

Urban Aboriginal Economic Development National Network Newsletter

January 2010
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Welcome

We are pleased to present the Winter 2010 edition of the Urban Aboriginal Economic Development National Network newsletter. We hope that this quarterly newsletter will help to keep you informed about network activities and opportunities. If you have any comments on how we can improve the newsletter or any news that you would like us to include in our next issue, feel free to contact the coordinator at uaed@abdc.bc.ca.

About the National 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.

Network News:

Hadi

We are pleased to take this opportunity to provide an update about the various activities and plans of the Urban Aboriginal Economic Development network.

This past year has been exciting. From early planning and collaborative work, we were able to host the first national gathering of the UAED network in Ottawa in the Fall of 2008. This gathering was an exciting opportunity for people to share in the creation of plans for Learning Circles, network activities, and mutual support initiatives.

Since that time, Learning Circles have been created in Vancouver, Victoria, Prince George, Regina, Winnipeg, and Sault Ste. Marie. Early discussions on future Learning Circles are underway in a number of other communities. In addition to the community-based Learning Circles, an additional Learning Circle around the topic of urban Aboriginal governance was also created. As well, a number of academic and student researchers are working on projects and topics to support the network and its activities. A discussion paper was completed by Evelyn Peters and it is now available on the UAED website. The website was created and developed as a collaborative exercise across the Steering Committee and it is now available for recording and sharing network activities.

Finally, a small workshop was held in Ottawa in the Spring of 2009 to support early Learning Circle development. The Spring workshop brought together potential leaders of local Learning Circles for a discussion on opportunities, processes, and challenges.

We are now at the mid-point of our initial funding package for creating this UAED network. As such, we held a "Learning Circle on Learning Circles" in Vancouver at the start of November 2009. The purpose of this gathering was to learn more about what has been accomplished within each of the Learning Circles that are underway, as well as what our information needs are to better support those Learning Circles in their work. In addition, the purpose was to help clarify the possible pathways towards creating a national network to further practitioner led priorities for urban Aboriginal economic development.

The November 2009 event was attended by 29 people from across Canada. Discussion was guided by Chris Corrigan. Outcomes included discussion about:

- How can a national network help connect community based definitions that support urban Aboriginal economic development?
- How can a national network develop an urban Aboriginal policy lens that could transform federal and provincial policy?



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- How can a national network create and support a social and institutional infrastructure that can keep dialogue and linkages going?
- When thinking of a national network, what are the compelling cases that would invite each of the policy, research and practitioner people?
- How can a national network support continued communications between policy, research and community – based people?
- How will a national network help policy people, academics and practitioners continue and sustain their work after the KIS project ends?
- What is the most effective practical form or structure for the national network?

As we move forward with plans for the network, we can outline some of the upcoming activities. The Learning Circles will continue to grow and develop through dialogue participation. In addition to those already underway, we hope to add Learning Circles in additional communities.

We have also identified opportunities for two future network gatherings. At the end of April 2010, it is our hope to host a gathering in Regina that will bring together the academic participants in our network. The goal would be to report on many of the student projects the network has funded, as well as to develop further the network's research agenda as initially framed at the November 2009 – Vancouver gathering. An additional task of that academic gathering will be to organize opportunities for a second large national research funding agency application to support the network's activities.

We are also planning a national gathering to be held in Ottawa in November 2010. The event in Ottawa would include all participating members of the network and would be a two-day dialogue and discussion event to learn about what has been accomplished and to talk about future network possibilities and opportunities. In addition, we are hoping to develop a half-day policy workshop where the practitioner, policy, and research members of the network would share with the Ottawa policy community the important findings, opportunities, and contributions from our work to date.

If we are to be able to deliver these activities, then we will have had two national gatherings of the network, two gatherings that focused upon Learning Circle participants, one gathering focused upon academic participants, and a workshop that bridged to a national policy audience.

It has been our pleasure to provide this update with respect to UAED activities. Please look forward to additional information and opportunities coming in the near future.

Sincerely,

Ray Gerow and Greg Halseth

Addressing Urban Aboriginal Issues: Whys & Hows of Learning Circles
by John McBride, Learning Circle Facilitator

Those who work in the urban Aboriginal community or on urban Aboriginal issues know there are challenges in service delivery, housing, education and health. The variety of people and perspectives include government people who are delivering a specific program, agency people looking for funding, and native leaders whose priority is often reserve communities. Discussion is often hampered by the specific interests the individuals are bound to represent, and collaborative solutions are hard to come by.

A dialogue that could better address urban issues might involve practitioners working in the urban community, academics who have access to evaluation and research information, and policy people who are interested in change. If such a conversation can move beyond short term funding concerns and program outcomes, and has the scope and the resources to address an issue of mutual interest, there is a better chance it will be productive. This is the aim of the Urban Aboriginal Economic Development (UAED) National

Network – to initiate and support conversations, formalized as Learning Circles, in urban places across Canada, and to see if they can make a difference.

For the full text of John McBride's article please visit:

<http://abdc.bc.ca/uploads/file/03%20Documents/LCs%20-%20Whys%20and%20Hows.pdf>

Learning Circle News

- The Vancouver Learning Circle has met twice this summer and seem to be really interested in food security. Notes from their circle can be found here:
abdc.bc.ca/uaed/learning-circles/regional-learning-circles/vancouver-learning-circle/
- The Victoria Learning Circle has been established and they've met twice this past summer. Notes from their circle can be found here:
abdc.bc.ca/uaed/learning-circles/regional-learning-circles/victoria-learning-circle/
- The Regina Learning Circle group had their first meeting this summer, and are going strong. They have created four task groups that focus on the following areas: 1) Communications 2) Funding 3) Affordable Housing and 4) Skills, Training and Youth. Their notes can be found here:
abdc.bc.ca/uaed/learning-circles/regional-learning-circles/regina/
- The Sault Ste. Marie Learning Circle is going very strong, they have had six meetings so far. Notes here:
abdc.bc.ca/uaed/learning-circles/regional-learning-circles/sault-ste-marie/
- The Winnipeg Learning Circle had their first meeting this fall, their notes can be found here:
abdc.bc.ca/uaed/learning-circles/regional-learning-circles/winnipeg-learning-circle/
- A Halifax Learning Circle is in the works.
- There will be a network gathering next November in Ottawa. We would like to have participants from the Learning Circles present information to the entire group. Details will be sent to Learning Circle closer to November.

Information: Conferences, Publications and Practices

Conferences

Engaging Indigenous Communities: Research, Rebellions and Resurgence

Aug. 9-13, 2010, Sault Ste. Marie, Ont.

The conference is being undertaken in honour of the 1850 Robinson Treaties. The vision of the Anishinabeg leaders to protect their heritage and resources while sharing with the newcomers remains relevant today. Contact between different peoples has resulted in peaceful interactions, uneasy relations, war and genocide. Recognizing the autonomy of nations to determine their futures, including the allocation of resources, or the lack of such recognition, has sometimes been mediated by various types of agreements and treaties. It is through access to, or exploitation of resources, that the colonial project has had the greatest affect on Indigenous peoples and Indigenous peoples on the colonial project. The focus of the conference will be on exploring Indigenous peoples' perspectives on resources and the moments in history when Indigenous peoples have fought to protect them.

Contact: icrr@gmail.com

For more information: <http://abdc.bc.ca/uaed/networking/conferences/>

Aboriginal Law and Economic Development Forum

Feb. 17-18, 2010, Casino Nova Scotia, Halifax, Nova Scotia

The conference will explore possible solutions to pressing economic development and Aboriginal legal issues. Extensive attention will be focused on exploring new economic development strategies and tactics. This two day event will guide your community, professional practice or business organization to greater success.

For more information: <http://www.insightinfo.com/aboriginallawhalifax>

Publications

Prosperity Through Partnerships: Framing the Future of Aboriginal Economic Participation

The Public Policy Forum organized a national workshop in Ottawa to bring together industry leaders and Aboriginal organizations to share best practices in partnership building and to promote further engagement from both communities. This report summarizes the key themes and issues that were discussed, and provides recommendations for moving forward with a collaborative vision of sustainable economic development for both Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal stakeholders.

For the complete document: <http://abdc.bc.ca/uaed/documents/document-library/>

Story to Share

Native and Non-native Inner-city Partnership Facility Opens in Winnipeg

Diane Roussin, Acting Executive Director of the Ma Mawi Wi Chi Itata Centre (Ma Mawi) in Winnipeg, comments at the opening of the North End Wellness Centre, "The Centre has been a dream in the making for over a decade." From the remains of what was once a YMCA-YWCA recreational landmark within Winnipeg's North End, the North End Wellness Centre – known today as "Win Gardner Place" - has risen anew to showcase the pride, strength, capacity and redevelopment of the North End community. It is a welcoming retreat that North End residents can call their own and will work to serve the community in innovative and exciting ways. The 25,000 square ft. multi-service facility is community-driven, designed to reflect community standards and is inclusive and accessible to all.

With a number of stakeholders working together guided by the community, the Centre represents a shared vision of community wellness. Thanks to the collaborative efforts of such organizations as, Ma Mawi, the YMCA-YWCA of Winnipeg, North End Community Renewal Corporation, SPLASH Day Care, and the Winnipeg Regional Health Authority, Win Gardner Place serves as a beacon of hope, inspiration and opportunity for North End residents.

Ma Mawi is a community-mandated, non-profit Aboriginal controlled/directed organization that offers an array of culturally relevant preventative and supportive services for families. They work to empower community members to practice self-care through preventive and supportive services for families. Their philosophy is rooted in the belief that the entire community has responsibility for the healthy development of future generations. Ma Mawi has been designated by the partners to be the Keeper of the Spirit of the facility, and to ensure that community respect, values and expectations can be met through the facility. The inner city partnership between native and non-native organizations, serving native and non-native residents, is evolving as a viable urban Aboriginal community development model.

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In future issues of the newsletter, this section will be an interactive space for Network participants.

Participants will have the opportunity to share a story with the rest of the network.

If you would like to submit a story to be included in the next newsletter, please email the coordinator at uaed@abdc.bc.ca