

Urban Aboriginal Economic Development National Network



Urban Aboriginal Economic Development Presentation

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Title: Urban Aboriginal Economic Development Presentation

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Author Information: Christine is from the Bawating/Sault Ste. Marie, ON area and Obishikikaang (Lac Seul First Nation). She is completing the first year of a PhD Indigenous Studies program at Trent University. Her research is centered within a broader Indigenous research agenda that seeks liberation for Indigenous peoples. Her entry point into this broader agenda is in the restoration of Anishinaabek women's social economic autonomy within their homelands/Canada. She is presently editing a poetry manuscript called "Laying Cedar". Her most significant responsibility and passion is raising her 8 year old daughter, Aja.

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About the Urban Aboriginal Economic Development Network: The Urban Aboriginal Economic Development National Network is an open and inclusive multi-stakeholder network of researchers and practitioners working in urban Aboriginal and Métis communities. This includes organizations, universities, federal/provincial/municipal and Aboriginal governments, private industry, community groups, and NGO's. The network's focus is on mobilizing economic development knowledge and strengthening organizational capacity.

This paper can be found on the network website: <http://abdc.bc.ca/uaed>

The Circle

- Began March 2009
- John McBride facilitated the first circle
- Facilitated by Christine Sy March –August 2009; Natalie Waboose September – December 2009; Bonnie Gaikezheyongai a consistent support via NORDIK Institute
- A diverse membership from SSM and urban First Nation community; some involvement from local tribal council made up of 7 First Nations; representation from Chippewa Tribe in U.S – a collectivity of 12.

Update

- In terms of the research methodology of a Learning Circle, the grounding centre through which knowledge is shared and collective knowledge is created are rocks—asinaan—from gichi gaming—Lake Superior; over time some of the rocks were removed and replaced with rocks symbolic to members;
- The Circle has great energy; immediately came together and identified the need to balance process with action;
- Work well together; high motivation and energy (e.g. met every month through the summer, shared meeting places).
- Reciprocal sharing of knowledge across members from their shared and diverse histories and experiences in Bawating/SSM
- Creative energy is vibrant and strong
- Several projects linked to economic development were envisioned within the first 6 months:

Projects

- Monument or statue that signifies Indigenous historical and contemporary presence in SSM
- Tourism project that also locates and identifies presence in the urban downtown area; balance the existing historic tourist sites that document Settler presence
- History project- uncovering the history of an Anishinaabek burial ground and what happened to it during urban development

Prioritized Environmental Scan

- Identified a need to know where we are at right now in terms of UAED; decided on an environmental scan
- Proposal was submitted and supported by UAED
- Derek Rice, graduate student in economics, lead on this project, assistance from Natalie;
- Purpose was to answer the question “In terms of UAED, where are we right now?”
- Draft was presented to the Circle in December 2009, edits being made and final being presented in May 2010

Environmental Scan

- Documents the history of Bawating/SSM that traverses international and city-urban reserve borders
- Snapshot of the historical leaders that impacted the area
- Significant events (i.e. treaties, residential school, Shinngwauk Anishinaabe kinomaagegaming)
- Impacts of economic development by settlers/colonists/industrial developers (i.e. significantly mining)

Scan

- Draws on statistical data about the contemporary demographics and social economic status of urban Aboriginal population (not in the US)
- Provides descriptive information about local Aboriginal collectivities: political, social, economic, cultural, spiritual, emotional, physical and intellectual

Update

- Circle agenda at this point is to finalize the Environmental Scan and continue in Strategic Planning;
- Now that we know where we are,
- 1. Where do we want to go?

- 2. How do we want to get there?
- Hopeful that this meeting will re-invigorate momentum