

A bald eagle is shown in flight, its wings spread wide, against a dramatic sunset sky with soft, golden clouds. In the foreground, the dark silhouette of a teepee is visible on the left side. The overall scene is peaceful and evocative of Indigenous culture.

# Indian Residential School Survivors

National Conference & Workshop

April 30, May 1 & 2, 2007  
Winnipeg Convention Centre

## FINAL REPORT

Preparing  
Survivors &  
Communities  
to Move Forward

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## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The overall intent and purpose of the Indian Residential School Survivors National Conference and Workshop was, and remains, moving forward in a positive way from the debacle that was the Indian Residential School System. The Conference was sponsored by Indian Residential Schools Resolution Canada and hosted by the Assembly of Manitoba Chiefs in Winnipeg, Manitoba from April 30<sup>th</sup> – May 2, 2007 inclusive. Along with residential school survivors and their descendants, conference participants included political leaders, management and front line workers from Federal, Provincial/Territorial and First Nations governments.

This Conference is a first major attempt at bringing together key informants to review and otherwise build onto a National Strategy to minimize negative impacts and maximize the positive effects of the Indian Residential Schools Settlement Agreement monies targeted to benefit survivors and their descendants. The Ottawa Working Group whose membership includes representatives from several federal government departments, national aboriginal organizations, and other prominent stakeholders had drafted the National Strategy under review at this Conference.

On day two of the Conference, some one thousand, six hundred (1,600) participants gathered in six (6) separate workshop areas whereupon they were further assigned to eighteen (18) smaller groups to undertake the work required by the Conference sponsors. Participants reviewed 18 community impacts identified by the Ottawa Working Group via a modified gap analysis process. The analysis process entailed the eight-step process as follows:

1. Impact and what this looks like at present.
2. What would it look like if the impact had been successfully handled?
3. Risk high, medium or low,
4. What, if anything has been done thus far to address the matter? ;
5. What else needs to happen to properly address this matter?
6. Who will do the work?
7. What resources are available in your region that would resolve /address the matter?
8. Time frame: Start and Finish dates?

Some emergent priorities derived from the fifth step of the small group process to address the negative side of the flow of money that will likely have significant impacts on individuals and their communities such as increased elder abuse, fraud, alcohol and drug problems, and conflict

- **Fraud:** Communication, education and information-sharing to survivors and emphasize elders most at risk. All information must be in First Nations languages, through all Aboriginal media (TV, radio, internet, newspapers) and mainstream. It is important to have one location and one site where people

can report scams: information is shared and will stop further scams being tried on other survivors.

- **Scams:** Conference participants . . . identified services and partnerships, where government and non-government agencies and front line workers collaborate towards appropriate services both on and off reserve. Conference participants identified the need for such services as community watch groups, community workshops, open band meetings, youth awareness/education, and healing with the school system. A screening process and monitoring system for traditional healing and database of healers should also be developed and maintained.
- **Gang Violence:** Support systems need to be developed to assist former gang members and those who want out. There needs to be infrastructure in place to ensure long term detox and addiction centers, after care programs, community justice circles, traditional life skills teaching and various workshops
- **Alcohol, Drugs And Gambling:** Reclaiming culture, language and spirituality was considered most important ... Information campaigns and treatment programs geared towards specific needs such as residential school survivors, youth experimenting with risk behaviour are needed. Educating and involving the whole community in understanding what damage residential school has had and why people turn to drugs, alcohol and gambling will help to change the behaviour and impacts.
- **Community Conflict:** Suggestions ranged from more conflict resolution models from traditional and western sources, promoting and implementing cultural and traditional values,
- **Elder Abuse:** Court workers, Counselors, Chief and Councils, provincial and federal governments should be working together to draft legislation to make reporting of elder abuse mandatory; enact local legislation (by-law) to banish perpetrators of abuse in the community and establish an Elders' Help line, Communication, education and information-sharing should be done by advocacy groups, committed grassroots people and governments to educate Elders and community members alike on what constitutes Elder Abuse.
- **Elder Support:** Increase elders' involvement in decision-making through the establishment of an elders' Council, have the youth advisory council working with elders. Band administration should be more accountable to elders and the community, and have an Elder on Chief and Council who reports to the Elders Council. Increase funding based [indexed to] on the inflation rate, increase in resources with better training and increase services to elders.
- **Overcrowded Housing:** Too, participants suggest elder-specific measures to address their housing needs and concerns. These measures would include an elders advocate/support group; shelters for elders and "meals on wheels. Television, radio and print media coverage is identified as a means to educate the public about First Nation living conditions on-reserves.

## **INTRODUCTION AND PURPOSE OF WORKSHOPS**

### **Background**

As of March 21, 2007, all the court approvals have been secured for the Residential Schools Agreement in all nine jurisdictions in which they were required and its implementation is expected to take place following the mandatory seven-month opting out phase. As a result of the Agreement, large amounts of money will flow into aboriginal communities across Canada. This flow of money will likely have significant impacts on individuals and their communities. On the positive side, money can potentially be available for economic development, and individual and collective investments. On the negative side, we anticipate problems such as increased elder abuse, fraud, alcohol and drug problems, and conflict. Some of these impacts have already been seen arising from the Advance Payments made to former students over 65 years of age.

The Manitoba Working Group, under the auspices of AMC, had been planning a provincial conference to brief Manitoba survivors of the Indian Residential School Settlement Agreement (IRRSA) and related matters. Planning a similar undertaking and opting to avoid duplication of service, the Ottawa Working Group approached the Assembly of Manitoba Chiefs to broaden their scope by playing host a national conference of this nature. The Ottawa Working Group extended some assurances AMC would receive financial assistance from Indian Residential Schools Resolution Canada (IRSRC) towards this end. The Assembly of Manitoba Chiefs took up the challenge with an aim to help solidify a national strategy on mitigating the potential negative community impacts of the IRS Settlement Agreement and to maximize the potential positive impacts.

Several initiatives are in place, and in planning, in different parts of the country to address these impacts. These are led by several organizations and groups, which generally function independently of each other. While each initiative has merit, there is, to date, no consistent set of policies and supports from the federal government. National coordination of these efforts would help to ensure that all parts of the country are represented through these initiatives, and that there is no duplication of effort.

The Indian Residential Schools Community Impacts Working Group (CIWG) also known as the Ottawa Working Group herein, has been created to coordinate and support efforts across Canada to maximize the positive impacts and mitigate the negative impacts of the IRS Settlement Agreement. Membership includes representatives from several federal government departments, national aboriginal organizations, and other stakeholders.

### **Participants/Process**

Following standard conference opening protocols, the Assembly First Nations National Grand Chief Phil Fontaine delivered his opening and welcoming

remarks. Elijah Harper followed with a keynote address on the Generational Impacts and Healing Process. In the afternoon, a community impacts panel comprising Sharon Thira- British Columbia (IRSS); Maggie Hodgson-Healing Our Spirit; Violet Paul-Atlantic Policy Congress; Chief Superintendent Doug Reti-RCMP; Mike DeGagne-Aboriginal Healing Foundation delivered presentations on model healing initiatives currently available in various regions in Canada. Gina Wilson-IRSRC; Bob Watts-IRC; Aideen Nabigon-SC; Monique Bond-IAP; and Andrea Chalis-HC then delivered an update on the Indian Residential Schools Agreement that Conference participants had the most current information on the Indian Residential Schools Settlement Agreement. Finally, Ed Azure-Conference Lead Facilitator provided an overview of the workshops and related processes; participants would be involved in on day two of the Conference.

Day two found 1600 conference participants making their way to six (6) major workshop/theme sites. Upon their arrival at these workshop sites, large group facilitators responsible for the overall management/facilitation of the workshop site and small group session teams, briefed participants on the workshop topics being addressed at their site, the overall workshop process, attendant timelines and guidelines for working together. Following this briefing, the large group facilitator dispersed participants into the two-four small group sessions.

In each of the smaller groups, *numbering eighteen in total*, participants were lead through an identical eight -step process (Gap Analysis), by a *small group team* comprised of a small group leader; a resource person; a small group recorder; and a “runner” who served as a support to the small group team. Each member of the team, save the runner, had been given explicit instructions on the performance of their respective roles.

The small group leader controlled and facilitated the small group process while their recorder captured the information generated during the session. An electronic copy of a small group recorder template and computer laptop was given to eighteen (18) small group recorders to aid them in recording the data generated by their small group leader. All small group reports would be given to an executive summary writer responsible for collecting and summarizing all data generated in a given workshop/theme area. The reporting template was identical in every small group session and was, in fact, identical to the small group process/sheets displayed on the wall in which the workshop was occurring.

An electronic copy of a summary report template for the six main workshops was given to the executive summary writers who analyzed the data collected from the small group leaders and recorders to aid them in preparing an executive summary. The executive summary writers’ identified highlights and reoccurring themes from the eight-step small group session. Their summary reports are key informant documents that were presented during the plenary session on third and final day of the conference proceedings and formatted for presentation in this final report.

### **Purpose, Goals and Objectives**

The overall purpose of the Indian Residential School Survivors National Conference and Workshop was to move forward in a positive way from the Residential School experience. In so doing, it was imperative that this is done in a manner that the following goals and objectives be realized. The goals of the Conference were threefold:

1. To ensure, insofar as possible, no harm is done to IRS Agreement payout recipients.
2. To promote positive impacts of the Settlement Agreement.
3. Provide input on a National Resource Guide that would be applicable to each region of the country.

The Conference objectives - *the community impacts the Ottawa Working Group tasked participants to review during this conference* - drove the design for the small group process that conference participants were led through on day two of the event are outlined in the table of contents.

## **Objective #1: Minimizing Frauds and Scams**

### **a) Fraud**

**Impact and how this looks like in our communities:** The IRS settlement may lead to family divisions and other pressures. Banks and financial institutions lack accessibility and incur costs, while check cashing locations have high interest on loans. Lawyers and other professionals may raise their rates when IRS settlements involved. First Nations people need to understand money and how to use it or they face exploitation by unscrupulous outsiders or even family or neighbors.

**Risk:** There is very high risk of incurring costs for advice, being targeted by fraud artists, or having one's privacy invaded.

**What, if anything, has been done?** In B.C., the Public Guardian and Trustee of British Columbia have sponsored Collaborative Dialogues on Indian Residential School Survivor Settlements (March 07) with pamphlets and reports available. Canadian Network for the Prevention of Elder Abuse ([www.cnpea.ca](http://www.cnpea.ca)) has information on its website including info on World Elder Abuse Awareness Day June 15<sup>th</sup> – an opportunity to raise awareness. Dr. Maggie Hodgson has draft document available “for use of Service Providers and Former students who are planning ahead and want to hear what choices other former students have made when managing their compensation”.

**What else needs to happen to properly address this impact?** Communication, education and information-sharing to survivors and emphasize elders most at risk. All information must be in First Nations languages, through all Aboriginal media (TV, radio, internet, newspapers) and mainstream. It is important to have one location and one site where people can report scams: information is shared and will stop further scams being tried on other survivors.

Note: Advance payment and Common Experience Payment need to be applied for separately. Chiefs and Councils need to take action, such as no sales people allowed on the reserve except with permission of Chief and Council. Help with sorting out ID and other issues to open bank accounts is needed so survivors can have direct deposit of their settlement.

**Who will do the work?** Chiefs and Councils and First Nations organizations, Tribal Councils, need to act on reserve, and both they and Friendship Centres need to act off reserve, promoting awareness and knowledge.

**What resources or supports are available in your region that would resolve or address the matter?** There needs to be more funding and information resources from IRSRC and Health Canada/Sante Canada, assisted by AFN and Native organizations, into the communities regarding the settlement agreement

flow of monies and education and information on potential incidents of fraud. Resources need to be made available to establish Elder advisory boards immediately and to support Residential School Survivor groups to educate people and support them thru the process. It is difficult to attend meetings due to transportation problems and other costs so the info must go to the communities. Health clinics must have people and resources to help support people.

**Timeline:** May 2007 – begin or continue awareness campaigns and train people on reserve and in towns and cities to raise awareness.

**Impact – how it should look?** Immediate training for community members to help survivors handle this settlement – empower survivors by providing resources in financial planning, learning the power of money and how to say ‘no’, encourage opening bank accounts and having settlements direct deposit into these accounts, and helping all survivors, friends and relatives to remember this money is compensation and that our own values are to listen to and support our elders. Settlement monies must be protected from garnishee in social assistance and other similar income. Note: the province of Manitoba has agreed that ISR settlements will not be considered income for purposes of income assistance – this is what needs to happen across Canada.

## **Objective #1: Minimizing Frauds and Scams**

### **b) SCAMS**

**Impact and how this looks like in our communities:** Car dealers seem to be the most prominent problem – charging too high price for the vehicle, offering credit on IRS settlement ‘buy now and pay later’ and charging high interest, etc. There are other scams such as ‘rent to own’ outlets; investment or internet scams; ‘deals’ offered door to door or pleas made through phone (including requests for donations to causes/churches/etc. by ‘guilting’ the survivor). Friends and family may also pressure the survivor, by charging for household chores and transportation, etc. Beware of professionals charging higher percentage such as lawyers or therapists. There are also workshops offering healing from residential school experience but at a high price – check before you attend or pay – they should be free.

**Risk:** High risk in all categories.

**What, if anything, has already been done and by whom?** In Saskatchewan, Chiefs and Councils have spoken with elders, organized workshops for survivors and community members, including in Regina. Financial advisors have been invited to visit reserve communities. The RCMP in Manitoba and elsewhere have been working with regional agencies to raise awareness. Residential School survivors groups have been active in many areas to share information and protect people. Community needs to monitor professionals to ensure proper services are delivered (e.g. therapists).

**What else needs to be done?** There is much to be done to educate and support survivors regarding how to handle finance and what risks scams to look out for. It was suggested that community people be trained, workshops be held, community newsletters be developed to make people aware of scams and risks to avoid. Publicizing scams can make people aware of what to avoid and lessen the risk to others. Community watch groups could help, as well as having personal financial workers in the communities. Materials must be published in First Nation languages and broadcast through mainstream and Native radio (Wawatay, NCI< ...) ,TV (APTN) , internet in all languages. IRS/INAC must provide resources for this education/awareness campaign. A toll free helpline and website would be very useful – especially if people can add to it online and keep people up to date on community happenings across the country.

**Who will do the work?** Chiefs and councils, Elders, community and health workers, IRS survivors, healers, churches, AFN and provincial/territorial organizations and tribal councils, schools, federal departments (INAC, Health Canada,...), Aboriginal Healing Foundation, and other organizations.

**What resources or supports are available in your region that would resolve or address the matter?** Aboriginal newspapers and TV/radio/other media; Better Business Bureau; Law Society and other professional organizations to raise awareness and set standards for their members as well as receive complaints regarding their members; provincial police; free information sessions by neutral organizations such as CESO.

**Timeline:** May 2007 to begin or continue awareness campaigns; to train community people on reserve and in towns/cities to do info sessions; updates from AFN, organizations, government agencies.

**Impact – how it should look?** With the resources and action outlined, survivors will be empowered to make decisions that will minimize financial loss and help them as compensation intended. People will be better shoppers, with an approved buyers list in some communities, but have less solicitation on reserves. Hopefully, community people will be more aware and prevent elder abuse and undue influence on how elders may wish to spend their money. Chief and Council will be pro-active in community affairs, and young people will become more knowledgeable about residential schools and what compensation is for, as consumer awareness for themselves, leading to a closer youth-elders relationship. There may be opportunities for economic development, with people pooling their resources, and soundly based trust throughout the community.

## **Objective #2: Minimizing Violence, Addictions and Conflict**

### **a) GANG VIOLENCE – Impact**

**Impact - how this looks like in our communities at present:** First Nations understand gang violence as a negative impact to the community as a whole. Gangs have formed in our communities due to loss of identity, values, teachings, self-esteem, language, connectedness and belonging to families and community. This has led to family breakdowns, bullying, fear, abuses, increase in drugs and drug trafficking, murder, suicide, welfare dependency, peer pressure, crime, lack of respect for self and other people and an overall lack of moral values.

Youth are adopting a culture not their own and are substituting material values for love and spiritual hunger. They seek power through the fear imposed on the people and the freedom from no boundaries rules or supervision.

Policing has not been able to fully address this growing problem which is leaving communities feeling threatened and afraid for families and lives.

**Risk:** There is a high risk in areas relating to the social, health, and wellbeing of the communities.

**What, if anything, has been done?** The attendees of this session report that the following individuals and/or entities have already undertaken the following measures to address this situation. First Nations have revitalized traditional teachings in the homes and community such as, grandparents teaching children, ceremonies, drumming, singing, pow-wows, traditional parenting, life skills (hunting/fishing/trapping), and language.

The results are positive and more so when communities come together for activities providing a positive connection and impact to the young people. Teaching the youth the true history of our peoples and identify were seen as critical.

Other initiatives include community justice initiatives, working with gang members, mandatory drug testing of leadership and resources as role models.

Finally communities need to share challenges and successes with other communities and Canadians.

**What else needs to happen to properly address this impact?** Community involvement needs to be encouraged to promote unity, positive messages, outreach and empowerment to the youth and gang members. Support systems need to be developed to assist former gang members and those who want out. There needs to be infrastructure in place to ensure long term detox and addiction

centers, after care programs, community justice circles, traditional life skills teaching and various workshops.

Promotion of community role models and mentorship and teaching of First Nations true history and identity were identified as very important.

Leadership to be encouraged to take a hard line by implementing curfews, band bylaws on gangs and evictions of gang members.

**Who will do the work?** In addition to what is already being done, attendees suggest the following measure also be applied to respond to the risk of gang violence. The group felt that it is incumbent upon the community as a whole to ensure that gang violence is stopped. Identified groups included Chief and Council, Elders, parents, community resources and spiritual Elders.

External resources identified include the RCMP, Canadian Rangers, Church's, Native organizations, and the National Aboriginal Residential School Gathering.

**What resources or supports are available in your region that would resolve or address the matter?** Attendees report the following resources and/or supports are available in their respective communities and/or regions: First Nation leadership, schools, health services, RCMP and band policing, youth and Elder centres, traditional and spiritual people, local media.

External resources included the Church's, Canadian Rangers, Cadets, and the Aboriginal Healing Foundation.

**Timeline:** The group felt that all initiatives should be ongoing with long term goals, reviews and evaluations to determine effectiveness and results.

**Impact – How it should look:** As a result of the implementation of the suggested measure, the following outcomes are likely to be realized: safe, clean and healthy environments to raise families and future generations. Reclaiming and instilling traditional values such as respect will result in a renewed sense of pride and peace in the communities. This will be reflected in a sense of identity, healthy minds, body and souls, productive youth, family values, positive role models, effective leadership and an overall sense of empowerment.

## **Objective #2: Minimizing Violence, Addictions and Conflict**

### **b) Family Violence**

**Impacts and what this looks like:** In First Nation communities, violence takes many forms – physical and mental abuse, threats and verbal abuse, elder abuse, child abuse, sexual abuse – and many people live in denial as they do not want to look at it, or they are too scared to talk about it. These situations lead to anxiety, depression, and sometimes suicide. People need to understand there is a cycle of violence, that there are learned behaviours, very much due to the impact of residential schools leading to increased violence in our communities. Understanding this historic trauma and the resultant behaviours called dysfunctional families can allow people to take the path to healing. Communities need trained counselors and family therapists, and a return to understanding traditional roles, values, and rites of passage. Perpetrators of crimes need to get counseling instead of it being swept under the rug. Children are the ones uprooted – the parents stay at home.

**Risk:** The collective risk is high for family violence in our communities to continue.

**What, if anything, has already been done and by whom?** There are many communities where more community members are going to school, who have support groups of community wellness workers and social workers, and a restorative justice system. One Manitoba band council allows, in a case of spousal abuse, that women to stay in the home and the men have to leave, so that children retain their home. Other communities have developed their own programs in family violence prevention, anger management, and traditional counseling. There are youth chief and council programs, men's and women's sharing circles and mentoring programs. Communities may have drumming practices and cultural activities, and also life skills programs. Crisis intervention programs such as de-briefing when a family loses a loved one are also being utilized, along with family mediation and counseling, with community support workers. It was identified that parents need to be more involved with their children in sports and recreation, and activities they can enjoy together.

**What else needs to happen to properly address this impact?**

**Who will do the work?** Everyone's efforts are needed. Every individual must take responsibility to make change. There are many experienced and trained people who can help. Elders and youth need to be fully involved. The clan system is a source of strength, as are recognized, credible elders. Our own people need to be trained by their peers, elders, and by our own trained people.

**What resources or supports are available in your region that would resolve or address the matter?** First Nations have family support systems of

grandparents and extended families, and have developed programs of support through our organizations and agencies. Sustainable funding is needed for many worthwhile programs. Native women's organizations and youth programs are looked to for their models, best practices, and advice.

**Timeline:** Immediate and ongoing action is needed – “in perpetuity” was how the group saw many of the initiatives identified.

**Impact – how it should look:** People looked to a place of “peace” that “we don't have to escape”. There would be less conflict, less apprehension, healthier people mentally, physically, spiritually, emotionally. No more junk cars lying around, more arts and cultural activities, children and grandchildren graduating from school, and pride in ourselves and our history. With improved lives in the communities would come less prejudice towards off reserve people and others. Better communication throughout the community, better ability to deal with conflict and handle stress would mean better relationships, more effective and accountable leadership. Healthier leaders, youth leaders, less alcohol and drug abuse would help the change toward a united community, teaching our children in a positive way.

## **Objective #2: Minimizing Violence, Addictions and Conflict**

### **c) Alcohol, Drugs, Gambling**

**Impact – what it looks like:** Together, these three create a depressing picture of life where addictions and sometimes violence heavily affect family and community dynamics. Youth feel the isolation of being without parental supervision and without discipline. Bingo, drinking, and/or drugs every day has meant children being taken by Family Services, violence including youth gangs, babies being born addicted, elder abuse, lack of food in the home or resources for kids in impoverished homes. Solvent and drug abuse, online and in house gambling has led to prostitution and suicide. These situations are interrelated in a downward spiral which must be stopped and addressed by leaders, parents, and everyone.

**Risk:** Risk is high when any one of these elements plays a prominent role in a person's life. In many families and communities, these three makes the stakes even higher.

**What, if anything, has been done and by whom?** Community wellness workers, mental health and addictions workers, clinicians working with individuals and families are making an impact in NWT, Saskatchewan, Thompson, MB, and elsewhere. Wilderness camps, Junior Rangers, community workshops, sacred ceremonies and visits to sacred sites have all contributed across the country to bringing people to wellness and balance. Sometimes, police and courts have helped to make people realize the extent of their problems and then treatment centres for offer help. FASD identification and intervention programs are growing. Organized sports like lacrosse and soccer at Kaniwake have proven effective and fun. There is a workbook on resiliency for RS survivors on the Internet.

**What else needs to happen to properly address this impact?** Reclaiming culture, language and spirituality was considered most important. However, it was recognized that outside forces still have to be recognized: government needs to implement treaty rights and promises, for there to be real change and opportunity. Drug and alcohol free Chief and Council is needed and would be supported by dry socials, recreational clubs, and more prevention and promotion programs. Bylaws need to be developed and enforced, role models identified, drug testing instituted, and customary laws respected. Information campaigns and treatment programs geared towards specific needs such as residential school survivors, youth experimenting with risk behaviour are needed. Educating and involving the whole community in understanding what damage residential school has had and why people turn to drugs, alcohol and gambling will help to change the behaviour and impacts.

**Who will do the work?** The whole community is needed to be involved in prevention, intervention and support. Leadership, resource workers and all staff,

and committees of volunteers from education to justice, supporting each other, are needed to work together. And the organizations established to help people and communities such as the Aboriginal Healing Foundation are NNADAP workers are looked to as important supports. Youth and Elder involvement is essential and encouraged along with parents, grandparents, Chiefs and Councils.

**What resources or supports are available in your region that would resolve or address the matter?** The workshop identified many resources either in their own communities or available, including the ones mentioned in “who will do the work” (above). The group was in effect saying, ‘What’s stopping us? Let’s go’.

**Timeline:** All activities must start immediately. Some will require planning and proposal development and lobbying for funds, while other require a change in attitude and modeling new behaviour. Training community people to raise awareness and curriculum development were important; to be undertaken before the compensation arrives.

**Impact – How it should look:** The group foresaw a positive lifestyle and environment, better economy, better education in language and culture, healthy communities with traditions and more family gatherings. That would lead to less suicides, moms at home not in treatment, less incarceration, better results at school, less teen pregnancies, and overall better understanding. Better working relationships, effective leadership, with less corruption, will lead to better living conditions and housing. With families intact and strengthening family bonding, more families on the land, eating traditional foods and being active, and more respect for elders, traditional values and positive identity be strengthened.

## **Objective #2: Minimizing Violence, Addictions and Conflict**

### **d) Community Conflicts**

**Impact - how this looks like in our communities at present:** There are many types of conflict within and between communities: family, division and lateral conflict affecting everyone in community, leadership and community staff not working together. Many pressures lead to these conflicts: poverty, overcrowding, hopelessness, religion, Indian Act membership divisions as well as jealousy, lethargy, favoritism, and fear, to name some of the factors. Relationships need communication. People need awareness of intergenerational impacts. Training of leaders, staff, and community people is needed in all areas.

**Risk:** All issues were considered high risk in community conflict.

**What, if anything, has already been done and by whom?** First Nations communities on and off reserve have developed and delivered effective programs, such as parenting skills, role modeling, life skills, traditional gatherings, women's groups, traditional male/female groups, restorative justice, peacekeepers. It is important to train the trainers, be proactive within the community, work on decolonization of attitudes and practices. Respect for oneself, for others, and especially elders needs to be emphasized.

**What else needs to happen to properly address this impact?** Suggestions ranged from more conflict resolution models from traditional and western sources, promoting and implementing cultural and traditional values, to day to day practices such as showing compassion and listening more, working with one mind, body and soul to promote unity, being personally responsible for what you say and do (not gossiping or judging), and stopping looking over the fence. Involving youth, providing more mentorship, transparency in leadership and freedom of spirituality were also mentioned as strengths to be encouraged.

**Who will do the work?** There was unanimous agreement that everyone – all band members – were responsible for doing the work. Leadership, staff, youth, Elders, family, Native and mainstream media, and our own trained and educated people were to be counted on.

**What resources or supports are available in your region that would resolve or address the matter?** Both youth and Elders were themselves considered resources. Traditional gatherings and ceremonies including sweat lodges, feasts and giveaways, cultural camps and elder-youth groups, were recognized as providing strength and encouragement. As well, educators, health and NNADAP workers, churches, police and probation workers were also considered useful resources.

**What else needs to happen to properly address this impact?**

**Timelines:** Most of the activities such as working on healing relationships, histories, identities and communications would need to last a lifetime. Some involve community consultations to get underway effectively. Implementing cultural and traditional values in the school are needed to be “ongoing until it’s finished”.

**Impact – how it should look:** Healthy families, healthy leaders, healthy communities together form the anticipated outcome of healing from residential schools. Building cultural and spiritual identity and self-esteem, supporting mutual respect, through working together in respect, unity and equality were given equal weight. Lessen the violence through emphasizing the positive influences, improving communication, working together on educational and health boards, re-establishing languages, and reunification of families, keeping them together. People agreed that all activities should start in one’s own home community, with some interested in re-establishing traditional methods of governance.

### **Objective #3: Seniors – Challenges and Opportunities**

#### **a) Elder Abuse**

**Impact and how this looks like in our communities:** At present, elders in our communities are confronted with their Grandchildren, children and significant others taking advantage of them. As well, our elders endure a significant and substantial lack of respect from others within and outside their community. There is an abhorrent lack of appropriate programming, services and support for our elders. Elders in our communities also find themselves having to survive in the midst of immediate and present danger while lacking access to or encountering inappropriate application of traditional knowledge/services

**Risk:** For participants of this conference, the likelihood of this current situation will persist is rated as very high.

**What, if anything, has been done?** In First Nation communities across Canada, Elders' programming, services and supports range from non-existent to diverse. While some communities and Tribal Council areas can boast of such measures as Elder-specific housing or an Elders' Senate, others report Personal and Residential Care facilities for their Elders. Some tell of a healthy amount of community involvement by their Elders in schools and at public gatherings. Too, there are those First Nation communities that have an Elder Resource/ Wellness Centers where workshops to are offered to inform on elder abuse but there are those communities who report a dearth of any such programming, services or support for their Elders.

**What else needs to happen to properly address this impact?** While measures have been on the rise of late to address Elder Abuse, much much more can be done. Focusing on survivors and elders most at risk - Spiritual Advisors, Counselors, local and regional Health & Human resource teams should work together to strengthen youth-elder relationships, record elders' stories (including use of traditional medicines) hold Elder's gatherings and provide interpretation of traditional ways. Court workers, Counselors, Chief and Councils, provincial and federal governments should be working together to draft legislation to make reporting of elder abuse mandatory; enact local legislation (by-law) to banish perpetrators of abuse in the community and establish an Elders' Help line, Communication, education and information-sharing should be done by advocacy groups, committed grassroots people and governments to educate Elders and community members alike on what constitutes Elder Abuse.

**Who will do the work?** Leadership needs to be demonstrated from all levels of government including Chief and Council, Health Canada for funding, Cities/Town Mayors and Councils and Provincial government. Conference participants cite time and again, the need for a coalition of Human service organizations and teams of every sector that provide services on and off reserve to work together to

address elder abuse. Some but not all of these services include on reserve local police and CHR's. Many off reserve Human Service organizations were cited including - Court Worker programs, urban social workers, front line workers, Friendship Centres, Health Centres and Hospital workers, RCMP, Native Political Territorial (Tribal Council) Organizations, CMHC, educators from all areas (schools), Colleges and universities, Manitoba First Nations Education Resource Centre, Advocacy groups and Parent councils, Social Workers and Counselors, Writers and publishers, Drivers for transportation, Spiritual advisors, Interpreters and sharing/healing circles. Community and family members, elders, Youth, committed grassroots people, individuals, couples, family units; siblings of the entire community may also be called upon to assist.

**What resources or supports are available in your region that would resolve or address the matter?** Conference participants report a number of resources and services are available to address this matter but many more resources are needed. Available resources include natural environment, community crisis line, health advisory committee run by elders, community health authorities (in B.C. they provide counseling now), nation-wide RCMP aboriginal committee, school boards, health authorities, Tribal councils, traditional healers, nutrition bingo, medical transportation for elders, elders to have their own bus, English translators for elders and Personal care homes.

Conference participants identified a number of resources as prominent needs to further address elder abuse. Funding to develop these areas include support and recognition for elders, health services, training and elders gatherings and playing a key role in planning and direct service delivery. Support and recognition for elders in urban areas from government and Chief and council is important to elders. Written pamphlets informing on issues discussed in the conference.

With regards to health, more personal care homes, healing and health centers, hearing aids/medical and special needs, need supports for the hearing-impaired like sign language, and for the visually impaired, awareness of crisis line (with translation services) in the community, Home visitors for "shut-in's" are all needed.

Conference participants also believe a counseling skills program designed for elders and culturally sensitive training for all workers in community for translators would be beneficial. Additionally, elder workshops and gathering in the community to discuss more of what we are doing now. Sharing circles raising self-awareness and reconnecting with our natural environment through camps, Traditional teachings and knowledge in all areas and language use.

Elders would appreciate playing a key role in short, medium and long-term planning to prioritize services based on their own needs to focus on what is needed to keep elders healthy and balanced with the physical and spiritual

aspects of their life. Being a part of direct service with offenders and educating non-aboriginal people is also important needs for the elders. Elders need to listen to our children and grandchildren and serve as positive role models.

**Timeline:** Participants considering the matter of elder abuse urge the measures noted be undertaken within an overall timeframe Starting May 2007 – and ongoing.

**Impact – How it should look?** As a result of implementing the suggested measures regarding Elder Abuse contained herein, the conference participants submit the following outcomes are likely to be realized: our Elders will enjoy the benefits occasioned by facilities, programs and services developed for their exclusive use and consumption. They will again, teach, share and have access to various forms, styles and applications of Traditional Knowledge as appropriate. And, finally, our Elders will feel happy, safe and respected both in and outside their communities.

### **Objective #3: Seniors – Challenges and Opportunities**

#### **a) Elder Support**

**Impact - how this looks like in our communities at present:** While some communities may not do anything to recognize their elders, other communities engage them in direct service delivery or have programs and services designed specifically for the elders. Loon River Cree Band, Alberta has an annual supper to recognize local elders. Health and Human Services and programs targeted to meet the needs of elders include an elders council, health clinics, home care, personal care homes, medical and like escorts for elders, lunch and bingo program, elders transportation, security for elders, home gardening and spring cleaning. Financial support provided to elders to attend gatherings, subsidized for household utilities, distribution wild meat and/or Christmas hampers to elders.

Elders also provide counseling and guidance in various programs and services including residential survivors group, alcohol and drug programs, parole services, child and family services, cultural programs, seasonal gatherings and elders teaching young people traditional skills.

**Risk:** For these self-same participants, the “risk” of elder support occurring as we understand it is high, both on-reserve and in urban areas.

**What, if anything, has already been done and by whom?** Increased security and increased parking in some town sites in Alberta, policing in First Nation communities but band constables need better training and ambulance services - first responders. Group homes, Home Care, elders and seniors transportation some that have meals on wheels and an elders residence with in-house clinic services are also available in some communities. Home Care may include male and female support workers but better training is needed. The Nisichawayasihk Cree Nation, Manitoba provides their elders a \$100 monthly subsidy.

**What else needs to happen to properly address this impact?** Increase elders’ involvement in decision-making through the establishment of an elders’ Council, have the youth advisory council working with elders. Band administration should be more accountable to elders and the community, and have an Elder on Chief and Council who reports to the Elders Council. Increase funding based [indexed to] on the inflation rate, increase in resources with better training and increase services to elders. A community needs assessment should be conducted on elders’ needs for the development of programs to support elders. Personal safety devices for elders are needed. They should be able to merely press a button when they need help in an emergency health situation or if they are in emotional distress. Participants also suggest that there be an improved sustainability of natural resources and a re-visitation of the treaty programs.

**Who will do the work?** Participants suggest people of patient and compassionate temperament be of support to elders. As part of a traditional way of life, it is customary to have mentoring and resourcing supports for young people via professionals and personal care givers [informed youth translates into elder support]. Educational support and resources including language instructors and universities administrators can work together with elders to endorse language courses. Dieticians and nutritionists and trades people; youth advisory committees, funded support services to young people and families; Band Administration and financial managers will also lend their expertise.

**What resources or supports are available in your region that would resolve or address the matter?** Traditional and natural resources are available in regions and these include fishing, hunting, trapping as well as human resources. Participants report available local veterans who can share their experiences within the community to emulate traditional warrior values. Participants assert that leaders need to speak up on the fulfillment of treaty entitlement, particularly on land claims.

Participants informed on financial support available to local elders from all three levels of government – Federal, Provincial and First Nation. Too, there is financial support from casino, gambling and oil revenues in certain communities and/or regions of Canada.

Participants also identified elder support flowing from natural resources exploration/exploitation in various communities/regions of the country such as: water resources; gold mining; hydro development; wind turbine to generate energy and in Gordon, Saskatchewan - wind turbines generate electricity. Logging; farming/ agriculture; diamonds and other mineral exploration were also cited.

Finally, participants suggested the following conventional resources in some communities/regions: tourist lodges, airplane pilots, and municipalities short and long-term land leases. Cost-free income tax returns have also been identified as a source of elder support in some regions of Canada.

**Timeline:** Attendees recommend the following time lines for the measures suggested herein should commence May 2007 and be on going.

Improved and easily accessible services with qualified and trained professionals designed to address the needs of elders for their safety and well-being. Equitable housing or aboriginal managed senior homes; education particularly training in modern technology such as computers; financial; health care; social and support services both on and of reserve should be evident.

Participants identified the need to have the role of elders defined, as their role is important in the restoration of our language(s) and traditional culture and in the governance structure; particularly in decision-making. A significant part of traditional restoration is to have everyone in the community speaking their own language. As part of the governance structure, every board in the community should have an elder with a voting right. Education funding should be safeguarded so that Chief and Council do not drain school funds. As part of tradition and governance, the family structure with the traditional family values and spirituality needs to be re-established and the Ogichida [Warriors Society] oversees the community.

Finally, participants envision elders babysitting on their own terms, communication between the elders and youth as established and maintained so that the next generation is better informed on the impacts of residential school on them as the young people; a program is designed and established to address this need. The young people visiting seniors and elders in home care facilities and senior home.

## **Objective #3: Seniors – Challenges and Opportunities**

### **a) Overcrowded Housing**

**Impact - how this looks like in our communities at present:** Housing, and indeed household appliances, in First Nations communities remains substandard and wretched compromising occupants' [and community as a whole] health and safety. Mould, mildew and mice infestation are commonplace and with poor road access to homes, increased risk to loss of life and property ensues; this is further compromised with the loss of basic utilities. Given the location of reserve housing, floods and fire are imminent threats with home-security the exception to the norm. Participants from British Columbia and Manitoba note a dire lack of facilities for seniors and the disabled in their communities.

No home-safety and fire inspections; housing in disrepair- often caused by poor workmanship at the outset of construction - are linked to no or limited qualified journeyman, managers and administration. These factors are exacerbated by vandalism.

Other complicating factors specific to the elderly population, as identified by the session participants, include elders having no life of their own, and having to share their money; elders, as grandparents, who have to look after children or who have to cook for everyone - can be regarded as elder abuse. Also, participants note that elders lose community support when moving to other communities as evidenced in elders moving from northern communities to an urban setting(s) reporting feelings of isolation.

**Risk** For these self same participants, the risk of overcrowded housing occurring, as we understand it is high.

**What, if anything, has already been done and by whom?** Participants report some Canadian First Nation communities have undertaken the following initiatives: the establishment of town sites; construction of multiplex units (6-7-8 plex units). In B.C., home renovation/repair workshops are offered to residents while Saskatchewan offers trades training. In Alberta, the Siksika First Nation is speaking with leaders and the Enoch Cree Nation constructed a 108 Apartment building block as temporary housing. Others report such measures as exploring fire options and finding a good carpenter.

Participants also report senior and nursing homes are offered on reserve. In the Hollow Water First Nation, Manitoba - CMHC houses have been built to accommodate low-income seniors.

**What else needs to happen to properly address this impact?** Session participants submit community needs assessments and housing meetings would result in plans and program improvements aimed at addressing both overcrowded housing and improvements to the water and sewer system. Too, participants suggest elder-specific measures to address their housing needs and concerns. These measures would include an elders advocate/support group; shelters for elders and “meals on wheels. Television, radio and print media coverage is identified as a means to educate the public about First Nation living conditions on-reserves.

Training is also a significant action to address overcrowded housing in our First Nation communities. Training our own people entails assertive training, training youth and community members on carpentry, leadership and community living. Acquiring outside expertise from such entities as the Habitat for Humanity has also been identified. Members suggest we encourage our people to build their own homes through such measures as “building bees.” Obtaining individual ownership of housing on reserve, will help to ensure people are held accountable for changes to their own houses, which may result in a limit of how many houses a person receives.

Finally, session participants propose revisiting the fundamental principles of the treaties; abolishing or changing the Indian Act and establishing our own bylaws on reserve will aid in responding to overcrowded housing both on and off-reserve.

**Who will do the work?** At the federal and regional level, the federal government, Indian and Northern Affairs, and has the responsibility to address overcrowding and improvements to the water and sewer system. At the community level, community members and people have the responsibility to build their own homes and do repairs to their own homes. Our own carpenters, housing inspectors and trade workers are also responsible. Other suggested resources to solicit support to address overcrowded housing is the department of Veterans Affairs, a co-op of different territories, youth programs and summer student employment, Clergy, charities (Voluntary Sector), can take on the responsibility to undertake renovations and building houses.

**What resources or supports are available in your region that would resolve or address the matter?** At the community level resources include Band Council, Housing committee, Housing Coordinator, Band members, , Housing Inspectors, Community health representatives (CHRs), Band-owned resources, Natural resources, and Tribal Councils. Financial institutions at the regional and federal level include Indian and Northern Affairs, Canada Housing and Mortgage Corporation, Banks and regional hydro facilities. Other sources of revenue for financial support include casinos, video lotto terminals and bingos and for Technical training institutions like those in Saskatchewan.

**Timeline:** Attendees suggest a number of different time lines to undertake the measures suggested herein. As of May 2007 and ongoing a community needs assessment and planning can be done. Major housing projects and renovations can be done when the money starts flowing.

**Impact – How it should look?** Communities achieved total independence and sharing of sustenance. People have a great source of pride of their reserve. Improved health standards and a nice place to live. People are happy, a respectful relationship of both elders and youth and hope for future generations. The quality of housing for elders has improved and elders have a longer life span. Communities are living in a peaceful environment with less violence, stress and feuds.

Elders have more gatherings with youth and sharing more of their knowledge and traditional teachings, including hunting and fishing. Youth are able to speak their native language. Communities have more celebrations of weddings; community activities and sporting events; etc.

## **Objective # 4: Upsides and Downsides (Positive and Negative)**

### **a) Individual and Community Investments (Economic Development)**

**Impact and what this looks like.** The participants felt that this time of Indian Residential School is a time filled with mixed feelings of relief, excitement, chaos, gratitude, thankfulness, skepticism, trust or lack thereof, and concern for financial abuse. Participants are concerned for the potential of elder abuse, internal family conflict, jealousy, multiple addiction problems, alcohol and drug abuse, deaths and internal and external scam operations. Actions must be taken to set up individual financial planning and saving arrangements, investing for offspring and family members, ensuring First Nation health community programs are established to support people and have systems established within a First Nations. Most communities do not have banking services on reserve or near reserve.

**Risk:** These impacts and the suggested responses to the impacts results in high risk as people's livelihoods and family future planning is at stake.

**What, if anything, has already been done and by whom?** Participants reported that mini-banks, automated teller machines, cash link, loaning services, etc. are available in some communities. Participants also indicated that they have already ensured their monies will be protected in trust funds. Some communities have received services from healing projects that have addressed wills and financial planning. Some communities have provided resource people and Healing Foundation and First Nation organizations to give workshops and training in Indian Residential School awareness issues. As well, RCMP and local First Nation staff has assisted in this process. Banks have come to variety of First Nation's to prepare people for investing. In general people feel these activities should be undertaken for citizens and recipients, however, it is not happening in all communities. Risks include exploitation from financial institution, family members who get access to Indian Residential School financial information and business companies such as vehicle companies that will take advantage of people when setting vehicle purchases.

**What else needs to happen to properly address this impact?** Major themes derived from this question focus on the need for overall financial preparation and planning for people and communities; the availability of mental health support services and Indian Residential School awareness sessions. Workshops and/or information sessions need to happen in each community for Indian Residential School survivors and communities to help prepare people for influx of money. Participants would like to see training and workshops on preparation of wills and estates and to have financial administrators/advisors hired and or appointed. Training such is in business courses, financial planning, retirement, home buying and banking and loaning services. Participants would like to see these processes be guided by what the "people" want and/or needs. Participants

suggest Chief and Council ensure these services are available, perhaps INAC could deliver some workshops and/or the Healing Foundation can hire people to coordinate this area of service provision and delivery. Mental and health support services could be delivered by wellness workers and First Nation resource workers to help people deal and prepare for a multitude of emotional problems that could occur such as addictions, and substance abuse.

**Who will do the work?** Participants suggest community and/or service providers assist in program/service delivery including financial experts, particularly First Nation financial experts and First Nation lawyers. Participants' health and support workers available in the community including adult care workers to assist with paper work, social workers, health directors and appointed committees. In addition Human Resource Outreach personnel are available in some communities to assist. At the end of the day, each individual should strive to educate him/herself on how best to plan and utilize monies received from Indian Residential School settlement.

**What resources or supports are available in your region that would resolve or address the matter?** Responses from this question addressed the financial, mental health and social program areas. Participants felt Chief and Council, band staff, community leaders, NNDAP should take lead roles in planning for this Indian Residential School settlement. Most communities have these individuals in place. Other services and supports available in First Nation communities but not all communities include community wellness programs to assist with health issues, addictions, etc., Justice Committees to address criminal behaviors; financial trust groups; First Nation political organizations such as Assembly Of Manitoba Chiefs, Keewatin Tribal Council (and other Tribal Councils), MKIO because they have legal advisors and they can come into the communities at no cost.

**Timeline:** Community and Individual investment planning is seen to be started immediately as in May 2007 prior to Indian Residential School deadline. First Nation leadership should, therefore, listen to this citizen direction as an immediate pressure to be dealt with in the community.

**Impact – How it should look?** First Nation financial, investment institutions and systems would be in place for business ventures, employment and health and social support services, local economy and traditional land use. Participants foresaw First Nation financial systems set up that are easily accessible, Trust packages; community investments for ongoing business import and export; the establishment of local and national First Nation economies to generate employment through a variety of means such as financial institutions; tourism; organic farming and health centres. Monies generated from community business ventures to benefit social/health programs. A more self sufficient First Nation operated and governed community is sent to provide “hope” for the future and create protected First Nation institutions to benefit future generations.

## **Objective # 4: Upsides and Downsides (Positive and Negative)**

### **b) Financial Counseling and Education**

**Impact and what this looks like.** First Nation communities in general and isolated communities in particular, lack of support systems and/or community business arrangements with banks and credit unions. Furthermore, these communities report a lack of legal support, media outlets that are typically used for communication purposes. People would like to access these types of services in their communities and/or certainly close vicinity and easy accessibility to also assist with mobility impediments. Services to be provided in First Nation languages

**Risk:** Overall attendees felt that the risk of financial counseling and education occurring is seen as both low and high.

**What if anything, has already been done and by whom?** Minimal services are provided and actions done for First Nations and communities. Some financial/banking systems in place for cheque cashing are through the Northern Stores and casinos. Legal advice services are provided by the Community Lawyer (where available). Some communities are close to nearby town to access banking services; this is NOT available to most northern and isolated and rural communities.

It was identified that Onion Lake has its own Community Bank. Some attendees indicated that access is available to the First Nations Bank of Canada. The Beardy Reserve Model was identified as a community service. A First Nation has come to do workshops with some communities. A number of attendees indicated that “Nothing has been done to date” and that overall individual research needs and has been undertaken.

**What else needs to happen to properly address this impact?** Nine main areas were identified as areas already addressed for some First Nations and individuals. Financial education and training services are available through mediums such as workshops and First Nation services. Financial planning services; First Nation initiatives and governed institutions; Business arrangements done within the community; Legal services availability; Mental Health Services; Community generated income businesses and media communication opportunities.

Some communities are able to access banking services and/or financial services through some means such as Northern Stores and/or casino cheque cashing services; Legal services have been/are available through Community lawyers; Community Committee structures have been set up through First Nation Economic and finance depts. Off reserve support services are available in some areas for elders to assist with finances. Banking institutions and Public Trustees

have visited many communities to provide education and awareness and planning arrangements with some. Some First Nation communities have appropriate support services available towards assisting those who require financial spending education to deter from reckless spending, help people with depression problems, suicide thoughts and addictions.

**Who will do the work?** Nine main structures were identified, they are: Residential school designated staff both community, regional and national driven entities; First Nation Chief and Council; First Nation Health staff; Federal and Provincial government officials such as MLA's and MP's; Finance experts; PTO's and Tribal Councils and other community business services such as Band managers, First Nation financially trained recruits and Northern Stores. In addition individual responsibility was highlighted.

**What resources or supports are available in your region that would resolve or address the matter?** Six main support systems were identified in this session, they are grouped into the following: Community Workers (financial advisors, family support workers, health workers, teachers, social development officers); Band Office Workers (band managers, accountants and bookkeepers); pto's (Assembly of Manitoba Chiefs, First Nation, etc.); Community traditional business people, leaders and workers (hunters, fishermen, gatherers, trappers, entrepreneurs); native communication/media outlets such as APTN and Newspapers and Law Enforcement departments such as local police and RCMP.

**Timeline:** Overall attendees agreed that financial counseling and education services require immediate attention and should be ongoing. (May 2007)

**Impact – How it should look?** Five main areas were identified by the session recipients. Well structured and confidential community finance systems; Customer and Citizen security and well-being (reassurance and alleviation of stress) ; First Nation “friendly” training/education and finance systems in place (language, financial terminology); Community driven entities that ensure resources stay within community such as fees; support for community infrastructure, recreational activities, investments for future community growth. Attendees raised community/individual pride and ownership as an overall result.

## **Objective # 4: Upsides and Downsides (Positive and Negative)**

### **c) Lack of Banking Facilities in Remote Communities**

**Impact and what this looks like.** Inaccessibility to banking business and transportation (no banks on reserve); costly financial impacts as a result of high interest and surcharges; improper pre-arrangements and/or poor planning for financial business such as improper identification, no bank account to begin with, lack of knowledge or money value and misleading banking information; Lack of banking knowledge therefore need second party assistance; First Nation citizen/client stress as a result of being overwhelmed, fear and hesitancy due to exploitation from both businesses and family, family abuse (physical, mental and financial), robbery (gangs on reserve), racism from mainstream banking and financial institutions; Mobility problems particularly due to isolation, disability, health reasons.

**Risk:** All participants agree the issue of lack of banking in remote communities deserved high risk value.

**What, if anything, has already been done and by whom?** Attendees of this session report that the following individuals and/or entities have already undertaken the following measures to address the remote banking issue. Generally respondents identified a variety of financial transaction methods currently available to many communities. Services from the First Nations Bank are available. Many northern communities access the services of the Northern Store to cash cheques, this however, can pose a problem if they are obligated to deposit cheque into Northern Store personal account and only access funds when shopping at the Northern Store. Some Band offices provide loans to Band residents. Post office outlets for First Nation's provide extra office and banking space for customers. Canadian banks have utilized mobile banking services through trips to the communities and setting up money transfer arrangements. Some communities have ATMS, such as Long Plain First Nation. First Nation citizens utilize tele-banking and internet banking services; however, this can be intimidating electronic features to many First Nation citizens especially the elderly and people who have language barriers.

**What else needs to happen to properly address this Impact?** Financial awareness is required to assist individuals with banking arrangements, investments, opening accounts and management of funds. This can be dealt through education of public banking, local workshops, and services in urban settings for people from the north such as the Friendship Centre, Aboriginal media dedicated to public education and communication awareness and scam awareness training and education. Participants felt that a variety of Support Services must be available for First Nation citizens in the areas of money management, mental support for alleviation of mental stress and depression problems. Third area is the need for transportation services for northern remote

citizens to access banking services. It was suggested that this could be done through coordination of car pooling in communities that can do this mode of transportation.

**Who will do the work?** It was suggested that community leaders such as Chief and Council, lawyers, regional First Nation Political Territorial Organizations (tribal councils) and Canadian Executive Services partake in ensuring northern remote communities address this impact. As well, other Band programs such as human resource outreach workers, tribal councils, social workers, banking representatives and satellite banking arrangements assist First Nation citizens with addressing these impacts.

**What resources or supports are available in your region that would resolve or address the matter?** Three main community program/service areas were identified that already exist and could/would address the matter. Social program areas such as the community health centre, social development, human resource development and child and family service programs and specialists may or do exist to assist people with their Indian Residential School business. A variety of financial services (though limited) do or may exist such as ATMs, northern stores, general stores, post offices, community business and telephone and internet banking only if satellite and computer availability is available to trained for citizen. Attendees indicated that all communities have a Chief and Council that could and should help Political Territorial Organizations and Tribal Councils exist to help.

**Timelines:** All attendees agreed that this area requires immediate attention and action (May 2007) some also suggested that this area should have been dealt with recently.

**Impact – How it should look?** A variety of financial/banking systems set up for northern remote First Nation communities and citizens are established and ready for perusal from clients through telephone and internet banking, availability of ATMS on reserve, First Nation Banking Assistance and Bank accounts for elders established. People would have access to a number of support services and financial training activities such as financial workshops; insurance protection, Trustee services and wireless banking services. These services would ensure privacy is ensured, alleviation of stress due to fraud, financial abuse, robberies and citizens exercising and having more control of their private finances. These measures could ensure people feel more secure and independent in managing their own finances and future planning.

## **Objective # 5: Safeguarding Improved Living Standards**

### **a) Improved Quality of Life**

**Impact and how this looks like in our communities:** First Nation communities experience many socio-economic determinants that impact the quality of life including a lack of housing, lack education funding, and a high rate of unemployment, social assistance, addictions, crime and violence. Many people lack spiritual and cultural identity and parenting skills. First Nation people are faced with prejudice and racism. There is no youth and elder connection and no respect for authority due to experience in residential schools. The existing justice system has to harmonize with Aboriginal culture and restorative justice to resolve, as our communities are small. The health system has a two-tiered system for those with plans and those who only have the First Nations and Inuit Health Branch.

**Risk:** There is a high risk of the socio-economic determinants impacting the quality of life in First Nation communities, as it remains a high risk.

**What, if anything, has been done?** The Indian Residential School Survivors national conference participants have already undertaken the following measures to move towards an improved quality of life: Conference, workshops, community gatherings and recreation programs including cultural camps, traditional games, heritages days which are part of community history and offering community programming to teach teachers, children and people for a one – two weeks on the land or in the bush about our culture; and networking, counseling, youth development initiatives and curfew bylaws.

**What else needs to happen to properly address this impact?** Chief and Council, community resources, front line workers, managers as aboriginal people need to work together with more commitment and support to undertake the measures to improve quality life such as

- i. Improve all lines of communication at all levels – which will help in responding to issues facing communities through community meetings and more involvement from elders and parents to inform elders and family members that there are services available to aid in daily living.
- ii. Develop partnerships with non-native agencies and possibly churches to look beyond usual boundaries – for initiatives that are working, to address the lack of resources and materials, to ensure proper standards, to educate the non-native society about issues facing Aboriginal communities and to get more policing.
- iii. Use of technology to teach language, culture and the history of your First Nation. Alkali Lake Model and its application to other communities that

require follow-up for open wound dressing from using this model. Healing camps on site-need schools and language camp where ceremonies and language are used daily.

The provincial and federal government also need to undertake measures to improve quality life of First Nations by improving lines of communication at all levels – which will help in responding to issues facing communities through participating in community meetings, informing elders and family members that there are services available to deal with daily living, to ensure proper standards and to provide more policing

**Who will do the work?** Chiefs and councils, managers, front line workers, elders, community resource workers in education, health, social services, the federal, provincial and municipal governments - all band members – were responsible for doing the work to improve the quality of life.

**Timeline:** Before monies start following and ongoing for the next seven generations.

**What resources or supports are available in your region that would resolve or address the matter?** First Nation community services include NNADAP, Justice, BFI/BHC, CHR's who provide services on reserve, and Education, Healing Centres, and RCMP for on and off reserve. Services in Urban Centers such as the Winnipeg Rupertsland Wechetowin Inc visits to transients to Winnipeg Hospitals and Advocacy for aboriginal people and the Winnipeg Micah House play are notable services off reserve. Resource people such as sweat lodges, residential school survivors coaches that are positive role models, artists teaching their art, youth and youth leadership programs, elders, grandparents, women as life givers and who are the back bone of the communities are significant resources to improve the quality of life.

**Impact – How it should look?** As a result of implementing the suggested measures regarding improved quality of life contained herein, the conference participants submit the following outcomes are likely to be realized. First Nations will have a more balanced lifestyle with strong family and cultural beliefs and values, respect for all types of spirituality and the connection to the language and land that will be passed on. First Nation governance that will be able to directly address issues affecting our communities and urban reserve based. First Nations will have their own justice system, research institutions, good economic development with the ability to have trade routes and businesses in Canada and people would be technologically advanced. First Nations will have job creation, education and be socializing people. They will have a purpose in life, goals and direction, more choices to live where they want and would be educating the rest of the world.

## **Objective # 5: Safeguarding Improved Living Standards**

### **B) Investing In Social, Education And Healing Initiatives**

**Impact and how this looks like in our communities:** First Nation communities have invested in social, education and healing initiatives through inter-sectoral meetings with health, education and Child and Family Service agencies working together and communicating. Some communities such as the Opaskwayak Cree Nation and Birdtail Sioux in Manitoba have a language immersion and generations forward program. Some have drug prevention “check stops” in and out of community to ensure no drugs are coming in. Traditional healers are a valuable resource in the communities.

Indian Residential School Settlement - no one taking the lead on Indian Residential School's dollars that's coming, survivors seem on their own or there is nothing specific in place. Residential School Survivors are not informed enough regarding process with respect to what is happening.

In general people don't think of future investment in family development, youth, men's capacity or homeless people. Parents have no parenting support skill development and youth have a suicide rate. Men don't open up and need to return to traditional roles and identity. First Nation communities are in a crisis oriented and very reactive as opposed to being proactive. They wait till things get bad first so communities are in limbo, putting out fires. Homeless people and Urban Aboriginals are not receiving the support and have trouble accessing services.

**Risk:** For these self same participants, the risk of Investing in social, education and healing initiatives occurring remains uncertain.

**What, if anything, has already been done and by whom?** First Nation language(s) and the Elders knowledge of history and traditions have been incorporated into some First Nation's education curriculum. Aboriginal Healing Foundation financial support for community programming and availability of healers sponsored by Health Canada

**What else needs to happen to properly address this impact?** A common theme was solid preparation before the monies arrive including ensuring survivors take care of their needs first, utilize ceremonial preparation to guide the survivors, seek out financial and investment information and to consider a foundation utilizing collective investments. Monies from a pooled source could ensure specific community development and governing structures for healing activities.

Healing initiatives, traditional teachings and ensuring more trained staff in these areas was recommended. Community collaboration is seen as key to ensure success of new and proposed programs and services. Support is also required from the regional and political leaders to be aware of the issues but not to be directly involved in programs and services.

Support will also be required for off reserve survivors and outreach was identified as an issue. The utilization of local media was presented as a source of outreach as well as to share good news stories of survivors and their monies.

**Who will do the work?** Support from leadership was identified to assist with the creation of personnel and resources. Community resources included: health, education, child and family, band personnel, human resources, off reserve members and the survivors themselves. Collectively the community could work on education, training, healing and the development of resource materials.

External resources identified included banks to provide presentations on finances, Indian Residential School Resource staff and the federal government for future financial resources.

**What resources or supports are available in your region that would resolve or address the matter?** Attendees reported that there are existing resources and supports available in their respective communities and/or regions. The goal is to ensure the minimization of inter-generational impacts in the future. Education is required in the school system and should be taught by Indian Residential School Survivors. Community resource workers should address the delivery of their programs and services accordingly to ensure the goal is met. Utilization of elders and healers was seen as essential.

External resources included Health Canada, Aboriginal Healing Foundation, Justice and Corrections, Commemoration Fund, Truth and Reconciliation Fund and the National Aboriginal Youth Suicide Prevention Strategy.

**Timeline:** Attendees recommend that all proposed initiatives begin in May/June 2007 and longer term projects such as scholarships and personnel to administer programs seek out funding options as soon as possible.

**Impact – How it should look?** As a result of the implementation of the suggested measures, strong communities can be realized through sovereignty and authority over our lives. A long term, proactive community action approach is required to invest in the culture, socio-economic, education, health and well being of our people and future generations. Investment in own revenue base and creation of employment will result in higher self esteem, confidence and reverse the negative images of our Nations.

## **Objective # 5: Safeguarding Improved Living Standards**

### **c) Overloading In Social, Education And Healing Initiatives**

**Impact and how this looks like in our communities:** The overloading of local health and social services has resulted in negative impacts to the First Nation communities. Impacts include lack of funding for essential services, lack of qualified people, and lack of infrastructure. Socio-economic impacts include alcohol and drug abuse, gambling, family fighting, neglect and abuse, loss of identity and self-esteem, fraud and elder abuse.

**Risk:** For these self same participants, the risk of overloading in social, education and healing initiatives occurring remains very high.

**What, if anything, has already been done and by whom?** This conference was perceived as a good step in ensuring that those Survivors who were able to attend have received essential information. In some First Nations local resources have met to address issues that may arise with the distribution of Indian Residential School settlements. Staff increased their skills in suicide intervention, critical incident debriefing, and counseling. Some regions have created positions to ensure that information is relayed to communities through on-site visits. As well the RCMP has indicated they will provide information on theft and fraud to interested communities.

**What else needs to happen to properly address this impact?** The group identified the need for effective teamwork and networking with other regions and within their communities to reduce work overload of local and health services. Additional funding is required to ensure the required number of resource people. The group recommended incorporation of both western and traditional methods for healing and wellness of the community, family and individuals. Continuity, communication and sharing of information are important to ensure those that cannot attend conferences receive important information.

**Who will do the work?** The community as a whole is required to determine a plan for the future. Utilization of leadership, local resources, and front line workers should determine what skills can be found within the community and also identify gaps in programs and services. Funding is required to ensure there are adequate human resources to meet the needs of the community and to prevent burn out from staff. A community made plan can build trust, community ownership for a concentrated goal of health and wellness.

**What resources or supports are available in your region that would resolve or address the matter?** Attendees reported that there are existing resources and supports available in their respective communities and/or regions. Local resources include various health programs, child and family, justice officials,

youth programs, Elders, education, economic development, women's associations, local media and local businesses.

External resources identified included Friendship Centres, Métis Association, urban programs and services, and academic/training programs.

**Timeline:** Attendees in this group identified a need to develop community plans with preventative measures prior to the IRS payments. The group stated a five month plan from May – August would enable communities to strategize and put an action plan together. Information should be sent to all First Nation people. Resources people should network devise a plan, strategize, and identify time frames, required dollars and goals. People would be assigned tasks for each initiative.

An evaluation of this process should be ongoing as IRS payments are received to determine if planning was effective and goals were achieved.

**Impact – How it should look?** As a result of the implementation of the suggested measures, First Nations should have effective communication, positive decision making, dedicated resource people, economic development plans/investment, culturally relevant healing and wellness programs and effective resource networking.

Leadership would have achieved more funding to build needed infrastructure, programs and services, human resources, training and education and a plan to ensure money stays in the community.