

2009

Aboriginal Women in Economic Development *Final Report*



Sponsored by:

Indian and Northern Affairs Canada

**National Network for Urban Aboriginal
Economic Development**

**Aboriginal Business and
Community
Development Centre**

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Final Report: Aboriginal Women in Economic Development

Introduction

This Final Report is being submitted by the Aboriginal Business Development Centre (ABDC), in partial fulfilment of the contract requirements for the *Aboriginal Women in Economic Development Project*.

The ABDC is an Aboriginal controlled and staffed organization that has conducted a number of successful Aboriginal-based engagement strategies and research projects. Our strength is our ability to work with Aboriginal communities, organizations, individuals and associated government agencies, in a respectful and effective manner.

Background for the Project:

In October of 2008, the *National Network for Urban Aboriginal Economic Development* held a National Gathering to identify the next steps in the development of the Network.

One of the critical gaps identified in those discussions, and in discussions amongst Network participants prior to that, was the need to ensure a dedicated focus on Aboriginal women in urban areas. This issue reflects the perspective of some of the participants in the Network that gender is an important variable in understanding and responding to the situations of Aboriginal people in urban areas.

The rationale for this focus emerged from the clear recognition that Aboriginal women faced particular barriers in becoming active members of the workforce, and in starting up and sustaining business enterprises. If the Aboriginal community in urban areas lags behind the general, non-Aboriginal population, then Aboriginal women in turn are still further behind, even though women comprise a majority of the Aboriginal people in urban areas, and women are also active in leadership positions in urban areas, particularly in health and social services.

In assessing how to achieve the goal of encouraging Aboriginal women in urban areas to participate more effectively in building business enterprises, members of the Network identified two key points.

First, Aboriginal women often lack the support structures and networks that are available to non-Aboriginal people, and that are so key to success in starting a business. This is particularly true in urban areas, but reflects the more general exclusion of Aboriginal women from positions of influence that was the one of the defining features of the colonization process.

But Network participants also noted a second, relevant fact: that Aboriginal women often occupy key leadership positions in urban Aboriginal organizations, and that a number of individuals have managed to create and sustain important connections and networks despite the very real challenges they face. In urban communities, Aboriginal women also bring significant leadership abilities and skills and experience in planning and organizational management.

These two features led the participants to the conclusion that one effective strategy for encouraging Aboriginal women in business would be to bring these two audiences together: Aboriginal women who want to start a business, and Aboriginal women who have connections, skills, and confidence in managing organizations, with the idea that this would help build the necessary support structures for budding Aboriginal women entrepreneurs. Those support structures would draw from, and be based on, the pool of talented, experienced Aboriginal women in urban areas. As well, in drawing from those women, the Project would also be able to tap into local networks that those women have built up over time. Finally, with support from the Network, these support structures could be expanded to include new participants, such as private lending institutes, or experts in marketing, into the process of supporting Aboriginal women.

As a result of these discussions, the Aboriginal Business Development Centre approached Indian and Northern Affairs, and the National Network on urban Aboriginal Economic Development, to support a project of creating support networks in four specific locations, that could perform the task of enabling Aboriginal women to be more successful in creating and sustaining business enterprises.

In response to the request, Indian and northern Affairs and the National Network agreed to sponsor the project. The key features of the Project in its final form included:

- ◆ Organizing and facilitating at least four initial Round Tables in communities in British Columbia and Alberta
- ◆ Identify, with local community organizations, appropriate support people who would be helpful in the process of creating, expanding, or sustaining a business or economic development opportunity
- ◆ Using the round Table process to identify business opportunities that could be pursued by Aboriginal women in the community
- ◆ Organize and facilitate a second round Table, in the 09-10 FY, in each community to solidify the Round Table, and the connections amongst participants

Round Table Methodology:

The principle mechanism adopted by the Project was a Round Table format. Under this approach to meeting facilitation, the emphasis is on using informal, non-hierarchical, peer to peer discussions to draw out the creative potential that participants bring to the meeting. The goal was to avoid having participants bring `positions` or ideas that are entrenched in the perspectives of the organizations participants came from. Instead, the goal is to encourage a free flow of ideas, possibilities, and to generate new connections.

It was also recognized that a circle format, a less structured approach, and a focus on brainstorming and sharing of ideas would be more inviting to potential Aboriginal women entrepreneurs than a rigid meeting format. The goal was to support peer-to-peer relations, creativity, and informal as well as formal supports. In part, using a round table format encourages the kind of creative thinking that is an important ingredient to identifying new business opportunities.

The organizers and Project sponsors believed that this was the best way to achieve the goals of the project, and so adopted the Round Table approach as the main methodology for the Project. As is discussed below, the approach was generally a success, with very positive feedback from participants,

who said that they liked the approach, and that it was more productive, for this purpose, than the more formal process they used in their regular meetings. And, since some of the participants go to a great many meetings, we feel this was a substantial validation of the use of Round Tables in this project.

Project Activities:

Communities

The Project commenced on January 15th, 2008. Although the Project budget called for only four round Tables Project coordinator, we were able to find efficiencies in the budget and host five, in the following communities:

- ◆ Prince George, British Columbia
- ◆ Edmonton, Alberta,
- ◆ Masset, British Columbia (not on the original list)
- ◆ Prince Rupert, British Columbia
- ◆ Fort St. John, British Columbia

The list above represented a range of communities, although all were in northern or central locations. Prince George is a medium, central interior town with a substantial urban population, with an economic base in forestry and fibre processing. Edmonton is a large metropolitan centre, with dispersed population of Aboriginal people, and a mixed urban economy. Masset represents a small coastal community where the inhabitants are largely from the Haida Nation. Prince Rupert is a small to medium coastal community with an Aboriginal capital corporation, and a significant percentage of the population is Aboriginal.

Local organizing

In each community, the Project identified a local coordinator who could identify participants, find a location, and coordinate the meeting logistics. This was also intended to encourage local ownership of the process, as one of the key principles of the Round Table process is that it is the participants own the process, not the Project.



Summary of Sessions: Common Themes, Community differences

By the nature of the process used, the discussions in each of the sessions took its own path. While the agenda for each meeting was similar, the core of the Round Table meetings is the portion of the agenda dedicated to open ended, unstructured discussions. As a result, there was considerable variation in the flow of discussions, and, reflecting the different specifics of each community, some variation in the identified opportunities or constraints. So, for instance, Masset participants identified high freight costs as a barrier to export orientated production of goods. By the same token, however, the transportation costs also presented an opportunity to use import substitution as a possible business strategy. Needless to say, these were not issues raised by participants in the Edmonton session.

However, it is also true that Aboriginal women in urban areas face similar challenges, and often come from similar personal or community situations. As well, many of the participants were drawn together by a shared understanding of the value of community, and of the need to work together as Aboriginal people in order to create and sustain a distinct Aboriginal way of life in urban settings. As a result of this, and because of other similarities in the context, the various participants in the different communities also converged in their conversations on some very similar points. An analysis of the record of the meetings shows some unique features of each meeting, but also demonstrates that there are considerable overlaps between the communities selected for this Project.

The common themes articulated in the each of the Round Table meetings include:

Assets:

A number of participants, when prompted by a question, were quick to recognize that Aboriginal women had real personal and collective assets to contribute to business development. A discussion of assets alone was an important part of the process, as too often interpretations or descriptions of urban Aboriginal communities focus on the challenges, limits, and deficits. But no business can be started on

the basis of what the business owner is missing, or what is absent, so the process of identifying and naming assets was central to the outcome of finding viable business ideas from the conversation. The following were some of the key assets that emerged from the participants:

Culture :

For one, Aboriginal women are often involved in their culture, and can use the rich cultural resources available to them for artistic or craft production. These cultural connections also represented a potential source of personal strength and pride, necessary conditions for succeeding in business.

Social Networks:

Participants in most of the sessions also pointed to the ability of women to generate and sustain social relations. This was a particularly important insight given that one of the objectives of the Project was precisely to deepen and extend the capacity of Aboriginal women to draw on social networks to support their business enterprise. And, this was one of the moments in the discussion where the intersection of culture and issues of gender was most explicit: consistent with the role of women in many Aboriginal traditions, building a web of community relations and ensuring mutual support for community members was seen as a natural role by many of the participants.

Flexibility:

Participants pointed to the fact that many Aboriginal women they knew had child care (or other) responsibilities, or alternatively personal challenges, that made full time work in a standard office setting problematic. But some pointed out that this is also an asset, allowing women to take up small business opportunities (ie., in sub-contracting roles) that fit with their personal schedules and needs better than waged labour might. For instance, more than one session identified sewing as a skill that could be applied in the home, with flexible hours and using equipment that is both relatively affordable and could be easily moved between locations.



Barriers:

Each session also spent time considering what barriers faced Aboriginal women in their community who might be interested in starting a business. Those discussions identified the following:

Child Care:

Participants were quick to identify what is a long standing barrier for women attempting to start a business: lack of child care. This is no different for Aboriginal women, except that in some communities there is little or no Aboriginal specific child care, and it is also true that Aboriginal women rarely possess the financial ability to pay for quality private care.

Lack of self-esteem or confidence:

As a result of a history of colonization, and the marginalization of Aboriginal women in mainstream society, Aboriginal women often lack the confidence or internal resources to take on the task of building a business or competing in the private sector. Most of the conversations at the sessions identified this as an issue that holds women back from becoming more active in the business world.

Lack of Technical skills:

This is a problem faced by many budding entrepreneurs, but is especially acute for Aboriginal people. These skills range from business planning to marketing to financial management, and lack of these presents barriers to success in business.

Lack of effective support:

Starting a business can be a difficult and draining process, and Aboriginal women, while they may have social supports, sometimes do not have effective access to the more specialized professional networks needed to succeed in some business sectors.

Lack of capital:

Again, this is a challenge that faces many small start ups. The issue is deepened for Aboriginal women, though, in part because of the lower levels of income of Aboriginal women. In part, also, the problem is deeper for Aboriginal women because the lower levels of savings and income in their immediate circle of relatives and friends means they are limited in their ability to draw on those resources.



Community specifics:

In each of the Round Table sessions, participants spoke to the specific resources and situations that arose from the unique circumstances of their community. For instance, in Prince Rupert, participants talked about ways to take advantage of the port expansion that was planned for Prince Rupert in 2010. In Masset, participants identified a specific space that could be used to draw Aboriginal women out of their homes and into a common space where they could be supported in becoming more involved in business activities. And in Fort S. John, the presence at the meeting of women with experience in textiles and clothing sales led to serious discussions about the potential in this sector for a business.

As well, each of the five communities has available to them a different range of potential participants in a support circle. For instance, in Masset, the Mayor could play a key role, because he is both the Mayor and a loans officer of the local credit union. In Edmonton, the presence of an Aboriginal capital corporation and someone well versed in business plan development meant that participants at the Round Table had ready access to financial and business development expertise.

Social and professional support:

The possible enterprises identified in the sessions will of course account for or relate to the specific markets, opportunities, and assets in that community. But one of the things that the sessions revealed was that there is a clearly articulated need for strong peer support for Aboriginal women developing business or social enterprises. A number of the common themes summarized above speak to that need. As a result, as can be seen in the discussion below, there was a significant emphasis on establishing some more organized or comprehensive peer support or mentoring process. It was expressed by some that this was a necessary step, so that as business opportunities were identified in the Round Table discussions they could be taken up and the women involved would find effective support.



Profile of participants

This first round of meetings was an opportunity to see some of the connections that already existed in the communities where Round Tables were held. As well, as some of the participants did not know each other, it was also a chance to connect different social and professional networks together. The strategic

goal was to ensure that the Round Tables had key sectors involved: financial expertise, business technical skills, mentors/role models (i.e. Aboriginal or even non-Aboriginal businesswomen), legal training, social support, training, and general organizational and leadership skills. While scheduling, availability, and interest levels played a role, the initial meeting did indicate that the following kinds of participants were or would be involved in the process:

- **Lending institutions, Aboriginal:** in three of the five meetings, representatives from Aboriginal capital corporations attended to lend their support (pun intended) and provide information to participants.
- **Lending institutions, non-Aboriginal:** in the Masset meeting, and in Prince Rupert, non-Aboriginal lending organizations also attended, indicating their interest in working with Aboriginal community members. In Masset, there is only one bank (a trust company) in the community: the representative, who is also the Mayor, is keen to continue to participate.
- **Aboriginal business people:** in four of the five meetings, the Round Table attracted Aboriginal women who were currently or recently in business for themselves. This was a key audience for all of the circles as one of the barriers identified early on was lack of self-confidence amongst potential entrepreneurs. Being supported by aboriginal women who have actually run successful enterprises was an important feature of responding to this issue.
- **Business Technical skills:** In 3 of the five meetings, there were participants that had experience in, or access to people with experience in, business plan development, business after-care, or business strategy.
- **Community knowledge:** in order to draw from existing community members, it was important that the meetings include people who had extensive knowledge of community leaders, or community members with key skills or abilities who could be invited to participate.
- **Accounting or bookkeeping:** While this particular skill set can be obtained through normal market processes, it was helpful to have actual individuals identified so that potential participants could seek accounting or record keeping advice early on in the process of business development. While only one Round Table had an accountant, three of the five discussed this issue, and agreed to try ensure this skill set was made available in some way to participants. In fact, one of the business ideas that emerged in the discussions at one meeting was the opportunity to provide bookkeeping services to community members.
- **Social Supports:** Given that some of the main challenges facing Aboriginal women are social in nature, ie, lack of skills, lack of confidence, addictions issues, child care needs, etc, it became obvious at almost all of the sessions that having participants who could connect women to appropriate services or supports for these issues was going to be important to the success of the initiative.

A number of the participants in the Round Tables identified that there were other people who should be involved in the process of building support networks for Aboriginal women interesting in business development. Some of those people were invited to attend this round of meetings but for various reasons were not available. It was clear that a second set of meetings would enable the groups that formed from the Round Tables to expand, and involve others would be able to contribute skills, knowledge, or other assets to the process.

Business opportunities identified in the process:

Prince George

General ideas:

The group in Prince George emphasized many talents amongst Aboriginal women, especially in the Arts, crafts and sewing apparel, however they stated a need to learn how to market their product nationally and internationally.

Participants also thought that women's business support circles could be developed throughout the city, where the women could focus on child-minding, transportation, housing, training, and advocacy. Instead of the women having to leave their neighbourhoods they could go to a place nearby and develop a support system to assist in moving from welfare to work. This would be a safe place for women to go to and they wouldn't have to worry about transportation or childcare, they could develop childminding while they meet, they could solve issues of transportation, such as women's taxi services with car seats, barter systems for transportation services, babysitting networks etc.

As well, they stated that their needs to be more promotion of existing Aboriginal owned business by showcasing the business in order to bring the idea of self employment and business start up more to the forefront. Participants thought that advertising and taking advantage of current free space in local papers would be a way of bringing more women to think about starting their own business.

Specific business ideas:

The first business idea that came out of the Roundtable in Prince George was to obtain a warehouse where people could bring their old clothes for recycling. This would be a 'grading house' where women would sort the clothes, bale them and sell them. Currently all clothes donated to "Big Brothers" etc. is shipped to the lower mainland for grading and sale. This could be done locally by Aboriginal women.

Another business would be to start an Aboriginal Labour Ready, the business would negotiate contracts with developers, contractors, grocery stores, etc. and supply them with daily labourers. This would be a place where people could find available work and be paid on the same day. Labour Ready agencies currently exist in larger cities and there isn't one in Prince George.

Another business that could get started would be small home daycares, where there are 10 kids and 2 workers, a number of these home daycares could be set up throughout the city.

Projects to Feasibility Stage:

Participants thought that the two main business ideas generated in the first roundtable (a 'grading house' for textiles, and a Labour Ready employment service) were good ideas worth pursuing. It was agreed to discuss these in more depth at the next roundtable discussion in Prince George.



Edmonton

General ideas:

There were several viable business ideas discussed in the Edmonton meeting. It was suggested that there needs to be a housing cooperative for Aboriginal people, where they can create their own community right inside the city. Aboriginal children should be able to grow up in a safe place where families can get to know and trust their neighbours. This idea could be modeled after Synala Housing Coop, based in Vancouver, and where 51% of the occupants must be of Aboriginal ancestry.

The woman emphasized that there are many skilled aboriginal artists but there is need for training in marketing and sales. A program needs to be developed on how to market and sell their products and it should be targeted to meet the needs of talented Aboriginal women artists. They also mentioned that a number of women have home based sewing businesses and often businesses get started at home and they suggested they start a sewing enterprise.

Specific business ideas:

Further suggestions indicated that there is a need for an Aboriginal childcare centre, specifically one that is located in close proximity to work and school. If there were childcare centre's in learning institutions, more mothers would get their education, and then perhaps they would think more about starting their own business. A Social enterprise in Mexico named La Mujer Obrera has developed numerous businesses, including a housing project, and a company that promotes Indigenous artists, as well as a child learning and daycare centre. As well, the Aboriginal Mother Centre Society, has developed a number of skills related programs over the years, runs a social enterprise MaMa's Wall Street Studio, and the Centre is currently developing a 25 space daycare centre, 16 transitional housing units for women and children all under one roof. These best practice models could be developed in Edmonton.

Another participant suggested an interest in using traditional medicines and developing those products for medicinal use. RUF Cunco, a social enterprise in Chile, develops beauty products from traditional plants cultivated by Mapuche women. Although, medicinal plants and beauty products are different, the same concept could be used to train Aboriginal women can to cultivate the local indigenous plant life in Alberta, which the Aboriginal women can learn and develop culturally as well as sustain employment.

Another second business suggestion was to develop clothing lines, there were many suggestions for the clothing line including a wedding dress shop, as well as a high end clothing company, and make the clothes locally in a sewing enterprise. The enterprise could be developed into a coop, where the women could sell their paraphernalia.

In Edmonton the Aboriginal awareness trainers are non aboriginals in the province and in schools and need to be aboriginal, and this could be a business for someone to start. The women stated that Aboriginal people need to be the ones teaching about the residential schools, oral history and customs and traditions. Most of the participants thought that this could be a viable consulting/training business.

One of the women who currently owns her own business wants to develop housing and a renovation business, a woman owned construction business. She wants to find homes, buy, renovate and then rent them to our people.

They also suggested starting a wedding planner business. Taking high end wedding dresses –high end traditional wear and have wedding planners for traditional weddings. There is currently a small but real market for Aboriginal women who want to incorporate traditional materials and clothing into weddings.

Projects to feasibility stage:

The Edmonton group continued to work and they came up with a business idea that they all wanted to begin working on and they swore us to confidentiality until their business plan outline is complete. Business planning has already started for this business idea.



Masset

The meeting in Masset indicated that there is a strong need for a social organization that is able to support the community members in a number of areas including building trust and self esteem within the community, a focus on literacy skills, and counselling. The development of a social organization to bring the community together in a safe space will foster community trust and also provide a place where business idea's can develop. There was a mention for a need for outreach and training for individuals wishing to participate in the development of the social enterprise.

There were a number of different business ideas and concepts that were brought to the table in the meeting in Masset. One of the ideas was to utilize existing skills from artists, and to train the artists on how to market their product. There is a T shirt company which is a social enterprise in East LA and they manufacture the shirts and they are more expensive than the ones made in China, but they are a better quality and people buy the better quality shirt. Things need to be made and sold locally and there needs to be marketing of original products. There are many barriers to marketing and not having the capacity to do it. For example there is a family that makes small rattles, necklaces etc and they sell the items for \$50.00 and if they spent a couple of dollars on packaging they could sell these items for \$80.00, our people need to learn how to market and package their art work and goods .

There is a business opportunity for a social enterprise to take art and sell it as Art Brokers/ social entrepreneurs. Some artists are good at marketing and can do it on their own and others who can't. An artist coop could be developed. Also a sewing enterprise business could be developed to specialize in Potlatch gifts. Tashanda Inc. is a successful social enterprise, and is also the proud recipient of the 2008 Angel Africa Entrepreneurs Achievement Award. This social enterprise "promotes and markets sustainable products which are contemporary, made ethically and remain true to African style". They hire women to produce a number of lines of products including purses, dolls, and house hold items. "Tashanda works with individuals to transform their lives and create possibilities for themselves and others that they never imagined".

Projects to feasibility stage:

The participants in the Masset roundtable agreed that there were two steps they wanted to take, both of which would take some more work, in the form perhaps of a feasibility assessment.

The first was the idea of creating a specific space for Aboriginal women to gather, spend time in, and develop stronger relations, social support, and the kinds of working relations that could lead to a business or a social enterprise.

The second idea was to take advantage of the wealth of artistic and craft expertise on Haida Gwaii and start a business that helped artists market and distribute their work.

Fort St John

Three possible new business ideas came out within the group.

- 1) a bookkeeping service housed at the Northeast Aboriginal Business & Wellness Centre that would involve Aboriginal women currently with bookkeeping skills and those trained , providing services for the businesses in the FSJ area.
- 2) An Aboriginal Women's Market Place that would provide a space for local artists and craftsmen to display and sell their products.
- 3) An Artisan Broker Service to promote and distribute local Aboriginal Women's products.

Projects to feasibility stage:

The main idea, which was to be discussed at the next round table, was the idea of providing book-keeping and accounting services to Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal people in the Fort St. John area.

Prince Rupert

As stated in the other meetings the women noted that there are a number of crafters in the community but they had trouble marketing their goods. As well, there is a woman in the community that makes fleece jackets and she could expand her business by developing a social enterprise, where other women could help her with her business. There is also an Artist Co-op and through the Aboriginal women's economic development network the artists could link with Akwe-kon and other marketing agencies to market their goods. This would be good for the artists to take advantage of the 2010 Olympic games.

The women also suggested that a mentorship program be developed for Aboriginal women to mentor from women in business to acquire the skills to develop their own business. They suggested in working with the Chamber of Commerce to develop this program.

They also suggested that food security was important and that they would develop a greenhouse attached to their mother centre and sell fresh vegetables at a reasonable price.

They also wanted to develop a Potlatch Enterprise where they could get contracts for making generic regalia and Potlatch gifts.

Projects to feasibility stage:

The participants thought that it would be worth exploring in more depth the idea of a Potlatch and regalia supply enterprise and the creation of a mentoring group/process/program for Aboriginal women.

Summary and next steps:



These initial Round Tables were, on the whole, successful in encouraging Aboriginal women in the communities to either identify a specific business they wanted to start, as in the Edmonton business idea, or in creating the space for participants to come together and solve some of the barriers facing Aboriginal women in starting a business, such as a lack of effective peer support, or mentoring opportunities.

It became clear in all of the sessions that there was some real interest in creating some form of ongoing support or process for Aboriginal women to use in developing their businesses. While this differed between places and people, there was agreement across the five communities that continued interactions would likely produce results.

All the roundtables generated many useful and viable business concepts and ideas. First of all, it is important to note that the participants at the meetings clearly indicated that there is a need for a community support system, which will specifically focus on the issues and barriers that Aboriginal women face. After participating in the five roundtables, it is evident that there are a number of services needed that are not currently being provided in each of these communities, specifically to Aboriginal women and without these services or a support system in place it will be difficult for Aboriginal women to move from welfare to sustainable livelihoods.

Economic instability, lack of education, limited access to adequate and affordable housing, and dependency on social assistance have impacted these women's abilities of being able to become self sustainable. The participants in the roundtables stated that women want to further their education, find employment or start their own business, but are faced with many barriers, such as health, family commitments, drug and alcohol dependencies, lack of money and resources, limited access to daycare and current housing situations. Programs that teach entrepreneurship and pre-employment skills are

needed and helpful for assisting women to break the cycle of poverty; but first, women need to have access to services, which help them address these barriers. Aboriginal women need to have access to a number of culturally relevant services such as, affordable childcare, transportation, telephones and computers, laundry and shower facilities, more counselling, advocates, community learning centres, if they are going to be able to further their education, obtain jobs, start their own business, afford adequate housing, decrease their dependency on social assistance, and support their children. Each community suggested developing a safe place where Aboriginal women and their families can find the tools they need to increase their health and self-esteem, further their education, improve their employability skills, and learn more about their culture.

The model of the 'Aboriginal Mother Centre' is place where young parents and their families come together to rebuild their confidence, their skills, and capacity to look after themselves and their children and to become economically self-reliant, through employment or entrepreneurship

The next steps would therefore include:

- A second facilitated Round Table in the five communities, to try to firm up and 'gel' the existing discussions, while at the same time including others who for whatever reason could not make it to the first meeting.
- Some capacity to support some of those Round Tables as they continued to do their work. This might involve, for instance, encouraging a mentoring program by sharing successful models from elsewhere, or by just providing some moral support to participants as they create their own process. The requirement for further support would have to be judged after the second meeting: one session does not allow a clear sense of which groups will move ahead without support and which will not.
- The possible expansion of the number of circles to include other communities.
- A process to connect the circles to each other, to enable mutual learning and exchanges.
- Strengthening the connection of the Round Tables to the National Network on Urban Aboriginal Economic Development.



APPENDIX A: MEETING MATERIALS FOR PRINCE GEORGE ROUND TABLE

Agenda

PRINCE GEORGE ROUND TABLE ABORIGINAL WOMEN IN ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

March 05, 2009

- Introduction / Breaks
- The networks / The Supports
- The Circle as sacred
- Guidelines for Circles
- The beginning... check in...
- Accepting the invitation
- The question ...How can we support Aboriginal Women in Social Enterprise?
- General round table discussions
- Practices
- Next Circle
 - New people
 - Will you attend?
 - Email list
- Appreciation

Guidelines for discussions

- ◆ Learn about one another
- ◆ Listen carefully
- ◆ Take your turn so everyone is heard
- ◆ Keep discussion going
- ◆ Address remarks to the group – not facilitator
- ◆ Let us know if not working
- ◆ Take part – everyone is unique
- ◆ Engage in friendly discussion – and disagreement, but challenge ideas.
- ◆ Respect all opinions
- ◆ Humour helps
- ◆ Uncompromised attention and attendance

Record of Discussions: Prince George Round Table

Giving confidence to Aboriginal women and their entry in business.

“Aboriginal Voice” column

- brings about awareness
- what are other possibilities

- Aboriginal Business Awareness
- Aboriginal News Section
- Alternative to WEB

I.D the Women in the community that we want to involve.

- ‘Show casing” Aboriginal Business
- Aboriginal Women Business 1/ mo
- Women on welfare – spiralling down
- Craft makers >International Marketing

Identify the community needs that are not being filled.

- Local economy not as vulnerable to internet fluctuation?
- Business skills > experience, social support for women on welfare
- “It happens in the kitchen
- Skills training
- Moms need breaks
-

Business initiatives to be pursued

- Clothes grading
- “Labour ready “ Aboriginal
- Small daycare centre, 10 kids, 2 workers = daycare (house)
- Aboriginal women peer support business circles
 - kid minding
 - transportation
 - housing
 - training
 - advocacy

Identifying how to support Women in Social Enterprise

- Sharing Women’s Experience
- The journey from welfare to....
- Vision and venture
- Got to step up
- It is real.....
- Seeing the value of the Circle
- Thinking about making kids aware
- Women’s Awareness of resources
- The gathering of women
- The safety
- The transportation
- Child care
- Parent Advisory Committee– continue

- Head Start- with kids
- Women's taxi with kid's seats
- Barter system – for taxi
- Babysitter network
- How to know who the Aboriginal women are in local neighbourhoods

APPENDIX B: MEETING MATERIALS FOR MASSET ROUND TABLE



Agenda

MASSET ROUND TABLE ABORIGINAL WOMEN IN ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

March 23, 2009

- *Introduction / Breaks*
- *Overall goal of the Project*
- *The Round Table learning Circle methods*
- *Circle as sacred*
- *Guidelines for discussions*
- *The beginning... check in...*
- *Accepting the invitation*
- *The question*
 - *What assets do we have to work with for Aboriginal women in Masset?*
 - *What opportunities do we have in Masset*
 - *What challenges do we face in Masset*
- *General round table discussions*
- *Practices*
- *Next Circle*
 - New people*
 - Will you attend?*
 - Email list*
- *Appreciation*

Guidelines for discussions

- ◆ Learn about one another
- ◆ Listen carefully
- ◆ Take your turn so everyone is heard
- ◆ Keep discussion going
- ◆ Address remarks to the group – not facilitator
- ◆ Let us know if not working
- ◆ Take part – everyone is unique
- ◆ Engage in friendly discussion – and disagreement, but challenge ideas.
- ◆ Respect all opinions
- ◆ Humour helps
- ◆ Uncompromised attention and attendance

Record of Discussions: Masset Round Table

Masset Participant List

Barry Pages	Mayor of Masset
Elizabeth Moore	Past Chief Counselor Old Masset Village Council
Bernard Kerrigan	Artist
Wendy Riley	Entrepreneur – Owns a Successful Café
Art Lew	Community Futures
Patricia Moore	Economic Development Old Masset Village Council
Knud Anderson	Anglican Church
Lilly Bell	Anglican Church

Regrets

Berle Parke	Healthy Community Society
Sharon Mathews	Bloom n Shoe (Local Business)
Jeanette Corey	Entrepreneur (owns a crafting supply store)
Dave Phillips	Copper Beach Bed n Breakfast

The meeting in Masset was organized by project participants, and invitations were sent to the key community members in the north end of Haida Gwaii. These included the local municipal government in Masset; the bank in Masset; the community Futures representative; several women who own businesses in Masset; Aboriginal women community members including a former Chief; and representatives from the local fish processing plants.

The meeting was introduced by Charles, and Penny, and after introductions, discussions were started on the key questions.

Participants made the following points:

- ◆ Aboriginal women in Masset face numerous challenges in starting businesses or becoming involved in the economy
- ◆ These include childcare, lack of capital, lack of technical skills in business start up; limited economic or business opportunities in small remote areas; lack of self-confidence, and others
- ◆ But women also have numerous assets to work with, including`
 - Strong cultural practices and art forms that can be business assets
 - Potential strong tourist trade
 - Some capacity in the community
 - Ability to support each other
 - Availability of support from community Futures
 - For some, well developed social networks for support and partnership

- ◆ There was much discussion about ways to get Aboriginal women to step forward so that they could be provided support for start up
- ◆ The group agreed that the first step was to create a space to draw women out; at the meeting the Masset Mayor agreed to find space, and some of the participants agreed to provide mentoring and other support
- ◆ One participant indicated that they were thinking of starting a small business, involving artistic production
- ◆ The Masset participants agreed to meet prior to the next round Table to formalize next steps

APPENDIX C: MEETING MATERIALS FOR PRINCE RUPERT ROUND TABLE

PRINCE RUPERT INVITATION

I invite you to an all day Learning Circle on “Developing Community Enterprise Strategies and Partnerships for Aboriginal Women in Prince Rupert” on March 24, 2009. The circle or council is an ancient form of meeting that has gathered human beings into respectful conversation for thousands of years. The circle has served as the foundation for many cultures. What transforms a meeting into a circle is the willingness of people to shift from informal socializing or opinionated discussion into a receptive attitude of thoughtful speaking and deep listening. The purpose of this circle is to strengthen the capacity of Aboriginal women to develop, implement, and sustain economic development opportunities and partnerships in your community.

As you may know Aboriginal women looking to create business face numerous challenges. But research shows that one of the best assets women bring to starting a business is the strength and support they draw from their social networks and community. In addition, Aboriginal women-led community organizations also face challenges by relying on short-term or temporary funding. In response to this, the development of a network for Aboriginal women is needed to support their business ventures, to aid the development of their Social Enterprises, as well as to provide a foundation in the creation of sustainable economic development.

The group would continue to meet, adding resource people to the group that could support the start up of such enterprises. The hope would be that the on-going groups will build the needed supports for Aboriginal women starting up and sustaining business and social enterprises.

The nature of this gathering would be to evaluate a variety of models of women in business and social enterprise and determine what models might be applicable to your local situation. Furthermore, we will develop a Canada-wide advocacy network that supports Aboriginal women in social enterprise. This network will be developed by building partnerships with key groups including Aboriginal women in: universities, business, community organizations, and Aboriginal women from different sectors (governments, banks and credit unions, health care and social services). We expect this network will serve Aboriginal women at different stages of their business development.

We hope you will join the Circle. If you want to include yourself or want more information, please call Mamie Lawson, who is coordinating this event in your community.

Location: Highliner Plaza Hotel & Conference Centre

Time: 9:00 am – 3:00 pm

Mamie can be contacted @ (250) 624-3535 during these hours (8:30 am – 12:00 pm) & (1:00 pm – 4 pm)

Sincerely,

Mamie Lawson

Agenda

PRINCE RUPERT ROUND TABLE ABORIGINAL WOMEN IN ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

March 24, 2009

- *Introduction / Breaks*
- *Overall goal of the Project*
- *The Round method of discussion*
- *Purposes of project*
- *Guidelines for discussions*
- *The beginning... check in... introductions*
- *Accepting the invitation*
- *The question*
 - *What assets do we have to work with for Aboriginal women in Masset?*
 - *What opportunities do we have in Prince Rupert*
 - *What challenges do we face in Prince Rupert*
- *General round table discussions*
- *Practices*
- *Next Circle*
 - New people*
 - Will you attend?*
 - Email list*
- *Next steps, follow up etc*

Guidelines for discussions

- ◆ Learn about one another
- ◆ Listen carefully
- ◆ Take your turn so everyone is heard
- ◆ Keep discussion going
- ◆ Address remarks to the group – not facilitator
- ◆ Let us know if not working
- ◆ Take part – everyone is unique
- ◆ Engage in friendly discussion – and disagreement, but challenge ideas.
- ◆ Respect all opinions
- ◆ Humour helps
- ◆ Uncompromised attention and attendance

Record of Discussions:

March 24, 2009
Prince Rupert Learning Circle

In attendance:

Bernadette McNabb bmcnabb@nwcc.bc.ca
Barbara Armitage barmitage@tricorp.ca
Toni Carlson tonicarlson@northsave.com
Kaarlene Lindsay klindsay@nwcc.bc.ca
Lucia McCann luciam@citytel.net
Lynne Graham manager@princerupertchamber.ca
Lucy Mackey lucy.mackey@td.com
Mamie Lawson mlawson@tricorp.ca
June Lewis jlprces@citytel.net

Opening Remarks, Introductions, Explaining Learning Circle Methodologies

Question 1: What assets or strengths do Aboriginal women in Prince Rupert bring to the party?

- Hard working, determined, resilient
- Strong cultural knowledge, pride in heritage
- Connection and loyalty to the area
- Respect for the earth
- Generous and hospitable

Question 2: What would hold people back from using their skills?

- Confidence issues, difficult place to 'make it'
- Isolation, tend to stick to their own social groups
- Difficult to find resources unless looking for them
- Lack of mentors
- Have good ideas, but not using them as a way to generate income
- Unaware of strengths
- Undervalued skills (ie. In the home)
- Insecure about taking the step forward
- Lack of knowledge about different resources in the community
- Lack of formal education, or high school completion
- Difficulties with returning to school, especially for young mothers
 - o Daycare –huge issue –problem of access, cost, time consumption
- The economy right now, the precariousness of starting a business that makes it
- Not having the capital to start a business, issue of economies of scale
- Not qualifying for subsidies
- Accessibility to resources
- Problem of different programs clashing with expectations (ie. If on EI, can't work)
- Disconnect between realities and policy-making
- Confidence of staying in education, internal barriers, home situations
- Fear of success, lose stability
- Grooming for employees rather than entrepreneurs in school
- Gendered issue: not encouraged to have a career

- Problem of alcohol abuse, have babies to get out

Question 2A (interjection): How do we start a business? What could be people's contribution from the circle?

- 'Under one roof' project.
- Social Enterprise
 - o Problem of space
- Needs analysis: skills gap survey
- Using resources in community college to rewrite business plans, more effective, community driven mandate

'mother centre movement': long-house in an urban centre, women as leaders, recreating the neighbourhood, sharing the commons

- Fleece jacket maker in the community
 - o What would her needs be? Equipment, business plan, workers, materials

Question 3: What are the specific, particular opportunities available to people in Prince Rupert?

- Salmon berry trading Co.
- Friendship house
- Artist Co-op
 - o Linking into a co-operative movement (Akwe-kon)
- 2010 Olympics as a business opportunity for local artists
- Port building: Van ASAP

Challenges:

- Lack of confidence access:

Idea Proposed:

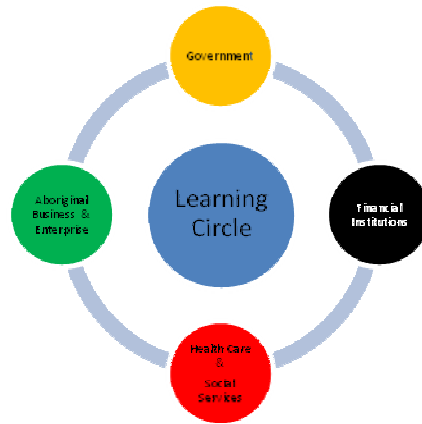
- Developing a mentor program:
 - o Keep people going
 - o Provide and identify resources
- Lucy from TD offered to start up this program, asked for committed volunteers.
 - o Resources?
 - o Who is to get involved in this?
 - o Friendship house as a possible resource
 - o John Turner
- Lynn offered up the Chamber as a resource to get the mentorship program going
- Stressing the needs of the mentored
- Suggestion that some of the people being mentored could be potential mentors (Carmen Adams): Problem of time, access to capital

Talk about a local gardening program was also introduced, but not really elaborated on.

- Some sort of greenhouse attached to a mother's centre?
- Potlatch enterprise: contracts for making generic regalia.

APPENDIX D: MEETING MATERIALS FOR FORT ST. JOHN ROUND TABLE

Invitation:



You are invited to attend an introductory Learning Circle on:

“Developing Community Enterprise Strategies and Partnerships for Aboriginal Women in Northeastern BC”

Date: March 26th, 2009

Place: Northern Lights College (room 2112)

Time: 9:00am – 3:00pm

Lunch will be provided for all participants

The purpose of this circle is to strengthen the capacity of Aboriginal women and/or organizations to develop, implement, and sustain economic development opportunities and partnerships in their communities. This will be achieved by evaluating a variety of models of women in business and social enterprise and determine what models might be applicable in northern communities.

The overall goal of the community learning circles, which this circle will be a part of, is to develop a Canada-wide advocacy network that supports Aboriginal women in business and social enterprise.

We hope you will join the Circle and add your valuable knowledge and input into this process.

To RSVP or for more information please contact:

Cindy Rost – Meeting Coordinator

Ph: (250) 785-3909

Email. crost@shaw.ca

Agenda

FORT ST. JOHN ROUND TABLE ABORIGINAL WOMEN IN ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

March 26, 2009

- *Introduction*
- *Overall goal of the Project*
- *The Round Table method*
- *Purposes of project*
- *Guidelines for discussions*
- *The beginning... check in... introductions*
- *Accepting the invitation*
- *The question*
 - *What assets do we have to work with for Aboriginal women in Fort St. John?*
 - *What challenges do we face in Fort St. John*
- *General round table discussions*
- *Practices*
- *Next Circle*
 - New people*
 - Will you attend?*
 - Email list*
- *Follow up and thanks*

Guidelines for discussions

- ◆ Learn about one another
- ◆ Listen carefully
- ◆ Take your turn so everyone is heard
- ◆ Keep discussion going
- ◆ Address remarks to the group – not facilitator
- ◆ Let us know if not working
- ◆ Take part – everyone is unique
- ◆ Engage in friendly discussion – and disagreement, but challenge ideas.
- ◆ Respect all opinions
- ◆ Humour helps
- ◆ Uncompromised attention and attendance

Fort St John Round Table: March 26, 2009
“Developing Community Enterprise Strategies and Partnerships for Aboriginal Women

Process and background to organizing meeting:

Twenty invitations were sent out to Aboriginal organizations, financial institutions, learning centres, politicians and leadership, Aboriginal business women and women interested in developing businesses two weeks prior to the meeting. Six organizations responded that day indicating that representatives would be attending.

One week prior to meeting follow-up calls were made to those who had yet to respond. Four more confirmed attendance. The day before the scheduled March 26th meeting reminder phone calls were made to participants. Three declined at that time due to deaths in their community.

March 26th three participants attended the meeting at Northern lights College. Paulette Flamond, Executive Director of the Northeast Aboriginal Business and Wellness Centre and Scoops clothing store owner, Tracy Mytron, loans officer of the Business Development Bank and Emily Goodman, Executive Director of the FSJ Womens Resource Centre. Brenda Chmelyk, owner of Sacred Space Yoga Centre, attended part of the day.

Charles opened the meeting with introductions of the group and went over the structure and guidelines of the Learning Circle and then threw out the first question.

- 1) What assets do Aboriginal women in FSJ bring to the party?
 - a. Knowledge of the Territory
 - b. Knowledge of the people
 - c. Women are social leaders and leaders in communities (Executive Directors of all Aboriginal Support organizations and Chiefs and Councillors in the First Nation communities)
 - d. They have an ability to bring people together
 - e. They are not afraid to do the small and/or big tasks required in business
 - f. They are creative, imaginative and very talented
- 2) Challenges faced:
 - a. Racism
 - b. Poverty
 - c. Childcare
 - d. Lack of supports and/or services
 - e. Capital – Qualified co-signers
 - f. Lack of education
 - g. Male dominated society (4/1)
 - h. Industry focused
- 3) How do you identify potential entrepreneurs?
 - a. Clients at the Business Centre and Women’s Resource Centre
 - b. Hold business workshops & info sessions
 - c. Set up a mentorship program

There was great discussion on how we could reach young girls. It was thought that if we could target the youth still in high school and perhaps it would encourage them to stay in school and further their education in a business direction. An Aboriginal women mentorship program was discussed and was met with a positive response from everyone in attendance. Charles suggested that if that was the direction the group wanted to take that perhaps the Rupert group could be contacted as they are currently working with a mentorship program. Current local programs that encourage girls to look at different career and business options were discussed: The Go Karts 4 Girls program, the Student Summer Entrepreneurial program and the youth Urban Community Action Team. General consensus was that the Mentorship Program would complement the existing programs and fill a current gap for girls and women.

Three possible new business ideas came out within the group. 1) a bookkeeping service housed at the Northeast Aboriginal Business & Wellness Centre that would involve Aboriginal women currently with bookkeeping skills and those trained , providing services for the businesses in the FSJ area. 2) An Aboriginal Women's Market Place that would provide a space for local artists and craftsmen to display and sell their products. 3) An Artisan Broker Service to promote and distribute local Aboriginal Women's products.

Penny also described the structure of the Aboriginal Mothers Centre and their Social Enterprise sewing program.

The group also discussed the importance of linking existing programs and funding to expand opportunities within the region as well as the importance of everyone working together and sharing resources.

4) Who should be at the next learning Circle?

- Current group
- Re-issue invites to the original twenty potential participants
- Invite representatives from the local Chamber of Commerce and high school
- Potential Aboriginal Women Mentors

Next Learning Circle will be held in the first two weeks in May. Current group will be contacted to determine most suitable date.

Note: Lunch was provided for participants.

APPENDIX E: LIST OF PARTICIPANTS AT ROUND TABLES

Prince George round Table Participant List:

Penny Irons
John McBride
Veronica Creyke

Masset Roundtable Participant List

Barry Pages	Mayor of Masset
Elizabeth Moore	Past Chief Counselor Old Massett Village Council
Bernard Kerrigan	Artist
Wendy Riley	Entrepreneur – Owns a Successful Café
Art Loue	Community Futures
Patricia Moore	Economic Development Old Massett Village Council
Knud Anderson	Anglican Church
Lilly Bell	Anglican Church
Regrets	
Berle Parke	Healthy Community Society
Sharon Mathews	Bloom n Shoe (Local Business)
Jeanette Corey	Entrepreneur (owns a crafting supply store)
Dave Phillips	Copper Beach Bed & Breakfast

Prince Rupert Participant List:

In attendance:
Bernadette McNabb bmcnabb@nwcc.bc.ca
Barbara Armitage barmitage@tricorp.ca
Toni Carlson tonicarlson@northsave.com
Kaarlene Lindsay klindsay@nwcc.bc.ca
Lucia McCann luciam@citytel.net
Lynne Graham manager@princerupertchamber.ca
Lucy Mackey lucy.mackey@td.com
Mamie Lawson mlawson@tricorp.ca
June Lewis jlprces@citytel.net

Edmonton Roundtable Participant List

Ruth Carlson	IAAW
Yvonne Bedara-Gladue	Peace Hills Trust edmonton@peacehill.com
Agelica Rojas	Edmonton Catholic Schools rojasa@ecsd.net
Angie Hall	Edmonton Catholic Schools hallo@ecsd.net
Muriel Stanley Venne	IAAW murielv@telusplanet.net
Rachelle Venne	IAAW
Brenda Gladue	Aboriginal Relations brenda.gladue@gov.ab.ca
Alanna McKenzie Dionne	IAAW lanarmd@yahoo.ca
P Gayle McKenzie	IAAW gayle2m@telus.net
Sharon Pasula	IAAW/MNA Zone IV spasula@softhome.net
Karyn Gagnon	Edmonton Catholic Schools gagnonk@ecsd.net
Marcela Mandeville	Alberta Women Entrepreneurs marcela.mandeville@awebusiness.com
Corey Wells	Mountain Voices mountainvoices@hotmail.com
Jean Cardinal	Mikisiw Family Services jeancardinal@shaw.ca
Marieka Cardinal	Edmonton Catholic Schools cardinal@ecsd.net
Tracy Bearard	tracybearard@hotmail.com
Vi Roberts-Marten	acreedesigns@shaw.ca

Fort St. John Roundtable Participants

Charles Horn
Penny Irons
Paulette Flamond, Executive Director of the Northeast Aboriginal Business and Wellness Centre and Scoops clothing store owner
Tracy Mytron, loans officer of the Business Development Bank
Emily Goodman, Executive Director of the FSJ Womens Resource Centre.
Brenda Chmelyk, owner of Sacred Space Yoga Centre, attended part of the day.

APPENDIX F: BACKGROUND MATERIAL ON BEST PRACTICES

Social Enterprises: A global synapses of social enterprises

According to the BC Centre for Social Enterprise the definition of social enterprise is an “enterprise [that] operates like a business, produces goods and services for the market, but manages its operations and redirects its surpluses in pursuit of social and environmental goals”. The people that start and run these businesses are referred to as social entrepreneurs. They most often structure these businesses as co-operatives, and see the businesses as contributing to community economic development.

Social Enterprises around the world

Currently there are many social enterprises well established in the global community. In recent years the global economy has paid a considerable amount of attention to these small sustainable businesses. Social Enterprises and social organizations are able to pick up where the government and business sector leave off, in that they fill the gap by creating jobs and social programming that promotes economic and social sustainability. The world is paying attention to the ‘social economy’ and the benefits it creates. According to Torjman (2008), the National Summit on Social Entrepreneurs that was held in Toronto in 2007 indicated that the “social economy sector not only is here to stay but also appears to be gaining strength. It is starting to take its place as a must-have component of traditional stock portfolios” (p 4). Social enterprises are gaining worldwide attention by making a difference in the social economy and by promoting community economic sustainability.

Social enterprises around the world are an essential contributive factor in creating and sustaining community economic development. Many communities where social enterprises have been developed are experiencing poverty, insufficient resources, and very little job opportunities. The indigenous women in social enterprises around the world work towards a common goal of creating change within their community by developing sustainable businesses that support the development of the community around them. Social enterprises provide invaluable resources in essential services, empowerment of indigenous women, job creation, cultural sustainability, as well as the creation of new partnerships that further contributes towards community economic development.

RUF Cunco:

RUF Cunco was founded in 1994 in Chile's impoverished southern Araucania region. The social enterprise specifically works with Mapuche indigenous women. "The Mapuche comprise about 95% of Chile's indigenous people, and about on-third of them live in poverty, with higher unemployment levels than the general population. Mapuche women, particularly in isolated rural areas, have few opportunities to work outside the home" (Nesst Business Advisory Network).



RUF Cunco's social enterprise is an innovative and dynamic beauty line of creams and lotions. RUF Cunco produces and distributes "beauty creams made from extracts of medicinal herbs and native plants from the local area". The business hires Mapuche women as experts to cultivate the plants using indigenous knowledge of the local plant life. The business has 7 full-time employees, 15 part-time and 2 volunteers. Profits that are generated from the business are currently being used to expand and develop the beauty line. By expanding and developing more Mapuche women will be able to have

sustainable employment. "RUF Cunco promotes community development and the economic and civic advancement of rural indigenous women, specifically through training, vocational support and cultural events". <http://www.nesst.org/documents/2008RUF CuncoIBEN.pdf>



La Mujer Obrera:

La Mujer Obrera is a non-profit organization that has been in operation for over 30 years. They are located in the South Central barrio of El Paso. They work towards Women’s Empowerment, Economic Development, and Community Development. Some of their goals are to “Secure the right and the capacity to develop as women, in community, and for our families...[they] generate women’s economic empowerment through social enterprises,

small business support, and bilingual workforce development...”. Furthermore La Mujer Obrera works towards “build[ing] community, while sustaining roots through neighborhood revitalization, job creation, housing development, and educational projects that celebrate Mexican cultural heritage”. La Mujer Obrera owns and operates four social enterprises. These enterprises are Café Mayapan, Rayito de Sol, Uxmal, and Lum Metik.

Café Mayapan is a restaurant, catering, and events center. The Café serves on a number of levels, it provides employment opportunities, and it also serves as an events center where community events can be held. The Café also promotes local artists and musicians by providing them a place to perform and to showcase their artwork.

Rayito de Sol is a daycare and learning centre. It opened on March 21, 2000 and it has gained “state wide recognition” for its quality of management and care. “Its mission is to provide a safe and nurturing environment that promotes the physical, social, emotional, and cognitive development of children with the help and involvement of their parents and our community. By offering services at an affordable rate, Rayito de Sol participates in the South-Central El Paso community-building efforts of the El Puente Community Development Corporation”.



Uxmal Apartments serves as “incubators’ for families who want to remain or return to the South Central barrio, and eventually want to own homes in the barrio”. Uxmal Apartments focuses around the “personal values and the holistic approach that incorporates residents needs, challenges an strengths of the South Central neighborhood”. Some of the services and issues that

are addressed at the Uxmal Apartments are “income, jobs, health, childcare, skills training, small business development, education, culture and social services”. Furthermore, “since opening in late 2002, the eight units of Uxmal Apartments have been fully occupied”. www.mujerobrera.org

Lum Metik is a trading company that purchases products from indigenous communities in Mexico. It purchases arts and craft items at fair trade to help promote the economic stability of surrounding communities. It was created to “generate business and a source of employment for the Mexican business and social organizations”. Lum Metik is in partnership with many other social organizations that support the indigenous population in their efforts to support community economic development. Some of these partnering organizations are Yoltli and Niulaa.



Yoltli is an organization that supports the rights of indigenous women by working towards equality between gender, social classes, and social groups. Since its development in 2002 Yoltli has contributed to and provided leadership training, strengthening organizations, human rights and health education, sustainable development and ecotourism, as well as it is involved in Lum Metik social enterprise. Yoltli has conducted training workshops in finance, the production of arts and crafts, sustainable development, conservation of natural resources, as well as workshops on animal health.



Niulaa is a non-profit organization that works with indigenous women from Oaxaca Mexico. They promote micro-credit loans, gender equality, health, and social enterprises to create economic sustainability. They also provide training to indigenous women in areas of cost, design, and organization for the creation of products. They focus upon the traditional skills and knowledge of the indigenous women and work towards providing a reliable product available to the world wide market. (www.lummetik.com)

Gone Rural

Gone Rural started as a single family business in the 1970's. Gone rural sold products such as jams that were produced at the local farm, but the business also shared its space with local women who produced arts and crafts. The business became a success; however in 1991 the business broke away from a strictly for-profit family business, and started working towards “empowering rural Swazi women”. As Gone Rural developed it became a social enterprise, whereby it outsourced Indigenous women’s arts and crafts from all over Swaziland, Africa.



Gone Rural provides training and product development to rural Swazi women. By outsourcing Swazi women to produce products in their homes the women can maintain their traditional lifestyle, continue to care for their children and families, and furthermore the women are empowered through income generation. Gone Rural currently works with 700 women from 13 different communities. Through the successful efforts of the social enterprise in 1997 Gone Rural was able to develop a non-profit organization named Gone Rural BoMake. (www.goneruralswazi.com)

Tashanda Inc.

Tashanda Inc. was founded by a young, female, Zimbabwean named Nyasha Manyonda in 2006. Tashanda Inc. is a successful social enterprise, and is also the proud recipient of the 2008 Angel Africa Entrepreneurs Achievement Award. This social enterprise “promotes and markets sustainable products which are contemporary, made ethically and remain true to African style”. They hire women to produce a number of lines of products including purses, dolls, and house hold items. “Tashanda works with individuals to transform their lives and create possibilities for themselves and others that they never imagined”.



Tashanda Inc works to eradicate extreme poverty and hunger, promote gender equality and empowerment for women. They also ensure environmental sustainability by using recycled



products, such as the recycled metal bird sculptures that the women create. Tashanda uses the profits from their sales to provide funds for a local daycare as well as the local clinic and also contribute towards many other resources in their community. (www.tashanda.com)

Key Factors

The social enterprises in the global community that have been explored in this presentation possess a number of key factors that contribute to the success of community economic development. The social enterprises utilize skills that indigenous women already have such as Indigenous knowledge of local ecology, traditional craft making, and basket weaving. The businesses also work with the women to develop new skills and provide training in a number of different marketable skills such as product development as well as financing. There is also an overall theme of developing a product that is environmentally friendly, such as the organic beauty creams, as well as using recycled material to produce products. Fair trade and fair wages are also a key factor in contributing to the success of the social enterprises as well as contributing towards community economic development.

Community economic development is an essential aspect of social enterprises. The social enterprises support community economic development by providing employment, education, social programming, and health services. Furthermore social enterprises provide flexibility for women which results in the ability for Indigenous women to be employed without being restricted by having to travel long distances, or having to take time away from home to maintain a permanent job. The social enterprises are able to adapt to the Indigenous women in the community, in that they often offer opportunities to work from home or in some cases the social enterprises develop child care centre's which enables indigenous women to be successfully employed while maintaining the roles and responsibilities that are associated with being an indigenous woman, a mother, and a caregiver.

Aboriginal women in Canada can learn from these successful social enterprises that operate around the world. The best practice models can be applied to the development of social enterprises across Canada. For example many of the social enterprises outsource their product development to women in neighboring communities. This is beneficial for both the social enterprise business by enabling a wider market of product production, as well as it also creates job opportunities for women who are residing in the community and in surrounding communities. The key concepts of the best practice models can be applied toward the development of social enterprises for Aboriginal women in Canada, and together Aboriginal women in Canada can work towards creating community economic development.

