



**BUILDING AND SHARING CULTURALLY RESPONSIVE
CRIME PREVENTION PROGRAMS IN B.C.'S
ABORIGINAL COMMUNITIES**

NCPC PS-SP #504686-10

April 1, 2011 – October 31, 2014

Final Report

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**This project was partially funded by the Government of Canada's
National Crime Prevention Strategy**

The views and opinions expressed in this report are those of the authors and do not necessarily represent the views of neither the National Crime Prevention Centre nor the Department of Public Safety

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Executive Summary

The Community Safety and Crime Prevention Branch of the Ministry of Justice works with communities, stakeholders, all levels of government, police and service providers to improve the safety of communities and to assist victims of violence. The mandate of the Branch includes services for victims of crime, services for women and children fleeing violence, financial assistance for victims of crime, victim safety and court support, crime prevention, restorative justice, combating human trafficking, and civil forfeiture.

Building and Sharing Culturally Responsive Crime Prevention Programs in B.C.'s Aboriginal Communities was a four-year project (April 1, 2011 to October 31, 2014) developed to reduce and prevent offending, crime and violence in B.C.'s Aboriginal communities through the delivery of culturally responsive direct intervention programs. A community capacity building approach allowed for the building and sharing of tools, resources, knowledge and best-practices about crime prevention initiatives. The project was led by the Community Safety and Crime Prevention Branch of the BC Ministry of Justice with partial funding support from the Government of Canada's National Crime Prevention Strategy.

The *Building and Sharing Culturally Responsive Crime Prevention Programs in BC's Aboriginal Communities* project was developed as a result of Division staff reviewing a number of key sources of documentation, statistical data and trends analysis¹. This project resulted from a significant set of studies undertaken between 2004 through to 2009 that looked at incarceration, recidivism and violent crime rates involving incidents with on-reserve Aboriginal populations and off-reserve Aboriginal communities. The analysis resulted in critical findings on service gaps that continue to exist in creating a responsive crime prevention project that is focused on Aboriginal communities. A number of key trends emerged from this analysis – violent crime rates in Aboriginal villages and communities were up to seven to eight times higher than non-Aboriginal communities and secondly, that victimization extended beyond the victim but included families and communities. In addition, the root causes also included the violent legacies of contact and post contact colonialism, forced impoverishment, violence and trauma inflicted upon Aboriginal children through the residential school experience and the 1960s scoop of Aboriginal children. As a result, Aboriginal communities in B.C. and Canada suffer the highest

¹ Information sources: Juristat data, annual statistics centered on violent crime rates, victimization and recidivism through the General Social Survey, and previously commissioned research conducted on behalf of the Ministry by Dr. Sarah Hunt, *Services for Aboriginal Victims in Rural and Isolated communities: Innovative Models of Service Delivery*; as well as looking at recommendations from the Highway of Tears Recommendations Report published in 2006.

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proportional rates of crime and victimization compared to non-Aboriginal counterparts, demonstrating a clear need for a positive and culturally responsive crime prevention initiative.

Summary of the Project:

The *Building and Sharing Culturally Responsive Crime Prevention Programs in BC's Aboriginal Communities* project increased understanding of what an effective provincial service delivery model might look like in working with Aboriginal communities in crime prevention practice. The previous meta-analysis led to the formation of a project team that was tasked and was given responsibility to develop a multi-year proposal that would use a strength-based approach and Aboriginal best practices to develop a crime prevention initiative. The project team worked with three Aboriginal communities – Ahousaht First Nation, Whe-La-Le U Council (Alert Bay) and the Prince Rupert Aboriginal Community Services Society. Additionally, this project identified culturally appropriate ways to evaluate First Nation-based crime prevention activities. There was a strategic interest in ensuring the three Aboriginal communities would lead the planning, development and implementation of crime prevention to ensure local ownership and the potential to sustain the work beyond this project timeline.

This project engaged more than 2000 community members, and was guided by a best practices ethos, as well as evidence-based learning. The project emerged from an environmental scan that was robust, had a long-reaching timeline and considered more than five years of data and research analysis on excessive crime and recidivism rates in Aboriginal communities, as well as multiple generations of victimization. This project has demonstrated an approach that can become a provincial crime prevention model for working with Aboriginal communities and leaders in developing culturally relevant and responsive crime prevention projects.

During the project planning process, a culturally appropriate evaluation was developed and conducted by Reciprocal Consulting – an evaluation firm specializing in conducting culturally competent evaluations using participatory research processes.

Specifically, the three communities actively engaged in developing and implementing culturally relevant, responsive and appropriate activities; highlights include:

- cultural awareness camps for at risk Aboriginal youth and families,
- crime prevention retreats for individuals in crisis,
- youth tribal Journeys,

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- community-based safety events – curtain feasts focusing on crime prevention by revealing, knowledge materials staged behind an Aboriginal curtain,
- coordination of crime prevention training for community leaders and elders,
- advanced training of village security staff (Hawi'ihin Ahousaht),
- traditional Law Workshop (Alert Bay Elders), and,
- fundraising skills development to explore sustainability for extending this project,
- cultural awareness curriculum developed including Tsimshian cultural and history to be delivered to community services sector in Prince Rupert.

This report summarizes the positive impacts of utilizing Aboriginal cultural ways and tools as part of a crime prevention action plan to reduce crime in Aboriginal and off-reserve communities.

Objectives of the Project:

This project had three core objectives in mind;

- to initiate a dialogue with selected Aboriginal communities and facilitate community conversations that would identify and address their respective crime prevention needs;
- to ensure the process and identified intervention activities reflect both of the following elements: 1) incorporation of promising practices which address known risk and protective factors in a manner rooted in an evidence-based approach, and 2) cultural responsiveness, meaning they will be holistic, inclusive and consistent with Aboriginal values and belief.
- to encourage collaboration with Aboriginal communities, focusing on their strengths and resources. By operating in this manner, crime prevention initiatives would include a greater level of community ownership and support.

Lessons Learned and Recommendations:

According to police-reported data examining crimes committed on reserve in 2004, Criminal Code incidents on reserve communities across Canada represented 4% of the national total. Over half of on-reserve incidents were classified as “other” Criminal Code offences, such as mischief and disturbing the peace, while 25% were violent and 21% were property offences. Police-reported data examining crimes committed on reserve identified that rates of violent crime committed on reserves were eight times higher for assaults, seven times higher for sexual

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assaults and six times higher for homicides than rates in the rest of Canada. Research conducted by Dr. Sarah Hunt, *Services for Aboriginal Victims in Rural and Isolated communities: Innovative Models of Service Delivery* for the B.C. Ministry of Justice, Victim Services and Crime Prevention Division found that crimes such as mischief, physical assault, sexual exploitation, homicide and substance abuse are highly prevalent in rural and isolated communities. The report recommends the use of Aboriginal cultural tools and knowledge to begin reversing the levels of violent crime and recidivism in the community.

Four key learnings were identified during the 3 years of project implementation; they were:

- **Community Engagement and Collaboration:** building a strong community engagement process and working from a space of collaboration when considering a partnership with an Aboriginal community.
- **Establishing an Advisory Process:** Community engagement at an early stage through an advisory process benefited the project.
- **Utilizing a Strength-Based Approach:** the importance of using a strength-based approach, as well as, deep listening to learn which cultural tools can be used for crime prevention;
- **Building Ownership at the Local Level:** working closely with local project teams that resulted in a greater sense of local ownership.

Additional learning included: seeking reduced administrative processes that become burdensome to the agency, clarifying roles and expectations for community staff involved in such a project, ensuring a culturally responsive, relevant and holistic approach to developing this kind of project and finally, being adaptable to having one's expectations changed as a result of creating ownership for prevention work once a community does become involved.

Introduction

According to the Canadian Centre for Justice Statistics, violent incidents were much more likely to be committed against younger Aboriginal people than they were against their older counterparts. In 2007, Aboriginal adults accounted for 22% of admissions to sentenced custody, while representing 3% of the Canadian population (*Adult Correctional Statistics in Canada, 2007/2008*). In addition, on all crime-based violent incidents reported through Juristat, 56% were by a known relative, while 25% of all violent incidents perpetrated. Homicide rates for Aboriginal people in the five years preceding the 2004 Juristat survey was almost seven times

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higher than that for non-Aboriginal persons. The breadth of statistical informational gathering and analysis highlighted for both, the Division leadership and the program staff, the very real need for a crime prevention intervention that would be respectful, responsive and culturally competent.

Developing the Project

As a result of the demonstrated need, Division staff formed a project team that was comprised of a restorative justice coordinator, a crime prevention coordinator, a senior advisor on Aboriginal programs, and at a later date, a program manager responsible for the north region. The project team developed a proposal and began conversations in 2009/2010 with the National Crime Prevention Centre (NCPC), Public Safety Canada, in order to negotiate a multi-year funding partnership. A funding agreement was developed and signed off that committed multi-year funding and direct in-kind support for this project.

The project proposal focused on 3 core areas of activity:

- Recruit and convene an advisory group made up of key knowledge holders and experts who will advise the project team on community selection and criteria, project fit, outreach and engagement approaches and consideration of any issues pertaining to the planning and delivery of the project.
- Identify 3 Aboriginal communities that have administrative capacity to implement a three-year crime prevention project.
- Work with the 3 communities, as well as the evaluator, through a project management and contract management cycle of 3 years.

Significant stakeholder consultation led to the establishment of an advisory committee that was instrumental in guiding the initial stages of the project and assisting with the selection of the three communities. An advisory group was formed in October, 2011. This nine-member group was made up of a cross-section of community, education and government experts in Aboriginal engagement, Aboriginal cultural knowledge and Indigenous cultural competency training. An Expression of Interest (EOI) to identify 3 communities for this project was developed and disseminated in January 2012. The adjudication process included members of the advisory group.

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The EOI selection criteria were - capacity and willingness to deliver a project; existing momentum for developing crime prevention activities; a self- identified need for a crime prevention initiative; and, the use of crime statistics as determinants for community selection. Three communities were successful: Ahousaht First Nation in Ahousaht, BC, Whe-La-Le-U Council in Alert Bay, BC and the Prince Rupert Aboriginal Community Services Society in Prince Rupert, BC. All three communities agreed to become part of the project, signed contracts and began working with the project team to begin a three-year crime prevention project for their respective villages. In the case of the Prince Rupert Aboriginal Community Services, the adjudication and project team identified that one of the communities should be an off-reserve project that would engage Aboriginal people living within a municipality.

Each community was supported to conduct a needs assessment, develop local action plans and implement those action plans. The project team worked in collaboration with representatives of Aboriginal communities by focusing on their strengths and resources, leading to crime prevention initiatives that were owned and supported by the participating communities.

Evaluation

The evaluation for this project was undertaken by Reciprocal Consulting. The group is unique in that the principle consultant and the team focus their work through a number of Indigenous approaches when evaluating projects – this includes considering the circle and the space of a story to mine key observations about the success of the project, as well as taking an holistic lens to seeing how different areas of a project inter-connect and positively impact the project and project participants. In addition, this evaluation report for the *Building and Sharing Culturally Responsive Crime Prevention Programs in BC's Aboriginal Communities* includes:

- A brief literature review on the historical context and best practices for developing an Aboriginal crime prevention projects;
- describes the program;
- reviews the evaluation questions and how outcomes were measured; and,
- presents the evaluation findings and related recommendations.
- Overall, over 2000 community members participated in the program. The work was guided by best practices for developing and delivering crime prevention strategies.

Appendix A Final Evaluation Report (Attached as Appendix 1)

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Resources & Tools Created

- **Final Evaluation Report (Appendix 1):** Final evaluation report prepared by Reciprocal Consulting
- **Building and Sharing Culturally Responsive Crime Prevention Practices (Appendix 2):** A resource kit intended to support communities in the development of a crime prevention project. This toolkit is a 'how-to' for Aboriginal communities to consider approaches to community engagement, assessing local needs and developing action plans that are culturally relevant and responsive.
- **Presenter Notes copy – Building and Sharing Culturally Responsive Crime Prevention Practices (Appendix 3):** This power point presentation was developed by project team members to present this project to community meeting convened in the three host communities.
- **Advisory Group Terms of Reference (Appendix 4):** Governance document developed for the Aboriginal Crime Prevention Project Advisory Group that outlined the group's functions, roles and responsibilities, and mandates for input.
- **Expression of Interest (Appendix 5):** The open procurement document developed to seek proposals from Aboriginal crime prevention proponents who indicated an interest in becoming part of the project.
- **Engaging and Empowering Aboriginal Youth Toolkit (Appendix 6):** Toolkit that works as a guide for front-line service providers, facilitators, educators, community partners and researchers who are seeking to develop youth-focussed Aboriginal crime prevention projects.
- **Evaluation in Northern, Remote and Aboriginal Communities:** A reciprocal Consulting reference document developed to identify how best to approach developing an evaluation culture in remoter areas of B.C. such as the North Region and in remote Aboriginal communities – **Link:** <http://reciprocalconsulting.ca/wp-content/uploads/2013/02/Sage-Advice-English.pdf>

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- **Promising Practices NCPC:** Reference document: NCPC Compendium and reference document that profiles 20 new projects that provide innovative promising and model programs.
Link: <http://www.publicsafety.gc.ca/cnt/rsrscs/pblctns/prmsng-mdl-vlm2/index-eng.aspx>
- **Aboriginal Crime Prevention Project Presentation (Appendix 7):** Presentation on the Project Highlights developed for the BC Annual Crime Prevention Symposium in 2014.
- **Implementation Fact Sheets on Promising and Model Crime Prevention Programs 2012:** Reference document on the many different approaches to working with youth that range from cognitive behavioural intervention, to community-based prevention and leadership development models
Link - <http://www.publicsafety.gc.ca/cnt/rsrscs/pblctns/mplmnttn-fct-shfts-2012/index-eng.aspx>
- **Community Final Report and Tsymshian Cultural Awareness Workshop (Appendix 8):** Example of a more formalized linear toolkit that teaches non-Aboriginal participants in a workshop about traditional cultural values and way of being from a Tsimshian cultural perspective.

Project Observations

In reviewing the annual submitted final report documents from the three communities during the project implementation phases, a number of consistent themes emerged, they are:

- take a strength-based approach that integrates culture, tools and traditional knowledge, as a best practice in working to develop an aboriginal crime prevention project,
- work through existing community events to leverage further community strength and ownership for the project,
- build community capacity,
- enhance trust between project partners,
- create healthy spaces through use food and nutrition, and
- take an holistic approach in developing crime prevention activities.

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The most frequent comments on the subject of culturally responsive crime prevention were the need to carefully consider the diverse needs of an Aboriginal community.

Lessons Learned and Challenges Identified

This project was unique in working specifically with three participating Aboriginal communities to lead all aspects of the project development, planning and implementation cycle. The project team at the Ministry disseminated a promising practices and best practice document that would assist in the learning cycle of each participating community. Additionally, each community received a facilitated session that was delivered to further tease out ideas for local crime prevention activities, and identifying underlying factors to recidivism within families residing in the village. An Aboriginal-focussed process evaluation was identified as a good practice early on in the project planning process. These approaches helped the project leadership in the communities build community support and ownership for the projects.

A number of key learnings took place during the project cycle. Here are some highlights:

1. **Community Engagement:** Participants noted the need for more community members to be included on advisory committees to the projects
2. **Using a Strength-Based Approach:** Participants felt that the program had taken a strength-based approach that included integrating culture, leveraging community input, building community capacity, enhancing trust, and creating healthy spaces. The most frequent comments around culturally responsive crime prevention advantages include helping make initiatives more relevant to address unique and diverse community needs and addressing the root causes for crime.
3. **Adapting Project Tools:** Care should be taken to not assume that one culturally specific crime prevention strategy will work for another First Nation village either regionally or in different parts of British Columbia. The adaptability of project tools from an Indigenous lens should be considered with care given the diversity of Aboriginal cultures in British Columbia and the diverse applications of cultural tools such as:
 - a. cultural learning,
 - b. use of regalia creation and ritual performance for important, individual/family/community healing.
 - c. learning about family responsibilities and governance systems, and,

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- d. use of the potlatch model as a way of introducing the person who has committed a crime back into the village and community.
4. **Program Delivery:** Working collaboratively, communicating regularly and collective problem solving had a positive impact in how well the projects were delivered.
5. **Program Outcomes:** Short-term outcomes identified include increased awareness of issues and increased understanding of culture and crime prevention measures. The medium-term outcomes include increased collaboration and enhanced connections between community partners. The long-term outcomes reported include an increased level of cultural values and practices embedded within crime prevention frameworks, increased community capacity for crime prevention work, and increased community resiliency.

The participants noted that program challenges were mainly structural in nature. Structural challenges included being confined both by fiscal year funding with no roll-over, narrowly-defined government guidelines for reporting, and working within a structure that sometimes made it difficult to promote Aboriginal culture and communication. In terms of staffing challenges, issues reported included lack of human resources, staff turnover, the need for diverse skills sets, and defining personal and professional boundaries. Diversity between communities was seen as both strengths and as challenges.

Community strengths included using and building partnerships, being flexible, being autonomous, and knowing one's own community well. Staff strengths included recognizing the value of all team members, being creative, having leadership skills, being skilled at mentoring new staff, and already having a network of community based relationships. Process strengths included communication skills, knowledge translation, and the ability to use culture and knowledge as tools. Overall program strengths were program flexibility; having a comprehensive advisory committee structure and using a project framework that was both holistic and culturally responsive.

Conclusions and Key Recommendations²

There were three objectives for the project evaluation: to understand the effectiveness of the provincial service delivery model to engage Aboriginal communities in crime prevention practices; to identify and evaluate culturally responsive crime prevention practices, and to conduct a process evaluation to assess participant satisfaction and determine whether key

² Informed by annual year-end reports and the final evaluation report generated through Reciprocal Consulting.

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activities are being fulfilled. With regard to the first objective, the Ministry invested in supporting communities in the development of their proposals as well as the development of the programming that occurred in the three communities. Feedback from the three communities indicated that the Ministry was effective in providing that support and that it was helpful and appreciated. Furthermore, the three communities also expressed gratitude and noted the value of the Ministry including site visits to the communities to assist with the program planning, as well as enhancing the understanding of the community context and complexities for providing services. Related to this, the Ministry and communities discussed the need to engage in a service delivery model that is flexible and takes the community context into consideration.

As a further reminder that this work is not complete, more recent statistics illustrate a continuing challenge for those working in the areas of services to Aboriginal communities. In 2013/2014 Aboriginal adults accounted for 24% of admissions to sentenced custody (a 2% increase from 2007 stats) while still remaining at 3% of the Canadian adult population ((*Juristat*). Self-reported violent victimization among people who identified as an Aboriginal person was double those of non-Aboriginal people. While the success of *Building and Sharing Culturally Responsive Crime Prevention Programs in BC's Aboriginal Communities* has been tangible, there is still much work to be accomplished in order to reduce or reverse these kinds of statistics.

The following recommendations are based on the evaluation findings and provide suggestions for moving forward with this work:

1. Review administrative processes around funding and payment periods, as well as the inclusion of administration and overhead.
2. Provide clear roles and expectations for community staff, and determine fit for the position and scope of work, as well as whether they are willing and able to fully participate.
3. Continue to utilize an approach that is culturally responsive, relevant and holistic.
4. When supporting a community based culturally relevant prevention program, be prepared and open to shifts in project design due to feedback from community stakeholders and advisory committees that may have other project goals than originally specified.
5. Continue to provide program development support, and meet with communities to define roles and responsibilities, ensure sufficient commitment, and ascertaining whether the community has adequate support. This step received positive feedback from all three communities.
6. Continue to support community-driven approaches to planning for crime prevention activities, where ideas come from inside of the community, and also recognize community diversity.

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7. Continue to build and strengthen external relationships with organizations such as the RCMP and school districts, and other public and private service providers.
8. Continue to support low threshold programming in the communities to ensure inclusivity and minimal barriers for attending the programs.
9. Continue to work with an evaluation framework that is based on a program logic model and clearly delineates short, intermediate and long-term outcomes. Also consider using a participatory approach.
10. Consider building program evaluation capacity for the program coordinators staff such that they can integrate process and outcome evaluation into their program management.

Appendices – 1-8 (Attached)