

Getting to Know Each Other

The participants were asked four questions:

1. What is your particular interest in urban Aboriginal economic development?
2. What are you curious about regarding this project?
3. What assets, gifts or capacities can you offer to this work?
4. This is a three year project. What do you hope will come from it if we work well?

These are the responses.

1. What is your particular interest in urban Aboriginal Economic Development?

My interest is in Indigenous economic development and women and youth; identifying new strategies for capacity building.

Right now we are trying to put together an economic development strategy. Also I am interested in social enterprise within non for profit sector in particular within the Aboriginal community.

I would like to see progress/advancement in this area in all urban areas not just the large centres.

My interest is with Aboriginal people getting into the mainstream commercial projects and ventures and with Peace Hills Trust Company branch located on an Urban reserve in the City of Saskatoon. I have seen the challenges that Aboriginal businesses face, in regards to financing and proposals. If we can assist, by way of developing some type of outline that would help Aboriginal business and individuals to obtain or have a better chance at obtain financing. I am a member of a First Nation that has recently ratified its Treaty land Entitlement, which enables the band to purchase additional land base, this is my interest, is to get the band to purchase land near big centers in order to be self-reliant and establish its own revenues sources and not rely on Government handouts.

My interest in urban economic development is related to my work here in the North End of Winnipeg. Winnipeg has a relatively high (compared to other major Canadian cities) Aboriginal population (10%). The rate in the inner city particularly the North End is much higher at around 20%. In 2002 I started a community based construction company in the North End employing primarily low income inner city residents many of whom had been unemployed, on social assistance or recently released from prison. Since then we have averaged approximately 20 employees on full time basis. The majority of our employees are Aboriginal. The goal is to offer employees opportunity to learn a trade and earn a decent income while participating in the renewal of housing and infrastructure in the inner city. Before embarking on my current work in community economic development and social enterprises, I was policy advisor to Bud Wildman, Minister for Native Affairs

and Natural Resources in the Ontario NDP government in the early 90's. The minister was committed to Aboriginal self-government and allocation of resources for Aboriginal self-government.

I am interested in the use of community economic development and social economy/social enterprise models by urban Aboriginal community organizations. I am also interested in the importance of community-based and participatory research practices and partnerships to generate urban Aboriginal leadership in economic development

My interest in urban Aboriginal economic development is based on my professional experience in working with and for First Nation clients, Aboriginal organizations and government in designing and developing economic development initiatives. Over the past ten years, there have been a number of government departments and both the private and public sectors that have produced many reports and documents on economic development. We are all aware of the challenges and barriers Aboriginal individuals, businesses and communities face in the mainstream economy. I would like to contribute as a meaningful participant in the process and hope my opinions; suggestions and ideas are taken into consideration. One final interest is that I believe there needs to be support for individuals and communities and institutional capacity building inclusive of education, training and workforce experience that are suited to the diverse cultural, social, regional and national needs.

It would be great if the governments could provide specific funding for this endeavor(s). Aboriginal funding for economic development has always been directed for on-Reserve projects. Incentives like tax exemption or phased-in taxable solutions would be interesting.

IRS interests are to ensure the Urban Inuit are including in the discussion, planning and implementation of any Urban Aboriginal Economic Development initiatives, programs and services, interests include research, data collection, data analysis, networking and connecting Urban Inuit organizations and individuals to Aboriginal Economic Development people, governments and industry.

While the Métis fair better than other First Nations peoples in Canada's cities, the socioeconomic outcomes are still worse than the rest of the population. The Métis National Council (MNC) is interested in improving these outcomes and achieving new opportunities for Métis ownership and investment in community economic development initiatives.

I am interested in business development opportunities for the growing number of Aboriginal people that are moving to urban centres.

I am Urban for all intents and purposes, and recognize that there is a migration and even duality for some of our First Nation population as they leave for employment and other reasons. It is probably one of the fastest growing areas of business in Canada as First Nations realizing opportunities in Urban Canada. Some of our First Nations are also urban.

Our organization is currently in the process of creating an Urban Aboriginal social enterprise business and I am particularly interested in what other groups in Canada or the province are doing to create urban Aboriginal businesses. As well, Vancouver has recently become engaged in the creation of the Metro Vancouver Aboriginal Executive Council. I would like to see if this has the opportunity to create or expand the economic development for the metro Vancouver area.

Inuit Tapiriit Kanatami's (ITK) in urban Aboriginal economic development is how it will tie in with the new development of the Governments framework on economic development. What are the opportunities, threats, strengths and weakness already in urban centres around economic development? Where are the gaps?

I am interested in looking at the opportunities economic development may provide to help support/enable self-governance for urban Aboriginal people. Identifying the range of stakeholders who are interested in using economic development to enhance the capacity bldg in Aboriginal organizations, so that economic development actually builds urban Aboriginal social capital.

2. What are you curious about regarding this project?

I am curious about the role of network participants and the nature of research they can participate in.

I am curious about what is happening in economic development for Aboriginal people, some best practices, and how to set up social enterprises in the Aboriginal community.

I would like to see what results come out of it, and the Learning Circles.

I'm curious about what other participants have to say and to get ideas to assist my First Nation.

I am curious on how the research resulting from this project will be implemented in various urban areas across Canada.

I am curious about research questions to be addressed and their potential linkage to research being done in other community university research partnerships. I'm interested in the knowledge mobilization activities that can be supported and potential

policy implications linked to policy research in other community economic development networks and projects.

I am interested in hearing the different perspectives from the participants on their viewpoints and opinions of how effective learning circles would be and how to better build upon the partnerships between government, academia and communities. I am also interested in learning how the academic participants can contribute to community learning and practice when it comes to urban economic development initiatives.

I would like to understand the issues raised and possible solutions suggested.

Inuit Relations Secretariat (IRS) is curious to know what research, data analysis, number of programs, services that Urban Inuit can apply to and be involved in. What are the various Economic Development policies for Aboriginals (Urban), how these policies are developed, by whom and are they inclusive to urban Inuit, if not why and how do we enhance, change or develop policies for Urban Inuit.

There are many things. First, I would like to see how the Métis can access new projects and funding, build new partnerships and collaborate with business and industry.

I am interested in the process and the end result.

I am curious to hopefully learn more stats on what is going on and also have a more rounded view from all the participants. I hopefully can share my optimism about the good things that I see going on.

I am curious as to what everybody else doing in regards to Urban Aboriginal economic development. I would like to know the how, what, where, when and why of creating successful Aboriginal economic development.

Inuit Tapiriit Kanatami (ITK) is interested in finding out more about this National Network for Urban Aboriginal Economic Development, what is the mandate, purpose, goals and outcomes of this network. Who will the network be made up of?

I would like to see if this research can identify something other than the 'standard' economic development subject linkage areas (services, procurement, resource development etc). Can this work identify any economic development subject areas that are unique to an urban Aboriginal context?

3. What assets, gifts or capacities can you offer to this work?

I have twenty-five years of academic and practical experiences in Indigenous economic development through research, teaching and publications. I have experience with community-based social and economic planning and project development from many

Indigenous perspectives. I have experience with community-based adult learning, research and training. I've worked with women and development issues for other international perspectives.

I have worked in the Aboriginal not for profit area for over thirty years and have been involved in the skill development side of economic development by providing education and training for Aboriginal people. I am open to new ideas and want to learn as well as share.

Being a First Nation person that has direct experience living in a remote isolated reserve and transitioned to a non-Aboriginal urban environment. My determination in advancing Aboriginal peoples' interests. Educating the non-Aboriginal population about Aboriginals.

Having worked with Peace Hills Trust Company for the past thirteen years, I have worked with Aboriginal groups in Saskatchewan and British Columbia. They have financed projects and seen projects that have been successful in an urban mainstream environment.

Assets that I bring to this project are my years of experience in community economic development and Social Enterprises and actually having managed a social enterprise for the past six years. In addition I have experienced corporate management, government (both as a federal bureaucrat and provincial political advisor), and academia having taught management courses at Ryerson University in Toronto. I have traveled to more than fifty countries and have worked overseas both in Europe and in Central America.

An asset that I bring is potential linkages to other community university research partners involved in relevant work. Support for knowledge mobilization from the research. Linkages to members of the Canadian CED Network from urban Aboriginal backgrounds. Knowledge of Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal community economic development activities, models and policies in Canada and internationally. Knowledge and involvement in community economic development policy development from national social economy research program that may be relevant. Connection to national and global networks of community based researchers

I am completing my PHD in Business and have twenty years experience working in the economic and business development field. I have developed effective working partnerships with government; industry and First Nations in moving economic development initiatives forward both on a small and large scale. I am an experienced facilitator, work well in a team environment and am respectful of our diverse groups.

I have worked both on and off- Reserve and see the challenges that Aboriginal people face in both contexts when trying to start a business.

Assets that I bring are the knowledge of the urban Inuit communities, the players, networks and connections, access to Federal programs and services, funding sources, policies (or lack of) for urban Inuit. Gifts that I bring are knowledge, people, and the gift of giving (in the sense of providing advice, information on and to Urban Inuit about Economic Development research and development). Capacity - Through human resource means, the capacity to facilitate, coordinate urban Inuit partners initiate and lead the discussion.

The Métis National Council governing members have many resources and successes in economic development projects. We would like to build on these successes, find ways to increase capital and capacity building and expand projects in new areas and share what we can to assist others. In my role as director of intergovernmental affairs, I offer a background in political economy and would like to expand areas of investment and open up new opportunities for community development. I also have done work in evaluation and feel strongly that measuring change is just as important as achieving it. Finally, I have lots of ideas, think strategically and consider short, medium and long term outcomes when it comes to economic development.

I have knowledge of Aboriginal people, developmental lending and conventional lending

I get to travel quite extensively around the country to participate in many Urban Economic events and businesses. This allows me to have an awareness that I believe is exposed and enlightened to this particular topic

I am involved in the leadership within Vancouver and our organization has currently created an urban economic development plan to increase our goal of self sufficiency. Please find attached my resume and bio that outlines my work experience

ITK is the national organization representing the four land claim organizations. Our assets would encompass a wide range of knowledge, experience and understanding.

Navigation links to provincial ministry interests and associated resource links. Understanding of self-governance context for urban Aboriginals (non-Status and Métis) who are the stakeholders.

4. This is a three year project. What do you hope will come from it if we work well?

I hope that we will be able to highlight most of the issues affecting indigenous research and training. We will build a strong network of expertise focusing on indigenous research and policy directions. We will be able to develop tools and products to enhance academic learning.

I hope to be more knowledgeable about economic development, have made some good contacts and seen some best practices. Hopefully we will get some good ideas, examples, advice and inspiration to help us with our economic development strategy.

I would like useful tools and increased awareness about Aboriginal issues.

I hope that we can get lots of ideas that Aboriginal business and individual can use.

My hope is that we can deliver practical solutions for local implementation that will further urban Aboriginal economic development across cities in Canada.

I would like to see a connected, informed network of practitioners, researchers and policy-influencers developing effective Aboriginal community economic development activities and leadership in urban areas of Canada, supported by appropriate resources and policies from all levels of government.

My hope is that rather than duplicating efforts that have been done in the past there needs to be a multinational forum where government, academia, on and reserve First Nation people, Aboriginal peoples (Métis and Inuit) can share and offer practical and realistic solutions for urban Aboriginal economic development. Aboriginal people have unique situations from province to province particularly as it relates to progress on resources, land claims, and other economic initiatives. My hope is that building understanding, maximizing economic potential for urban initiatives, human and financial support and access to capital are carefully examined and all stakeholders can achieve solutions to these challenges through open and honest dialogue.

My expectation is that after the three years, a solid empirical and anecdotal evidentiary base is collected in order to address the specific challenges faced by aboriginal entrepreneurs (e.g. Intellectual and cultural property issues, statutes and practices which inhibit economic development surmounted etc.).

Inuit Relations Secretariat hopes that this project will lead to further research on urban Aboriginal Economic Development for urban Inuit, enhanced or new Economic Development policies, programs and services to which urban Inuit can take advantage of. Most importantly, the urban Inuit voice is heard and acted upon.

The most important outcome would be creating capacity for change. Three years is not a long time to make great strides, so it is important to build confidence, generate leadership and start opening doors for long term sustainability.

I would like to see a perpetual network of business development practitioners spanning the Country. A relevant data base established to assist them in their day to day activities. The establishment of virtual business development teams to develop larger proposals.

I hope that the information is shared with the government as an area of real value to be supported. I personally would like to advocate the transition of social assistance funding and child care funding to economic development funding, both on and off- Reserve. All levels of government need to address that issue to have further success with social issues. We are leaving some people behind because we leave them on social assistance and take care of their kids in a less than productive manner.

I would like to see a plan(s) for the improvement and growth of Aboriginal businesses across Canada.

We would like to ensure that there is Inuit involvement in the process and that the outcomes are inclusive of all three Aboriginal groups in Canada.

I would like to see lasting relationships, improved understandings at in an internal and external context.