, and commitment among partners.

The importance of investing in professional and personal relationships across the ORAAP partnership was identified as an important lesson this year. In particular, partners are moving beyond the “getting to know each other” phase, to engaging in meaningful dialogue with the goal of co-creating lasting change. These connections will help to move ORAAP forward, including navigating the new Federal Government funding model as well as building a foundation for expanding the multi-sectoral partnership.

“Investing time in relationships can open up so many doors. It is amazing how the barriers that had existed before, no longer exist. This is such an important piece.” - Representative of the Ministry of Aboriginal Affairs and Reconciliation

“I think there is enormous amount of frankness and honesty at the table. The PCT is very inclusive, open and collaborative. At the end of the day, we all have the common goal of trying to support the communities – and it is very collaborative.” – Aboriginal Affairs and Northern Development Canada

4. Need for sustainability and predictability.

Partners identified that the timing and uncertainty of funding created significant challenges to implementing ORAAP. The time lag, in part, is due to the fact that ORAAP is considered a special initiative, as opposed to a multi-year, core funding program. Therefore, funding for ORAAP needs to be collected from various provincial ministries (i.e. “We need to shop ORAAP around to resource it”). This led to delays in the call for review, approval, and processing of community proposals. It was very challenging for communities to deliver and evaluate proposed year-long programming in just four months. The delays created challenges for the PCT team as it became a key priority, rather than focusing on cross-ministry collaboration to improve policy and programming. Furthermore, this was a transition year, as the federal government is in the process of modifying its model for funding Aboriginal communities and urban Aboriginal service delivery agencies. Collectively, the ORAAP partners are discussing ways to improve program efficiencies, for the timing of funding to be more predictable, as well as exploring new strategies to increase program sustainability.

5. It is critical that ORAAP activities are grounded in Aboriginal values and customs.

Culture needs to be carefully woven into all aspects of the initiative, including the design, implementation, and evaluation of ORAAP. In particular, Elders, Chiefs, band councils and other traditional leaders are playing an influential role in guiding ORAAP and in helping to support and inspire Aboriginal youth. There are many community examples demonstrating this integration: the Prince George Smokehouse, Surrey traditional games and mentorship, cultural protocols for community consultation in Vancouver.

Chief: “I’m endorsing ORAAP because my people need to have a personal voice in government” – Prince George Representative

“There is a lot of talk at adult tables about youth involvement. We need to walk the talk. We need to show that youth voices are meaningful and bring that back to them so that they can see how.” – Kamloops Aboriginal Friendship Society



Traditional games integrated into ORAAP activities in Surrey

6. Ongoing relationship building supports inclusive services for diverse urban Aboriginal people.

The ORAAP process of bringing diverse people together to address common challenges is also helping to increase awareness and to break-down many types of barriers: On/off reserve, Métis/ First Nation/Inuit, young/older persons

7. Reaching out to diverse partners can lead to innovative intercultural partnerships.

ORAAP partners – particularly at the community level - are increasingly reaching out to organizations they have not typically engaged previously (e.g. law enforcement, school boards, health authorities, businesses, employment centres). In some cases, engaging with such organizations is leading to the unexpected outcome of shifting entrenched adversarial relationships into solution oriented, supportive partnerships that thrive on our cultural diversity and shared values.

Box 12: Planting Seeds of Social Innovation

Social innovation is about putting people and places at the centre of creating and moving new concepts into action. ORAAP, like many social change initiatives, is seeking to transform systems to create sustainable change for urban Aboriginal people. This can be done through altering perceptions, behaviours, and structures. ORAAP is engaging and influencing complex systems involving people from diverse *societies* (youth, Elders), *sectors* (government, non-profit, private sector) and at different *scales* (community, provincial, federal). Examples: education, health, transportation, housing, safety

The relationship and network building through ORAAP is creating several spin-off initiatives, including, for example:

- 1) **Community Safety Plan:** Public Safety Canada approached the Prince George Aboriginal Friendship Centre about integrating and expanding the community consultations to improve community safety.
- 2) **GP for Me:** The Kamloops Aboriginal Friendship Society struck up a partnership with the Thompson Region Division of Family Practice to better understand urban Aboriginal experiences and perspectives with family doctors.



“Working with GP for Me was a huge unexpected outcome for ORAAP. Doctors are going to get a better idea of the needs of our community. This is a big piece that is opening up opportunities.” – Kamloops Aboriginal Friendship Society

Minister Don McRae joins artist Andy Everson at Wachiay Friendship Centre to celebrate Aboriginal Social Enterprise Day

- 3) **Aboriginal Social Enterprise Day:** BC government proclaimed April 22, 2014 as a day to recognize the expanding social enterprise sector. This included winners from the BC Ideas contest
- 4) **Reconciliation Workshops:** ORAAP partnerships are supporting an initiative to host 100 workshops to raise awareness and foster healing in BC-based communities
- 5) **Métis Micro-granting:** As a result of the ORAAP grant writing workshop, MNBC was able to fund 22 grants to strengthen Métis communities
- 6) **Large industry partnerships:** Through new partnerships, federal and community partners are exploring opportunities for urban Aboriginal communities, including the shipping and extractive industries.

“Social innovation is about three things: 1) Changing the status quo (e.g. policies and plans), 2) Changing attitudes and behaviours, and 3) Changing the way that initiatives are financed. ORAAP is making progress on the 1 & 2. Now we need to focus our energy on # 3.” – Ministry of Jobs, Tourism, and Skills Training

SECTION D: LOOKING FORWARD

On February 6, 2014, the Minister of Aboriginal Affairs and Northern Development Canada (AANDC), announced the renewal of an improved Urban Aboriginal Strategy (UAS) that will continue to focus on encouraging partnerships and collaboration to help increase the participation of urban Aboriginal people in the economy.

To identify priorities to remove the barriers for urban Aboriginal people to increase their participation in the economy, AANDC is leading the development of a 'BC Regional Plan'. The development of the Regional Plan will include engaging communities across BC using a comprehensive survey tool and using the survey data to inform the development of the Plan.

How does this fit with ORAAP? Since 2011, ORAAP has supported five communities in BC to undertake community development pilot projects that sought to identify key themes and priorities to achieve the vision of ORAAP.

Using the information captured through ORAAP ensures that we are building off existing community engagement data and that we are now able to extend opportunities to other areas of the province to provide feedback into the development of a Plan. The information captured, through this survey, will also inform the future direction of ORAAP as the federal and provincial government work, in partnership, with Aboriginal organizations and local government to achieve similar outcomes for increased economic participation and increased employment readiness.

ABBREVIATIONS AND ACRONYMS

AANDC	Aboriginal and Northern Affairs Canada
ABE	Adult Basic Education
ADM	Assistant Deputy Minister
BCAAFC	British Columbia Association of Friendship Centres
CVRD	Cowichan Valley Regional District
DE	Developmental Evaluation
DM	Deputy Minister
FRAFCA	Fraser Region Aboriginal Friendship Centre Association
IICRD	International Institute for Child Rights and Development
IO	Individual Opportunities
KAFS	Kamloops Aboriginal Friendship Society
KORAC	Kamloops Off-reserve Advisory Council
MARR	Ministry of Aboriginal Relations and Reconciliation
MCFD	Ministry of Children and Family Development
MNBC	Métis Nation British Columbia
MSDSI	Ministry of Social Development and Social Innovation
MVAEC	Metro Vancouver Aboriginal Executive Council
NGO	Non-governmental Organization
ORAAP	Off-Reserve Aboriginal Action Plan
PCT	Provincial Coordination Team
PGNFC	Prince George Native Friendship Centre
UAS	Urban Aboriginal Strategy
UBCM	Union of British Columbia Municipalities