

***Lessons Learned  
Building Communities:  
Effective Practices in  
Aboriginal Communities***

**Technical Appendices**

***Evaluation and Data Development  
Strategic Policy  
Human Resources Development Canada***

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# 1. Project Overview

## Background

In 1996-97, Human Resources Development Canada (HRDC) initiated a series of “Lessons Learned” studies. These were intended to update the findings of earlier evaluations by including both recent writings on the topics and the views of managers and other experts working in the area. The series has two goals:

- to identify the lessons that can be learned from the past about what contributes to the development and operation of effective policies and programs; and
- to present the lessons in a 20-30 page report that will be of practical value to policy and program managers both in government and in the community.

HRDC has completed two studies in this series, one examining employment programs for youth and one examining the employment needs of people with disabilities.

This new Lessons Learned project focuses on *comprehensive social development strategies and programs serving the needs of Aboriginal people in Canada*. It asks *how* programs should be delivered if they are to meet the needs of Aboriginal people, and *what* is needed — from government, from the program and from the community — to enhance their impact and effectiveness. The project focuses on strategies and social programs that:

- emphasize prevention and serve children, youth and families;
- are comprehensive and attempt to strengthen individuals, families and communities in a holistic manner;
- are in place either in Canada or internationally; and
- serve Aboriginal people, including First Nations people living both on or off reserve, Métis and Inuit.

This project is being undertaken by a team of three people each of whom has extensive experience working with Aboriginal communities and organizations.

- **Martin Spigelman** evaluated both the First Nations/Inuit Child Care Initiative and the Ayas Men Men Family and Child Services Program (Squamish Nation, B.C.) during 1997. He is also working with the Assembly of First Nations on its Aboriginal Strategic Initiatives project.
- **Dena Carroll** has served as Director of the Aboriginal Health Policy Branch in the B.C. Ministry of Health and has worked with the B.C. Association of Aboriginal Friendship Centres and with the Victoria Native Friendship Centre.
- **Martha Montour** is working with the Assembly of First Nations and in the past has worked with the Royal Commission on Aboriginal Peoples and the Native Women’s Association of Canada.

As part of this project, the project team (i) analyzed a range of program evaluations, (ii) reviewed relevant Canadian and international literature and (iii) interviewed program managers in government and in Aboriginal organizations who have experience with providing particular services as part of a comprehensive social development or community development strategy.

They explored “what has worked” and “what has not worked”, to determine what lessons can be drawn from their experience. Their questions included the following:

- How can organizations develop a comprehensive strategy for addressing social issues? What are the advantages and disadvantages associated with a holistic approach to social development?
- How should policy be developed and programs designed? Who should be involved?
- What support (i.e., political, administrative or financial) is needed from federal, provincial/territorial or First Nations governments?
- What is required and what works best in terms of funding arrangements and funding levels? In terms of administration requirements? What are the best and most appropriate ways of ensuring accountability to clients, community and government?
- What skills and abilities have to be developed within the organization in order to make the integrated approach work well? What training is needed?
- What programs should be included as part of the strategy? How do you build commitment and co-operation in the different program areas? How can different program areas within the federal or provincial/territorial governments work together?
- What are the major lessons that can be drawn from experience with an integrated social development strategy?

Our hope and expectation is that the answers to these questions, and the lessons we will learn from the research, will help both government and community agencies plan for the future.

For further information about this project, or to contribute your views, please contact:

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## ***2. Matrix: Lessons Learned from the Evaluation and Other Literature***

The tables beginning on page 9 present the recommendations and lessons offered in a sample of the secondary and evaluation literature. These recommendations and lessons focus on the issues of social development and integrated community development programming for Aboriginal people in Canada.

### **Secondary Sources (for Table 1)**

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**TABLE 1**  
**Secondary Sources — Keys for Effective Programming**

Recommendations and Lessons Learned	Selected Secondary Sources								
	Abrahams	CMHC	Chapman	Copet	Cornell	Decter	Edwards 1994	Edwards 1995	Gulati
<b>Policy Development and Program Design</b>									
Responsibility for policy dev't and planning with Aboriginal agency alone.					✓				✓
Shared responsibility for policy dev't and program planning.	✓	✓							
Need community involvement in all aspects of planning.	✓	✓		✓	✓		✓	✓	✓
Need more thorough planning, across programs.					✓				
Remove politics from planning and design work.									
Develop political support at community level.									
Address issues from a holistic perspective.	✓	✓							✓
More emphasis on prevention.									
More time for preplanning.	✓	✓							
Need clear statement of purpose, objectives and goals.	✓								
Need cultural component.				✓	✓				
Need organizational ability and stability.					✓				
<b>Staff Development and Support</b>									
Provide thorough training to staff.								✓	
Provide adequate administrative and other support to staff.									
Provide opportunities for staff to share experiences.									

**TABLE 1 (continued)**  
**Secondary Sources — Keys for Effective Programming**

Recommendations and Lessons Learned	Selected Secondary Sources								
	Abrahams	CMHC	Chapman	Copet	Cornell	Decter	Edwards 1994	Edwards 1995	Gulati
Build capacity within organization.	✓	✓	✓	✓		✓	✓		
Provide training in planning and cultural values.				✓	✓			✓	✓
<b>Program Delivery and Operations</b>									
Provide adequate administrative support, both initially and throughout.									
Funding agency to remain available for support, etc.									
Develop a holistic approach.	✓								
Enhance community awareness and develop political support.								✓	
Improve linkages to other programs in community.									
Develop linkages to and awareness in non-Aboriginal agencies.									
Adapt program to the unique circumstances of each community.			✓	✓					✓
Encourage ongoing community involvement.	✓							✓	
Use appropriate, attractive and accessible facilities or settings.							✓	✓	
More opportunity for Aboriginal delivery agents to share experiences.				✓			✓		
Provide tangible rewards and reinforcements.							✓		
<b>Funding Mechanism</b>									
Need adequate funding with level based on current and projected needs.									

<b>TABLE 1 (continued)</b>									
<b>Secondary Sources — Keys for Effective Programming</b>									
<b>Recommendations and Lessons Learned</b>	<b>Selected Secondary Sources</b>								
	<b>Abrahams</b>	<b>CMHC</b>	<b>Chapman</b>	<b>Copet</b>	<b>Cornell</b>	<b>Decter</b>	<b>Edwards 1994</b>	<b>Edwards 1995</b>	<b>Gulati</b>
Have a reasonably long time frame for funding commitment.									
Access different funding sources.									
Identify all potential funding sources.	✓								
Need commitment to stable funding.									
<b>Monitoring, Evaluation and Accountability</b>									
Need standardized reporting framework across project sites and formal Management Information System (M.I.S.).									
Better standards of and mechanisms for accountability to funder.									
Ongoing evaluation and needs assessment.	✓							✓	

<b>TABLE 1 (continued)</b>									
<b>Secondary Sources — Keys for Effective Programming</b>									
<b>Recommendations and Lessons Learned</b>	<b>Selected Secondary Sources (continued)</b>								
	<b>Joe</b>	<b>Jones</b>	<b>Lockhart</b>	<b>Loney</b>	<b>Murray</b>	<b>Popple</b>	<b>Rothman</b>	<b>Rubin</b>	
<b>Policy Development and Program Design</b>									
Responsibility for policy dev't and planning with Aboriginal agency alone.									
Shared responsibility for policy dev't and program planning.						✓			
Need community involvement in all aspects of planning.		✓	✓			✓	✓	✓	
Need more thorough planning, across programs.		✓				✓			
Remove politics from planning and design work.									
Develop political support at community level.									

**TABLE 1 (continued)**  
**Secondary Sources — Keys for Effective Programming**

Recommendations and Lessons Learned	Selected Secondary Sources (continued)							
	Joe	Jones	Lockhart	Loney	Murray	Popple	Rothman	Rubin
Address issues from a holistic perspective.							✓	✓
More emphasis on prevention.								
More time for preplanning.			✓					
Need clear statement of purpose, objectives and goals.		✓			✓			
Need cultural component.								
Need organizational ability and stability.								
<b>Staff Development and Support</b>								
Provide thorough training to staff.								
Provide adequate administrative and other support to staff.								
Provide opportunities for staff to share experiences.								
Build capacity within organization.		✓	✓		✓	✓	✓	✓
Provide training in planning and cultural values.								
<b>Program Delivery and Operations</b>								
Provide adequate administrative support, both initially and throughout.	✓	✓						
Funding agency to remain available for support, etc.								
Develop a holistic approach.								
Enhance community awareness and develop political support.							✓	
Improve linkages to other programs in community.	✓	✓						
Develop linkages to and awareness in non-Aboriginal agencies.								
Adapt program to the unique circumstances of each community.					✓		✓	
Encourage ongoing community involvement.		✓						
Use appropriate, attractive and accessible facilities or settings.								
More opportunity for Aboriginal delivery agents to share experiences.								
Provide tangible rewards and reinforcements.								

**TABLE 1 (continued)**  
**Secondary Sources — Keys for Effective Programming**

Recommendations and Lessons Learned	Selected Secondary Sources (continued)							
	Joe	Jones	Lockhart	Loney	Murray	Popple	Rothman	Rubin
<b>Funding Mechanism</b>								
Need adequate funding with level based on current and projected needs.					✓			
Have a reasonably long time frame for funding commitment.					✓			
Access different funding sources.								
Identify all potential funding sources.								
Need commitment to stable funding.								
Allow communities to reallocate funding; flexible funding arrangements.								✓
Allow communities to retain surpluses.								✓
<b>Monitoring, Evaluation and Accountability</b>								
Need standardized reporting framework across project sites and formal Management Information System (M.I.S.).								
Better standards of and mechanisms for accountability to funder.								
Ongoing evaluation and needs assessment.								
Commitment to evaluation.								

**TABLE 2**  
**Program Evaluations — Keys for Effective Programming**

Recommendations and Lessons Learned	Selected Evaluations							
	AFN 1997	CMHC 1987	CMHC 1992	MSB 1992	MSB 1995	HRDC CJS 1992	HRDC Path. 1994	HRDC CCIF 1995
<b>Policy Development and Program Design</b>								
Responsibility for policy dev't and planning with Aboriginal agency alone.								
Shared responsibility for policy dev't and program planning.		✓	✓		✓			
Need community involvement in all aspects of planning.	✓	✓	✓	✓		✓		✓
Need more thorough planning, across programs.	✓				✓		✓	
Remove politics from planning and design work.					✓			
Develop political support at community level.				✓	✓			
Address issues from a holistic perspective.			✓					
More emphasis on prevention.								
More time for preplanning.				✓				
Need clear statement of purpose, objectives and goals.								
Need cultural component.								
Need organizational ability and stability.								
Explicitly recognize self-government.				✓			✓	
Reach out to all groups in community.							✓	
<b>Staff Development and Support</b>								
Provide thorough training to staff.		✓			✓			
Provide adequate administrative and other support to staff.	✓				✓			
Provide opportunities for staff to share experiences.				✓	✓			✓
Build capacity within organization.				✓	✓		✓	✓
Staff to be from community or involved in community activities.								
Provide training in planning and cultural values.								

**TABLE 2 (continued)**

**Program Evaluations — Keys for Effective Programming**

Recommendations and Lessons Learned	Selected Evaluations							
	AFN 1997	CMHC 1987	CMHC 1992	MSB 1992	MSB 1995	HRDC CJS 1992	HRDC Path. 1994	HRDC CCIF 1995
<b>Program Delivery and Operations</b>								
Provide adequate administrative support, both initially and throughout.					✓			
Funding agency to remain available for support, etc.				✓	✓			
Develop holistic approach.								
Enhance community awareness and develop political support.	✓	✓		✓	✓			
Improve linkages to other programs in community.					✓	✓		
Develop linkages to and awareness in non-Aboriginal agencies.					✓	✓	✓	
Adapt program to the unique circumstances of each community.					✓	✓	✓	
Undertake ongoing efforts to address service gaps.								
Longer time frame for delivery.				✓		✓		✓
Develop resource materials for program, staff and community.					✓			
Encourage ongoing community involvement.								
More opportunity for Aboriginal delivery agents to share experiences.					✓			
Provide tangible rewards and reinforcements.								
Involve clients in all aspects of program.		✓						
Create partnerships.						✓		✓
<b>Funding Mechanism</b>								
Need adequate funding with level based on current and projected needs.				✓				
Have a reasonably long time frame for funding commitment.				✓				✓
Allow communities to reallocate funding; flexible funding arrangements.					✓			



**TABLE 2 (continued)**  
**Program Evaluations — Keys for Effective Programming**

Recommendations and Lessons Learned	Selected Evaluations							
	AFN 1997	CMHC 1987	CMHC 1992	MSB 1992	MSB 1995	HRDC CJS 1992	HRDC Path. 1994	HRDC CCIF 1995
Allow communities to retain surpluses.								
Co-ordinate funding sources.		✓	✓		✓			✓
Need commitment to stable funding.								
<b>Monitoring, Evaluation and Accountability</b>								
Need standardized reporting framework across project sites and formal Management Information System (M.I.S.).				✓	✓	✓		✓
Better standards of and mechanisms for accountability to funder.	✓							
Better standards of and mechanisms for accountability to community.								
Need more realistic reporting requirements for small budget projects.				✓	✓			
Firm reporting requirement to government and community.	✓							✓
Ongoing evaluation and needs assessment.								
Need commitment to evaluation.							✓	✓
Clear outcome and performance measures.							✓	

<b>TABLE 2 (continued)</b>							
<b>Program Evaluations — Keys for Effective Programming</b>							
<b>Recommendations and Lessons Learned</b>	<b>Selected Evaluations (continued)</b>						
	<b>HRDC N.W.T 1995</b>	<b>HRDC N.W.T 1996</b>	<b>HRDC FNICCI 1997</b>	<b>HRDC Alta. 1998</b>	<b>HRDC WADA 1998</b>	<b>Justice 1992</b>	<b>UOI SSRPP 1998</b>
<b>Policy Development and Program Design</b>							
Shared responsibility for policy dev't and program planning.			✓	✓			✓
Need community involvement in all aspects of planning.	✓	✓			✓	✓	
Remove politics from planning and design work.	✓		✓	✓			
Develop political support at community level.							
Address issues from a holistic perspective.				✓		✓	
More emphasis on prevention.	✓						✓
More time for preplanning.	✓			✓		✓	
Need cultural component.			✓				✓
Need organizational ability and stability.			✓				
Explicitly recognize self-government.							
<b>Staff Development and Support</b>							
Provide thorough training to staff.							
Provide adequate administrative and other support to staff.					✓		
Provide opportunities for staff to share experiences.	✓	✓	✓				
Build capacity within organization.		✓	✓	✓	✓		✓
Provide training in planning and cultural values.			✓			✓	
Use appropriate outside expertise.	✓	✓	✓			✓	
<b>Program Delivery and Operations</b>							
Provide adequate administrative support, both initially and throughout.							
Funding agency to remain available for support, etc.				✓	✓		
Develop holistic approach.		✓	✓				✓
Enhance community awareness and develop political support.				✓	✓		✓

**TABLE 2 (continued)**  
**Program Evaluations — Keys for Effective Programming**

Recommendations and Lessons Learned	Selected Evaluations (continued)						
	HRDC N.W.T 1995	HRDC N.W.T 1996	HRDC FNICCI 1997	HRDC Alta. 1998	HRDC WADA 1998	Justice 1992	UOI SSRPP 1998
Improve linkages to other programs in community.		✓			✓		✓
Develop linkages to and awareness in non-Aboriginal agencies.	✓		✓		✓		✓
Adapt program to the unique circumstances of each community.	✓				✓	✓	✓
Undertake ongoing efforts to address service gaps.	✓	✓					✓
Longer time frame for delivery.	✓	✓		✓			
Develop resource materials for program, staff and community.	✓						
Encourage ongoing community involvement.		✓	✓				✓
Separate program from band government.		✓	✓			✓	
<b>Funding Mechanism</b>							
Need adequate funding with level based on current and projected needs.			✓				
Have a reasonably long time frame for funding commitment.	✓						
Allow communities to reallocate funding; flexible funding arrangements.					✓		
Allow communities to retain surpluses.	✓						
<b>Monitoring, Evaluation and Accountability</b>							
Need standardized reporting framework across project sites and formal Management Information System (M.I.S.).			✓	✓			
Better standards of and mechanisms for accountability to funder.	✓		✓	✓	✓		
Better standards of and mechanisms for accountability to community.		✓			✓		
Need more realistic reporting requirements for small budget projects.	✓				✓		
Firm reporting requirement to government and community.							

<b>TABLE 2 (continued)</b>							
<b>Program Evaluations — Keys for Effective Programming</b>							
<b>Recommendations and Lessons Learned</b>	<b>Selected Evaluations (continued)</b>						
	<b>HRDC N.W.T 1995</b>	<b>HRDC N.W.T 1996</b>	<b>HRDC FNICCI 1997</b>	<b>HRDC Alta. 1998</b>	<b>HRDC WADA 1998</b>	<b>Justice 1992</b>	<b>UOI SSRPP 1998</b>
Ongoing evaluation and needs assessment.			✓				
Need commitment to evaluation.							
Clear outcome and performance measures.	✓	✓	✓				

### 3. Key Informant Interviews

#### 3.1 Key Informants (49)

Organization	Name and Title	Organization	Name and Title
<b>Community-Based</b>			
Inuvialuit Regional Corporation, N.W.T.	Delma Pieluk	Skeena Native Development Society, B.C.	Clarence Nyce
Acho Dene Koe, N.W.T.	Wanda MacDonald, Band Manager	BCAHC, Victoria, B.C.	Mike Mearns, Executive Director
Vuntut Gwitchin Tribal Council, N.W.T.	Lis Cayen	Hultain Social Service Society, B.C.	Brenda Pielle
Saskatchewan Indian Training Assessment Group, Sask.	Roger Schindelka	Cowichan Tribes, B.C.	Dorena Elliot, Cultural and Education Administrator
Meadow Lake Tribal Council, Sask.	Vern Bachu, Director, Planning and Development	Apehtaw Koisan Métis Child/Family Support	Murlene Browning, Executive Director
Healing Lodge, Sask.	Faye/Quinn	BCAHC, Kamloops, B.C.	Marilyn Ota, Reg'l Co-ordinator
Métis Nation of Canada, Alta.	Doreen L'Hirondelle, Director of Operations	Tillicum Haus Friendship Centre, B.C.	Grace Nielsen, Executive Director
Woodland Cree First Nation, Alta.	Brian Dewar, Education Superintendent	We'suwet'en Human Services Society, B.C.	Darlene Glaim, Co-ordinator
"Taking Charge," Man.	Rosa Walker, Executive Director	Vancouver Native Health Society, B.C.	Lou Desmarais, Executive Director
Awawsis Child and Family Services, Man.	Director, Community Development	Montreal General Hospital, Northern Quebec Module, Que.	Caroline Oblin, Patient Services
Native Friendship Centre, Montreal, Que.	Deborah Cooper, Urban Referral Worker	Mohawk Council of Akwesasne, Que.	Richard Jock, Director of Social Development and Health
Ouje-Bougoumou Cree Nation, Que.	Paul Wertman, Advisor	First Nations Health and Social Services Commission, Que.	Jules Picard, Social Services Co-ordinator
Kanasetake, Que.	Mary Jane Hannaberg, CHR	Pauktuutit Inuit Women of Canada, Que.	Carol Rowan, Consultant
Labrador Inuit Health Commission, Labrador	Carolyn Michelin, CHR	Atlantic Policy Congress of First Nations Chiefs, N.S.	Krista Brooks, Senior Policy Analyst

<b>Organization</b>	<b>Name and Title</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Name and Title</b>
<b>Government</b>			
Nunvik Regional Board of Health Brighter Futures, Que.	Attasi Pilurttut, Co-ordinator	Health Canada, Health Promotions (Head Start), Montreal, Que.	Suzette Jeannotte, Program Consultant
Saskatchewan Intergovernmental and Aboriginal Affairs, Sask.	Doreen Bradshaw, Policy Analyst	Ministry of Health, Aboriginal Health Policy Branch, B.C.	Lisa Algaier, Executive Director
Ministry for Children and Families, B.C.	Fred Storey, Team Leader	Aboriginal Child Welfare and Children's Services, Alta.	J. Carrier Laboucan, Director
Redesign Services, Métis Settlements, Children and Families, Alta.	Lillian Parenteau, Regional Director	HRDC, Aboriginal Relations Office	Henry Holik, Team Leader
HRDC, Aboriginal Relations Office	Howard Green, Director General	Aboriginal Business Canada, Alta.	Lloyd Bison, Manager
National Crime Prevention Council	Philip Hepworth	CMHC	Vern Barkwell, Evaluation
Indian and Northern Affairs Canada	Beverley Clarkson, Senior Evaluation Manager	Health Canada, Health Program Support	Judith Ross, Director
Justice Canada, Evaluation Division	Paul Wheatley, Manager	Health Canada, Health Promotions and Programs, Aboriginal Head Start	Richard Budgett
HRDC, Regional Co-ordinators, Alta.	Paulette Gosselin and Bonnie Huckluck	Health Canada, Medical Services Branch, Health Transfer	Abu Nazir, Director
HRDC, Regional Co-ordinator, Que.	Marie Claire Sauvageau	Health Canada, Medical Services Branch, Health Funding Arrangements	Debra Gillis, A/Director
HRDC, Regional Co-ordinator, B.C.	Michelle Lanouette		

## 3.2 Key Informant Interview Guide

### **Background**

The purpose of the following key informant guide was to give greater precision to the Reporting Framework outlined in the project workplan. The following questions may have been modified somewhat during the course of the different interviews depending upon (i) with whom the key informant is associated, or (ii) the nature of the strategy or program.

### **Introduction**

Explain the *Lessons Learned* series and our focus within this project: i.e., “We are examining different government and community efforts to support communities, families or individuals in an *integrated* manner, through *comprehensive social development or community development initiatives*. Our approach, and the project, are “forward looking” in that we want to be able to identify, for governments and communities, different ways of making their efforts more effective in the future.”

It is important to inform people that we are *not* evaluating any particular program, organization or community. Instead, we are trying to draw lessons that can serve as a guide in the future. *Additionally*, we want to be clear that we will not be quoting people directly and everything that is discussed will be treated as strictly confidential.

## INTERVIEW QUESTIONS

### **Background**

1. Interviewee name, position and organization:
2. If appropriate, name of program/initiative in which we are interested:
3. Please describe the goals and objectives of this initiative *or* the organization’s mandate. *(To whom is it targeted? What are its key program components? How do the different components, and the different staff delivering these, relate to or work with one another? Is there a partnership between the federal (or provincial) agencies and the Aboriginal organizations? How have authority and responsibility been devolved or shared?)*
4. In your view, have programs and the relationship between the government and Aboriginal organizations changed over the past years? *(How? In what ways? In your view, what has been responsible for this change?)*

### **Policy Design**

5. How was the strategy (or program) in which you are now involved designed? *(Who/what agencies was/were involved? To what extent did the government and Aboriginal organizations work together in developing it? To what extent were clients*

*involved in the design, if such was appropriate? Were there also partnerships across government departments and across organizations?)*

6. Why did you adopt this approach to design? *(What factors contributed to the strategy/program being designed in this way? Have there been lessons learned in the past, from other initiatives, which led you to adopt this approach?)*
7. Are federal (or provincial, as appropriate) policies and organizational structures supporting the idea of working co-operatively when designing initiatives? Or do they present barriers to working in this manner? *(Are the policies and structures of the Aboriginal organization supportive of or barriers to this approach?)*
8. Have your experiences with this strategy/approach made you think there are still better ways to design policy programs in the future? What lessons can you draw from your experience in this regard?

### **Capacity, Funding and Accountability**

9. What measures were taken to ensure that the Aboriginal organization could deliver the program effectively? *(Was training provided? Were there efforts to build ability and capacity in the organization?)*
10. *(Depending upon the answer, explore whether this “capacity building” is new, adequate, effective, etc.)* What lessons would you offer about building capacity either in the organization or in government for this sort of approach?
11. Do federal funding mechanisms allow for the sort of integrated approach you are attempting? *(Is there sufficient flexibility? Does the funding mechanism allow you to shift resources as required? Is this an (any?) improvement on the past? What would you like to see being done differently in the future?)*
12. Funding is closely related to accountability. To whom are you accountable with this strategy (i.e., federal government, the Aboriginal organization, clients)? *(How do you ensure accountability? Are there lessons you can draw from your experience which you would like to see applied in the future?)*
13. Are you generally satisfied with the monitoring, reporting and evaluation requirements and mechanisms that are in place? *(Are the needs of all the different partners adequately met? Are there lessons you can draw from your experience in this regard?)*

### **Delivery, Outcomes and Impact**

14. How do you deliver the services/strategy? *(How do you ensure that different agencies, organizations and staff are working together and working toward a common goal?)*
15. Is this integrated approach “better” or more effective than how you have worked in the past? *(What are the strengths and shortcomings of working in this way? Do*



*government policies support your efforts to work in this way, or do they serve as barriers to working in this way?)*

16. Is the approach more effective in terms of achieving your goals and objectives? *(How do you measure outcomes and impact, or success and lack thereof? Given this, what lessons can you draw from your experience? In the future, what would you do in the same way and what would you do differently?)*
17. From your experience, can you suggest lessons that, if implemented, would ensure that strategies like this more fully achieve their goals and objectives in the future?

## **Conclusions**

18. This project is looking for lessons learned relative to policy and program design, implementation, operations, accountability and impact. Given your experience, are there any other lessons — either specific or general — to which you want to draw our attention?
19. Are there any other issues or concerns you would like to raise?
20. Finally, does your organization have any reviews or evaluations that might contribute to our work and which you can share with us? *(Again, we will not quote directly from them without permission.)*

## **3.3 Summary Overview of Interviews with Community-Based Key Informants**

### **3.3.1 Introduction**

#### **Objectives**

The objectives of this project were to identify and analyze the lessons that can be learned from experience with comprehensive community development programs and strategies being implemented in Aboriginal communities.<sup>1</sup> Primarily, these lessons related to the policy and program development, implementation, operations, capacity building and accountability processes that accompany these programs and strategies.

The study is based largely on telephone interviews with 35 Aboriginal program managers/administrators across Canada. Most of the respondents are responsible for administering a program at the community level either through a band council, tribal council, or another Aboriginal organization. The remaining interviews were with provincial government administrators. The interviews with federal government staff are not included in this report.

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<sup>1</sup> “Aboriginal peoples of Canada” includes the Indian, Inuit and Métis peoples of Canada, as defined in the *Canada Act, 1982*.

The interviews generally followed a standardized set of questions provided to the respondents prior to the interviews. The first element in the interview process included program administrators and regional co-ordinators recommended by Human Resources Development Canada (HRDC) in Ottawa. Others were identified through referrals from Aboriginal people and organizations or other government representatives.

The second element of this process included preliminary telephone calls and follow-up information packages being sent to over 50 potential respondents.

## **Participation**

A number of those contacted were reluctant to or declined to participate in the project. Some thought that this might be “yet another project that remained on a shelf.” Others could not participate because of their own year-end reporting requirements. Others still were skeptical about the government’s intentions and the exact purpose of this study. Some simply could not see why HRDC would be interested in social programs.

A number of those contacted chose not to participate because they were very frustrated over the lack of adequate funding, a system that consumes “most of the available funds” and the fact that short-term funding most often disrupts service to their community. Finally, some commented upon the Assembly of First Nations’ recently completed review of social assistance programs across Canada, and the potential for duplication of effort and outcome.

Nevertheless, the Aboriginal administrators and program managers who did participate represented a diverse array of experiences. They were involved with:

- regional corporations in the N.W.T. that provide community development and training programs within their land claims agreement;
- Aboriginal employment and training organizations that have bilateral agreements with HRDC to co-ordinate provincial training programs;
- tribal councils that administer a number of social, educational and economic initiatives serving several Aboriginal communities;
- urban Aboriginal organizations that operate at a regional level and provide a variety of youth, family and health services;
- Métis organizations providing family support, child welfare and/or housing projects for Métis families;
- social service agencies, one of which administered an urban housing project for street people as well as counselling programs, a program for single parents and a healing lodge;

- urban health centres that serve clients in downtown core areas;
- a provincial umbrella organization that administers provincial funds for alcohol/drug addiction services and for programs relating to family violence, mental health, community development and tobacco use reduction;
- central agencies within provincial governments that formulate policy relevant to Aboriginal employment and cultural programs;
- Aboriginal units in provincial ministries with responsibility for Aboriginal programs and health determinants; and
- provincial child welfare ministries.

### **3.3.2 Description**

#### **Programs, Mandate, Key Components and Partnerships**

With the exception of those in government agencies, few Aboriginal administrators related well to the concept of a strategy per se. Instead, they preferred to focus on developing long-term “visions” about what was expected in terms of wellness and self-sufficiency within their communities. Aboriginal administrators felt the development of comprehensive programs evolved out of a desire to better serve the needs of their community/and or client group.

Key components of the programs include: a wide range of holistic programs focusing on the individual social, emotional, physical and mental needs of clients; community and family structures; preventative healing and wellness strategies; and crisis intervention. Mandates were established either by government, a board of directors or the community itself. Respondents indicated that the majority of the Aboriginal organizations providing social programming relied on some sort of government funding to develop and sustain programs. The level of partnership between various orders of government varied, and it was difficult to draw specific comparisons.

#### **Current Relationships Between Government and Aboriginal Organizations**

Respondents were asked for their views on whether the relationship between government and Aboriginal people had changed over the past few years and, if so, in what ways, and who was largely responsible for the change. The question was open-ended and no specific time frame was identified.

Almost all respondents suggested that the relationship has improved as government has devolved administrative control to Aboriginal people. Respondents indicated an increase in shared decision making, more direct services available at community levels, more design and implementation of programs by Aboriginal people, a greater emphasis on partnerships and relationship building, more openness, less rhetoric, and a greater understanding of the needs of Aboriginal people. For Aboriginal people this has equated to less dependence on government, greater control and decision making, and less confrontation.

Not all the changes were felt to be positive, however. Respondents indicated notable decreases in funding and were also concerned that the federal government saw devolution as an opportunity to off-load its fiduciary responsibility for social programs. There was concern about the government adopting a “dump and run” approach to devolution.

Many of the respondents were also quick to point out that there are still many problems in the current relationship. Governments, they said, do not work in the communities and do not necessarily understand community dynamics; funding is inadequate; and governments are unwilling to transfer responsibility and effectively address the issues that require attention.

Respondents viewed Aboriginal and government leaders as possessing the ability to effect change. An overwhelming majority saw Aboriginal people, their leaders and their organizations as being largely responsible for many of the current changes. There has been a shift from confrontation to a greater focus on achieving community wellness and self-sufficiency. Land claims appear to be the single biggest impetus for change. The federal and provincial governments are also viewed as making a positive contribution to changing the relationship, although social programs have still not received high priority in land claim discussions. Respondents indicated that government ministers were increasingly responsive to Aboriginal needs, although this shift is not always consistent across government departments. Some respondents indicated a significant improvement in their relationship with the regional and head offices of HRDC.

### **3.3.3 Policy Design**

#### **Strategy Design, Involvement and Partnerships**

In almost all the community projects/programs, strategies “arose from the collective minds of the people involved.” Some groups looked at the historical data for the success stories either in their own community or across the country. During the course of the interviews, many respondents indicated a need to implement small changes, and to achieve small successes, rather than attempt sweeping changes that are often perceived as characteristic of government strategies and programs. Some programs, for example, evolved as a result of short-term summer programs; while other social and economic programs were strategically designed for a specific purpose. In other instances, land claims provided an impetus to establish new priorities and to examine areas for potential cost savings.

Government and Aboriginal people recognize that the design/redesign of policies for comprehensive social programming requires the involvement of chiefs, key community people, service providers, elders, clients and outside experts if there is to be a sense of ownership, inclusion and trust in the process. This involvement is felt to be critical as governments devolve or redesign programs for delivery in Aboriginal communities.

Many respondents acknowledged that it takes time to get Aboriginal people on side. However, the formation of small working groups, the establishment of regional committees and the use of draft guidelines encourage people to become involved.

One of the advantages of comprehensive programming, they suggested, is that it allows communities to develop committees responsible for a variety of program areas, for soliciting community involvement and for liaison with government representatives. This is viewed as a significant advantage compared to past practices, which often required the same people to sit on several different committees at the same time. “Burn out” has been an issue at the community level.

Interviewees stated that partnerships between various orders of government and Aboriginal stakeholders were an asset in policy design, specifically in relation to developmental costs. Aboriginal involvement in the design of policies affecting them at the regional level, allows their involvement with local governments, businesses and other social agencies. There is general consensus that government is moving away from “simply announcing programs” and is placing a more concerted effort on ensuring that Aboriginal people are involved in the design, implementation and monitoring of strategies. Two government representatives discussed this trend in relation to Aboriginal control of child welfare programs.

A number of provincial government representatives described models wherein key service providers and government representatives met together to discuss policy and future strategies. In 1997, in British Columbia, for example, the Ministry for Children and Families developed a draft “Strategic Plan for Aboriginal Services.” In 1990, the Alberta Ministry for Children and Families passed legislation to provide authority to the Métis Regional Settlement to establish its own health authority.

One of the limiting factors in these strategies is the minimal representation of Aboriginal people on committees that oversee issues that directly affect their communities. Often, negotiations take place at a political level and do not always reflect the diversity and priority needs that exist in various communities. At a political level, many of the First Nations organizations recognized the difficulty in meeting their goals due to inadequate social and educational programs in their communities. Not all communities have been able to make a concerted effort to develop strategies to deal with these specific areas.

Some of the organizations have enjoyed greater success in this regard by using feasibility studies and comprehensive needs assessments, combined with community forums, in order to determine their communities’ needs.

### **Factors Contributing to the Design and Adoption of Strategies/Programs**

For communities in Northern Canada, self-government agreements are vehicles for developing comprehensive social programs, providing an opportunity to implement change in a different manner than previously.

Respondents stated that once they were able to develop their capacity, they were able to re-examine their health and human service strategies. The treaty process in B.C. has also forced governments to consult with Aboriginal people. For some government departments, the treaty process signalled a need to develop alternative models and partnerships with Aboriginal groups. Government representatives recognized the need to provide Aboriginal organizations with the time and capacity to develop their core competencies.

Throughout the Prairie provinces, Aboriginal people have taken advantage of structural changes sought by governments and/or specific legislation. For example, Aboriginal people in Alberta developed an urban strategy to address employment training issues and to provide better service in an era of shrinking budgets. This strategy linked various Aboriginal groups with the business community, on the basis of a set of principles. As well, the regionalization of health care in Alberta provided Métis people with an opportunity to establish a regional health council. This process will allow them to examine the broader social determinants that influence their health.

Respondents suggested that the more successful programs are those that are driven from the grassroots and that involve parents and other community people in the design, development, implementation and evaluation of programs.

Programs such as the Urban Aboriginal Health Centres and the Sexual Abuse Intervention Programs in B.C., were developed to meet the need for culturally appropriate services. Throughout B.C., each project/centre has developed its own approach to meeting its own unique community and management challenges. These programs have been able to identify Aboriginal values and principles, which is an essential component of program delivery. These programs, more so than mainstream ones, incorporate a holistic approach to healing and over the years have been able to provide some valuable and useful models for mainstream service providers.

In other instances, high-profile events have often helped to raise community awareness. For example, the Residential School Project in B.C. evolved after victims of sexual abuse at residential schools came forward and raised the need for personal and community healing. Provincial resources were used to address these needs, and local programs evolved from this awareness. Nationally, Head Start was modeled after the U.S. initiative but has been tailored to meet the needs of Aboriginal children.

Some governments have also become more involved in encouraging intergovernmental agencies to establish preventative action plans for communities in order to support children at risk. Numerous government reports indicate inherent flaws in the child welfare system and thus provide an impetus for increased Aboriginal involvement and integration within departments. At the same time, respondents suggested that government departments that are specific to Aboriginal health and social programs appear to be more proactive and more sensitive to Aboriginal concerns. One Aboriginal organization examined various defunct programs in order to identify their common characteristics, and suggested that these were strategies that ignored the need for grassroots involvement and for appropriate guidelines and principles.

## **How Supportive Are Federal and Provincial Policies and Structures?**

Over 35 percent of the respondents shared the view that government supports the goal of working co-operatively in designing initiatives. Another 36 percent viewed government as a barrier to working in a co-operative manner. The remaining respondents were either undecided, felt that some departments were more supportive than others, or felt that government was not always supportive.

Government standards and guidelines were identified as barriers because Aboriginal people were unable to compete due to a lack of educated and trained personnel. Others felt that government required integration at the community level but had far too many different departments and policies.

Those respondents who identified a government commitment to co-operation were generally working and involved with government. Some respondents indicated that certain federal agencies, such as HRDC and Health Canada, tended to be more supportive at the national level. That support allowed for and facilitated more innovative approaches. Government departments that were able to relinquish control over policy decisions and standards were viewed as more supportive of Aboriginal initiatives.

Decreased funding was identified as the primary barrier to providing holistic services in communities and developing a strategic approach. Government was viewed as being too focused on policy, procedures and management, and this focus can impede community efforts to integrate funding and programs. In British Columbia, a provincial body responsible for health care programs stated that funding is now provided to many groups on a monthly basis, rather than quarterly. This has created concern within Aboriginal communities, since there is always a threat that core funding for many organizations could be terminated, impeding long-term planning.

Another barrier to the provision of holistic services is the lack of integration between government departments, programs and agencies. Communities that are trying to develop new strategies are overwhelmed and frustrated by having to deal with far too many different government departments. Others indicated that there was more rhetoric than reality about partnership building.

## **Is There a Better Way to Design Policy Programs in the Future?**

Almost all respondents suggested that there are better ways to design policies in the future, and they offered the following suggestions:

- build on past experiences;
- involve key players and community members in preplanning;
- meet and consult with the community about their needs, since community involvement is critical for obtaining community support;
- provide opportunities for community members to ask questions and make suggestions;
- do not adhere to preconceived ideas or criteria but rather show flexibility, sensitivity and a willingness to innovate;

- do not coerce people into becoming involved;
- recognize the changing needs of Aboriginal communities;
- recognize that there is often a lack of managerial and professional capacity in communities;
- emphasize relationships, learning and values;
- develop a policy framework whenever possible and establish joint action committees involving governments and communities;
- thoroughly document the process;
- accommodate cultural differences and diversity;
- encourage communication and reward small successes;
- keep things simple rather than focusing upon elaborate plans;
- use both qualitative and quantitative data in planning;
- involve the community in developing the vision and promoting active participation;
- use the professional services of Aboriginal people whenever possible;
- recognize that every effort takes time;
- provide some consistency in government staff so the networks can be strengthened;
- give local communities control and decision-making powers to develop their own policies around local needs;
- transfer authority to Aboriginal people whenever possible; and
- recognize that evaluations can help organizations grow.

### **3.3.4 Capacity, Funding and Accountability**

#### **Capacity-Building Measures**

One Aboriginal government representative involved extensively in services to children and families stated that there was a need to move away from relying on provincial recognition and provincial standards in determining whether Aboriginal organizations are effective. That reliance does not meet the governance needs of Aboriginal people.

While rebuilding their organizations and administrative structures, respondents suggested that there is a need to recognize that colonialism and the imposition of European structures and ideals have undermined the capacity of Aboriginal people. Respondents generally wanted to develop standards that reflect the needs of Aboriginal communities and that are articulated by Aboriginal people themselves. The key, they said, will be to sit down with Aboriginal organizations and get them to articulate their expectations before they start to develop programs. Although some communities do not operate with specific policy manuals, they do have standards. These standards need to be identified and then scrutinized by community members.

At least three respondents indicated that HRDC has been very helpful in providing funds to build capacity within their organizations. However, one other group mentioned that they were still waiting for a large-scale training program, which was to be implemented over a two-year period.

Some also suggested that not all government departments feel it is their role to provide capacity-building assistance to organizations. Instead, they feel it is government's role to



establish a process for intergovernmental and community linkages. They prefer to develop strategies that can bring all people involved to the table to discuss the capacity and learning needs of the community.

At the provincial level, there was one instance where an Aboriginal group was afforded the opportunity to build capacity within their organization. It was a unique situation because a specific time-limited political accord was signed with the government. However, there remained a requirement that any new programs were to be developed under the current government policies and that funding had to be available at the line ministry level. It was noted that 18 months is not enough time to develop a comprehensive community plan and the capacity for implementing that plan.

Many respondents indicated that capacity building requires a focus on hiring qualified staff and developing good job descriptions. Others indicated the need for specialized and culturally appropriate training. Some programs have training dollars included in their proposals for these purposes.

### **Lessons Offered about Capacity Building**

There appeared to be mixed views among respondents about whether capacity building in Aboriginal communities is a new idea. When respondents were asked for their definition of the term, they stated: “training.” All respondents agreed that capacity within the communities is inadequate due to a lack of financial support. Some claimed they are forced to hire costly consultants because they do not have the capacity within their organization. They spoke of the need to train Aboriginal people as part of the effort to build comprehensive, holistic programs.

Respondents offered the following lessons for increasing capacity in Aboriginal organizations and governments:

- Aboriginal people must control the process;
- existing top-down bureaucracies do not work and should be replaced by community-based developmental initiatives;
- developmental and training funds should be provided prior to funding initiatives;
- support and assistance must be provided to encourage healing within Aboriginal communities;
- training must be appropriate to the needs of the community and should incorporate traditional knowledge and healing methods;
- efficient monitoring and accountability systems must be developed in partnership with government and Aboriginal people;
- skilled people should be hired whenever possible;
- government processes need to be simplified to encourage networking among existing organizations and departments;
- management information systems should be developed for monitoring and evaluation purposes;

- linkages need to be encouraged between community agencies to avoid duplication of services; and
- funding and evaluations should focus on long-term impacts and outcomes rather than on short-term activities.

Respondents also offered lessons for increasing capacity within government itself:

- ensure proper consultation with Aboriginal people;
- recruit skilled Aboriginal people to work in government;
- ensure public servants working with Aboriginal people are sensitive to the needs and goals of Aboriginal people;
- strengthen the authority of Aboriginal administrators, organizations and communities to develop, deliver and implement comprehensive programs;
- provide resources to support communities lacking infrastructure and services;
- co-ordinate the activities of the different orders of government in order to support comprehensive social and economic programs for Aboriginal communities;
- develop effective partnerships and protocols;
- strengthen government capacity to respond immediately to crises and to carry out long-term planning;
- provide culturally appropriate and sensitivity training to front-line workers;
- advocate for antiracism and cultural sensitivity training in the public sector; and
- establish advisory committees and processes at the regional level to ensure Aboriginal people are involved in regional planning, implementation and service delivery.

### **Do Funding Mechanisms Allow for an Integrated Approach?**

Almost two-thirds of respondents stated that the current funding mechanisms allowed them the flexibility needed to develop a more integrated approach. Others did suggest, however, that this flexibility did not reduce their concern about long-term funding security. None of the organizations, for example, had the flexibility to carry over surplus funds into the next fiscal year.

Organizations receiving HRDC funding did not hesitate to mention that HRDC is very flexible in its financial arrangements, with the only notable restriction being related to the Employment Insurance (EI) program. Respondents suggested the HRDC model allowed the organization to be more innovative and hence promoted growth within the community and the organization.

One respondent mentioned that, through the federal government's Health Transfer Initiative, the possibility existed for more programs to be integrated. At a provincial level, other administrators indicated they were able to shift funds to meet demand; however, not all respondents felt that their provincial government was as flexible as the federal government. The particular stage of development for the organization often determined the amount of flexibility that would be considered. One of the ways of gaining greater flexibility was to establish committees to ensure adequate reporting.

About one-third of respondents stated that there was no flexibility and that government financial mechanisms were not geared to Aboriginal needs. One respondent described their unsuccessful attempt to convince the provincial government to allow the pooling of resources in order to build an integrated program. Government structures, some suggested, appear designed to meet their own purposes. Many respondents viewed themselves as simply government administrators, providing services in exactly the same way as the government organization as a result of overly restrictive policies. Furthermore, there was no incentive to move beyond these types of arrangements, since an organization would either be penalized for not meeting the government's regulations and policies or would be denied financial support for larger strategies.

In reviewing their experiences, respondents offered the following lessons on funding mechanisms:

- allow Aboriginal programs to retain surplus funds and provide multi-year funding;
- provide flexibility to invest in capital projects;
- recognize the contribution of volunteers by allowing honorariums;
- fund strategic planning processes;
- allow for the first installment to be increased in order to avoid having to borrow funds for staff;
- ensure that RBA decisions provide communities with adequate approval time for yearly funding;
- decrease funding variability between program areas;
- recognize the linkage between program areas; and
- increase funding to ensure Aboriginal organizations and bands do not have to operate their programs at a deficit.

### **Ensuring Accountability — What Lessons Have We Learned?**

Aboriginal respondents indicated they were accountable to the funding agencies, their board of directors and their community membership. Bands and tribal councils described themselves as being accountable to Chiefs and Councils.

Many of the organizations viewed their “operation” as a business, relying on financial audits and reporting structures. Reports are given to members at regular band meetings; however, individuals are allowed to voice their concerns directly to the person responsible. Standard reporting structures were usually established to provide information either on a monthly or quarterly basis. A shortcoming in this approach, however, was the emphasis placed on financial matters rather than on outcomes.

Another respondent stated that there are many intangible aspects of their work that are not accounted for in different reports, for example, the sometimes considerable time required for travel to remote communities or for home visits.

Respondents also emphasized the importance of both transparency and accountability in their activities. They emphasized the importance also of showing members that:

- Aboriginal people are being hired for jobs;
- the community is healing;
- partnerships are being developed; and
- the needs of the larger community are being properly considered.

Some Aboriginal organizations are actively consulting with the various programs for youth, children and family services to determine how the programs can become more reflective of community rather than government expectations. Real accountability, they said, will emerge from this process.

Respondents drew the following lessons from their experience with accountability:

- involve, inform and consult Aboriginal people and Aboriginal communities on a regular basis;
- undertake extensive consultations with the various communities of interests that exist and encourage participation;
- ensure culturally appropriate means of consultation;
- ensure Aboriginal people are involved in setting their own standards;
- allow for more decision making at the local level;
- identify and remove barriers and obstacles impeding access to program information;
- ensure the guidelines and policies are transparent and accepted by the community;
- ensure that the objectives outlined in the funding proposals are met;
- shift the focus from inputs to outputs and outcome measurements;
- shift resources on the basis of outcomes being achieved;
- make the community the first priority in terms of accountability; and
- place more emphasis on business plans and long-range planning.

### **Satisfaction with Monitoring, Reporting and Evaluation Requirements**

Respondents were generally satisfied with the monitoring, reporting and evaluation requirements currently in place. One respondent suggested implementing a computerized tracking system to obtain better statistics at the local level and to improve reporting accuracy. Small organizations with few staff complained that monthly and quarterly reports took up valuable time that could be more effectively spent with clients.

Measuring success in social programs is very difficult, and many of the respondents indicated that they relied on standardized and often outdated measurements to track their success. For example, they mentioned collecting data on how many people were enrolled or attended programs or on completion rates. In other cases, there were no defined measures of results or processes to capture the needed information on an ongoing or periodic basis.

Overall, respondents indicated an interest in improving their current methods. But few — including those in government — had yet found an entirely appropriate approach. One respondent stated that different levels of accountability were needed. The leadership, for example, needed to be accountable on the financial, political and strategic planning issues, and to various interest groups in the community. They were also accountable to future generations.

One respondent expressed concern about the lack of feedback and site visits undertaken by government. Another indicated that strong support was lacking from government throughout the project phases, and that sometimes there was a feeling that things were expected to fail. Furthermore, while organizations provide governments with a great deal of data, few reports reflect that information. Government appeared to prefer statistics from Indian and Northern Affairs Canada (INAC) or provincial departments even though these could create problems in population-based funding formulas. They expressed a need for credible information management systems at the local level.

Respondents provided the following “lessons learned” with respect to monitoring, reporting and evaluation requirements:

- share accountability and responsibility with Aboriginal people;
- shift the focus from controlling to managing the process of change;
- recognize that even small changes are important since “success builds on success and the vision gets bigger”;
- recognize that the traditional and clinical approaches can both provide appropriate measures of success;
- focus on promotion, prevention, early intervention and integration even though outcomes associated with these are not immediately apparent;
- provide evidence to the community that particular policy directions are being pursued;
- use systematic approaches to capture appropriate information;
- ensure there is a purpose to proposed changes — change for its own sake is not necessarily useful;
- improve co-ordination and communication strategies;
- focus on outcome measures as opposed to monitoring; and
- manage the system more effectively by moving resources to where they are most needed and by cutting waste and inefficiencies.

### **3.3.5 Delivery, Outcomes and Impact**

#### **Delivery of Services and Strategies and How to Achieve a Common Goal**

Respondents employed a variety of means to achieve their goals: regional training committees, direct service provider meetings, inter-agency meetings, identifying team leaders, community working groups, etc. Some respondents also indicated that their organizations were not doing a good job of integrating various program areas and suggested the following as reasons for this:

- leadership has not taken the responsibility or is too busy;

- organizations do not have the capacity and/or are overwhelmed with land and economic issues; or
- communities are too fragmented to work together.

One respondent indicated their organization was at a crossroad as they have reached the plateau under their present tribal council structure. *The Indian Act* is said to hinder this community from moving forward.

Respondents indicated that it should be relatively easy to link programs at the community level. Weekly meetings and sharing of information are seen as important elements for integrating services. Obtaining constant feedback on community needs was seen as the most effective way to judge the effectiveness of programs. Community consultations were identified as one way of ensuring community members assisted in the design and delivery of programs. Accurate knowledge of community needs provided the best assurances that the right programs and services would be implemented.

Respondents suggested that one of the biggest obstacles to program integration is inadequate funding. Other factors include client confidentiality, geographic isolation, animosity between government and community staff, and restrictive policies and legislation. The first year of the B.C. “Building Blocks” program (formerly “Healthy Beginnings, Healthy Lives”) saw the federal and provincial governments reaching an agreement whereby provincially funded programs could provide services on reserves. There are now 10 pilot sites in British Columbia emphasizing prevention, promotion, early intervention and integration of services.

At both the federal and provincial levels, legislation is being changed to provide authority for Aboriginal people to enter into new funding and governance arrangements. Across Canada, for example, there are a number of health transfer agreements where Canada has delegated management authority and transferred funding for First Nations to design and manage community-based health services on reserve.

### **Is the Integrated Approach Better or More Effective? Strengths and Weaknesses**

All respondents indicated that the integrated approach was preferable because it:

- reduces administrative costs;
- improves access to and co-ordination of services, and reduces service gaps;
- is better attuned to the needs of the individual and allows for more culturally relevant services;
- focuses on group problem solving and enhances the ability to deal with a wider range of problems;
- offers the possibility of providing an enhanced quality of service;
- improves communication and awareness of other programs and services;
- increases the opportunity for innovation and creativity;
- improves decision making at the local level;
- encourages improved reporting, monitoring and evaluation;

- facilitates comprehensive planning;
- highlights principles and standards as opposed to criteria;
- shifts the focus from intervention to prevention and promotion; and
- can alleviate mistrust and frustration.

Respondents also offered a number of shortcomings associated with a more integrated approach:

- integration is a challenging undertaking that requires tremendous energy;
- it is difficult for different program areas to communicate effectively;
- there is the issue of client confidentiality;
- integration requires program restructuring;
- staff are reluctant to give up control and to pool funds;
- there are concerns about the impact of poor management and leadership capabilities, lack of financial resources and/or inadequate financial control;
- there is concern over increased complexity for communities;
- it is difficult to measure progress and to evaluate outcomes, leading to reduced accountability; and
- integration requires too much time, effort and resources.

### **Is the Approach Effective in Terms of Achieving Goals and Objectives? How Do You Measure Outcomes and Impact?**

One respondent indicated that communities tend to focus upon crises rather than upon long-term outcomes. Aboriginal people also tend to define success differently than do government departments, which creates barriers and increases misunderstandings about outcomes.

Some respondents indicated that feedback received from independent evaluations was used to determine whether their organization was progressing in the right direction. Other respondents indicated that they measured success based on whether their initial objectives were met. When evaluating program areas, some respondents looked at activity measures such as the number of applications received or expenditures made, while others emphasized outcomes such as the number of clients in paid employment. Government representatives also mentioned that they are moving toward outcome rather than input measures.

Many program administrators rely on “word of mouth” or personal feedback from either clients or community members to judge the success of their programs. Some administrators stated that their measure of success is the number of people attending their programs. Overall, the community is considered the most powerful force in determining whether programs are meeting their needs. One respondent stated that they knew their summer program was successful when people came back the next year and started asking for the program.

Several respondents noted the challenge of identifying outcome measures for goals relating to upgrading language skills or enhancing cultural awareness. These respondents

often indicated a preference for using qualitative measures such as client satisfaction. In a small community, in-person feedback with clients can provide a “feeling” as to whether success has been achieved or not. To measure success at the individual level, a team leader may evaluate the level of interaction between the client and staff, the amount of change exhibited by the client over the course of the program or attendance levels.

One respondent cautioned against relying too heavily on the community or clients as a measure of success, since people often fail to recognize that their lives are improving.

### **“Lessons Learned” for Enhancing the Chances of Success**

Respondents offered the following lessons as potential means for enhancing the likelihood of success:

- the process of change should start and proceed slowly, in step with the ability of the community;
- give up preconceived ideas about programs, policies and strategies;
- undertake research and obtain feedback on other strategies and programs;
- provide adequate funds for operations, staffing and training;
- use outside, objective evaluations for further planning;
- seek input from community members when contemplating change; include leaders, elders, service providers, women, youth and children in this process and ensure that the voices of minority groups and minority opinions are also respected;
- focus on a holistic approach;
- ensure accountability and teamwork;
- ensure staff are adequately trained and help to train students;
- develop strong co-operative relationships with all sectors that affect community wellness; and
- provide more support to grassroots organizations.

### **3.3.6 Conclusions**

#### **Specific and General Lessons**

Respondents recommended moving away from quantitative statistics to determine funding levels at the national, provincial, regional and community levels. These tend to underestimate community needs. Instead, governments should study reports such as that of the Royal Commission on Aboriginal Peoples, since they provide insights into some of the real needs and costs associated with rebuilding Aboriginal communities.

What respondents have learned from the past is that we need more trained administrators and leaders to assume these new responsibilities in the future. Communities can no longer rely on government but instead must assume full financial and social responsibility for change at the community level. Respondents also suggested that Aboriginal people have to and will learn from their mistakes as they assume this responsibility. They will learn to bridge the gap between the various interests groups and to place more emphasis on communications.



Respondents suggested that communities are expected to operate like a business, and that they must focus on long-term planning, economic development and political astuteness. One respondent stated that Aboriginal people should not be afraid of accountability, and should be flexible and prepared to deal with new issues and new challenges as they arise.

Respondents believed that strong organizational structures are the key to dealing with future uncertainties. One respondent stated that Aboriginal people must work hard on making the incremental changes needed in communities. Developing culturally relevant policies that are accepted by community members will ensure that change is accepted.

In terms of “best practices,” respondents offered a number of models. The most critical factor, however, is to provide Aboriginal communities with the autonomy and power to implement programs and services that are consistent with community needs. Aboriginal people must be given the opportunity to make mistakes and to learn from these mistakes. It is important that Aboriginal people are able to measure their own success, on their own terms and in their own way.

Respondents focused also on the need to develop real partnerships, suggesting that “the whole is greater than the sum of the parts.” They suggested that their communities have moved beyond being able to entrust responsibility to others. They also stressed, as a lesson, the importance of relying on cultural values and strengths. The development of vision is critical to ensuring accomplishments are attained. Programs and changes can start off small, but once you develop partnerships both within and outside the community, success will follow.

One respondent indicated that we know what does not work and what stifles creativity and ownership. When setting up systems that work, it is important to remember that it took several centuries to create the colonial system that destroyed Aboriginal people’s identity and culture, and it will take time to rebuild a new and healthy one. The place to begin is in the community, with the children, youth, women and families.

### **3.4 Extracts from the Interviews**

**Question: In your view, has the relationship between the government and Aboriginal organizations changed over the past years? How? In what ways? In your view what has been responsible for this change?**

- *“Yes. Funds have been devolved to Aboriginal leadership, who now administer funds directly. This means Aboriginal leadership has more say in the identification of needs and in how funds are spent.”*
- *“Yes. In some ways we are going through a devolution stage. However, there are still many policies in place that are not working, and one of the reasons for them not working is because our people are not educated enough to deal with them. Remember, we have few education programs at the community level and the literacy rate is low. Even with HRDC programs, they set out an MOU with the local tribal council, but there are still so many criteria that it is difficult for our people to compete on equal footing.”*

- *“No. I don’t think things have really changed. Government still has lots of control, especially when we are working on wellness programs. We write proposals, and then they come back to us and say that we do not meet the criteria, and they even like to intervene in our case management. Our communities have to go to regional bodies for decision making. There is lots of talk of change, but not much has happened.”*
- *“Yes. Things have changed because government has decided they no longer want to be Indian agents. There is more focus on partnerships and the general attitudes of government personnel have changed. Also, the vision of Aboriginal leaders has changed, and we see a shift from confrontation to wanting to achieve success by working together.”*
- *“Yes. There are changes, but I believe it is because government wants to dump its responsibility.”*
- *“Yes. Funding has decreased, and services have increased in communities.”*
- *“Yes. I see most of the changes being initiated by the federal government as part of their off-loading strategy. They no longer want to be in the business so they are turning things over to the province.”*
- *“Yes, somewhat, but I still feel that government has this paternalistic attitude toward Aboriginal organizations.”*
- *“Yes. Certainly the climate has changed in terms of the rhetoric, and many people state they are more open and want “best practices.” However, I also see government structures as powerful, and the standards and implications of not following policy are tough. There is talk about a different way, but there is considerable pressure not to break the rules. In today’s system you almost have to break the rules and be a risk taker to do something different.”*

**Question: Why did you adopt a certain approach to design? Does the approach build on any lessons from past experiences?**

- *“We were really careful at the local level to look at the needs of the people. One of the hardest things for us to overcome was the fact that the federal government was dictating needs and bureaucracies were focused on protecting resources and not looking at the bigger picture.”*
- *“It was important to have a bottom-up process with clear principles and guidelines.”*
- *“We tried to avoid the old patterns.”*
- *“Looking at past processes has shown us the need to look at different options. We may not need different agreements for all the different groups, but it must be clear who is speaking for whom at the policy tables and at negotiations. For example, who is*

*speaking for the Métis, off-reserve groups, etc.? We also need to give Aboriginal organizations and people enough time to organize and demonstrate their competencies.”*

- *“HRDC is quite innovative in its approach. It provides opportunities to its own staff. It helps communities with accountability issues and ensures that they get the funding if a project is worthwhile.”*

**Question: Are federal (or provincial, as appropriate) policies and structures supportive of the idea of working co-operatively when designing initiatives? Are the policies and structures of the Aboriginal organization supportive or are there barriers to this approach?**

- *“Yes. Government has been helpful.”*
- *“Not always. Government structures require certain standards for delivery of programs, and it is difficult for us to have the trained personnel in place. We are often forced to upgrade to their standards with very little funding. For example, with the health board we cannot put in a proposal because we need qualified people before we can apply for funding in many areas. In some cases, I believe that government departments do not want to relinquish control. Being successful depends on how aggressive our leaders are.”*
- *“No. Guidelines are a hindrance. We are fairly creative here, but the biggest thing is a lack of education and experience so it is important we do not restrict people or programs too much. The leadership also creates barriers for integration. Not having enough trained people is a real barrier.”*
- *“Not sure. On a government level, it is hard to say whether they are supportive or not. We don’t have the funds we require, and it seems they give us just enough funds to look good. If we want to integrate any additional services or develop new programs, we still need to apply to several different government agencies. Their structures do not attempt to make any effort to assist us with integrating the various departments for us.”*
- *“Governments create barriers because they “mother” us too much.”*
- *“Yes. Today everything is pigeonholed, which creates barriers to access.”*
- *“Government today presents fewer barriers than it used to. There is recognition that jurisdictional barriers do not accomplish anything.”*
- *“No. Governments cannot accommodate community-building initiatives, as this requires a bottom-up structure in order to effect change. In government today, policy has come to rule how to do even the smallest things. Policies dictate how to make decisions, but one of the real problems in First Nations communities is there are always exceptional situations that do not conform to the standard parameters of the policy*

*model. Communities differ and change rapidly, and bureaucracies do not. They appear to be policy-bound rather than policy-directed.”*

**Question: Have your experiences with this strategy/approach made you think there are still better ways to design policy or programs in the future?**

- *“Yes. Set up meetings to discuss the needs and to share your mandate in order to move ahead. The bottom-up structure seems to have the most strength. Each region should be allowed to do what works for them. Criteria should not be established for programs ahead of time.”*
- *“Yes, we can always improve, and evaluations can help us take a good look at ourselves.”*
- *“What we know is that neither the federal nor the provincial government, nor the politicians, can do it as successfully as we can. I also know we should not just turn all the money over to First Nations as it will disappear into such things as mileage, meals and honorariums.”*
- *“Before government starts any new programs, it should ensure that any replacement program is a significant improvement over the old method, and we should avoid changing just for the sake of change. This is important because a network gets built up, and when the dynamics change the whole process gets set back 10 to 20 years. This has happened with the old Pathways program. The new administration has a limited role, and if the role is not part of a larger strategy the whole thing could be taken over.”*
- *“We need to recognize that some communities have more problems than others.”*
- *“We also need to be more professional, but it is hard when you are always dealing with crisis.”*
- *“We have learned that involvement of the community is critical to getting community support on policy issues.”*
- *“In working together for change there must be an emphasis on relationships, learning and value-based decision making. The interaction of these factors can help deal with the changes needed to serve the interest of the people being served. Relationship and value-based decisions are important. Belief in the people and in change requires special attention to policy, but there must also be exceptions to explore new ways of doing things.”*

**Question: What measures were taken to ensure that Aboriginal organizations could deliver the program effectively? Was training provided? Other efforts to build ability and capacity in the organization?**

- *“None. They are more focused on accountability and like to ensure that their own staff are well trained, but this does little to increase our capacity.”*
- *“Yes. HRDC helped us with capacity building and helped us to look at the industry to develop people.”*
- *“None. Access to individual programs does not equate to community wellness. We have had a number of business failures and had to risk pushing the boundaries to respond to our needs. We have had little support for this.”*
- *“We tend to focus on the process and not on the content. We feel the government’s role is not to do content but instead to connect the process. For example, the government’s role re social and community development is simply to establish a process for intergovernmental and community linkages. Our role is to link the various ministries so people do not have to go back and forth, and we want to establish a relationship with a particular body. Our goal is to eventually develop an Aboriginal health strategy to determine how all decisions will be made and what limitations will be made on this.”*
- *“We cannot afford to hire unskilled people. Having skilled people allows the opportunity to do things ourselves.”*
- *“Capacity building is a new issue, especially if we are looking at comprehensive programs.”*
- *“Capacity building has always been there. Other funding sources actually help First Nations with proposals. We definitely need more funding for training. Our leadership needs more assistance with financial and proposal writing.”*
- *“Trained people are critical for the success of self-government.”*

**Question: Do federal funding mechanisms allow for the type of integrated approach you are planning? What would you like to see being done differently in the future?**

- *“No. The flexibility is not there, and we have little ability to shift resources.”*
- *“Yes. HRDC is very flexible. We are able to set our own objectives, and the only area that is really set is EI. The rest is carte blanche. The only recommendation that I would provide is to relax the guidelines and allow communities to become more self-determined with the RBAs.”*

- *“No, unless we fight and argue hard to get funds integrated. Those of us who tend to do better homework and research get more value out of the process. The problem is that there is no one place in government, and people change so often that it always seems like you are starting over. Government needs to listen to the needs of the community even though it may not fit with their policy guidelines or their perceived way of doing things. We are required to do so much more work just to obtain community-relevant and integrated services.”*
- *“Yes. Funding is somewhat flexible and we can design our own programs, but things are tight financially, which restricts us. We used to get funded on a quarterly basis, but now it is on a monthly basis, which has increased the paperwork and workload for our co-ordinators. This new type of funding mechanism restricts our ability to move forward. We have no long-term security, and there is variability between the various funding sources. We need long-range approaches to hire competent staff, and right now we cannot assure our staff that we will have funds available for them.”*
- *“Because we are a housing agency the government does not want to fund our social workers. We find this type of integration critical to dealing with the many social issues that we face. We try to tell them that it is important to have co-ordination and services when families are in need. Many of the people who use our projects are already linked with other agencies, and we need to ensure they can continue to use these services.”*
- *“We believe if you cannot make the community accountable then you have not succeeded as that is the key to self-government.”*
- *“Generally, the federal departments do not know what each other is doing. They all want to dump programs on communities faster than ever before, and yet communities are not being provided with additional training. HRDC is now focused on developing individual approaches to labour market issues vs. community approaches, and in some cases individuals are merely trying to collect enough hours to qualify for EI in order that career implementation plans can begin. While this may be a good approach, it is not doing anything for community development, and there is no structure to sustain this.”*
- *“Yes. HRDC has provided for a lot of growth, innovation and creativity to allow things to happen. They are responsive to shifting resources whenever possible, although some areas cannot be shifted.”*

**Question: Funding is closely related to accountability. To whom are you accountable with this strategy and how do you ensure accountability?**

- *“For government we try to show effectiveness and for community we show relevance. For the federal government we provide enough information to ensure we are meeting the terms of the agreement.”*

- *“We are never sure if the information we provide gets read because we never get any feedback. Our reports are comprehensive, and we try to be accountable to our membership, which can be difficult, as they are fluid and come and go. We try to get information out on crisis issues, and we generate annual reports to funding agencies and local politicians. In terms of accountability, we take our job seriously, have developed extensive policy and procedures and have an advisory board for the different program areas. We encourage feedback from clients, and it is a close-knit community so we are sure to hear what is going wrong.”*
- *“In order to ensure accountability, government needs to identify the process ahead of time. It needs to be laid out how they will obtain community accountability, and they need to define what standards and objective measurements will be used. Policy offices need to facilitate the time frames for implementation and provide advice on how it will develop and evolve.”*
- *“The issue of accountability is not an issue for us. We are more concerned with service quality than the balance sheet. We want to know what happened as a result of spending the money: is there evidence that the standard has been maintained? If we start with standards, the community can accept this because the strategy becomes accountable to them. It also becomes more realistic and becomes part of the process of developing communities.”*

**Question: Are you generally satisfied with the monitoring, reporting and evaluation requirements and mechanisms that are in place?**

- *“Yes. I don’t find it cumbersome. The process is more or less putting information on paper and showing how the funds are spent.”*
- *“We work in partnership with government on what is needed. Principles have been developed, and we have agreed to them. We need more of an evaluation process and not just a mechanism.”*
- *“We are generally satisfied, but we don’t get much feedback on our reports. I am not sure there is consistency between programs, and we never get calls if something is late. We would appreciate more helpful information on issues.”*
- *“Rarely does HRDC bother with us unless they want some sort of information. If we are to be accountable to government then we believe that government must come to our communities more often instead of relying on reading our reports. You cannot tell from statistics based in Ottawa what the critical issues are.”*
- *“We provide information, but it is rarely monitored or checked. There is little information exchange that takes place within government or within the region. Little feedback is available for the community development projects, and few models are available. We do not appear to ask the proper questions such as: Does the community need changing?”*

**Question: How do you deliver the services/strategy? How do you ensure that different agencies, organizations and staff are working together, and working toward a common goal?**

- *“It is so easy to cherry pick, and sometimes we pick one thing to focus on. If we are to monitor based on a holistic approach, we have to ensure that all things are happening, and not just focus on one thing. For example, very strong leadership and vision are important; we need to ensure partnerships do not focus on one issue, that they are reflective of the various needs of our peoples, and that everyone participates so that the funding does not just go to one nation only. We have to be open to everyone who participates, and we must deal with the politics in the proper context.”*
- *“We deal with villages/urban areas/social workers/education and they all intermingle. The training and job placement officers and I are in constant contact with the field workers. We have operations meetings every Monday morning and share our successes and administrative details. There is constant feedback.”*
- *“We have knowledge of what the community wants. We can ensure communities are working together as evidenced by the number of participants and the demand for services.”*
- *“We have regional meetings to promote awareness of projects and have joint projects. We get together to talk about issues and see what we can do to integrate services.”*
- *“It is very difficult to promote interagency meetings, because there is evidence of competition for the same clients.”*
- *“We try to integrate through meetings and consultations, but most government departments won’t allow for infrastructure development other than capital projects funded by INAC.”*

**Question: Is the integrated approach “better” or more effective than how you have worked in the past? What are the strengths and shortcomings of this approach?**

- *“Yes, an integrated approach is better as it reduces duplication of administration costs. People in our communities also work more closely together, and an integrated approach is absolutely essential. The negative side is that clients who are in a transition period often don’t know where to go. There are also problems that we cannot foresee. For example, there are problems outside our settlement areas, which makes it hard to do anything about them.”*
- *“Yes. An integrated approach means less duplication of administrative services. It is also more reflective of community needs and community involvement. Such an approach gets more people involved and assists with dealing with community problems more effectively.”*



- *“I believe the integrated approach would be better, but we would need to change the attitudes of leadership. We need a process to get people talking and discussing issues. We also need a strategy on how we can move forward.”*
- *“Yes. In the past, Aboriginal people had to go to several different agencies, and they often felt uncomfortable because of the barriers they encountered. Our “one-stop shop” reduces the frustration and increases networking and linkages with other organizations. Our type of program can be adapted to the unique circumstances of the individual. We help them seek the information they need, and we can assist with addressing the service gaps. The problem is that not enough integration is done, and there is often a lack of awareness of what others are doing.”*
- *“Yes. Our current structures create a stovepipe approach, which makes it difficult to integrate our initiatives. In the past, programs were set up for the job, not aimed at the community. If we want a holistic approach we can no longer focus on just one thing. We need to change structures and ensure the strategies fit with our needs. We must work in co-operation/partnership and focus on principles vs. definite criteria. If we develop strategies that are focused on one target group such as youth, we cannot deal with the total picture, which includes the parents and the extended family. Partnerships mean working together and bringing the issues to the table. If you want to devolve direct services to Aboriginal people, then you must change our government policies to facilitate the necessary changes, otherwise we are merely moving the structural problems out into the community.”*
- *“Yes. We are able to look at the determinants of health, and we can appreciate the link between poverty and poor health. Using a holistic perspective allows us to focus on prevention and promotion issues. We have rarely had any kind of negotiation with the government on this type of approach.”*

**Question: Is the integrated approach more effective in terms of achieving your goals and objectives?**

- *“This is hard to answer because First Nations are often dealing with pragmatic issues or doing crisis management. There are many things in our community that are intangible and hard to define, and we measure success differently. We like to get positive feedback from outside evaluations, and this enables us to ensure we are on the right track.”*
- *“There has to be a partnership or things do not work. In community development, there are funds that go to bands for community development initiatives, and one of them was to get people in mining jobs-but people did not last. We believe that if they had partnered with the provincial government, we could have assisted in ensuring the workplace was more accepting, and we could have assisted in breaking down the structural barriers.”*

- *“For the most part we are achieving our goals. We do need more time to meet with organizations to see how we all fit together and to avoid competition on proposals.”*
- *“We measure our success by communicating what we are trying to aspire to, and try to avoid misleading or creating false expectations that we cannot live up to. We also try to avoid moving ahead when people aren’t ready.”*

**Question: From your experience, can you suggest lessons that would ensure that strategies like this one can more fully achieve their goals and objectives?**

- *“The biggest thing is to get people involved, but this is a slow process as people are not generally motivated since they have always been told what to do. With the settlement of land claims, suddenly they have been given responsibility, but they often lack the skills, and they have to relearn to be self-directed. The government still continues to tell us what to do, especially in the social programs area. They should come to our communities minus their preconceived ideas, because we know what is best in terms of designing programs, policies and strategies.”*
- *“The number one lesson learned is the development of a vision for a strategy. When government asks us to sit down, the first question we ask them is: What is your long-range vision? This was the shortcoming of Pathways as there was no vision of what should happen five years down the road. Even if the vision was for government to decrease its involvement and increase the role of First Nation management, that would help us move forward.”*
- *“Government has lots to learn regarding partnerships. We have to respect, listen and understand how other people do things that are different.”*
- *“It is important to ensure that there is accountability and teamwork. I would recommend ensuring that staff be trained and developed in order to enhance the organization and develop a common vision.”*
- *“There is a tendency on the part of government to look at issues and to provide funds based on this. We can move from 0 to 10, but we need a strategy in place to ensure the steps are followed. We also need a clear map and have to see money as a tool to meet the end results, instead of seeing money as the end result.”*

**Question: This project is looking for “lessons learned” relative to policy and program design, implementation, operations, accountability and impact. Given your experience, are there any other lessons to which you want to draw our attention?**

- *“Programs that are devolved should be able to have some of the same resources that were once available in government. It seems they want to see us fail because we are*

*underfunded and understaffed. Sometimes the community wants to set up things for the future, but how can you plan with no long-term funds. We are not afraid of accountability, but it should be known that some of our strategies change during the year, and we need to be able to react to our needs and handle our crises when they happen. One of the really frustrating things we face is that different federal departments change just for the sake of changing, and there is no consideration on what impacts they have on other departments.”*

- *“I applaud the HRDC model and think that social programs should follow this approach. HRDC allows us to set our own objectives, and they are broad enough that we can mould things to the needs of our community. They have put faith in our organization and in the communities, and we are able to engage in lots of dialogue with them. They set the contract and leave us alone to implement the programs. One thing I would like to point out is that there is always more cost involved with implementing programs, and we often don’t account for enough of these costs. My advice is to listen to people at the local level and not tell them they should be self-directed as this will only frustrate us.”*
- *“Governments should give us a chance to make our own mistakes, so that we can learn from them and improve. We must develop year by year and compare ourselves to the previous year. It would be better if the community decided what they needed to account for and whether the money was well spent. If people feel they benefit, then we consider programs a success, but we realize we have to look for small successes. Government has a tendency to want to make sweeping changes, but when you are dealing with changing a mind set for people who have come through residential schools these changes will be slow.”*
- *“There is a need to look at the bigger picture. Governments tend not to get involved and make agencies work their butts off. They expect too much, and they do not set the same standards for themselves. They need to put some things into perspective (i.e., how do we provide babysitting and address the real needs of our client group). Government agencies need to look at the overall strategy and determine what resources are required. They also need to be more open-minded to different ways of doing things and should be more open-minded to the needs of different cultures.”*
- *“Government always has great words for partnership, but I don’t believe they really mean it because they always have to have the last say in everything. We should not use the word “partnership” unless we put some meaning into it.”*

## ***4. Community Building: Case Studies from the United States***

### **Community Building**

Community building is not a programmatic format as much as it is a framework for addressing interrelated problems that snare people living in chronic poverty: poor schooling, crime, poor health, unemployment and underemployment, family instability and violence. The community-building concept maintains that comprehensive, community-driven efforts offer the best hope for achieving long-term success in the transformation of impoverished communities.

Community building emphasizes that the key to expanding opportunity and fighting poverty lies in building strong communities, and that the work of building strong communities must take place on many fronts at the same time. By itself, no single initiative — for example, like building new houses, providing job training or improving the schools — can make a fundamental difference in the well-being of communities and their people. Instead, improvement must encompass and co-ordinate efforts to improve the physical, social and economic conditions of the entire community.

Community building may involve organizing some new local institutions. But it also means working with and strengthening existing institutions: families, schools, businesses, religious organizations, other community groups and government agencies.

Most importantly, community building recognizes that persistent poverty is not just about money but about relationships as well. People living in chronic poverty lack not only income but the beneficial relationships with the people and institutions that can help them to improve their lives.<sup>2</sup>

### **Detroit**

Core City Neighborhoods in Detroit is a non-profit organization whose mandate and mission are to strengthen the social and human development needs of its community and to rebuild the physical and economic base of the area. Area residents make up at least 50 percent of its board of directors and provide much of the volunteer labour upon which the corporation depends. It has established important partnerships with local businesses and other organizations.

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<sup>2</sup> National Community Building Network. “An Overview of the National Community Building Network.” Oakland, Calif.

Core City Neighborhoods combines a long-term, 50-year vision with practical and concrete goals whose results are clearly evident in the short term. It offers area residents a comprehensive range of services and supports including:

- housing rehabilitation and new house construction, as well as workshops on home ownership and financing;
- after-school and summer programs for children, which provide tutoring, skills development, arts and crafts, recreation and mentoring;
- an annual Junior Olympics program — sponsored in partnership with local business, residents, other community organizations and the county — which emphasizes both physical and academic development, builds self-esteem and encourages parental involvement;
- crime prevention through a citizen-band radio patrol;
- job creation through its landscaping company, which has a contract with the city to employ nine residents to maintain 2,000 vacant properties; and
- business counselling and guidance to 185 small business owners in the area.

## **Indianapolis**

In 1976, residents of a low-income Indianapolis neighbourhood formed their own development corporation. The corporation's core activities involved training a team of local residents in housing repair and rehabilitation. That team earns fees from work in high-income areas and uses this income to refurbish housing in its own community.

Since 1976, the corporation has:

- converted an abandoned school into a successful rental project with affordable apartments;
- developed its own industrial park, which now houses 32 businesses;
- established a fund that has made more than \$1 million in venture capital available to small, community-based businesses;
- established a day care co-operative and trained residents to provide affordable child care to neighbours; and
- established special service programs for teen parents, special-needs children, the elderly and homeless, adults with chronic mental illness, and battered women.

## Washington

A public housing tenants' association in Washington, D.C., assumed the responsibility for managing the project and has subsequently established a number of its own social service, educational and economic development initiatives. Over its first four years of operation, the corporation has:

- increased rent collections by 77 percent;
- decreased the project vacancy rate from 18 percent to 5 percent;
- created 102 jobs for residents, comprising 10 on its own staff and 92 running its other business ventures; and
- helped at least 132 residents become independent of welfare.

Seven years after it began, the crime rate in the development had declined from 12 to 15 incidents per month to an average of only 2. And through its first 15 years, the association's "Stay in School" campaign has achieved a high school completion rate of 75 percent and has seen 700 project youth go on to college.

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## Relevant Web Sites

- Alaska Office of Native American Programs:  
[www.hud.gov/local/anc/anconap.html](http://www.hud.gov/local/anc/anconap.html)
- Australia Community Development Employment Projects:  
[www.atsic.gov.au](http://www.atsic.gov.au)
- Canadian Council on Social Development:  
[www.ccsd.ca](http://www.ccsd.ca)
- Government Accounting Office (U.S.):  
[www.access.gpo.gov](http://www.access.gpo.gov)
- James Bay Cree:  
[www.ouje.ca/reliance/reliance.htm](http://www.ouje.ca/reliance/reliance.htm)



- U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development, Alaska Community Planning and Development Division:  
[www.hud.gov/local/anc/ancepd.html](http://www.hud.gov/local/anc/ancepd.html)

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