



Indian and Northern
Affairs Canada

Affaires indiennes
et du Nord Canada



Success Stories



Indian and Inuit Services Directorate
Spring/Summer 2008



Canada 

Aboriginal people and Northerners are continuing to develop a vision for their communities, their businesses and themselves. Residents throughout the NWT are attending seminars, workshops and conferences, forming partnerships and becoming involved in new business and entrepreneurial opportunities.

These diverse activities are helping residents of the NWT to capitalize on economic development opportunities and experience personal and professional success.

By sharing information and lessons learned, establishing networks, and continuing to **develop skills**, people throughout the North are benefiting from other's examples and accomplishments, **gaining confidence**, and recognizing and embracing **economic possibilities**. The participation, **interest, involvement and enthusiasm** shown by Aboriginal people and Northerners participating in various programs demonstrates a commitment to success.



Indian and Inuit Services Directorate

The Indian and Inuit Services Directorate (I&IS) is part of Indian and Northern Affairs Canada (INAC). The directorate supports the unique connection between the Crown, Aboriginal people and Northerners. I&IS is working with communities to build relationships, understand and meet the diverse needs of people and organizations, and help create opportunities for successful personal and community development.

I&IS offers a number a number of programs and services to facilitate the building of self-reliant and sustainable communities, increase participation in economic development, and enable Aboriginal people and Northerners to achieve their visions and aspirations.

Aboriginal Business Canada

Aboriginal Business Canada (ABC), part of Indian and Northern Affairs Canada (INAC), delivers programs and services directed towards Aboriginal business development. ABC's focus is to help Aboriginal entrepreneurs and organizations achieve their business goals and to increase the number of Aboriginally owned and operated businesses in Canada.

ABC provides funding to assist with a range of activities including business planning, start-up, marketing and expansion. Before ABC can consider supporting a proposed venture, the entrepreneur or organization must be able to demonstrate the following: Aboriginal ancestry (status or non-status Indians, Métis and Inuit); equity

to invest (minimum of 15% cash equity); and experience and key viability factors such as financing, marketing plans, management and operational capacity.

Emphasis is placed on ideas or projects that support innovation in areas such as tourism, youth entrepreneurship and market expansion which will strengthen Aboriginal financial and business development organizations.

ABC is one of many INAC programs that enable Aboriginal people to pursue success through new business opportunities.



Broadening Horizons

Over the last year, funding from I&S allowed students from various communities throughout the NWT to travel to Calgary, Halifax, New York City and Rotorua, New Zealand. The students participated in range of conferences, camps and seminars that exposed them to new educational and career opportunities.

In mid-October 2007, Bonnie Koe and Autumn Semple, high school students at Moose Kerr School in Aklavik, participated in the International Network for Indigenous Health Knowledge and Development (INIHKD) Conference in Rotorua, New Zealand. The INIHKD conference provides an opportunity for people working in the areas of traditional health, service delivery, research, policy and workforce development to meet and talk with other members of indigenous communities that support continued indigenous health development.

As part of their Careers and Technology course, Autumn and Bonnie participated in a Youth Dietary Choices project which was co-ordinated by Amanda Clarke of the Arctic Health Research Network (NT).

Bonnie and Autumn interviewed local community members, elders, staff and students and recorded their daily diet information. They then analyzed the data, examined the impact of health information and funding on the dietary choices people make and presented their findings in a report and short video. "It was very interesting to assess our own community's dietary choices and we saw a very big difference in diet choices between the elders and the youth," said Bonnie.

During the conference, the students learned a great deal about the different health concerns of other

indigenous groups in the USA, Australia, Canada, and New Zealand. "We came away understanding how important it was for indigenous people to network and share ideas to strengthen health services," explained Autumn.

Participating in conferences, seminars and activities focused on education, encourages students from across the North to broaden their horizons. The opportunity to travel, exchange stories and information with people from many different backgrounds and countries and to share these experiences with the community helps to create an understanding and appreciation of the bigger world around them.



Autumn Semple and Bonnie Koe



Meeting Communication Needs

The Native Communications Society (NCS) is helping to meet the social, cultural and information needs of the North by providing programming that promotes Aboriginal language, culture and traditions. Through CKLB radio, NCS is currently the only radio service in the NWT that broadcasts northern Aboriginal and English language programming 24 hours a day, seven days a week. Broadcasts can be heard in five Dene languages in 30 communities in the NWT as well as the Diavik and Snap Lake diamond mines.

To keep listeners informed and entertained, CKLB increased its live coverage in 2007 and broadcast 11 live meetings from communities throughout the NWT. Their motto is 'the Voice of Denendeh.'

"By providing a medium for Aboriginal people to share their successes, communicate in their language and

interact with one another across the miles, the NCS is supporting and inspiring the Dene people and making them proud of their culture, heritage and language," explains Joachim Bonnetrouge, Native Communications Society Board Chair.

Through its Strategic Investments in Northern Economic Development (SINED) initiative, INAC invested \$58,000 to support the development and implementation of new digital technology. This will allow CKLB to reach a global listening audience and promote Aboriginal culture and traditions world-wide.

The availability of interactive, two-way communication, such as the Internet and blogs [an interactive online journal usually intended for public viewing] will encourage information sharing and increase international awareness of the North's people, history, stories and communities.

"When will I be able to listen to CKLB on the Internet?" is the most frequent question I get," says William Greenland, Director of Radio. "INAC funding means that we will be streaming our radio station on the Internet in early 2008 and making our unique radio programming available to everyone through the world wide web."

News items, interviews, Elders' stories, meetings and special broadcasts will be stored online and accessed through a searchable audio database or an online audio library. Preserving the special history of Northern Aboriginal people and sharing the culture, humour, traditions, political issues and public records with a global audience contributes to the understanding of a peoples' past and appreciation of its present.

Developing New Skills

Women, especially Aboriginal women, are under-represented in industrial and trade jobs in Canada. To prepare women in the NWT for jobs in the mining, oil and gas sectors and provide them with the resources and support they need, the Status of the Council of Women in the NWT launched its Northern Women in Mining, Oil and Gas (NWMOG) in October 2007.

In addition to providing women with information about training for industrial and trade jobs, there is also a research component to the project. The goal is to determine what issues or barriers are preventing women from entering or

staying in trades and industry jobs, and in response, develop practical solutions. Through its Strategic Investments in Northern Economic Development (SINED) initiative, Indian and Northern Affairs Canada (INAC) contributed \$125,000 to help develop the proposal for this three-year, \$1.7 million project.

Seven women from the NWT and Nunavut began the 12 week Building Trades Helper Program in October 2007. During this time, the women were introduced to basic tools and materials and learned how to read diagrams and blue prints. They also had hands-on experience with specific trades such as carpentry, electrical systems and mechanical systems.

They used their new skills to build a shed and are now prepared for entry-level industrial or trade employment and are able to assist trades people such as: carpenters, electricians, plumbers, drywallers, painters and mechanical contractors. They can also choose to

attend a two-week Ready to Work program that will further prepare them for the workplace.

“The best part was using the tools to build the shed and I am going to buy my own tools and use the skills I learned around my house,” says Doris Rabesca (Behchoko, NWT)

The project is unique to the North and has been tailored to meet the specific employment, training and job search needs of the participants. To help overcome employment barriers unique to women, participants are provided with access to daycare, educational upgrading, financial assistance and cultural support. In addition, the small group approach, the maximum number of students is 11, allows the instructors to focus on the individual needs of each student.

“It increased my confidence and showed me what I can do,” says Sara Tautuaqjuk. (Pangnirtung, NU)
“I hope other women go for what they believe in – women can do it.”

Offering Northern women access to training and trades opportunities in non-traditional jobs and industries makes it possible for them participate in, benefit from, and contribute to, the NWT’s booming economy. Identifying and providing the resources and support they require offers them a career with a future and improves their chances of success.



Northern Women in Mining, Oil and Gas Project



Patrick Kane

Sharing Lessons Learned



INAC photo - Jari

Funding from INAC's Community Support Services Program (CSSP) allowed community economic development corporation representatives from 23 NWT communities to attend a two day economic development seminar hosted by the Osoyoos Indian Band Centre for Aboriginal Community Enterprise in British Columbia. The session, specifically developed for the NWT, was called 'The Osoyoos Indian Band Experience.' Chief Clarence Louie, Chief Executive Officer of the Osoyoos Indian Band Development Corporation (OIBDC) and executives of OIBDC presented the band's economic development experiences and lessons learned.

The Osoyoos Indian Band (OIB) is located on a 32,000 acre reserve in the Okanagan Valley of southern British Columbia just north of the Canada/US border. Separate from the band government and governed by a board of directors, the OIBDC is a \$14 million organization with interests in nine businesses. It provides strategic economic development direction to the band's existing businesses and identifies new economic development opportunities.

Now economically successful and able to meet the social needs of its members by using profits from its businesses to top up social programs and services, the OIB did have challenges to overcome:

a lack of business and financial experience; no administrative policies or procedures; and negative attitudes and behaviour. The band developed a community-supported vision of where it wanted to be and made changes to support and achieve that goal.

Through a variety of presentations, NWT attendees learned first-hand how the OIB successfully introduced and applied a new mindset to its way of doing business. They were introduced to the OIB's approach to financial leadership; received an overview of business financing and building business capital; became familiar with the steps used to evaluate an opportunity; reviewed a case study in community entrepreneurship; and enjoyed a tour of the site.

Merven Gruben, Vice Chair of the Tuktoyaktuk Development Corporation, Mayor of Tukoyaktuk and owner of Gruben's Transport pointed out that, "OIB is doing their own thing very successfully and filling in the gaps where there is a shortfall from the government. We can learn a lot from our people in other parts of the country."

Many of the approaches and actions that the OIB has taken can be applied in the North:

- have a clear organizational separation between business and/or commercial operations and band governance;

- run businesses on a profit-oriented basis;
- have a sound financial management plan and employ experienced, knowledgeable and skilled managers;
- establish accountability among staff, management, chief, council and employees;
- search out proven business advisors, learn from them and take advantage of their expertise;
- acknowledge mistakes and learn from them;
- understand the why behind successes and mistakes;
- challenge practices and attitudes that undermine success;
- be strategic in both planning and executing proposed ventures;
- conduct due diligence (do your homework) before committing to something;
- work with non-Native communities and people.

By learning from others' experiences and following successful examples, Aboriginal leaders, business people and all Northerners, can create positive change and make real improvements in their communities and in the lives of all Northern residents.

Working Together

The Sahtu regional office of the Government of the Northwest Territories' (GNWT) Industry Tourism and Investment Department (ITI) has conducted three of four Economic Development Officer (EDO) Workshops in Norman Wells. The workshops, entitled Capacity Building for Economic Developers in the Sahtu (CBEDS), were funded in part by Indian and Northern Affairs Canada (INAC) under the Strategic Investments in Northern Economic Development (SINED) initiative.

Community Economic Developers in the Sahtu recognize that because of a lack of capacity and co-ordination, local companies and organizations may not be benefiting from the current and potential development in the region. "By bringing together people from different communities and organizations who have similar roles, we are establishing the foundation for an organized, collaborative approach to community economic development in the Sahtu,"

explains Nazim Awan, Manager, Business Development, ITI, Sahtu Region.

During the workshops, local government and business representatives spoke to the group about a variety of issues relevant to community economic development such as: education and training needs; resource exploration; tourism initiatives; and services for small business. Staff from the Economic Developers Association of Alberta (EDA) and the Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation (APEC) also covered a range of topics including: strategic planning in economic development; marketing, business and investment attraction; opportunity identification; and community planning.

The EDOs gained the background knowledge and theory necessary to help them understand their roles as economic developers and had the chance to work together to identify and achieve common goals. "I think the skills and information gained in the CBEDS workshop helped

to boost everyone's confidence and competence and increased our enthusiasm and job satisfaction," says Leonard Kenny from Deline.

The EDOs came away with practical tools and techniques that can be used to evaluate potential clients and assist them with feasible business idea development. In addition, different training methods, such as role-playing, small group work and interactive group exercises encouraged teambuilding and created relationships among the participants that they took back to their workplaces.

Working together, improving regional capacity and strengthening the lines of communication will allow EDOs in the Sahtu to better support and service local businesses and regional initiatives. This will result in stronger economic growth and ensure that all Sahtu residents benefit from shared resources and economic growth.



Developing a Community Vision



Over the last two years, the Salt River First Nation (SRFN) in Fort Smith has participated in facilitated workshops to improve band governance and working relationships. The purpose of these meetings is to have everyone contribute to the information gathering and participate in the decision-making in order to come to a group consensus on the issues and objectives.

The leadership of the SRFN recognized the need for guiding principles and through these workshops created a draft strategic plan to help the band move forward and remain focused on achieving its goals. In previous sessions, policies and procedures were developed and included a code of conduct, roles and responsibilities of chief and council, and a work-plan to help to the band deal with a number of challenges.

Continuing to build on these earlier practices, further workshops in December 2007 resulted in four new

policy directives: a decision-making process and the correct use of band council resolutions (BCRs); the creation of a portfolio system where each councillor has an area of responsibility; a staff reporting and office structure; and a conflict of interest process. By establishing governance as its priority, the SRFN is building a solid foundation for the band's long-term strategic plan.

"Involving the Council and making a commitment to work together as a team was successful since we were all involved in setting goals for the band," said Toni Heron, SRFN Sub-Chief. "We were a united team focusing on the future and working together towards the goals set before us. We came away feeling like we accomplished something."

The workshops helped the leadership team, committee members and trustees understand their roles and responsibilities and those of others.

Documenting these processes and polices, committing to following the processes the workshop participants developed and working towards a greater openness amongst all band members is an important step for the SRFN.

Sticking to its action plan and addressing and resolving its issues will benefit the community and band members and help them maximize and enjoy their successes.

"commitment to work together"

Creating Opportunities

The NWT Métis-Dene Development Fund Ltd. (MDDF), an Aboriginal Capital Corporation, has been providing financial services to Métis and Dene small and medium sized enterprises in the Northwest Territories since 1991. The organization has been very successful and as a result, its loan fund has been fully utilized. The healthy territorial economy increased demand for developmental capital that the MDDF was unable to meet.

To fill this gap and enable MDDF to expand its services and meet the needs of Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal business owners and entrepreneurs across the NWT, INAC, through its Strategic Investments in Northern Economic Development (SINED) initiative, invested \$1.6 million. Expanding its client base will create a stronger financial institution which will help to strengthen and diversify regional economies.

Providing support to expand the existing loan fund will:

- increase the availability and size of loans available to all NWT small and medium sized businesses;
- improve benefits from non-renewable resource development in the North by supporting early-stage small and medium sized business development and improving employment opportunities; and
- help the MDDF get to a point where it can be financially self-sustaining and provide ongoing benefits to the people of the NWT.

"The additional capital will enable the MDDF to not only serve Dene and Métis but all Northern residents," says Jake Heron, Chair, NWT Métis-Dene Development Fund. "This will allow all communities, especially those underserved by traditional financial institutions, to pursue market economic opportunities."

The NWT Métis-Dene Development Fund, by offering its loan services to a larger market, is improving access to developmental capital for all small and medium sized business owners who create jobs and help diversity local, regional and territorial economies.

"stronger financial institution"





Made in the North Solutions



Non-renewable resource development is the driving force of the NWT's economy but there is a lack of trained and readily available northern workers to meet the labour market demands. Until recently, the NWT did not have the facilities or equipment to offer the necessary education and training to Northern residents.

New technology and facilities in the NWT offer Northerners access to training at home. Two projects, funded in part by INAC through its Strategic Investments in Northern Economic Development (SINED) initiative, provide a made-in-the-North solution to help meet the current and future labour needs of the territory.

INAC partnered with the Aurora College, the GNWT and the diamond mines to purchase four underground mining training simulators. INAC invested \$799,200 in the simulators

(a stationary one located in Yellowknife and three portable models that can be brought into communities) which will give students a very realistic, hands-on learning experience. Computerized programs lead the participant through a series of job-related manoeuvres, using modern tools and equipment similar to those that the operator would perform on the job, in a safe and controlled environment.

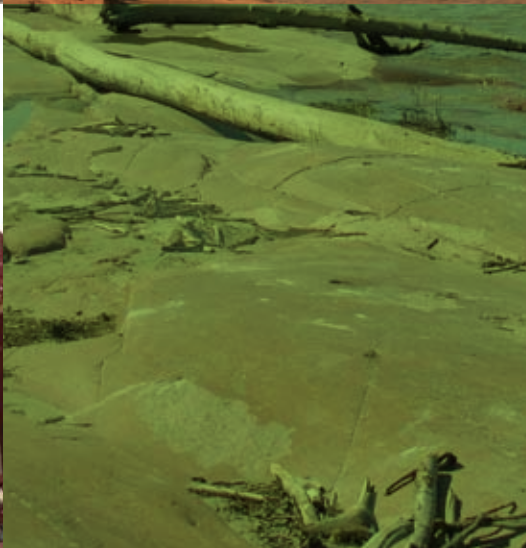
INAC also invested \$400,000 in a mobile trades training unit based out of Inuvik and which will travel to communities in the Beaufort-Delta region. The GNWT, the Inuvialuit Regional Corporation, the Gwich'in Tribal Council and industry also contributed to this facility.

The 55 foot long trailer is a portable classroom that has a training area of approximately 1000 square feet. It can accommodate 12 students and is set up

to teach welding, electrical, automotive, plumbing/pipefitting, mechanics, carpentry and if required, millwright.

"These facilities will increase the participation rate of community members in trade related programs," says Robert Ward, Co-ordinator, Industrial and Mine Training, Aurora College. "Having the training come to them gives residents in more remote communities the opportunity to develop the skills they need to increase their employment options."

These two projects are the result of governments, Aboriginal organizations, educational institutions and industry working together to bring creative, relevant and practical training solutions to the NWT.



Published under the authority of the
Minister of Indian Affairs and Northern
Development and Federal Interlocutor
for Métis and Non-Status Indians
Ottawa, 2008
www.ainc-inac.gc.ca
1-800-567-9604
TTY only 1-866-553-0554

QS-Y290-300-EE-A1
ISSN: 1916-6273

© Minister of Public Works
and Government Services Canada

Cette publication est aussi disponible en français
sous le titre: Réussites de la Direction des services
aux Indiens et aux Inuits Printemps – été 2008