

ABORIGINAL EMPLOYMENT IN BRITISH COLUMBIA COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

SUMMARY REPORT



**PREPARED FOR:
BC MINISTRY OF ABORIGINAL RELATIONS AND
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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The 2008 British Columbia–Canada Labour Market Agreement (LMA) has presented an important opportunity to improve employment programs for Aboriginal people who face barriers to their participation in the labour market in BC. Through this agreement, funds will be available to support labour market programs for Aboriginal people who are either: (a) unemployed, but not eligible for Employment Insurance benefits or programs, or (b) employed but with low levels of Essential Skills or educational attainment. Aboriginal people include First Nations, Métis, and Inuit people.

The Ministry of Aboriginal Relations and Reconciliation (MARR) undertook a research project that consisted of a literature review and a community engagement process consisting of surveys, interviews, and a series of focus groups. The community engagements began with a review of “best practices” in programs, and the dialogue then focused on an interactive approach with participants. The research data reflected in this report consist of the views and opinions expressed by the participants during the community engagement process. This report provides a summary of the key themes that emerged from the data as recommendations for potential future LMA employment programs for Aboriginal people.

Participants in the engagement process anticipate that copies of this report will be provided to them prior to any public process to determine service delivery agencies.

KEY FINDINGS

Engagement Findings

According to the participants, the most successful employment programs must include all of the following elements:

1. Holistic Approach
2. Pre-Employment Training
3. Multi-Partnership Sponsors
4. Workplace-Based Training & Supports
5. Cultural Awareness Training for all stakeholders

The themes that emerged most consistently during the research and engagement process are summarized as follows:

1. Holistic Approaches – includes but is not limited to:

- Client driven and as long as necessary
- Inclusive assessment (currently a gap)
- Coordinated approach to employment and employment programs
- Strength-based approach
- Link to community and broader labour market
- Clearly defined and measurable outcomes

2. Pre-Employment Training – includes but is not limited to:

- Contextual assessments and preparatory training are necessary
- Cultural and diversity awareness training is needed in all areas
- Start where the client is at
- Emotional, physical, spiritual, and intellectual stabilization
- Basic needs are met (food, housing, daycare, transportation, etc.)
- Essential Skills (9 skills), Employability Skills (Conference Board)

3. Multi-Partnership Approaches – includes but is not limited to:

- Increase coordinated efforts among governments
- Increase the number of employers in partnerships
- Increase systemic or system supports
- Partnerships need to be defined: see Principles of Partnership

4. Workplace-Based Training and Supports – includes but is not limited to:

- All learning and training should be documented, recognized by other workplaces or educational institutions, and certifiable
- Individual personal supports are required on the job
- Program outcomes must link to the appropriate economic development (i.e., on or off reserve jobs)

5. Cultural Awareness Training across the Labour Market – includes but is not limited to:

- Cultural reconnection for Aboriginal clients who have been disconnected from their culture
- Skilled Aboriginal facilitators delivering training to all partners in the labour market (educators, employers, employees, job coaches, trainers, NGOs, government, community, general public, etc.)

INTRODUCTION

MARR recently undertook a community dialogue on labour market programming for Aboriginal people. In response to the recent federal labour market agreement funding opportunity, MARR sought the advice and input from representatives of Aboriginal people and organizations representing Aboriginal people. They also sought input from a variety of other sources, including educational institutions, industry demand side experts, federal government representatives, other provincial ministries and organizations in the business of providing labour program training. An engagement process was created to help identify gaps in current programming and best practices that will shape future employment programs. This community engagement took place over the late fall of 2008 and included key informant interviews, surveys, and regional focus groups to collect information.

BACKGROUND

This current LMA with BC supports new investment in labour market programs aimed specifically at those who are unemployed, but are not eligible for Employment Insurance (EI) benefits or programs. The agreement also benefits those who are employed, but with low skills including low educational attainment or those lacking essential skill levels. MARR coordinated the research and the dialogues to specifically focus on programs directed towards Aboriginal people who meet these criteria. (Note: Aboriginal people include First Nations, Métis, and Inuit people.)

In February of 2008, MARR began to investigate how the LMA funding opportunity could be put to “best use”. The MARR staff worked with an inter-ministry LMA working group to share information and coordinate efforts. MARR envisioned a summary of existing research as the basis for a broad-based community engagement process. A series of research scans were undertaken through a literature review, and the early findings helped to direct the focus of the engagement process. Scattered throughout this report are quotes and references from research sources that confirm and compliment the literature review and engagement findings. A selected list of research resources is included as Appendix A. Please also see MARR’s literature review titled, *Aboriginal Labour Market Programming – A Scoping Review*, for more resources on this subject.

Facilitators were hired in the fall of 2008 to design the engagement process and present the literature review’s findings as part of the interactive focus groups. Working with a summary of five best practice approaches identified by the literature review, the key engagement questions were developed.

COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT PROCESS METHODOLOGY

By contributing to the engagement dialogues, all participants have helped to shape recommendations for future Aboriginal employment programming in the province.

Using principles of an appreciative inquiry to build on the current strengths of Aboriginal employment programming, three methods of engagement were utilized through November and December 2008. Participants had the option to choose to contribute through a focus group, interview, or survey, depending on which method was most convenient for them.

Research Questions

It is important to note that the research questions were the same through all three engagement methods.

1. Tell us about the most successful employment related program(s) you are aware of. What is it about those programs that you think makes them successful?
2. Share a story about innovative approaches for Aboriginal job seekers facing employment challenges.
3. If you had three wishes for the future of Aboriginal employment programs, what would you wish for and why?
4. Please add any other thoughts, comments, or suggestions that will help future program planning activities.

The information in this report is based on an analysis of the responses to these questions, gathered through the various engagement methods noted. The information reveals common themes, but also includes some region-specific results where identifiable. In addition we asked participants to please include consideration of Aboriginal elders, women, youth and persons with disabilities.

Focus Group Sessions

The focus group sessions were held in a World Café format (see description further in report) over a full day. Participants discussed and recorded their responses throughout the process. The focus groups were held in four locations:

Duncan	November 5 th	Quw'utsun Cultural Centre
Prince George	December 9 th	Native Friendship Centre
Kelowna	December 11 th	Coast Capri Hotel
Vancouver	December 15 th	Vancouver Library Conference Centre

MARR supported travel and accommodation costs for invited participants. With the exception of Kelowna, the lunches were provided by local Aboriginal caterers or, in the case of Vancouver, a local social enterprise that assists Aboriginal clients was employed. During the lunch break, caterers had an opportunity to speak to the group regarding their programs and how they were developed. This provided an opportunity to showcase some of the province's best practices for Aboriginal employment and training.

Table 1. *Focus Group Participation per Region*

Regional Centres	Number of Participants
Vancouver	23
Duncan	20
Prince George	17
Kelowna	10

Note: See Appendix C: Organizations Represented in the Engagement Process.

Key Informant Interviews

Some individuals were selected for one-on-one interviews because of their expertise in these matters or because they could not participate in the regional focus groups. The interviews took no more than an hour and used the same questions as the focus group and surveys.

Survey

People who could not participate in the regional focus groups or interviews were invited to access and submit a survey response through fax, mail, or e-mail. The survey contained the same questions being asked during the interviews and the regional focus groups.

Limitations of Engagement Process

1. All sessions were planned to occur in the months of November and December 2008, which were busy months for many organizations, sometimes competing with other activities or scheduled holidays.
2. It was a time-consuming process to track down correct contact information for such a diverse group due to the lack of current information and resources (i.e., accurate database) for many Aboriginal stakeholders. In addition, some technological challenges resulted in some invitations being received with very little notice for some participants.
3. The Vancouver event lost about 10 participants because of the snowstorms.

Despite these challenges, it is an indication of the importance of this issue and the commitment of the participants that they attended and were fully engaged at each session.

ENGAGEMENT PARTICIPANTS

MARR used the engagement process to connect with a full spectrum of interested people, organizations, and communities. It was important that the overall engagement gather representative data from all Aboriginal communities in the province, including on and off

reserve as well as urban, rural, and remote settings. Efforts were made to include youth and Elder representatives from each of the four regions for the regional focus groups, and in most cases this representation was attained. Overall, efforts were made to specifically include Aboriginal elders, women, youth and persons with disabilities in all the methods of engagement.

Participants and locations for regional focus groups were chosen to ensure inclusiveness and to reflect a broad range of perspectives. Invited participants included:

- Aboriginal Organizations such as: Aboriginal political organizations, Friendship Centres and Aboriginal Human Resource Development Agreement holders (AHRDAs)
- Employers: those who hire or would like to hire Aboriginal people
- Public Sector: other BC Ministries, federal government representatives, post secondary institutions
- Non-Government Organizations: education and employment serving agencies
- Individuals: human resource and employment counsellors, Elders, subject matter experts, Aboriginal leaders, Aboriginal unemployed persons

More than 100 people offered their stories, comments, and suggestions through the focus groups, surveys and interviews.

The Facilitator

Each of the four sessions was facilitated by Nene Van Volsen-Kraneveldt and supported by MARR representatives. Van Volsen-Kraneveldt is Hupacasath, a member of the Nuu-chah-nulth Nations from the west coast of Vancouver Island and is very experienced with community engagement processes. She is owner of Imagination FX, and through her company and employment, she has had the opportunity to facilitate focus groups and strategic planning sessions in areas of economic development, capacity building, and leadership. During the sessions, Nene presented the issues, a summary of research, and then guided the groups through a discussion of key questions, while recording participant input on key issues.

Nene worked with Louise Nichol and Myrna Herringer of OARS Training Inc., a workforce development firm in Lantzville, BC, that helped to administer the engagement process, data gathering from the various forms of engagement, analysis, and writing of the report. Louise designs labour market attachment programs and worked closely with Nene throughout the project.

Regional Differences

During the sessions, specific themes emerged from the various regions. In some cases, the participants self-identified their differences compared to other regions, and in some cases, the regional significance was identified during the data analysis process. It was noted, for example, that:

- Vancouver has significant geographically accessible resources available and more employment opportunities. This is, in part, due to the number of businesses and economic activity as a result of 2010.
- Prince George has more industry-based opportunities and specific training for attaching Aboriginal people to industry.
- Kelowna and Duncan presented more of an on-reserve picture.

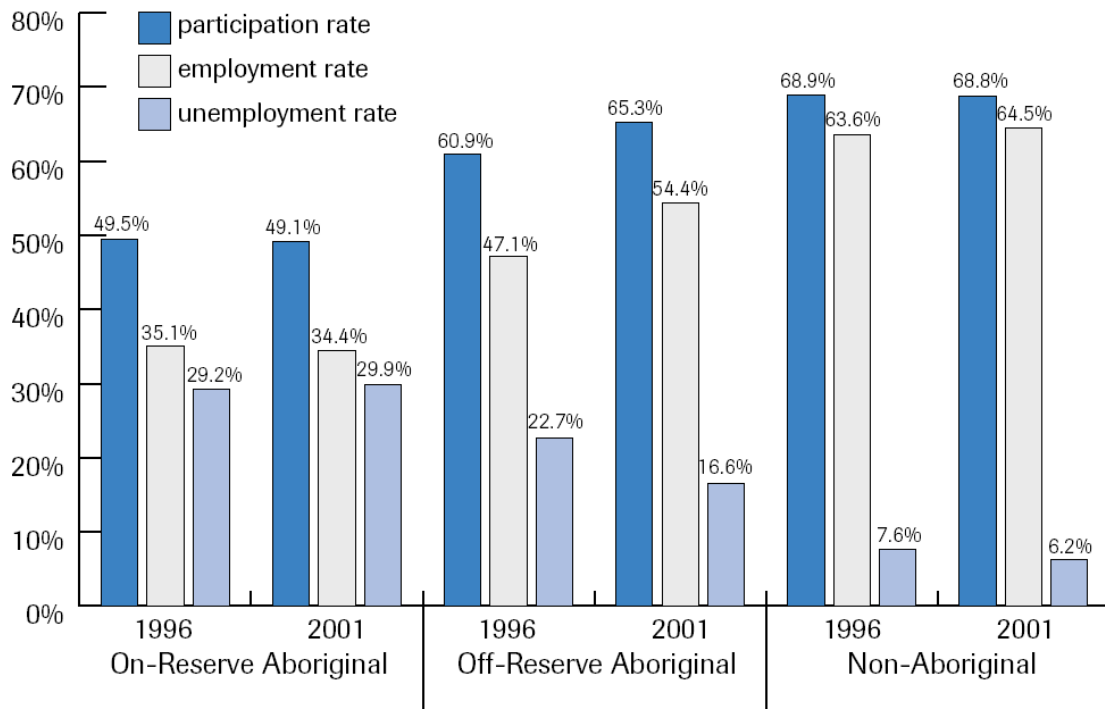
A key observation from participants in these sessions was the importance of recognizing regional differences and the need for flexibility within programs to recognize the specific needs and opportunities of individuals in each community. Also, participants were very clear about the importance of engaging Aboriginal service providers from the community to provide employment program services for Aboriginal people.

Data

The importance of understanding regional significance can be demonstrated by exploring the similarities and differences of on and off-reserve statistics. This information is included in an effort to paint an accurate picture of influences that impact labour market attachment for aboriginal peoples.

The following charts illustrate the levels of employment for Aboriginal people, both on and off the reserve.

Figure 1: Aboriginal participation in the Canadian Workforce

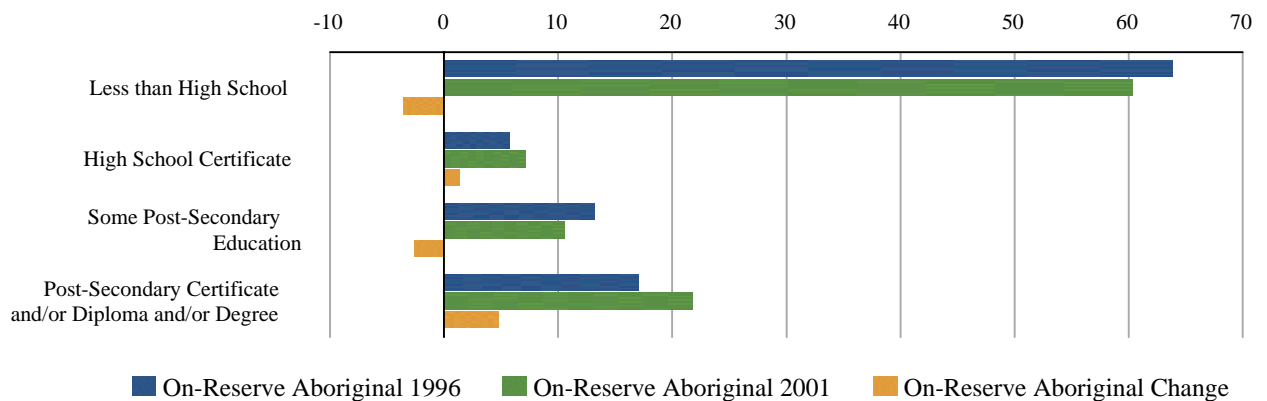


Source: Derived by CWF from Statistics Canada

While the marginal growth in labour market success is a cause for concern it is important to note there has been some positive change between 2001 and 2006. According to Statistics Canada the unemployment rate for core working-age Aboriginal people (those aged 25-54) was down 4.2 percentage points from 17.4 per cent in 2001 to 13.2 percent in 2006.

Studies have indicated there is a direct link between education levels and employability. The series of charts that follow illustrate the difference between on- and off-reserve Aboriginal populations and that of non-Aboriginals.

Figure 2: Educational attainment in the West by on-reserve Aboriginal youth between 1996 and 2001



(Note: Western Canada, commonly referred to as the West, is a region of Canada normally including all parts of Canada west of the province of Ontario.)

Figure 3: Educational attainment in the West by off-reserve Aboriginal youth between 1996 and 2001

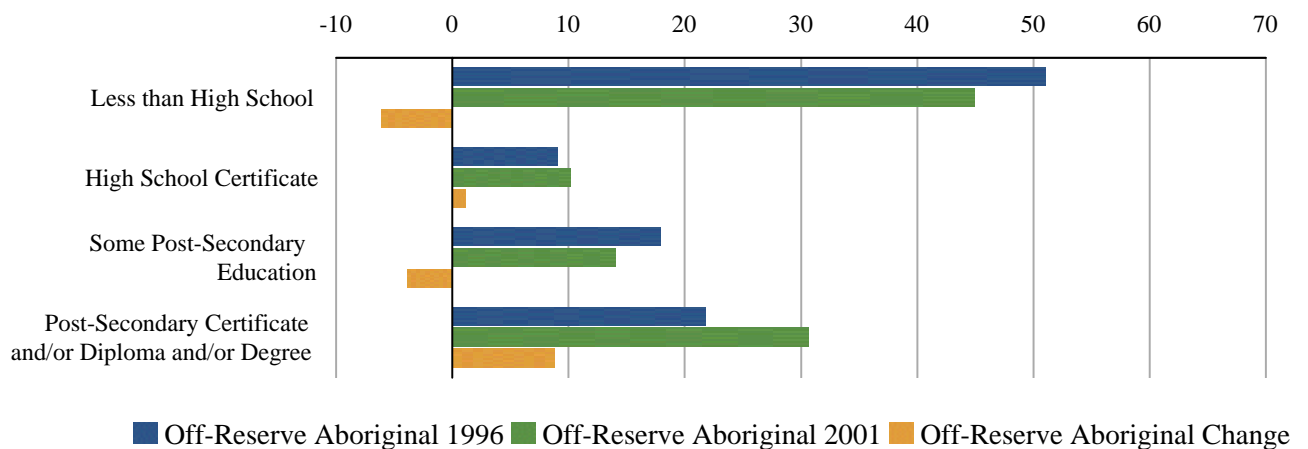
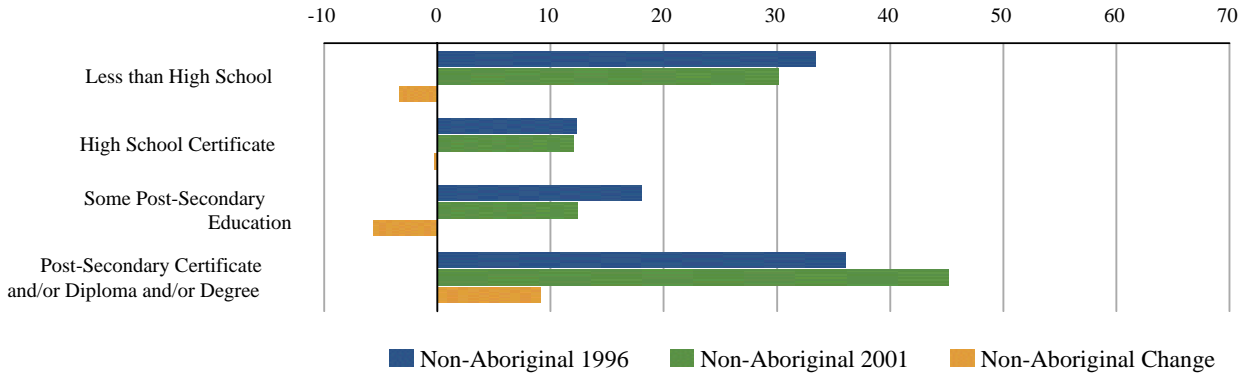


Figure 4: Educational Attainment in the West by non-Aboriginal youth between 1996 and 2001



RESEARCH SUMMARY – CHALLENGES AND BEST PRACTICES

It is helpful to look at the Best Practices reported from the literature review and compare them to the findings from the engagement process.

CHALLENGES

The success of employment programs is critical if Aboriginal people and the Government of British Columbia are to achieve the goals of closing the social and economic gaps between Aboriginal people and other British Columbians.

The focus of this project was to obtain insights into successful Aboriginal labour market programs and best practices through an appreciative inquiry approach. However, it is important to recognize previously experienced challenges that have negatively impacted labour market programs in the past. The literature review identified the following challenges. To improve the opportunity for successful programs, new programming must consciously avoid these practices.

- ❑ **Lack of coordinated approaches** across government, Aboriginal communities, and industry. Fragmented and haphazard approaches to program planning produce poor results.
- ❑ **Lack of Aboriginal Leadership** in planning and decision making within existing labour market programming. The delivery and control of training and employment programs has not been placed in the hands of Aboriginal communities and organizations.
- ❑ **Training and education** not tailored to employment needs. There is no link between the education and training offered to Aboriginal youth and the employment opportunities available in Aboriginal communities. Lack of relevance of traditional education is a particular problem for northern communities.
- ❑ **Lack of long-term employment support.** Without adequate supports in place, many employers are unwilling to hire Aboriginal employees who may not be able to adjust after short-term employment support is removed.
- ❑ **Common employment barriers.** Barriers for Aboriginal people include: a belief that Aboriginal job-seekers can only apply for jobs designated for Aboriginals; racism and discrimination; lack of education and training; few role models or mentors; a lack of jobs available on reserves, which can lead to a sense of dislocation for Aboriginal people living off-reserve; and many employment programs focus only on entry-level jobs instead of retention and advancement.
- ❑ **Lack of access to information** about employment programs and jobs. A study looking at Aboriginal people seeking work reported a staggering amount of those surveyed did not know the location of the nearest Employment and Training Officer.
- ❑ **Lack of clarity** around program goals and evaluation criteria. Program goals and evaluation criteria have not been developed in coordination with both employers and Aboriginal communities. There is a need for longitudinal data.

BEST PRACTICES

According to the literature review, the most successful initiatives for employment programs for Aboriginal people include program elements such as:

- **Partnerships** between government, service providers, Aboriginal communities and Elders, and employers to ensure the best possible program design and delivery for specific employment objectives.
- **Pre-employment training** that includes life skills and basic employment readiness skills, as well as targeted and appropriate vocational training providing the full range of soft and hard skills necessary for long-term employment success.
- **Workplace-based training** through apprenticeships and job placements that provide supported and gradual skills development targeted to a specific job, with appropriate supports for both employees and employers.
- **Workplace supports** through ongoing mentorship and diversity awareness training that assist both the Aboriginal employee in making the transition to employment and the employer in providing a culturally aware and appropriate workplace.
- **A holistic approach** to labour market programming that takes into account the multiple needs of Aboriginal job seekers, including but not limited to the need for healing and empowerment, practical needs such as housing, transportation, health and childcare, and the importance of encouraging role models to inspire future generations of Aboriginal people with strong labour market attachment and economic independence.

ENGAGEMENT PROCESS FINDINGS

RECOMMENDED BEST PRACTICES

According to the participants, the most successful employment programs must include all of the following elements:

- Holistic Approaches
- Pre-Employment Training Preparation (Essential Skills, Literacy)
- Multi-Partnership Sponsors
- Workplace-based Training and Supports
- Cultural Awareness Training Across the Labour Market

The suggested best practices emerging from the engagement process very closely match existing research reported in the literature review. However, one suggestion that comes up repeatedly but was not as apparent in other research is the addition of cultural awareness training for **all** stakeholders in Aboriginal labour market programming.

The themes that emerged most consistently during the research and engagement process are summarized below. Specific quotes from participants offer deeper explanation and can be found later in the document.

1. Holistic Approaches

- Programs should be client driven and as long as necessary. This means that the training needs to be tailored to the specific needs of the client, requiring reliable assessment tools. There is no uniform duration of training at which point clients suddenly becomes job ready. The nature of training and the length of time that is required for each person will vary based on their strengths and needs.
- Inclusive and reliable assessments need to provide a more complete picture of the individual's capabilities and barriers to successful employment. Some of the assessment tools mentioned include Structure of Intellect, and Test of Workplace Essential Skills.
- Service providers and government funders need to take a coordinated approach to referrals and linking programs concurrently. This would include seamless transitions between programs (i.e. assessment to pre-employment training to job placement and support). Coordinated approaches could also address the integration of programs so clients are not faced with having to switch service providers if they relocate on or off-reserve midway through a program.
- A strength based approach that builds on individual current talents is more likely to lead to empowerment and job success.
- Programming needs to link to community and the broader labour market needs. The nature of the training needs to align with the specific employment opportunities in each community to ensure that the training leads to available jobs.
- Program planning should produce clearly defined and measurable outcomes; this will require evaluation frameworks with success indicators that can be measured on an ongoing basis.

2. Pre-Employment Training

- Contextual assessments and preparatory training are necessary. If assessments are to be an indicator of a person's likely success or failure in a job, the assessment needs to be contextual to the environment. For example, using a Grade 12 diploma as an indicator of success in a manufacturing environment will produce poor results. Preparatory development must include an introduction to the job environment that includes but is not limited to job specific training and site visits.
- All stakeholders reported a need for cultural and diversity awareness training in all areas. This is important for both the Aboriginal people and the environments they work in (including employers and fellow employees)
- Prior to specific employment training, programs need to start where the client is at. Basic needs must be met (food, housing, daycare, transportation, etc.)
- Emotional, physical, spiritual, intellectual stabilization is important prior to success in a job. The issue of community healing came up in every session. Types of training and supports that achieve this would include self-esteem, parenting, alcohol / substance abuse and addictions and Elder development.
- HRSDC has supported Essential Skill development in Canada for over a decade. The assessments and training in these areas are now critical to the skill development of Aboriginal employees. Essential Skills are the fundamental skills that make it possible to learn all others. They are enabling skills that help people participate fully in the workplace and in the community. They are:
 - Reading Text
 - Document Use
 - Numeracy
 - Writing
 - Oral Communication
 - Working with Others
 - Thinking Skills
 - Computer Use
 - Continuous Learning
- In addition to the Essential Skills required, all employees must have Employability Skills. As defined by the Conference Board of Canada, these are the skills you need to enter, stay in, and progress in the world of work-whether you work on your own or as a part of a team. These skills can also be applied and used beyond the workplace in a range of daily activities. They include: academic skills (communication, thinking and learning), personal management (positive attitude and behaviours, responsibility) and teamwork skills.

3. Multi-Partnership Approaches

- Increase coordinated efforts among governments. Participants suggested a more coordinated approach between governments. Specifically, there are nine ministries involved in labour market programming with several programs operating within each ministry. This creates challenges in navigating through programs. In addition, participants expressed "proposal fatigue" and concerns about lack of alignment between programs and ministries.

- Increase the number of employers in partnerships participants mentioned several times the absence of employers at the engagement sessions. In addition, it was noted there is potential for employers to be more involved in pre-employment training, curriculum design and program delivery where appropriate (i.e. at the local community level).
- Increase systemic or system supports. Comments included access to sustainable, coordinated, multi-year funding, holistic approaches (i.e., treatment centres working with potential employers). In addition, it was suggested that labour market programs be aligned with comprehensive community plans. This will require coordinated approached between provincial ministries and federal departments.
- Partnerships and their significance and role in employment programming were widely discussed in all sessions. Partnerships need to be defined. Comments relating to partnerships produced a set of principles or rules of engagement for partnerships:
 - All partners are equal in value, authority, and representation
 - Partnerships should have formally defined roles for each stakeholder, which should be agreed upon and evaluated
 - Partnerships should administratively and financially support the program
 - Partnerships are considered relationships and should, therefore:
 - Incorporate Aboriginal culture as appropriate
 - Assume a good faith and respectful approach by all
 - Pool the strengths of all partners
 - Create opportunities for the relationship to progress
 - Create a shared vision of the outcomes
 - Offer two-way learning opportunities
 - Be flexible
 - Define the separation between business and political issues

4. Workplace-Based Training and Supports

- All learning and training should be documented, recognized by other workplaces or educational institutions, and certifiable where appropriate (i.e., trades certification). Participants cautioned against investing in programs and training that were not recognized by employers and / or institutions.
- Individual personal supports are required on the job. Job Coaches and Mentors are included in all best practice examples provided by participants. Personal supports mentioned include, tools, upgrading, transportation, daycare, clothing and boots.
- Program outcomes must link to the appropriate economic development, i.e., on or off reserve jobs. Participants repeatedly recorded the importance of connecting employers to the programs. Pre program tours, job fairs and internships are ways the workplace can get involved in the training to support the retention of Aboriginal employees.

5. Cultural Awareness Training across the Labour Market

- Cultural awareness for Aboriginal clients who have been disconnected from their culture. Cultural support is a key element of success and there are many potential Aboriginal workers with little or no connection to their community of origin. It is not only the outsider that needs awareness training.

- Skilled Aboriginal facilitators delivering training to all partners in the labour market (educators, employers, employees, job coaches, trainers, NGOs, government, community, general public, etc.)
- Creating connections to Aboriginal culture, through cultural celebrations, teachings, and spiritual practices, can contribute to healthy Aboriginal communities and individuals. As such, cultural awareness training can be viewed as a very important consideration for future labour market programming

RESEARCH QUESTIONS

A summary of findings for each of the four research questions follows, along with direct comments from participants. Where applicable, research quotes or links have been added, and there are brief actions or recommendations at the end of each question.

1. RECOMMENDED BEST PRACTICES

Question 1: *Tell us about the most successful employment related program(s) you are aware of. What is it about those programs that you think makes them successful?*

Participant responses can be summarized as follows:

- Culturally aware environment (Elders are included)
- Tutors, mentors (caring and passionate)
- Learner driven
- Evaluation at all levels
- Multi-partnership sponsors and collaboration
- Locally focused delivery
- Built-in capacity
- Provides basic supports
- Includes essential skill and employability skill development (pre-employment)
- Long term

These specific elements have been incorporated and are discussed in the Recommended Best Practises on pages 15 and 18.

Comments from Participants

Because cultural awareness was the most frequently identified essential component of any training and employment program, these comments from participants address this issue specifically.

Focus group participants highlighted employer development, bridging Aboriginal culture with the work world, and Elder involvement. Employer development includes cultural awareness and can create safety and understanding for both the employer and employee.

Duncan participants noted the need for spiritual and cultural advisors for employers and service providers, as well as culturally appropriate training that reflect Aboriginal values.

The need for employers understanding the Aboriginal culture cannot be underestimated. The issue was raised in every session, totalling more than 64 comments that ranged from simply identifying the need for cultural understanding to suggesting it be mandated for government, industry, and employers.

It was noted in all regional sessions that Aboriginal programming (whether it be diversity / cultural awareness training for employers or programs and services for Aboriginal clients) needed to be created and delivered by Aboriginal people in order for it to be successful. Kelowna participants elaborated noting, “Cultural guidance for and from our own people is critical, and government needs to be aware that cultural sensitivity is necessary for government employees and ministries.”

The need for diversity / cultural awareness training extends beyond government employees. As noted by another participant, “Employers need to have Aboriginal friendly environments; there should be mandatory Aboriginal awareness training.” The benefit of this approach is two-fold: (a) The employer has the opportunity to learn about Aboriginal culture and through that learning can find common ground on which to build relationships; and (b) The employee has an opportunity to share their culture, language, history, and values and create understanding thus bridging Aboriginal culture with the work world. This understanding creates an “Aboriginal friendly” environment that will assist in retaining employees. As noted by Duncan participants, successful programming includes the ability to fit into two worlds. The magic lies in creating a home for traditional teachings and values in modern-day context in a way that is meaningful and beneficial to both the employer and employee.

Related Research

The following research confirms the importance of including cultural awareness in all training and employment programs.

Aboriginal people have been characterized as being disengaged. Disengagement is multi-factorial and can be linked to a loss of community, relationships, culture, and language. It also results in the deterioration of health: “Belonging to a social network of communication and mutual obligation makes people feel cared for, loved, esteemed, and valued. This has a powerful effect on health. Supportive relationships may also encourage healthier behaviour patterns” (World Health Organization, 2003, p. 22).

While Aboriginal people will agree the period of colonization interrupted traditional ways and the ability to sustain community, there is also recognition of a streak of resiliency that appears unmatched. This can be attributed to pre-contact Aboriginal health and the power of traditional teachings and systems. Rowe (n.d.) supported this statement: “Healthy Native American communities have a strong sense of identity and basic structure in the community, often defined by cultural protocols and principals” (p. 4). The fact that Aboriginal songs, languages, dances, oral history, and traditional feasting ceremonies have survived, even through a period when they were banned, attests to the ability to survive through challenges. Rowe described First Nations resiliency as a

“demonstration of capacity for survival that is remarkable” (p. 2). These statements demonstrate the value of sharing traditional teachings with non-Aboriginal partners in employment as a foundation for relationship building. In addition, they speak to the value of Aboriginal people reconnecting with their culture, particularly if they have been removed from their culture as a result of attending the residential school or being placed in non-Aboriginal foster care.

As stated by Bopp and Bopp (2001), “Everything is connected to everything else. Therefore every aspect of our healing and development is related to all others (personal, social, cultural, political, economic, etc.). When we work on any one part, the whole circle is affected” (p. 73).

In relationship to participants’ comments regarding basic employment supports as a best practise it must be noted that supports must address various stages along the journey from unemployed to employed and sustaining employment (see Figure 5). This is exemplified in recent findings in a study undertaken by the First Nations Social Development Society (2008):

Client support needs to be addressed holistically. One phrase that stood out was, “*The pot of money going to one person should not be separated.*” Illustrating that all of a client’s needs, including mental and physical health, in some cases addiction, have to be addressed together if there is going to be movement along the employability continuum. (p. 12)

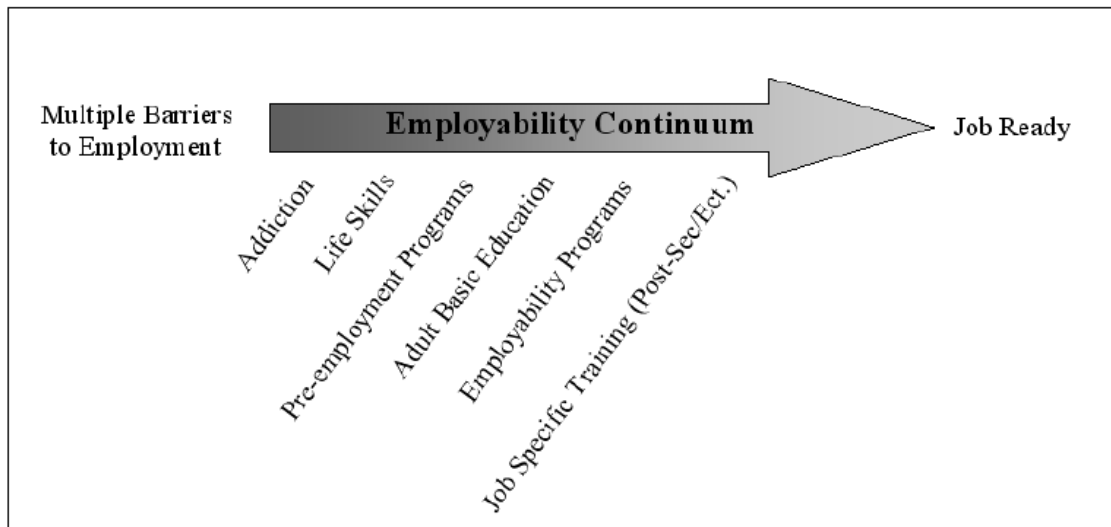


Figure 5. The employability continuum

Note: From *Active Measures to Improve the Income Assistance Policy* (p. 8), by First Nations Social Development Society, 2008, Vancouver, BC: Author. Copyright 2008 by First Nations Social Development Society.

2. RECOMMENDED INNOVATIVE APPROACHES THAT ARE WORKING

Question 2: *Share a story about innovative approaches for Aboriginal job seekers facing employment challenges.*

Participant responses can be summarized as follows:

- More “Essential Skills” and “employability” programs being offered
- Start where people are at
- Workplace related programs beginning with younger and younger groups (Grade 7)
- Multiple community projects (i.e., nine First Nations communities partnering to deliver social and employment programming)
- Self-employment programs: feed two birds with one crumb, producing both economic development and a job
- Free community services for working parents, lunch at work, daycare, computers
- Community-based learning centres and employment services
- More extensive use of technology, i.e., distance training
- Train youth to meet community needs
- Flexibility in funding
- Create space for traditional practices (culture and values)
- Use of social enterprises to create employment

Comments from Participants

Increasing Essential Skills training was identified as a priority. For participants, Essential Skills need to be linked with essential and practical needs that include cultural connection, self-esteem, and support of peers and family.

A Kelowna participant highlighted the value of a partnership between MARR and the BC Public Service to create the Aboriginal Internship Program, which included family support as an essential need. The participant noted that youth had input into program development, and the partnership created a family atmosphere amongst the interns; as a result the program was supportive and successful. Many other comments among all the sessions referenced the essential needs of: sense of self and identity, family, friendship, Elders, “someone to believe in me,” and connection to community as components of preparing a person for the workforce.

Another innovative approach that was identified in all sessions was to address practical needs that, if not met, could serve as barriers to employment and employment training. Practical needs included: housing, adequate nutrition, financial management, assistance obtaining a driver’s license, daycare, bus tickets, relocation travel subsidies, and work clothes. Many of these can be provided as employment supports or Essential Skills training in employment programs.

One Prince George participant talked about achieving success by having Aboriginal instructors delivering training on managing projects, job / life skills, budgeting, computer skills, parenting, safety, communication, dress for success, and other Essential Skills which would assist clients on their career path and aid in job retention once clients are placed. Many proposed Essential Skills should be included in all programming.

Another Prince George participant described the formula used by Essential Skills for Aboriginal Futures (ESAF):

Employer and partners are brought on board at beginning of program. They must be willing to share authentic workplace documents and have the desire to hire Aboriginal employees. Employers must agree to provide 8–10 hours of training / site visits over six weeks. Ten to fifteen jobs must be available, and employers must only interview successful graduates of the program. Curriculum is developed with the employer.

The data also suggested that innovation involves being creative in the areas of resources and funding and addressing the need to provide a continuum of services that start where the client is at. The latter was also a response under the “Vision for the Future” category.

In addressing the need for creative use of funding and resources, a survey respondent shared that their community’s Social Development program assisted with clients obtaining their driver’s license. They noted not having a license is a barrier to employment. Another respondent highlighted their community’s pooling of programs (Health Department, School District, Youth Services, and Employment Services) to deliver life and Essential Skills, mobile treatment, and an introduction to trades to youth.

Starting where the client is at means that programming addresses the supports required from the moment a client walks through the door for services until they are employed and capable of sustaining employment. Responses indicated there needs to be readiness to leave home, yet still have family and community support. A survey respondent described this best:

Use a program that provides gradual entry into the workforce, have a classroom in the community, then transition to volunteer (community service), ultimately progress to meaningful full-time employment on or off-reserve.

On a final note, in relation to creative use of funding, one participant shared:

Several years ago we had a literacy program under the guise of basic job readiness because literacy could not be funded.

This illustrates how a creative approach was used in meeting the needs of the participants within the funding boundaries. In addition, it speaks to the importance of including literacy in program delivery in an effort to meet labour market needs and increase the likelihood of long-term sustainable employment.

Related Research

The following related research highlights the importance of Employability Skills as they relate to sustainable employment and program development.

Employment programs should assume a certain level of job readiness from the individual taking the program. There is a huge need for support prior to employment programs to help develop the Employability Skills necessary for job attachment.

The Conference Board of Canada (1999) defines Employability Skills as “the generic skills, attitudes and behaviours that employers look for in new recruits” (p. 13).

It seems that if an individual has the appropriate essential and Employability Skills, they are ready and able to succeed in a job. The Conference Board report (1999) provides a picture of the “fully skilled” individual and lists the central characteristics.

- The ability to keep informed of current circumstances, a capacity to learn and keep learning
- The flexibility to adjust in a timely fashion to a constantly changing environment, adaptability
- The ability to work well with others in the broadest sense, sociability
- The finesse to analyze a situation and develop a plan and carry it out

Information related to Employability Skills can be found through the following publications. Full source information will be found in Appendix A.

Bloom, M., & Kitagawa, K. (2000). *Understanding Employability Skills*

The Conference Board of Canada. (2000). *Employability Skills 2000+*.

The Conference Board of Canada. (2000). *Employability Skills*.

The Conference Board of Canada. (2006). *Careers / Job Resources Research Guide*.

Information related to Essential Skill programs can be found through web site information provided by the Government of Canada
http://srv108.services.gc.ca/english/general/home_e.shtml

Research further supports the development of basic skills. As stated by Brunnen (2004),

Aboriginal “readiness” for the labour market is a particularly urgent policy area for at least two reasons. First, Aboriginal education and labour market outcomes are well below those of the non-Aboriginal population. Secondly, there is a great opportunity—indeed, a great need—to fully engage Aboriginal people in addressing labour supply challenges. (p. 2)

Research also reminds us that beyond the basic skill development and job readiness programs, Aboriginal people are still lacking in job parity, and this may be partly due to the educational differences in Aboriginal people and non-Aboriginal people. Kapsalis (2006) tells us, “Educational differences explain most of the occupational difference between Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal workers” (p. 26).

3. RECOMMENDATIONS ON A VISION FOR THE FUTURE

Question 3: *If you had three wishes for the future of Aboriginal employment programs, what would you wish for and why?*

Participant responses can be summarized as follows:

- Individual, family and community development create healthy and vibrant communities
- Mobile post secondary institutions
- Aboriginal programs are developed, delivered and evaluated by Aboriginal people
- Equity in funding opportunities and programs
- Wage and work parity for on and off-reserve employment and also between Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal employees
- Healthy Elders helping to develop people and communities
- Seamless and sufficient supports for Aboriginal people whether they reside on or off reserve
- Paradigm shift in view of Aboriginal people in the labour market
- Everyone is culturally connected
- Business community is engaged with opportunities on reserves
- Wait! We no longer need Aboriginal programs.

Comments from Participants

Most participants expressed their vision of the future in terms of overcoming hopelessness and dependency through building healthy and vibrant individuals, families and communities. On a tablecloth from the World Café format a participant illustrated their three wishes in the following diagram (see Figure 6, reproduced for this report)

The diagram presented in Figure 6 clearly illustrates the need to focus on developmental supports to help ensure the participant is “job ready”. Each of the concepts illustrated were supported in various forms at each session. A survey respondent echoed these thoughts in their comments: “I wish for self-esteem, self-worth, and worthiness to one’s own people. All three combined will help in overcoming all barriers.”

It was noted through the sessions that there is a need to bring training to the communities (directly or indirectly through broadband connectivity and distance learning), which avoids people having to leave their traditional lands, and communities. Participants stressed when clients leave their communities to get training it can create challenges and trauma and ultimately serve as a barrier to success.

Participants also shared that movement for Aboriginal people can be frequent especially when there are adjacent communities with employment opportunities. There is a need for seamless transition to support clients maintaining their employment. Currently if a person moves off reserve, they are often required to end their employment training with one service provider and commence training with another. A more coordinated integrated approach between the federal and provincial government on employment programming could ensure a seamless transition for clients as they move back and forth on and off reserve.

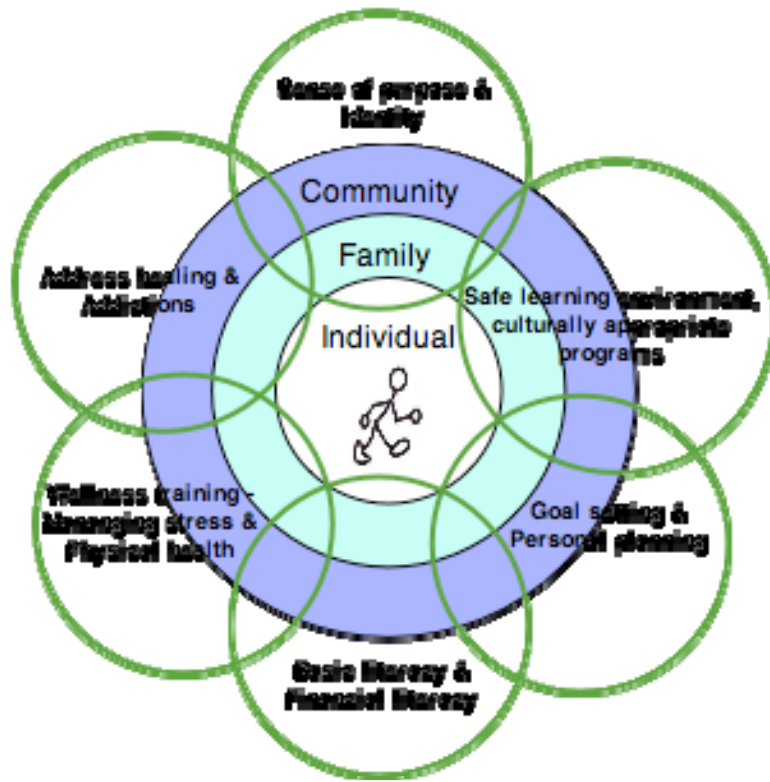


Figure 6. A participant’s three wishes for the future of Aboriginal employment programs

A Vancouver participant referred to Aboriginal pre-contact ways, wishing for “employment programs that gathered Elder input towards building sustainable communities and reintroducing systems of government that existed before contact.”

In describing three wishes for future Aboriginal employment programs, a Duncan participant shared: their parents would be healthy role models, they would be healthy and vibrant with a sense of purpose through contributing to their community, and they would feel whole—emotionally, spiritually, physically, and intellectually.

A key informant shared their vision for the future with great passion: “In the future, it won’t be us (referring to Aboriginal organizations) coming up with programs, it will be Aboriginal youth saying we need to work and identifying why they need to work.” In addition, they envisioned

...more employers will see the value in a diverse workforce. They’ll see the value in making our communities strong again. Employers will say we want you and they will nurture relationships. Employers will come to us instead of us begging them for employment opportunities.

Participants agreed on the importance of evaluation for all programs. Whatever programs and services are created, they must be evaluated based on success indicators developed in partnership with key stakeholders. A Kelowna participant addressed their frustration with current evaluation processes by commenting, “We are always measured by someone else’s standards—stop that.”

Evaluation should also consider equity in access to programming and funding. One wish was for the same or more support as made available to immigrants.

As an NGO we have a very narrow and focused approach for a vision to leverage and facilitate the recruitment of Aboriginal individuals within the high technology sector. In this country we often reach out to immigrants when there is a shortage of skilled workers in the technology sector, but the fact remains that we have a strong population base of Aboriginals and one of the fastest growing population base that we could very easily and effectively capitalize on. To date, this has been ignored.

The comments go on to state that if a region capitalized on the Aboriginal human resources, it would: solve the skills shortage, benefit the rural communities, support existing and future technological infrastructure, be sustainable, and improve the quality of life for the people in the community. Other participants supported this notion.

A survey respondent shared their frustration and concern in relation to challenges accessing funding.

We may need to give up programs like the Aboriginal Infant Development Program because the Ministry for Children and Families (MCFD) does not provide enough funding to fully support the program. Other funding (i.e., through foundations) could top-off and support this program, BUT we do not have a charitable tax number; therefore, we are not [able] to access any grants to non-profit organizations. I wish government would advocate for change to this policy.

It was interesting to note some participants linked their wishes to the need for certainty, change in policy, and addressing the rights and title of land.

Our bands need more First Nations owned businesses. I am thinking about gas stations, motels, restaurants, golf courses, merchandise / grocery store, even haircutting salons. A lot of our community’s businesses lease land for their business on reserve. The landowners benefit from this. There would be more benefit for the First Nations community if there were First Nations owned businesses.

Related Research

Other researchers support the importance of healing, self identity and self worth for Aboriginal people and suggest it may be a major stride towards overcoming the sense of hopelessness and dependency. Once this has occurred the individual becomes

employment ready and employment itself can lead to independence and greater self-worth.

Mendelson (2004), in his report on Aboriginal people in the labour market, claims, “Employment is the cornerstone of participation in modern Canadian society. Employment is not only a source of income: It is also the basis for self-respect and autonomy” (p. 1). Findings in the *Active Measures* (First Nations Social Development Society, 2008) report substantiate the need for self-development as a critical component towards becoming employable:

Many clients have been in a state of dependence for so long that they do not believe that they can manage life in any other way. For many clients, access to personal counselling is the first step towards employment or self-sustainability. Counselling clients and helping them heal from past abuses, addiction and mental illness issues and allowing them to gain self-assurance is necessary to ensure personal goals and possibly employment. (p. 12)

The research agrees with the participants, the value of wide spread cultural understanding and healing cannot be underestimated. This is evident in the comment by Wihak and Price (2006), “white privilege has just an overwhelming impact in counselling” (p. 4).

Some participants made the link between certainty with land and title and economic development and employment opportunities for Aboriginal communities. In addressing these comments, we refer to the intentions of *The New Relationship* (Government of BC & First Nations Leadership Council, n.d.). *The New Relationship* is based on government relationships that focus on positive change for the future. It includes a commitment to “Develop new institutions or structures to negotiate Government-to-Government Agreements for shared decision-making regarding land use planning, management, tenuring and resource revenue and benefit sharing” (¶ 1). These structures enable opportunities for First Nations owned businesses that in turn would provide increased employment opportunities on reserve.

The continued efforts of *The New Relationship* (Government of BC & First Nations Leadership Council, n.d.) are necessary. Atkin (2006) noted that, with “two thirds of BC’s Aboriginal people are involved in land claims” (p. 3), it is critical we commit to positive change and relationship building among Aboriginal, provincial, and federal governments. Participants highlighted corporations; organizations, industry, and the like are also a part of the equations. Atkin concurred: “Reconciliation requires a change in assumptions, attitudes and behaviours. In that regard we have work to do. Relationship building is not something that needs to start after the treaties have been signed. Relationship building must start now.” (p. 4) Changing assumptions, attitudes, and behaviours in all areas, in this case employment, are challenging tasks, but ones that demand attention and commitment from all parties.

4. RECOMMENDED FOCUS FOR GOVERNMENT

Question 4: *Please add any other thoughts, comments, or suggestions that will help future employment program planning activities.*

Participant responses can be summarized as follows:

- Help to engage employers (i.e. through awareness sessions, incentive programs or partnerships)
- Have more flexibility in funding – many participants feared with the funding flowing through nine different ministries it would be too challenging to access funding, and there would be too many application processes and deadlines. All of this would act as a deterrent to potential applicants.
- Cultural sensitivity and diversity awareness training for all
- Scale programs to fit in different communities needs, resources and opportunities
- Build capacity in AHRDAs either through accredited training, increased funding and increased partnerships
- Remove policies that are barriers—lessen bureaucracy. Again this comment was often linked to nine different ministries delivering one program. In other cases it referred to the fact there are too many silos and barriers (like on-reserve and off-reserve, inability to collect social assistance if going to school etc.)
- All levels of government support working together including the need for continued dialogue with the Aboriginal community on issues that affect them
- Programming developed and delivered by Aboriginal people

Comments from Participants

The following comments focus on issues not addressed elsewhere in this report. The responses illustrate the depth and complexity of the issues.

Our issues extend far beyond land and money. Government forget that we need to develop people. Land and resources mean nothing without people. We need to develop our most valuable resource, our social and human capital. We have to look beyond economic development. Many Aboriginal economic development initiatives are successful then need to hire non-Aboriginals, as there is no Aboriginal labour pool to fill their needs.

Government should get rid of policies that are barriers to a potential job seeker (i.e., client can't go to school while receiving income assistance).

Funding in general was raised in every session in a variety of contexts. In some cases, participants identified a need to an increase to funding, others proposed funding be long-term (5- to 10-year agreements) with realistic standards for proposals and reporting. It was noted at the Kelowna session that Service Canada and the provincial government could align their funding criteria to avoid leaving anyone behind based on their residency (on and off-reserve). A Vancouver participant expressed, there is insufficient funding to fully capitalize on all existing employment and training opportunities, specifically citing

trades, Essential Skills, and multiple-barrier client interventions as examples. In reference to nine ministries sharing the LMA funding, one participant stated, “Funding is too fragmented—people get lost navigating numerous funding sources.”

One participant acknowledged the efforts of the ministry,

MARR is trying to do the right thing with this [engagement] process. There is so much we can do in partnership to provide good outcomes. Relationships take time to develop, but strong, trusting, honest relationships open doors and let community have input into programs.

These thoughts were echoed by a survey respondent who noted the need to

...involve all organizations that provide service delivery for employment related programs with government initiatives. We are all working towards the same goal yet government shies away from inviting or involving non-government agents in staff training programs.

A Kelowna participant commented,

It is good if the province can get involved with First Nations—not just relying on jurisdictional division to deny programs and services. Thanks for trying to make connections with First Nations. First Nations are not just a federal responsibility.

Another survey respondent supported this notion: “Get rid of on and off reserve; I have enjoyed being an employment counsellor and have never liked these terms because I see the objective as being able to assist the Aboriginal job seeker become self-sufficient.”

Related Research

The need to support effective employment training needs to be a high priority. Other research supporting this focus for government can be seen in comments by Ben Brunnen (2004), in his report on labour market parity for Aboriginals. Ben claims, “Aboriginal people represent the largest untapped labour force in Canada” (p. 15).

This same report makes several recommendations supportive of those in the MARR engagement findings (Brunnen, 2004, pp. 15–20)

- increasing the labour market outcomes of Aboriginal people should be a top priority for government
- governments need to work together, cooperate, coordinate, communicate
- support the Employer with cultural awareness training to help hire and retain
- support partnerships with business on or near reserves

HISTORICAL AND EMERGING RELATIONSHIPS AS RELATED TO PARTNERSHIPS

Participants throughout the various methods of engagement stressed the importance of establishing positive relationships between Aboriginal people and federal and provincial governments.

Historically, Aboriginal people have been recipients of imposed policy (Henderson, 1996); the Indian Act being one example. Imposed policy of various forms have dictated who is eligible for services, status, accessibility to land on reserve, and such, since as early as the 1700s (Henderson, 1996). Change to policy has been slow and challenging. Attempts at consultation have lacked the necessary foundation of mutual trust and respect. All these factors combined form an equation that cries out for meaningful engagement.

Fortunately, British Columbia and Canada are taking action to positively change through relationship building and reconciliation. This was observed by participants in all sessions. Many commented the community engagement process was a step in the right direction and indicative of governments' commitment to the *New Relationship* (see Appendix D), the *Transformative Change Accord* (see Appendix E), and the *Métis Nation Relationship Accord* (see Appendix F). They were encouraged by the fact that the government realizes the importance of involving Aboriginal people in the planning and delivery of employment programs that impact them.

Many participants indicated a desire to increase their knowledge of key political documents that guide government's relationships with Aboriginal people (i.e., *New Relationship*, the *Transformative Change Accord*, and the *Métis Nation Relationship Accord*). Although the regional focus groups included a brief presentation and discussion of these documents, participants indicated a need to increase their awareness of these documents as essential to their own programming design, planning, and delivery. As some communities do not have technology to access these documents we have included each document as an appendix to this report (see Appendices D, E, and F).

The principles of these documents directly link to the engagement findings including:

- Acknowledgement and celebration of the diverse histories and traditions of Aboriginal people.
- Understanding that a new relationship must be based on mutual respect and responsibility.
- Recognition that government needs to work with Aboriginal people to support social and economic well-being of First Nations.
- Recognition that accountability for results is critical.

While the Accords and *New Relationship* exist, it would seem, from our engagement process, that participants believe more strategic alignment and collaborative efforts between political bodies and grass roots organizations will aid in breathing life into the agreements and the proposed relationships. It also is critical to increase Aboriginal

representation at higher levels of government to meet the visions and goals identified within the Accord and New Relationship agreements. Increased representation within government, in addition to government to government dialogue, will ensure a voice at the policy development levels of government. Meaningful relationships will lead the way to positive change. As stated by Margaret Wheatley (2005), “There is no power for change greater than a community discovering what it cares about” (p. 42).

ADDITIONAL COMMENTS FROM PARTICIPANTS

Throughout the engagement process, a number of issues arose that did not fit the identified key themes. However, the comments warrant mentioning. In some cases, time did not permit further discussion of the issues, and in other cases, there were comments from anonymous surveys we could not follow up on.

Comments included:

- Low level of representation from employers. There needs to be a strategy to engage with them in the design, development, and delivery of employment programs.
- Need to define parameters of cultural awareness training needs: What is cultural awareness? Who should define what awareness needs to be created? Is cultural awareness different from diversity training?
- Why is there cultural awareness training for new immigrants, but not Aboriginal people?
- Lack of adequate research and evaluation information specific to programs and services for Aboriginal labour market attachment.
- Desire for a gathering of participants at the conclusion of the engagement process.

Additional Suggested Actions and Recommendations

- Provide an opportunity for participants to gather at the conclusion of the engagement sessions to review findings.
- Desire for a central website to see how various ministries are using LMA funding.
- Further and separate discussion is required on employment programming for Aboriginal people with disabilities.
- Advise engagement participants of current initiatives within government to address cultural diversity; which ministries are involved, who is attending, and who is facilitating.
- Ensure an evaluation process, which includes a youth and Elder from the Aboriginal community, to assess the effectiveness of training.
- Ensure any future funding includes the best practices identified on pages 15-18 as criteria.
- While there was not consensus on this issue, some participants indicated a strong opposition to direct awarding of any LMA funding. There was general agreement on the need for transparency in funding processes.
- Again, while there was no consensus, participants also expressed funding should not be largely directed to post-secondary institutions or province-wide service providers as this disadvantages smaller communities from participating or from their needs being met. Opportunities should exist for smaller communities and First Nations-based programs and services
- Ensure all programs include Essential and Employability Skill training.
- Encourage creative and flexible approaches to programming.
- All partners need to find ways to resolve long standing issues.
- Support Aboriginal developed and delivered programming.
- Programs that are not holistic in approach should not be funded.

- MARR, in conjunction with a working group comprised of an Elder and Aboriginal government representative, review existing approaches to Aboriginal awareness sessions for government and assess their effectiveness.

MOVING FORWARD - A PARADIGM SHIFT

It is the hope of the consultants that MARR will be able to breathe life into the gifts of knowledge the engagement participants so generously shared with us. Many were open with their mistrust of the engagement process and doubted if they could truly affect change in the planning, development, and delivery of Aboriginal employment programs. Yet they gave their time, honesty and expertise willingly. One would hope they shared in this process because they believe we can work collaboratively towards brighter futures. Indeed many expressed this belief. Perhaps they engaged because they have begun a paradigm shift of their own. Certainly it was apparent participants contributed to the session because they recognized a need for positive change and felt a social responsibility to contribute to improving the quality of life for Aboriginal people through employment.

In order for growth, paradigm shifts will need to occur at multiple levels, including with the clients themselves. Some participants indicated that this shift is already occurring as Aboriginal people and communities see their future in employment and economic development, with income assistance seen more as a system of last resort or a short-term financial safety net. Organizations and government are also taking measures to shift paradigms. Now more than ever we are starting to see emerging relationships, partnerships and shared responsibility towards creating positive change.

When people, families, communities, Nations, government, organizations, and corporations begin to take shared responsibility for Aboriginal labour market attachment, we will begin to succeed in enabling Aboriginal people to be the authors of their destinies.

APPENDIX A: RESEARCH RESOURCES

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APPENDIX B: ORGANIZATIONS INVITED

Note: This Appendix lists the organizations invited to participate in the Aboriginal LMA Engagement process.

Aboriginal Organizations/Service Providers

Aboriginal Community Career Employment Services Society	Aboriginal Sports and Recreation Association of BC	BC Aboriginal Child Care Society	BC Aboriginal Network on Disability Society
BC Assembly of First Nations	BC Association of Aboriginal Friendship Centres	BC Elders Communication Centre Society	Cariboo-Chilcotin Aboriginal Training and Education Centre
Cariboo Friendship Society	Carrier Sekani Family Services	Central Interior Partners in Aboriginal Human Resource Development	Circle of Eagles Lodge Society
Coast Salish Employment and Training Society	Conayt Friendship Society	CFDC of Central Interior First Nations	Dze L K'ant Friendship Centre
Friendship House Association of Prince Rupert	Fort St. John Friendship Society	First Nations Social Development Society	First Nations' Emergency Services Society of BC
First Nations Employment Society	First Nations Summit Society	Fort Nelson Aboriginal Friendship Society	Helping Spirit Lodge Society
Hiiye'yu Lelum Society	Houston Friendship Centre	Kermode Friendship Society	Ki-Low-Na Friendship Society
Kla-how-eya Aboriginal Centre of SACS	Métis Association – Region 3	Métis Association – Region 5	Métis Employment and Training – Lower Mainland
Métis Nation BC	MNBC Prince George Region	MNBC – Thompson Okanagan	Native Courtworker and Counselling Association of BC
Native Youth Centre	Nawican Friendship Centre	New Relationship Trust	Okanagan/Ktunaxa Aboriginal Management Society
OoknaKane Friendship Centre	Port Alberni Friendship Centre	Prince George Native Friendship Centre	Skeena Native Development Society
Stitsma (Squamish Nation Emp./ Training Org.)	Sto:lo Nation Society	Tansi Friendship Centre Society	Union of BC Indian Chiefs
United Native Nations Society	Urban Native Youth Association	Vancouver Aboriginal Council	VAN ASEP Training Society
Vancouver Native Health Society	Victoria Native Friendship Centre	Wachiay Friendship Centre	

First Nation Governments and Communities

Adams Lake Indian Band	Ahousaht First Nation	Ahousaht Treaty Office	Akisqnuq First Nation
Allied Tsimshian Tribes Association	Ashcroft Indian Band	Blueberry River First Nation	Bonaparte Indian Band
Boothroyd Band	Boston Bar First Nation	Bridge River Indian Band	Burns Lake Band
Canim Lake Band	Canoe Creek Band	Carrier Chilcotin Tribal Council	Carrier Sekani Tribal Council
Cayoose Creek Band	Champagne and Aishihik First Nations Main Office	Chawathil First Nation	Cheam First Nation
Chehalis Indian Band	Chemainus First Nation	Cheslatta Carrier Nation	Coldwater Indian Band
Comox Indian Band	Cook's Ferry Indian Band	Cowichan Tribes	Dakh-ka Tlingit Nation (Tribal Council)
Da'naxda'xw First Nation	Daylu Dena Council	Dease River First Nation	Ditidaht First Nation
Doig River First Nation	Ehattesaht First Nation	Esketemc First Nation	Esquimalt Nation
Fraser Canyon Indian Administration	Fort Nelson First Nation	Gingox Village Government	Gitanmaax Band Council
Gitanyow Hereditary Chiefs' Office	Gitanyow Band Council	Gitsegukla Band Council	Gitksan Government Commission
Gitxsan Chiefs' Office (Victoria)	Gitxsan Hereditary Chiefs' Office (Hazelton)	Gitxsan Treaty Society	Gitxaala Nation
Gitwangak Band Council	Glen Vowell Band	Gwa'sala-'Nakwaxda'xw Nation	Gwawaenuk Tribe
Hagwilget Village Council	Halalt First Nation	Halfway River First Nations	Hamatla Treaty Society
Hartley Bay Village Council	Heiltsuk Tribal Council	Hesquiaht First Nation	High Bar First Nation
Homalco First Nation	Hul'qumi'num Treaty Group	Hupacasath First Nation	Huu-ay-aht First Nation
In-SHUCK-ch Nation	Iskut First Nations	Ka:'yu:'k't'h'/Che:k:tles 7et'h' First Nation	Kamloops Indian Band
Kanaka Bar Indian Band	Kaska Tribal Council	Kitasoo Band Council	Katzie First Nation
Kitamaat Village Council	Kitselas Treaty and Resource Office	Kitsumkalum First Nation Office	Kispiox Band Council
Klahoose First Nation	Ktunaxa Nation Council	Kwadacha Band	Kwakiutl Band Council
Kwiahah First Nation	Kwantlen First Nation	Kwaw-Kwaw-apilit First Nation	Kwicksutaineuk/Ak-Kwa-Mish Tribes
Kwikwetlem First Nation	Lake Babine Nation	Lake Cowichan First Nation	Lax Kw'alaams Band
Laxgalts'ap Village Government	Leq'a:mel First Nation	Lheidli-T'enneh Band	Lheidli-T'enneh Treaty Office
Lillooet Tribal Council	Lower Kootenay Band	Lower Nicola Indian Band	Lower Similkameen Indian Band

First Nation Governments and Communities

Lower Stl'at'imx Tribal Council	Lyackson First Nation	Lytton First Nation	Malahat Treaty Office
Mamalilikulla-Qwe'Qwa'Sot'Em Band	Matsqui First Nation	McLeod Lake Indian Band	Metlakatla Band Council
Metlakatla Treaty Council	Moricetown Band Office	Mowachaht/Muchalaht First Nations	Musgamagw Tsawataineuk Tribal Council
Musqueam Indian Band	Nadleh Whut'en Band	Nak'azdli Band	Namgis First Nation
Nazko First Nation	Nazko Treaty Office	Naut'sa mawt Tribal Council	Nee-Tahi-Buhn Indian Band
Neskonlith Indian Band	New Aiyansh Village	Nicola Tribal Association	Nicomen Indian Band
Nisga'a Village of Gitwinksihlkw	Nlaka'pamux Nation Tribal Council	Nooaitch Indian Band	N'Quatqua First Nation
Northern Shuswap Tribal Council	Nuchatlaht First Nation	Nuu-chah-nulth Tribal Council	Nuxalk Nation
Okanagan Indian Band	Okanagan Nation Alliance	Old Masset Village Council	Oregon Jack Creek Band
Osoyoos Indian Band	Pacheedaht First Nation	Pauquachin First Nation	Penelakut Tribe
Peters Band	Peters Tribal Council	Popkum First Nation	Prophet River First Nation
Qayqayt First Nation	Qayqayt First Nation	Qualicum First Nation	Quatsino First Nation
Saik'uz First Nation	Saulteau First Nation	Scia'new First Nation	Scia'new Treaty Office (Beecher Bay)
Scowlitz First Nation	Seabird Island Indian Band	Sechelt Indian Band	Semiahmoo First Nation
Sencot'en Alliance	Seton Lake Band	Shackan Indian Band	Shuswap Indian Band
Shuswap Nation Tribal Council Society	Shxw'ha:y Village (formerly Skyway First Nation)	Shxw'owhamel First Nation	Simpco First Nation (formerly North Thompson Indian Band)
Siska Indian Band	Skatin Nations Council	Skawahlook First Nation	Skeetchestn Indian Band

First Nation Governments and Communities

Skidegate Band Council	Skin Tye Nation	Skowkale First Nation	Skuppah Indian Band
Skwah First Nation	Sliammon First Nation	Sliammon Treaty Office	Snaw-Naw-As First Nation
Snaw-Naw-As Treaty Office (Nanoose)	Snyneymuxw First Nation	Songhees Nation	Songhees Treaty Office
Soowahlie Indian Band	Splats'in First Nation Shuswap Nation Tribal Council	Squamish Nation	Spuzzum First Nation
Squiala First Nation	St. Mary's Band	Stellat'en First Nation	Sto:lo Nation
Sumas First Nation	Tahltan Band	Takla Lake First Nation	Taku River Tlingit First Nation
Te'mexw Treaty Association	T'exelc Treaty (Williams Lake Indian Band)	T'it'q'et Administration	Tla-o-qui-aht First Nation
Tlatlasikwala First Nation	Tl'azt'en Nation	Tl'etinqox-T'in Government Office	Tlowitsis Tribe
Tobacco Plains Indian Band	Toosey Indian Band	Toquaht First Nation	Tsartlip First Nation
Tsawataineuk First Nation	Tsawataineuk First Nation Band	Tsawout First Nation	Tsawwassen First Nation
Tsay Keh Dene Band	Tseshah First Nation	Tseycum First Nation	Tsi Del Del First Nation (Alexis Creek)
Ts'kw'aylaxw First Nation	Tsleil-Waututh Nation (Burrard Band)	T'Sou-ke Nation	Tzeachten First Nation
Uchucklesaht Tribe	Uculelet First Nation	Uculelet First Nations	Ulkatcho First Nations
Union Bar Band	Upper Nicola Band	Wuikinuxv Nation	Xats'ull First Nation
Xaxli'p Band	Xeni Gwet'in First Nations Government	Yakwekwioose Band	Yale First Nation
Yekooche First Nation	Yunesit'in Government		

Employers, Unions, Sector Associations

Aboriginal Council of British Columbia	BC Aboriginal Fisheries Commission	BC Construction Association	BC Hydro
Canadian Columbia River Inter-Tribal Fisheries Commission	Canadian Home Builders Association of BC	CUPE – Fraser Valley	CUPE – Kelowna
CUPE – Prince George	Neil Squire Society Navigator Program	Terasen Gas	

Government Departments/Ministries

British Columbia Treaty Commission	Indian and Northern Affairs Canada	Ministry of Advanced Education and Labour Market Development	Ministry of Housing and Social Development
Ministry of Small Business, Trade and Economic Development	Service Canada		

Education and Training Institutions

BC Skills Force Initiative	Boundary Area Business Development Centre Society	Camosun College – First Nations Education	Employment Connections
First Nations House of Learning - UBC	Kitimat Valley Institute Corp	Langara College	Northern Lights College
Okanagan College – Student Services	Royal Roads University	Simon Fraser University	Spiritlink Communications
THEO BC	Triumph Vocational	UNBC – First Nations Centre	Vancouver Island University

Other

Canadian Executive Services Overseas	Community Futures BC	Community Futures Kelowna	Community Futures – Prince George
Community Futures Quesnel	Community Futures – Williams Lake	Turtle Island Consulting	

APPENDIX C: ORGANIZATIONS REPRESENTED IN THE ENGAGEMENT PROCESS

Note: This Appendix lists the organizations that participated in the engagement process. Several of the organizations were represented by more than one person.

Organization	City	Organization	City
Aboriginal Community Career Employment Services Society	West Vancouver	ACCESS Trades	Vancouver
BC Aboriginal Network on Disability Society	Victoria	BC Association of Aboriginal Friendship Centres	Victoria
BC Construction Association	Victoria	Bladerunners	Prince George
Building Futures Today	Vancouver	Camosun College	Victoria
Canada Safeway	Vancouver	Capilano University	Sechelt
Cariboo-Chilcotin Aboriginal Training and Education Centre	Williams Lake	Carrier Chilcotin Tribal Council	Williams Lake
Central Training and Employment Society	Kamloops	Coast Salish Employment Training Society	Duncan
Coastal Community Credit Union	Nanaimo	Community Futures - Prince George	Prince George
Community Futures Development Corporation of Central Interior First Nations	Kamloops	Cowichan Tribes	Duncan
First Nations Elder	Kelowna	First Nations House of Learning - UBC	Vancouver
First Nations Social Development Society	Vancouver	Fort Nelson Aboriginal Friendship Society	Fort Nelson
Indian and Northern Affairs Canada	Vancouver	Kelowna Friendship Society	Kelowna
Kitimat Valley Institute Corporation	Kitimat	Lower Nicola Indian Band	Kelowna
Lyackson First Nation	Chemainus	Lytton First Nation	Lytton
Organization	City	Organization	City
Métis Employment and Training - Prince George	Prince George	Métis Nation British Columbia	Vancouver
Métis Nation BC - Thompson Okanagan	Kamloops	Ministry of Advanced Education and Labour Market Development	Victoria
Ministry of Housing and Social Development	Kamloops, Victoria, Prince George	Nadina Community Services	Smithers
Native Education College	Vancouver	Neil Squire Society Navigator Program	Vancouver

Norweld Mechanical	Prince George	Nuu-chah-nulth Tribal Council	Port Alberni
Okanagan Training and Development Council	Kelowna	Penelakut Tribes	Chemainus
Prince George Native Friendship Centre	Prince George	Prince George Nechako Aboriginal Employment and Training Assn.	Prince George
Snuneymuxw First Nation	Nanaimo	Social Enterprise Consultant	Vancouver
Squamish Nation Stitsma Employment Center	Vancouver	Sto:lo Nation HR Dept	Chilliwack
Terasen Gas	Vancouver	THEO BC	Vancouver
Tillicum Lelum Aboriginal Friendship Centre	Nanaimo	Tobacco Plains Indian Band	Cranbrook
Treaty 8 Tribal Association	Fort St. John	Triumph Vocational	Vancouver
Tsleil-Waututh Nation	North Vancouver	United Native Nations	Vancouver
Upper Nicola Band	Merritt	Vancouver Island Métis Regional Employment and Training Committee	Duncan
Vancouver Island University	Nanaimo	Victoria Native Friendship Centre	Victoria
WCG Jobwave Fraser Region	Vancouver		

I. Statement of Vision

We are all here to stay. We agree to a new government-to-government relationship based on respect, recognition and accommodation of aboriginal title and rights. Our shared vision includes respect for our respective laws and responsibilities. Through this new relationship, we commit to reconciliation of Aboriginal and Crown titles and jurisdictions.

We agree to establish processes and institutions for shared decision-making about the land and resources and for revenue and benefit sharing, recognizing, as has been determined in court decisions, that the right to aboriginal title “in its full form”, including the inherent right for the community to make decisions as to the use of the land and therefore the right to have a political structure for making those decisions, is constitutionally guaranteed by Section 35. These inherent rights flow from First Nations’ historical and sacred relationship with their territories.

The historical Aboriginal-Crown relationship in British Columbia has given rise to the present socio-economic disparity between First Nations and other British Columbians. We agree to work together in this new relationship to achieve strong governments, social justice and economic self-sufficiency for First Nations which will be of benefit to all British Columbians and will lead to long-term economic viability.

II. Goals

Our shared vision includes a celebration of our diversity, and an appreciation of what we have in common. We recognize the vision of First Nations to achieve the following goals:

1. To restore, revitalize and strengthen First Nations and their communities and families to eliminate the gap in standards of living with other British Columbians, and substantially improve the circumstances of First Nations people in areas which include: education, children and families, and health, including restoration of habitats to achieve access to traditional foods and medicines;
2. To achieve First Nations self-determination through the exercise of their aboriginal title including realizing the economic component of aboriginal title, and exercising their jurisdiction over the use of the land and resources through their own structures;

¹ Government of British Columbia & First Nations Leadership Council. (n.d.). *The New Relationship with First Nations and Aboriginal People*. Retrieved January 3, 2008, from http://www.gov.bc.ca/arr/newrelationship/down/new_relationship.pdf

3. To ensure that lands and resources are managed in accordance with First Nations laws, knowledge and values and that resource development is carried out in a sustainable manner including the primary responsibility of preserving healthy lands, resources and ecosystems for present and future generations; and
4. To revitalize and preserve First Nations cultures and languages and restore literacy and fluency in First Nation languages to ensure that no First Nation language becomes extinct.

The strategic vision of the Province for British Columbians is:

1. To make B.C. the best educated, most literate jurisdiction on the continent;
2. To lead the way in North America in healthy living and physical fitness;
3. To build the best system of support in Canada for persons with disabilities, special needs, children at risk and seniors;
4. To lead the world in sustainable environmental management, with the best air and water quality, and the best fisheries management, bar none; and
5. To create more jobs per capita than anywhere else in Canada.

This vision can only be achieved if First Nations citizens attain these goals. To achieve these strategic goals, we recognize that we must achieve First Nations economic self-sufficiency and make First Nations a strong economic partner in the province and the country through sustainable land and resource development, through shared decision-making and shared benefits that support First Nations as distinct and healthy communities. All British Columbians will benefit from a richer understanding of First Nations culture and from economic, political and cultural partnerships with First Nations. We therefore agree to the following principles and action plan.

III. Principles to Guide the New Relationship

We will mutually develop processes and implement new institutions and structures to achieve the following:

- integrated intergovernmental structures and policies to promote co-operation, including practical and workable arrangements for land and resource decision-making and sustainable development;
- efficiencies in decision-making and institutional change;
- recognition of the need to preserve each First Nations' decision-making authority;

- financial capacity for First Nations and resourcing for the Province to develop new frameworks for shared land and resource decision-making and to engage in negotiations;
- mutually acceptable arrangements for sharing benefits, including resource revenue sharing; and
- dispute resolution processes which are mutually determined for resolving conflicts rather than adversarial approaches to resolving conflicts.

This vision statement to establish a new relationship has been written as a measure of good faith by the parties to put into words our commitment to work together to explore these concepts and develop their full meaning.

IV. Action Plans

We agree to work together to manage change and take action on the following:

1. Develop new institutions or structures to negotiate Government-to-Government Agreements for shared decision-making regarding land use planning, management, tenuring and resource revenue and benefit sharing;
2. Identify institutional, legislative and policy changes to implement this vision and these action items;
3. Develop additional protocols or accords to further the implementation of the vision, as required from time to time;
4. Identify processes to ratify agreements;
5. Establish funding and distribution structures/institutions to support First Nations' capacity development and effective participation in the processes established through these action items;
6. Establish effective procedures for consultation and accommodation;
7. Appoint a joint working group to review Forest and Range Agreements and make recommendations to the parties on options for amending those agreements, in order to make them consistent with the Vision and Principles above;
8. Identify and develop new mechanisms on a priority basis for land and resource protection, including interim agreements;
9. Develop impartial dispute resolution processes and work towards a decrease in conflicts leading to litigation; and
10. Create an evaluation process for monitoring and measuring the achievement of this vision and these action items.

V. Management Committee and Working Groups

The parties will establish a joint management committee of senior officials to:

- develop terms of reference, priorities, and timelines for the management committee and the working groups by May 31, 2005;
- identify current issues of substantial concern, and consider short and long term steps the parties could take to facilitate their resolution;
- jointly develop policy frameworks;
- establish joint working groups and provide direction, timelines and co-ordination to further the implementation of the action items;
- identify and allocate financial and technical resources for the work of the management committee and the working groups;
- make recommendations to the parties to address problems as they arise in the implementation of the vision; and
- engage the Government of Canada.

APPENDIX E: TRANSFORMATIVE CHANGE ACCORD²

Transformative Change Accord
-between-
Government of British Columbia
-and-
Government of Canada
-and-
The Leadership Council
Representing the First Nations of British Columbia

The Government of British Columbia, First Nations and the Government of Canada agree that new approaches for addressing the rights and title interests of First Nations are required if First Nations are to be full partners in the success and opportunity of the province.

At the First Ministers' Meeting on Aboriginal issues on November 24th/25th, 2005, First Ministers and Aboriginal Leaders committed to strengthening relationships on a government-to-government basis, and on focussing efforts to close the gap in the areas of education, health, housing and economic opportunities.

This accord respects the agreement reached on November 25th and sets out how the parties intend to implement it in British Columbia.

Two important documents preceded the First Ministers' Meeting:

- *First Nations - Federal Crown Political Accord* – on the Recognition and Implementation of First Nations Governments signed in May 2005
- *The New Relationship* – A vision document setting out an initial work plan to move toward reconciliation of Aboriginal and Crown Titles and Jurisdictions within British Columbia

The goals in each document continue to be pursued and the understandings reached in both serve as the foundation for this tripartite accord.

The purpose of this Accord is to bring together the Government of British Columbia, First Nations and the Government of Canada to achieve the goals of closing the social and economic gap between First Nations and other British Columbians over the next 10 years, of reconciling aboriginal rights and title with those of the Crown, and of establishing a new relationship based upon mutual respect and recognition.

The Accord acknowledges and respects established and evolving jurisdictional and fiduciary relationships and responsibilities, and will be implemented in a manner that seeks to remove impediments to progress by establishing effective working relationships.

² Government of British Columbia. (2005, November). *Transformative Change Accord*. Retrieved February 1, 2009, from http://www.gov.bc.ca/arr/social/down/transformative_change_accord.pdf

The actions and processes set out herein are guided by the following principles.

- Recognition that aboriginal and treaty rights exist in British Columbia.
- Belief that negotiations are the chosen means for reconciling rights.
- Requirement that consultation and accommodation obligations are met and fulfilled.
- Ensure that First Nations engage in consultation and accommodation, and provide consent when required, freely and with full information.
- Acknowledgement and celebration of the diverse histories and traditions of First Nations.
- Understanding that a new relationship must be based on mutual respect and responsibility.
- Recognition that this agreement is intended to support social and economic well-being of First Nations.
- Recognition that accountability for results is critical.
- Respect for existing bilateral and tripartite agreements.

The parties to this Accord acknowledge the importance of First Nations' governance in supporting healthy communities. Actions set out in this Accord and in subsequent action plans will reflect this reality.

The parties understand that new resources will be required to close the gaps and federal and provincial investments on and off reserve will be made available pursuant to the decisions taken at the November 2005 First Ministers' Meeting. The parties also recognize the need to examine how existing resources are expended with the view that transformative change will require different funding approaches.

The Province of British Columbia, the Government of Canada and the First Nations of British Columbia agree to establish a 10 year plan to bridge the differences in socio-economic standards between First Nation citizens and other British Columbians. It is understood that a 10 ten year plan must by necessity evolve over time, and that concrete actions are required at its outset to build the relationships and momentum to achieve the desired outcome.

Accordingly, the parties to this Accord agree to undertake immediate actions in the following areas:

- To improve relationships by:
 - Supporting a tripartite negotiation forum to address issues having to do with the reconciliation of Aboriginal rights and title;
 - Engaging in the review and renewal of claims, treaty implementation and self-government policies;
 - Holding an annual meeting of political leaders intended to jointly discuss issues of mutual concern, report on progress and plan ongoing action; and,
 - Developing and implementing a communications plan to increase public awareness of the diversity and value of First Nations cultures, including support for the 2008 North American Indigenous Games

Possible Indicators include:

- Concluded Treaties and other agreements
- Increased awareness by the public of diversity and value of First Nation cultures

- To close the gap in education by:
 - Concluding a tripartite agreement on First Nation jurisdiction over K-12 education;
 - Supporting First Nation learners;
 - Focusing resources on early childhood learning and post-secondary training, including skills, training and apprenticeships; and,
 - Creating a high quality learning environment for First Nation students through curriculum development, teacher certification and the early detection of, and response to, learning disabilities.

Possible Indicators include:

- First Nations children exhibiting readiness for Kindergarten.
- Aboriginal students meeting expectations in reading, writing and numeracy (Foundation Skills Assessment).
- K-12 (or Dogwood equivalent) completion rates .
- Aboriginal students enrolled in post-secondary education (alternatively "highest level of education attained").
- Number of First Nation teachers.
- K – 12 curriculum modules.

- To close the gap in housing and infrastructure by:
 - Building on-reserve housing units.
 - Developing a partnering agreement to address off-reserve housing.
 - Exploring the devolution and development of Aboriginal off-reserve housing units to an aboriginal housing authority.
 - Supporting capacity development in the area of housing, including building maintenance and standards, and training and employment having to do with housing construction;
 - Undertaking measures to ensure the safety of water supply;
 - Improving other basic infrastructure such as wastewater systems, roads and fire protection;
 - Undertaking comprehensive community planning; and,
 - Providing broadband connectivity to First Nation communities.

Possible Indicators include:

- First Nation households in core housing.
- First Nations people trained in construction and maintenance of housing and related infrastructure.
- Number of Aboriginal subsidized housing units .
- Number of on-reserve and off-reserve housing units built.
- On-reserve boil water advisories.
- First Nation communities with broadband access.

- To close the gap in health by¹:
 - Establishing mental health programs to address substance abuse and youth suicide;
 - Integrating the ActNow strategy with First Nations health programs to reduce incidence of preventable diseases like diabetes;
 - Establishing tripartite pilot programs in the Northern Health Authority and the Lytton Health Centre to improve acute care and community health services utilizing an integrated approach to health and community programs as directed by the needs of First Nations; and,
 - Increasing the number of trained First Nation health care professionals.

¹ BC First Nations will be supported in the health actions by the direction and contribution from the Assembly of First Nations.

Possible Indicators include:

- Increased life expectancy.
- Age standardized mortality rates.
- Youth suicides.
- Infant (up to one year) and neonatal (up to 28 days) mortality rates.
- Level of incidence of diabetes.
- Level of childhood obesity.
- Practising, certified First Nation health care professionals.

- To close the gap in economic opportunities by:
 - Providing increased access to lands and resources through interim measures;
 - Considering the implementation of revenue sharing arrangements;
 - Holding a provincial summit on economic development; and,
 - Supporting First Nations business and entrepreneurial development by increasing access to business training, and skills development and considering ways to facilitate greater access to capital funding sources.

Possible Indicators include:

- Employment rates.
- Average weekly and hourly wage levels (LFS data).
- Business start ups.
- Number of entrepreneurs in BC.
- First Nation registered apprentices.

The Parties agree that by December, 2006 a detailed tripartite implementation strategy will be developed laying out specific actions and building upon a shared commitment to undertake as many initiatives as possible in year one of the 10 year plan (2006 – 2016). The Parties understand the collective responsibility for reporting on the progress of closing the socio-economic gaps that exist between First Nations people and other British Columbians. Accordingly, resources will be focussed towards developing the data and information necessary to appropriately monitor and report on agreed upon action plans. Canada, British Columbia and the First Nations of British Columbia agree that regular public reports are necessary. Data collection will respect the privacy of individuals.

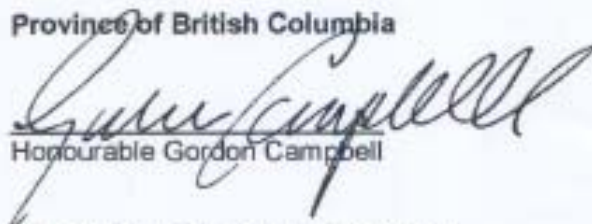
For greater certainty, nothing in this agreement shall be construed so as to abrogate or derogate from the protection of any existing or future Aboriginal or treaty rights of the First Nations peoples of British Columbia.

Signed this 25th day of November, 2005.

Canada

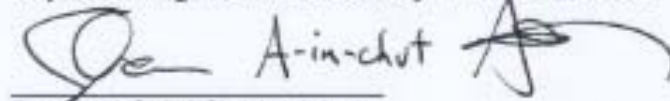

RL Honourable Paul Martin

Province of British Columbia

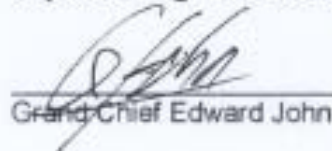

Honourable Gordon Campbell

First Nations Leadership Council

Representing the BC Assembly of First Nations:


Regional Chief Shawn Atleo

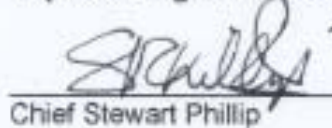
Representing the First Nations Summit:

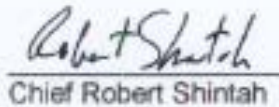

Grand Chief Edward John


Grand Chief Doug Kelly


Dave Porter

Representing the Union of BC Indian Chiefs:


Chief Stewart Phillip


Chief Robert Shintah


Chief Mike Retasket

APPENDIX F: MÉTIS NATION RELATIONSHIP ACCORD³

Métis Nation Relationship Accord
between
Province of British Columbia
as represented by the
Minister of Aboriginal Relations and Reconciliation
and
Métis Nation British Columbia
as represented by the
President of the Métis Nation of British Columbia

The history of Canada has been greatly influenced by the Métis peoples who emerged in west central North America with their own language (Michif), culture, traditions, and self-government structures.

These Métis people refer to themselves, and are referred to by others, as the Métis Nation.

This recognition of the participation of the Métis peoples in the development of Canada is noted in section 35(2) of the Constitution Act, 1982, which states that the Aboriginal peoples of Canada includes the Indian, Inuit, and Métis people of Canada. On May 31, 2005, Canada and the Métis Nation entered into the Métis Nation Framework Agreement that identified the need to address five objectives with the Métis Nation and its Governing Members.

At the First Ministers' Meeting on Aboriginal Issues in Kelowna on November 25, 2005, First Ministers committed to strengthening relationships with Aboriginal people based on mutual respect, responsibility and sharing as well as collaboratively working with Aboriginal people in order to close the gap in the quality of life for Aboriginal people in Canada.

The Métis Nation British Columbia embraces these commitments and undertakes to work with the Province of British Columbia in order to make progress and achieve results on a number of fronts including, but not limited to, relationships, education, housing, health and economic opportunities.

A positive working relationship between the province and the Métis people of British Columbia is essential to moving forward on the goals and outcomes identified by First Ministers in Kelowna.

³ Government of British Columbia & Métis Nation BC. (2006). *Métis Nation Relationship Accord*. Retrieved January 1, 2009, from http://www.gov.bc.ca/arr/social/down/arr_metis_accord.pdf

1. Objectives of the Métis Nation Relationship Accord

- Strengthen existing relationships based on mutual respect, responsibility and sharing.
- Improve engagement, coordination, information sharing and collaboration.
- Work toward meeting the commitments of the First Ministers' Meeting on Aboriginal issues as they pertain to Métis people and their aspirations to close the gap on the quality of life between Métis people and other British Columbians.

2. Subject Matters for the Métis Nation Relationship Accord Process

The Parties agree on the following as a preliminary list of subject matters for the Métis Nation Relationship Accord process. The Parties recognize that some work is already being undertaken in these areas and these efforts provide a foundation for enhanced work, utilizing the existing tripartite process where appropriate:

- Housing
- Education (Lifelong Learning)
- Economic Opportunities
- Collaborative Renewal of Métis Tripartite Processes
- Métis Identification and Data Collection

Additional topics may be added at the request of the parties to the agreement.

3. The Métis Nation Relationship Accord Process

The Parties agree to work toward FMM commitments and utilize and enhance the existing tripartite process in order to implement the objectives of the Métis Nation Relationship Accord.

To that end, the Métis Nation and the Province will build upon current processes, such as the existing Tripartite Management Committee. Those processes will develop ongoing discussions and planning in relation to the social and economic challenges facing Métis people.

To support this relationship, the parties to the agreement will each appoint two senior officials. These officials shall constitute the Métis Nation Relationship Accord Secretariat. The Secretariat's primary role will be to review the progress of the Métis Nation Relationship Accord.

The Secretariat will assist in the coordination of strategies designed to address the social and economic "gaps" and arrange meetings on subject matters listed in section 2. Each party will have the responsibility to ensure that relevant representatives will be in attendance based on the agenda topic.

Once a year, the Parties will make best efforts to convene a meeting between the President of the Métis Nation British Columbia and the Province of British Columbia as represented by the Minister of Aboriginal Relations and Reconciliation.

The Parties agree that the Métis Nation Relationship Accord process will support the overall multilateral process agreed to at the First Ministers' Meeting on Aboriginal Issues on November 25, 2005.

4. General

The Métis Nation Relationship Accord process will also recognize and respect existing bilateral and tripartite processes that are in place between the Parties.

For greater certainty, nothing in this Accord changes, affects, infringes on, or limits existing bilateral and tripartite processes now in place between the Parties but is intended to compliment and enhance these existing dialogues.

This Accord does not recognize, deny, define, affect or limit any Aboriginal rights within the meaning of Section 35 of the Constitution Act, 1982.

President
Métis Nation British Columbia

Minister of
Aboriginal Relations and Reconciliation
Province of British Columbia

Signed this _____ day , _____ 2006.