

Reinvestment is an opportunity for First Nations to develop innovative programs. Each region uses its provincial or territorial model and the *National NCB Reinvestment Framework* to guide reinvestment initiatives and to develop a region-specific framework for National Child Benefit reinvestment. The onus is on First Nations to ensure that reinvestment initiatives meet the objectives of the National Child Benefit. Activities not eligible for reinvestment funds include construction or financing of new houses, capital investments including recreational facilities or playgrounds, or the provision of a shelter allowance.



Abinogeesh-Wi-Gamik or "Kid's Place,"
Pikangikum First Nation, Northern Ontario

CHILD CARE

PIKANGIKUM FIRST NATION, ONTARIO ABINOGEESH-WI-GAMIK OR "KID'S PLACE"

Pikangikum community, located north of Sioux Lookout in Northern Ontario, had limited activities for its children and youth. This led to other social problems such as vandalism. In response, Pikangikum created *Abinogeesh-Wi-Gamik*, a children's drop-in centre, to provide an opportunity for the children and youth of the community to use their minds in a learning environment. The program, which began in July 1999, is available to children aged 6 to 13.

The program is held throughout the summer months in an old Mennonite church. It runs weekdays from 11 a.m. until 10 p.m. It is also available during holidays and professional development days throughout the school year. *Abinogeesh-Wi-Gamik* is co-ordinated by a full-time employee who has a staff of 11 to assist in the operation of the program.

By providing a learning environment with a focus on crafts and recreation, the program enhances the health, well-being and fitness levels of the community's children and fosters self-esteem, teamwork, leadership and interpersonal skills. Some typical activities available for the children include indoor and outdoor games, reading, sharing circles, mural painting, movies and tae-bo. Activities vary daily according to attendance.

The future of *Abinogeesh-Wi-Gamik* is promising, as the staff is innovative and dynamic and supported in its efforts by the Band Council. The staff plan to incorporate educational ventures, such as science camps in future years. It also hopes to involve the parents and the rest of the community in *Abinogeesh-Wi-Gamik* by organizing a dinner for the community using food grown by the children in a garden planted as part of the program.





Abitibiwiinni First Nation-Art Class,
Pikogan, Quebec

Abinogeesh-Wi-Gamik is an excellent example of a community combining the National Child Benefit reinvestments funds with financial resources available through other federal programs to develop an initiative that responds to the community's individual needs. The majority of the staff are participants of the Youth Employment Strategy Work Placement Program, and the snacks and meals throughout the day are provided through the Head Start Program.

This program helps provide a place for the kids. It is something to keep them occupied.
Co-ordinator, Abinogeesh-Wi-Gamik

NUTRITION

BROKENHEAD OJIBWAY FIRST NATION, MANITOBA SERGEANT TOMMY PRINCE SCHOOL BREAKFAST PROGRAM

The rural community of Brokenhead is named for the Brokenhead River, which passes through the municipality located northeast of Winnipeg. The community consists of approximately 1,300 individuals; however, the actual population registered on-reserve numbers only 600.

In an effort to promote a healthy lifestyle and good nutritional habits in school-aged children, and contribute to better school performance, the community initiated the Sergeant Tommy Prince Breakfast Program. This program ensures that the nutritional needs of the on-reserve daycare children are met. This program enhanced an existing breakfast program offered at the day care that now reaches approximately 60 nursery to grade 6 students at Sergeant Tommy Prince School.

The program provides each child attending the Brokenhead Ojibway Nation Day Care with breakfast and two snacks per day. The day care plans, prepares and provides these meals to the children throughout the day. When possible, the children assist in the preparation and the planning of their meals as well as snacks.

By combining efforts with the existing day care centre, and through the additional financial resources provided by the National Child Benefit, the community is able to employ a community member to oversee the planning and the preparation of the meals and snacks. This has allowed for an expansion of the previous menu, to include items such as milk, cereal, fruit, toast, hot breakfast items and juice. The community has also been able to facilitate the preparation of these meals with the purchase of toasters and other cooking items. The community plans to continue the program.

POPLAR RIVER FIRST NATION, MANITOBA INFANT MILK FORMULA SUBSIDY PROGRAM

Located north of Winnipeg, in a remote fly-in area, lies the small Ojibway community of Poplar River. To assist young parents in becoming self-sufficient, the community has implemented a wide range of initiatives under the National Child Benefit.



One initiative is the *Infant Milk Formula Program*. In March 1999, social services assessed the needs of infants, specifically those who required formula. This assessment uncovered a concern related to the high cost of infant formula and its unavailability due to the community's remoteness. In an attempt to alleviate this problem, arrangements were made with the local Northern Store to have a special order flown in. Because it was a bulk order, the community received a 20 to 25 percent discount on the overall cost of the formula. Approximately 36 families with infants benefited.

EARLY CHILD DEVELOPMENT

O'CHIESE FIRST NATION, ALBERTA EARLY CHILDHOOD DEVELOPMENT PROGRAM

The O'Chiese First Nation, located northwest of Rocky Mountain House in central Alberta, is a relatively small community with a total registered population of 687 people. The O'Chiese community has limited employment opportunities within the reserve community. Members often seek employment off the reserve.

In 1998, under the National Child Benefit, the O'Chiese First Nation initiated the customized *Early Childhood Development Program*, in conjunction with Red Deer College. It is designed to educate participants using a holistic approach to early childhood development and has led to the establishment of a day care centre at the O'Chiese First Nation.

The goals are to enhance parental skills and to qualify participants for college programs or for employment at the O'Chiese Day Care Centre. The program involves an early childhood development course offered at a daycare facility where 10 participants are presented with practical situations for an integrated and sustainable learning experience. They also learn and are able to practise day care licensing policies and procedures. An instructor from Red Deer College was hired for the first year to provide the training. She is the administrator for the O'Chiese day care and provides hands-on training within the day care.

The program aims to establish community networks with other potential work placements and to implement an evaluative system to measure the program's effectiveness in addressing needs. As the training progresses, the long-term goal is to implement a home-based Aboriginal Head Start-type program as well as other parental programs.



Eagle's Nest Day Care Centre,
O'Chiese First Nation, Alberta

OPASKWAYAK CREE NATION (OCN), MANITOBA

Situated on the shores of the Saskatchewan River approximately 620 km north of Winnipeg, OCN is continually creating new and innovative ways to serve its members. Utilizing a combination of reinvestment funds and existing band resources, OCN has implemented a variety of reinvestment programs, including the *Breakfast for Kids Program*, *Children's Clothing Program*, *High School Summer School Program*, *College Preparation Program* and the *High School Child Care Centre Subsidy Program*. These programs focus on the development of youth through education and work skills programs.

The *Early Childhood Development Program* is available to low-income parents who have experienced difficulties in sustaining long-term employment. At the end of the first year of the program, 90 percent of the participants were employed while the other 10 percent were attending college full time. Peripheral achievements included overwhelming community support and heightened self-esteem for the participants and their families.

This *Early Childhood Development Program* reinforces the community's future. It is part of an ongoing cycle of empowerment designed by the community. All the community's programs are interconnected and interdependent of each other.

The *Early Child Development Program* has become a catalyst for community development and program planning.

EMPLOYMENT/TRAINING

KANESATAKE FIRST NATION, QUEBEC MEN'S MENTOR PROGRAM

Under the National Child Benefit initiative, the community of Kanesatake undertook the *Men's Mentor Program*, designed to provide work-related experience on a part-time basis to men with families to assist them in finding permanent employment. There are five participants in the program hired for a variety of community tasks, for example, the general maintenance of community sites.

The relationship that has developed between the employees and the full time co-ordinator has proven to be positive. The employees enjoy the program and work with the co-ordinator to ensure its success, not only for themselves and their family but for the community as a whole.

We would like to keep on working because there is a lot to do [within the community] in the winter time. - Derek, an employee.

OTHER

CARRY THE KETTLE FIRST NATION, SASKATCHEWAN EMERGENCY FAMILY SUPPORT PROGRAM

In the community of Carry the Kettle, located near Regina, Saskatchewan, the high suicide rate was dealt with through a program that provided emergency family support. The program was developed to assist one family within the community that had been greatly affected by this issue.

In this particular instance, four children were left without a legal guardian. The community, having the desire and the capacity to intervene on the children's behalf, provided financial assistance, food and emotional support until such time as their situation could be resolved by Family Services.

As a result, the issues of family violence and suicide were dealt with in a variety of ways. For example, multi-family counselling services were made available to the community at large. Using National Child Benefit funds, the community hired four individuals to develop activities that support families that have experienced suicide and family violence. These activities ranged from individual family counselling to activities for children of all ages and youth programs.



Men's Mentor Program,
Kanesatake First Nation, Quebec

In addition, NCB funds were used to hire a liaison to address the community's concern for youth returning to the reserve from the Youth Rehabilitation Centre. The liaison arranged meetings and provided the necessary support for the youth and families to assist them with re-orientation to the community.

The *Emergency Family Support Program* was a benefit to the entire community and as such, continues to be funded under the National Child Benefit reinvestment component.

KANESATAKE FIRST NATION, QUEBEC DRESSED FOR WINTER PROGRAM

Kanesatake is located on the north shore of the Ottawa River, west of Montréal. There are about 1,285 registered members living on the reserve and 602 living outside of the reserve but within the area. To meet the growing need for sufficient clothing for children during the winter months, the community established the *Dressed for Winter Program* in 1998.

The program provides parents with the means to obtain adequate winter clothing for their children. Each participating family received a gift certificate for approximately \$225 per child, to purchase boots, a snowsuit, hat, gloves and scarf. In its first year, an age limit (infant to 12 years of age) was set.

The program was later expanded to include children up to the age of 17. With this expanded limit, the allowance was readjusted to \$140 per child. The items purchased were then distributed to the community members at the annual Christmas banquet.

This program also benefits children in future years, given that many families in the community consist of four or more people with more than one child. Therefore, winter clothing can be passed along from older children to younger siblings. To supplement the program, a regular clothing drive may be held to ensure there is enough clothing for all eligible children in the community.

SKOOKUM JIM FRIENDSHIP CENTRE, WHITEHORSE, YUKON YOUTH DEVELOPMENT PROGRAMS

The National Child Benefit reinvestment program provided funds for program service delivery to the Skookum Jim Friendship Centre for three specific programs: work-life job skills 2000, drum making and traditional songs, and youth empowerment. The needs to address the lack of cultural programs and organized activities and teachings were determined through citizen feedback. The three program areas involved a select group of youth, 10 years of age and older, including young teenage mothers.

SAMSON CREE NATION, ALBERTA

Located South of Edmonton in Alberta, has implemented the *Healthy Families Project*, a voluntary intensive home-visiting program to assist families with the preparation, and care of, newborns. The goal is to provide positive parenting and healthy child development skills, thereby improving the outcomes for children. The project works with families to identify their strengths and supports them in accessing existing services within the community. This initiative works to inform the mother-to-be about her pregnancy, to identify abuse or neglect, to develop different activities aimed at stimulating children after they are born and to develop a nutrition program.



Kwanlin Dun First Nation, Yukon Territory



Kwanlin Dun First Nation,
Yukon Territory



Worklife Job Skills 2000

The *Worklife Job Skills 2000* program provides pre-employment, computer and Internet skills training to youth suited to individualized learning. The program has a self-pacing model to ensure that individuals can maximize learning opportunities leading to employment, but at their own pace. This program led to the development and production of a facilitator's guide, complete with an electronic resource centre and a web site with e-programs.

Participants are encouraged to continue with occupational goals and objectives with active job searches. Each has the opportunity to increase self-confidence with the acquisition of new skills, such as drafting résumés and cover letters, and is actively encouraged to pursue employment opportunities.

Light of the North Drum Making Program

This program consists of delivering drum making and traditional songs to the youth and participants working with a mentor and an elder in eight workshops. The overall impacts of this program are youth empowerment and cultural enrichment, including acquiring traditional skills, and working in a team and with a cultural peer group. The youth were all highly motivated to learn more about their culture and identity, and to seek knowledge and understanding of others within the group from an oral history perspective.

Youth Self-Empowerment Program

This program involved working with families (both parents and youth) to increase awareness about the challenges facing young children in an urban environment. This was accomplished through sessions and family support consultations that build self-confidence, enable youth and families to be more assertive and deal with anger and aggression in family situations.

This program has had direct benefits for all the participants. Specifically, two youth have taken major steps toward sobriety and have assumed the responsibility to develop a more positive lifestyle free from addictive substances.

SQUAMISH FIRST NATION, BRITISH COLUMBIA AYATEWAY SQUAMISH NATION CULTURAL DEVELOPMENT CAMP

The name "Ayateway" comes from the Squamish language which is a dialect of the Coast Salish language family. It can be translated as "supporting one another, unity, teamwork." *The Ayateway Cultural Development Camp* has set a precedent in immersing children into the Squamish heritage. By focussing on fun, inclusive, diverse activities, the children have witnessed and participated in cultural activities that promote skills development, lifelong learning, hope and encouragement, and respect.

Culture is a way of life and recognizing the diverse needs of the community is important. Cultural integrity is an ongoing learning process which fosters a sense of belonging and develops self-esteem and confidence. The *Ayateway Cultural Development Camp* uses this focus to provide traditional Squamish activities that are designed to strengthen the pride and identity of each participant.

The Squamish concept of cultural development is a lifelong process; it takes time to comprehend the rich, diverse and distinct identity of the Squamish people. The camp provides an opportunity to emphasize the concept of rites of passage in pre-adolescence and on making healthy choices. The camp allows each participant to increase awareness in the following areas:

- All life is sacred and interconnected.
- A connection to Mother Earth is vital to our process of growth and healing.
- The traditional teachings of ancestors are vital for the well-being of the children, families and communities.
- Language, ceremonies, spirituality, history, values, art, songs/dances, stories and lifestyles are all part of the values that teach who you are and where you are from.
- Native values and teachings have great significance in the modern world in regard to global, environmental and social issues.
- Each individual is special and can provide significant contributions.
- Make a commitment to yourself to do your absolute best.
- Try to be supportive of one another and have fun.

The rich oral tradition of the *Skwxwumesh* has evolved in the territory of British Columbia for thousands of years. It is this evolution which enables children to possess a strong foundation, sense of belonging and identity. Participation in cultural activities provides a safe environment for *Skwxwumesh smenhems* (Squamish descendants), to explore their heritage and to develop a sense of pride, self-esteem, respect and confidence in themselves, their family and communities.

The Ayas Men cultural workers initiated the camp concept and further developed plans by hiring a co-ordinator, five assistants and an elder. By using strong role models and resource people, the children see healthy adults contributing to the betterment of the community. Twenty-five children, between grades 5 and 7, from upper Squamish communities and North Vancouver communities participated in this program.

LITTLE RED RIVER CREE NATION, ALBERTA

The Little Red River Cree Nation includes three remote communities in northern Alberta. Using the National Child Benefit reinvestment funds, the Nation was able to support and develop four programs, including a hot lunch program at the three community schools, supplementing the Head Start Program, and developing a clothing program. In addition, the community implemented a recreation program to build self-esteem and team participation skills in the youth of the community. The program made it possible for children to participate in various activities by providing necessary safe equipment in a safe facility in which to play.