UAKN | RCAU
Urban Aboriginal Knowledge Network | Réseau de connaissances des Autochtones en milieu urbain
Prairie Research Centre

Final Report

The Urban Aboriginal Service Delivery Landscape: Themes, Trends, Gaps and Prospects

UAKN Prairie Regional Research Centre

Authors and Affiliations: Isobel M. Findlay, Jania Chilima, Tamara Chambers-Richards, Vincent Bruni-Bossio, Dana Carrière, and William Rowluck, Community-University Institute for Social Research, University of Saskatchewan

ABSTRACT

In the context of an increasingly urbanized and mobile population of Aboriginal people in Canada, an "invisible infrastructure" of urban Aboriginal service delivery organizations has emerged to meet identified needs in such sectors as social services, language and culture, economic development, employment, education, and health. Yet Aboriginal people face gaps and lags in service delivery because of a range of systemic and other factors related to the history of colonization and ongoing marginalization. This research project, the Saskatchewan portion of phase two of a larger Urban Aboriginal Knowledge Network national study, examines this organizational infrastructure to identify gaps or areas requiring attention or development.

The first phase developed a national inventory of urban Aboriginal organizations and examined how those organizations facilitated participation in the Canadian economy. This second phase of regional projects led by UAKN research centres was guided by these themes:

- Improving urban Aboriginal economic participation
- Improving services in underserviced areas
- Facilitating improved relationships between urban Aboriginal organizations, non-Aboriginal organizations, and First Nations, Métis, Inuit organizations

To support consistency and comparability across regions, the research study is guided by this standardized set of questions:

- What services are being provided by urban Aboriginal organizations?
- What services are being provided by which urban Aboriginal service organizations? Who are the target service population? Are there gaps in services or target groups?
- Which of these services enhance economic participation of urban Aboriginal people? How?
- What are three priority areas for service delivery? How were these priorities determined? How are these priorities met?
- What are the best practices/lessons learned on how services are designed and delivered that have emerged over the last decade?
- What do these organizations perceive as being facilitating factors, and threats, to their sustainability?

Based on a literature review and 35 interviews with urban Aboriginal service delivery organizations across all treaty territories and 11 of 13 health regions in Saskatchewan, this report discusses findings on opportunities and challenges associated with service delivery to urban Aboriginal peoples in Saskatchewan, many of which confirm themes, trends, and challenges observed elsewhere in Canada. The interviewed organizations face unusual burdens of not only meeting diverse Aboriginal community needs but also navigating cultural expectations of their own communities and mainstream society **and,** in the absence of federal and provincial government leadership, educating newcomers and mainstream Canadians on Aboriginal and treaty rights. In fulfilling these tasks, organizations can depend on the passion and commitment of staff, boards, chief and council, and other leadership to Aboriginal control of services, a

proven facilitator of urban Aboriginal economic participation, to education and cultural transfer of knowledge for sustainability and social medicine.

Quality of life improvement emerged as an overarching theme related to everything from food security to meeting the physical, emotional, spiritual, and intellectual needs of community members. At the organizational level this is expresses by interrelated goals of equity in education, economics, and health with each organization focusing on a different balance. Although cultural services were viewed as essential to quality of life, too often they were sacrificed to reductive views of value. Common sense views of the economic bottom line, or employment numbers, as the primary and even only indicator of how communities are faring, however well intentioned, violate traditional principles of community organization and self-sustainment. Culture is no less necessary than food on the table and opportunity at hand.

Services that enhance economic participation of urban Aboriginal people include business development, Aboriginal-controlled organizations, sports and culture, as well as education and skills training to reduce dependency, build on capacities, and help Aboriginal youth understand who they are so they can effectively participate in the workforce.

To reach their goals, urban Aboriginal organizations continue to support the journey toward self-determination, assessing and addressing needs, while focusing on the long term, understanding their place in the story of self-determination and celebrating their commitment and ability to support future generations.

While there are limited funding opportunities from the governments and funding agencies to institute services to meet levels of quality of life enjoyed by non-Aboriginal peoples, there are opportunities for re-imagining and reorienting the many and complex urban Aboriginal organizations that offer services to an ever-growing population. The report discusses issues of access, ongoing barriers, and initiatives to give urban Aboriginal people voice and choice, visibility and authority, to draw on networks and partnerships and to stretch dollars to serve their own communities, to close educational and employment gaps, to include all treaty people, and to build bridges across communities to the benefit of all Canadians.

INTRODUCTION

Since the end of World War II, Aboriginal people in Canada have become increasingly urbanized while maintaining links with rural and reserve settings. An "invisible infrastructure" of urban Aboriginal service delivery organizations has emerged in response to the identified needs of this urban population (Newhouse, 2004) extending to such sectors as social services, language and culture, economic development, education, art, and health. Yet Aboriginal people face many gaps and lags in service delivery because of a range of systemic and other factors related to the history of colonization and ongoing marginalization. This research project, the Saskatchewan portion of phase two of a larger Urban Aboriginal Knowledge Network national study, examines this organizational infrastructure and develops an inventory of organizations and their service areas in order to identify gaps or areas in need of additional attention or development.

The first phase developed a national inventory of urban Aboriginal organizations and examined how those organizations facilitated participation in the Canadian economy. The second phase of regional projects identified through discussions of the inventory by regional UAKN research centres was guided by these themes:

- Improving urban Aboriginal economic participation
- Improving services in underserviced areas
- Facilitating improved relationships between urban Aboriginal organizations, non-Aboriginal organizations, and First Nations, Métis, Inuit organizations

The research study is also guided by these questions:

- What services are being provided by urban Aboriginal organizations?
- What services are being provided by which urban Aboriginal service organizations? Who are the target service population? Are there gaps in services or target groups?
- Which of these services enhance economic participation of urban Aboriginal people? How?
- What are three priority areas for service delivery? How were these priorities determined? How are these priorities met?
- What are the best practices/lessons learned on how services are designed and delivered that have emerged over the last decade?
- What do these organizations perceive as being facilitating factors, and threats, to their sustainability?

Building on this research base, this report reviews the literature, elaborates our methods, and discusses findings, especially themes and trends associated with Aboriginal service delivery organizations in Saskatchewan, exploring disparities in services delivered to urban Aboriginal peoples, how they may have been minimized, and the extent to which opportunities have been realized by Aboriginal service organizations and their partners. By way of conclusion, we consider prospects for service delivery organizations in Saskatchewan.

LITERATURE REVIEW

I. The Urban Aboriginal Service Delivery Landscape: Background

Increasingly Aboriginal people (defined constitutionally as First Nations, Métis, and Inuit peoples) live off reserve (DeVerteuil & Wilson, 2010; Peters, 2005, 2011; Prairie Wild Consulting, 2014) in a movement that was recognized as early as the end of World War II when Aboriginal-identifying peoples started to form communities in urban areas (Newhouse, 2003; Peters, 2011). Nationwide, as of 2011, there were 1.17 million Aboriginal people, of which 54% lived off reserve (Snyder & Wilson, 2012). A similar trend is observed in Saskatchewan whereby at the current time, 15.6% of the total population identify as Aboriginal peoples and increasingly live in the cities and urban settings (Prairie Wild Consulting, 2014).

An additional and unique situation characterizes the majority of the people who identify as Aboriginal who live in urban settings: the high level of flux and movement between reserve and off reserve (rural and urban), which makes them highly mobile and results in high rates of population change between locales (Norris & Clatworthy, 2003; Young, 2011). For instance, between 1991 and 2001 the percentage increases of urban Aboriginal peoples in Saskatoon and Regina were 71.6% and 43.3% respectively (Peters, 2005). By 2011, 9.8% (or 21,335) of the population of Saskatoon reported an Aboriginal identity (of whom 50.1% are First Nation, 47.3% are Métis, 0.4% are Inuit, and 2.3% report multiple or other Aboriginal identities [Statistics Canada, 2011a]). In Regina, 9.5% (or 19,785) of the population reported an Aboriginal identity, of whom 56.5% were First Nation, 41.6% Métis, and 1.8% reported multiple or other Aboriginal identities (Statistics Canada, 2011b). This mobility does not readily fit traditional migration models used to determine population needs of social and other service delivery (DeVerteuil & Wilson, 2010; Snyder & Wilson, 2012).

Not only is this the fastest increasing urban population in Canada and the most mobile, but it is also the youngest population in Canada and Saskatchewan equally (Hawkes, 2005; Prairie Wild Consulting, 2014; Young 2011) with further implications for service delivery. For example, in Saskatoon, the median age of urban Aboriginal population is 29 years old—specifically 20 years of age for First Nations and 28 years of age for Métis (Prairie Wild Consulting, 2014). Further, it is estimated that by 2016 of all the Saskatchewan children ready to enter Kindergarten, 45% will be of Aboriginal ancestry (Prairie Wild Consulting, 2014). The two factors—mobility and young population segment—mean that there is a need to ensure that Aboriginal peoples are provided with appropriate services of the same quality as those provided to all viable populations in urban settings, so that they can meet their full potential in all spheres of life—social, economic, and health—and prosper in the greater Canadian society.

Despite such realities, however, urban Aboriginal-identifying peoples still face greater gaps in responsive services than non-Aboriginal peoples (DeVerteuil & Wilson, 2010; Newhouse, 2010; Newhouse & Peters, 2003; Prairie Wild Consulting, 2014; Senese & Wilson, 2013; Snyder & Wilson, 2012; UAKN, 2012). Historically, the lag in services was ascribed to cultural myths understood as determinist in research that purported to show that people of Aboriginal descent did not use the necessary services because of a cultural orientation different from that of non-Aboriginal peoples within urban settings (Peters, 2011; UAKN, 2012). Such a biased

construction was demystified by Waldram (1990) in a study of the use of physicians in the downtown Westside core neighbourhood of Saskatoon (a neighbourhood poorer in socio-economic and health terms in comparison with the rest of the city) that showed that poor use of such services was due to socio-economic factors rather than culture. In other words, this is an example of what Newhouse identified as the "study of lack" (Newhouse. FirtzMaurice, McGuire-Adams, & Jette, 2012, p. xi) so pervasive in the literature until the late 1980s, which exacerbated the marginalization of Aboriginal peoples.

What is now recognized as the overarching barrier to meeting the needs of urban Aboriginal-identifying peoples, ever since Waldram (1990)—confirmed by succeeding studies (Environics Institute, 2010; Norris & Clatworthy, 2003; Walker 2003, 2008)—is that service delivery gaps exist due to a number of factors, most systemic in nature, varying only by degrees among various provinces and their municipalities (Hanselmann, 2001, 2002; Peters, 2011; UAKN, 2012) within the "jurisdictional maze" in Canada (Andersen & Strachan, 2011; Graham & Peters, 2002). These are (i) discrimination, segregation, and racism directed at Aboriginal urban populations originating from the wider colonization, containment, and marginalization of Indigenous peoples in most settler societies that dispossessed people of traditional territories and bound benefits to reserve status (Findlay et al., 2014; Newhouse & Peters, 2003; UAKN, 2012); (ii) lack of accurate statistics because of high mobility and census definitions of urban metropolis areas that produce misinformed needs assessments (Albert, 2011; Norris & Clatworthy, 2003); and (iii) failure of municipalities and provinces to create space for urban Aboriginal people, therefore forcing them to be 'accommodated' in non-Aboriginal centres which lack the policies and programs to meet their social and cultural needs (DeVerteuil & Wilson, 2010).

Against this background, there developed what Newhouse (2003) termed an "invisible infrastructure" of Aboriginal organizations and institutions designed to fill the gaps in the delivery of necessary services, especially in the areas of education, health, economic development, and housing, for this growing urban population. Newhouse (2003) documented the existence of Aboriginal initiatives and organizations within urban settings that aimed to provide a sense of cohesion and community, filling a need to participate in creating shared cultural values, and to fill the void of self-governance. This "invisible infrastructure" took the form of cultural clubs and friendship centres that began to mushroom as early as the 1950s in many urban centres and increasingly contributed to urban Aboriginal quality of life (Newhouse, 2003). Over time, these organizations matured in form and mandate and began to offer a variety of services and programs in most urban locales including those in Saskatchewan (Peters, 1992, 2011).

The importance of such organizations was exemplified in the Environics Institute's (2010) extensive study, *Urban Aboriginal Peoples Study*, which gave a strong conclusion: "Aboriginal services and organizations clearly help Aboriginal peoples make significant choices about their cultural, economic and social affairs—and, for some, sustain a sense of collective identity in their city" (p. 58). What such organizations have created is visibility of the needs of urban Aboriginal peoples and impelled cities and municipalities to "see" and try to respond to those needs (Young, 2011). The Friendship Centre movement in Canada, for instance, has done much to bring culturally appropriate services and programs to urban Aboriginal populations (Graham & Mitchell, 2009; Mitchell & Bruhn, 2009; Newhouse, 2003, 2010; Newhouse, et al., 2012). Effective self-governance on a foundation of five success factors allowed these organizations to

fill the niche of specialized service providers for urban Aboriginal-identifying populations. These success factors include strong working relationship between Chair and Executive Director, continuity among board and staff, sound governance and management practices, inclusion of clientele in the organization's work, and scrupulous ethical practices (Graham & Mitchell, 2009). Mitchell & Bruhn (2009) confirm those principles of effective governance, stressing the cultural specificity of good governance and the particular challenges and opportunities of Aboriginal organizations navigating "an intercultural landscape" (p. 1) where they accommodate both the cultural needs of the community and mainstream cultural expectations, adopting and adapting practices and principles to ensure their cultural relevance and responsiveness to respect for the land and people, reciprocity, responsibility, and relationships.

II. Themes and Trends of Services and Organizations: Disparities and Shortcomings of Services to Urban Aboriginal-identifying Populations

According to Newhouse (2010), four kinds of urban Aboriginal organization emanate out of the indigenous philosophy on balance and wellness in life: "1. physical (health, employment, housing, business); 2. cultural and mental (education, language, powwow); 3. social and political (political representation, sports and recreation); and 4. spiritual and art (elders, church, theatre)" (p. 10). The emphasis in these organizations and their many partners is to ensure fitting services for end-users based on culturally appropriate ways respecting Aboriginal and treaty rights together with self-governance (Hanselmann, 2001, 2002; Newhouse 2003; Peters, 2011; Walker, 2008). Additionally, the *Kitaskinaw* study completed by Prairie Wild Consulting (2014) in collaboration with numerous service providers in Saskatoon and area, found that for service delivery organizations to be effective in urban settings of Saskatchewan, they should demonstrate the following qualities (in order of importance): culturally aware and sensitive, inviting, informative and resourceful, fair and respectful, empathetic and supportive, being Aboriginal (shared experiences and values), effective, accessible, knowledgeable and communicative, professional, sincere, involved and known in the Aboriginal community, varied and diverse, affordable, holistic, flexible, and visionary and expressing leadership.

Services are offered not only by Friendship Centres but also by a varied and complex set of Aboriginal organizations. For example, in Saskatchewan there are tribal councils such as the Saskatoon Tribal Council and the Federation of Saskatchewan Indian Nations (FSIN); service corporations such as the Central Urban Metis Federation Incorporated (CUMFI); formalized and accredited educational institutions such as the Gabriel Dumont Institute of Native Studies and Applied Research and The Saskatchewan Indian Institute of Technologies (SIIT); and also youth centres such as the White Buffalo Youth Lodge. Furthermore, some of these Aboriginal organizations such as the Friendship centres have managed to form responsive partnerships with numerous research institutes and with municipal and city service divisions, for the purpose of service delivery to urban Aboriginal-identifying peoples (Newhouse, 2010; Peters, 2011; Prairie Wild Consulting, 2014).

In its review of services to urban Aboriginal peoples, Prairie Wild Consulting (2014) focuses on Saskatoon and identifies services for children, youth, adults, and elders, for individuals, families, communities, and Tribal Nations. The services include those that are policy directed under the

mandatory programming of the Urban Aboriginal Strategy (UAS), given that Saskatoon meets the population threshold of 5% Aboriginal peoples and can thus receive funding to provide services under the UAS (Canada, 2002; Spence & Findlay, 2007). Other services such as those of Friendship Centres outside the mandate of UAS originate from a recognized needs base (met by government organizations where federal coordination is lacking). To a small extent rights-claims services exist within the cities (within the jurisdiction of the federal government) (Young, 2011).

In terms of service delivery, two trends emerge: the overlap and duplication of service delivery on the one hand, and the lag in services for urban Aboriginal peoples in comparison with the non-Aboriginal population on the other hand. Overlapping of service delivery among providers, a phenomenon observed at the national as well as local levels around Canada (Albert, 2011; Young, 2011) is visible in Saskatoon where they often cluster within the same vicinity (Prairie Wild Consulting, 2014). One explanation for this overlap is the small number of national level urban Aboriginal governance structures or umbrella associations that could exert pressure and persuade Ottawa of the need for diversified funding sources and autonomy of service types (Hanselmann, 2001, 2002; Young, 2011). When, for instance, UAS is triggered, only those services which are specified within its mandate can be offered even though other providers may also be available. The only umbrella association specific to urban Aboriginal issues is the National Association of Friendship Centres (Peters, 2011; Young, 2011). Therefore, it is difficult to coordinate the varied and complex network of service delivery organizations with the hope of minimizing inefficiencies and redundancy. Poor coordination, short-term programming based on project funding and competition among providers and between political and service organizations add to challenges, including burnout and high turnover, yet UAS has fostered new collaborative structures for shared interests (Andersen & Strachan, 2011; Young, 2011).

For instance, the Aboriginal Friendship Centres of Saskatchewan—Buffalo Narrows Friendship Centre (Metis Nation Land # 26), Kikinahk Friendship Centre (La Ronge), Newo Yotina Friendship Centre (Regina), Ile A La Crosse Friendship Centre, Battlefords Indian and Metis Friendship Centre, La Loche Friendship Centre, Qu' Appelle Valley Friendship Centre, North West Friendship Centre (Meadow Lake), Indian and Metis Friendship Centre of Prince Albert, Saskatoon Indian and Metis Friendship Centre and Yorkton Friendship Centre—offer services that cover most of the Newhouse (2010) four service categories, although not all services within each category. Still, it remains unclear how adequate is their capacity to meet the demand of those who need the services in large part because the funding is not targeted to specific programs in the 'slicing and dicing' of funds for needed services among many organization types (Hanselmann, 2001; Young, 2011).

A second explanation for service delivery overlap is jurisdictional in that the urban Aboriginal population is not always distinguished in terms of First Nations, Métis, and Inuit. Typically, there is little classification of which group receives which services, another systemic problem related to problematic data collection that does little for understanding of the segments/demographics of the population (Norris & Clatworthy, 2003). As outlined by Spence, Wingert, and White (2011), the lack of benchmarking of the demographic characteristic of urban Aboriginal peoples results in inadequate programming and servicing and the absence of indicators for monitoring progress in a given service type.

Well-documented lags in service delivery magnify the systemic marginalization of Aboriginal peoples that still exists in cities and urban settings (Peters, 2011; UAKN, 2012). On the one hand is the proliferation of the jurisdictional enigma at the federal level of government avoiding the responsibility for off-reserve Aboriginal people within the Canadian Nation (Abele & Graham, 2011; Young, 2011), which is still persistent in Saskatoon as observed in the difficulties in implementing the UAS itself (Spence & Findlay, 2007). On the other hand, the consequences of such a lag in the lower socio-economic well-being of urban Aboriginal-identifying populations are clear in quality of life indicators related to education, cultural and spiritual space, and Aboriginal rights, just to mention a few (Findlay et al., 2014; Hanselmann, 2001).

The Prairie Wild Consulting (2014) *Kitaskinaw* study, for example, lists the top five services according to the Aboriginal Life Promotion Framework's sixteen categories and medicine wheel teachings. It lists many programs and services— intellectual/educational, physical, economic/employment, cultural and spiritual, emotional/counselling—that serve the community well, while identifying others in need of improvement (elders, adults and individuals, political and nation, including voter engagement), especially when service deficiencies disproportionally impact young people. More needed to be done to increase Aboriginal employment by increasing organizational cultural competencies and to address housing needs with Aboriginal-led initiatives. Even though health was not listed, health and wellness services such as counselling (support, family, and career) and physical activities were addressed, and Aboriginal programming in health was suggested. In Regina Aboriginal peoples with disabilities (32% nationally and twice the national and provincial average for non-Aboriginal people) cannot access specialized services (Durst, South, & Bluechardt, 2006), whereas in Saskatoon, the urban Aboriginal-identifying populations with disabilities constitute 20% more than non-Aboriginal peoples, yet 55% (90% of whom had high school education or higher) indicated accessible and sufficient services for their needs (Prairie Wild Consulting, 2014).

In terms of housing and homelessness (Environics Institute, 2010; Patrick, 2014; UAKN, 2012), the situation in Saskatoon reflects long-term compounding issues related to federal cutbacks in the 1980s, whereby the two housing and homelessness programs—the Federal Urban Native Housing (UNH) program and the Rural and Native Housing (RNH) program—were terminated. By the 1990s, the Canadian Mortgage and Housing Corporation (1996) reported that more than one-third of Aboriginal peoples in Canada (compared with 18% of the non-Aboriginal population) lived in inadequate, unsuitable, or unaffordable housing. Indeed, urban Aboriginal peoples are the most poorly housed in Canada (Anderson, 2013; Myles & Picot, 2002; Patrick, 2014; Walker, 2008, 2003). This housing-related poverty results in further residential segregation, "economic spatial segregation" whereby low-income people concentrate in specific neighbourhoods (Myles & Picot, 2002); such "ghettoization" exacerbates impoverished living conditions and high unemployment rates (Canada, 2002) associated with housing instability (Newhouse & Peters, 2003). These challenges are reflected in Saskatoon's core neighbourhoods (Anderson, 2013; Garcea, 2004).

Cultural activities were named the second most important area requiring further services in Saskatoon (Prairie Wild Consulting, 2014). "Systems of belief, values, customs, and traditions that are transmitted from generation to generation through teachings, ecological knowledge and time-honoured land-based practices," culture includes "ceremonies, methods of hunting, fishing

and gathering foods, the gathering and use of traditional medicines, traditional diet, spiritual journeying, and traditional art forms such as drumming, dancing and singing" (McIvor, Napoleon, & Dickie (2009), p. 7)—all tied to one's identity. The *Kitaskinaw* study listed activities to be included in programming to unite the communities and pass on teachings and knowledge from one generation to the other: Pow wows, sweats, beading classes, singing, dancing, Full Moon ceremonies, feasts, round dances, and story-telling (Prairie Wild Consulting, 2014). Building cultural resilience was associated with improving services to elders, a rich resource in this regard (Prairie Wild Consulting, 2014).

In educational service delivery for urban Aboriginal population, challenges are related to lower level elementary education attainment and a well-recognized shortage of opportunities for post-secondary education (Hawkes, 2005; Parriag & Chaulk, 2011). As Richards (2008) argues, there is an even greater intergenerational divide for all urban Aboriginal-identifying population whereby the younger generation below age 45 are disproportionally failing to complete school; the Aboriginal/non-Aboriginal gaps at all education levels are still high in younger groups. Richards recommends Aboriginal-run schools that are independent of band councils. One reason that education services and achievement are at these levels is that needs and capacity assessments are too narrowly "mandate-oriented" within policy silos without engaging community members in a more comprehensive assessment of services and links between housing, health, education, safety, and social engagement (Anderson, 2013, p. 129). Within urban elementary education, for example, there is a lack of community schools that could teach culturally relevant curriculum as is the case with the schools on reserves (Hawkes, 2005). The problem is exacerbated by a shortage of and indeed the cost of qualified Aboriginal early childhood educators given the need to register such programs with the federal government in order to receive funding (Preston, Cottrell, Pelletier, & Pearce, 2012). Such research has added to understanding that school systems and curricula rather than Aboriginal students are the epicentre of the problems.

The largest post-secondary education attainment gap in the country for all Aboriginal peoples is found in Saskatchewan (Spence, Wingert, & White, 2011), a disheartening gap given that 55% of the current job market in Canada requires a level of post-secondary education (Spence, at al., 2011). There is an even greater disparity in the education level of Aboriginal males in Saskatchewan within the Friendship Centres catchment areas compared with those of other metropolises, with urban Aboriginal males less likely to have any educational certificate or diploma (Parriag & Chaulk, 2011; Richards, 2008) and therefore less likely to be represented in the relevant job market. This lag in post-secondary education has been related to limited funding for individuals to access post-secondary education, lack of educational preparation, and lower high school graduation (Parriag & Chaulk, 2011). In Saskatoon, many have pointed to fewer choices for post-secondary education and lack of information on how to proceed in identifying opportunities especially if higher learning institutions are outside the prospective students' urban locales (Anderson, 2013). Simultaneously, racism in higher learning institutions directed towards urban Aboriginal peoples has been associated with high drop-out rates (UAKN, 2012).

Youth programs lack specific definitions; however, they are listed as activities accessed by urban Aboriginal-identifying youth seeking support for personal, family, or community well-being (Prairie Wild Consulting, 2014). In Saskatoon, youths access these services at White Buffalo Youth Lodge, Saskatoon Tribal Council, at formal schools such as Oskayak, Saskatoon

Community Youth Arts Programming (SCYAP), and at centres such as the Saskatoon Indian and Métis Friendship Centre. The services were related to cultural activities—arts and ceremonies; sports–minor sports leagues, gym visits—employment and teen counselling services, all of which support determinants of well-being, including a sense of community belonging.

In sports literature, for instance, youth in particular have been shown to associate sports with community given that they see sports as a distal factor; that is, they see sports as a component of their communal well-being (McHugh, Coppola, Holt, & Anderson, 2015). Still, many factors hinder the successful participation of urban Aboriginal youth in sports activities: financial barriers, time constraints, and racism and discrimination that some experience in mainstream sport contexts (McHugh et al., 2015). Youth programming also emphasizes empowerment through services such as employment, counselling, and cultural activities since all these activities help build identity and resilience for the youth (Belanger & Walker, 2009; Crooks, Chiodo, & Thomas, 2009).

Physical activities encompass both formal sports activities and traditional activities such as dancing, hunting, and fishing, as explained by participants of a study by Smyth (2010) in Saskatoon, which looked at links among physical activities, body weight, and diets in urban Aboriginal youth. Smyth (2010) showed that barriers to physical activity for urban Aboriginal youth were income, location or residence, and transportation. Similarly, Kerpan & Humbert (2015) indicated that urban Aboriginal youth prefer traditional physical activities, but are unable to participate in activities of their choice because their location of residence acts as a barrier. Both these studies confirmed the *Kitaskinaw* finding that public transportation within Saskatoon needs to improve to meet the needs of the urban Aboriginal population (Prairie Wild Consulting, 2014). Sensitivity to the barriers facing this group when developing physical activity programming will be crucial in ensuring the use of the facilities and services.

III. Opportunities: Progress Towards Filling the Service Gaps

Despite the listed challenges in the five service areas mentioned above, there are many opportunities due largely to Aboriginal organizations delivering such services. These Aboriginal organizations in urban settings have been filling gaps, taking new responsibilities, and showing capabilities to deliver services (Peters, 2011; Todd, 2001). The successes and opportunities are worth mentioning in order to analyze further the existing gaps and possible prospects for the future. To improve service delivery that is responsive, creative, effective, and efficient, the interface between the urban municipalities and urban Aboriginal communities will have to be reimagined. This can be done by moving away from the 'pathological' view of these communities (Patrick, 2014) that entrenches the deficit model to seeing them as important and viable populations that will help keep Canada competitive and maintain it as a progressive nation with highly informed human resources. In other words, we need to move above and beyond the "study of lack" (Newhouse, et al., 2012) that tends to be 'pacifying' rather than inspiring. Aboriginal peoples want to live better lives for themselves and the community surrounding them (Newhouse, 2012, 2003) in housing, education, and youth programming and cultural activities, including physical activities.

First and foremost, following the extensive study of the *Bridges and Foundations* in Saskatoon (Anderson, 2013; Garcea, 2004; Patrick, 2014), organizations outside the federal government's authority for Aboriginal matters in Canada recognized the twin housing and homelessness problems and began to institute services. Analysis of core housing needs (Garcea, 2004; Kerwin, 2006) and success in housing programs reveals that younger, urban Aboriginal peoples have lower income and lower paying jobs. Hence varied programs were initiated, some of which receive funding from the federal government but are operated at arm's length, while others—both for profit and non-profit—have been started and have been enhanced by different Aboriginal organizations and their partners. The following organizations are involved in housing service delivery and a homelessness strategy: Métis Urban Housing Association of Saskatchewan, SaskNative Rentals Incorporated and Camponi Housing Corporation, Cress Housing Corporation (Saskatoon Tribal Council), The McLeod House, and The Central Urban Metis Federation Inc. (CUMFI) Infinity House, to mention a few. Some of their services include housing inventories, provision of affordable "rent adjusted to income" housing, temporary residences, transitional housing for men in addiction recovery, group/community homes management, assisted housing searches, rental properties, and women's and children's shelters.

The success of the initiatives is highly commendable as demonstrated by the quantity and mix of housing types operated and managed. These initiative are similar to what is taking place in Winnipeg, the city with the most urban Aboriginal peoples in Canada (AANDC, 2013). They are also an illustration of the desire of the Aboriginal organization and their partners to end homelessness in Saskatoon. For example, SaskNative and Camponi Housing Corporation manage 400 rental units of various sizes and family types (SaskNative, 2015); Cress Housing Corporation in partnership with Saskatchewan Housing Corporation, City of Saskatoon, Dakota Dunes Community Development Corporation, and First Nations Bank of Canada currently own and operate 90 units across Saskatoon (Saskatoon Tribal Council, 2015a); The McLeod House, a partnership between CUMFI and the Saskatoon Health Region – Mental Health & Addiction Service, owns and operates 16 units in the form of transitional housing for men in addictions recovery (Saskatoon Housing Initiative Partnership, 2015a); and The Infinity House provides supportive temporary housing facility for Aboriginal women and their children who are at risk of becoming homeless (Saskatoon Housing Initiative Partnership, 2015b). In addition, a Rapid re-Housing Team operates at The Saskatoon Indian and Métis Friendship Centre and the Friendship Inn and White Buffalo Youth Lodge hosts a Housing First for Families initiative (Jimmy & Findlay, 2015).

Education is a contributing factor for labour market success (Peters, 2011; Spence et al., 2011). As Kerwin (2006) argues, a large number of Aboriginal peoples will be entering the labour market in the next 10-15 years. This makes it imperative to have education achievement rates that will ensure access to diverse labour markets and not just lower paying jobs. Hence closing the education gap is of utmost importance for Saskatchewan to realize the economic opportunities of an Aboriginal educated workforce in general, and educated, urban Aboriginal peoples in particular. In his study modelling the economic outcomes of three education levels for Aboriginal peoples—high school diploma, completion of non-university post -secondary technical school, and a Bachelor degree or higher—Howe (2011) showed an individual economic benefit worth $16.2 billion and a net social benefit of $90 billion in 2011 dollar terms. Education attainment not only improves earning abilities but also reduces poverty, betters

employment opportunities, and increases fringe benefits such as extended health coverage that improve health outcomes. Similarly, education has been credited with better decision-making transforming both individual and social values (Oreopoulos & Salvanes, 2011).

One Aboriginal organization that is having rapid success in Saskatoon, Regina, La Loche, and Prince Albert is the Gabriel Dumont Institute of Native Studies and Applied Research (GDI), which has been providing technical programs and adult basic education (ABE) completion programs through its Dumont Technical Institute since its establishment in 1992 (DTI, 2013). It offers innovative and culturally appropriate education opportunities for a cross-section of Aboriginal students that include mature students with families, young individuals who could not complete high school and are thus upgrading, and those who are looking to change direction in their professional careers. In 2013-2014, of the 706 enrolled students, 251 completed ABE and 225 completed technical programs in health sciences, business, and trades for a completion rate of 71%. In 2012-2013, of the 711 students, 190 completed their ABE training and received General Diploma of Education and 255 completed various technical training including nursing which was started in Saskatoon in the previous year (DTI, 2012). The 2011-2012 success rate of entrants was 79%, representing 390 students who completed ABE and 316 who completed technical programs. High completion rates suggest the desire of students to compete in the labour market as well as the support and innovation of GDI (DTI, 2012, 2013, 2014).

One of the early First Nations-controlled post-secondary institutes in Canada, Saskatchewan Indian Institute of Technologies (SIIT)—the Saskatchewan Indian Community College until an act passed by FSIN in 1985 gave it its current name—has since 1976 been increasingly associated with student success in meeting career goals. Growing over the years to deliver programs on three campuses (Saskatoon, Prince Albert, and Regina) and eight career campuses across the province, SIIT provides applied skills training in a range of areas from adult basic education to aircraft maintenance engineering to business, information technology, community and health studies, professional development, and trades and industrial training. In 2000 the Province recognized SIIT as a fully accredited post-secondary institution. Working in partnership with industry and the Saskatchewan Indian Training Assessment Group (SITAG), SIIT provides strong training meeting the needs of communities and labour markets in an environment that promotes traditional ways. In July 2015, SIIT announced an initiative bringing career search tools to communities via two mobile job connections buses offering career fair and coaching opportunities to increase access for Aboriginal people (Glazebrook, 2015).

Also concerned to provide post-secondary education for both Indigenous and non-Indigenous students in "a culturally supportive environment" is First Nations University of Canada (FNUC) which was formerly the Saskatchewan Indian Federated College, 1976-2003 (FNUC, 2015). The FNUC vision is based on the collective wisdom, strength, spirituality, belief in the Great Circle of Life, and integration of "Elders, cultural symbols and the First Nations connectedness to the land":

> The university is a special place of learning where we recognize the spiritual power of knowledge and where knowledge is respected and promoted. In following the paths given to us by the Creator, the First Nations have a unique vision to contribute to higher education. With the diversity and scope of the First Nations degree programs, the university occupies a unique role in Canadian higher education. The university promotes

> a high quality of education, research and publication. . . . Rooted in their own traditions, our students will walk proudly and wisely today. (FNUC, 2015)

Its mission to "enhance the quality of life, and to preserve, protect and interpret the history, language, culture and artistic heritage of First Nations" is supported on three campuses: Regina, Saskatoon, and Prince Albert (FNUC, 2015). Enrolment continues to grow in an institution that provides a holistic learning environment that motivates students "to give back to their communities in profound and meaningful ways" (FNUC, 2014).

With one of the largest Aboriginal student populations in Canada—2541 in the 2014-2015 academic year (Zurevinski, 2015)—the University of Saskatchewan is committed to providing services and diminishing the educational achievement gap by initiating and maintaining specific programs such as the Native Law Centre, Indian Teacher Education Program (ITEP), and Saskatchewan Urban Native Teacher Education Program (SUNTEP) and integrated plans to meet student needs. The success of SUNTEP, for example, has been credited with diminishing the education achievement gap in Saskatchewan and improving the economic status of urban Aboriginal peoples who went on to complete high school because of SUNTEP teachers across the province (Howe, 2011). President Stoicheff's commitment to indigenizing the University was demonstrated in a University first: its Building Reconciliation conference in response to the Truth and Reconciliation Commission's calls to action (Kilkenny, 2015).

Culture filters through the lives of Aboriginal peoples in terms of traditional medicine, spirituality, traditional foods, traditional activities and language (McIvor et al., 2009). For urban Aboriginal peoples, culture is foundational to keeping their identity amidst new places and people and to quality of life (Findlay et al., 2014; Peters, 2011; UAKN, 2012). Newhouse and Peters (2003) have established the importance of services that allow urban Aboriginal peoples to maintain and explore their culture and see cultural activities as an asset for metropolises as culture increases diversity and compassion within these spaces. When exposed to such diverse ways of doing things, people from different backgrounds can have better understanding of the ways of living of Aboriginal peoples (McIvor et al., 2009). Yet others see Aboriginal cultures as supportive of sustainability within cities, as ethical tools to achieve sustainability (Cardinal, 2006) or even as social medicine for the healing process that fits well within the "therapeutic landscape concept" (DeVerteuil & Wilson, 2010). All in all, culture is part and parcel of the social fabric of all Aboriginal peoples.

In Saskatoon, Aboriginal organizations work hand in hand with their partners to ensure opportunities are provided for elders, adults, and youth to participate in cultural activities. Two institutions in the forefront in integrating cultural activities in the everyday lives of urban Aboriginal peoples are the Saskatoon Tribal Council (STC) and University of Saskatchewan (U of S). The STC and its 250 employees represent important cultural capital and provide social networking for all its seven (7) First Nations council members of Kinistin Saulteaux Nation, Mistawasis First Nation, Muskeg Lake Cree Nation, Muskoday First Nation, One Arrow First Nation, Whitecap Dakota First Nation, and Yellow Quill First Nation. These seven First Nations councils represent approximately 11,000 in the Saskatoon and Area, and cover three linguistic cultures of Cree, Saulteaux, and Dakota/Sioux (Saskatoon Tribal Council, 2015b). Among STC varied programming for children, youth, adult, and elders is the White Buffalo Youth Lodge

(McKay, 2005; Newhouse, 2010) offering Elder services (counseling, healing circles); traditional pipe ceremonies; smudging; feasts and round dances (STC, 2015b).

The University of Saskatchewan's institution-wide planning document, *Promise and Potential: The Third Integrated Plan 2012 to 2016*, formally ensures Aboriginal engagement—including perspectives on culture and community—is introduced in teaching and learning throughout the institution. It made specific commitments to increasing by 20 per cent "cultural awareness and understanding" and improving "intercultural competencies" (University of Saskatchewan, 2012, p.13). For example, among other academic activities, *Building Bridges Sharing Circles*, a partnership of the Aboriginal Students' Centre and the International Student and Study Abroad Centre, discusses Aboriginal cultural perspectives (University of Saskatchewan, 2014). Simultaneously, the university holds an annual graduation Pow wow that is attended by the wider community of Saskatoon (Sired, 2015).

Although the challenges facing urban Aboriginal peoples are well documented, closing the existing gaps requires innovative service delivery for urban Aboriginal-identifying populations, commitments to self-determination, including strong national representation and policy responsibilities (Cardinal, 2006; Walker, Moore, & Linklater, 2011; Young, 2011), reorientation of research to reframe issues and outcomes in health and other areas (Haworth-Brockman, Bent, & Havelock, 2009; Jeffrey, Abonyi, Labonte, & Duncan, 2006; Snyder & Wilson, 2013; Waldram, 1990), and reorientation of service delivery to address internal migratory phenomenon and diminish artificial funding and other boundaries (Peters, 2011).). A key solution is to ensure co-production of relevant policies rather than simply implementing policies that guide services (Walker, Moore, & Linklater, 2011; Young, 2011). The housing service sector also indicated that autonomous decision making should be entrusted to the local community organization to solve community-specific issues in issue-based and place-based policy design (Anderson, 2013).

It is against the background of this literature review that the current study aims to contribute to the research on and delivery of services for urban Aboriginal peoples in Saskatchewan.

METHODS

This study received U of S Behavioural Research Ethics Board (Beh-REB) exemption as an initial exploratory study (as per Article 6.l1 of the Tri-Council Policy Statement (TCPS): Ethical Conduct for Research Involving Humans, December 2014). Although the study received ethics exemption, it was conducted with due concern for ethical issues of consent, respect, equity, confidentiality, and privacy. Researchers introduced themselves as researchers from Community-University Institute for Social Research, University of Saskatchewan, and explained the purpose to identify gaps and/or areas that need attention and/or development in the urban Aboriginal service delivery sector in Saskatchewan—a research project funded by the Urban Aboriginal Knowledge Network (UAKN) Prairie Research Centre as part of a national project led by Professor David Newhouse and funded by the Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council of Canada.

Participants were informed that to protect confidentiality, the data would be presented in aggregate form so that it would not be possible to identify individuals. Direct quotes, opinions or expressions might be used but would be presented without revealing names unless participants agreed to be acknowledged in the report. The researchers would safeguard the confidentiality of responses to the best of their ability; however, that ability was limited by the small sample size of interviewees and the specific locations or experiences that might provide identification. Participants were asked to keep these limitations in mind when answering any questions they felt sensitive in nature. They were also asked to signal whether or not they wished their contributions to be acknowledged (with their name in the publication) or to remain confidential. While some were content to be named, others opted to remain confidential.

Participants also had opportunity to agree or not to have interviews recorded for transcription purposes only and were advised that they could request that the recorder be turned off at any time. After the interview and prior to the data being included in the final report, they had the opportunity to review the transcript if they chose and to add, alter, or delete information from the transcript as they saw fit (recordings to be destroyed once transcripts were approved).

Participation was voluntary and participants could answer only those questions with which they felt comfortable. They could withdraw from the research at any time; however, the data provided could only be removed from the research prior to the analysis stage where all data collected would be combined. Before the interview began, participants were asked if they gave consent and whether they wished to receive a summary of the final research report (the full report to be publicly available on the CUISR and UAKN Prairie Research Centre websites). To ensure consistency and comparability, the study used the Interview Question Guide developed by UAKN (Appendix A).

Selection of sites and interview subjects was finalized after reviewing existing surveys and databases, including *Kitaskinaw: An Environmental Scan of Programs and Services Serving Aboriginal People in Saskatoon 2013-2014*, the United Way of Saskatoon and Area's 211 Saskatchewan service delivery-sk.211.ca, online and offline literature searches.

Like the Manitoba part of the national study, the Saskatchewan study used Health Regions as the organizing principle for boundary and other definitions with the advantage of access to Statistics Canada community-level data (Appendix B). The study was also mindful of the treaty territory where interviews were conducted (Appendix C). Although we had anticipated between 34 and 45 interviews, a summer of northern fires and evacuations added stress to organizational infrastructure. As a result, interviews extended well beyond the summer and we were unable to reschedule those arranged for Athabasca Health Authority and Cypress Health Region.

We completed 35 interviews (in-person wherever possible but by telephone when distance and coordination of schedules required): 13 in Saskatoon (Saskatoon Health Region); four each in Regina (Regina Qu'Appelle) and Prince Albert (Prince Albert Parkland); two each in Meadow Lake, North Battleford (Prairie North), and Yorkton (Sunrise and Sun Country); one each in La Loche (Keewatin Yatthé), La Ronge and Southend (Mamawetan Churchill River), Cumberland House (Kelsey Trail), Lloyminster (Prairie North), Fort Qu'Appelle (Regina Qu'Appelle),

Creighton (Keewatin Yatthé), and Moose Jaw (Five Hills) covering all six treaty territories (2, 4, 5, 6, 8, and 10) and eleven of the thirteen health regions.

Upon collecting data the CUISR researchers were responsible for transcribing, inputting, analysing, and assimilating information. Data analysis was completed with the supervision of the principal investigators meeting weekly or as necessary to debrief and guide in an iterative process over the months. This process involved the use of data analysis tools such as NVIVO and SPSS software suites. The results and discussion are organized according to the objectives and the research themes set out in the interview instrument, beginning with quantitative data regarding participant position, organization, mission and mandate, geographic location, funding, population served, before exploring challenges and opportunities, gaps and synergies. Participant voices are woven throughout to enrich findings.

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

Q 1. **Organizational position**

A wide cross-section of urban Aboriginal service providers was interviewed. The organizational positions held by the respondents are highlighted in Figure 1 below. Directors, accounting for 60% of the respondents, were primarily executive directors (36%) responsible for organizational portfolios inclusive of, but not limited to, Social Development, Planning and Development, Languages, Operations, Aboriginal Relations, and Training and Employment Services.

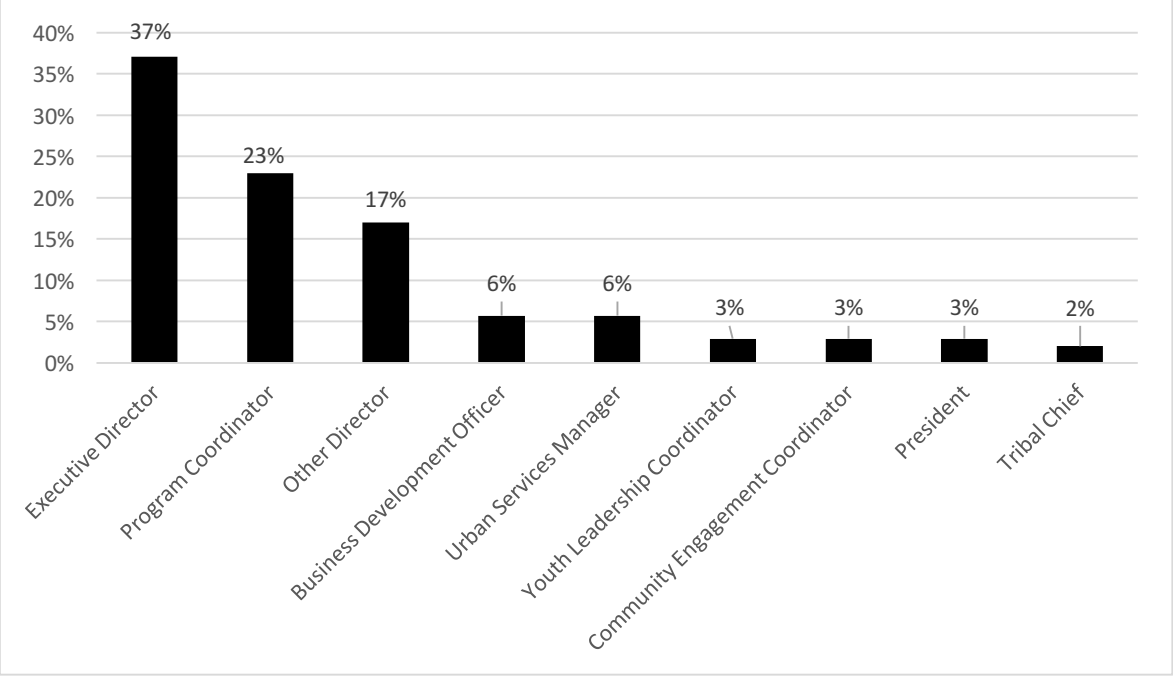


Figure 1: Organizational positions of respondents

Q 2. Length of time in organizational position

As shown in Figure 2 below, the length of time spent in organizational positions ranged from less than one month to thirty years indicating a level of commitment, continuity, and even succession planning.

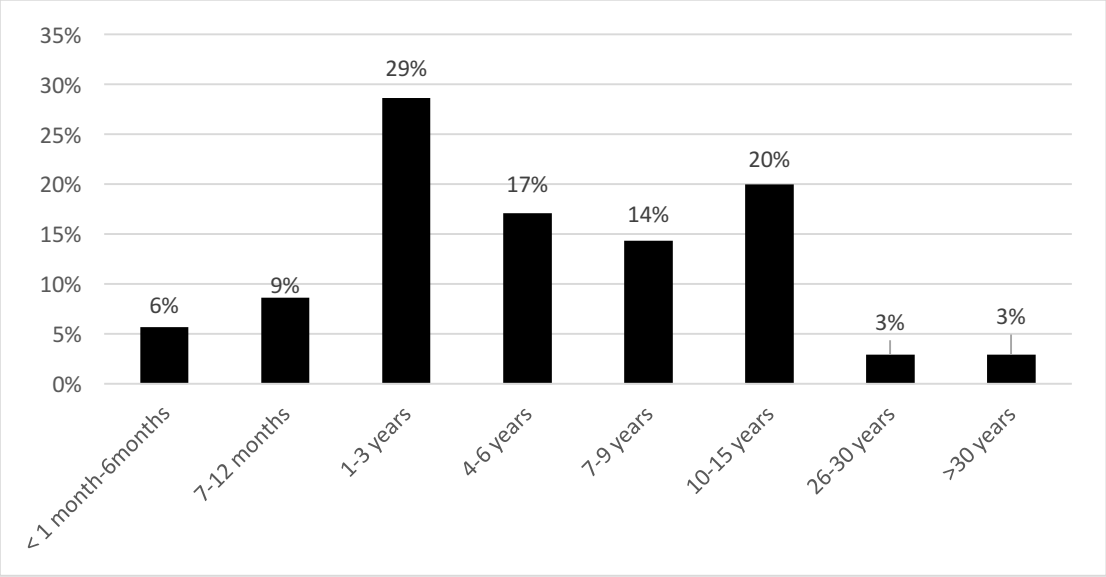


Figure 2: Respondent length of time in organizational position

Executive directors were the longest serving respondents with the majority serving between seven and fifteen years (Table 1).

Table 1: Percentage breakdown of respondents' length of time served in each position.

Position		**Length of time served in each position**							
	< 1 month	**7-12 months**	**1-3 years**	**4-6 years**	**7-9 years**	**10-15 years**	**26-30 years**	**>30 years**	**Total**
Executive Director	—	2.9%	5.7%	2.9%	8.6%	14.3%	2.9%	—	**37.0%**
All Other Directors	—	2.9%	5.7%	5.7%	—	2.9%	—	—	**17.0%**
Program Coordinator	—	2.9%	8.6%	5.7%	2.9%	—	—	2.9%	**22.9%**
Business Development Officer	—	—	5.7%	—	—	—	—	—	**5.7%**

Urban Services Manager	__	__	__	2.9%	2.9%	__	__		**5.8%**
Youth Leadership Coordinator	2.9%	__	__	__	__	__	__		**2.9%**
Community Engagement Coordinator	2.9%	__	__	__	__	__	__		**2.9%**
Organizational President	__	__	__	__	__	2.9%	__		**2.9%**
Tribal Chief	__	__	2.9%	__	__	__	__		**2.9%**
Total	**5.7%**	**8.6%**	**28.6%**	**17.1%**	**14.3%**	**20%**	**2.9%**	**2.9%**	**100.0%**

*NB __ denotes no one serving in those positions for that length of time

Community engagement coordinators, youth leadership coordinators, and some program coordinators were the shortest serving respondents, who had been with their organizations for less than one year. Such short lengths of time may well reflect recent implementation of some programs to meet new or emergent needs.

Q 3. Reason for becoming involved in organization

If job security was a reason for many, respondents became involved in their urban Aboriginal organizations for a number of often related reasons, including the **opportunity to live and work in their communities:**

> Because of the sports, culture, and recreation tri-mandate that kind of matched my work background and it was an opportunity to combine all three sectors into one job.

> I'm from the area, and [this organization] has always been a large vibrant organization. It's probably the largest organization in this area so it provided me an opportunity to stay close to home as well as grow in my capacity.

Committing to Aboriginal Control of Services to Aboriginal People

Among the most cited reasons for becoming involved in urban Aboriginal organizations was a commitment to the philosophy of Aboriginal people providing services to Aboriginal people. One respondent puts it succinctly:

> I really believed in the philosophy of what this organization was trying to do. I saw [the position] as a challenge, as I have always been around First Nations people and heard and saw some of the issues and felt that I wanted to sort of be part of this new transfer where First Nations were taking control over their [own] services.

As in the case of so many, the commitment was accompanied by a need to use life experiences to drive that philosophy.

Building on Family Tradition/ Advocating for Treaty Rights

For many, being driven by life experiences to give back to the community meant advocating for treaty rights, out of respect for ancestors, and providing for future generations within urban Indigenous communities. Some were inspired by family tradition:

> I was always involved…since I was a teenager. My dad used to work for [them] at one point in time. [This organization] has always been there for Aboriginal people.

> My mother is Métis and pretty much grew up in the Métis Nation, and when I say the Métis Nation, I mean more the political structure. But I also grew up with a heavy influence of Métis culture, and I definitely have a little activist bone for Métis rights. I figured the best way to push those rights-based agendas forward is to be on the inside.

Another respondent added that it was a way of preserving family roots and Treaty Rights:

> For myself, I very much identify as a person that comes from my First Nation, as well as from my father's Métis roots, the half breed or Métis side. I believe in Treaty and the portability of Treaty Rights. My connection has always been back to the land, but due to employment opportunities, housing opportunities, my family resides in the city. So I grew up in the city [where] I have raised my children. My children would be considered the definition of urban Indigenous kids. I always wanted them to be part of a city, a community where as Indigenous kids they can feel that they are part of an Indigenous community. So, it was really important to me to become involved with an organization that was owned by First Nations communities or First Nations, so we would always have that connection back to the land, back to the treaty organization, because that's what this organization is embedded in—that we only exist due to the portability of Treaty Rights.

Improving Quality of Life

While some respondents felt that their involvement was a spiritual calling**,** others cited their passion for improving self-sufficiency and quality of life for First Nations, family tradition,

economic development opportunities within ancestral bands, and being a strong advocate for, and believer in preservation, protection, and promotion of Aboriginal language and culture.

The commitment to improving quality of life is so strong among respondents that after being equipped with postsecondary education, some choose to "return to the land" to give back to their communities. One such respondent, on the subject of quality of life, stated:

> I went to school, graduated with my degree, came back and I thought, "well I am going to work with my First Nation." I just have a passion to work with them and improve their quality of life in any way I can. We've gone through so much and we've developed so much.

Others spoke to a desire to use their talents to make a difference:

> I wanted to be somewhere, where at the end of the day, no matter what I was doing, no matter how menial or random it seemed, I knew that it was affecting my community in a positive way and the right ways.

> I have a bit of a cultural background and this was a way to sort of let other people become involved with culture and have some of the same experiences that I have had that a lot of people aren't able to have.

Fostering Indigenous Inclusion and Leadership

Professional relations, Indigenous inclusion, and leadership proved to be significant motivators for becoming involved in the work of urban Aboriginal organizations. It is no different for respondents of this study, who were influenced by previous community and organizational leaders, who promoted professionalism and inclusiveness, without neglecting the importance of family and community spirit. According to one respondent, "I talked to a few people and they said it was a good organization to work for. They were professional yet very family oriented in their approach to their employees and other people they serve." Another participant highlighted the need for exemplary leadership and role models, who by their inclusiveness influence later generations in building community spirit:

> I was aware of the first urban reserve, [and I've] seen opportunities, because you had a leader [who was] willing to make change. That's why I am [here] because I believed the leadership was very willing and open to Aboriginal inclusion.

> Initially, I worked in economic development and our late mayor who was also the treaty commissioner, was the president of the organization that I worked for. He took me under his wing and was really supporting

> Aboriginal inclusion. He encouraged me to apply [for the job], saying we need individuals like you to bring our community together.

Though community leadership is a strong motivating force**,** involvement in urban Aboriginal organizations is also a means of self-preservation according to one respondent:

> Part of my self-protection was to find a new position, but more importantly [there] was a man who helped our community change directions back in the late 1980s. He helped us acquire an urban reserve and that changed the thinking in our community about what is possible and what is not possible in terms of economic development. I have always enjoyed his personality and I just felt I wouldn't mind working with this guy and so he was looking for an executive director and I haven't looked back since.

Q 4. Names of organizations

As explained in the methods section, organizations were selected to represent all treaty territories in Saskatchewan and to represent as many of the health regions as feasible. Where organizations agreed to be named, they are listed in Table 2; others are listed by type of organization.

Table 2: Participating Organizations

Lac la Ronge Indian Band	Yorkton Tribal Council	Métis Nation Saskatchewan	Peter Ballantyne Cree Nation--Southend	Tribal Council
Gabriel Dumont Institute	First Nation	Saskatoon Friendship Inn	Tribal Council	First Nation
Municipal service delivery	Financial institution	SaskCulture	South West District for Culture, Recreation & Sport	Tribal Council
Provincial agency	Community-based organization	Northern Sport Culture & Recreation District	Service Delivery Agency	Aboriginal Nonprofit
Tribal Council	Creative Kids	Office of the Treaty Commissioner	Saskatchewan Indian Cultural Centre	Service Delivery Agency
Battleford Indian and Métis Friendship Centre	Lloydminster Native Friendship Centre	Indian and Métis Friendship Centre of Prince Albert	La Loche Friendship Centre	Yorkton Friendship Centre

Friendship Centre	Friendship Centre	Friendship Centre	Health Authority	Tribal Agency

Q 5. Location of Organizations

Figure 3 shows the geographic distribution of the organizations represented in this study, while Appendices B and C show their locations within provincial health regions and within treaty territory. The three largest urban centres (Saskatoon, Regina, and Prince Albert) with the largest number of Aboriginal organizations, some of which have mandates that extend across the province, represent the largest percentages of interviewed organizations.

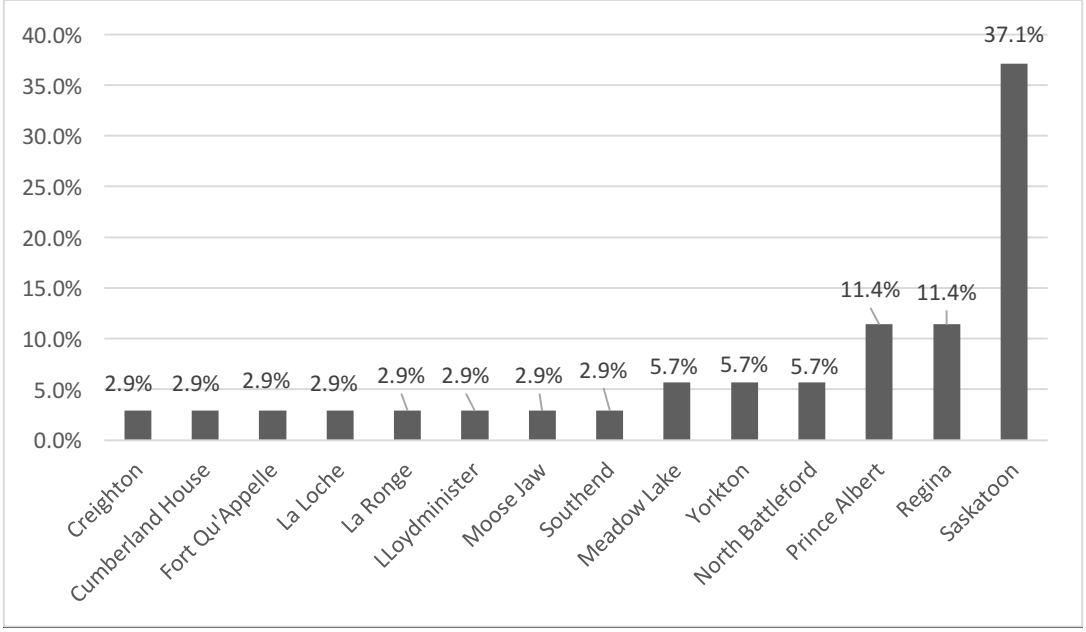


Figure 3: Location of surveyed urban Aboriginal organizations

Q 6. Purpose and Mandate

The purposes and mandates of the organizations are summarized in these broad categories:

1. **Language and Culture of Aboriginal Peoples (First Nations, Métis, and Inuit)**
   - Preserving, promoting, and protecting First Nations languages in Saskatchewan, which are Nakota, Lakota, Dakota, Dene, Saulteaux, Cree (including Woods Cree, Swampy Cree, and Plains Cree)
   - Promoting the renewal and development of Métis culture and language (Michif) through research, materials development, collection, and distribution, and the design, development, and delivery of Métis specific educational programs and services

- Supporting and promoting urban Aboriginal people through sports, cultural, and recreational events that build community awareness and appreciation for Aboriginal culture

One respondent summarized the organizational mandate in this way:

> Our mandate in a nutshell is to provide sport, culture, and recreation programs and to build community development in our northern communities. That can be either by consultation, by supporting, guiding, and providing not only services from our district but services from our global partners.

Another respondent explained that cultural programs are not reserved for Aboriginal organizations but are open to the general population, or all people living in Saskatchewan: "Our purpose is to increase the sport, culture and recreation programs and services that are offered by communities and community organizations in southwest Saskatchewan." Another added, "Our purpose and mandate is to promote cultural activity so that all people of Saskatchewan can participate and engage in diverse cultural activities."

In speaking to the promotion of cultural activities, another respondent stated, "[We provide] funding for families with so their kids can participate in creative activities—art, music, dance, theatre, cultural activities, things like that."

2. **Inclusive communities, equity and balance**
    - Building inclusive communities that integrate Indigenous people at all levels, supporting and promoting urban Aboriginal people to help them succeed and enjoy upward social mobility
    - Ensuring that the Aboriginal community is reflected in the composition of community organization boards and committees
    - Partnering with Aboriginal organizations to enhance economic development and employment
    - Safeguarding equal opportunities for Métis people to be well represented, and have access to quality education, through proper educational resources

3. **Political representation**
    - Giving the Métis and all other Aboriginal people a political position to influence their respective communities
    - Promoting a unified voice in city politics, advocating to governments and industry

4. **Social programming**
    - Providing training and education, employment, justice, and also community wellness services aimed at quality of life improvement for students, elders, youth, and the general community
    - The health of Aboriginal people is an important part of improving quality of life. The health mandate is clear: "We are a health status and surveillance unit that provides technical support to second level First Nations health jurisdictions."

5. **Education, Training, and Employment Services**
    - Providing culturally appropriate education to support student success
    - Providing training and employment services to Indigenous groups to make it easier for members to fully access the labour market
    - Twinning training and employment services with life skills as fundamental to improving and sustaining quality of life

One respondent spoke eloquently about the need to think in holistic ways about quality of life issues rather than focus narrowly on employment numbers:

> Quality of life is more than just finding a job, right? It's about when you get that job, what are you doing? If we bring somebody into the city [for a job] and they leave their family behind and their family breaks apart because of that, have we provided quality of life? No. If we bring family into the community for a good paying job and they start to make $50 an hour when they were on social assistance prior and they don't know how to adequately budget or they take their excess money and start using it for unhealthy purposes, drugs, and alcohol, those types of things, and the family disintegrates; have we done our job? The answer is "no"; we've made it worse. So it's more than just finding people employment. It's ensuring that it's a quality of life and that where we start from [is] the very basics.

6. **Quality of life improvement**
    - Meeting the basic needs especially supplying food for those with low or no income or anyone in need
    - Maintaining an open door policy in delivering family counseling, referrals, employment, and "whatever the needs of the Aboriginal community are"
    - Offering adequate and sustained human and health service delivery

If food is critical to physical survival, caring for the emotional, spiritual, and intellectual needs remains foundational to improved quality of life.

7. **Treaty Rights**
    - Promoting understanding of the treaties, the spirit and intent of the treaties, among all the peoples of Saskatchewan
    - Creating an environment in Saskatchewan where the people become comfortable with the language of treaty through public education, awareness strategies, networking, partnerships, and alliances
    - Protecting the land, and facilitating the transition from reserves to urban centres

8. **Diversifying Economic Opportunity**
    - Fostering an economic base within ancestral lands and employment opportunities for First Nations members

- Diversifying corporate interests by increasing the number of businesses owned by First Nations communities and co-operatives
- Promoting and supporting First Nations owned business

Q 7. Organizational Goals

Urban Aboriginal organizations across the province of Saskatchewan have goals that are typically related to their mandates. Though these goals may be targeted to specific Métis or First Nations, they can be generalized to all Indigenous peoples and are designed to reduce barriers and eliminate gaps in educational, socio-economic, and health outcomes.

1. Equity in education, economics, and health

The often interrelated goals of diverse organizations share an overriding interest in providing better opportunities and access to educational, social, and health services for Indigenous peoples and their families to meet their physical, mental, emotional, and financial needs.

The overriding interest in equity is contingent on empowerment of "Indigenous peoples to provide sustainable services on their communities and to enhance equity in economics and education across the province of Saskatchewan," as one expressed it so well.

Several respondents supported this goal linking it to housing, employment, education, and food security: "satisfactory sustainable work, keep[ing] people safe and warm; food security"; "establish a seniors' home"; "bring more children home from foster care"; "develop partnerships and programs with Aboriginal organizations that assist in economic development, employment and training opportunities—investments in Aboriginal businesses."

2. Indigenous rights

Equity was importantly related to promotion of Indigenous rights, particularly, the inclusion of Métis in provincial education planning, "and the integration of Métis into the social services [to] have control over, or at least some control over their own jurisdiction of Métis children."

3. Retention, support services, and community engagement for Aboriginal students in colleges and universities

One respondent connected educational equity to a need for consistency and concern for respectful protocol in education for Métis students:

> [We are involved in] community engagement [to ensure] that there is always Métis protocol and education in all of our programs. We want to make sure that we have higher retention rates, higher graduation rates, and we really just want to raise the standard of living for Métis people across Saskatchewan. So we want to deliver education programs

> n responsive ways to the community and that also includes culture and raising the standard of living for Métis people.

Another respondent spoke to the need for improvements in mathematics and science skills: "one of the things we need to improve is our math and our sciences."

4. Achievement of at least the same health status and services for on- and off-reserve First Nations as the rest of the provincial or national population

To achieve this goal, one organization stated that its objective is to "track the population's health statistics and help First Nations plan their services and what they want to deliver and what they need to deliver to help their community get better health."

5. Promotion of consistent, accessible, and quality services across the province

Equal access to quality services was stressed by several respondents. As one put it, that would mean "that a client who walked into the office…will be able to receive the same quality and the same consistency in the services as they would [anywhere else]. So it makes it very seamless and easy for our clients to move from one office to the next."

6. Physical facilities for expanded programming to meet specific and unmet needs

Acquiring and expanding physical space to support the safety and wellbeing of Aboriginal peoples was a key consideration. While one respondent stated, **"**One of our biggest goals right now that we are trying to achieve is our new building," another spoke to the particular needs of women and children for safe, supportive space to achieve levels of independence that could free them from cycles of dependence and abuse:

> We need to expand our space. There is a need in the city for emergency shelter for women. There is no place for women who have raised their children or maybe who have lost their children through the welfare system. So there is no emergency housing. We would like to [address] that need because we have a lot of people coming to our centre. It would have to be a supportive type of living environment. I think it would be important for the women to have independent apartments. There needs to be maybe some space for short term housing but also longer term because women are dealing with a lot of personal issues, possibly addictions. Maybe they've never lived on their own before. Maybe they've always been dependent on the man in their relationship. Maybe that's part of the abuse, creating that dependence. So there would have to be a whole gamut of support services in place.

7. Skills training for a representative workforce

Those involved in workforce training stressed the need to develop adequate social skills in the youth that will translate into professional skills, so that there will be success in transitioning into

urban areas and employment. This will help in achieving a representative workforce while reducing unemployment and its associated negative impacts.

8. Entrepreneurship for Self-Sufficiency

Investing in entrepreneurial opportunities was explained as a goal by one respondent who also described partnerships to reduce dependence on exploitative payday loan services:

> Our goal is to provide equity to people to start a business, to help them secure a loan. This serves as a replacement for payday to cash loans where instead of individuals going and using those services, we sign up First Nation companies. Their employees are eligible to come to us instead because they're kind of a rip-off, very high interest rates.

9. Diversity and inclusiveness

In keeping with the mandate of inclusive communities, equity, and balance, one respondent stated that organizational goals include formulating a strategy for multiculturalism:

> Right now the hot topic is diversity and inclusion. It comes down to having a diversity strategy, multiculturalism strategy. We support different organizations in this province and we are asking them to also be inclusive and have diversity plans and strategies in place so they are representative of the changing demographics here in the province. There is a particular focus on First Nations, Métis, and newcomers.

At the same time, other organizations believe that the process to develop inclusive communities should begin with the young: "Opportunity for kids really. Inclusion, having kids be able to have the same experiences as their friends, build self-esteem and skills through life-changing artistic and cultural programs."

10. Community Development through sport, culture and recreation

Sports and culture were key facilitators of community development. One respondent stated that the main aim was to facilitate communities in achieving their goals and not to dictate the goals:

> Our biggest goal is to support all of our communities in helping them build their own community development with sport, culture, and recreation. So our approach is going into communities, identifying their needs and wants, and helping them achieve those goals with our support. So not basically doing it for them, but basically giving them the tools so that they can do it on their own so that they can further their community development and feel a sense of pride, but with us consulting and helping them achieve that goal.

11. Sustainability

Sustainability was a goal for most organizations that receive government funding "so that we can move away from relying so heavily on government funding and more or less provide ourselves with the income we need" to achieve the objective of "providing meaningful employment to our communities...and obviously quality programming and services to meet the needs of our membership in the realm of employability skills, communication, culture and recreation."

Q 8. Government Funding

The capacity to offer programs or services is dependent on the type and volume of funding an organization is able to secure. As shown in figure 4, the majority of organizations (92%) receive funding from provincial, federal, and municipal governments. It is important to note that even though most organizations are funded by one or more government entities, these funds are tied to specific programs or Indigenous groups. This results in these organizations competing for grants to carry out similar projects that are targeted to Métis, Inuit, or First Nations groups.

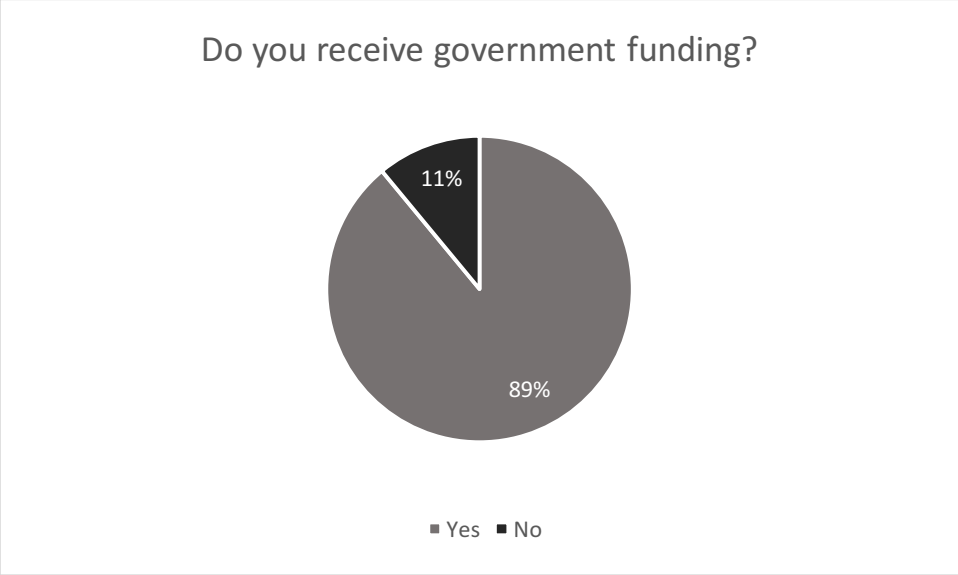


Figure 4: Percentage of organizations receiving government funding

Not only is government funding (like many other funding sources) targeted to specific Indigenous groups, but the mandates are also policy-driven. One respondent stated, "[Our program] is federally funded. We actually have to follow a policy that they give us. We have to run the program the way that the policy dictates, so we don't have a lot of leeway on how we can run it because it's basically legislated." As a consequence, some organizations supplement their government funding through special contracts with provincial, regional, and other organizations for delivering special projects within their scope of operation. Those organizations that do not receive government funding depend on fundraising activities, the operation of businesses, and the goodwill of community partners for financial support. They may also be in the pool of

competitors who are bidding for grants available from non-governmental agencies.

Additionally, there may be a disconnect between what funding partners deem important and are willing to fund and the actual needs of an organization and its community. This makes it difficult for organizations to achieve what they have identified as important to the improved quality of life of Indigenous groups. An example given by one respondent underlined how youth needs for healthy, supportive relationships that ground them can fall between the cracks:

> We put on programs when we can find funding. The hard thing to find funding for is the youth program where they can just come and hang out, a safe place for them to come. People don't understand the importance of just having some kids fooling around, playing volleyball, or even sitting with healthy adults and talking and being accepted and the mentoring that can go on … but you can't get people to buy into things that they are not willing to even think about.

Notwithstanding funding limitations, organizations have found creative ways to offer programs and services without contravening funding contracts: "I have core funding … but I have no specific program funding. What I do is partner with other organizations." Partnerships and collaborations are common among urban Aboriginal organizations to stretch their limited resources and provide as many programs and services as community members need.

Q 9. Programs and Services Offered

Programs and services offered by urban Aboriginal organizations are generally geared toward improving the quality of life of Indigenous groups. This is reflected in the specific mandates and goals of the organizations. In cases where organizations mandated to provide specific services are unable to meet client needs, there is an informal referral network: "Even though we are the human services part of it (and I talk about being able to provide as many services as we can), we have definite links without our own network, whereby, if we can't assist them, we have other people within our entities and organization that we can refer them to." Consequently, there are many services and program offerings delivered within and across vitally connected networks of urban Aboriginal organizations:

Health Services

Significant investments in health services on large reserves include not only time and money spent in staffing and training, but substantial planning to ensure that, with limited access to physician care, the medical care is extensive. In the absence of physicians, nurses have been specially trained to carry out a wide range of health services:

> We operate nursing stations, which are called primary care centres. All of the nurses that we hire, and there is over twenty just in primary care, do acute treatment, emergency treatments, chronic care, everything. From community health and emergency, [nurses] work in something

> called a transfer [of] medical functions. They have to take specialized training to do some treatment services that only a doctor would be able to do, but they can do some of that. We do home and community care, mental health and addictions programs and treatment, and security services. We have clinical disease programs, chronic care programs, we do emergency management and planning for forest fires and flooding and for epidemics and pandemics, so we have to plan for that.

The absence of physicians in reserve communities forces health services teams to be innovative and resourceful, meeting health needs while keeping up with current trends in health care. According to one respondent:

> We have a robot manned from the University. This robot is plugged into the wall. We are going to use a specialist and they will go to the treatment room or wherever and work with the nurse and the patient. We are the first ones in Saskatchewan to use that for treatment. As an example, we have a Pediatrics specialist out of the University Hospital [who will] have a clinic with kids. In an emergency, [the robot] has actually saved one life [because the nurse was] able to hook up directly with the specialist while the emergency [was] going on…to stabilize [the patient]. So that's one of our initiatives.

The resourcefulness of health teams on reserve is essential to meet the medical needs of underserved communities. According to one respondent, some critical services may be provided without provincial involvement: "so in that community, because the province does not provide any ambulance service in that whole area for on reserve, which is their responsibility, we operate our own ambulance … and it is a fully operating service licensed ambulance." This lack of provincial involvement, however, provides opportunities. It encourages partnerships between these health services and local universities allowing for some services to be provided on demand, and without either the usual wait time or the discomfort associated with travelling long distances:

> We are also doing a pilot to use physiotherapy and that was successful. That was a research project through the University. The patient … said that it was better than having to drive for two hours down a rough road to go to your physio appointment for half an hour, after you [have] had back surgery, and then drive all the way back on that rough road.… So we are looking to expand that.

According to another respondent, there are partnerships with Health Regions in the areas of prenatal and maternal health, as well as in the fight against HIV/AIDS: "We have a partnership with the Health Region and we offer mom and baby clinic. We have a crib tournament, [and] HIV point of care testing."

The extent and reach of these partnerships may not be clear, but what is clear is that the health resources are not enough to meet demand even when, as one respondent pointed out,, "Our biggest program is health." Some remote communities in Northern Saskatchewan report that they

have “a medical health officer, so anything when it comes to health data and surveillance, gynaecologist, public health specialist, and we have an NHO.”

Culture, Sports, and Recreation

Cultural programs are popular among urban Aboriginal groups. Historically, there have been cultural events, particularly in the form of pow wows that are important expressions of First Nations identity and are used to preserve Indigenous culture and build community spirit. Commitment to preservation of culture and identity is so prominent that it begins with the very young—and often with few resources.

> We’ve got Mētawētān, which is ‘let’s play’ in Cree. We’ve been running that for 20 years. [It] is a mobile unit that goes out to every playground in the city. We have 52 different playground programs that operate in every neighbourhood. An Aboriginal focused program, they have a tipi they set up and they talk about the traditional tipi teachings. Initially we only had them going in the core area where there are [many] Aboriginal people. . . . we were short staffed.

Such is the impact of these programs that they attract recognition from political officials as well as funding: “we get lots of kids there. Then we got a letter from the mayor acknowledging the city for their cross-cultural teaching in the playground. So now we’ve got more money and we move it all over.”

The need to preserve culture is so entrenched that older youth volunteer to lead in sports and cultural programs. According to one respondent, “We've got some students who are going to be [taking the youth] to cultural events so that they learn their culture. They are training the summer games people in our area here every Monday night for archery.” Another reinforced that culture is preserved through youth sharing their talents in cultural performances: “cultural wise, we administer Northern Spirits, where youth go down to Prince Albert and do this whole showcase on singing, stage development, light show … in a big show that happens every year. We have Northern Drama, where all the schools that have drama go to a show and a broadcast and the winner goes to Regina for provincials.”

Other organizations invest in training to support and promote Indigenous sport and cultural activities. One respondent shared, “We have the Aboriginal Sports Grant. We do the Saskatchewan Games which is province wide. Our team north is in that. We do coaching and officials development for our communities to help them get certified coaches and officials.”

Cultural events are well supported by Aboriginal groups: **“**We just finished ‘So you think you can Powwow?’ That is going to be ongoing in the future. We did powwow dance instruction, drumming and singing, and regalia design [and] sewing for families that are interested. It is probably one of our more popular programs.”

But efforts are underway to broaden cultural events beyond Aboriginal networks to create an atmosphere of acceptance and understanding among all Canadians, including newcomers, in hopes of diminishing negative stereotyping and racism. One respondent explained:

> We started something new this year. We had a multicultural powwow. We want it to become an annual event because we need to break down some of those barriers. . . .We are finding that with a lot more variety of cultures moving into our community, we need to start trying to break down those barriers all the way around. So it was really cool and it went quite well and it's something we want to do more often.

Because a by-product of stereotyping and racism is harm to Aboriginal girls and women, some cultural and sport programs target women. One such program has gained pre-eminence:

> We've got Little Sisters in Action program—an exercise program focused on young girls. It's supporting the whole movement for missing and murdered Aboriginal women. We run some self-defence programs … just to make them proud to be an attractive Aboriginal woman. So this program is something they are trying to mirror across the city, or across Canada.

Fundamental to the message about being proud to be Aboriginal is the reclamation of Indigenous languages and services that support their formalization in schools: "We develop curriculum, we go out and do in-services, and we produce CD's, multi-media materials for languages."

There are also organizations whose purpose is to facilitate connections among organizations or communities committed to preserving culture in Saskatchewan. One respondent explained:

> We are a little different than most organizations in that we don't offer specific workshops... Our programs and services tend to focus on connecting people, organizations, and communities with the tools that they need to increase sports, culture, and recreation in their communities. Our program and services [involve] a lot of community engagement work, which is meeting with communities and finding out what their needs are, helping them to focus their needs and then putting them in touch with the right people. We do other programs where we bring in people from the different sectors, recreation practitioners, culture practitioners…so they can do a networking meeting. There is a focused agenda to guide them through it so they can get to know each other and learn from each other and have a facilitated discussion and then that helps them to go back to their own communities with new tools and ideas that they can use as well.

Another explained that, though not directly engaged in sport, culture or recreation activities, their organization provides support to "help communities with their arena operators to get certified to run the arenas. There is facility development, pool operators. The Lifesaving Society comes to

our communities in the summer and runs lifeguard opportunities and swimming lessons." Another added, "Children can take almost any creative activity: one might learn a family language like Cree or take creative writing. We have a lot of applicants trying dance and piano and guitar but we don't instruct the kids ourselves." Another respondent emphasized that another way of helping preserve culture is for organizations to allocate funding to "support some of the larger organizations like museums across the province; we support language organizations, heritage, arts. We are built on four different pillars—multiculturalism, heritage, arts, and cultural industries. It is a very broad group of people that we work with to support different types of engagement at the community level."

Post-secondary Education and Skills Training

Though educational goals are common across all urban Aboriginal organizations, the programs and services are varied. These are geared toward labour force development and include sponsoring or providing university education; preparing adult learners for general education development (GED); offering professional development and training (e.g., CPR and employee upgrading); operating residential programs; developing language and cultural curricula; and promoting treaty and cross-cultural awareness. One respondent underscored the role of organizations as facilitators preserving Indigenous history and culture through education, through embedding in curricula and organizational structures to ensure their resilience over time:

> [It] is mostly about bringing treaties into the classroom and building the infrastructure so that it has longevity and it is not an ad hoc project that dies when somebody disappears from the scene. And so [we] become less of a facilitator, and more of a maintenance agent, to maintain that momentum…and continue to create that awareness of the importance of teachers engaging and owning treaty education. [We do some other types of work, like [we're] finishing off a project on the history of the Dakota people in Saskatchewan. In partnership with the Ministry [of Education], we just finished printing three books on Dakota communities, their history, and their contribution to this province and to Canada. That's the kind of work that [we're] involved in.

Another respondent explained the obligation to do what the immigration system does not: to educate by sharing the Indigenous perspective; that is, cutting across cultural divides to destroy stereotypes:

> We have done some work with newcomers, recent immigrants. We have actually prepared a module to train the organizations that work with the new immigrants. We've provided them with training modules on how to do treaty awareness, cross-cultural awareness with newcomers, so that we can address the stereotyping that they pick up about First Nations when they come into the country. It's helping to correct the negative story. They don't get any of this stuff as new Canadians. In the process of becoming Canadian, the Indigenous story is not in there. So we are trying to address that gap.

This commitment to preserving positive Indigenous history and culture is superseded only by the strong impetus to equip Indigenous groups with the requisite tools for employment and improved quality of life. One of the major investments being made toward that goal is the support of and involvement in post-secondary education and skills training by urban Aboriginal organizations. One organization refers to enhancing the uptake of Indigenous youth in the job market as "asset funding". This process ensures better access to and preparation for the job market through its rigorous selection and matching of candidates for post-secondary education. These candidates are funded and provided with services that enhance their employability. One organization described its programming goals to match training with labour market needs:

> One of our biggest programs is the individual sponsorship program. This is where Métis individuals can apply for funding for post-secondary education … through a regional selection committee model. Selection committees are made up of community members who are familiar with local labour market requirements. All of our programs are demand driven. They have to be tied to industry … or demonstrated need in the labour market because, in the end, our goal is not just to give Métis students money to go to school. It's to ensure they have the skills and experience required to get the job. Employment is always the end goal. Through the counseling process, the employment counselor will determine whether there is a need for skills training, or whether they are employment ready and what course of action is [necessary].

This impetus has led to noteworthy advancements and partnerships in education and skills training among urban Aboriginal organizations. These organizations have capitalized on the gaps in the skilled trades to create opportunities for training and employment of Indigenous youth to meet the demand in Saskatchewan. One respondent explained their strategy to meet needs:

> We do a lot of partnerships with the Saskatchewan Apprenticeship Trades Certification Commission (SATCC), as they have noticed a large need for apprentices in the province. It's kind of no secret; it's everywhere you look in the news. There [are] huge skills shortages in trades, so what we have done through these partnerships with employers, [is] encourage [them] to take on apprentices.

In support of the Indigenous ownership and control of Indigenous services, post-secondary level education is also provided through urban Aboriginal organizations. The educational services of these organizations involve more than just imparting knowledge; there is a holistic approach to empowering students:

> We have university education through Gabriel Dumont Institute which is two years of post-secondary at the university level. We have the Saskatchewan Urban Native Teacher Education Program (SUNTEP) which is … in partnership with the University of Saskatchewan in Prince Albert, Regina, and Saskatoon. But we have a publishing department…that publishes a lot of books, CDs, and all kinds of

> promotional materials such as posters. We have what's called Gabriel Dumont Institute Training and Employment where we have employment counsellors who do intake, sit down with clients, figure out what their goals are, and actually provide funding through tuition and living supports for clients.

The efforts of the organizations are not lost on Indigenous people. There is substantial buy-in, particularly among Indigenous youth—evident in the following quotation that also suggests that on-reserve communities are overcoming barriers to education and are being successful:

> We sponsor individuals to either remove barriers to get certificates and diploma. We [don't handle] post-secondary [education] anymore. We do refer those guys to the reserves. However, we have their funding applications. We even allow them to apply online here and we will actually help them. Right now my intake is thirty-four students in various certificate and diploma programs at [Saskatchewan Polytechnic], [Saskatchewan Indian Institute of Technologies], and different institutions.

While there are many programs that focus on formal educational program, one respondent explained that educational programs are enhanced by after school and weekend community engagement: "Well I already mentioned our biggest one and that is the community and school coordinator program. We have 22 active, employed people that run after school and weekend programming for their communities. As I said, that is a grant for $47,000 per year, so they get that every single year for their salary and program dollars."

Social Services and Programs

Aboriginal organizations are committed to exercising their jurisdiction in matters pertaining to their citizens. Social programs and services are focused on combating social ills, mostly stemming from the colonial legacies of poverty and alcohol and/or drug dependency. The organizations are tasked with keeping children safe, reuniting families, providing basic needs such as food and shelter, and breaking those cycles of poverty and dependency. While services are designed to meet the needs of a wide cross-section of people, they primarily target children and families, seniors and youth, those dealing with addictions, and low-income groups.

In respect to children, services aimed at providing a safe home atmosphere include prenatal programs, parenting classes, and anger management interventions for "women and families, working through their case management to get their children back." The problem of parents losing their children to the child welfare system is so great that vast amounts of resources and manpower are deployed. For example, in one organization alone, there are "314 in-home support workers that go right into the homes to work with the parents." In addition, they have "home visitors [for] the children who have already been apprehended."

Programs for families include family and individual counseling services "for people who are anywhere from being pregnant to people who are grieving lost ones." There is also the family

violence prevention program which is broad in its reach. According to this respondent, "it's a committee that works up north by Beauval, La Loche, Buffalo, Ile-a-la-Crosse, all those communities. They do presentations and work towards violence free [families]." Additionally, since men are often neglected in family programs, one organization has shifted focus particularly in their parenting program to fathers and grandfathers: "We focus on men because a lot of organizations…are focused on women, and sometimes the single dads and men need that extra support so I am working with men." Seniors are also catered to with the New Horizons for Seniors Program, which supports a range of seniors' activities, "from encouraging seniors to volunteer, to improving seniors' facilities, increasing seniors' participation in their communities, and increasing the awareness of elder abuse."

In keeping with the mandate of sustained quality of life improvements for Aboriginal peoples, social programs directed at youth include children's and youth summer day camps, recreational sports, summer and winter sports, and cultural activities. These programs are valuable sources of youth mentorship and youth leadership development, as one respondent stated:

> [We engage the youth through] sport, recreation, and cultural activities. We've got Aboriginal leadership programs called 'Atoske'. It's a leadership development program and we have had very good success. Now we have got an alumni program where you can see these youth have a plan for the future and they're moving forward in a good way. We just started another program called 'Wanska', which is 'to lift one up'. It's more dealing with youth that have potential. I was interviewing this young fellow and I said well, you know this program is for youth at risk…At the end of his interview he said to me, "I am not a youth at risk; I am a youth with potential."

These programs help youth to explore their potential for success. As their natural energies are diverted into teamwork, economic development activities, and friendly competitions, they are moved to view themselves positively. Additionally, youth are exposed to positive role models, from among their peers, with whom they share similar backgrounds, values, and experiences. Speaking to the nature and sustainability of one entrepreneurship program, a respondent stated:

> They sell at the Farmers' Market under the guise of youth—according to some, you can be 35 and still be considered a youth. Well, one is a teen, one is 18… the majority are in their 20s. It is led by two coordinators who were interns in that program last year, so it is rolling that knowledge forward. It is really trying to build capacity within the Aboriginal community too, sort of a cultural influence. So, there are a lot of eyes on that program because it is brand new and only two years old and attracting a lot of interest. We want to really build that program.

Quality of life improvements are also to be secured through youth programs that target "young men to deal with addiction behaviours and other dysfunctional behaviours." A variety of services specific to breaking the cycle of addiction to drugs and alcohol span age groups and genders. These services are reflective of the severity of an issue which is no respecter of socioeconomic

class or family structure. The quotation below addresses the extent of the negative effects and the many positive approaches being taken to unravel and resolve them:

> McLeod House is our transitional home for men who are recovering from addictions. All of our time frames are up to three years because we never believe that you can make change in 6 months or a month; you need time to become addiction free and then time to be sure your life is together. There is also education and employment before you can move on. We do the same in all of our homes for our women. There is Infinity House which is a high risk home; Kanaweyimik, which is our middle of the road home for moms; Niwaapatahanannik, which is a home for two-parent families; Trotchie House, which is our home for men who are the head of the household and for all of their children returning from foster care; Hessdorfer House which is our home for people with FASD [Fetal Alcoholic Spectrum Disorder]; and Stewart House which is for moms living well with HIV/AIDS, [whose] children are returned home. We have our Kohkum's house, grandma's house and that's for families when they just need a little break. We have our emergency receiving home where we receive children from 0-12, preventing them from going into a foster home. We have our wellness unit that works with people with FASD, and that's on a daily basis and we have a day program for that.

Similar to these interventions are programs which provide support for low-income groups. Urban Aboriginal organizations realize that food security is linked to sustainable economic development. Consistent with their economic development and sustained quality of life mandates, relevant collaborative programs range from hot lunch initiatives, soup kitchens, school nutrition, community markets, and safe food handling instruction to emergency food assistance and nutrition education.

Most programs providing meals do so free of charge to clients. For example, there are breakfast and hot lunch programs, which are targeted to needy families especially with school-aged children. Extensive school feeding programs ensure access to foods which support healthy growth and development. One respondent described their "largest program" as "the children's nutrition school program. So we go and drop off fresh produce and dairy and some proteins—lentils and things like that—to pretty well all of the schools in Saskatoon in some capacity."

This focus on schools is essential, especially for those of lower socioeconomic backgrounds, because, in some schools, hot lunches are provided at a cost which is not affordable to some: "They do serve lunch but at a fee. So now we have some families that have five kids that are going to school. If you are paying $3 a day for them to have lunch there, that's $15 a day. [Multiply] that by five days a week [and] people can't afford it." It is important to note, however, that these programs are not reserved for Aboriginally-identifying people: "It's not always Aboriginal children that are coming to the lunch program; it's non-Aboriginal as well. We've had Caucasian, Oriental children … different people."

In fact, another respondent commented that the proportion of Aboriginal people accessing these programs may not be higher than that of other groups: "the number of people of Aboriginal ancestry that experience food insecurity is always skewed, so we want to ensure that people that use our services are served well, and that they are part of the conversation in ensuring our programs are relevant and adequate." As a result of increasing numbers unable to afford quality food, some programs are oversubscribed and are hard pressed to meet demand: "It's really, really hard to keep up with it because of the number of people we get for each meal. It is quite costly." However, they are sustained by generous donors, who supply gifts of cash or food baskets.

While some programs, such as food banks, focus on providing emergency food assistance to low-income groups, others are more far reaching, focusing on access to nutritious foods at affordable costs. One such program is the CHEP Good Food Box, which offers fresh produce at affordable prices to individuals regardless of economic backgrounds or social status:

> We are not a food bank, but we believe that people should always have access to good food in a dignified way. So there is always a bit of an exchange by way of volunteer hours and/or money, just to make sure that…it's not charitable. The good food box program happens every two weeks where we assemble a huge group of volunteers to put together the boxes and then they are disseminated all throughout the community and [some] First Nations [reserves].

Still, other programs are focused on promoting ownership of long-term food security through establishing and supporting community gardens. In some cities, this program is extensive with staff dedicated to its success. For example, "there are 39 gardens in Saskatoon, so [the community garden coordinator] will provide some sort of technical gardening knowledge and act as a liaison for the city if they don't have running water to ensure that they get a water source there. So he does a lot of infrastructure support to those community gardens."

Nor is seed purchase a deterrent because "for lower income community gardens where people have trouble purchasing seeds, we can purchase seeds for them and they can access that." To supplement those activities and to promote greater Aboriginal involvement, there is "an urban agriculture internship program where we encourage young people to learn how to garden on their own within an urban setting and then also sell their produce. So it is kind of a social enterprise type of deal. This year five out of six interns are Aboriginal young people."

The community gardens feed into the community markets which supply nutritious foods to schools, lowering the cost of school lunch programs. They also improve access to affordable and healthy foods in those communities that are not close to grocery stores: "Every week, we set up a community market in a lot of community schools. Families living in those areas would be able to go to the school, buy three tomatoes and a small little bag of carrots at minimal costs. We do it literally at cost, so that with $5 they will actually have a bag of stuff."

Through these initiatives, organizations realize that it is more effective and less costly to teach others to feed themselves than to feed them. To that end, they have formed partnerships that minimize the cost of nutritional education. One respondent underscored the fact that the younger

generations must be engaged for these partnerships to have long lasting effects. Additionally, organizers must understand the cultural practices of its target groups in order to achieve success:

> We partner with the Saskatoon Community Clinic as well as the Saskatoon Health Region. They are part of our partnership to essentially guide the program—to providing capacity building, skills building, ensuring that people know how to cook their own food, what's entailed [in] nutritional needs… An offshoot of that would be a kids' kitchen program for grade 4 students. So we are teaching young children how to cook [because] we find that by the age of 11, a lot of kids are often times home alone and sometimes responsible for cooking for younger siblings in different families. We want to make sure that they have a basic understanding of nutrition and also a basic understanding of how to cook. Just so that if their parents or caregivers are away because of different circumstances for any length of time the kids kind of know what is required to ensure that they have good food.

Further, to encourage buy-in, ingenuity must be employed and deliberate efforts made to customize programs: "The collective kitchen program happens in a number of different ways, from drop ins, to more deliberate kinds of program that run over six weeks or eight weeks." Community participation and empowerment are also essential to ensuring sustainable food security and, as this respondent pointed out, coaching and tangible incentives may be necessary to bolster these programs:

> We do training for facilitators for both within the community and different institutions to ensure that we are trying to build capacity—leadership capacity, for people to lead those kitchens. So say, for example, a community member has an interest in leading a group of people in collective kitchen, they are paid a little bit of money and it helps out. But sometimes they don't have the confidence or understanding of safe food handling programs, so we do a leadership training over a week each year where we train people in that area.

Some organizations are proactive in their approach to economic development through nutrition. Acknowledging that nutrition impacts health, which in turn directly influences productivity and economy, they have tied nutrition education programs to the health needs of the community. A respondent explains: "We have a nutritionist on staff who will do talks in the community to make sure that if people have questions—questions about their diabetes or questions about managing chronic disease, questions about addictions and food—we can provide expertise to each program to ensure that what they are doing is sound nutritionally and helps the community to eat better."

Although food security is a major concern for individuals in low-income groups, there are other services that are offered free of charge to facilitate the transition from poverty to self-sufficiency and to provide a safe place for the homeless. These include income tax clinics, computer and technology services, temporary housing, public washrooms and showers for the homeless. These services are situated in venues that allow their telephone numbers and addresses to be used as

points of contact. A respondent explained: “When they are on the street and their family members need to get a hold of them, this is where they are; this is the number they call, [saying] ‘Can you give a message to someone?’ or ‘is that person there?’ And we find that person. Life isn't easy for everyone.”

Furthermore, these venues serve as donation centres where people can access basics such as toiletries and other personal products. The following highlights the challenge of proving identity and place of residence before being granted access to some of those basic needs:

> For the most part, what we do is, if people are [seeking] their basic needs, they come into our office. We do an assessment with them and they have to apply. They have to meet certain criteria because we only assist people who live right on the reserve. They have to prove that they live on the reserve. They have to prove who they are. They have to provide documentation for that and we help them with that process.

This process may be frustrating and time-consuming for those people who “sometimes don’t always have the right ID.” Notwithstanding the frustrations of this process for many, it remains advantageous for some. According to the same respondent, “a lot of younger clients come in and we will assist them with getting their social insurance number, for instance, so they can have that for our purposes and also for when they are wanting to go to school or go get a job.”

Despite the bureaucracy, some organizations go a step further in establishing effective support systems and helping address the plight of people during times of hardship. In this regard, some organizations provide ways for people without permanent addresses and cell phones to be contacted especially if they are between jobs and need to set up interviews: “we have public phones that people can use the number if they don’t have one and we take messages for them.”

Access to affordable housing continues to be problematic for job seekers and those transitioning from on reserve communities to urban centres. To combat this challenge, there are real estate companies and housing developments “owned entirely by First Nations,” adding evidence on the ways that Aboriginal peoples are filling the gaps and at the same time engaging in sustainable economic development activities.

Employment

The aim of the educational services and programs is to enable the transition of Aboriginal-identifying people from low-paying and insecure jobs to careers that provide higher and consistent incomes. As such, the educational and employment services are closely linked, although such programs and services may be under the umbrella of employment agencies. They may also include enhanced service delivery programs which impart soft skills to rural youth in their transition to the city “for a better lifestyle.” This transition involves employability training that encompasses “culture and identity and just understanding wellness and how to take care of number one, and how that in turn helps you in the work place.”

This program is intertwined with the administration of the First Nations Job Fund, involving Aboriginal Affairs and Northern Development Canada (now Indigenous and Northern Affairs Canada) and administered by Employment and Social Development Canada (ESDC) working with participating First Nations communities to target "those rural clients who are living on reserve who are 18-24 years old and who are on social assistance but have the ability to work with a little extra support." One respondent explained this link: "Once those rural clients are assessed and they are ready for work or they are ready for training, then they get referred into the First Nations Job Fund which we also administer."

Also noteworthy, is the wage subsidy program designed to encourage organizations to hire Aboriginal people: "So those are programs where we create partnerships with employers across the province to incentivize them or assist them with hiring an [Aboriginal] individual. So, we subsidize the wages, for up to 50% of their wages, and sometimes the other mandatory employment costs for that employee for a determined amount of time, up to 52 weeks." While this program is advantageous in rewarding organizations for hiring Aboriginal-identifying people, it also eliminates inexperience which often acts as a deterrent in job market entry. Toward this end, an assortment of services are provided to specific groups:

> To make sure that Métis people have the opportunity to go in and get some of that experience that is needed to get those long-term sustainable jobs, we have a variety of programs that are specifically targeted towards students. Summer sessions or weekend work during the school year are available for full-time students. Then we have basic wage subsidy for those clients who have some technical skills but don't have any experience to really be able to get into their area of employment. And then we have one having to do with apprenticeships to encourage more people to get into apprenticeship positions and encourage employers to become trainers.

The existence of these employment enhancement programs underscores the commitment to a number of the mandates of the urban Aboriginal organizations: economic development, improved quality of life, and inclusive communities, equity, and balance.

Political

Throughout the course of Canadian history, gross injustices, damaging to trust and cooperation, have been meted out to Aboriginal peoples. Honouring historic treaties made between Aboriginal people and governments is a foundation for righting these wrongs and rebuilding Aboriginal economic development and economic independence. Thus, the Office of the Treaty Commissioner (OTC) exists to promote reconciliation with the past and light a path to a better future while recognizing and promoting the notion that "we are all treaty people." In an attempt to promote this way of thinking, the treaty commissioner is involved in coordinating and facilitating a bilateral process between the Government of Canada and Indigenous people. One respondent further explains the role of the treaty commissioner:

> The treaty commissioner does a lot of public appearances. He carries the official voice of the office. His term has been characterized by a message that implementation of treaties is only possible through the foundation of reconciliation processes. If people can come together and talk to each other and begin to build a relationship, which is a reconciliation process, then we can move onto treaty implementation, because, then it makes sense. The treaties were about reconciliation originally between two governments.

The respondent further acknowledged that in order for the mandates of inclusiveness, equity, and balance to be achieved, colonization must be reversed resulting in the political processes which recognize, not just the letter, but the spirit of the treaties: "And so the spirit is there. We have to bring it alive and recognize that colonization is not the way to go, and that it is something that has to be shed by both parties. They have to recognize what it represents." The treaty commissioner has a key role to play in motivating and facilitating dialogue, promoting awareness and understanding, and sustaining relationships for reconciliation and a stronger Canada.

To assist the treaty commissioner in public education, a speakers' bureau of "a cadre of people, from many different walks of life, [are] trained over the years to do presentations and to talk to people and to be at events." They cater to any group interested in learning more about treaties, although the treaty rights message is also transmitted to those who may not have indicated interest: "It's a lot more than just talking to people. It's getting into what's happening around us and making sure that there is a place where treaty can be profiled." In speaking about the creative ways to generate interest in treaty rights, one respondent explained, "We put a little display together there about treaties, so people going to the theatre, can take home more than *Othello*."

The OTC is intentional in its approach to public education about treaty rights and has encountered levels of difficulty in engaging governmental bodies. One respondent explained, "We go after very strategic partnerships. We just signed an agreement with Saskatchewan Justice. They have engaged us to provide training to their staff. So we're beginning to bring our message into the prison system—the guards, the personnel in those places, and the people who work inside that ministry." This strategic alliance is a major win for the treaty rights agenda: "That's a big item. That's not the easiest group of people to influence."

In promoting understanding of treaty rights, fostering trust has been critical to "bring people together, with a move towards some kind of resolution." To further explain how trust is being built as part of the reconciliatory process, one respondent added that the organization is "identifying key individuals across the province [who] have the potential to influence the world around them by the positions they hold and their own leadership qualities." The aim of that exercise is "to allow individuals to feel comfortable enough to be able to speak [their] heart as opposed to [their] political line." Admittedly, this is no easy feat to accomplish: "That's a hard chip but you have to go there to be able to use their potential and capacity to influence people."

It was emphasized that facilitating a nonjudgmental environment outside of political sway, and appealing to individual conviction, creates "a more in-depth understanding of how to move forward with this trust that's being built, and the notion of reconciliation." It is thought that this

approach will result in the involvement of "a much larger group to deepen the discussion." Furthermore, widespread discussions promoting reconciliation on all sides of the political divide gives credence to the treaty rights agenda "in a truer sense than it's been in the past." One respondent argued that for reconciliation to truly occur, governments—federal and provincial crowns— should not shy away from the issue, but should actively pursue it:

> The treaty table needs to become more real … and it can only become more real if the federal government is serious about it. The federal government needs to send people here who have already the authority to make decisions.

In addition to public education campaigns on treaty rights and reconciliation, the OTC operates an Indian Residential Schools Resolution Health Support Program in partnership with Health Canada. This is an initiative where cultural and emotional support is provided for people who received settlements due to cruelty and abuse suffered in residential schools.

Economic Development

Relevant to Aboriginal economic development is redressing the historic wrongs, which have been viewed as robbing the Aboriginal people of economic development opportunities. In recognition of this, solid partnerships are being forged among Aboriginal people, governments, and the private sector. In linking economic development to treaty rights as an organizational mandate, one respondent stated:

> There is inside of the treaty relationship, a recognition that the First Nations signed in the spirit that they be allowed to participate in the economy. That, the big part of it, is been ignored, is being attacked, is been suppressed. So [we] spend a lot of time networking with businesses, business organizations, and connecting people, coordinating, and providing opportunities to have discussions. Right now [we are] involved in what we call our luncheon project. [We organize small luncheons, partnering with Macdonald-Laurier Institute]. We provide the venue and they lead the exercises with the participants, getting them to begin thinking about resource/revenue sharing. That's all in the spirit of livelihood, the treaty right to livelihood, participation in the economy.

In addition to exploring resource/revenue sharing initiatives, there are services and programs that are tailored to economic development. These include business development and ownership, financial business advice to First Nations bands, and entrepreneurship support through provision of grants and loans for business development. Community cohesiveness and inclusiveness are important factors in establishing and sustaining Aboriginal businesses. Businesses also tend to be corporations that depend heavily on community collaboration for their success, as demonstrated by the following:

> The owners of our corporation are . . . fourteen First Nations here in southern Saskatchewan. They also own other entities. We are just a new

> organization in the process of building a good sound economic base for our corporation and assisting people with financial business advice. We are in the real estate business. We have an office complex that we rent to Northlands College and a couple of individuals in the community.

The approach to economic development is one that relies on collective responsibility and support:

> That [entrepreneurship] program is our first step to becoming sustainable. But we are consulting with community to see what they believe would be a good business for us to operate. As we go through the business planning stages, we are inviting the community to come on that journey with us, so they can learn more about entrepreneurship. That's a partnership with First Nations University.

Q 10. Target Population

Most services provided by urban Aboriginal organizations in this study are targeted to specific groups cited as Indigenous, Aboriginal, First Nations, Inuit, and Metis (Table 3). However, such is the generosity of those at the helm of these organizations that access to programs and services is granted to those who do not meet eligibility criteria. One respondent explained, "[We serve] Indigenous persons, whether they are First Nations, Métis, Aboriginal, Inuit, however you want to put it. But we are open to anyone and everyone to utilize services and programming." In other words, they recognize that challenges faced by Indigenous people are no different from those faced by other members of the population. And, while some organizations are "status blind," targeting no specific Indigenous group, they do not deny access to programs or services. According to one respondent, "'We are all treaty people' implies you have to deal with the total population."

Table 3: Target populations of Aboriginal organizations

Target Population	**Percentage (%)**
Aboriginal	32
First Nations	24
Mētis	16
No specific target group	28
Total	**100**

In addition to "status blind" organizations, Aboriginal peoples are served by organizations that were not designed exclusively for Aboriginal peoples but for social demographics within which they are overrepresented:

> The target service population are people that are experiencing food insecurity in some way. In large part that is due to low income. If you tease out who those folks might be, then it's typically … certain cultural populations that are more represented. We certainly know [who] are

> more highly represented in those demographics… [Those with] limited access to employment and things like that are part of that population. Our programs are first and foremost relevant to them and then we look after everyone else, but they come first.

Another respondent shared that even though they do not specifically target Aboriginal groups, they do not discriminate, but focus on all members of smaller rural communities:

> It's all community members, though rural communities are a little higher priority than urban communities. Sometimes people use urban to mean anything that isn't on the farm, but that's not how we see it. We have two cities, Swift Current and Moose Jaw. Those are not our main priority, although we will work with them. They are pretty established, so we tend to work with small communities or community areas... For example, if you have a community with a population of 50 and they want to partner with the neighbouring community that has a population of 45, and together make a recreation board. We tend to focus on smaller population groups…we don't typically pick either seniors, or youth, or anything like that. It is based on community need [and] we don't differentiate in that way.

Specific programs and services may also be relevant to and target specific Aboriginal groups. For example, some programs target children who are being returned from foster care, others target youth who should be entering the workforce or are at risk of dropping out of high school, and others target provincial cultural groups. Some programs focus on families with low incomes, others are gender specific, and others focus on the elderly. There are also some programs that exist solely for people who live on reserves, while others are aimed at improving the governance structure and transparency and accountability levels within their own organizations. The different levels of programming for varying Indigenous groups result in some duplication of services.

Q 11. Who else offers programs and services to urban Aboriginal people in your community?

In some communities programs and services, available to Aboriginal peoples, are not operated by Aboriginal people. According to one respondent, these programs capitalize on the socioeconomic issues of these communities to acquire funding or to sustain their livelihoods:

> Well, we have about 100 [organizations] that grab one First Nations person and put them on their board and then they are eligible for Aboriginal monies. So that's the tactic that is used, or they go set up shop within our poverty-stricken areas and then that's who they deliver their services to. I always tell the people that are here, our First Nations people including ourselves are in the misery industry, unfortunately.

Notwithstanding the influx of services delivered by non-Aboriginal groups, there remains a strong need for Aboriginal services to be provided by people who understand Aboriginal culture, practices, and experiences. One respondent explains why:

> What is frustrating for me, because I have lived in Regina all my life, is that organizations pop up and they receive money because either they have the political connections or whatever. They receive money to assist our people, but really have no understanding or care to have that understanding of where these people are coming from—what generations look like. They fail, maybe not maliciously, or not without the best intentions of helping people, but just not understanding how. We have a lot of bleeding hearts … that think that they can fix us, but nobody [else] can fix us. We need to have healthy helpers that understand that we can only fix ourselves.

Another respondent added:

> In Regina, we have organizations that are either looking to make a buck off of us, or they think that they can fix us, or they think that we are lost causes the first or second time they try to fix us. So we get the people anyway that come to this organization and we are expected to make a dollar's worth of help out of 5 cents. Generally, these people who come to us have already used many services before they get to us. So you are asking how many organizations are out there, there's plenty. Stating that, though, we are committed to working and partnering with genuine organizations who truly assist First Nations and Métis people.

As a result of this commitment to having people who truly understand Aboriginal worldview and experiences provide services, most programs and services provided by Aboriginal organizations target specific Aboriginal identities (mostly First Nations and Métis), creating some duplication of programs and services. Yet some organizations partner with similar service providers to avoid this duplication and to serve all Aboriginal people. One respondent explained, "They are restricted to their regions. So, for instance in Saskatoon, [there are] a lot of partnerships, so we can run a joint program. We work together to make those …programs happen."

Education, Training and Employment

Tertiary education, skills training and employment services are closely linked. Tertiary education is offered by formalized and accredited Aboriginal academic institutions such as Gabriel Dumont Institute of Native Studies and Applied Research, Dumont Technical Institute, First Nations University of Canada, and The Saskatchewan Indian Institute of Technologies. These institutions forge partnerships with other regional colleges and universities such as University of Saskatchewan, University of Regina, Saskatchewan Polytechnic, Northlands College, Northwest Regional College, and Parkland College that offer similar programs. Memoranda of understanding exist among First Nations bands and territories, Métis Nation of Saskatchewan, and these institutions to provide Aboriginal specific programs with Indigenous content.

Examples of these programs include Northern Teacher Education Program (NORTEP), Northern Professional Access Program (NORPAC), Saskatchewan Urban Native Teacher Education Program (SUNTEP), and Indian Teacher Education Program (ITEP).

The programs offered by universities and colleges are supplemented by those of several organizations which focus on skills training and employment readiness. Such organizations include, but are not limited to, the Saskatoon Tribal Council Employment and Training Department in collaboration with the City of Saskatoon, Metis Employment and Training of Saskatchewan Inc. (METSI), Saskatchewan Indian Training Assessment Group (SITAG), Saskatoon Indian Métis Friendship Centre, Canada-Saskatchewan Career and Employment Services, Read Saskatoon, Radius Community Centre for Education and Employment, Quint Development Job Training and Employment, First Nations Employment Centre, and Saskatoon Aboriginal Employment Partnership.

Economic Development

There are Aboriginal Financial Institutions (AFI) that operate services in a manner similar to regular commercial financial organizations, while tailoring to the needs of Aboriginal people:

> When it comes to some of the business programs [Aboriginal peoples] are open to, like financial institutions, all of that still exists in an urban area. But the requirements are a little bit different and can sometimes be quite onerous on someone who is Métis. Access to capital is usually an issue. [Our programs are] offered just a little bit differently; [we] offer support in terms of business planning. A traditional financial institution expects you to come with all of that done already whereas [we] will help you in the process [of] creating all of that free of charge.

Organizations that offer similar financial and economic development programs for Aboriginal peoples include the Clarence Campeau Development Fund (CCDF), National Aboriginal Capital Corporation Association (NACCA), Saskatchewan Indian Equity Foundation (SIEF), and First Nations Bank, Peace Hills Trust, as well as Credit Unions.

Health

The health needs of Aboriginal peoples are met mostly through existing programs provided by health districts and health regions: “There are quite a few within our other communities outside of Saskatoon. There is the health region that offers some of the programming and some of the municipal government also offer some of the programming.” Urban Aboriginal organizations involved in providing or supplementing health services include Central Urban Métis Federation Inc., “which is the Métis representation”; First Nations and Métis Health services; Northern Saskatchewan Health Services; All Nations Hope, which deals with hepatitis and HIV prevention, education, training, awareness and support; and White Buffalo Youth Lodge.

Given the health disparities that exist between Aboriginal peoples and the general population, it is evident that health services struggle to meet this demand. In some areas, more than others,

there is a dearth of health services: "we are the only organization that provides third level services." This is true for some on reserve communities. In response to a question about organizations offering health programs and services to urban Aboriginal people in the community, one respondent stated:

> Nobody. I guess I could say with the health district, in term of nursing directly, they do bring some TB support in. But it's like us anyways, since we are a part of that organization. But there are no other provincial services. Federally, there is Child and Family Services there, the schools, and the band of course. But in terms of health there is nobody else that offers services on reserve in those communities. There are in other health districts, like Onion Lake they were able to get lab services in their community from the province which there is no way we would get. The province does pay the salary for the physicians, and it's supposed to be two days a week in some of the communities and we pay the travel. I guess I should acknowledge that and that's one way they provide services on reserve.

Social Services

Services are predominantly provided under the jurisdiction of Aboriginal organizations. While there may be some governmental involvement, this is not usually the case in some communities. One respondent stated, "We could have the federal government as well. Not so much on First Nations; we just have mainly the First Nations doing program delivery services themselves." Some organizations may not be Aboriginal specific, and may include urban services provided by "non-governmental organizations, a city or town, and the provincial or federal government." Some organizations that provide services to children and families include Canada Prenatal Program (CPNP), Child Hunger and Education Program, Kids First North, Boys and Girls Club of Saskatoon, and Aboriginal Family Services. Tribal Councils and Friendship Centres may also offer some programming geared to children and families under the umbrella of community development. Organizations mentioned by respondents as carrying out similar functions include Battlefords Agency Tribal Chiefs (BATC), Battlefords Tribal Council, Saskatoon Tribal Council, and Prince Albert Grand Council, which "has an Urban Service office."

Friendship Centres provide many programs to a wide cross-section of individuals. However, they provide youth specific programming similar to other organizations listed by respondents: White Buffalo Youth Lodge, Global Gathering Place, North Central Community Association, City of Saskatoon, and Rainbow Youth Centre. These organizations are all involved in youth mentorship and leadership development programs. One respondent stated that along with other organizations, the City of Saskatoon is highly involved in youth development and leadership:

> We run three Atoske programs [with the City of Saskatoon]. One is for the rural youth that potentially could be coming into the city at some point in time. And it's really a leadership program but it helps those youth then have the skills but also the comfort level to say, "I can come from my home community into the city and I can have these skills here.

> And I can not only just survive, I can thrive in the city environment and I can be a leader." And that's what that program really promotes.

> Then we run two urban Atoske programs for youth as well…It's those young clients who are…showing leadership qualities, positive leadership…We just want to promote that a little bit more and help them gain those skills and push them…If they decide to go through training, [saying], "I am deciding I want to be a lab tech" and they are stepping forward with some confidence, hopefully it leads people behind them, their peers, their contacts to follow along to do what [they are] doing.

Friendship Centres also play a significant role in providing emergency shelter, housing, food services, and addictions resources. Parkland Housing and The Lighthouse Supported Living were also mentioned as providing affordable housing, the latter also offering a wide range of outreach services for the homeless and/or individuals with drug/alcohol dependency, as "providing expanded services" muck "like a friendship centre."

Like most Aboriginal programs and services, social programs target specific Indigenous groups. One respondent pointed out their organization's unique position in this regard:

> We are the only status blind Aboriginal owned and operated organization. So we don't discriminate against anybody. There are other Aboriginal groups in the city. For instance, there is First Nations housing. Carlton Housing is First Nations focused. There is Métis housing. Now I do know that Métis housing takes First Nations as well but their priority is Métis. Their board is Métis. The same thing with Carleton Housing [in Lloydminster] whose board is First Nations. Our board is made up equally of First Nations and Métis.

This distinction in service is also evident in programs provided to women as well as poverty alleviation strategies and emergency feeding programs offered in clusters within the same communities: "We have Métis Women, so they offer programming of different types. I'm not positive but I believe that you need to be Métis to attend, though. At the Grand Council you need to be First Nations to attend." In addition, one respondent described organizations which provide similar services in a community: "Probably the Métis society a little bit. But they don't have an office right now. And the tribal council, I guess. Flying Dust band, just right out of town. [There is] also Door of Hope [in Meadow Lake]. They work with the churches in town and they set up a food bank and they deal with a lot of people, giving them clothing and stuff helping them out."

In general, Friendship Centres appear to be the reference point for Aboriginal people and food security: "Well there's lots [working on food security], [but] we work quite closely with the Friendship Centre, so there is a lot of conversation when we have the community markets. If there is food left over, it goes to the Friendship Centre to cook and serve to their clientele."

Sport, Culture, and Recreation

Recreational and cultural programming is structured around a provincial hub that branches out into communities: "All of our recreational organizations in all the different communities, cultural organizations certainly would be offering to Aboriginal participants, although it's more provincially focused. The provincial sports and governing bodies would be focusing and definitely trying to reach Aboriginal participants for…Aboriginal games or Saskatchewan games." With the provincial focus in sports, "we wouldn't see a lot of sport groups in the district. You might see a sport team but nothing bigger than that until you get to a more specific focus." Funding available for sport, culture, and recreation was explained in this way:

> Well, in terms of the granting funds…to the culture sector here in the province, there are other agencies that get money from other places. So you have the Community Initiatives Fund which would be another agency that basically is using revenue from Casinos that supports culture, recreation, and activities. The other one would be the Saskatchewan Arts Board that we have a partnership with, and obviously their mandate is a little more focused on arts whereas ours is much broader in supporting heritage as well and multiculturalism. There is also Creative Saskatchewan, a new player, and that is through the Ministry of Parks, Culture and Sport. So they are arm's length from the government and they support the economic venture side of culture. So we are more entangled in the awareness, diversity, building bridges, bringing cultural awareness here and supporting those activities.

Q 12. Gaps in Services or Target Groups

Notwithstanding, programs and services provided to Aboriginal peoples by Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal partners, gaps remain. While some programs and services are duplicated, distinguished only by target population, some groups such as Métis or Inuit, may find fewer programs for them and some programs may be sacrificed to the latest policy priority. A scramble for financial resources drives much of the undue competition, duplication, and missed opportunities—with disproportionate impacts on northern and youth programs.

Overlap of Services

This separation by groups may lead to some programs and services being operated in silos, with very few resources to meet needs outside of specific groups. One respondent further explains how a proliferation of services has become a barrier for organizations to meet their mandates:

> So everybody is chasing projects like this, even private donations or whatever. It used to be that there were maybe two or three organizations in the city that would have been the go to places…[based on their] mandates. But now, what we are finding is that there is less elbow room in the sense that everyone is putting on different programs…It's really getting to be a bit of duplication of services.

Duplication of services may not only be a matter of attempting to tailor service to each Indigenous group, but may also be linked to current policy direction. One respondent explains that designing programs to match policy may lead to competition and neglect of other needs:

> I think there is a bit of duplication and I think it needs to be straightened out… This past year, the buzz words of the government (where a lot of non-profits like us get our funding from) are Aboriginal participation in the economy. So you can imagine most places are going to shift their programming to address that need because that is where all the money is right now. You see a lot of that right now…cultural programming is maybe lacking. [A gap would be]…a lack in cultural social programming right now, in my opinion.

As this example makes clear, policy priorities may also be narrowly conceived in ways that neglect the cultural foundation of successful engagement in any area of life, including the economic. Another respondent voiced concern about the waste: "Duplicating services is a waste of dollars, and it's a waste of energies. Why not let…each organization do what they do and do it well and support each other. There is lots of room for non-profits… . But it's deciding what you do and do that well and trying not to be competitive with each other. We are all in this together."

Lag in Services

In addition to duplication of services, lack of financial resources (cited as a major gap by almost every organization surveyed) contributes greatly to a reduced ability to bridge the gaps identified. One respondent shared, "We don't really have huge gaps in the services. We provide what they want. Our only gap is that we don't have extensive funding so it's not an unlimited pool." Another stated, "There are definitely gaps in services and I guess it comes down to money. There is never enough." Yet another added, "Yeah there is a big gap in terms of funding dollars for other training programs because we don't have any of that."

Lack of resources

This lack of financial resources hinders Aboriginal organizations from fulfilling their mandates and meeting their priorities. According to one respondent, "The big thing I guess is resources to fulfill the mandate. There is always a shortage of funds and a shortage of capacity—human capacity, financial capacity, and technical capacity. There are a lot of gaps."

Not only are competition and dependence on external parties for financial resources crippling, but these issues are further compounded by the bureaucracy associated with Aboriginal organizations/individuals acquiring funding. According to one respondent, "In order to go back to school you have to apply for provincial training allowance (PTA)…or be funded somehow, [but] they can't get PTA…on-reserve unless there's special permission."

Many suffer because of a lack of capacity. According to one respondent, the efforts of organizations to meet the needs of clients is lost because follow up cannot be sustained: "We don't have the continuity or the ability to bring the program to the individual, and I think the infrastructure is our biggest problem." One respondent also shared that important services are

inhibited due to this lack of capacity: “Our only gap is that we can’t fill every need and we only have three coordinators that go out. We can’t fill every need and visit every community every year because there simply isn’t the capacity or funding to do it. That’s our only real gap, I think.”

According to another respondent, clients are negatively impacted by personnel being spread too thin: “I don’t have a person to dedicate to health. And really, we should have one person here just on health…. The Indigenous people, the newcomers, the poor people, they all get affected by this institution and not always in the best way, not always in their best interests.” Another respondent explained that the demand in the community for services is overwhelming, “I think if there are any gaps or any challenge is that we can’t be everywhere all the time. I think some communities would like us to probably spend a week or a month in developing and supporting their recreation director or their recreation board. But that is a pretty big challenge for us.”

Where there are no other barriers to services, success is compromised by staff and resource shortages. With few workers and many clients, there may not be time to dedicate to clients:

> I mean also, not enough time in a day. I guess you can't really blame anybody. At times, it is challenging to try to build success if you are working with the client and you only have an hour or you are based on scheduled appointments. There is nothing you really can [do]; at times, yes, you can accomplish things, baby steps or you can connect them further. But I mean, in working with people and truly working with people, you need more time than an hour or an hour and a half.

The respondent further explained that the challenge of time is exacerbated by the unavailability of certain professionals who choose not to work with Aboriginal organizations or their office hours do not coincide with the times that individuals are available to access these services:

> For these professionals—job coaches, liaison workers, the guidance counselors, et cetera—there are a lot of people out there who do require development and career growth just in themselves. But I noticed, nobody is really stepping up to make themselves available. Not the 8 to 4:30, but that 2 to 10, the 3 to evening...You don't have to necessarily start…any type of special program, but maybe encourage change in your administration where you have an employee who comes in from 12 to 8, just to make themselves available and try to understand a bit more. [Clients] have barriers, responsibilities, things might be going on. There have been instances where individuals who are working in a job where they have to make the income, don't have time to visit an agency because our doors are closed.

Uneven impacts of funding formulas and cuts

Northern communities face unusual funding difficulties:

> There’s always a need for funding…, let’s say a facility for capital projects. Unfortunately, we don’t have the resources or ability to

> provide communities with funding dollars of $100,000 plus. That has to come from the provincial government and those grants happen very rarely and for northern communities they are really hard to apply for because of all the dynamics that happen.

Offering programs in remote locations is more costly when compared to urban settings, yet the funding formula and expectations of its use are the same:

> My funding is based on population. What's recognized is the dollar in the outlying communities that we serve isn't as valuable as in Saskatoon, meaning, if I am going to put a project on or a program in one of those outlying communities, it's going to cost me more money. So I could have dollar figures coming in, for example, let's say two hundred here and two hundred here. To serve this two hundred here in the rural end it's going to take more dollars, but I have less dollars because I have less people. But they deserve the same quality of service. So our dollar is limited more by the factor of, [serving in] a remote place where we have to get, either people coming into the city to do the training, which is going to cost us more dollars to do that, or else take the training to them which is going to cost more dollars to them.

This gap affects several First Nations communities that are located in remote areas: The same respondent, explained that partnerships are necessary to address this cost factor:

> Yeah [this affects] the seven First Nations that I serve, and then it's the more rural [areas] and then the surrounding geographic areas. So that's one of the things that I think has to be recognized, that if you are serving a smaller remote population out of a larger population base, the funding formula has to be different than the funding formula for the city…I have partners here in the city, I will go to my partners and say "let's do something together" and the cost isn't as great. But if I don't secure a partnership, ability drops and the cost goes up, [even though] the funding formulas are the same.

This challenge of resources and personnel is exacerbated in Northern Saskatchewan where there is an unwillingness to volunteer time and effort without remun.ration. One respondent explained, "Not only that, but we hear a lot in the north that it is really hard to get volunteers that aren't paid. That's still a gap that we are trying to help bridge." In addition, the lack of skilled personnel living in remote and rural communities is inhibiting to some programs. This is true for programs which are seeking to promote creativity among children. It becomes more expensive to streamline and deliver these programs when human resources are not readily available or accessible within the communities. One respondent explained,

> We would like to work more closely with, for instance, the First Nations bands and perhaps tribal councils. It's challenging though in that Creative Kids fits best when we have a dance or language teacher

> already in a community and we can provide the lesson costs. Some communities might not have a dance studio or music teacher, so providing funding for families in these communities is more challenging. So there's a gap in the service we are able to provide if we are looking to ensure all Saskatchewan children have those opportunities. We are kind of testing the waters; for instance, in the north. We partnered with Cameco and offered up to $7,000 for communities to start their own programs, because we haven't had many applications for, say, north of La Ronge. It is a bit of a pilot project to see what kids want to see in their communities.

In some cases, children have to be discontinued from programs or they do not participate because it is expensive or inconvenient for them to be transported outside of their communities to access programs: "The other gap for us is transportation. Some of our funded families may not own a car and look to taxis or busing to get to lessons. We don't fund transportation to lessons but realize it can be a barrier to participating in creative activities." Transportation is difficult for these families especially during the winter.

Respondents also cited several reasons for their financial limitations and associated effects, especially funding cuts by provincial and federal governments, policy dictates accompanying existing funding, funding timelines, competition for funding, and organizational structure.

Funding cuts result in service gaps. However, sustained quality of life improvement is hindered because youth programs may be discontinued without financial support: "I guess the gaps with working with our youth is that it is becoming very difficult due to the federal government having pulled funding for our youth programming." Another stated, "We don't have a youth organization in that community. We used to have a youth centre at one time but the funding was no longer given. That centre is just sitting there now; it's empty. [We can't continue] until we get, regain funding from somewhere."

Policy impacts

Others stressed gaps in programs and services for which funding is consistent but mandates and policy negatively impact quality of life. One respondent explained how this negatively affects Aboriginal culture and quality of life: "Yes it's great [that] you want people employed, but quality of life is lost if you lose other components of it. Spirituality and all those things…are being eroded because of that: 'you want money, well, here! This is now your mandate for that money'." Another respondent commented on the prioritizing of the economic at the expense of the cultural as another colonial act of assimilation:

> You've got a lot of different organizations [trying] to stay alive. They are chasing that dollar and pulling away from…their original mandate or the true intent of their mandates. Maybe, at one time they provided more recreation and culture. But now because they need to sustain their funding to keep doing those types of things they need to incorporate an employment piece to that or attach an economy piece to that which really robs their original mandate of…culture. And culture is

> important…we forget about the culture, so it leads back to assimilation. So let's make sure everybody has a job…forget about the culture and everybody should be acting the same way in the same manner.

Another respondent further explained the difficulty of service providers, who know and understand community needs, working with policy mandates and targeted funding:

> There are gaps in services as well as target groups because much of the funding that any organization gets in the human services is project or program based. So the government truly dictates where their dollars are going. If we received a core amount of funding that said 'what are your priorities? Who are your priorities? How would you spend 5 million dollars?' then we would be able to come up with a work plan in which we felt it would better target those groups and demographics as well as the program and services that are required. But right now, especially the last 3-4 years it is very much dictated to us. If we are fortunate enough to receive the funding, who we are helping, how we are helping, and how much we are helping, even down to the cent is dictated.

Another respondent reflected on the effect on organizational priorities: "I can see things we start but [become] weak in other areas…at the expense of chasing a government mandate which is employment, attachment to the economy. And I am not denying because that is the bulk of my work…is the attachment to the economy and employment."

Funding timelines

Funding renewal timelines that do not coincide with program duration may introduce uncertainty and also inhibit planning and continuity for some programs. According to one respondent, "a lot of the programs that we have, some of them are a 5-year program, a 3-year program, some of them are annual programs so there is no guarantee on funding for some of them and we have to keep re-applying." In addition to gaps in planning, attributed to funding renewal timelines, some respondents feel that funding is still not enough to cover costs:

> We could definitely use a lot of support. I find that…friendship centres are always fighting for dollars, right? Because, I am not really sure why but especially in our community…our first Nations groups. We are open to First Nations, Métis, and Inuit, you know. It seems like we are always struggling for dollars. It's tough sometimes. I just feel like we struggle; we are always fighting, pretty much nickels and dimes. It's not like we get multimillion dollar funding. I mean, we get enough funding to survive and do what we can… Every organization wants more money, definitely. You know, we could do a lot more.

Organizational structure

In addition to competing with non-Aboriginal organizations that list Aboriginal peoples as one of their target groups, the structure of some Aboriginal organizations has been cited as a debilitating factor in the competition for grants: "that's one kind of gap, just the way that some of the

organizations are structured, and how difficult it can be sometimes to compete for federal grants. A lot of Aboriginal organizations tend to struggle with that." Another respondent elaborated on the structural challenge of "all those agreements and all those tribal councils," causing "a very hard time of securing additional funding through other sources."

Competing for clients and dollars

A dependence on funding from external sources strongly inhibits Aboriginal organizations in achieving their mandates as several organizations compete for the same grants. One respondent explains, "We're chasing the same dollars, we are chasing the same clients, we are chasing… Because clients equal dollars, everyone is putting on different programs, everybody's chasing some dollars, and everybody's kind of chasing the same client." This competition goes against the spirit of community espoused by Aboriginal peoples and organizations:

> I wish that we could all just come together. We are so split. We have friends in the Métis-Nation so even the locals are pitted against each other. We are actually planning—I just have to find the funding in our community—I want to host a gathering where we honour the three leaders of the three Métis locals in our community. We are hoping that it will…bring some strength and togetherness.

This same respondent added:

> So that's what I find very challenging is that it is an old school mentality to me, "don't talk to them; they will take your funding," but we need to get over that if we are going to make a difference in people's lives. We need to come together and work together and trust each other. But I don't' know! Keep working on it and see what happens!

Affordable housing

Among the gaps, finding affordable housing in urban areas slows economic development among Aboriginal peoples. One respondent explained how the purposes of economic development programs are defeated by disabling factors:

> We have Yorkton Tribal Council Labour Force Development (LFD), and First Nations Job Fund helping all these young adults get trained and helping them get jobs. Some of the programs are specific for on-reserve only and then when they come to the city, they have nowhere to live, or are driving back and forth. That's a huge problem because you commute an hour a day—an hour this way and an hour back for a $10 an hour job. You know, that's like set up for failure really.

Another respondent explained that there is not much urban Aboriginal organizations can do about the housing shortages: "Obviously, more housing is one that is very important with the shortages out there. We don't have resources or any kind of capacity that way other than doing inspections of existing facilities. But almost every year there are gaps that could be filled and provide better services. There are no real numbers on that, but there are…vast shortages in all the

areas." Yet another respondent added that this housing shortage leads to other issues such as overcrowding and deplorable housing conditions: "Housing is a major gap. It's underfunded and basically the Tribal Council has no housing funding and it's one of the biggest concerns of our member First Nations. There is a lot of overcrowding and shortage of housing. The conditions of homes are pretty bad and there is no funding for it." Another respondent identified housing as a special challenge for children leaving the social service system because they have come of age:

> It seems to be the one area that is really needed, [that] is housing for children and young adults from the age of 16 to 18 in the city and Yorkton. They go from Child and Family Services or Social Services when they are 18, and once they are 18, all services stop for them. Like there's nothing, absolutely nothing for them and the culture shock from going from on reserve to off reserve or vice versa.

Defining and navigating urban Aboriginal services

The definition of urban services unique to Aboriginal people is seen as itself a gap because specialized services for one population is not understood by the broader Canadian population:

> The big gap is always the Aboriginal gap. So when you look at the makeup of a city or urban setting, there are diverse cultures there. The problem with the diverse cultures is [that] the Aboriginal component is still a unique and specialized field, where there is a requirement of services. Typically, an urban service is unheard of in other cultures. So the definition of urban services to First Nations and urban services to a town or to the general membership of a town or city is not the same.
>
> So ours is a specialized service that deals with justice, housing and homelessness, health issues, meaning Medicare, pharmacy, methadone programs, addiction counseling, job placement programs, support services for families. Some are specialized fields, so a town or non-native from other cultures can't understand what urban services definition means. It's a different definition. An urban service definition to them is providing water, sewer, lots, commercial developments, housing lots, making parks, having fire and safety services… When you talk [to the] provincial government they have two definitions—one for us and one for everyone else.

If the broader community does not understand the obligations of urban Aboriginal services and the numerous ad hoc and disconnected services, they are also difficult for Aboriginal people to navigate. According to one respondent, the disconnect is such that a map is required: "What's missing in the equation is a map to the gap, the resources that is overseen by somebody, somewhere. And so people get lost in that. They get lost in, "okay I need this….do I fit there?" "Do I fit that mandate, or do I go here?" It's kind of like shotgun approach…boom, you know, it's all over there and you've got to try and navigate through that." Without this connectivity "map", and the infrastructure to support it, it is challenging to provide comprehensive services:

> There are some gaps in some programs. For example, when we have a client that comes in we shuffle them off to five different people and everybody sort of meets them individually and writes a case assessment file on them… After that, we don't know where he is at or what's happening because we don't really communicate as well as we should.

On-reserve communities

On-reserve First Nations communities are not exempt from lack of coordination. In fact, the size of the communities and the distances between them creates opportunities for individuals to be neglected or overlooked. One respondent explained:

> One of the disadvantages to being a really big First Nation is that we are not close enough together. We are not in close proximity so a lot of those family services that our clients need are not located in the same program as ours. I think a lot of people fall through the cracks because of that. We see things like people who need help with addictions—they have to go to a totally different part of the reserve to get that.

The same respondent added that coupling services into some sort of shared portfolio among organization would reduce the poor coordination: "If we could pull programs closer together and somehow offer a lot of the stuff at the same time; that would be great. But it is hard to do that because we are so big." This respondent concluded, "A small First Nation might have all of those service workers in the same building but we can't put all those staff in the same building with our band because there is just too many staff. So there is like physical distance and it does create a lot of people falling through the cracks, just because of that." Therefore, dispersed communities were a root cause of inefficient service delivery.

One respondent recounted an experience that underscores an unwillingness among some organizations to form relationships outside of their existing structure and values:

> In February I got shut down. I wanted to make a board, a non-political board, with their CEOs or finance people from the different agencies and just let us put our heads together to make a business but they didn't want that. So I was like okay I will just go with the status quo, and the status quo is really doing nothing! [Some programs are] great for my First Nation, that really is and it's good for them, but what about everybody as a whole?

Health care

If there are gaps in health services in urban centres, gaps are far greater for on-reserve communities. In on-reserve communities, there are some health services that are not as efficient or readily available as in small towns or cities:

> There are services here in the cities or even small towns that you can't even imagine over there [on-reserve communities]. For example, blood work. If anyone has to get blood work they just go to the lab here. There,

> you have to get up and make sure you are at the clinic before 10:00 a.m because if you are not there you are going to miss the taxi that is going to take your blood work to another centre which is a couple of hours away. It may or may not get there in time and then it gets shipped over to…But you don't get your results back for a long time and sometimes the blood is no longer any good depending if you miss that. If you are really sick you could wait forever.

Service challenges are amplified by staff shortages: "We started in 1998, and our organization provides services to the Northern First Nations with positions that were originally handed to us by FNIHB [First Nations and Inuit Health Branch], and then we have not had any additional positions added so we do have shortages since there have been changes in health care since 1998 and we haven't had any increases in those positions." The respondent also explained that these shortages are due to lack of consideration of population size:

> Well part of the problem is that the Federal government has never considered population in First Nations communities. So, when they do funding increases they don't consider the fact that the population has changed. So, when we took transfer in 1998, our partners had a total of 30,000 and now they are at about 70,000. Since the government doesn't take into account population, it is hard to continue to provide services when you are still funded for—like we were originally funded for a 0.4 NHO but we have to have a full-time NHO, so we are just underfunded.

Furthermore, in some health fields, there are not many Aboriginal people who are equipped to carry out specialized jobs: "Because of our area and expertise, we are supposed to hire people who are the top of their field, and at this time, in the way the world works, we don't have a lot of First Nations people that are NHO or Doctors or Dentists. So we are looking at people who are specialists in their field and that's pretty tough to come by in the First Nations community."

Staff shortages and limited availability of services affect individuals in all stages of the life cycle. Limited access to prenatal services such as ultrasounds or labour and delivery units in some on-reserve communities pose a threat to the health of mothers and their newborns. It also disrupts families as pregnant women may have to leave their families for extended periods of time in order to access obstetric care. One respondent explained:

> One of our communities has an average birth rate of 90 per year, so you have a lot of prenatal women. When prenatal women are getting close to term, they have to go out…for two weeks before their due date. They just stay in these places, these group home type things...They are not funded to have their partner or anything so they are by themselves. You have to remember that most people who are on reserve and have clinics, don't have access to any of this stuff that I am talking about.

Additionally, some communities are so remote that access by road is limited for emergency vehicles. At the same time, air strips are unsuitable for emergency landing and the primitive methods employed in air evacuations pose a threat to life and safety:

> When we have an air evacuation, what they do is have cars on the strip to shine their headlights, so the air med evacuation team can get in. It is very dangerous. We have videos where the airplane comes just overtop one of these vehicles [to] take off and to land. It's very dangerous and we have been fighting with the government about adequate [resources]. It's not lighted and it's not meant for emergencies. [It] was initially meant…to bring in fishermen to this camp.

In some communities, there is no access to palliative care for chronic conditions such as renal disease. One respondent explains how stressful and unfair this situation is for sick people who have to travel long distances for care, because there is none available in the place they call home:

> We have a number of people on dialysis [that travel] three times a week to Saskatoon. [For instance], we have an older gentleman. He leaves Sunday night to Saskatoon and has his dialysis, then travels back home. He gets home Monday night. Tuesday, he has to travel back again, have his dialysis and back. Three times a week, he does that, so he is only home two days. You ask "why does he live there?" That's his home, and they don't do well in the city, especially for the elderly.

The respondent also explained that where services could be accessed in towns closer to these reserves, it is perceived that some services are not seen as priority areas for these towns. "You might ask why they don't just go to [a particular town]. Well [that town] is in our health district, but they don't want dialysis there. Of course, it's mostly First Nations on dialysis but they didn't have room and it wasn't important, whatever."

Notwithstanding the many gaps highlighted by respondents, the city of Saskatoon is viewed as a model city for having identified and addressed many of the services gaps for Aboriginal people. According to one respondent, compared to other urban centres in Saskatchewan, Saskatoon has been highly successful in bridging service gaps:

> One of the things I find in Saskatoon coming from a smaller centre is they are resource rich. And people who live, or grew up in Saskatoon may not see it that way compared to Vancouver, Toronto, or wherever. But if you look at the smaller communities outside of Saskatoon. North Battleford, Prince Albert, Meadow Lake, or even smaller communities, there is usually not a whole lot of resources. But when you go to Saskatoon, regardless of your need, a lot of people have filled most of the gaps. I am not saying all of them because I don't know all the gaps.

Aboriginal representation and relationships

The status quo is maintained in the absence of Aboriginal representation across all levels of programming. One respondent explained how Aboriginal peoples assuming authority over their own programs can bridge the misunderstanding of Aboriginal culture and needs:

> Again I come back to building relationships and one of the strongest things is that there needs to be representation both within your staff, within your board, of people of First Nations and Métis background. You can't talk about how your organization is building bridges if you don't have those people in place that have some level of authority over what your organization does and the philosophy that it promotes. So you need people with lived experience within your organization that can provide guidance and do the tangible work as well as ensuring that the programs of Aboriginal communities are always…front and centre. I think you have to really ensure that these pieces are in place in order to build relationships with Aboriginal organizations.

The respondent also explained that greater progress can be made by Aboriginal people taking ownership of their own services and building trusting relationships with non-Aboriginal organizations that provide services to Aboriginal people:

> It's a huge thing around trust and it's kind of time I think to prove yourself and consistently move forward and sometimes you take steps backwards and sometimes you learn and being honest about that with others. It's a learning thing for any organization that is not strictly Aboriginal to work as an ally with Aboriginal organizations. We still have lots to learn. Again that comes from having people on staff or on your board or on management that has that knowledge to pass on.

The uptake of qualified Aboriginal people in authority positions in the workforce can help improve working relationships among Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal organizations. One respondent explained that this ought to be part of future planning:

> It would be nice to have Aboriginal or brown faces in positions that can have influence and that can provide better knowledge to companies—be it supervisors or mid-level seniors and then even CEO—just to share. There are some places out there that are getting it a little bit at a time and they do have working success. I even think about it like this; [there] is going to be a day soon, 10, 20, 30 years, where that's all you are going to see, majority. So why not react now and do something now to start building that capacity, because it is going to happen. Welcome brown faces that have the same qualifications as the next person to meet or fill the position.

Aboriginal organizations have been doing their part. They are aware that it is important to build trust and have been engaging with both Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal organizations to increase Aboriginal representation in the workforce. However, the results have been slow in coming. One respondent explained that having a representative workforce is two sided, requiring Aboriginal engagement as well as buy-in from employers: "There would be a lot of gaps, but some that I find are from experience. Obviously, would be the actual buy-in…from the employer side. If they really wanted to connect and engage, the front line or entry-level workers, they would be

wise to do their part as far as they themselves engage with the service agencies that provide service to Aboriginal people." The respondent underlined ongoing efforts and failures:

> We do hold jobs fairs and we do [our] best [at] relationship building with businesses. But there is only so much that we can do. For example, I had a job fair [that was] well attended with as many as 40 or 50 [businesses]. At least those places, upon discussion, confirmed, "yes, if we find the right candidate that meet the minimal [requirements], we will give them an opportunity." That was successful [because] they actually showed true intent. But they didn't hire. You show up and you give them your information and you don't really hear from them. There is no return by any means. It would be nice if we see more businesses just do their [part] because there is only so much we can do.

Another respondent explained that, while some Aboriginal organizations understood the importance of networking and would like to initiate relationships and expand their scope, they do not have the manpower to do so: "Well there are big organizations that we've barely touched like the health system. There is the odd group that will reach out to us. But we don't have the capacity to be more assertive in establishing relationship with big organizations like that."

Cultural barriers

Some organizations which operate on limited resources and have chosen to partner with non-Aboriginal organizations have experienced soured relationships due to cultural barriers. One respondent felt that cultural barriers are so prominent that organizations should prioritize overcoming these barriers: "That's where we see the gaps right now is the awareness piece across cultures …out there, so we've got to do some more work in that area." Another respondent explained the disrespect experienced when partners do not understand Aboriginal way of life: "I forgot to mention that we have a partnership…but had issues with…how they were abusing Elders, so I haven't filled that position in two years...Our Elders are there for support not to offer services. So they were doing that [but there was a problem with] the comfort level and talking Cree." The respondent further explained that youth and inexperience of non-Aboriginal workers contributed to the breakdown in the relationship with the non-Aboriginal organization: "You know, some of those home visitors are book learned, 23, and not life experienced at all. And the looks! I can tell when someone is disgusted, so how dare you look, you know what I mean? If you are there to help, help! Leave your judgment at the door."

In addition to perceptions of disrespect, there is the lack of trust of non-Aboriginal people among Aboriginal elders. According to one respondent, this stems from their experiences of abuse: "I'd say for elders, the Cooperative Health Centre, which is set up through our Parkland Health District, tries to help with Elder Abuse Programs and things like that, but if you don't have that comfort level…I still see, in our older people, the tight lipped stuff because [they] are scared that whatever you say is going to affect somebody's life later or your own or like the law."

This fear of authorities is a gap in itself as it allows problems to escalate. The respondent clarified that this fear spurs the cycle of self-preservation and creates barriers: "It's the memories of authorities. Even a lot of our young people here, they don't want to tell us stuff, it stays here.

‘I don’t call Social Services, I don’t. It’s all for the betterment of the people [but] everybody sets up their own borders. Like I said, you see college borders, you see provincial borders. Well for us it’s Treaty 6.”

Education

While organizations have secured gains in skills training which are contributing to the economic development of Aboriginal communities, one respondent explained that there remain gaps in education: “There is still a large gap in terms of education. We do notice especially in some of our northern urban centers there's still a large gap in the STEM skills. So we're still having an issue with the science, technology, engineering, and math with our younger generation.” Another added that there’s a gap in the age of individuals allowed to access some training programs:

> That’s a new program it just started and it has been running for a little while, but it hasn’t been able to work with anyone over 24 years old which is unfortunate because we have a lot of people who are potentially highly employable or trainable but they are not able to access any benefits through that program… It’s good that they are focusing on the young people, but it’s not meeting the need for that kind of a service for everyone that actually needs because our education rates are not high and people don’t have a lot of work experience and training so it’s hard for them to get into the workforce.

Employability skills are necessary for solid economic development, but they are not the only skills that contribute to sustained economic development that may be lacking. The absence of life skills can severely impede economic opportunity:

> Well clearly, to start or expand businesses, usually people say the biggest roadblock to that is access to funding. So the services that we provide, in general, is funding service. However, there are services that could potentially be missing, such as financial literacy [programs for] people who live paycheck to paycheck or who don't save money. They have got a great business idea, they get financing, it is profitable, it is making money, but they run their business into the ground because they don't know how to manage their financing. They don't get bookkeeping, don't get proper savings. And the reasons why could be varied, right? It could be issues of substance abuse, it could be issues of addiction, issues of whatever. There almost has to be…tied hand-in-hand with having a successful business of having a successful life, of being healthy and ready and prepared which is often overlooked. You know, when people come to us and apply for a loan, [financial management] would be a big part of mitigating the risk for successful projects.

Another respondent added that there is also a need for business consultants who will work with Aboriginal entrepreneurs who seek out existing business development programs:

> We used to have business service officers who served as business consultants [for] people who are at the very early idea stage but didn't know about the grant [and wanted to know], "should I go to this lender or that lender?" Most people think, "I want to start a business, I just need a business plan." But that's not necessarily always where you start. Or they want to start a business and they don't know size and scope and "do I start it or not?" And I think it's almost like the service of how to choose the right idea or not. Right, because a lot of people fall in love with their ideas or they have an idea. And you hate to see someone go down the road for something that's not going to have a great chance of success. It's really not my job to do that. It's my job to give out financing right, come to me when your idea is complete, I will let you know if you are approved for financing or not. But often times I feel like I need to take on the role of providing some development to the person's idea because there is that gap of simply no one else doing it.

Childcare

Other respondents feel that economic development is inhibited by limited childcare options:

> Services to ensure that people are achieving childcare is a huge one because when you don't have licensed daycares and services to little ones, how do people feel about going out and seeking employment and what amounts of personal income is spent on child care? I know so many people in this city generally that fret and worry over the kind of childcare that their children are receiving. But it's really heightened in this neighbourhood. When you are vying for a small number of spaces for childcare then what is your incentive to go and find employment?

The childcare gap also affects individuals who are trying to improve their standard of living by educational advancement. According to this respondent, this challenge heightens the stress level of students and is a deterrent to upward mobility: "Actually, from talking to students, different coordinators and instructors on campus, and from community, I see a gap in daycare and childcare being an issue. . . . Students go into their internships for nursing on a 12 hour shift. Day care centres close at five or six, and then there's the cost of finding additional care or the transportation for someplace else for that additional two hours."

Another respondent stated that there will always be social service gaps due to the number of children apprehended by children services: "There are social service gaps always, I think those will exist just because we do have a large number of children in care still. I mean it is an issue."

Services for youth and men

While some identified gaps in youth services—"Oh, I think the youth. We don't have a youth organization in that community"—others stressed a gap in services for men which is amplified by the limited number of men applying for positions within the organizations:

> I would say men. We don't have specific programming and supports for men. And we've talked about that before. The majority of people who come in for coffee and use the computers are men. However, to get them hooked into programs and services is hard…there is a gap. We haven't solved that problem yet. Like they will go in and meet one on one with our community intervention advocate. They will come in and socialize all day long but to have them participate in a program, there is something missing there.
>
> I think we need a position, and not to sound discriminatory, but we need a position on staff that is filled by a man. Because I think they could make that link. It not that we have a bias against hiring men; it's just that we don't get a lot of applicants. Now maybe it's because of the oil and gas industry here. We can't compete with those kinds of wages.

Q 13. Services that enhance economic participation of urban Aboriginal people

Respondents reported that the following services play a significant role in economic participation of Aboriginal people: business development, transfer of Aboriginal services to Aboriginal-run organizations, sports and culture, education and skills training, cultural recognition, employment, childcare programs, low income supports, and provincial recognition.

Business development
Business development programs are directly linked to economic participation as they help to "directly involve people in start-up businesses and get them on their feet." In this regard, funding services are a key piece offered by one financial institution: "We are kind of just a flow through for economic development. We help First Nations, our First Nations, with their business plan and stuff like that. We can't dictate, they have to tell us what to do." According to the respondent, this approach is widely accepted: "We are getting good feedback from the community in regards to it so it's something that is wanted, that's for sure."

Aboriginal-run organizations
Another respondent mentioned that their organization enhanced economic participation by using the services of Aboriginal-owned and operated businesses: "I think that we are a large part of enhancing economics in Saskatoon with the amount of services that we use and utilize. We try to utilize Aboriginal businesses. We just did a $500,000 renovation." Another added, "We use Aboriginal contractors... for years too. When you look at that, that's how we participate, I think, economically."

One respondent described increased economic participation when health services in one Aboriginal community was transferred to Aboriginal providers: "[Before] transfer, when the government was providing the services, there was roughly 20 people working and out of those, there might have been maximum ten from the community. Those would have been local people, and the other ten would be coming in from somewhere else. We now have over 115 employees. 94% are Aboriginal, and 85% are band members." In demonstrating how the transfer enhances

economic participation, the respondent stated, "We initiated the first long distance LPN [licensed practical nurse] program a number of years ago. Out of that pilot we had 6 and we hired all of them. Now, it is a program that is offered throughout the north, so we have a lot of nurses now from the communities. That helps to improve hopefully health status and direct the control of health services." Not only has it "provided a lot of jobs for a lot of people, but these are professional jobs":

> Those are the highest paying jobs out there in any community. We have LPNs, RNs, health practitioners. The other important thing is that it not only helps us in terms of providing services but it gives the individual more opportunities...where people can move to the city and work because they have the same level of training as anyone else.

Sports and culture

Sports, culture, and recreation also contribute to the economic development of Aboriginal people. One respondent explains the far-reaching effects of one grant:

> The Aboriginal Arts Culture Leadership grant is basically an opportunity for an organization to apply for a grant to hire an Indigenous person to work with them to deliver a program or project. So it is entirely focused on making jobs happen. I think we just did our indicator for this past year, and that one grant supported employment of 40 people to work in the culture sector of the province, and those would all be First Nations and Métis people.

Another respondent stated that funding these activities generates a cycle of economic development: "I'm thinking of the Aboriginal Sport Grant. If they fund $5000 to host a tournament, that brings in economic development because you have 10 communities coming to your school or to your arena and spending the whole weekend. I think to a degree we help with hosting and getting the funds to host a tournament and build community capacity in terms of inter-community participation."

Education and skills training

These examples underscore the necessity of education and/ or skills training. Educating Aboriginal individuals is a step towards reducing dependency on welfare: "One of our main goals in that area…is to have zero dependency. So our goal in our tribal council is to reduce dependency by 5-10% every year. Now [reducing] dependency means people get to work…that would be training." Another respondent shared, "We do trades, and we do a number of different things that are related directly to employment…that in itself is the best way to participate in the economic [and] social development of any community."

Others support the view that education leads to better access to the job market: "I would say first of all our upgrading programs, because without education you are not able to participate in the economy, or if you do it's at the very low standard. So, our public access computers are there for people to do job search. We also do resume writing, we fax resumes, and we have a job board. So all of those things promote economic participation." Another respondent added that education

provides the relevant competencies for persons to access jobs at higher rates of pay: "Right now the program and training that we are providing for the carpentry course is enhancing their skills to get into the labour force. They get all of their certificates so that they are able to compete for jobs with the right wages and stuff."

For some respondents, the role of education in economic development is more than enrolling in a particular course of study, but in imparting basic economic knowledge to children: "We are always having our families looking for… education to help them be able to enhance their lives. Teaching the children is my main goal with that. Teaching the children that you need to work to live." To build on this concept "that you need to work to live," formal education at post-secondary institutions or training programs are introduced through partnerships:

> I think that all of [our training programs] have an economic benefit…GDI is a perfect example. I mean they have so many training programs that are open. They are a provincially recognized education institution [that] has a partnership with the University of Saskatchewan. They offer nursing [and] education [courses] through SUNTEP. So, many different things that are helping train our people so they can then go out and be active in the economy.

Part of enhancing economic participation is building on the skills that the Aboriginal youth already possess and making them marketable in the job market:

> We've got an Aboriginal lifeguard program…we have had some really good success. To be a qualified lifeguard, it costs quite a bit to get all of your certification. So, some of these youth have been working for us for three years…they can swim because they grow up around water, but they don't have their Red Cross [certification]…so you assess their swimming level. We get them into a level and…and we mentor them with lifeguards. And now we've got a considerable number of Aboriginal lifeguards. So it's identifying where the opportunities are, supply and demand. If we know we are going to have a demand in this particular area of employment, then we get the supply educated so they are qualified for these jobs.

In some instances, organizations do not wait until persons have completed post-secondary education to encourage them to start thinking about their preparation for the job market. One respondent explained the success in preparing for the skill trade market by supplementing formal secondary education with apprenticeship programs:

> I'll go back to a few years ago to…connections [with] a builder here in the city, a company and a high school…and how they could prepare young people for trades. They came up with a very practical project where they built houses. They set it up so high school students who were in the project earned not only high school credits but they were also gaining apprenticeship hours. When they came out of grade 12,

> they already had exposure to a trade or trades. And they were on their way with the powers, if they wanted to, to become a carpenter or an electrician. So that is a very practical thing that turned out to be very successful. It impacted the high schools in the core area [because] a lot of First Nations and a lot of poor people were in that high school. That's a very concrete kind of example and now has been moved to [another] high school to see if that concept can work there as well.

Despite the variety of educational or training programs, training programs are tailored toward labour market needs, facilitating quick and successful entry into the workforce:

> We do a number of different things where we actually take short-term programs that are skills based and we get people jobs right now. They are often community driven; for instance, let's say [an organization] came to [us] and said, "we've got an old folks home opening up next September and we need 30 people to work in these different areas"; they would actually work with us to provide tailored training programs to fill those jobs. So a lot of times we get people out into the work force immediately and we get them out there in stages as well. We do have a licensed practical nurse program that is full every year. They do two years of training and, if people want jobs they have jobs; it's basically a 100% employment rate after.

Cultural recognition

Acknowledgement and acceptance of Aboriginal heritage is seen by others as a way of enhancing Aboriginal participation in the economy. One respondent explains how teaching youth about Aboriginal language and heritage facilitates this process: "It's more educational, but the way I see it, teaching young First Nations people about their language and their heritage and who they are better equips them to join the workforce...They need to have a strong base of who they are. So that's part of my reasoning of why I try to teach kids about who they are so they can be productive, more productive."

Employment

Urban Aboriginal organizations are cognizant of the link between education and employment and, therefore, some training programs target youth who receive income assistance: "Well, one new program that we have right now… called Enhanced Service Delivery is an employment training program for 18-24 year olds who are on income assistance." Also, urban Aboriginal organizations are staying ahead of the game by looking at retirement trends and preparing to fill these gaps. One respondent explains how giving an early start in employment programs can help gain seniority, advance to higher positions, and increase participation in the economy:

> We are trying to stay ahead of the wave of retirements within the city. So we do some analysis. We know we are going to have this many people retire from these positions or we have hired lots of transit operators. So we have started an Aboriginal pre-employment transit operator program. They run it in conjunction with SIIT. We started an

> Aboriginal heavy equipment 1A training program. We hire them as seasonal labourers, but then we are hiring garbage truck operators. The other people might have more seniority, but they don't have their 1A. And so we've got qualified Aboriginal people that have seniority. So they can move up the ranks fairly quickly.

Some urban Aboriginal organizations promote Aboriginal economic participation by hiring qualified people. One respondent stated, "We have a large staff that makes decent wages. Nothing makes me happier to see staff buy a new car or purchase a house." While there may be some organizations that have large numbers of Aboriginal staff, according to one respondent, there are some lucrative fields where Aboriginal people are not proportionally represented: "The employment of Indigenous people in the oil trade and related fields was very limited." To address stereotyping that may be a barrier to secure employment, urban Aboriginal organizations are engaging business entities and professional organizations: [We] have been working with…[three major mining corporations to increase the numbers of Aboriginal employees]." Efforts at communication have proved fruitful, culminating in an annual conference:

> And connecting the Chamber of Commerce and business community of Lloydminster in exercises over the past three years to break down some of those barriers, and to expose some of these stereotypes that people were living under. And so that's had some really positive effects. They now have an annual gathering, a conference where they bring these groups together. They deal with economic issues in that region. They talk about employment and preparing the workplace to bring in Aboriginal and Indigenous employees. And it seems to be making a difference in that area. So those are very practical things.

Childcare

Economic participation is further enhanced by ensuring ease of access to education and the job market. Some groups such as single parents need support to capitalize on available programs: "if we are talking about [enhancing economic participation], it takes me to a specific place and that would be …daycare for single mothers trying to go to work…" Another added, "Very many students have children… If we can find something to support them to make sure their children are looked after so they can have a rest of mind… when they are doing their education… it would help to enhance community participation."

Low-income Supports

While there may be some doubts as to how people are empowered by being on welfare, a number of respondents argue that providing support for people in low income brackets enhances economic participation: "Anything that helps a person that is struggling and helps make their life a little better, helps in economic participation… If you have nowhere to live, [and] you are poking a needle in your arm or drinking whatever comes across your lips all the time, you are not eating… how can you even begin to entertain working and participating in the economy?" Housing can be a critical support to enhance economic participation: "So just helping them find housing, possibly get help with their addictions, start eating regularly, looking after themselves a

little better, puts them on the road to being able to participate in the economy." Additionally, there are times when it is necessary to provide support:

> The price of food has gone up, so we see a lot of working poor and a lot of families. A lot of children would have a meal program at their school because a lot of inner city schools provide meal programs, [but] they are not providing them in the summer. So if you are used to having your three children at school all day and then you are not providing that meal then we have to be there to provide those two meals for people. It's just trying to bridge the gap between pay cheques because people receive their pay cheques. So that helps in their economic participation.

The respondent also likened economic participation for some Aboriginal people as a journey from one point of needing support to another point of wanting support and finally to the destination of no longer needing or seeking support: "Well we certainly are here to support people in their journey and support them where they are at. We work a lot from trying to transition people who are needing us or wanting us, to not needing to come to the Friendship Inn." Another added, "We are building strong individuals but in order to build strong individuals we need to have the strong families and communities. So everything we are doing in order to stabilize a person and have them go beyond the generational poverty and/or dependence on government assistance is allowing for a greater economic future for all Canadians."

Provincial Recognition

While Aboriginal organizations have taken bold steps toward economic development and ownership of services provided to Aboriginal people, one respondent is of the opinion that there will be greater economic advancement with governmental support: "What I am optimistic about is that the Government of Saskatchewan has emerged as a leader, not only off reserve, but is saying, "we recognize that there needs to be some work done on reserve, and we have a role to play." According to the respondent, it is important for continuity in services to recognize that people who live on reserves are also Canadians:

> In the past, while you had that armed struggle between the Government of Saskatchewan and the Government of Canada saying, 'that's yours' the moment someone steps their foot off reserve, and the moment they step back on, 'that's mine'; what you had was loss in contact in service with people that needed it. I am most hopeful about [the] government of Saskatchewan … recognizing that there is a responsibility… and they are still Saskatchewan people…it doesn't end by stepping on or off the reserve.

Q 14. Priority areas for service delivery

When asked to name the top three priority areas for services delivery in their organizations, interview data show that most provide a variety of programs which cut across the following

services: social services (health, education, shelters and related programming, and well-being), treaty awareness, cultural services, employment, and youth services. Some of these services were amalgamated to form a portfolio. For example, an organization that provided shelter also organizes fundraisers to collect donations for this type of service. Table 3 lists the top three priority services for respondents and indicates the most frequently mentioned services.

Table 3. Priority areas per respondent

Respondent's number	**Three top priority service areas per respondent**
1.	Retention, support, and engagement.
2.	Youth, trades, and health.
3.	Mental health and addictions; quality care and services; and governance of long term care.
4.	Women's shelter, men's programs and space (for carrying out programs, offices etc)
5.	Sports, culture, and recreation
6.	Strategic planning by meeting with communities
7.	Level of readiness based on funding priorities, although mostly falls under youth, well-being, and safety.
8.	Basic needs, financial advice, and self-esteem/self-confidence counselling (against the stigma of financial dependence).
9.	Sports, culture, and recreation
10.	Grant programs and supporting inclusion and diversity
11.	Workforce training and placement, and youth
12.	Youth across Saskatchewan
13.	GDI, SUNTEP, Business Development
14.	Transitioning into and becoming self-sufficient in the city of Regina.
15.	Employment and career tracing; indigenizing the City of Saskatoon (naming streets and parks with Aboriginal legends); and environmental awareness (eg: improve recycling in inner city neighbourhoods).
16.	Helping with government-related paperwork like filing income taxes; life skills (court and legal cases representation and assistance); prenatal services
17.	Raising awareness of treaty issues such as the impacts of Bill C-31; status card registration for urban-born Aboriginal children.
18.	Emergency shelter and homeless shelter.
19.	Employment training, career change training and information services for individuals transitioning from reserves or small town to big city (i.e health care, access for quality housing, transportation, etc).
20.	Raising awareness of Aboriginal communities with dignity and respect.
21.	Basic life needs (food, shelter and clothing), culture-based social programs and youth programs including employment.
22.	Youth programs, education and employment.
23.	Producing manuals and policies related to health care—long-term primary care for elderly, and long-term care facilities with associated nursing services.

24.	Promote Métis culture, to elevate the socio-economic status through education, and to collaborate and engage with Métis communities.
25.	Reduce dependency on government welfare; youth education (transitioning from elementary to secondary to after graduation) and funding for services.
26.	Education, economic base and provision of stewards for the ancestral lands
27.	Financial counselling and financial services (lending)
28.	Nutrition, community, and friendship
29.	Intervention through youth programs, education and employment, and strengthening families.
30.	Community capacity, community development and providing sport, culture and recreation programming for all youth.
31.	Social enterprise, ability to cook, know how to garden and promote skills geared towards nutrition.
32.	Assisting people move or become self-sufficient in the city.

*Three people did not respond to question 14.

Social services: Health, education, shelters and related programming, and general well-being.

Health

In terms of health, the most important priority was to improve both access and the quality of health care delivery. Respondents explained that they were working on a range of initiatives from developing their own policies for health administration and improving mental health care to ensuring physical space is available for both elders ("long-term care facilities for our elders in the communities") and those who recently immigrated into cities from First Nation reserves or small towns "to have just as much access to health care as anybody else":

> We develop manuals like infection control manuals for the partners to use, policies and procedures for them. One of the biggest areas we are working on now is the new transfer medical function for primary care nurses. So we write all the policies and we help the partners and make sure their nurses will be ready to work in our nursing stations.
>
> Mental health and addictions is a definite priority area. We are doing an assessment right now trying to develop a model or adapt a model that might work more effectively. So that's a big one and all the social and health issues that fall under that. You know addictions, grief and loss, which is astronomical, suicide, anxiety, and depression.

Education

Organizations provide a range of programs to meet current economic demands by providing specialized training such as in trades: "trades is also a very big priority because we are demand driven. So we work a lot with industry to figure out where the need is." Many trades-based

programs are successful and create supply of prospective employees to various companies. One respondent enthusiastically explained how their program recruits proactively and effectively:

> We need to get boots on the ground. And you've got to have people ready. Our transit operator training program has worked excellent. We started a campaign in *Eagle Feather News*. So each month we profile an Aboriginal employee who works for the city. We try and encourage more people to apply for jobs at the City of Saskatoon.

While some organizations such as Gabriel Dumont Institute (GDI) provide education and training that helps their clients secure high school general education diploma, some are motivated to promote in their education awareness strategies First Nations schools, universities, GDI, and First Nations University. As one respondent simply stated, their first priority is "to elevate the socio-economic status through education."

Understanding that education is key to reducing well-documented socio-economic gaps and improving quality of life, organizations also prioritize training and education that will enable Aboriginal people to be promoted into better and securer jobs:

> So training would be one of the target areas. And it is not only for getting the employment, you know, your laborers and less skilled people are the first to go when you are laying off people. So we want to make sure that the training is there for them. Or, like I said, there is nothing wrong with us being promoted either, but you need the ammunition to be promoted. You need the training, you need the skills.

Finally, other organizations with education as a top priority indicated that it's either a requirement of their funding to offer training and education services or the demand of the community they serve. That is, they have open service mandates and respond to client service requests as one Métis organization representative commented:

> We are guided by our board and by our communities. So our board gives us the direction but actually once a year we meet and we have strategic planning sessions with community members. So we bring in Métis locals, we bring in the regional directors, we bring in all community members and ask them, "hey so and so from Meadow Lake, what do you want in your community?" And then what we do is we bring all of that information back and we figure out the dollars we have and we try to find overlap, and try to find resources to provide all of that training in those regions.

These organizations fill many gaps in the provision of education and training for Aboriginal people at various life stages, for various purposes, and in different modes of service provision.

Shelter and related programming

This portfolio was the most diverse in terms of the kinds of social services offered—indicative of

the overwhelming needs in urban settings. For some organizations, the priority was family safety: "We are always focused on having a safe place for people to go to. I think that's top priority for us." This respondent then added, "They (users of the service) can come in here and sit here all day long and have coffee and feel safe and secure because we don't know what's happening in the homes." Others focused on basic support to women in shelters: "The need for our women's shelter under the parameters of what I had mentioned earlier in that it is not just a shelter, but is more of an apartment style with supports."

Other organizations collect donations to improve the facilities and programming. One respondent, for example, explained how they developed services for winter time when individuals experiencing homelessness are vulnerable to the harsh weather conditions:

> I think that's why we started our homeless shelter, our mat program five years ago because people were sleeping outside back then. And nobody thought that we had a problem. So we do it through the winter months; we close at March 31st. They get a blanket and a pillow. And we started our mat program with nickels and dimes, literally. A few donations here and there, like that was it.

General well-being

There were identified services which did not fit in the previous areas, but are important and uniquely set to improve well-being of Aboriginal peoples in urban areas. The themes that emerged for general well-being included food and nutrition, friendship, community, and financial counselling and knowledge. One respondent shared their priority as food reskilling:

> The ones that the organization was sort of founded on is access to affordability and also skills. So if you can access the food and you can afford it then what are you going to do with it? So ensuring people have the ability to cook themselves, know how to garden themselves, how to have those skills that your population is more secure.

Ensuring a sense of community is central to all priority areas, including the imperative to be inclusive in service provision to different demographic and cultural backgrounds:

> All the infrastructure that we support out here in the province—all those 30 groups that we spend millions of dollars on, that we fund to support their activities, they have to be able to show that they are including different people, that they are not just serving one aspect of the province but that they are representative of everybody that's here. That's what our funds are intended for.

In terms of financial counselling, the purpose is to reduce barriers to individuals accessing services and opportunities: "it could be entering business plan competitions, it could be trying to do crowd funding, or leveraging an asset for a line of credit." This same respondent elaborated on what the organization does to teach individuals: "one of the issues of delivering our services, is helping them reach the eligibility requirements [for financing options]; you know, individuals'

personal credit history, often times, prevents us from helping them. This respondent added that they helped community members navigate the system: "We tell them here is the organization you can go to, they have a six month plan or a 12 month plan, you can work through it. You can address the problem and potentially reapply for what you want."

Treaty awareness

One of the identified priority services is informing about Aboriginal treaty rights and building awareness of what is available to them as a function of these treaty rights. Services include status card services and how to be good stewards of the ancestral lands. One respondent underlined the need in the numbers registered: "We did over 200 status cards at urban treaty day in Yorkton." Another illustrated the need to supplement such a service:

> So what we do is we asked the Department of Indian Affairs with the help of the Indian Registered Administrator that we do status card services once a month here. The first time they came out they came with 40 cards which we used up and we keep statistics on it. The next time, they came in with 40 again, we had to turn away 8 people. So it started catching on, and then the following time they came they came with 40 more cards and we had to turn away people again. So they started bringing more.

Awareness building focuses on issues such as changes in legislations and amendments to regulations, where to find such information online, how to get organizations on the 'treaty table' to negotiate with federal government, and so forth. One respondent described some of the difficulties people face:

> A lot of First Nations people don't know that you are supposed to register your child now and they don't know the impacts of the different sections of the *Indian Act*. A lot of children are not registered, a lot of kids are registered but not on band lists because those are two separate things. How, for example, if the father is not named on the birth document then your child is going to be registered in section 6(2) which means your child can't pass on status to their children. Stuff like that. People don't know that! They still don't know that how many years later, and it was in 1987 that Bill C-31 came out.

Another respondent commented on why it's important to bring people to the 'treaty table':

> From our perspective, treaty relationship has not achieved its goal as a consequence of that one piece of legislation and all the policies that come out of it. And the culture that developed in the bureaucracy of Indian Affairs and all the different departments over the last 135 years of history. That culture is a deterrent. It needs to change. And so the treaty table has got to try to establish that awareness and create a movement here that provides the federal government for an opportunity

to change the way it does business.

All in all, as a priority area, advocating on issues of treaty rights builds further capacity in urban Aboriginal populations, and more involvement in governance and the economy.

Cultural services
Cultural services were related to activities that are specific to Aboriginal peoples as well as sports and other recreational activities, which were seen as means of developing community as well as engaging the users so that they are living a fulfilling life. As for the cultural activities, respondents explained that urban Aboriginal communities can remain in touch with their cultural practices through engagement with such services. As one respondent made clear, "Finding a cultural community when you're not from Saskatoon is a big thing--whether it's coming to the centre to learn beading or something like that and to engage in the community."

Other organizations work as bridging institutions for Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal peoples to form relationships: "We try and help our whole community better understand the Aboriginal community." Improving relations with others was also supported by sharing legacy through naming to honour Aboriginal people and their achievements: "We named one of our parks after Chief Darcy Bear, who attended Nutana School. So we are really trying to encourage sharing (our history) through street names, you know, to get more signage in Saskatoon that reflects Aboriginal community."

Employment
Most organizations identified employment as their top priority area (Table 3). Services identified within this portfolio were vast and varied:

- Training for career change
- Supporting workforce placement
- Delivering research and publications
- Providing youth services
- Providing apprenticeships and trades training
- Mentoring for job security and promotion
- Offering life skills mentoring
- Stabilizing families
- Nourishing cultural awareness
- Building bridges across communities
- Delivering arts programs
- Hosting job fairs
- Gathering and sharing job vacancies and job advertisements
- Succession training
- Teaching food reskilling
- Teaching financial literacy
- Teaching treaty rights
- Hiring Aboriginal people first
- Contracting Aboriginal-controlled businesses and organizations

- Training individuals to get off social assistance and welfare dependency
- Training in business development and start-ups
- Sharing Aboriginal success stories in specific career sectors

One respondent explained the importance of succession training: "I am obviously mentoring someone to take over this president's position someday. You need to be educated, you need to know what you are going after, and you need to feel it." Another explained how their organization improves the employment prospects for Métis people: "We do research and publications, we liaise with communities, and we have a mandate that we hire Métis people that are qualified first." These respondents indicated how their organizations play key roles in social development and employment empowerment:

> So if you have got a gem that you can polish and keep moving up you show it. So when [name of person] went to school, she came to us and worked part-time. In the summer she worked through the summer and, you know, she is one of our excellent employees. And she likes her job because of community impact and I mean [name] is one of our best staff in the programming side.
>
> We offer advice and encouragement. That's really important as well because people get stigmatized when they are low income and especially if they have been on income assistance for a number of years. It can become an even bigger issue if it is multi-generational

These are some of the important types of services for employment both within their own organizations and into others outside the Aboriginal service organizations.

Youth services

Representatives gave a number of reasons for ensuring youth services receive high priority on their organizational agenda. Apart from meeting funding requirements, many identified youth as a vulnerable demographic that needs assistance to cope with many challenges within urban settings. Time is dedicated to assisting youth given their vulnerability: "To me the desk, the paperwork, it all can wait. If there is somebody at the door that needs me and if there is something that I can do for them even if it's going to take two or three hours, I will do my best." This same respondent added that it could be a matter of life or death: "You never know if you are going to see them again especially with what's going on like suicide, trouble, whatever. I never want that to happen." This respondent concluded, "I want to be glad I was able to provide mentorship." On a similar note, another respondent spoke to youth safety and opportunity: "We are always trying to work with our youth to keep them off the streets. You know, keep them away from the drugs, and try to give them a chance for a positive lifestyle."

Youth services were seen as important areas because these services can impact youth's future adult life positively:

> In my work I classify those [youth] as 'Not ready', 'Near ready or 'Ready. These 'Readies are just as important as the 'Not readies', in the

> sense that, let's give these 'Readies' just as much opportunity or time or funding as the 'Not readies.' Because if these 'Readies' do not get connected or do not get provided an opportunity or chance we could lose them. There is an array of possibilities that may prevent these readies from grabbing onto their potential to really run, to really soar.

These five themes underline how differently priority areas are selected, configured, and acted upon in service delivering organizations. Setting priorities on social services, treaty awareness, cultural services, employment, and youth services enables these organizations to act on the gaps already identified and address issues one step at a time.

Q 15. What are the best practices/lessons learned on how services are designed and delivered that have emerged over the last decade?

Community Engagement

Building relationships through community engagement and consultation is highlighted as a best practice in accordance with the community spirit embedded in Aboriginal culture. On the matter of building relationships, one respondent was clear:

> My opinion of the best thing to do is if you want to offer a program, you only offer things that people want, and you can't know what someone wants unless you ask them. So that means you have to spend the time getting to know your communities and getting to know the volunteers, the leaders, and the groups in your communities…Then putting that all together and creating a program plan that matches who they are and what they want.

Another respondent stressed building and maintaining relationships with champions in Aboriginal communities:

> Some of the best practices that we find that are handy in the north that may be different than the south is you definitely have to build relationships with the leaders, the movers and the shakers—passionate people who get things done in each community. Sometimes as a district we will go to those people that are passionate in building community development and providing help on the things they want to see things change or things provided for their youth… I think that approach has really made things move.

Another respondent advised that building relationships is important for buy-in and participation: "I always express to people when they are applying to a project, whether it is a grant program or whatever, that they need to remember that they have to do it with the community, not to the community." The same respondent explains that while it is difficult, organizations have begun to factor inclusion and diversity in strengthening community relationships:

> Even this organization when we were created and other cultural organizations were created by and for a certain group in the province, and now we are trying to change it with this inclusion and diversity piece. We have to go to the fundamentals of it all and see how to make it fit all the people. It's not an easy thing to do. It's part of our role to build those bridges and do our own internal change so that we can be a leader for the rest of the cultural community here in the province.

Community-centred activities are most effective at stimulating community involvement. Using this approach, organizations get to know the needs of the people who are being served, which enhances the ability to connect them to a network of services. One respondent underscored the point: "[Because] the community is a lot more participatory, you are encouraged to find the supports and branch out." At the same time, the ability to meet face-to-face is most effective at generating interest and participation from the community: "It's face to face, it's getting to know people and getting them to know you. So, all the e-mails and all the paper you send to everyone else doesn't near do what you need to do if you're doing it face to face." The face to face communication plays such a significant role in destroying negative stereotypes that organizations have found it necessary to include that role in the job description of staff: "Just because you come from somewhere else or your skin is a little bit darker or a little but lighter, that doesn't make you a bad person, that doesn't make you an incompetent person, it just makes you a different person… That's the approach we take. I have two staff who are specifically hired to engage on a one to one basis—getting to know people, what makes them tick, [and] their needs."

The emergence of community-based delivery is a reflection of the significance placed on community engagement and consultation: "I think the best services are just actually going out in the communities and teaching. That's why I am teaching in Kawacatoose." Another added that community-based education maintains community connection for students:

> The best practice for me would be community-based delivery. It's one thing that we have excelled at... A lot of our clients, especially within our Northern and Southern populations, are living in very remote Métis communities. Some are also living on reserve. To take those students out of their home communities—especially when they are in some isolated [areas] or from tight knit communities—and to try to bring them into [an urban centre] is a huge culture shock. And, to [tell them] "you have to live down here for three years to get your nursing degree, whatever higher education you want," it's a huge strain on them. So, through our partnerships …we provide community-based education directly in the Métis community.

The respondent also explained that community-based delivery is linked to Indigenous empowerment because it creates and maintains a pool of qualified Indigenous professionals who will remain in rural areas:

> I can't stress enough just how important that is because…if you want nurses to live in remote communities, you have to find someone from that remote community and train them as a nurse and then they would go back home. You can't take someone from the city, and train them as a nurse and try to bribe them to go work in that remote community. Because as soon as their five years is done, they are out as fast as possible. And it is the same idea: If we want these people to get the education and get the skills that they need to get the jobs in those communities, we have to go to that community, we have to work with them in their comfort zone.

Customer Service/Attitude

Excellent customer service, demonstrating care and understanding, is another best practice mentioned by respondents. According to one respondent, "Our biggest priority is providing great customer service because we have clients come in who are intimidated, who are scared, who do not understand the language, who do not understand the process." It has been found that excellent customer service leads to positive feedback and allows for common understanding between organizations and clients: "For me, the best practice, and something that I take pride in the most in my work, is getting good feedback from clients: 'now I really understand the program' or 'thank you for explaining it clearly'." While it takes time and practice to develop trusting relationships, it is equally important to clarify expectations:

> That just took time to develop…When I first started…a lot of people walked in upset because they just have expectations that don't match what we can do. They expect "I am First Nations; I should get the money right away." So, then I changed the script to "this is the mandate" upfront and "this is what we can and can't do." Now that we have correct expectations, let's explain the process. So, my best practice is a very informal way of providing accurate and hopefully easy to understand information so that clients can understand the process.

For another respondent, being non-judgmental is an important part of the ability to deliver excellent customer service: "For me I guess, your attitude plays a big part of it. You've got to be really open-minded with a lot of things. You have to be able to talk to the people and not have any issues with anybody." Another likens customer service to delivering on a promise: "It's our promise to our clients…that you are going to be treated fairly…in a timely manner and we are going to use all our skills and abilities to help you gain a [better] quality of life… [It's]…more importantly, a reminder to us as to why we are here and what we are doing. If you are talking about best practices, sometimes it's…going back to your core and seeing what drives you."

Customized Services

Related to excellent customer service is providing customized services to meet differing clients' needs: "Everyone is unique and what we can do for this one person may not be what this other person needs. We have to…individualize it for people." The respondent further explained that, in order to be effective, organizations need to be able to adapt and tailor services according to clients' needs as well as provide a common ground through shared experiences:

> Not one blanket thing…ABC, sometimes you just can't. You have to skip to the B and go to the C or something like…[being] a people person, we all are, we all have to be, we have all lived with addictions, or we have all lived with…struggling in our life. I only hire staff that actually have some life experience. Book smarts are good, but I prefer to hire people that walk the walk and talk the talk of these people.

Another respondent shared the same sentiments: "Well some of the services and programs are handed down to us from the federal and provincial government. We know that some of the programs don't work. We can try them, but we have to adapt them to fit our community, our cultural needs, and our general lifestyle… thinking outside the box so to speak…and a lot of our funding agencies are okay with that." In reference to adapting existing programs to suit the needs of clients, the respondent also shared:

> We take a program from SIAST, we tailor it to our community, and to our students, and then they follow suit and change their programs. Our programs are [tailored]; we have extra time added on, so for example math is a barrier in most communities—not just Aboriginal communities—so we add extra time for math. We add time for life skills or soft skills or employability skills. We bring resource people in to make sure people have good resumes, good interview skills…We address those issues—all those barriers that our communities face, economic and social disparities…and I do find that is really effective.

Another respondent shared that fundraising activities have had to be different in order to appeal to a wider audience. As a result, the mode of fundraising has changed from highlighting the plight of individuals and pleading for money, to thanking individuals for their part in the success of organizations:

> The way that we have been able to do fundraising is mostly by making sure that people know our successes and then that good energy comes full circle with the donations from the businesses. The businesses like to see that the money is being used in the community immediately. For instance, tomorrow is our deadline and we have 100 applications, so that's going to be $50,000 worth of applications. So when someone donates $20, we can send them a letter saying "thanks for your donation. We were able to make use of it right away and look at the good that is happening."… We are pretty specific about how we share our success stories because that increases the good will versus saying "we could totally use some money."

Innovation/Technology

Accepting new ways of doing things such as embracing technological advancement and innovative ways of implementing some services has been acknowledged by many participants as a best practice that has emerged in the past decade. Some have linked the new technologies to

meeting funding eligibility and implementation requirements: "You see, I know a lot of the funding that we get they are really wanting us to start using technology to start developing, let's say, classes to make satellite classes." Others have seen adopting technology as a way of optimizing the little funding that they have:

> I know that there is not going to be funding for every single thing, so you have to really rethink your priorities and think how I am going to get the best bang for the dollars you are getting. So I think we have to look at this technology and we need to be realists.

Others see technology use in their institutions as a way of moving forward towards best practices and standardization of good quality service delivery: "Well I have learned to never be afraid to try something new [technology]," adding, "We had trial and error here a million times in the past 12 years. Now we have to use technology to standardize things because what works for one person may not work for the other." These comments not only suggest the willingness of the organizations to adjust to new ways of doing things but also to ensure funds are stretched to meet as many project needs as possible with maximum fiscal responsibility.

Organizational/Political Structure

Moving away from the shadow of the Chief and Council to operate successfully was seen as best practice as it enabled First Nations organizations to provide services away from the 'politics of the day' so as to meet their target, as explained by one respondent: "one major thing that I have noticed is that we don't have political influence from our chief and council on our business corporation. That is kind of working for us and we are able to make some sound business decisions." In a similar vein, another respondent emphasized the delineation of responsibilities of their institution and their affiliates away from the political trenches: "Prior to 2006 they were definitely a bit more influenced through the politics and closely tied with the political structure. But then an election oversight committee came and asked that we distance ourselves. I think that was definitely in our best interest." This respondent added, "Because when the Métis nation political structure is crumbling, we are still able to maintain status quo and offer those programs to our people."

Political structures are often associated with unnecessary bureaucratic obstacles to organizations carrying out their operations ("The other thing is just…. removing, if you can remove as much technical pieces and bureaucratic paperwork and that from ….front line staff"):

> The best practice is just let them do their job. You know, most people come from a perspective in that they're in it to help people. I'll bet you 90% of my staff could go and get a better paying job somewhere else and maybe less headaches on most days. But they do it for a different reason. You know, they do it because they want to help people and contribute in that way. So it's standing in their way….well you have to fill out this paper or you have to fill out this paper.

Autonomous operations were also seen as a way of advancing organizational structure such as formulating lines of authority or board governance:

> You have to have a good board. If your board is behind you 100%, you are good to go. They have to be really in tune with what's happening at the Friendship Centre. They have to be on top of your objectives, everything you do in your programming, for example.

Another participant also recognized how the board allows them to assign roles and responsibilities differently than before but more efficiently:

> I think the foundation of this organization is the board and the stability that it has created. We have a really solid board who are supportive of what we are doing here. They're a governing board, not an operating board. They don't get involved in the day-to-day operations of the centre. They set the policy, the direction. They come in and support all the events we have here. Without the board it would be a whole different environment.

How the organizations relate to non-Aboriginal organizations and affiliates was an indication of maturity, of how the organizations have evolved as well: "I think from the perspective of the Métis nation, and this is solely my opinion, what I have seen that has worked really well is actually the affiliates. So the affiliates have managed to maintain arm's length from the political structure which has worked in their favor." The decision making powers have migrated from the general political bureaucrats to allow institutions to develop service delivery best practices that make sense to them—a mark of the autonomy and maturity of such organizations.

Empowerment versus dependency

Some participants also identified moving away from dependency to an empowering strategy in order to provide better services, while changing the dialogue around "struggling" individuals so these individuals can redefine the way they use the services provided. As a case in point, participants framed this as eliminating the need for clients to "tell their story" as part of receiving services. Clinging to this mode of operation produces both stigma and fear in seeking help. Instead, participants described providing services as a way to better oneself rather than as a corrective social control measure: "Helping someone get to know themselves and being true and honest with themselves, that goes a long ways. It doesn't matter if I am true and honest with you, it's myself and I have to live with it at the end of the day." Another participant explained it differently: "I think one of the best things that I have learned is that we have a no-questions-asked policy and we don't ask people to self-identify. We just simply meet people from where they are at and just open our door. It really gives people the opportunity not to have to tell us their story." The respondent concludes, "It's not necessary nor is it our business to tell us why you are here; we just know that you are hungry and we are here to feed you." Moreover, empowerment can also set expectation of the services that can be provided:

> We try to have an open door policy, but it's difficult because sometimes there is just so many people and we've really only got three workers

> that actually work directly with clients. So that can be difficult at times although I've tried to streamline it somewhat. People are used to now coming in for certain things and there are certain things that we don't do now, so it's slowed the traffic down. So now we are able to spend more quality time with people than we used to. People were just coming in all the time for just a lot of miscellaneous things that we really didn't help people with. Now people know what services we do provide. They are more prepared now than they used to be, because they are getting consistent service and they know what to expect. So that helps a lot too.

In addition, it is felt that to truly empower individuals, the previous lessons of defensiveness and reactionary measures have to be unlearned. In this regard, one respondent shared that one best practice for Indigenous empowerment for a better future is to be proactive in reaching out to youth who are doing well but might be at risk:

> If I step back and look at everything…the one or two most important things to impress upon someone…maintain a set of services that keep people and make dependency our number one item to address. Don't focus all your time on residential school healing and drug addiction. Find the people in the cracks right now who are going to make a difference for people moving up. You have to understand, we spend half of our time in a defense position where we are constantly trying to find money to support someone's habit or support someone's problem and there is a whole generation of kids and young adults that are sober and don't have any issues. They might have a driver's license issue or are a single parent and that's where I would say spend your time. That would be our number one thing.

The respondent also added that services geared toward education and training and promoting participation in cultural and recreational activity are successful methods of combating dependency: "Yeah so now our second thing I would say is education and training. Make kids prioritize education and participation in whatever that means—culture, arts—make that something and give them something else than the problem area." This lesson of empowerment, learned and practiced, has resulted in great achievements among Indigenous people who contribute to the economy and lead balanced lives in urban centres:

> We also, for the first time ever in Regina, have the emergence of a middle class of Indigenous people—people who have not only jobs, but careers. [These are] Indigenous people who are formally educated and have incredible years of experience. They are homeowners, they have children who are in organized sports and organized bands, art, drama, whatever the case may be. We have never had that before in Regina. For the first time, we have Indigenous [couples] that have credit ratings or are both university- or trade-educated, that are raising children, not just in north central but they are in different places within the city.

Mentorship has emerged as a best practice with increasing numbers of Indigenous people moving to the city to advance careers and improve their standard of living:

> I have seen my position here as one of mentorship because it is my job to teach and to mentor our Indigenous people who are coming here to be helpers, to be healthy helpers, how to be career helpers without getting burnt out so bad. Also, to work in an Indigenous organization and feel comfortable and satisfied that the old stereotypes of politics don't come into it. That they are building pensions and that they have strong benefits because we need that here in the city because our benefits are covering less and less now.

Mentorship is a relatively new phenomenon, one which is necessary to sustain the growth of the emerging Indigenous middle class:

> It is very important to mentor our people how to be good helpers and this is a helping organization. We need to know how to help and when to help and how not to help. A lot of the agencies don't have that knowledge because we either think doing it for the people is giving them the benefit, or we think on the other end that they are continuously asking for handouts so once they reach their max we are not going to help them anymore. There is a very positive way to help people when you are never giving up on them but you are also putting boundaries down. So that has really been my job.

By changing the paradigm to empowerment and capacity building, service providers become mentors enabling spaces to share success stories of Aboriginal figures who make differences in different walks of life.

Another important practice that has contributed to the success of Aboriginal organizations is recognition that "we are all equal. We never know better than our clients. And that is definitely a no-no here; we are all equal here." Not only is equality sought when dealing with clients, but the respondent noted that equal rates of pay for employees promote teamwork: "And another unique thing about our organization here is we all make the same wage; every one of us [except the secretary]. We all make the same wage because I believe that if you want to have a good team, we're all equal. I know I do things a little different from some people. But, you know it works and I have a...good team here." In explaining organizational success attributed to equal rates of pay, the respondent stated that love for the job fuels the willingness to sacrifice financial gain:

> If you really love what you do, you are going to do it and you don't need to make hundred thousand dollars doing it…you do it because you love it. We all get the same pay, from the bookkeeper to me, to my employment coordinator to the new lady I just hired... we all just work. I passed raises in the past so I could give it to the lower paid staff of

> previous years. So now we all make the same. So that way everybody knows we are all equal, nobody is better than anyone here. We are all good, we are we are all cool with it, and we all love it. We have the best jobs in the world and we work with the best …in the world and that's what we love.

Q 16. What do these organizations perceive as being facilitating factors, and threats, to their sustainability?

Facilitating factors

Fiscal and non-fiscal facilitating factors were identified. Funding as the main facilitating factor was grouped into core funding and project-based funding. Core funding was explained: "It's funding for what is considered a core service so it is funded every year. It's not the kind of program or service that would be in jeopardy of being completely cut off. So it's consistently maintained although governments may decide to change criteria for the program over time, but it's a core program and a core service that is offered." Another participant added, "Our core dollars are from the government; if we didn't have that then we wouldn't be running."

By contrast project-based funding supports short-term projects whose aim may be to ensure urban Aboriginal peoples access more services so that they can participate in the economy. Normally, these would not be for interventions but rather for economic opportunity or research and assessment towards enabling economic engagement: "The Federal government just announced in their budget permanent funding for the Skills and Partnership Fund. But they have not announced permanent funding for Aboriginal Human Resources Development kinds of funds. So, we are having to reapply for funding every year at the moment." Another participant also added, "We put in proposals to provincial, regional, and other organizations for funding for specific projects. And we do that on a call for proposal basis so when we find something that fits well with our organization and will help us in capacity, we apply."

Non-fiscal facilitating factors for long-term sustainability included functions such as good communication resulting in networking and volunteerism. Networking enables organizations to form more partnerships for service delivery: "I think networking. More so right now in my position, I am that person in between, or trying to become that person in between. So I find that is something which provides really great support and connection to the urban Saskatoon services such as SWITCH, the Food Bank, and so on." Another respondent elaborated that because of ability to network well, they have been able to secure new types of contracts that support their mission: "Contracts that we've been able to get such as from the Ministry of Education would not have been possible without that kind of connection with those agents. Without them, we would not have been able to do some of the resource development work that is key in arming our speakers with the right and complete information."

Because of being able to communicate well about their services, volunteers are now participating and extending the reach of services provided by these organizations:

> Our volunteers are a huge facilitating factor. Saskatoon has had a tremendous fundraising presence and it has been led by our volunteers. In Regina, the volunteers are in the community at times. We have a booth at the Cathedral Village Arts Festival and talk to people about the program.

Apart from communications, facilitating factors also included visionary and committed boards, committed staff who go above and beyond the call of duty, committed and enthusiastic Chiefs and Councils, as well as committed partnerships between service organizations and their affiliates or parent organizations. Boards were applauded for good governance and operations: "Our board of directors supports us. We are governed by a board of 14 working board members that are not just a policy board; they are a really invested group of people." Yet another respondent also expounded on the board's importance: "I think having that balance between the outside view and the inside view, because you can have too much sometimes of an inside view, so I think that helps to support us is the way that structure is set up." Even further, boards ensure there is institutional memory for good governance to continue the good work: "Our board of directors is here for the long term, which is good because there is not much turnover. We have five year terms for our directors and they are staggered so all of them don't go at once." Having both invested people and institutional memory is necessary for long-term sustainability.

Next to the boards were the committed staff: "a good-staff team is the other part, as you can imagine, when building relationships is the foundation of everything that we do; if we didn't have people that would build relationships then we would be failing." Another responded added, "When we have new staff, it usually takes about 6-10 months just to build relationships in the community. Once those relationships are built and there is a trust, that's when we see our biggest growth so we can start building meetings and building facilitation." Staff not only build the needed relationships but they also provide solid strategic support to the management based on commitment: "Another good thing we have going for us is staff that are here because they believe in what they are doing—not because of their wage. If it was for the wage, they would be long gone." Similarly, another respondent concluded, "the people here want to be here because they love doing what they are doing and they love the people that come through our doors."

Supportive and visionary Chief and Council was also a facilitating factor: "We have a good working relationship with the chief and council in regards to working together on resources and ancestral lands." In the context of the migratory pattern or what has been termed 'internal transnationalism' (Todd, 2001) of urban Aboriginal people, there is still a strong linkage to their ancestral lands and chiefs back in the reserves. Chiefs were seen as important in helping to guide priorities for some of the urban organizations interviewed: "Well first of all, our First Nations Chiefs are incredibly supportive. You need that. They are visionary they come together and guide us." Finally, others saw changes in political leadership as helpful: "You have some Chiefs and elected leaders in there, 20 to 30 years and they just go with the flow and never change things. Sometimes it's good to have change after a few years."

Finally, a strategic means to ensure organizational sustainability is partnering with organizations such as Friendship Centres [which also provide some of the project-based funding to urban Aboriginal organizations] and non-Aboriginal organizations. One respondent put it this way:

> The support of SaskCulture is enormous. SaskCulture is an established organization with established practices and networks and Creative Kids is relatively new. If Creative Kids had somehow developed without that support and incubation, we would be much farther behind. The stable administration funding allows staff to focus on program development and working with our applicants and volunteers.

Another spoke to committed partnership with a funding organization;

> We have a pretty good relationship with our funders so that looks like that will be continuing. We also have funders in our community like Northern Lights Community Development Corporation. They generously gave us $5,000 to be able to pick up low income Aboriginal children for the day and we took them to the lake and fed them and took them on excursions, and those kinds of things. So we have some really good funders in the community that understand the need for more Aboriginal programming, more things for low-income Aboriginal children to do. They understand the value of those kinds of things.

Another respondent explained partnerships with non-Aboriginal organization this way:

> We have had a partnership with [names a television station] for the last 12 years and it's a lasting partnership. And we do partnerships together and it's a give and take type of partnership. They donate a lot of airtime to some of our ads. That's an important thing because they have been opening doors for us for other types of things. They're using their influence to open doors for us to reach other audiences. So partnerships have been really key to this organization.

Not only are partnerships with other non-Aboriginal organizations valuable, but also partnerships with any community of interest within the urban setting are valued equally: "The community partnerships. I think there has been a shift; there is now a more positive perspective on the centre in the community. Not always in the sense that there is money connected but in the sense that we do things together. We share our resources." Even though not all communities within urban settings are strengthening urban organizations with financial support, a few are supporting through donations: "We operate 100% solely on donations, at one point a $2.2 million budget, and the community has supported us for 26 years with no government funding. Just complete donations from the communities."

Threat to sustainability

Funding issues

Insufficient funding is the primary threat to the sustainability of service delivery. Inadequate funding is a result of both cuts to existing funds and funding restrictions limiting support to new programs or observed needs in the community. Abrupt funding cuts create planning uncertainty: "We never know for sure if the funding is going to get cut so I mean if that gets cut then we can't do anything so that's certainly the biggest threat." On a similar note, another respondent

explained, “We’ve got some major funding cuts so we’ve had $500,000 worth of funding cuts recently. Our communities are still expecting the same level of service.” Another respondent also commented on a comparable outcome of funding cuts: “The biggest threat is in order for us to reach any of the kids, we rely almost entirely on donations and sponsorships. Like I mentioned, PotashCorp has partnered with us annually and in the beginning that was almost all the money we had coming in to grant to families. As with many organizations if one or two of our major contributors moved on, we would be challenged to continue the same level of service with less funds.” There is always anxiety and fear of funds disappearing: “I think it's always funding. You know, the fear is always there, whether you're going to have it or not. And if you get it, are we going to get it next year? So I think that is always a big threat for different programs.”

Strict eligibility and other constraints on what funds can or should support are not always aligned with observed client needs. One respondent gave a heart-felt comment about such difficulties:

> We are very restricted and also because we are so underfunded lots of things that we would like to do or try to keep ahead of is where we are restricted. HIV is growing in our First Nations communities very quickly but we are not funded for HIV. It’s not something the federal government funds us for. So it is trying to make sure that the government understands the health trends and that they fund the health trends appropriately.

Another elaborated on the debilitating impact on long-term planning of short-term funding:

> A threat I would say is the short-term funding. It is really hard to plan long term if your money is only in place a year at a time. And it’s a threat not only to the organization but it’s also a threat to the people we serve. You may be working with someone, getting then on the path that they need to be and then all of a sudden the program is pulled because funding came to an end. So you are pulling the rug out from under these people when they may just be starting to make progress. So of course people get disappointed. They lose faith in the centre because where are you when they need you?

Similarly, this respondent lamented short-term funding:

> The biggest thing is that we don’t really have sustained funding. That’s probably the biggest obstacle that we face is our ability to ensure that our funding is continuous. I mean if one of our funding programs, like our community capacity support programs, if that goes by the wayside that is a real blow to our programs. These are things that we try to work on like 3-year, 5-year program grants but it’s just not happening.

Some funding cuts from the Federal Government are related to political terms and budget cycles. With that, some funding directed to urban Aboriginal affairs may be terminated or held off for a

while. For most urban Aboriginal organizations or their parent funding organizations such as National Association of Friendship Centres (NAFC) and the FSIN, this is a time of great uncertainties about the ability to accomplish their service delivery goals. As one respondent explained, "Depending on what government is in, and what their belief and value on Aboriginal education is, when the governments change sometimes we get cuts in funding. Funding is a huge issue for us, for our sustainability."

A different respondent clarified how these funding cuts affect the organization: "We are always scared if the funding is going to come through and for what department, because we have five departments at the cultural centre; we have the languages department, the culture department, the audio visual department, the finance department, and the library, and every year because we get our funding from the government it seems like our funding dwindles down." This respondent went on to say, "But because of cuts we really haven't been able to meet our mandate and that just boils right down to funding and not having enough money to hire people, or to produce books or materials." To respond to such core funding cuts during federal political regime change, some organizations begin to cut programs and lay off staff that are already difficult to find:

> So my position comes from government funding, and it comes on a year to year basis as well, and there have been changes in that program. So again, we are sort of at the mercy of the government and this program since it is not a treaty right, but an economic initiative, then it depends on if the government sees a value in it.

Funding issues decrease services and inhibit the ability to deliver services that are consistent and sustainable, and that can have positive impacts they wish their clients could feel in their lives.

Lack of good employees

As much as good and committed staff were applauded as facilitating factors for sustainability of urban Aboriginal service delivering organizations, not all are lucky enough to find a good fit between employees and organizational mission. Shortage of funding and therefore of committed staff was identified as the second leading threat to service delivery: "Funding and staffing are the biggest threat. I think it is certainly difficult because if we had some more funding we would do a lot more. We would have six community coordinators going out and they would do a lot more focused work." Another respondent added:

> It also makes it difficult to attract and retain employees because they know that if they are only going to be here for a year, if a better opportunity comes up they are going to be gone. And you are rehiring again and then you are starting that whole process of building relationships. So that's a threat.

Slow recruitment is a function of low wages, commented another: "There are higher wages out there than here," adding, "People need to live and the people that work here love what they are doing but the wages here are lower than it would be for different organizations or for the government." Another reason is "the lack of qualified people, and I'm not only talking about formal education, but qualified Indigenous people, to assist our clients."

Political Issues

Turf wars spill over in relationships with the Federal Government that influence operations of urban Aboriginal service delivery organizations. The first issue is due to the constitutionally mandated responsibilities of the Federal Government to Aboriginal people. Undeniably, some of the constitutionally-based rights complicate how the organizations carry out their mission especially in regards to representation of all the cultural groups that constitute Aboriginal people. This 'political spill over' interferes with operations of the organizations at times. For example, selecting board members for some of these organizations is complicated by competing claims for Métis and First Nations representation. Tension may develop on how to represent both cultural groups, as one respondent said, "We have an AGM coming up. Every year we always wonder, who is going to get on the board? Are they going to try to take over? "This same respondent added, "They brought in a whole bunch of people, like the Métis society and they said that they did not know any status [people]." The respondent perceived this to be unfair especially when it means people on the board "fighting for the wrong thing."

As another example, another respondent also explained how such political issues are onerous and costly for the organizations to constantly engage with: "The rights-based items are definitely a problem. So, when you try to assert your rights sometimes, you are asserting a right which is an Aboriginal right, that is your right too but because it isn't litigated and there is no case law, you always have the opportunity for someone to kibosh that. The respondent concluded, "And then make you [within the organization] take that litigation route." Such comments make clear that Métis-First Nation representation within the same organization can cause contention for some even as others have stressed their inclusive impulses and actions.

Duplication or Fragmentation of Services

Whereas duplication occurs within service delivery organizations, some of the duplication is caused by Federal Government bureaucracy that creates confusion in service delivery: "Particularly at the federal level you have two federal departments sometimes we're working with that I am sure don't even know they exist. You know, they don't talk to each other." The respondent added, "The rules don't match and don't flow together…you have to work with income assistance which is a different federal department than the enhanced service delivery in the First Nations Job Fund. So you're working with two sets of rules, trying to make it work because they say to make it work. That's really frustrating and that's really tough to work with."

At the same time, there is also fragmentation in the services being delivered because they are offered in separate rather than integrative ways that make it difficult to measure the success of the services. This dual problem of duplication and fragmentation is succinctly explained:

> A secondary threat would be ways some of our parent organizations are starting to put field consultants in our areas, and they are starting to overlap with the work we do. But they work only in one sector, and that's fine, but it makes for a lot of confusion and when we work in three sectors you can end up with little gaps in meeting your clients and meeting their needs because we think maybe they covered it or we covered it. So that's certainly a threat I would say.

Another example of fragmentation given by respondents was the effects of new entrants to the service sectors who are operating with different rules but serving the same kinds of clients or receiving funds from the same funding partners assisting the urban Aboriginal organizations. What has occurred is unhealthy competition, according to one respondent:

> Five years ago, nobody thought we had a homelessness issue; everybody was blind to it. Then all of a sudden, the city partners up with BATC [Battlefords Agency Tribal Chiefs] and the Lighthouse. They overstepped us and started their own shelter. We had invited city people and stuff like that to our centre for functions and they don't even give us a reply. Well those are the kinds of things that happened to us here.

Fragmentation also causes missed opportunities to learn about the greatest need in the communities or among clients: "I think that one of the things that we also have been learning over time, and this is a bit outside of our area, is a growing food insecurity." The respondent explained how fragmentation caused food insecurity to be missed because of the Food Banks:

> It's really unfortunate that somehow we have allowed ourselves to be reassured that people, for example, can go to the food bank and access tin cans or boxes of white pasta and be okay with that, that somehow that is taking care of those people that don't have healthy food. That is so wrong, that mentality that we even let that happen and that we don't value food as nurturing a bigger part of our collective self.

Such missed opportunities also mean that the real demand in specific economic development areas could be obscured by the need to meet regular social services expectations:

> For example, there is a shortage of meat cutters. We tried to get a meat cutting program together with a local organization, but we couldn't find a place to train them, there are not enough facilities and there was no money, but there is a huge need for meat cutters. And we don't' just train people in Saskatoon; we train people throughout the province

Lack of buy-in

Lack of buy-in originates in urban-reserve services linkages where supportive community or Chief and Council leadership is missing. One example given is when "they [community or leadership] don't get what they want," as explained by this respondent:

> So no matter what we do if we go to the bands and say our number one goal is to reduce dependency by 5%, that means people are going to come and complain to you that welfare is harder to get or they've been on it so long and they don't know any better. So the biggest threat would be having our local support from people, or buy-in from people pulled.

Nevertheless, these organizations are fighting this type of pull back: "We want to take them out of that mindset. Those are kind of human elements. You are changing a human psychic pattern." Some organizations are responding by changing the discussion and ensuring the elders are involved and concerned about such issues to improve the buy-in. A respondent explained, "So old people say to us and instruct our Chief and Council and leaders, which is part of our governance strategy, so our old people tell us what to do with our young people. They will say they don't need to be on welfare because welfare is the worst thing to happen to this generation since the 50s, 60s, and 70s so that has to go away." The discussion reframes issues as a burden to the bands: "dependency triggers financial burden to a band and it's to a point where the population is so high that the people in the band and the government can't fund that anymore and they are saying you guys are feeding dependency." The respondent ended, "We need to have our kids stronger and away from dependency because it rolls into them not taking care of their home, not taking care of their kids, not taking care of their family, being disrespectful—it creates a whole financial burden."

Another area where lack of buy-in is experienced is in school systems where parents are moving children to town schools:

> Some people don't like band schools anymore. Our own people. Indian Affairs doesn't know what to do with those situations because they want school boards and they want kids at better levels coming out of the systems. Some people are sending their kids back to town school because they feel they are going to get a better education. So the threat of that is basically we lose everything.

The respondent explained that some parents see the reserve school system as "babysitting schools": "So we brought all of our kids home here for education on reserve but if you are not educating our kids why would we keep our kids here because you are setting them up with wrong values and you don't have an education focus. You want money but you are not using our money to educate our kids as a band. Now let's send our kids back to school in town because there is a school here, but here is a babysitting school."

Q 17. How does your organization work/engage with various stakeholder organizations (both Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal, including various governments) to improve service delivery?

A number of strategies are employed to meet the specific demands of clients whenever there is insufficient capacity within an organization tasked to deliver on a given portfolio of services. Respondents reported cooperating with Non-Aboriginal organizations and various levels of government in three ways:

1. Forming partnerships to expand outreach capacity
2. Forming partnerships for governance purposes
3. Striking joint standing committees for specific services

Urban Aboriginal organizations extend outreach by means of short-term collaboration: "When we do have partners, they tend to be larger, provincial in scope or another district, something like that, because sometimes when you get into a community organization, for example, they want to offer a specific workshop where we might not want to offer something so small. We want to do something that is broader." This participant gave an example of workshops they might get bigger partnerships for: "For example, we have a recreation practitioners meeting coming up and we make sure that's in a venue where they can take a tour and learn about a recreation facility, something like that. That's not maybe a textbook partnership but it is a kind of partnership." Another respondent provided a similar large-scale partner orientation: "We try to build bridges with the regional health authority to see if they can help to address some of our issues in our communities." Some of the organizations also liaise on behalf of urban organizations to connect with the municipal government and build capacity:

> We are probably considered the main, and it wasn't always like this, but we are considered the main First Nations organization to deal with. We have a protocol at the City of Regina that states that this is the service delivery organization for the First Nations people of Regina. Actually we are just finishing up the cooperation community safety protocol between [organization] and Regina Police Service [RPS]. So we have the Director of Justice as well as myself here working with the RPS so that we have this as the tribal council involved in the city.

Even though some organizations preferred larger strategic partners, others saw the best way to expand outreach capacity is with other smaller like-minded organizations within the same service areas: "We have a lot of very positive relationships with other Aboriginal organizations who provide the same kinds of services to ensure that no one is left behind especially in years like this where we are going into renewal funds where we have funds for one year at a time."

In terms of governance, sometimes it is necessary to work with tribal councils and bands: "My board is the four large bands in Northern Saskatchewan—so Lac La Ronge Indian Band, Meadow Lake Tribal Council, Prince Albert Grand Council, and Peter Ballantyne Cree Nation. Those are the four bands that are on the board and they represent 33 First Nations communities across the north." They also form governance with organizations such as economic development: "We used to sit on the Economic Development Regional Board but they've kind of dismantled so we really haven't had much to do with the Regional Economic Development. We also have a number of other economic development partnerships that we sit with." Others sit on Health Regions boards: "We partner with third level services like Northern Inter-Tribal Health Authority (NITHA) in terms of health and we sit on the Prairie Health Regional Board."

On striking joint committees, one respondent said:

> There is definitely an excellent working relationship with the First Nations and FSIN specifically. So, going back to the task force on education for First Nations and Métis, that was definitely a collaboration between FSIN and, the Métis nation, and the provincial government. And it worked very well. We have the support of most of

> those organizations, too; they come out to our cultural events such as at Batoche. They play a big part in it and I think that all of those organizations, in addition to the federal government, recognize we are much stronger collectively than when we are fighting, which is definitely a different landscape than we've seen even 50 years ago.

Furthermore, joint committees are also formed for ongoing youth issues, as explained by the following respondent: "I mean it's just continuous, doing our best to connect with community partners. What's going on, how can we combine, how can we connect services together so that we are doing what we want to do and that's to help our youth, specifically?"

Q 18. How does your organization work/engage with various stakeholder communities (First Nations and Métis communities) to improve service delivery?

Engagement between First Nations and Métis communities

Some First Nations regional and provincial umbrella organizations stated that they do not work across stakeholder groups, including Métis groups. These organizations explained this is because they are not "third level front line organizations." They have limited interactions within the committees convened by others, as explained by this respondent: "Some of our First Nations work very well. But ourselves, we don't have a lot of dealings with the Métis. We sit on some tables together like some of the Northern economic development regions. But we don't really have a partnership with them, but I'm going to mention one: Buffalo Narrows. We are renting their building out there. That's basically one. Another respondent added, "Well you know the state of the nation. We do have local 106 and local 30 in our area. We work with them but at this point in time the Métis nation is null and void. There is very little going on with them." And finally another respondent from a non-third level organization concluded, "This office has not actively pursued a relationship with the Métis nation. But they're there and we are aware of it. And we meet and we talk but it's almost like a casual relationship right now."

Many First Nations respondents acknowledged the need to work with Métis communities: "We used to always do, when we would do National Aboriginal Day celebrations. Like Aboriginal people we recently learned to start including the Métis people in there because I think First Nations people are the most prejudiced at times against ourselves, so again Métis people should be included." Another respondent added, "We have our AGM basically for community meetings. Other than that, we just meet people [Métis and others] when they come into the centre."

While other organizations mentioned working relationships across the two groups, it was unclear what kind of organization would be conducive to bridging the divide. Some First Nations organizations clearly do work across the divide including bands and grand councils. Also the Office of the Treaty Commissioner and the STC bridge the First Nation-Métis divide. These organizations work together for a few purposes, including to ensure equity in funding among these groups: "I was talking about our funding programs. They are primarily to support the gaps that we observe out there, which are First Nations and Métis programming funding." Together with funding, the respondents explained how their organizations work with various stakeholders across the groups during the assessment period planning for services to be offered: "We go into

the communities three or four times a year; we do lots of focus groups in the communities with different target groups to see what they want."

Another purpose is to ensure staff inclusion in those upper level organizations that act as province-wide umbrella organizations: "Internally, half our consulting team are Indigenous peoples so that helps." Other organizations said they work when they can to be inclusive but are limited by status considerations: "The only part where we have to stop the services or suspend the services is when there is a dollar figure attached. For example, if we have to buy you work boots so you can get on a job site and so we need to attach a treaty number to you if we are going to expend any dollars on you. But places where we don't have to do that…we're status blind." The respondent then added, "And when it's dollar figures, that's not usually our rules either. You know it's somebody else's rules."

Lastly, groups may work together on special projects as elaborated below:

> The navigator program is even more encompassing in the sense that, if you are coming from a small Métis community and you are looking for help, we are going to help you. We are not going to shut the doors, whether you are Métis or First Nations. We include in the navigator program, in that sense, everyone. In fact there is very few limitation we have for employment and training services. If you walk through the door here and maybe you are a new Canadian or if you are non-Aboriginal and you are saying I am looking for work, can you help me, our advisors will help you. Our advisors will do resume building with you; they will say there are jobs and these people are looking.

The special programs vary across the First Nations jurisdictions:

> I'm from [First Nation] and being urban here I know a lot of people from a lot of different First Nations. They will come in and . . . . as long as you live in our area we will fund you if you have a treaty card. Our area is kind of weir; here are all the offices right, through like File Hills whatever and then we have a little map under there and this is the area. The whole province is cut up under SITAG [Saskatchewan Indian Training Assistance Group] and we have one agreement with them; they administer for Métis and First Nations.

Engagement within First Nations groups or Métis groups

Interview data revealed that engagement within First Nation groups only and Métis nation only are similar in nature to those between these two groups in cases where they do cooperate as shown above. Most First Nation groups cooperate via partnerships under their regional umbrella organizations such as the FSIN [Federation of Saskatchewan Indian Nations], BATC [Battlefords Agency Tribal Chiefs], SIGA [Saskatchewan Indian Gaming Authority], and SICC [Saskatchewan Indian Cultural Centre]: "In terms of our external partnerships we do some work with FSIN and the sports, culture, and recreation department." Another participant also added, "Well we work with SIGA; we have a beautiful relationship with SIGA. They come once a

month to volunteer. They serve food and they donate a meal once a month." And another respondent said, "We partner with the BATC; like they gave us a lot of funding for our homeless shelter over the previous years and the employment and training centre at BATC actually refers people to us and that is how they helped us get started."

For the Métis only partnerships, similar impetus for working together was visible in the interview data. Partnerships between Métis organization support grant sharing: "We have a partnership with the Gabriel Dumont Institute and the Métis Cultural Development Fund, so we administer that grant together." They also form working relationship to advance Métis people in areas such as education:

> We have what we call our quarterly meetings and as well we will hold an ED's meeting where the Executive Directors will all meet prior to the quarterly meeting and we just share what each centre is doing and the different types of funding that is available out there for friendship centres and you know different grants and stuff. We have the quarterly ED meetings so then we have the Board members that come together and meet as a provincial body. Like I know if I need some help I will just phone one of the other centres and ask 'what's happening there?' or whatever and you can be sure that they are going to be there and they are very, very supportive

Working relationships are typically case specific. For First Nations, there are also working relationships when there is a governance linkage with regional or provincial umbrella organizations.

Q 19. How does your organization work/engage with industry and business to improve service delivery?

Contradictory views were expressed by respondents on the relationships between industry and business and urban Aboriginal service delivery organizations. On the one hand, some organizations identified a lack of involvement with industry and business related to incompatible mandates: "Well, we are non-profit so that hasn't always been a good fit for us. We are not about creating an economy; we are about creating understanding and awareness and those things typically don't sell very well. That whole economic piece isn't what we are invested in." Others do not engage with industry and business for fear of controversy among community members:

> Not really, I have to honestly say. There is a fine line between creating employment, creating an economy for your communities yet at the same time trying to preserve the environment. Some communities are all gung ho about it and some communities want nothing to do with it. We have to find the balance someway somehow. It's hard to work together and it's hard for the First Nations to come together because they are so competitive with each other.

On the other hand, some urban Aboriginal organizations outlined engagement, some under the auspices of corporate social responsibilities, including contract work, employing rehabilitated organization clients, special subsidy programs for Métis or First Nations, special internships, and sponsorship for single events as well as program/project-wide sponsorships. For example, one Métis organization described its engagement:

> Right now we have partnerships, like we have trades, lots of trades since that is the focus right now. We just got 3.1 million dollars from Western Economic Diversification to get more trades training. We have a target group of 150 tradespeople and so we will have direct partnerships with where they will employ our people. We do wage subsidies for them [the companies]; we may have partnerships where we do a trades program directly for certain companies.

Industry relations were not unusual for the Métis Nation:

> In terms of industry, the Métis nation has had a history of working quite closely with industry such as NUMO, nuclear waste management organization, Enbridge pipeline and TransCanada pipeline, although that is not to say they are in support of all of those projects. But they have had a working relationship. I notice in terms of duty to consult and even prior to that, they [businesses] would be in contact with our provincial organization and the locals. For example, they involved them in walking the pipelines.

In addition to the above services, both First Nations and Métis organizations engage with industry and business to improve their own services. For example, a respondent explained, "I purchase internal services through them with a business engagement manager." Another respondent described being clients to business and industry: "We also have an economic development department with the Farm Credit Canada (FCC)."

Further, for-profit arms of many of the bands and urban community organizations work with business and industry in performing economic development activities to build capacity for their members: "Well we do have an economic development arm of our organization . . . . So we do have some partnerships that we are slowly trying to develop to try and provide our own sources of revenues and capacity." Similarly, another respondent said, "We also have an employment centre so we definitely work with industry and business and more so now than ever especially since we have potash and mining." Another respondent explained how they work with a business manager from one of the companies that form partnerships to promote them: "One of the things that directly impacts us is that when he's engaging with the different types of employers he is reminding them or gently saying, you know, we have the employment and training services team that can help you with any of your HR needs. So he is kind of out there getting the word out building those relationships so that people are comfortable with us and comfortable coming to us." Evidently, there is no one fit-all formula for how First Nations or Métis organizations choose to work with Industry and various businesses.

Q 20. What are the challenges that these engagements face? How are they addressed?

Few challenges within the arts and culture sectors
A number of respondents reported smooth operations among partners within the arts and culture sectors no matter where these partners are located or who they are representing. A respondent explained, "The people that are involved in the cultural sector are people that are typically invested in it, either personally or culturally. Not too many people decide to go work for a non-profit in the arts or in culture unless they are actively in some way involved and supportive of it. You aren't going to become a millionaire working in the culture sector but you are able to make the ends meet and do positive work." This shows the fit between the mission and who is hired to carry this mission out is important. Another respondent agreed, "We have a really good working relationship with them. So I don't see any challenges with our partnerships."

Social and educational challenges
What was mentioned to be the overwhelming challenge these engagements face is that, despite all that they do, many social issues remain to be tackled in light of limited resource and time: "At the community level we are still dealing with a lot of social issues. Drugs are one; addictions are a big factor. We are still having to deal with young people not graduating fully and going off to university and colleges. We notice that there are a lot of young parents, young women, going back to school and we are concerned about the young men not finishing high school."

Roads and access
Other challenges mentioned were specific and sometimes unique to the geographical location of the clients (or communities) as opposed to where the urban Aboriginal organization is located: "Sometimes our roads are the biggest obstacles because the way they are and a lot of people are scared to drive our northern roads. Now the other thing too is that we don't have a decent airstrip but I am glad that our leadership is currently working on trying to get some partner to build a bigger airstrip in our community and that is going to be a plus. If we could get that going it would be just awesome for us to continue looking at other opportunities."

Organizational capacity
Other unique situations arise from partnerships demanding too many meetings for staff and executives to attend: "Sometimes there is an over-abundance of meetings because the PEC holds their own meetings, the school divisions hold their own meetings, we hold our own meetings, we partner in each other's meetings sometimes." The respondent added, "I think it is a good problem that there is so much going on. There are choices for communities, but at times it is a bit overwhelming."

Others commented on the lack of capacity to engage or even to thank sponsors and other donors: "I guess our biggest challenge is that we don't have enough staff to actually focus on engaging external partners ourselves. It's just a real time constraint when you don't have a lot of time to do stuff like that. It would be great if we do have the time but we do have to administer the income assistance program which takes 99% of our time."

Jurisdictional complexity

Also mentioned as a challenge is the complexity of jurisdictional responsibilities of federal and provincial government: "It is hard because there is federal and provincial governments so its jurisdictional—the Feds are supposed to cover this but say 'no,' the province is supposed to cover it, and then the province says the Feds are supposed to cover it and so in the end First Nations are caught in the middle where nobody is funding them for a service because they are all arguing over who is supposed to fund it." The respondent gave an example:

> When you look at one of the issues that we have is hospital to hospital transfer. When they did the change to regional health authorities each region is separate and so now when somebody is sick and is sent down to Saskatoon and has, say, surgery or whatever, and then is sent back to their regional hospital of, say, La Ronge or Meadow Lake or La Loche, that ambulance trip is not covered by the province so it is an unfunded service. But the Feds say that's not our responsibility; that is the province's responsibility and the province says it's not our responsibility; it is a federal responsibility. So our First Nations members are stuck with an ambulance bill that they can't cover and are being forced to move from one hospital to the next. So we spend a lot of time trying to get those things addressed.

Corporate sponsorship

Corporate sponsorship was perceived as a challenge at times because it might be seen as a source of conflict of interest or as inconsistent with espoused values:

> I think that the naming thing is problematic for me in that a lot of organizations if they do give significant amount of funding they want that naming rights of the business. I struggle with that because in some ways it loses its authenticity and it loses its uniqueness if it is somehow stamped with an automatic label of a corporate donor. I guess that is a bit of a challenge for me, something that would prevent me from taking a large sum of money. Again I think I would do it on a case by case.

Others saw corporate sponsorship bring out the worst in their own communities:

> Also there is community politics, right, and that's the biggest obstacle that I face. We get a lot of sponsorships from corporations, like [names companies], who gave us $60,000 for our building, to build it and so forth. But again as it is with any small Aboriginal community there is always the fighting, the jealousy, and the fear of dishonesty and that. So it is something that is engraved in our society. At times I see in a lot of Aboriginal communities a lot of distrust, and rightly so because time after time we see a lot of things that shouldn't be happening.

Stereotyping

The majority of the respondents commented on the stereotyping experienced by Aboriginal people and ignorance and fear leading to disengagement:

> The biggest challenge we have is creating the awareness and dealing with the stereotypes of Aboriginal people. And sometimes people don't even mean it. And it's so much with language, not to lay blame on anybody, that doesn't work. But….we're Indians, we're native, we're half-breeds, or Métis, First Nations, Aboriginal, You know, the name changed so much and people are so scared of getting hit with the human rights hammer of being called a racist…they just disengage.

Some saw this stereotype was so strong that it impacted training opportunities with crown corporations: "I think there are perceptions of Aboriginal people that have affected us. So, for instance, some of the crown corporations such as Sask Power, or Sask Energy, are really tough to get in on and they often aren't very receptive to taking some of our students on and mentoring and training them."

Low self-esteem

Another commonly faced engagement challenge that was identified by different interviewed organizations was the need to have better and consistent communications of services to ensure uptake by those with low self-esteem: "People are not coming out here and asking about a lot of stuff because a lot of them have seen multi-generational suffering and they often feel that they are going to stay in that situation. People don't understand there is a lot of low self-esteem that holds people back from participating in things that would probably benefit them." On a similar note, another respondent confirmed: "Sometimes the low income people because they may not know the system or be equipped to really take advantage of a lot of those opportunities, they might fall through the cracks and that frequently happens." Finally another respondent elaborated on how they try to maximize access to services: "It's not just a welfare office; it's actually an office where there is a lot of people that are low income can use the exact same resources. So it's the perfect place to come to our office and work with us very closely to ensure you [clients] are aware of what we do."

Cultural barriers

Different cultural lenses and philosophies were seen as an engagement issue between Aboriginal organizations and non-Aboriginal organizations:

> Businesses are capitalist ventures so their bottom line is making money. So oftentimes they are just thinking dollars and cents, bottom line, following HR practices to a T which are often not very flexible. So our job is also within these employment and training opportunities to teach our people and their employees, learning exactly what their goals and objectives are as well as them understanding about our culture. A very big thing would be wakes and funerals. Most First Nations people have prayers the night before and then they take off the next morning to go to a funeral;, our people are gone for 3 days to a week. So that is something that we have had to work on for sure.

How to overcome challenges

Specific mandates and revisioning are seen as a way to overcome challenges in engagement: "Not really [no challenges] because our mandate was languages and culture and no one really else had that really as their mandate. It was only us." Another commented on "new visions, new partnerships, and then trying to come up with new ideas." For some, that means being positive and enabling rather than negative, divisive, and confrontational:

> If you can find someone who has contacts and the ability to go out and lobby for dollars and be very vocal, and be able to speak at very large functions and address issues in a positive manner and not one that is threatening or intimidating or hollering or screaming but coming as a proactive manner, and saying "what can we do for your organization" or "how can we both help to build the community as a whole" instead of going in there and I see that a lot in Aboriginal politics that people will come to a meeting and start banging their fists on the table and saying, "We need this! We need that!" instead of coming in and being proactive and saying, "hey how can we work together to make La Loche better."

In other words, it is about "building those relationships as you go through life and a lot of people that I know are now in positions of power and it just comes hand in hand with that."

Alternative ventures to generate funds were seen as a way to combat challenges especially for education initiatives whether it be training or building facilities:

> Establishing a few money-making ventures so we could reinvest some of our revenue dollars back into training and development for First Nations members. We've been able to do a little bit of that this summer with the little resources we have and I'd like to see that in a bigger scale to the point where we even have our own educational facility.

And there are times when an entrepreneurial initiative can be the solution to an educational challenge:

> I was thinking about the facility itself, and then the location that we are in in Southend if we want to bring special instructors, accommodations is a big issue in our community. But I am hearing through the grapevine that there might be someone who is starting up an accommodation business in the community, so that's a plus on our side.

Q 21. How do you work with other Aboriginal organizations that are not in your city? For example, do you work with Aboriginal organizations in northern communities like (MB: Thompson or the Pas) (SK: La Ronge, Pelican Narrows, La Loche)?

On the question of how Aboriginal organizations work with those organizations located outside the city (in northern communities, for example), there was some formal linking through umbrella organizations as well as informal information sharing, although geography and other barriers meant that working together had not become a priority.

Even though some organizations do not work with similar organizations in the North, many explained that there is still involvement through the umbrella organizations such as FSIN, AFCS, FNARF (First Nation Addiction Rehabilitation Foundation), and the GDI: "We don't really do any projects together, but I will call and say where did you get that funding for this or that? How did you do this? How did you do that? We are good that way back and forth." There was also a time when the Manitoba Association of Friendship Centres was responsible for the Aboriginal Friendship Centres of Saskatchewan when there was a lack of leadership (Executive Director). This was the only time reported of linkages between the two provinces' organizations.

Representatives of organizations in the south offered that "there isn't a lot of Aboriginal organizations in our district." Another simply said it has not been made a priority: "So working with Aboriginal organizations that aren't in the city hasn't been, we just haven't been able to make it a priority." Geographic distance makes it a challenge to have a positive relationship unless it's a great match for the organizations and there is a mutual benefit to be realized in a short time. An example of what a short-term mutual gain could look like is explained below:

> Some of the northern communities it would just be too far to really have a positive relationship anyway. But that being said, through our urban agriculture program we sent our interns on a tour to Flying Dust where they do a lot of agriculture like growing potatoes and carrots that they sell to markets. So we wanted our interns to see from a First Nation's perspective how they are managing to create this viable gardening business. So they went there and stayed there and talked to people. So we will build those kinds of relationships and if Flying Dust was willing to sell potatoes at a good price for food box then we would be totally into that. So where it makes sense where other organizations are doing agriculture or gardening and we see ourselves as a bridge to them if that is desirable to them too, we make those relationships.

Q 22. If you work with these organizations outside of your region, what has necessitated this engagement?

For those who work together the motivations are largely driven by capacity issues and the need to build something bigger and better for First Nations, such as economic development and other ventures. Seven main reasons were highlighted:

1. The need to share a resource person
2. Funding requirements of the AFCS
3. When a client relocates to another community or moves between communities
4. When a large disaster affecting Northerners occurs
5. When experienced board members are needed

6. When there is a nation-level conference or Career Fair
7. When there is an overarching nation-to-nation economic development plan/venture

For example, given the shortage of people with certain skills in areas with dispersed communities, resource persons are shared and might cross the North-South divide: "The family worker, she might have a client that belongs to Meadow Lake Tribal Council so she needs to have a connection over there." Another respondent said, "Actually we are connected to a lot of communities in the area. Our family violence coordinator goes out to Island Lake reserve, Pierceland, and Goodsoil. All the little communities. The same thing with our prenatal program who works with all the other communities and the court worker has her court points and she has to follow the judge."

The AFCS adds incentive to north-south working relationships as a result of funding requirements: "The AFCS is the one that brings out the grants and the programs and tries to encourage interactions among all of the centres. So they've done a really good job. Like any good organization, their staff is the most important part of it. If you have staff that is qualified, educated, and above all passionate about programs and making change in the community in a positive way, it will go a long ways."

When some clients move from region to another, cooperation happens in efforts to trace them and begin new files for them to continue receiving services at their new location:

> If one of my clients moves to one of the other three communities, they have to actually get referred out. If you go off reserve it is actually the same thing—there is a referral process. The reason that that is done is so you can share client information and also to reduce people possibly getting benefits from more than one location, which is possible, so when you refer someone out you close their file and then they open a file at another location.

Furthermore, cooperation occurs when there is a natural disaster calling for pooled resources: "There are certain things that make things happen that are special. A good example is the fires in La Ronge. So when people are homeless and they take 8,000 people out of the reserve [because of the fire], we [become] First Nations and our culture is if someone suffers you get in there regardless of if you are Dene and we are Plains Cree, or you are Bush Cree and we are Plains Cree."

Efforts to get appropriate and experienced board of directors have also resulted in working together: "We have a wide cross section of people from the community that have sat on boards previously or have some knowledge or are a quick study, so to speak, in terms of board members." Another respondent said, "Some of our [Saskatoon organization] board members are from Onion Lake because a lot of the students who come into the programs are actually from Onion Lake since they discontinued the upgrading program at Lakeland College."

Conferences and Career Fairs tend to connect northern and southern regions—both during planning and in attendance by invited First Nations and their representatives. Leaders/staff who seek insights from others with similar mandates profit well from these activities, as explained by

this participant: “I made several trips to Alberta to meet with the First Nations over there. I just got back from Southern Saskatchewan just last night. So I try and do whatever I can and I am trying to host some kind of conference here in the very near future to talk about stuff I picked up.” The respondent added, “I picked up a nice program last spring in April what one school was doing. So what I am doing is bringing those consultants to Saskatoon and I am taking all of my staff of 200 over there.” The same respondent “took a group down to Winnipeg just last spring too. When I need support I take people out over there so they can hear it firsthand.” During the planning of conferences the purpose is to ensure representation as well as relevant issues: “For example, our Language Keepers Conference that we had we tried to find presentations, workshops, and things geared to all 74 First Nations so we were not just focusing on one First Nation or one language group. So we try to work with everybody.”

Similarly, Career Fairs unite the southern and northern organizations and enable them to cooperate on employment and economic development as explained by these two respondents:

> We know that we have strong migration of Aboriginal people from the north; they come from La Ronge, Prince Albert, and then they come to Saskatoon. And that’s the migration route. And so what we do is we go to the career fair in La Ronge, Creighton, and Pelican Narrows. So, we try and reach out to the kids. And then Prince Albert Grand Council has a big career fair where they bring in all the kids. We attended that too. So we will do a presentation on the services that the city of Saskatoon provides and how to access different things.

Programs bring different groups together to support economic participation:

> There is navigator program that the Saskatoon Tribal Council just set up to help families when they are moving to the city. For example, I will get a resume from someone who wants to move to Saskatoon. He is from Ahtakakoop First Nation. So I will connect him with the navigator program. If you've got a job but you don't have a place to live and you are couch surfing, it's hard to survive, so we try and work together and let those northern communities know that there is opportunity and help here in Saskatoon.

Economic development and employment opportunities were stressed by others: “We really try to promote our region to Aboriginal investors because if somebody in the family has a job, it makes it so much easier for the rest of the family to get a job and we have to break that cycle of unemployment.” Also, the cooperation is geared towards business ventures and urban reserves:

> We try to promote opportunities for inclusion in the area of Saskatoon. And so because First Nations are a recognized order of government we have brought them to the table as well as we grow our regional plan, like [how] we have incorporated Martinsville, Osler, and Warman. You will see that we have 14 First Nations who have land holdings in our area. There are four urban reserves; there is one that they are working

> on. They have big enough parcels of land there they could subdivide and create their own zoning and develop a light industrial area. Little Pine have property that is not designated reserve and One Arrow bought the apartment building that is located right behind their gas station. So we really try to promote the area in our regional plan study.

One respondent summed up the incentives to work together: "We all work for the betterment of our people." Strong partnerships between the Health Regions and the Northern Sport, Culture, and Recreation District, for example, support initiatives: "We have strong partners that provide sport, culture and recreation so we try to work together. We will meet with anyone in the community that is providing sport, culture and recreation. Our biggest players are the school, the health sectors, rec portfolio and rec directors; if they have a rec board in the community that's even better." These types of cooperation are not strictly outlined in any memoranda of understanding but rather evolve organically because of the similarities of this portfolio for all communities: "We rarely go to leaders and chiefs or mayors; most of the time we get filtered down to rec directors and rec portfolios or rec boards. There's inter-agency meetings, and we will sit down at that table as well. But in most communities it's all the same: it's health, school, and council."

Q 23. What service delivery partnerships have emerged over the last decade? How do they work? What is needed to sustain them?

Table 5 lists emergent service delivery partnerships in the last decade:

Table 5. Emergent service delivery partnerships

Name of the service or partnership	Explanation/short quote
The Lighthouse (1)	
Tribal council urban services	"Were limited ten years ago and now they seem to be expanding."
Reserve urban services	"Reserves have set up urban service offices for their own members. They never had those ten years ago."
Specific Cultural Services	"I guess a lot of sports and cultural things have happened over the last 10 years. Like in the fall we do this round dance social and I mean we get so many people coming to this once a week and that has happened in the last 10 years."
Advocacy and Communication functions	"I see people accessing funding for communication, like I said. That's crazy when you can do that off the side."
Multicultural Council	"I think in our community we now have a partnership with the Multicultural Council. I think we have a really good relationship now because that's who our partner was for the multicultural pow wow. They often call and say, 'We are

	doing this. Do you guys want to be in on it?' I actually just got a call from them today."
Department of Social Services	"They are now taking in the value of Aboriginal culture and realizing that it makes a difference in a family and they are also trying not to apprehend if they don't have to.
Tri-global partnership	"So that's the partnership that we have through Sask Lotteries, SaskSport, SaskCulture, and Sask Parks and Recreation. We are all under the same support network. We are all provincial to support are different mandates throughout the province."
Saskatchewan Arts Board	"Is a direct partner with us; we have a formal agreement with them called Creative Partnerships."
Partnership with provincial government on developing E-health (electronic health records)	"We are actually working with them right now to try and share electronic health records across Northern Saskatchewan, or the implementation of what they call Panorama" and "There is a big partnership with the development of a mental health and addictions training program, which is unique to First Nations."
Saskatchewan Dental Therapy Association and Dental Hygiene Association	"We are trying to develop partnerships right now to try and get a dental therapy training program back up and running in Saskatchewan because we don't have one anywhere in Canada. So we are working with those associations trying to get a program off the ground."
City of Regina and Affiliates	"We have so many, I just told you, with the City of Regina, Police, etc. We are a complete city department. We are the only agency that is funded by two streams of the city government's funding, both social and recreation."
Friendship and Metis Centre	"Never before did we partner with an Aboriginal community. We partner on the Housing initiative which is new to Saskatoon. So we stood up with the Friendship Centre and said that we would do it together collaboratively."
Kids First	"They work with children 0 – 5. What happens with that program is an assessment is done at the hospital and if a mother has a problem with alcohol, or they smoke. I think if they fall into any one of those areas, then they can join the program."
Pro-bono law clinic	"A free legal clinic—we were told that would be the most neutral place in the city where people would feel comfortable to come and see the lawyer."
Affinity Credit Union and BDC	- Affinity has First Nations department manager.

	- -BDC has spoken at conferences in regards to financial services
Aboriginal Student Centre at University of Saskatchewan	"So that's one that I'm aware of. I am still getting to know many."
Saskatchewan Ministry of Highways	"So the Ministry of Highways actually gave up a section of their shop so that the Métis learners could actually see the physical work environment. We encouraged them to hire more apprentices and they took on wholeheartedly the role as a trainer and went way above and beyond any organization I have ever seen with training people for jobs."

A number of things were mentioned as requisites for sustaining these new partnerships. In the forefront, there was a need for clearer and streamlined governance systems and associated processes: "I mean it's good to have governance in place but at the same time you don't need it to hinder yourself and tie yourself down." Part of governance is to understand mandates that drive operations of the organization; hence, for these partnerships to thrive, mandates have to be clear: "I think we are now getting to understand what our mandates are and what we want to do. At first they were partnerships but there wasn't really anything happening, but now we are truly getting together and trying to partner up in our programming to help our communities."

Good governance will allow for good succession planning and productivity, as emphasized by this respondent: "I think that what is needed to sustain them is for there to be a consistent level of commitment on both organizations' parts to continue to forge program ideas and to ensure those relationships are continuing." Part of succession planning is having the right number of staff. However, there are some obstacles that may interrupt good succession planning and programming, such as the piecemeal year-by-year funding by Aboriginal Affairs and Northern Development Canada (AANDC) now Indigenous and Northern Affairs Canada:

> The biggest obstacle is with AANDC and their inability to commit long-term sustainable funding for our centres. For some reason they want to live year by year. If anyone was working in the federal government and I came in and I said to you, "hey guys, you are working here at Heritage Canada; we are not sure if you are going to be working after April 1st, but we might give you another year." I am sure you would see employees leave and move to a different location because who would work in an environment like that? Same goes for our staff when they work year to year with no job security. They can't get a mortgage or a car loan because you don't even know in a year's time if you will still have a job. So that's the biggest problem for Aboriginal organizations.

The above respondent concluded, "When they piecemeal everything out, the sustainability factor isn't there and it really upsets me at times because we are losing staff, because nobody has any job certainty. I don't know. It's really, really hard." In addition to issues that impact succession planning and therefore staffing sustainability, giving recognition for a job well done was explained to be a way of building positive attitudes and allowing people to remain motivated:

"Recognition is the biggest factor in any organization. People feed off of success and recognition." This respondent clarified further how this translates into expanded capacity: "When other agencies see you are doing well, they say, hey the friendship centre in La Loche can take on and look after this program, pretty soon we are a staff of not 10, but a staff of 30. Ultimately that's my goal [more staff]."

Q 24. What is the value of these partnerships? How are the results of these partnerships evaluated?

The following values were identified:

1. **Mutual benefit of collective action**

Having unity in dealing with difficult tasks shows a collective action ability: "This is like that whole collective idea. We are always stronger together, so I think that everybody just needs to get there; we are all stronger together." A sense of belonging makes the work mutually beneficial: "We are helping them as much as they are helping us to have a stronger organization. If you have support from these other areas, it builds a stronger community." When there is mutual benefit, it is easy to form relationships and to rely on each other: "I think any partnership is beneficial whether it's knowing a name or a face to send somebody to a specific organization rather than just the front door."

2. **Sense of belonging and inclusion for urban populations**

A lot of value was put on forming relationships with the specific purpose of inclusion for those who are recent in urban areas: "The people who struggle in the city and don't know how to connect with their band or lost their main connection to the band via their parent or their grandparent—so they become their own reserve in the city and they go look for services. So If I am an urban Indian or urban First Nations in Saskatoon or North Battleford and I have no relationship to my First Nation at all and my First Nation doesn't' even know I exist because I am that far removed from my band list or I have been away for that long—half of our population is in that box now. From a point like that, [forming connections], that's valuable."

3. **Working to keep families together during difficult times or life-changing events**

These partnerships had value in providing diverse services that help to keep families together, mostly following either difficult times in life or during life-changing events for troubled individuals. Services included providing family workers, court workers, and social workers. One respondent gave the following example: "For people who are in jeopardy of losing their children and they are working with our family worker and the value of that is keeping a family together, keeping those children from going away and not having that separation and not having all the mental health issues that come with that, so stopping that from happening." The court worker was an important part of keeping families together: "So those court workers are there to help you understand court rules. They give you a comfort level because they are First Nations people too and you don't feel intimidated going into court rooms. So it started with the court worker

program and then they go on to add other programs on to it like the reintegration." This respondent explained how young offenders and therefore their families are helped:

> It takes a handful of people to help young people to make right choices. Our justice department does a really good job and we have really good employees in that area and they go over and beyond to make sure all kinds of programs are on the reserve, working with the RCMP, working with the judge, working with the crown prosecutor. One program that is really good is reintegration. Kids make a mistake and they don't need a criminal record following them for the rest of their lives so if they go with those programs they don't have to have that criminal record.

Similarly, programs also work with young people before offences occur to teach them about making right choices to avoid penalties such as criminal records: "We would do programs for young girls just to help with their self-esteem—that all came from the justice department, you know, making the right choices and getting them when they are young, getting them to understand choices that they make could affect their lives."

4. Educating and empowering through knowledge sharing

Vast knowledge sharing activities occur in these partnerships, including formal training for employment purposes: "It's a big benefit because our people here, our community, and our membership are being able to get these training services and are able to get out there and work and become independent." Knowledge sharing on specific issues relies on lived experience: "The value of the partnerships is to reach a better understanding of how to address the issues of food insecurity because who better to know that lived experience than people within Aboriginal organizations because of who they represent. Food insecurity is something that a lot of people don't really understand but I think if you talk about it within the Aboriginal community I think people would understand it quite well what that is about." And finally, knowledge sharing between partners was invaluable for partners and their clients: "There's so much to learn. There's so much to learn from each other and there is so much to learn from different executive directors and different service providers and different people. We share the same people so learning from each other and learning from their core values and their mission just serves us all better to serve our guests better."

On evaluating partnerships, a number of formal and informal methods were explained.

Formal Annual Reports

Formal annual reports to funding and sponsoring agencies as well as to inform the general public were identified as a way of evaluating the partnerships. Some commented that reporting back is not mandatory while others said it is expected especially if the funds are from government agencies, both federal and provincial: "So, we do a number of different annual reports. We have to report to Service Canada, that is our federal funding service agency." Annual reports provide the evidence of service delivery and use and set targets for the year to follow, show expected areas of service demand, and demonstrate changes over the longer term.

Formal third-party evaluation

"We had done [evaluation] by a third-party, so completely external to our apprenticeship project that was funded through the Skills and Partnership Fund, and it showed we were able to increase Aboriginal apprenticeship by over 13% over that 2 1/2 years, which is just huge." This respondent added, "So this is kind of summarizing that last apprenticeship project. So we had some fairly good success rates. It was hugely, hugely successful—83% success rate. So last fiscal year, 2013- 2014, we sponsored 740 clients to attend training and out of those 500 of them found employment within 6 months of completing."

Informal evaluation

It was shown from the interview data that some other 'intangible' results were collected as means of evaluating partnerships. The metrics that are used are not necessarily the ones required by the funding agencies or the ones that can show the specific direction of service demand, but do indicate the satisfaction and use of services. A few participants explained that they look at comments from service users, how often they are visited, and how they work to keep lines of communication open: "We collect data, people's comments, any time we are in a public setting. We collect data to get a sense of how we are fitting into the bigger picture." Another commented, "We value their relationship that we have with them. We keep open lines of communication with them but we don't keep any sort of statistics on how much the business unit has given to Affinity Credit Union, how much have we given to somebody else. So there is no evaluation with the service provider relationships….as far as I know."

For some intangibles were at the heart of evaluation of partnerships:

> We evaluate it. You are going to think we are corny. We evaluate everything we do by the smile on that person's face, helping them, the way they talk to us in the way they are treated later. You know because a handshake and a hug in our tradition, that is value enough. To help someone find their first home, you know, when you've got the Kokum hugging you and saying thank you, that's the best value to us. I know people think we are so square, but our people know we're here, the people that we help, the street people, the people that matter to us. We are happy with what we do. And the people who matter know.

Others collected tangible measures although not to include in the formal annual reporting: "There are quite a few tangible results that definitely partnerships with numerous different organizations and governments have influenced—like the Aboriginal or Métis start-up businesses and the growth of Métis businesses." Others said they are just unable to meet the challenges of formal evaluation, "Well again, one of the gaps would be the ability to evaluate programs because funds are limited and to bring in an outside evaluator can be costly."

Q 25. Are there service areas where partnerships might be helpful or useful?

A number of service areas were identified that seem to require more partnerships either because they are underserviced or face constant increases in demand. The first was in the cultural sector

especially languages: "All I can think is that a lot of people are not very serious about preserving the language and the culture. They say that they are, but I don't really see it. So partnerships are needed there." Yet another respondent showed concern for cultural services: "I would like to have a more formal partnership with the Saskatchewan Indian Cultural Centre (SICC). It would be great if we could put our minds together and do something positive in that area. There are still some bridges that haven't been crossed yet but they are on our radar."

In addition to the cultural sector, recreation service delivery requires partnership building because it is underserved: "I wish we had a better relationship with the regional intersectoral committees, but they are so focused locally that we can't and we don't want to spend our times in the cities of Moose Jaw and Swift Current and they do. So that's disappointing but just different directives." This respondent concluded, "But when you look around the table at a meeting to see who is there, that's a really good group of people. We do wish that we had a better partnership there." Another respondent added incentives in youth engagement: "So getting more notice in those circles is really a good partnership that I am pursuing, in all organizations that work with people that are in touch with the kids that I want to help."

Another underserviced area identified was agriculture and food security: "I would love to be able to connect with food security organizations. I would love to be able to connect somehow with CHEP, and I would love to connect with the housing – with CUMFI and different organizations that are serving the same people. Right now that is not always the case." Another respondent looked to see the craft of gardening re-established within communities, "We've got a vast land base here in regards to fertile agricultural soils. I would like to work with agriculture to grow some crops to the point where we re-establish the community farming and cattle ranching."

Partnerships with provincial level service providers were suggested because these providers eventually share their clientele or could leverage some of the services Aboriginal organizations are providing but with more consistency. Some of these providers mentioned were Health Regions, Saskatchewan Indian Cultural Centre (SICC), SIGA, Saskatchewan Association of Social Workers, Saskatchewan Teachers Federation, Regional Intersectoral Committees, and Saskatchewan Mining Association. One respondent commented on the partnership benefits:

> It would be nice to have a better partnership with the Regional Health Authority. We have initiated some joint board meetings to address things, but it's very slow going. We have requested numerous times to have a representative on Regional Health Authority board but it's a no go. And that's gone right to the Minister of Health and same with Manitoba. Like I said, we have to use a Manitoba hospital where a big part of our population is served so we have asked for representation on their board, NITHA [Northern Inter-Tribal Health Authority]. We are a big part of their clientele so it would be nice to have some partnerships that way.

Another looked to a Heath Region partnership:

> There is one [partnership] that I would really like to see here and that is with our Health Region. I would like to have a nursing practitioner or someone along those lines set up a clinic in our building bi-weekly, whatever. We have a lot of intravenous drug users downtown and they don't tend to get medical help unless they are trying to get a prescription—you know what I mean? And so if we had someone coming here to this place where they feel very comfortable, it's not intimidating to them, and if that person would take the time to build a relationship and then start to try work with those clients, I think we would have healthier people here.

Another respondent emphasized Health Region partnerships for better health outcomes: "They encompass a broad area and a sort of diverse clientele and I think it would be nice if we could have a better linkage with them. They are very different than we are; their population health coordinators are a little more specifically focused and we are more broadly focused."

A higher level partnership that could bring mutual benefits to Aboriginal people and non-Aboriginal people is exemplified by SIGA: "We need another SIGA everywhere. They make money for the province of Saskatchewan, they create employment, they make money for all the First Nations, all the spin offs from the different casinos. That's probably one of the biggest success stories in First Nations history, I would say, in regards to economic development and own source of revenue."

Such higher level partnerships were also seen to be good indicators of where skilled-labour training should focus: "Because we are demand driven, industry partnerships are very important to ensure that we are getting people trained in the right areas so that they will have those long-term sustainable jobs. . . . It would be very beneficial for us to have partnerships with those larger organizations that look after specific industries like industry organizations or Saskatchewan Mining Association. That kind of stuff to make sure we are training the right kind of areas and help [their] staff to find the help needed in the province."

A few respondents pointed to the need for training agency partnering with small and medium sized enterprises (SMEs) to consider Aboriginal employees in their hiring, especially as SMEs often shy away because of the language or the need to understand Treaty Rights: "They don't know how to go about it and a lot of it is language. So we are going through some Aboriginal inclusion practices that have worked. We are providing training on treaties. We are providing training on Indian residential school and we try to keep it as cost-effective as possible."

Better partnerships among First Nations organizations with their services departments were recommended as a way to minimize the silos of service provision:

> We have to learn how to work together. All of our departments are segregated. We have Parkland Housing, Child and Family Services and RCDC. We also have upper management who know how to work with policies, procedures, know how to follow the rules and how to manage the money. We all work in little separate areas and keep to ourselves.

> We never work together. We never bring those all areas together. I got shut down when I tried to do that.

Similarly, a respondent added that unity would strengthen the relationships among organizations by addressing communication challenges, which will build further the capacity for service delivery: "I mean we have a relationship with FSIN but it could be stronger so that we could have more conversations with FSIN. But you know it's also like going to the government—so it's whether or not you have the uptake and if they are interested in talking with you and willing to work with you." As a concluding thought, another respondent said that partnerships begin with wanting to work communally from the lowest level of the community members themselves: "I think that a little bit more involvement from our actual First Nation members. So although our president has quite a strong relationship with FSIN, when it comes to the individual First Nations it's not quite as strong in some areas." Partnership of this type would bring about further understanding of services needed, increase responsiveness, and minimize the need for awareness building and marketing to clients requiring the services.

Q 26. Are there service areas that are no longer a good fit and useful for your organization?

Respondents acknowledged that there is hardly any service area that is no longer useful because of their constant and consistent adaptation and evaluation of the services they provide. One respondent confirmed, "You know, I don't think we do, just because we tend to adapt to what it is that we are doing every year. We go through quite a comprehensive strategic planning and operations planning; when something becomes irrelevant, it is pretty much dropped and we don't stick with it." Equally, another emphasized the constant changes and improvements: "We haven't really found anything that is no longer a good fit, but what we've done is learn our own best practices over the past few years. We realized some of our expectations at the beginning don't meet our needs now."

One of the great motivations for assessment of their operations and clients' needs is the success rate of the services offered; for example, graduates of a skilled labour training program securing employment in a lucrative sector:

> So, it's not so much to say that there isn't a service area that we wouldn't serve or we want to scale back on. But there are definitely some areas that we focus on more than in the past. And those would be the health and the trades because we find they have higher success rates for our clients for going into employment. They also end up with higher-paying jobs, as opposed to some of the other industries that are out there, the sales industry, arts, entertainment and culture, and that kind of stuff.

Another respondent stressed their engagement and responsiveness as part of their success: "We haven't really found anything that is no longer a good fit. We are still pretty new and looking for ways to help everyone who applies. We have changed the composition of our volunteer committees so they typically include interest in community engagement, fundraising and adjudication. We also assess a community's interest in supporting their own kids for Creative

Kids before developing a volunteer committee." Similarly, another respondent was confident in program relevance: "In the last few years we've just built up the services and supports where there is positive things happening so, no, I don't think the programs which we have in place would be there if they weren't a good fit."

Constant evaluation of service fit was also associated with outreach activities: "We have done a lot of implementing new systems and changing our roles here this year and that's the other piece of our outreach focus we have changed to since we have more people out in the field. . . . We have people on contract that are out there working with communities to build up ideas and engagement opportunities and things like that. Our programs will probably continue to change in the next little while." The outreach angle was confirmed by another participant who emphasized how it promoted improvements: "once we get more comfortable with this whole outreach piece, we will be doing the whole review of our grant programs."

Others stressed that relevance was a function of ongoing need and much to be done in all areas of Aboriginal peoples' lives: "I don't think anywhere in Regina there is a place where service areas are no longer a good fit or useful from our organization's standpoint. There is still too much of a need. . . . so much work that needs to be done." Another talked of "tweak[ing] our programs and services, but for the most part they've been the same for the last 7 or 10 years. Sometimes we add a few, but we haven't really cut anything that I can think of," while yet another affirmed ongoing health and education needs:

> The areas that we deliver now they are all still needed. Health is a major one. Health and education are our two foundational program areas. Without those you can't build a child and get them skilled and off to work. Couple that with the economic development and building of businesses; we are having a hard time because we've got such a high youth population in First Nations and in Northern Saskatchewan our youth population is going to be very high. To get those kids educated, skilled, and to a job, we need to have our own businesses and they need to move off the reserve and they have to move to urban settings. The jobs are not in the First Nations reserves.

For those who changed services or delivery completely, they named the following areas as not meeting the current or future needs: some advisory services, a northern library, Northern Festival, and a Sask Sport grant that is difficult to implement. Reasons included loss of fit, redundancy in the nature of services, inability to initiate new funds for service advancements together with changes in grant eligibilities. One respondent explained the changes to the advisory services as follows: "I think some of that has started to happen in terms of some of our advisory services. So it's probably been about a year that it has transitioned so that we can provide different services versus some of the old historical services that were originally provided by the Tribal Councils to communities." But in some cases, change was driven by "limited funding." The library service was unable to keep up with changes given the ability of users to access resources on the internet: "The library [not a good fit] because they have all those books there but nobody really visits the library anymore for some reason. I don't know, maybe because of internet and Google, all that stuff," said one of the northern participants. In the case of stopping

the Northern Festival, one explained that they "lost the funding for that and now it's just strictly with the First Nations Summer and Winter Games and with Team North Saskatchewan Provincial Games. I think there was just an over-abundance of games going on that we lost that particular festival." Changes in grant eligibility has also halted services:

> The only thing that maybe we struggle with in terms of not being relevant would be we have a Sask Sports grant that goes to each district called the Aboriginal Community Sport Development Grant. We all get a small chunk of that to give out as grants and we struggle really hard to give that away. It's actually a good chunk of money but we don't seem to have enough Aboriginal clientele in this district to make it happen. Typically, like when I started here, they gave us $20,000 a year to give out as grants and now they give us $5,000 and we can't even give that away. We have absolutely no applications—not even one. Part of that is that it is very strict; you have to have a minimum 51% Aboriginal participation and we can't do that here. So that's the one that is maybe not relevant any longer. It certainly could be if they were to re-write it, but as it sits now it's pretty much not relevant for us.

Another sport event was listed as no longer a fit: "We ran the hockey tournament for 50 years. Now, we canceled this year. You know, we were losing money year after year after year. Because, the teams got less and grown men didn't want to play contact hockey anymore. It was a loss every year and we were taking money that we could use for good resources in our other areas." While the recreational sector was often seen as a way of advancing cultural goals, this was a case where change drove a decision to cancel a particular program.

CONCLUSIONS

Service delivery overlaps and lags for a growing urban Aboriginal population in Saskatchewan are a result of systemic factors including colonial legacies of discrimination, policy and jurisdictional complexities, lack of accurate data and statistics often related to a long-standing deficit model or "study of lack," and a failure to create appropriate and supportive space for urban Aboriginal people. As shown in the findings above, an "invisible infrastructure" developed to compensate for these gaps, mainly through cultural clubs and friendship centres from the 1950s on (Newhouse, 2003). As time progressed, these institutions matured and now offer urban Aboriginal peoples a means of accessing a collective identity and choice in cultural, social, and economic terms, as well as enhanced visibility encouraging cities and communities to both see and respond to demonstrable need. This study has catalogued these and other urban Aboriginal organizations that supply housing, health, culture, education, and social services, for instance, to better understand how these organizations are striving to overcome gaps and lags in services. Overall, Aboriginal organizations are faced with the task of not only meeting the needs of their own people and communities but also of navigating an "intercultural landscape" (Mitchell & Bruhn, 2009), and educating the broader Canadian population and newcomers on Aboriginal and treaty rights—filling educational gaps left by both provincial and federal governments.

Among the 35 interviewed urban Aboriginal organizations in this study, commitment to Aboriginal control of services to Aboriginal people was foundational—and a proven facilitator of urban Aboriginal economic participation. In this motivation many interview participants were driven by the opportunity to live and work in and give back to their communities, to build on family tradition to advocate for Aboriginal and treaty rights, to foster Indigenous inclusion and leadership, and to promote Aboriginal language and culture and make a difference in the lives of all Canadians. While job security was a driver for many people becoming involved in these organizations, education and the cultural transfer of knowledge for sustainability and social medicine was another strong motivation.

The mandate of quality of life improvement emerged as an overarching theme related to everything from food security to meeting the physical, emotional, spiritual, and intellectual needs of community members. At the organizational level this is expressed by interrelated goals of equity in education, economics, and health with each organization focusing on a different balance. For example, health is a critical challenge and seen as directly linked to improving quality of life. In many cases, services in urban Aboriginal organizations aim specifically at improving the health status of Aboriginal people to a place at least on par with the rest of the province. Still other organizations view culture as a primary mandate with a focus on health more through sports and recreation. Equity in education and economics are symbiotic as access to education assists with capacity building for the labour market. A representative workforce is as critical to these goals as is entrepreneurship for self-sufficiency. Although they are viewed as an essential component of quality of life, cultural services are still lacking in many organizations—culture too often sacrificed to economic "imperatives" with too little understanding of what foundational values are lost in the process and of why friendship centres have proven such important organizations in reinvigorating and empowering Aboriginal individuals and communities.

A successful strategy has employed recreational services to support teaching culture. Cultural and recreational activities are often blended together with sports proving an important mechanism for transferring culture and knowledge. These initiatives are important to the goal of preserving and promoting renewal of language and culture. Inclusivity is also viewed as an important part of these sport and recreation activities, although language services are clearly identified as lacking support which creates a challenge to this transfer of knowledge.

Urban Aboriginal organizations often creatively tap into networks to meet needs individual programs cannot. In health care, for instance, they draw on partnerships with post-secondary institutions and health regions to meet the needs of underserved communities. They are similarly innovative in efforts at "asset funding" in ensuring meaningful access to education and the job market, ensuring that systemic and other barriers (including housing, food security, childcare, and transportation) are removed and that workplaces are prepared for Aboriginal career success and promotion.

The work of the Office of the Treaty Commissioner is a key part of reconciling with the past and creating a path to a future where all treaty people work together to enliven the spirit of the treaties for a stronger Canada. Fostering trust, building relationships, and mobilizing champions

in the communities is at the heart of a process that provincial and federal governments also need to take and support seriously.

Such treaty recognition is equally relevant to Aboriginal economic development, to righting the historic wrongs that robbed Aboriginal people of their land, languages, and labour, and to living up to treaty promises that Aboriginal people could maintain traditional livelihood and participate in the mainstream economy. And, despite constrained resources, interviewed organizations showed leadership in their inclusive strategies and determination to refuse access to nobody and act on the recognition that "we are all treaty people." As one respondent made clear, that means dealing with "the total population."

Despite so much innovative work, gaps in services remain—sacrificed to policy priorities, funding formulae, timelines, and cuts, and competition for resources—impacting some communities, including youth and northern communities disproportionately. Even proliferating and overlapping services can add to the barriers making it hard for people to know what is available and where they might fit. And policy priorities can neglect the very cultural foundations that are so important for engagement in economic and social life. Insufficient financial resources compound capacity and other issues at all stages of the life cycle.

Services that enhance economic participation of urban Aboriginal people include business development, Aboriginal-controlled organizations, sports and culture, education and skills training to reduce dependency, build on capacities, and help Aboriginal youth understand who they are so they can effectively participate in the workforce.

A major barrier to the success of these organizations is financial sustainability which is difficult to achieve with short-term project funding. Overall, the lack of financial sustainability results in a lack of adequate resources to meet the complex, interrelated needs of Aboriginal people. Other barriers to successful service delivery include a right fit of employees, a lack of motivation, how geographic location can impede working together, and turf wars. Long-term initiatives to assist with building autonomy, developing leadership qualities and improving overall health, remain threatened by short-term funding cycles, jurisdictional issues, and the inequitable access to health, education, housing, food security, childcare, and transportation.

Next Steps

Overall best practices noted in this study for urban Aboriginal organizations include building relationships through community engagement and consultation, developing customer service skill to demonstrate care and understanding, customized delivery, embracing new ways of doing things such as technological advancement, moving away from political tensions and competitions, and getting beyond strategies of social control that foster dependency to a more empowering focus on services. Empowering means, for example, abandoning the need for clients to tell their stories to secure services, a process that adds stigma and fear to seeking help. Instead, the focus is on helping people be honest and true to who they are. It means unlearning old defensiveness and reactionary measures and acting proactively to reach out to youth and to mentor and support achievement and participation in all its forms. It means recognizing and acting on the equality of all peoples and facilitating vision and leadership, promoting collective action for mutual benefit.

To reach these goals urban Aboriginal organizations will continue to support the journey toward self-determination, assessing and addressing needs, while keeping a focus on the long-term, understanding their place in the story of self-determination and celebrating their ability to support future generations. Improving things in the long term means aligning with a national agenda, operating as a hub of culture, knowledge, networks, information gathering and communication, and ensuring effective national representation that can sit with all levels of government. Being aware of this alignment will improve the ability of these organizations to use their knowledge on the ground to advocate to funders for programming that is relevant to the needs of Aboriginal people. As stated earlier, this allows for "co-production" of policies rather than just implementing policies (Walker, Moore, & Linklater, 2011; Young, 2011) by funneling information upward to government bodies.

Inclusiveness

While urban Aboriginal organizations are aimed at serving Aboriginal people, we note that most organizations are inclusive and do not restrict programming to those defined as First Nations, Métis, or Inuit. Despite the constraints listed in this report—funding, resources, location, etc.—many organizations still open up to all who face struggles and needs and are in fact "status blind" and act as models of how we might disentangle from dishonourable histories to be and act in a world where we live and breathe the reality that we are all treaty people.

Acknowledgements

We gratefully acknowledge all those who so generously participated in interviews and shared their wisdom, their experiences, and their creative and constructive initiatives to meet the needs and aspirations of their communities, and build relationships for a truly inclusive Canada where all can enjoy a good quality of life.

REFERENCES

Abele, F., & Graham, K., A.H. (2011). Federal urban aboriginal policy: The challenge of viewing the stars in the urban sky. In E. Peters, J., (Ed.), *Urban aboriginal policy making in Canadian municipalities* (pp. 33-52). Montreal & Kingston McGill-Queen's University Press.

Aboriginal Affairs and Northern Development Canada (AANDC). (2013). *Aboriginal education and employment : Trends in selected canadian cities*. (English version (PDF) - QS-7124-000-EE-A1). Ottawa,ON: Aboriginal Affairs and Northern Development Canada (AANDC) Retrieved from http://publications.gc.ca/collections/collection_2013/aadnc-aandc/R3-178-2013-eng.pdf.

Albert, T. (2011). Mapping methodology. In P. Dinsdale, J. White, & C. Hanselmann (Eds.), *Urban Aboriginal communities in Canada: Complexities, challenges, opportunities* (pp. 13-29). Toronto, Canada: Thompson Educational Publishing

Anderson, A., B. (2013). Community voices: Assessing capacity and needs within inner-city neighbourhoods. In A. Anderson, B., (Ed.), *Home in the city: Urban Aboriginal housing and living conditions* (pp. 128-137). Toronto: University of Toronto Press.

Andersen, C., & Strachan, J. (2011). Urban Aboriginal programming in a coordination vacuum: The Alberta (Dis) Advantage. In E. J. Peters (Ed.), *Urban Aboriginal policy making in Canadian municipalities* (pp.127-159). Montreal & Kingston: McGill-Queen's University Press.

Belanger, Y., & Walker, R. (2009). Interest convergence and co-production of plans: An examination of Winnipeg's aboriginal pathways. *Canadian Journal of Urban Research, 18*(1), 118-139.

Canada. (2002). *Urban Aboriginal Strategy: An analysis*. Ottawa, ON: Government of Canada.

Canadian Mortgage and Housing Corporation (CMHC). (1996). *The housing conditions of Aboriginal people in Canada*. (NHA 6408). Ottawa, ON: CMHC Retrieved from https://www.cmhc-schl.gc.ca/publications/en/rh-pr/socio/socio027.pdf.

Cardinal, N. (2006). The exclusive city: Identifying, measuring, and drawing attention to Aboriginal and Indigenous experiences in an urban context. *Cities, 23*(3), 217-228.

Crooks, C. V., Chiodo, D., & Thomas, D. (2009). *Engaging and empowering Aboriginal youth: A toolkit for service provider*. Ottawa, Canada: Public Health Agency of Canada Retrieved from http://master.fnbc.info/sites/default/files/resource-files/Engaging%20and%20Empowering%20Aboriginal%20Youth%20-%20Toolkit%20for%20Service%20Providers_0.pdf

DeVerteuil, G., & Wilson, K. (2010). Reconciling indigenous need with the urban welfare state? Evidence of culturally-appropriate services and spaces for Aboriginals in Winnipeg, Canada. *Geoforum, 41*(3), 498-507. doi: http://dx.doi.org/10.1016/j.geoforum.2010.01.004

Dumont Technical Institute. (2012). *Dumont technical institute annual report 2011-2012*. Saskatoon, SK Dumont Technical Institute Rretrieved from https://gdins.org/me/uploads/2014/03/3-DTI-Operations-Report-2011-2012.pdf

Dumont Technical Institute. (2013). *Celebrating the past, looking to the future: 2012-2013 annual report*. Saskatoon, SK Dumont Technical Institute Retrieved from https://gdins.org/me/uploads/2014/03/DTI-Operational-Highlights-2012-2013.pdf

Dumont Technical Institute. (2014). *2013-2014 annual report*. Saskatoon, SK Dumont Technical Institute Retrieved from https://gdins.org/me/uploads/2014/03/DTI-Operational-Highlights-2013_2014.pdf

Durst, D., South, S. M., & Bluechardt, M. (2006). Urban First Nations people with disabilities speak out. *Journal of Aboriginal Health, 3*(1), 34-43.

Environics Institute. (2010). *Urban Aboriginal peoples study: Main report*. Toronto, ON: Environics Institute. Retrieved from http://www.uaps.ca/wp-content/uploads/2010/03/UAPS-Main-Report_Dec.pdf

Findlay, I., M.,, Garcea, J., Hansen, J., G.,, Antsanen, R., Cheng, J., & Holden, B. (2014). *Comparing the lived experience of urban Aboriginal peoples with Canadian rights to quality of life: Final report*. Saskatoon, SK: UAKN Prairie Regional Research Centre.

First Nations University of Canada. (2014). Annual report 2013-2014. Retrieved from http://www.fnuniv.ca/images/factsfigures/FINAL_FNUniv_Annual_Report_for_web_Nov5_2014.pdf

First Nations University of Canada. (2015). Overview. Retrieved from http://fnuniv.ca/overview

Garcea, J. (2004). *Residential urban reserves: Issues and options for providing adequate and affordable housing*. Saskatoon, SK: University of Saskatchewan. Retreieved from http://www.bridgesandfoundations.usask.ca/reports/Garcea_residential_reserves_finalreport.pdf

Glazebrook, H. (2015, July 29). SIIT expands mobile jobs program. *The StarPhoenix.* Retrieved from http://www.thestarphoenix.com/business/SIIT+expands+mobile+jobs+program/11252629/story.html

Graham, J., & Mitchell, L. (2009). *A legacy of excellence: Best practices in board governance study: Aboriginal healing foundation*. Ottawa, ON: Institute On Governance. Retrieved from http://www.ahf.ca/downloads/legacy-of-excellence-full-report.pdf

Graham, K.A.H., & Peters, E.J. (2002). *Aboriginal communtiies and urban sustainability.* Ottawa: Canadian Policy Research Network. Retrieved from http://www.cprn.org/documents/15958_en.pdf

Hanselmann, C. (2001). *Urban Aboriginal people in western Canada: Realities and policies*. Calgary, AB: CanadaWest Foundation. Retrieved from http://cwf.ca/pdf-docs/publications/September2001-Urban-Aboriginal-People-in-Western-Canada-Realities-and-Policies.pdf

Hanselmann, C. (2002). *Uncommon sense: Promising practices in urban Aboriginal policy-making and programming*. Calgary, AB: Canada West Foundation. Retrieved from http://cwf.ca/pdf-docs/publications/August2002-Uncommon-Sense-Promising-Practices-in-Urban-Aboriginal-Policy-Making-and-Programming.pdf

Hawkes, D. C. (2005). Rebuilding and relationship: The 'Made in Saskatchewan' approach to first nations governance. In M. Murphy (Ed.), *Canada: The state of the federation 2003. Reconfiguring Aboriginal – state relations* (pp. 119-132pp). Montreal & Kingston: McGill-Queen's University Press.

Haworth-Brockman, M. J., Bent, K., & Havelock, J. (2009). Health research, entitlements and health services for First Nations and Métis women in Manitoba and Saskatchewan. *Journal of Aboriginal Health, 4*(2), 14-23.

Howe, E. C. (2011). *Mishchet aen kishkayhtamihk nawut ki wiichiihtonaan: Bridging the Aboriginal education gap in Saskatchewan*. Saskatoon, SK Eric Howe Retrieved from http://www.northernimpaq.ca/wpcontent/themes/nic/pdfs/Bridging_EduGap_Nov5_2011.pdf

Jeffery, B. P., Abonyi, S. P., Labonte, R. P., & Duncan, K. M. A. (2006). Engaging numbers: Developing health indicators that matter for First Nations and Inuit people. *Journal of Aboriginal Health, 3*(1), 44-52.

Jimmy, R., & Findlay, I.M. (2015). *YXE Connects 2015: A research report.* Saskatoon: Community-University Institute for Social Research.

Kerpan, S., & Humbert, L. (2015). Playing together: The physical activity beliefs and behaviors of urban Aboriginal youth. *Journal of physical activity & health*.

Kerpan, S. T., Humbert, M. L., & Henry, C. J. (2015). Determinants of diet for urban Aboriginal youth implications for health promotion. *Health promotion practice, 16*(3), 392-400.

Kerwin, T. (2006). *Urban Aboriginal households: A profile of demographic, housing and economic conditions in Canada's Prairie and Territories region*. Ottawa, ON, CAN: Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation.

Kilkenny, C. (2015, November 15). "Building Reconciliation" confernece a first at University of Saskatchewan. Radio Canada Internationl. Retrieved from http://www.rcinet.ca/en/2015/11/19/building-reconciliation-conference-a-first-at-university-of-saskatchewan/

McHugh, T.-L. F., Coppola, A. M., Holt, N. L., & Andersen, C. (2015). "Sport is community:" an exploration of urban Aboriginal peoples' meanings of community within the context of sport. *Psychology of Sport and Exercise, 18*(0), 75-84. doi: http://dx.doi.org/10.1016/j.psychsport.2015.01.005

McIvor, O., Napoleon, A., & Dickie, K. M. (2009). Language and culture as protective factors for at-risk communities. *Journal of Aboriginal Health, 5*(1), 6-25.

MacKay, G. (2005). The city as home: The sense of belonging among Aboriginal youth in Saskatoon. In *Final Report Prepared for the Bridges and Foundation Project on Urban Aboriginal Housing* Saskatoon, SK. Retrieved from http://www.bridgesandfoundations.usask.ca/reports/McKayTheCity.pdf

Mitchell, L., & Bruhn, J. (2009). *Best practices for governance and admoinistration of Aboriginal service delivery organizations.* Ottawa: Institute on Governance. Retrieved from http://www.firstpeoplesgroup.com/mnsiurban/PDF/governance/Best_Practices_for_Governance_and_Administration_of_Aboriginal_Service_Delivery_Organizations-2009.pdf

Myles, J., & Picot, G. (2002). Neighbourhoods inequalities in Canadian cities. *Horizon, 5*(1), 8-10.

Newhouse, D. (2003). The invisisble infrastructure: Urban aboriginal institutions and organizations. In D. Newhouse & E. J. Peters (Eds.), *Not strangers in these parts: Urban Aboriginal peoples* (pp. 243-254). Ottawa, ON: Policy Research Initiative.

Newhouse, D. (2010). *Reframing the issues: Emerging questions for Métis, non-status Indian and urban Aboriginal policy research*. Concordia University, Montréal, Québec: 79th Congress of the Humanities and Social Sciences Retrieved from http://iog.ca/wp-content/uploads/2012/12/2010_May_Reframing-the-Issues.pdf.

Newhouse, D., FitzMaurice, K., McGuire-Adams, T., & Jette, D. (2012). *Well-being in the urban Aboriginal community*. Toronto, ON: Thompson Educational Publishing Inc.

Newhouse, D., & Peters, E. J. (2003). Introduction. In D. Newhouse & E. J. Peters (Eds.), *Not strangers in these parts: Urban Aboriginal peoples* (pp. 5-13). Ottawa, ON: Policy

Research Initiative Retrieved from http://publications.gc.ca/collections/Collection/CP22-71-2003E.pdf

Norris, M. J., & Clatworthy, S. (2003). *Aboriginal mobility and migration within urban Canada: Outcomes, factors and implications*. Ottawa, ON: Policy Research Initiative Retrieved from http://publications.gc.ca/collections/Collection/CP22-71-2003E.pdf.

Oreopoulos, P., & Salvanes, K. G. (2011). Priceless: The nonpecuniary benefits of schooling. *Journal of Economic Perspectives, 25*(1), 159-184.

Parriag, A., & Chaulk, P. (2011). The educational profile of people living in Aboriginal friendship centre catchment areas across Canada. In P. Dinsdale, J. White, & C. Hanselmann (Eds.), *Urban Aboriginal communities in canada: Complexities, challenges, opportunities* (pp. 31- 59). Toronto, Canada: Thompson Educational Publishing

Patrick, C. (2014). *Aboriginal homelessness in Canada: A literature review* Retrieved from http://site.ebrary.com.cyber.usask.ca/lib/usask/detail.action?docID=10854058

Peters, E. J. (1992). Self-government for Aboriginal people in urban areas: a literature review and suggestions for research. *The Canadian Journal of Native Studies, 12*(1), 51-74.

Peters, E., J. (2005). Geographies of urban Aboriginal people in Canada: Implications for urban self-government. In M. Michael (Ed.), *Canada: The state of the federation 2003: Reconfiguring Aboriginal - state relations* (pp. 39 - 76). Montreal & Kingston: McGill-Queen's University Press

Peters, E. J. (2006). "[W]e do not lose our treaty rights outside the... reserve": Challenging the scales of social service provision for First Nations women in Canadian cities. *GeoJournal, 65*(4), 315-327. doi: 10.1007/s10708-006-0026-9

Peters, E. J. (2011). Aboriginal public policy in urban areas: An introduction. In E. J. Peters (Ed.), *Urban Aboriginal policy making in Canadian municipalities* (pp.1-32). Montreal & Kingston: McGill-Queen's University Press.

Prairie Wild Consulting. (2014). *Kitaskinaw: An environemtnal scan of programs and services serving Aboriginal people of Saskatoon*. Saskatoon, SK: Prairie Wild Consulting.

Preston, J. P., Cottrell, M., Pelletier, T. R., & Pearce, J. V. (2012). Aboriginal early childhood education in Canada: Issues of context. *Journal of Early Childhood Research, 10*(1), 3-18.

Richards, J. (2008). *Closing the Aboriginal/ non-Aboriginal education gaps.* Backgrounder 116. Toronto: C.D. Howe Institute. Retrieved from https://www.cdhowe.org/sites/default/files/attachments/research_papers/mixed/Backgrounder_116.pdf

Saskatoon Housing Initiative Partnership. (2015a). CUMFI – *McLeod house.* Retrieved from http://shipweb.ca/cumfi-mcleod-house/

Saskatoon Housing Initiative Partnership. (2015b). CUMFI – *Infinity house.* Retrieved from http://shipweb.ca/cumfi-infinity-house/

Saskatoon Tribal Council. (2015a). *Projects in progress: Cress housing.* Retrieved from http://www.sktc.sk.ca/about-stc/cress-housing/projects-in-progress/

Saskatoon Tribal Council. (2015b*). About Saskatoon Tribal Council.* Retrieved from http://www.sktc.sk.ca/about-stc/about-saskatoon-tribal-council/

SaskNative. (2015). Housing. Retrieved from http://www.sasknativerentals.ca/housing/

Senese, L. C., & Wilson, K. (2013). Aboriginal urbanization and rights in Canada: Examining implications for health. *Social Science & Medicine, 91*(0), 219-228. doi: http://dx.doi.org/10.1016/j.socscimed.2013.02.016

Sired, M. (2015). *Thousands to attend U of S graduation Powwow*. Retrieved from http://words.usask.ca/news/2015/05/26/thousands-to-attend-u-of-s-graduation-powwow/

Smyth, S. T. (2010). *Listen, learn, and understand : an examination of the cultural context of body weight, physical activity, and diet in urban Aboriginal youth* (Master of Science (M.Sc.)), University of Saskatchewan, Saskatoon, Saskatchewan. Retrieved from http://sundog.usask.ca/record=b3087227~S5

Snyder, M., & Wilson, K. (2012). Urban Aboriginal mobility in Canada: Examining the association with health care utilization. *Social Science & Medicine, 75*(12), 2420-2424. doi: http://dx.doi.org/10.1016/j.socscimed.2012.09.020

Spence, C., & Findlay, I., M. (2007). *Evaluation of Saskatoon Urban Aboriginal Strategy* Retrieved from http://site.ebrary.com.cyber.usask.ca/lib/usask/detail.action?docID=10360398

Spence, N., Wingert, S., & White, J. (2011). The economic development capacity of urban Aboriginal peoples. In P. Dinsdale, J. White, & C. Hanselmann (Eds.), *Urban Aboriginal comunities in canada: Complexities, challenges , opportunities* (pp. 61-98). Toronto, Ontario: Thompson Education Publishing.

Statistics Canada. (2011a). National Household Survey: Focus on geography series--Saskatoon. Retrieved from http://www12.statcan.gc.ca/nhs-enm/2011/as-sa/fogs-spg/Pages/FOG.cfm?lang=E&level=4&GeoCode=4711066

Statistics Canada. (2011b). National Household Survey: Focus on geography series--Regina. Retrieved from http://www12.statcan.gc.ca/nhs-enm/2011/as-sa/fogs-spg/Pages/FOG.cfm?lang=E&level=3&GeoCode=705

Todd, R. (2001). Between the land and the city: Aboriginal agency, culture and governance in urban areas. *The London Journal of Canadian Studies, 16*, 48-66.

University of Saskatchewan. (2012). Promise and potential: The third integrated plan 2012 to 2016 Saskatoon, SK Instittutional Planning and Analysis Retrieved from http://www.usask.ca/plan/documents/Promise%20and%20Potential%20-%20Full%20Version.pdf

University of Saskatchewan. (2014). *Dates & events: Building bridges - sharing circles* Retrieved from http://www.usask.ca/events/e.php?getdate=20131114&cal=U+of+S+Events&uid=9516902680e9d25525feb22733fa7889@usask.ca&mredir=0

Urban Aboriginal Knowledge Network. (2012). Literature Review on Urban Aboriginal Peoples. Retrieved from http://uakn.org/wp-content/uploads/2014/08/Literature-Review-on-Urban-Aboriginal-Peoples-FINAL-Mar.-20-2013.pdf

Waldram, J. B. (1990). Physician utilization and urban native people in Saskatoon, Canada. *Social Science & Medicine, 30*(5), 579-589. doi: http://dx.doi.org/10.1016/0277-9536(90)90156-M

Walker, R. (2003). Engaging the urban Aboriginal population in low-cost housing initiatives: lessons from Winnipeg. *Canadian Journal of Urban Research, 12*, S99-118.

Walker, R. C. (2008). Improving the interface between urban municipalities and Aboriginal communities. *Canadian Journal of Urban Research, 17*, 20-36.

Walker, R., Moore, J., Linklater, M. (2011). More than stakeholders, voices, and tables: Toward co-production of urban Aboriginal policy in Manitoba. In E. J. Peters (Ed.), *Urban Aboriginal policy making in Canadian municipalities* (pp. 160-201). Montreal & Kingston: McGill-Queen's University Press.

Young , R. (2011). Conclusion. In E. J. Peters (Ed.), *Urban Aboriginal policy making in Canadian municipalities* (pp. 202-228). Montreal & Kingston: McGill-Queen's UP.

Zurevinski, N. (2015). U of S a place for Aboriginal recognition and expression. *The Sheaf*. Retrieved from http://thesheaf.com/2015/06/20/u-of-s-a-place-for-aboriginal-recognition-and-expression/?utm_source=feedburner&utm_medium=feed&utm_campaign=Feed%3A+thesheafRSS+%28The+Sheaf+in+RSS%29

APPENDIX A

Questions for Interviews with Aboriginal Organization Officials

1. Tell us a bit about yourself.
a. What is your organizational position?

b. How long have you held this position?

c. Why did you become involved in this organization?

2. Tell us about your organization.
a. What is the name of your organization?

b. Where is it located?

c. What is its purpose and mandate?

d. What are the goals you are trying to achieve?

e. Do you receive funding from governments? For what purpose?

3. Programs and Services.
a. What kind of programs and services do you offer?

b. Who are the target service population?

c. Who else offers programs and services to urban Aboriginal people in your community?

d. Are there gaps in services or target groups?

e. Which of these services enhance economic participation of urban Aboriginal people? How?

f. What are three priority areas for service delivery? How were these priorities determined? How are these priorities met?

g. What are the best practices/lessons learned on how services are designed and delivered that have emerged over the last decade?

h. What do these organizations perceive as being facilitating factors, and threats, to their sustainability?

i. How does your organization work/engage with various stakeholder organizations (both Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal, including various governments) to improve service delivery?

j. How does your organization work/engage with various stakeholder communities (First Nations and Métis communities) to improve service delivery?

k. How does your organization work/engage with industry and business to improve service delivery?

l. What are the challenges that these engagements face? How are they addressed?

m. How do you work with other Aboriginal organizations that are not in your city? For example, do you work with Aboriginal organizations in northern communities like MB: Thompson or the Pas; SK: La Ronge, Pelican Narrows, La Loche?

n. If you work with these organizations outside of your region, what has necessitated this engagement?

o. What service delivery partnerships have emerged over the last decade? How do they work? What is needed to sustain them?

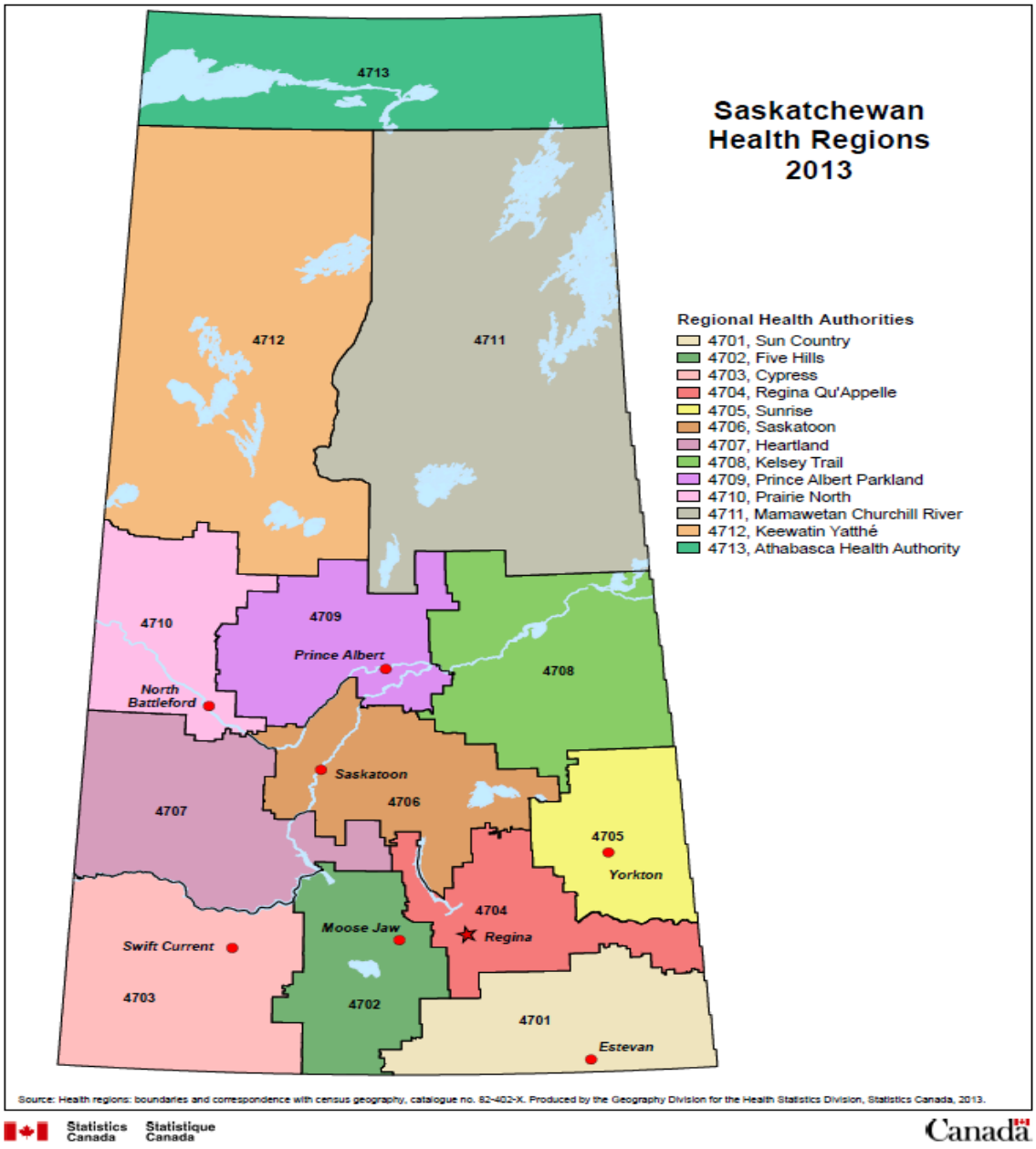
p. What is the value of these partnerships? How are the results of these partnerships evaluated?

q. Are there service areas where partnerships might be helpful or useful?

r. Are there service areas that are no longer a good fit and useful for your organization?

APPENDIX B

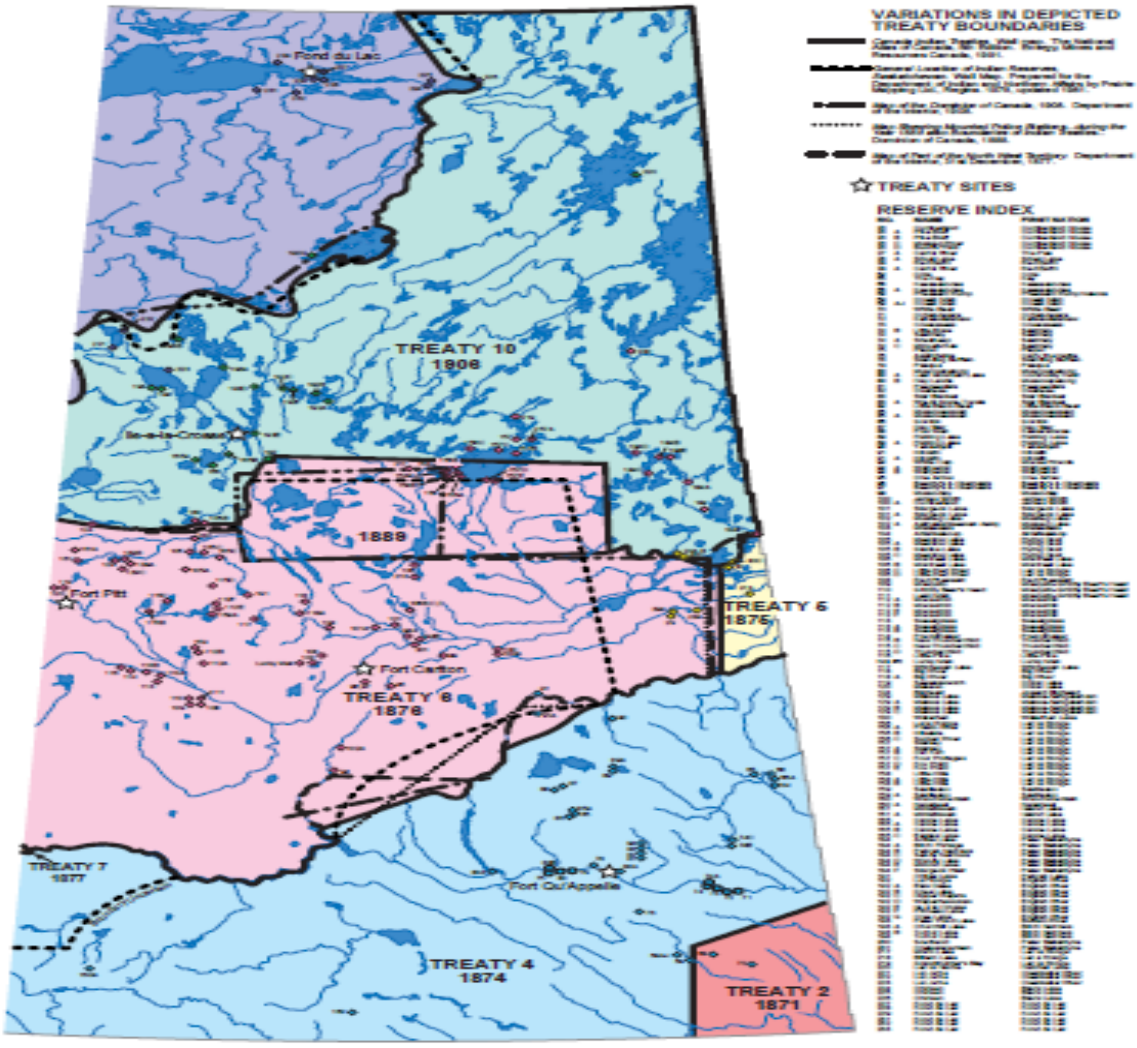
Saskatchewan Health Regions 2013



Source:
http://www.statcan.gc.ca/pub/82-402-x/2013002/maps/sa-eng.pdf

APPENDIX C

Treaty Boundaries, Location of First Nations, and Treaty Sites in Saskatchewan



Source:
http://www.otc.ca/education/we-are-all-treaty-people/treaty-map