
Community Development & Research

Executive Summary

Community Development & Research

Community Development & Research is the result of two initiatives by the Aboriginal Corrections Unit, Policy Branch, Solicitor General Canada.

First, a Unit researcher compiled material about community development and research. The material included sources of research and community action funds, with an emphasis on funds for Aboriginal communities.

Second, the Unit brought together 14 people for two days. The 14 people, representing Aboriginal communities, academic researchers, and private consultants, joined Unit staff in discussing the realities of community development, research, and government roles and funding in community development and research.

The participants in the two days of discussion reached consensus on two major points:

governments can help best through flexible, responsive partnership

research, whether by government, academic institutions, or private consultants, should be participatory and fully involve Aboriginal people at all stages

Community Development & Research details the discussion leading to this consensus.

As *Community Development & Research* is intended for Aboriginal communities, and government, academic and private sector researchers and development workers, it includes a comprehensive reference section.

Community Development & Research

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Introduction

This report is the result of an intensive, two-day session held in August, 1994. The Aboriginal Corrections Unit, Policy Branch, Solicitor General Canada, brought together people with a wide range of expertise and experience as a focus group to discuss community development issues.

Participants included individuals involved in community development in Aboriginal communities, academics, private-sector consultants and Aboriginal Corrections Unit staff. The participants are listed at the end of this report.

Discussions centred around:

- a. What is community development?
- b. How can government assist in community development?
- c. Issues concerning research involving Aboriginal people.
- d. Undertaking community development and community development projects.

The process produced a clear picture of many of the opportunities and road blocks to community development and research.

The discussions

Focus group participants identified critical issues in community-based research initiatives; discussed models and strategies for identifying and using resources; examined ownership and politics affecting community development; the role of government in community development; and, identified additional elements that should be addressed in community development.

Participants provided definitions of community development and gave examples from their own experience of community-based development projects and programs.

They discussed appropriate roles for government in Aboriginal community development. Participants paid particular attention to ways government departments and agencies, in spite of their limited mandates, can develop partnerships to support community projects which have a more holistic approach. The group also suggested ways in which government departments and agencies can build trust with Aboriginal communities.

Participants discussed research. They gave examples of successful research and the type of research that interests communities. They also discussed research methods that would be of most benefit to communities.

The group suggested benchmarks for evaluation and consultation, and suggested standards for publication of research.

Discussion also resulted in suggestions to prevent politics from distorting projects and prevent exploitation by community factions.

Consultants have a role in community development and in research. Group members discussed the benefits of hiring outside services, determining the necessary qualifications for a consultant; the responsibility of the consultant to a community; and, avoiding exploitation by a consultant.

The group considered ways that communities can determine whether they need outside services or support for a project.

Part 1: Community development

What is community development?

The group consensus was that community development starts with an individual who has a vision arising from an appreciation of a balanced look at the community and its people. From that balanced view of the community, others in the community are included in articulating a vision of what might be.

Development is a process that builds on the existing strengths of the community. It recognises that the power of a community rests with the people of the community, not solely with its leaders. Development is the community taking responsibility to make change.

“People own both the process and the results,” said one participant. Another participant won wide agreement with the proposition that communities need to return to communal responsibility.

Still another said: “There is fear, shame, and silence in communities, and isolation from each other. We need to come back to caring, sharing, kindness, honesty and faith. We need to return to respect for women, and children, and all adults.”

One participant urged communities not to forget the community’s children: “They have strength, desire, faith and spirit.”

Three major themes about community development emerged.

One theme, expressed in different ways, is that community development puts the community in the driver’s seat. The **community builds the capacity to grow and develop the way it wants.**

A second theme builds community development on Aboriginal history and traditions. The **community discovers itself and uses knowledge about the past and the present to change the future.** The group always prefaced suggestions about vision with learning from tradition, past social structures (such as the clan), and history.

A third theme is the need for local control, decision-making, ownership and participation. The **essential component of community ownership of development is involvement of the entire community**—Elders, adults, and children. Community development, said one participant, draws on the strengths of people.

“Leaders are only as strong as you make them. Ask the people of the community: Why are you giving your power away to the leaders?”

How can governments help?

Government can help Aboriginal communities the most by working in **partnership** with communities; by being **flexible and responsive**; and, by working with communities to develop projects and programs that meet **community needs**.

Partnership

Not unexpectedly, the focus group acknowledged that government financial help is important in Aboriginal community development.

Partnership, though, is much more than financial help. It starts with listening to the whole community, not solely its political leaders and organisations, and by being accountable to the entire community. All participants agreed that it is important to consult with women and children in a community.

Government, said the participants, must try to understand the driving forces behind community development. These forces can range from a new appreciation of tradition to the influence of Elders. With this understanding is the need for government to support Aboriginal people in the practise of their tradition and religion.

Partnership is not directing peoples' lives. It is a process of opening doors and breaking down barriers, of advocating, of being proactive, of connecting people with information, expertise, and ideas.

Government can be bewildering and confusing to communities. Participants said partnership should include help for communities in dealing with government bureaucracy. Government should explain what it takes to communicate and work with it. It should also play a role as a central information–gathering and sharing agent.

Many participants cited experiences with “compartmentalised mandates”—situations in which different units within one department seemed unaware of each other’s activities, or departments being unaware of the activities of other departments.

Finally, government can help community development by showing a willingness to learn from Aboriginal people and by adopting and practising a “service mentality.”

Flexibility, responsiveness

Underlying discussion about government help for Aboriginal community development was the view that government is neither flexible nor responsive.

Participants said there is more to government help for community development than developing policies and programs and doing surveys. Government can be more helpful by listening and by supporting community initiatives both within the community and within government.

The group agreed with one member’s suggestion that government ought to ask: “Is government willing to redefine its role? How does government feel about communities getting well?”

Steps government could take to create greater flexibility and responsiveness include:

- Deciding jointly with Aboriginal communities what is meant by consultation

- Building more effective mechanisms for advocacy, fund-raising, consciousness-raising, public relations, and including the private sector in community development
- Telling communities what government help is available, and what government expects
- Creating global funding arrangements, and setting out ways government will be accountable to Aboriginal people
- Giving Aboriginal people responsibility for dissemination of information
- A willingness to accept failure, to let communities make mistakes and learn from them.

Meeting community needs

Listening was a theme that focus group participants returned to throughout the two days. Participants said that government help is too often help according to a government agenda, not the community agenda. Frequently, it appears that what government wants is important rather than what the community wants.

Listening includes consulting with the whole community, not just political organizations and leaders. Listening means paying attention to the community's version of what the community needs. It means realizing that there are no blanket solutions, and awareness of and respect for different solutions.

Accountability, is an integral part of community development and listening. Government has to be accountable to the people of the community. As well, community leaders have to be accountable to the community. The community should evaluate and audit development plans, projects and policies.

Government has to set out clearly what it expects a development project to achieve for the community. The community should have regular, scheduled opportunities to question policies, programs, and progress and to make suggestions.

- Understanding the bureaucratic culture

Working with bureaucrats is a problem for many individuals and communities. People who do not work every day with government find it difficult to figure out who is responsible for what.

Another problem is finding out what programs and mechanisms are available to help community development projects. The *Young Offenders Act*, for instance, has provisions for the establishment of community-based juvenile justice committees. The *Corrections and Conditional Release Act* allows for the establishment of regional and local Aboriginal

advisory committees. These committees advise Correctional Services Canada on correctional services for Aboriginal offenders.

RECOMMENDED MATERIALS

The following materials may prove useful to individuals or groups involved in a community development project:

Community Action Pack

The Community Action Pack designed by the Community Health Division of Health Canada responds to requests from communities wanting to act on neighbourhood problems. The kit provides the tools needed to become involved in recreation, crime prevention, housing, environment, health or other community issues. The kit gathers resources developed by agencies across Canada on aspects of project development such as running meetings, fund raising, working with volunteers, planning needs, evaluating results, etc. Written in simple language, the kit sells for \$250. For a copy of the Community Action Pack contact:

**Community Programs Group
643 Queen Street East
Toronto ON
M4M 1G4
Tel. 416 778-8727
Fax 416 778-8726**

Research For Change: Participatory Action Research for Community Groups. (1992)

The authors of this book are J. Barnsley and D. Ellis. It is published by The Women's Research Centre, Vancouver, B.C.

Guide for requesting project funding

Copies of this guide are free from:

**Project Development and Discretionary Funds Section
Department of Justice Canada
239 Wellington Street
Ottawa ON
K1A 0H8
Tel. 613 957-3538**

Some Examples of community-based development

- Hollow Water Community Holistic Circle Healing

Hollow Water is a small Aboriginal community in Manitoba. It is a good example of how a community took control and ownership of problems and developed innovative community-based solutions.

The Hollow Water Community Holistic Circle Healing was developed to prevent and intervene in sexual abuse and family violence. The Holistic Circle also heals abuse victims, offenders' families, and communities.

The criminal justice system recognizes the model as more culturally appropriate and better integrated than what is now available.

Through the program the community has moved with great difficulty and pain from denial to accountability and responsibility. This process is enabling the community to find its voice and dignity.

Concerned service providers, politicians and volunteers made the reforms because they decided the community needed co-ordinated and culturally appropriate intervention. The community took responsibility and control and developed a community-based model to deal with the community's concerns and problems.

- Waseskun House Community Service Mobilization Program

Waseskun House started in 1989. It is an urban residential centre for men on conditional release in Montreal. Residents are Aboriginal males referred from federal and provincial correctional institutions. They follow a series of programs to help them reintegrate into family, community, and Nation.

In 1994, Waseskun House began developing a Community Service Mobilization Program to help reintegration. There are difficulties in restoring balance and defining "community" in an urban setting. In addition, it is often demanding to attend to the cultural differences of a heterogeneous urban Aboriginal population. Waseskun House addresses these difficulties by investigating networking with Aboriginal people communities outside urban Montreal and carefully organizing resources.

- St. Theresa Point Indian Government Youth Court System

This unique program in St. Theresa Point, Manitoba has been operating since 1984.

The program deals with offences and delinquent behaviour by youth. It operates completely within the Aboriginal community. The system consists of a judge or magistrate, a co-ordinator, and a case conference team. The chief and council appoint the team. The program started without federal or provincial approval. It still does not have approval but it does have the co-operation of all federal and provincial government departments.

- The Teslin Tlingit Tribal Justice System

This community-based traditional Aboriginal justice system was developed and implemented in Teslin, Yukon in January 1991.

The Teslin Tlingit Band has about 700 members. Five Elders one from each of the five Tlingit Clans sit with the Territorial Court Judge. They advise on dispositions that directly affect offenders within the community. The Clan leaders participate directly in court proceedings and play an important role in developing community-based justice and alternative dispositions.

The Elders and the judge arrive at conditions of sentence by consensus. Because the Elders sit with the judge and take part in the proceedings, the Court is seen as part of a community process.

This model was chosen over a Justice of the Peace model because it is consistent with Teslin Tlingit traditions and culture. The Teslin project is an attempt to develop a justice system that is more in line with the community's unique economic social and cultural needs. The model allows the Elders to again be the centre for resolving disputes. It helps to rebuild respect for traditional ways, for the role of Elders, and for the community as a whole. The system gives the community ownership. It provides an opportunity for Aboriginal people to participate more fully in the delivery of justice to their communities.

Part 2: Research

Views on research issues

Many members of the focus group felt that there is a communication gap between researchers/consultants and communities, with communities feeling they are at a disadvantage.

They noted that there is mistrust among many Aboriginal people towards researchers, consultants, anthropologists, and scientists involved in community research.

Traditionally, research has relied upon techniques and approaches incorporating a Eurocentric bias and scientific logic. These research models are often ineffective at grasping the social and cultural complexities of Aboriginal communities. Methods focusing on the individual often ignore the individual's role in a complex social and cultural framework of responsibility and dependency.

A major concern that was expressed is lack of community involvement in developing research projects. At times one or more experts may take too much control of the project. The community then loses ownership of the project. Without feeling ownership the community may not support the project and it fails. Often when a community receives a grant for a program its first move is to hire a person to develop the program. Little is accomplished because most of the resources centre on that person.

The group recognized, however, that this does not mean that communities should not do research. Nor does it mean that researchers should be prevented from coming into the community.

Research is a valuable tool. It investigates and uncovers the unknown. It can highlight problems and concerns. Research can support and justify action and show the way to developing solutions.

Many researchers, both Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal, provide valuable service and knowledge to communities. Skilled consultants can help with sampling or questionnaire design, in writing proposals seeking funds, and writing reports.

Community members must be leaders in any project. They must take part in all major decisions about the research or project and consider the purpose of the research. If the research is to benefit the community then the community should direct the work to meet their needs.

The problem is not research or researchers. The problem is the conduct of research and who benefits from research.

New styles of research such as participatory action research (PAR) emphasize community empowerment.

Both Aboriginal and academic participants agreed that research should be a way of listening to Aboriginal people. They also agreed that research should be participatory, open, and co-ordinated.

The academic view

The academic researchers in the focus group made three points very strongly:

- First, there isn't enough research. More is needed.
- Second, good quality, in-depth research is uncommon.
- Third, quality research is critical to the understanding of the Aboriginal people of Canada, and to the advancement of the Aboriginal issues in the Canadian justice system.

Participants agreed that research should be participatory. They defined participatory research as feeding information back to the people and/or community being researched, and others. This feeding back of information should be done constantly, periodically, and systematically. Participatory research, they said, must involve Aboriginal people in all aspects of the research.

Research must be done at two levels—with individuals and with groups, because answers to questions depend on whether an individual or a group is asked. Quality research also involves more than just the people or group who propose the research.

The aboriginal view

There were serious concerns expressed by Aboriginal participants in the focus groups about research. The concerns included the need for research, the money spent on research, the practicality of research, the ethics of researchers, and research by consultants.

The Need for Research

Some participants said that if Aboriginal people were respected, much of the research in Aboriginal communities would be unnecessary. Respect would give credence to what Aboriginal people say—and research often simply confirms what people say.

Participants often said, government does not even know what is available from its own agencies. Government should properly catalogue its research.

They suggested that government, working with Aboriginal people, set research guidelines. The guidelines would help decide what outside resources the community needs. They

would also set out the role of the researchers, the people being researched, and would address the question of ownership of research.

Funding

The major complaint about research funding is that there always seems to be money for research, but not for programs. Participants suggested that government should set criteria and processes to determine what research should be funded.

Aboriginal people often feel they are powerless in research projects because the government, not the community, is paying. There have also been instances of government asking for comments on proposed research and with projects going ahead despite community disapproval.

Research project proposals should include an evaluation process, and research funding should include money for development of proposals.

All participants said they would welcome a manual which listed funding sources by organization which included a description of the eligible projects. It would also be useful to have a directory of past and current research.

The practicality of research

Throughout the discussion about research, the constant refrain was: "We have been researched to death."

Participants said Aboriginal people often do not understand academic research; their concerns are not heeded; and, community concerns and desires bear no relation to the research objectives.

Communities often find it difficult to see how research, in particular long-term research, has a practical impact. Aboriginal people communities are now at the point that the first question they ask is: "What's in it for us?"

If the community cannot see a benefit from the research, then the community will not allow the research. The group suggested that help be given to communities so they can make informed decisions as to whether or not research is needed. If it is needed, communities should get help to find out what resources are available. They should also receive guidelines to determine appropriate roles and responsibilities of everyone involved in the research.

"Everyone involved in research—government, Aboriginal people, consultants, and researchers—needs to understand each other's realities to develop a mutually effective process, and to identify pitfalls," said one participant. There is also a need for Aboriginal people to understand that they have control over consultants and researchers and research results.

Communities should be able to determine what can be done with existing community resources. Communities should have some way to determine what qualifications it needs in an outside researcher and to determine who is a "competent" researcher or consultant.

Ethics

The ethical standards of researchers are not always what they should be, said participants in the discussion. Some of the people working with Aboriginal communities are, unfortunately, motivated by the need for work, more than by strong ethics.

A consultant or researcher who is hired by an Aboriginal community or authority is, for that brief period, like an employee of the band or organization. Too often, community members tend to bow to the opinions or preferences of consultants or researchers, because they are supposed to be “experts.” When that happens, before long the entire project maybe completely “consultant-driven.” Unfortunately a “consultant-driven” project often strays from what the community really wants and needs. The consultant may be an “expert” (and maybe not!) but it is the community members who are the experts on the community.

The community should always remember that if it hires a consultant or researcher, it is the community that decides what it wants from the work. (This is probably the most important step.)

The community also decides whether the work is acceptable, and whether the work is being done in an acceptable way.

In effect, the community can hire or fire the consultant. If a report which is submitted is not of good quality or does not meet the community’s specifications, it should not be accepted, and no payments should be made for it until it meets required standards.

Some of the participants in the focus group who had worked as researchers were eager to present an additional perspective on ethics. Consultants and researchers must maintain a balance in everything they do. They must respect the wishes of those who retain their services. They must respect all the people who are consumers of their work, and all the people who will or could be affected by their work. They must respect the truth (as best they know it) and what they believe to be right. Sometimes, these things can create contradictions, or the appearance of contradiction, and it is at these times that the consultant’s or researcher’s ethics will be tested.

For example, it may happen that a researcher is hired by a federal or provincial government to do a study on a reserve. The chief and council may take a different view from the government representatives about how the research should be done. A good researcher will try to find a way which is acceptable to everyone, not force something on the band with which they disagree.

Then again, a researcher may find that a certain segment of the band membership is unwilling to talk to him or her, or is being prevented from talking to him or her. Out of respect for the people involved, an ethical researcher will never try to insist or manipulate people into talking to him or her. However, if the researcher suspects the situation could result in an inaccurate picture arising out of the study, the researcher may be forced by his or her respect for the truth to withdraw from the work, or to state in his or her report that the results may be “skewed” by what happened. All the participants in the focus group agreed that it is up to each individual, or the parents of children, to choose whether or not to be interviewed, on the basis of what each person sees as the best interests of themselves and the community.

A competent consultant will try to plug into a wide network of people in the community who will give solid ongoing advice about the project and the community. If the consultant does

not do so, either formally or informally, the community should be on the alert to possible problems, and it should create a network or a committee (which should include Elders) to give advice to the consultant. Everyone agreed that the results of the work are likely to be useless anyway if active feedback and participation are not an ongoing part of the work. An ethical question was also raised for federal and provincial governments contemplating a new research project in a community. The challenge was presented to governments to check first to see if there would be dangers to people, especially in small communities, in speaking candidly to researchers. Participants urged governments to check, in particular, with women and children.

Consultants

Often, communities discover that projects are consultant-driven. Consultants need to keep themselves working and that need is often the reason the research continues. Focus group participants stated that research projects should start with the community asking itself what it needs, and should proceed from that point. It is important to understand that without growth from the roots of the community a development project cannot weather the criticism which is almost inevitable both from outside and within the community.

Doing your own research

Undertaking a community research project

How can an Aboriginal community keep control over research? Sometimes it is not possible to do so. But if an Aboriginal community cannot do its own, independent research, or cannot persuade others to do the research it wants, it is sometimes hard to know how to proceed. The following suggestions can help make the best use of community resources.

- What research, and why?

Research can help at various stages. Before you begin a project or program which you want for the community, you may wish to research the needs of the community members. This research can help you to design the project or program. Sometimes, this research will cause you to add or subtract something in the program, or even change your plans for the program altogether.

There are lots of different kinds of research, and lots of different reasons for wanting to do research. To avoid wasting time and energy, it is important to begin by getting a very clear idea about why you want to do the research. This will help you decide what kind of research you need to do. Sometimes, when you sit down with a group of people to talk about why you want to do some research, you may end up with a different decision. For example, you may discover that someone else has found out what you need to know, or you may decide that you need to do other things first, before you even think about doing research. Research can be undertaken during the life of a program, to get an idea of how things are going, and help the community make adjustments if these seem useful.

Research (or evaluation) is often done after a program or project is completed, or after it has been going on for some time. This research or evaluation is done to find out if the goals were or are being achieved, and the more positive and less positive aspects of how the goals are being completed.

Some research is undertaken periodically, to provide "snapshots" of the same things at different points in time. Often, this is done for a specific purpose (like the Canadian census which determines certain financial transfers), but sometimes this kind of research can provide us with knowledge in unexpected ways.

If you don't have the luxury of doing research at all stages (and few communities do), it is important to decide where research would be most useful to the community, and why. There are many different kinds of research. Some are very simple and some are very elaborate. If you don't have the time or resources to do complex research, there is often a lot to be gained by doing something quick and simple, provided it is also done properly. Research can be exploratory—you may not be entirely sure what is happening with something you are concerned about, so you may wish to do a very broad exploration of all the factors which might be involved. This would often involve talking to lots of different people, finding some books or articles on the subject, looking up records or case files, and thinking of as many different types of information as you can that might tell you something about the topic.

Research can also be the opposite—very precise and directed at finding out the answers to some very specific questions.

Research can involve talking to people (surveys), observing their behaviour and recording it, looking in-depth at what happens with a few examples (case studies), recording your own perceptions of something you are involved in (participant observation or diary-making), looking at case files on a large number of cases in an attempt to find patterns or trends, and evaluating a specific program. (There are lots of other types of research too.) Generally speaking, the more different ways you are able to find to study something, the more reliable will be your research results. Sometimes, you can get help from universities or government departments to help you make these decisions and actually design the research.

There are lots of different things that will have an impact on your research, besides the actual work. It is important to think about these things before undertaking research. For example, if community members feel that they have not been informed about the issue you want to study, they may refuse to give their opinions to an interviewer. Or if a program's goals have never been clearly stated, it will be difficult to measure the success of the program. For these kinds of reasons, some of what follows does not refer directly to research. But it will have a strong effect on the research you do.

Getting Started

- Establish a committee

Set up a committee of community members. A committee of several members working together will go a long way to increasing and assisting community involvement. Members of the committee can talk to their friends and relatives, that way a great deal of information will travel just by word of mouth. The committee must be accountable to the community and its elected representatives.

Avoid having community leaders at the top designing community-based programs or conducting research. A committee could include outside experts, community social or justice workers, and village council representatives. Most important, it should include community members. An Elder should be among the community members. [Women and youth should be considered too.](#)

The ideal committee size is about seven; larger committees become unwieldy.

Other options include setting up a justice council or using a group that exists. For example, police advisory committees established under Tripartite Policing Agreements can include crime prevention programs.

- Inform the community

Decide how to tell the whole community about the project, program, or research. This is a key step. Most people in a community are outside the decision-making process.

One way to inform the whole community is to include people from all parts of the community in decision-making.

Consider holding public forums and—or—workshops for the community before and during the project or program. Make arrangements with existing community groups and Elders' committees to speak to them about the program or project.

People are often reluctant to attend public forums and become involved. An informal forum after a potluck dinner, for instance, will put people in a relaxed mood. It will be easier for people to talk and to meet community leaders on an equal footing.

Be sure to reach the people who need the service the most. Often it is the disadvantaged or disempowered, such as women, the elderly, or children, who need services the most. They are also least likely to know what services are available.

Another way of informing the community about the program or project is through a newsletter. Low literacy levels can work against a newsletter that is just blocks of type. Be creative. Use illustrations and keep the language plain. Newsletters should also tell the community during the process, not just afterwards.

- Identify community conflicts

Tensions and conflicts in the community can hold community development and individual growth back.

Apathy is often the enemy of people who want to try something new. People become apathetic when they feel helpless about the prospects for change. People feel that they do

not have any control over things that affect their lives. Taking part in efforts to change the community is—to these people—futile.

It is difficult to encourage people to volunteer when unemployment and other social problems are severe. It is also difficult when people are used to relying on others to solve their problems. The best way to approach this is little-by-little; this means that if you can get people to help out in a small way, then they may gain confidence and believe that they can do more.

- Describe the setting of the research

Research does not take place in isolation. The community's social and cultural makeup influence the research and the results of the research. [Stepping back to assess these factors before you undertake a program or research can help you to plan both things more effectively.](#)

Someone who knows the community can be valuable in describing:

- Characteristics of the community: size, geographical location, population, economic base, cultural make-up, population turnover. [If you are planning to do research, you will probably want to survey or study some people from all the different sub-groups you can identify in the community. If you are designing a program, you will want to consider whether the different characteristics of the sub-groups in the community suggest that the program should be tailored a little differently to each sub-group.](#)
- The group doing the research, sponsoring the research, or working to have the research done. Where and how does it fit into the community? What is its reputation? How do issues that the group deals with affect the rest of the community? How does the community respond?
- Social services, such as housing and health care: What is available? At what cost? What is good—and not so good—about each? How do these services affect the people being served? Who is not being served?
- The economic situation: This includes jobs, business, unions, and working conditions. What is the situation for people in the community generally?

- The political climate: This includes politicians, boards, political parties, levels of government, and factions. How supportive are they of community concerns? How do their policies affect those concerns? How open are they to change?
- Funding sources: Is local, provincial, regional, or federal funding available? How receptive are funders to the issues? What strings are attached to funding? Government agencies can be useful resources to draw upon for information. They are often stakeholders in the funding and have a vested interest in helping the program or project succeed.
- The media: What is the coverage of issues?

Make use of universities. Universities can bring together people with a wide range of knowledge and skills. Problems can be dealt with in a way consistent with Aboriginal peoples holistic perspective and sharing of information.

Review [what you have learned by analysing the above factors](#) and ask: What does this mean for the research? What does this say about whom you should be talking to on this issue? What does this say about who might encourage or block the work? What does this say about how the research might be used?

Research as part of community development

- Consider the results of the research

Sometimes, research is done after initial program planning, but before implementation.

Unfortunately, often the research results are not fully considered before implementation takes place.

Put the same time and effort into assessing the results of research as you put into planning. Consider the immediate benefits, inconvenience or potential political problems. Also consider potential long-range costs of the program or project and the possible negative effect on community values and relationships.

Review the project proposal before starting. Link with municipal, provincial, or federal agencies. They will often volunteer their time and expertise to consider unforeseen consequences that may affect them. For example a municipality may review plans for a sewage system because deficiencies may affect regional water quality.

- Take the politics of research into account

It can be dangerous to think that research does not have a political angle. Even when research is conducted with the best of intentions and full community participation, there can be disagreement about conclusions and interpretations. One thing that can help with such disagreements is diversity and balance on the steering committee for your research.

What distinguishes research from many other activities is that, as much as possible, it is objective and independent of people and things that could interfere with providing a balanced, accurate picture of what you are studying. These potential sources of "interference" include politics, any opinions which the researcher may have about the subject, and any fears which community members may have about talking to interviewers. One of the most important tasks of researchers is to build in as many safeguards as possible to preserve the objectivity of the study.

One way to do this is to make sure that some of the research is designed, conducted or advised by someone who is independent of the community. Academic researchers under the general control of the community may veto politically-motivated changes in methodology or data interpretation.

For effective program development, politics must be separate from development and the delivery of services. The researcher must also be aware that he or she has responsibilities to the community and the funding agencies.

- Explore many sources of information

There is no central library of previous research and information. Someone has to sift through volumes of information and contact many individuals and organizations for help. Often universities can help with this.

- Monitor the research process

Evaluation [is one type of](#) research. Every project should include assessment [of one sort or another](#). This gives the project legitimacy and offers the opportunity for improvement. Data should be available during the project, not only after its completion. This gives those involved in the research a chance to sense its direction and change it if this seems necessary.

- Ponder the perils of publication

Publishing is a complex issue. Communities may not want to share information or results of projects.

On one hand, information should be easily available and research reports given to the people being researched. On the other hand, community leaders have the right to decide if a report or findings should be published.

A commitment to community ownership and control of research products means that the community owns the copyright. The community must also be aware of the ethical issues about disclosing private communications and the effect of disclosure on community relationships. The researcher must actively help to protect the privacy of rituals requiring secrecy. Problems arise concerning knowledge that persons or groups within the community conceal from one another.

- Making use of community resources

Start research with the questions or concerns of people from the community so the research serves their interests, not only the interests of non-residents. The community becomes more involved by taking responsibility in understanding and directing the research. The community also learns more and is better able to act on the results. This requires that those proposing the research present their interests and goals fully and honestly. They must also understand and consider the perceptions and expectations of the community.

Once a community knows what it wants researched it should find out if it has the resources to do the work.

[Sometimes it is best to](#) let the people being researched do the research. Community people can do much of the legwork. For example, a community can do a needs assessment, construct demographic profiles, or inventory community resources itself. They can collect and analyse the research information themselves or they can help do it. [\(At other times, such as with very sensitive issues, it may be best to use outside interviewers, or give people a choice of talking to someone they know or a stranger. Common sense is the best guide here.\)](#)

One of the myths of research and evaluation is that they are the property of the professionals. There is no reason that non-professionals cannot plan, conduct and analyse community research.

At the least those being researched should know the project's purpose and procedures. They should have the chance to advise on project design and implementation; and should

receive the study's findings and conclusions. The goal is to involve residents in the entire process.

A major benefit of using community resources is that these people have a knowledge of the community. An outside researcher cannot know ahead of time the complex network of people, the islands of influence, the problems and dilemmas of community life, the internal dynamics, or the temperament of the community.

Even a well-trained person may not be sensitive to many issues in the community. Local residents have this knowledge and they should be involved. Community members are invaluable for direct personal contact. They can obtain entry to a cross-section of all people and viewpoints that an outside researcher cannot.

Aboriginal communities have complex social relationships because of their small size. Community members may criticize community researchers if they sense that conflicts of interest are overriding objectivity. An outside researcher can often overcome this problem.

Using Consultants and Outside Resources

- The outside expert

A common complaint is that researchers and consultants take control of decision-making away from the people with the greatest stake in the project.

Some consultants do not have a basic knowledge of the area or subject they are researching. One project had difficulty getting funding because the consultant did not fit the program to the Canadian criminal justice system.

Other problems involve innovative projects that do not meet funding or program standards. Researchers from outside the community must be co-operative and willing to both teach and learn. They must work at the direction of the community members—not the other way around. Their role is to help. They must be accountable to the community and prepared to answer as well as ask questions.

In economic development the lack of management expertise and access to professional advice has a crippling effect. Business people must turn to outside consultants for business plans and advice. All too often, once the business plan is completed or the grant processed, the business-person is left to flounder. There is no follow-up advice as consultants move on to the next plan or grant proposal.

The community has to define how an outsider might help and how he or she will work with the group. A good consultant:

- Respects the group's responsibility and right to control the process;
- [Helps the group to identify any interests or constituencies which need to be added to the group, if true balance is to exist;](#)
- Understands the group's issues;
- Is not detached, but committed to working with the group to help it carry out the research;
- [Knows his or her own biases, and can help the group be aware of their own and others' biases too, in order to insulate the research design from such things as much as possible;](#)
- Is a facilitator, not a controller;

- Is confident enough to be flexible and can change and adapt methods to suit the group's situation;
- [Has a strong enough ethical base to withdraw from a research project if he or she sees it losing its integrity;](#)
- Can explain methods clearly so everyone understands them;
- Is clear about what he or she can and can't do;
- Is someone the group is comfortable with.

Finding and choosing a consultant involves some searching. Ask other groups for recommendations. Look in the community as well as in universities and colleges. Don't be fooled by appearances, or use of complex terminology or language—ask questions. Interview any potential consultants; ask for their views on the issues. Be wary of the quick fix or short-term projects. Check for an established track record. Ask for references and examples of their work with other groups and check with those groups. Word-of-mouth is a great way to get information. Many researchers fail to help the participants deal with problems the research finds. Ask if the consultant is willing to work with local community resource people to deal with these concerns.

- The contract

After choosing a consultant/researcher draw up an agreement. It should set out the researcher/ consultant's role and how the group and the contractor will work together and share information. Prepare a contract between the community and the consultant before the work starts. Be sure that the contract clearly says whether the community is going to participate actively or remain outside the process.

Always read the fine print in the contract. If something in the contract is not clear, have the contract rewritten to make it clear. You do not have to accept a contract until you are satisfied with what the contract says. Be sure that you understand everything in the contract. If you have any doubts about the contract, see a lawyer before you sign the contract.

As the employer, you have the authority to hold the employee to the contract. If the contract is not fulfilled, the employer has the right to cancel the contract or refuse final payment until the completion and approval.

Establish a contract with precise terms of reference and short periods between deliverables (for example, three and six months). This ensures that work is on schedule and meets expectations.

Some consultant/researchers will use information taken from a community to criticize without providing any positive recommendations or solutions. Consultants who do not meet the demands of fair exchange should not be hired. Define the terms and conditions of this exchange in the contract. The community has a right to expect a direct benefit—a product—from the research.

Each project contract should say that, if it is possible, attempts will be made to train and to hire local people.

- Ownership Of Research Results

Much research is really geared more to the researcher's needs than to those of the community. It is not studying something that could immediately result in improvement in services or conditions. There isn't any joint planning by the scientists and the local community and the service providers on what type of research might be needed. Agencies are more likely to fund a project when the population has several pressing problems. Mentioning those problems in a public document may generate hostility among local politicians.

The community or employer has ownership of the data and results. The community, not the consultant, should decide whether to publish project results; whether more preparation is needed, or even if the study should be re-done.

If the consultant disagrees then the community has the right to prevent the consultant from using the material. The research contract should specify this.

Researchers do not have to be allowed in; any community can refuse a contract with any researcher.

Researchers can also be caught in an ethical bind. They may feel they should not publish personal data because of the effect publication might have. This applies particularly to ritual secrets, sacred materials, and knowledge that requires careful handling or confidentiality.

A researcher should submit the completed study and the decision to publish findings to the community for review and criticism.

Funding criteria and sources

It is often difficult for people to find funding for projects because they do not know what is available. Problems include: where to go for funding, what can be funded, funding criteria, who can apply, how to apply, how to deal with bureaucrats and public officials, federal/provincial/territorial jurisdictions and services, and project and program standards. Public Legal Education Associations (PLEAs) have helped to create greater understanding and to provide information. However there is a need for a greater partnership between PLEAs and Aboriginal communities.

In crime prevention, community justice development, and alternatives to formal processing it is important to:

- define community problems and needs
- assess community resources
- re-allocate and re-assign community resources
- assess new resource needs
- develop inter-agency co-operation

The main criteria are:

- a clearly defined and comprehensive statement of need
- suitability of the project to meet the need
- capacity and interest of Aboriginal people to administer and manage the project
- making use of existing structures and resources avoiding duplication of existing structures
- commitment to training local people to ensure that skills are returned or left in communities

Sources of funding

Sources of general information

This section is an overview of organizations, their mandates, funding criteria, and funding sources for federal justice and corrections-related projects for Aboriginal people.

The information is taken from the *Funding Guide to Selected Federal Programs*, published by Indian Affairs and Northern Development.

For a copy of the ***Funding Guide to Selected Federal Programs*** contact:

**Indian Affairs and Northern Development
Room 1931
10 Wellington Street
Hull QUE
K1A 0H4
Tel: (819) 997-0380
Fax: (819) 953-0380**

Indian Affairs and Northern Development is no longer involved with policing, corrections, or justice-related agreements. Solicitor General Canada and Justice Canada are now responsible.

There is now a greater commitment to forming partnerships between various federal and provincial agencies. For example, six federal departments and agencies worked together on the 1991-95 Family Violence Initiative—Justice Canada, Solicitor General Canada, Indian Affairs and Northern Development, Human Resources Development, and the Department of Canadian Heritage. Activities related to the prevention of wife abuse, elder abuse, child abuse, and child sexual abuse.

In addition, federal and provincial departments often jointly fund projects. This may be confusing, but often you only have to contact one of the agencies involved. That agency will help bring together other interested parties.

The following publications also provide information about the federal government. In 1993 there was a major re-organisation of the federal government. The 1993 editions do not show the most recent changes.

The ***Guide to Federal Programs and Services***

This reference source contains descriptions of the programs and services of federal departments, agencies, and Crown corporations. The *Guide* also lists addresses and phone numbers of local, district, and regional federal government offices, as well as a list of federal toll-free numbers across Canada. The cost is \$21.95 plus GST. Contact:

**Reference Canada Program
Canada Communication Group
Ottawa ON
K1S 0S5
Tel: 613 956-4802
Fax: 613 941-3393**

Federal-Provincial Programs and Activities: A Descriptive Inventory

This provides basic information on each program and activity of the federal government, and tells you where to find out more information about the programs and activities. The publication includes major shared-cost programs and significant federal-provincial programs. Contact:

**Communication Support Centre
Hope Building Suite 403
63 Sparks Street
Ottawa ON
K1A 0A2
Tel: 613 990-6176
Fax: 613 995-0101**

Health Programs Support Division Catalogue

This catalogue provides a list of free materials available to First Nations communities. Topics include substance abuse, family violence, nutrition, mental health and healthy babies. Contact:

**Medical Services Branch
Health Canada
11th Floor, Jeanne Mance Building
Tunney's Pasture
Ottawa ON
K1A OL3
Fax: 613 954-8107**

You Wanted to Know

This gives answers to the most often asked questions about programs and services for registered Indians in Canada. Contact:

**Indian Affairs and Northern Development
Room 1931
10 Wellington Street
Hull QUE
K1A 0H4
Tel: (819) 997-0380
Fax: (819) 953-0380**

Solicitor General Canada

- Aboriginal Corrections Unit

The Aboriginal Corrections Unit of the Solicitor General of Canada Secretariat is part of the Aboriginal Justice Initiative. Much of the Unit's work assists Aboriginal people in finding alternatives to incarceration and in supporting communities in their desire to re-integrate members from institutions in a positive manner. The Aboriginal Corrections Unit has a small budget to assist communities who wish to further these goals. Applications for non-capital, non-core funding may be submitted to:

Ed Buller
Chief
Aboriginal Corrections
Solicitor General of Canada
340 Laurier Avenue West
Ottawa ON
K1A 0P8

- First Nations Policing Policy

What does it do? The purpose of the First Nations Policing Policy is to improve the administration of justice, the maintenance of social order, public security and personal safety in on-reserve communities. Under the new policing policy, funding for all types of First Nations police services is provided under agreements between the federal and provincial/territorial governments and First Nations communities and organizations.

What can be funded? Projects are divided into the following categories:

- Program administration: this includes First Nations police governance mechanisms (e.g. boards, commissions, and advisory bodies) and other administrative services provided by the police service, First Nations council, or provincial/territorial departments.
- Recruiting, training and education: this includes pre-employment, on-the-job, and formal in-service training.
- Salaries and benefits: this is for on-reserve police officers and civilian staff.
- Operating and maintenance costs: this includes equipment, fuel, vehicles, etc.
- Limited capital expenditures: this includes, where necessary, expenditures for police facilities.

Who can apply? The policy provides guidelines for the federal government to negotiate and implement agreements between the federal and provincial/territorial governments and First Nations communities and regional organizations, such as tribal councils.

How to apply: For more information on policing proposals please contact:

**Aboriginal Policing Directorate
Solicitor General Canada
340 Laurier Avenue West
Ottawa ON
K1A 0P8
Tel: 613 991-0241**

- Addresses of Solicitor General Canada Offices

**Solicitor General Canada
Headquarters Office
Sir Wilfrid Laurier Building
340 Laurier Avenue West
Ottawa ON
K1A 0P8**

**Policing and Law Enforcement
Director General
613 990-2703**

**Corrections
Research and Development
Director
613 991-2825**

**Policy Planning and Coordination
External Relations
Director
613 991-2952**

Justice Canada

- Project development and discretionary funds

What does it do? The Project Development and Discretionary Funds Section of the Department of Justice Canada administers a number of discretionary contribution funds for pilot projects. These funds provide money for the development of programs and services, support training and public legal education projects, and encourage research studies that promote and assist in the implementation of selected justice system reforms. The funds are available to individuals, groups, and government agencies that are involved in areas defined as priorities by the Government of Canada.

The Project Development and Discretionary Funds Section administers six funds in such areas as criminal, family, civil, and administrative law reform; legal aid; public legal education and information; child sexual abuse; family violence; victims of crime and Aboriginal people.

Criminal Law Reform Fund: this fund promotes new approaches to criminal law and supports the implementation of new legislation through the funding of activities such as conferences, research studies, reports, and projects.

Consultation and Development Fund: this fund is for general law, family law, and public law projects. The fund supports innovative projects, including legal research projects, the development of legal information materials for the public, and non-governmental conferences of interest to the Department. In addition, the public law component promotes consultations related to the reports and recommendations of the Law Reform Commission in civil and administrative law. This component is administered by the Public Law Branch.

Public Legal Education and Information: Special Projects Fund: this fund focuses on child sexual abuse projects undertaken by government and private sector organizations to develop, produce, and distribute public legal-information materials and programs designed to end child sexual abuse.

Legal Aid Special Projects Fund: this fund encourages experimental and research work in legal aid and supports projects that focus on improving the cost-effective delivery of legal aid services by the provinces and territories.

Native Special Projects Fund: this fund is for projects that assist Aboriginal people to understand their legal rights and responsibilities and to obtain equality before the law. Native courtworker training and professional development may also be considered for funding.

Family Support Enforcement Fund: this fund provides financial assistance to provincial and territorial governments to improve their support enforcement programs.

Other Discretionary Funds: the Department has two other discretionary funds, but they are not administered by the Project Development and Discretionary Funds Section. Information on the Human Rights Law Fund can be obtained from the

**Human Rights Law Section
Department of Justice Canada
Justice Building
239 Wellington Street
Ottawa ON
K1A 0H8.**

Information on the public law component of the Consultation and Development Fund can be obtained from the Public Law Branch at the same address.

How to apply: Final decisions regarding funding may take eight weeks or more. You must fully satisfy the Department's information requirements. Your completed, final submission must be received by the Department at least 60 days before the events or activity, or the starting date of the project. More detailed information may be obtained by telephoning or writing to:

Project Development and Discretionary

**Funds Section
Research and Development Directorate
Policy Programs and Research Branch
Department of Justice Canada
Justice Building
239 Wellington Street
Ottawa ON
K1A 0H8
Tel: 613 957-3538**

- Legal Studies for Aboriginal People (LSAP)

What does it do? To promote equitable representation of Aboriginal people in the legal profession, the Department of Justice offers financial assistance to Métis and non-Status Indians who wish to attend law school. (Status Indian and Inuit receive similar assistance from Indian Affairs and Northern Development.)

Through LSAP, the Department awards a number of three-year scholarships each year. The Department also provides for pre-law orientation programs and some support for graduate studies in law. A limited number of scholarships is available.

In the Summer Pre-Law Orientation Program, students study introductory level law subjects and learn legal writing and research skills. Their potential to succeed in law school is assessed by the faculty and staff at the end of the program.

Who can apply? To qualify for financial assistance under LSAP, an applicant must be non-Status Indian or Métis of Canadian citizenship, living in Canada who has received a conditional or unconditional acceptance from law school. Most law schools have developed a discretionary category: post-secondary studies, grades, and LSAT scores are balanced by work experience, age, and other factors. These factors include a student's maturity and motivation. For Aboriginal students, special consideration is also given to performance in a summer pre-law orientation program.

How to apply Applicants should write or telephone the law school of their choice to obtain information on deadline dates and specific requirements for admission. Law schools will provide advice on how to register for the admission test. Information on the programs and facilities offered by each law school can be obtained by writing to the registrar. The addresses of all Canadian law school registrars are available from Justice Canada.

For more information contact:

**Director
Native Law Centre
University of Saskatchewan
Diefenbaker Centre, Room 150
Saskatoon SASK
S7N 0W0
Tel: 306 966-6190**

In French Only:

Director

**Program Pré-droit pour les autochtones
Law Faculty University of Ottawa
57 Louis-Pasteur
Ottawa ON
K1N 6N5
Tel: 613 564-7059**

- Civil law—Common Law Exchange

What does it do? In two academic sessions between May and July, students from law schools across Canada are introduced to the other legal system and study comparative law. They attend Dalhousie University for five weeks and the University of Sherbrooke for five weeks.

The comparative law sessions of the Exchange Program offer the students a unique opportunity to compare Canada's two legal systems. Through a joint session on sources of law, professors' presentations, and other activities, participants from both systems observe key differences and similarities between the civil law and the common law. Comparative analysis also extends to Canadian public law.

How to apply: An application form must be completed and returned to the dean's office with the required documentation no later than the date indicated on the form.

For further information, contact:

**Program Manager
Civil Law—Common Law Exchange
Program
Department of Justice Canada
222 Queen Street 10th Floor
Ottawa ON
K1A 0H8
Tel: 613 957-9643**

- Human Rights Law Fund

The Department of Justice Canada has established a fund to provide partial financial assistance for legal research in protection of human rights or for education about human rights in areas of federal jurisdiction.

What can be funded? Activities concerning legal research, publications, legal seminars, and conferences on human rights legislation and issues, as well as innovative, public legal-education projects that develop or disseminate information on legal aspects of human rights. One area of particular interest to the Department is the interpretation and application of specific aspects of the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms by governments and courts.

Who can apply? Individuals doing research in law, as well as corporations, associations, and government and non-governmental organizations

| or groups are eligible for financial support from the fund.

Contact:

**Human Rights Law Fund
Department of Justice
Justice Building Room 416
239 Wellington Street
Ottawa ON
K1A 0H8
Tel: 613 941-2319**

- Aboriginal Justice Fund

What does it do? The Aboriginal Justice Directorate of the Department of Justice Canada administers a discretionary contribution fund called the Aboriginal Justice Fund. The fund provides money for the development of programs and services, training and public legal education projects, the establishment of a resource centre function, cross-cultural training, consultations undertaken by national Aboriginal organizations, as well as research studies related to Aboriginal justice issues.

What can be funded? Projects are divided into the following categories:

- Policy consultations and co-ordination: project contributions will be made available to national Aboriginal organizations to assist them in carrying out internal consultations, independent socio-legal research, data collection, and analyses on a broad range of issues of national concern to Aboriginal people, and in consulting with various levels of government.
- Cross-cultural training: within existing structures, new and enhanced training courses and sensitization programs for judges and justice officials are funded.
- Public Legal Education And Information (PLEI): project contribution funding will be made available to test current PLEI approaches for Aboriginal people, to develop new and innovative ways of delivering PLEI, and to inform them about the legal system and their rights and responsibilities in a way that is consistent with their special cultural needs and aspirations.
- Pilot projects: the special cultural needs and aspirations of Aboriginal people will be of the greatest importance in the funding of

pilot projects. These projects will reflect the need to foster improvements in the responsiveness, fairness, inclusiveness, and effectiveness of the justice system as it affects Aboriginal people.

Who can apply? Funding is available to individuals, groups, and government agencies involved in Aboriginal justice.

How to apply: An application form and a detailed proposal are required. The form is available from the Department of Justice Canada. Departmental officials are available to help prepare your proposal and for consultation. For more detailed information contact:

**Aboriginal Justice Directorate
Compliance and Aboriginal Justice Sector
Department of Justice Canada
130 Albert Street, 8th Floor
Ottawa ON
K1A 0H8
Tel: 613 957-4705**

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340 Laurier Avenue West
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