Closing the Gap

Métis Works

2013/14
CLOSING THE GAP

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Message from the Métis National Council President

As we prepare to enter a new generation of Aboriginal labour market programming with the Government of Canada it is important to reflect on the evolution of these programs and the incredible results achieved.

The Métis Nation has been involved in managing the delivery of federal Aboriginal labour market development programs since 1996. Prior to then, the federal government directly delivered training and employment programs. Although Aboriginal people were a high needs group in terms of training and employment, they were not being served well. This realization lead to the creation of Pathways to Success, where the Government of Canada set aside an initial $200 million per year targeted at Aboriginal labour market development.

Since 1996 federal Aboriginal labour market development programs have been delivered on a distinctions-based basis. Funding was devolved to representatives of the Aboriginal peoples of Canada through what were known as Regional Bi-lateral Agreements (RBAs). In the case of the Métis, a National Framework Agreement was signed with the Métis National Council (MNC) following which RBAs were signed with each of its Governing Members. From the RBAs we transitioned into Aboriginal Human Resources Development Agreements (AHRDA) in 1999; five years later came AHRDA II; and in 2010, the Government of Canada introduced the Aboriginal Skills and Employment Training Strategy (ASETS) that is in place until March 2015. Up to this point, federal Aboriginal labour market development strategies have been renewed in one form or another every five years.

Over the years, effective Métis specific delivery structures have been put into place. Through these structures, thousands of Métis people have been given opportunities to participate fully in the Canadian economy through programs and services delivered through Métis institutions. Under ASETS alone, Métis Nation Agreement holders had up to the end of December 2013 served 9,945 clients, 7,724 of whom had completed training and employment interventions. 80% had found employment or returned to school. Given that the majority of clients have only a high school diploma or less and are under 25 years of age, this is an enviable statistic since it means that the program is benefiting those who most need it.

This publication is intended to showcase people throughout the Métis Homeland whose lives have been impacted positively as a result of effective program delivery and to demonstrate how Métis institutions are closing the gap in skills, education and employment for Métis people in Canada.

We look forward to its continued success.

Clément Chartier
Closing the Gap

Message from the Minister of Human Resources and Social Development

There is no more important matter for Métis people than securing a better future for ourselves, for our families and for our community.

The Métis history of having been marginalized and excluded from fully participating in the mainstream economy is a lost opportunity for Canada. This is reflected today in lower levels of educational attainment, higher proportions of the population outside the labour force or unemployed, lower skill levels, lower incomes.

This is what Métis labour market development is all about. It is about employment, education, closing the gap – ensuring our young people complete high school. It opens the opportunity to college and post-secondary education, private sector partnerships and training – ensuring that we acquire the skills that lead to productive employment; and it is about job creation and ensuring the jobs that are there will allow our Métis workforce to fill in the opportunity.

Through our experience in over almost two decades of programming we have learned that, when programs are delivered by institutions with which the community is familiar and considers their own, people who need those services are much more likely to come forward and succeed.

Investing in Métis education and skills development is a win-win situation. It improves the lives of our people; it raises incomes; and it enables Métis to address Canadian labour market needs. This, in turn, impact positively on the economy by adding to the GDP and generating personal income to invest in their children.

Métis are a fast growing, mobile and youthful population that can make a significant contribution to the Canadian labour force needs today and in the future. By closing gaps in education, skills and employment through the excellent work of the Métis ASETS, we can optimize our contribution to Canada’s growth and prosperity and create brighter futures for our people.

The ASETS has been very successful to the Métis Nation, we need to continue this partnership and the renewal of the program will be good for the Métis, good for Canada.

David Chartrand
As Minister of Employment and Social Development, I congratulate all of the Métis people and organizations profiled in this issue of Métis Works.

Métis people have played a vital role throughout Canada’s history and have much to contribute to Canada’s future. Today, job market issues such as skills shortages are at the top of the Government of Canada’s agenda and Métis people are an important part of the solution.

A strong economy relies on having a qualified pool of candidates to fill available jobs. Recognizing this simple truth, our government is determined to help Métis, and all Aboriginal people, secure meaningful employment and build better futures for themselves and their families.

The Government supports training through measures like the Aboriginal Skills and Employment Training Strategy and the Skills and Partnership Fund. These efforts help ensure that Métis people are well positioned to share in the benefits of a strong, vibrant economy. The Aboriginal Skills and Employment Training Strategy supports over 80 organizations in the delivery of programs and services to increase Aboriginal participation in the job market. The Skills and Partnership Fund helps Aboriginal organizations partner with government, business, and local community organizations to improve skills training and create job opportunities.

Métis entrepreneurs are making their contribution to the Canadian economy. Across Canada, Métis organizations and communities are pursuing economic development initiatives and some of Canada’s major corporations are establishing business relationships with Métis businesses and communities.

I look forward to working together to create the successes to come.

The Hon. Jason Kenney  
Minister of Employment and Social Development
Aboriginal Skills and Employment Training Strategy (ASETS) programs are delivered to Métis in Ontario by the Métis Nation of Ontario; in Manitoba by the Manitoba Metis Federation; in Saskatchewan by the Gabriel Dumont Institute; in Alberta by the Rupertsland Institute; and in British Columbia by Métis Nation British Columbia. Each is a province-wide organization with a network of offices and delivery sites. Together the five Métis ASETS holders currently administer $49.8 million per annum from ASETS. The following provides an overview of the Métis ASETS.

Métis Nation of Ontario

Métis Nation of Ontario
The Métis Nation of Ontario (MNO) was established in 1993 through the will of Métis people and communities coming together throughout Ontario to create a Métis-specific governance structure. Since that time, the MNO has grown considerably in size and scope to a comprehensive province-wide governance structure with more than 30 Chartered Community Councils. The MNO has built an accountable, results-based provincial delivery structure to meet the socio-economic needs of its citizens and communities. Currently, the MNO delivers a wide range of programs and services through its branches including: Education and Training; Healing and Wellness; Housing; Lands, Resources and Consultation; Registry; and Economic Development.

The MNO’s delivery network reaches extensively into urban, rural and remote communities all across the Province. The service sites offer a single window delivery approach with integrated services and leveraged funding focused on addressing a multitude of program needs. The Métis Nation of Ontario (MNO) labour market programming infrastructure has been generating jobs, building partnerships and contributing to the growth and prosperity of communities and the economy for more than 17 years. The priority has always been providing accountable and results-focused support and skills development to successfully transition Metis people across Ontario into employment. MNO has enhanced its’ labour market programming through the implementation of additional education focused supports and the implementation and delivery of demand driven skills projects in sectors such as tourism, mining, energy, apprenticeship and housing.

Manitoba Metis Federation

Established in 1967, the Manitoba Metis Federation (MMF) serves as the government of the Manitoba Métis, with the President and cabinet elected in province-wide general elections every four years. The MMF administers labour market programs through its Metis Employment & Training Department and a network of seven community-based Local Advisory Committees (LACs), one for each MMF Region into which the province is divided.

All Métis Employment & Training programs, services and projects are built on a broad array of measures to meet a wide spectrum of employment needs and are flexible enough to encourage participation and create a climate of opportunity in all areas of employment. Partnerships are established with governments, businesses, community-based organizations and local chapters of the MMF. The objective of these programs and services is to assist clients in preparing for, obtaining and maintaining employment and in making successful transitions into the local labour market, thereby resulting in increased employment among Métis people in Manitoba.
Gabriel Dumont Institute
Gabriel Dumont Institute (GDI) is the official training and education affiliate of the Métis Nation-Saskatchewan. It was founded in 1980 to help meet the cultural and educational needs of Saskatchewan’s Métis community. GDI operates as a parent company that owns four incorporated non-profit companies: Dumont Technical Institute, GDI Training and Employment Inc., Gabriel Dumont College, and Gabriel Dumont Scholarship Foundation. As well, GDI offers core programs and services that include the Saskatchewan Urban Native Teacher Education Program (SUNTEP), Library and Information Services, Finance and Operations and Publishing Department.

Gabriel Dumont Institute Training and Employment was established in 2006 to assist Saskatchewan’s Métis looking to improve their educational and employment outcomes. GDI Training & Employment aims to create a strong link between the training and sustained employment of Métis people. There are service delivery sites in 10 communities across the province and each is staffed with employment counsellors who provide services to Métis clients in their home communities. GDI Training & Employment also supports staff travel to outlying area communities to ensure that all Saskatchewan Métis people have reasonable access.

Rupertsland Institute
In February 2010, the Métis Nation of Alberta, which had directly managed labour market development funding since 1996, made the historic decision to transfer these responsibilities to an arms-length education, training and research institute called the Rupertsland Institute (RLI) – a Métis Centre of Excellence.

RLI is incorporated as a not-for-profit company with a professional Board of Governors representing the business community, University of Alberta academia, government, industry and the Métis community. Headquartered in Edmonton, RLI offers training and employment services to Alberta Métis through a network of nine full-time regional office locations as well as a mobile unit that travels the length and breadth of Alberta.

Métis Nation British Columbia
The Métis Provincial Council of British Columbia was first incorporated under the Society’s Act on October 23, 1996. In 2003 the Métis leadership ratified the Métis Nation British Columbia (MNBC) Constitution thereby establishing a Métis Nation governance structure. MNBC is recognized as the official governing Métis organization in the province of British Columbia by the provincial and federal governments and by the Métis National Council. It represents more than 9,000 provincially registered Métis citizens and a population of nearly 70,000 self-identified Métis people.

MNBC consists of 34 Métis Chartered Communities and is mandated to develop and enhance opportunities for Métis communities by implementing culturally relevant social and economic programs and services. MNBC administers the Métis Employment and Training Program (METP) to improve the employment potential, earning capacity and self-sufficiency of Métis people in British Columbia. Headquartered in Abbotsford, METP provides programs and service through a network of seven regional offices throughout the province.
The Métis ASETS delivery structure allows our people access to labour market development programs at the community level. This is very important because, across the Métis Homeland, 45% of Métis live in what Statistics Canada classifies as “small urban centres” or in rural areas. Another 42% live in large urban centres and 12.5% in medium population centres. We have the infrastructure in place to reach our people wherever they live. This is a major accomplishment.

In total there are 49 delivery sites providing labour market programs and services to Métis in the Métis Homeland today. Moreover, in Alberta delivery sites are supplemented by mobile units that provide services on an itinerant basis to more remote communities, and in Saskatchewan and Manitoba, outreach services have been put into place to enable Métis in northern communities access services. For example, the Manitoba Metis Federation provides client services in Churchill where travel in and out is only possible by plane or train.

1 Special Run on the 2011 NHS

Rupertsland Institute provides itinerant services in remote communities and, with its Mobile Métis Training-to-Employment Services (MTES), it can go anywhere the need arises.

Currently the Mobile unit services the following Alberta communities: Athabasca, Big Valley, Cadotte Lake, Cold Lake, Conklin, Crowsnest Pass, Drayton Valley, Edson, Fairview, Falher, Faust, Fort McMurray, Fort Vermillion, Grande Cache, High Level, Hines Creek, Hinton, Kinuso, Lacombe, Lethbridge, Lloydminster, Manning, Morinville, Onoway, Pincher Creek, Plamondon, Rocky Mountain House, Spedden, Spruce Grove, St. Paul, Stony Plain, Sundre, Vilna, Westlock, and Worsley.

The wheel chair accessible Mobile MTES, baptized the “Coureur-De-Bois” (runner of the woods), is equipped with internet access, three client computer workstations and an employment counselling office. Clients can conduct labour market research, access on-line job banks and complete training applications with employment counsellors.

During the 2012-2013 year, the Mobile MTES units provided services for 664 clients across the province.

The Coureur-De-Bois travels across the province connecting people to services and creating awareness of the MTE Program at important community events.
Development & Implementation of ASETS Operational Manual

In order to meet the stringent accountability mechanisms, reporting requirements and performance measures of the ASETS Agreement, MMF MET implemented a comprehensive review of its departmental structure, programs and services and capacity. This led to the development of a comprehensive Operational Manual for our department. The manual maps out our processes and procedures and our policies for service delivery, monitoring, reporting and accountability.

The development of the Operational Manual was a very time consuming and detailed process, but was essential as a foundation for the department and staff to ensure that the administration and delivery of programs and services is consistently and effectively delivered throughout the province, as well as ensuring that we address our ASET Agreement obligations.

Employment Counselling Diploma Program

During this review process the need for a basic foundation of skill amongst MET staff throughout the province in terms of client intake, assessment, counselling, retention, monitoring and follow-up was recognized.

To address this need MMF MET, in partnership with Anokiiwin Training Institute and Louis Riel Institute (LRI), embarked on the development of a comprehensive accredited modular-based Employment Counselling Diploma program.

The Employment Counselling Diploma program includes eleven (11) four to five day modularized workshops covering approximately twenty topic areas. Modules consist of a combination of presentations by facilitators, MET and LRI staff, written manuals & materials, individual and group exercises and facilitated group discussions.

In February 2014, we began the pilot delivery of the Employment Counselling Diploma program to a cohort of 16 MET staff.
Métis ASETS provide effective client-centred services across the Métis Homeland. Each of our Métis ASETS holders has built effective service models. The following highlights a few examples of Métis ASETS approaches to service delivery.

**CENTRES OF EXCELLENCE - ON**

In Ontario, the Métis Nation of Ontario provides counselling and employment services through its regional Centres of Excellence. These sites are results focused, inclusive and accountable and are rooted in the communities. Clients are able to access a multitude of wrap around services in addition to the employment focused labour market programming. Clients can expect to receive consistent and quality service in all delivery sites across Ontario in line with the provincial program policies and procedures that guide all intake, assessment and decision making processes. Clients have access to trained and highly competent staff that provide counselling, job matching and employer partnership development expertise. MNO provides resume workshops and job preparation sessions with increased attention on demand driven occupations and highlighting actual client successes.

When Janelle Therien went back to school in 2009, she already had a degree in psychology but the world was not friendly to an arts degree. The chance of landing a job with a career path was limited. She had taught abroad in Japan, worked in crisis intervention and in day care. Education was the obvious choice, but the idea of even more crippling debt made it seem out of reach.

She then applied to the Rupertsland Institute for tuition, costs, and living support. The support she received was crucial to her success during her nine-week practicum in her final academic year. Janelle graduated with her Bachelor of Education in Elementary Education with Distinction.

Janelle then landed a position teaching in Hobbema. In the fall of 2013 she accepted a position instructing at NorQuest College in Wetaskiwin, “I began, like many of us do, floundering, lost, looking for a helping hand and some direction. The Rupertsland Institute helped me find my way. Now it is my turn to help provide some direction, tools, and support for those I can reach out to.”
Through our ASETS Agreement the MMF is able to design employment & skills training programs & services that best serve the needs of our Métis community and our Métis citizens. These programs aim to enable unemployed or underemployed clients (Métis, Non-Status and Inuit) to better engage in the workforce, thereby improving the quality of life for them and their families.

Metis Employment & Training (MET) provides a wide range of services to clients seeking employment and training. These services include: needs assessment & career planning, job search assistance including resume & cover letter preparation, access to labour market and academic program information, funding for skills training and employment programs and direct referral to employment opportunities with our employer partners.

Our partnerships are designed to address current and anticipated labour market demands and to enhance the knowledge, skills and employability of our clients. Through a variety of successful partnerships, our clients have a history of responding to employer’s needs for qualified staff, while securing worthwhile careers for themselves.

Since the beginning of the ASETS Agreement in October 2010, MMF Metis Employment & Training has provided employment & training services to over 6,100 individuals and has assisted over 1,900 individuals to secure employment.

**Kattie Therrien**
**Gabriel Dumont Institute – Practical Nursing Program**

Kattie Therrien was struggling to make ends meet each month, with no financial stability for her or her children. She knew she need to make a change, but lack of money prevented her from furthering her education. The Gabriel Dumont Institute changed that for her. “GDI allowed me to get off social assistance and begin educating myself for a career in health care, and to begin my career without the debt of student loans,” said Kattie.

Kattie is in the process of completing the practical nursing program through GDI and, in 2012, completed the Medical Device Reprocessing program through the Dumont Technical Institute.

As a MDR technician, she decontaminates surgical and ward instruments. “I like being a part of the health care setting. I feel like I am making a difference in the lives of other people. As a medical device reprocessing technician, you have the opportunity to see all the different wards and units and it gives you a better sense of how the health care system and the hospital work.”

Kattie sees herself staying in the health care field. After she’s gained experience as a licensed practical nurse, she’d like to pursue her bachelor’s degree in nursing, with the ultimate goal of becoming a nurse practitioner. “The possibilities within nursing are endless; there are so many different areas to specialize in. It’s a great feeling to wake up every day and feel pride at my accomplishments.”
Members of the MNBC ASETS team met in Richmond in September 2013. The team from the seven regions and central operations met to discuss best practices. The goal of the meeting was for the program coordinators to share with each other what is and what is not working in their region. Staff had the opportunity to review procedures and to discuss partnership development and policy.

GDI Training & Employment’s mandate includes creating opportunities for Métis people to attain the knowledge and skills they need to enter and succeed in the labour market. GDI T&E takes a holistic approach to career counselling that includes addressing the client’s entire life. This is because non-career related factors such as family, housing, and health can impact the job search.

Employment counsellors work with clients to help identify a career path and make an action plan to get into the career they want. The type of intervention is determined based on a needs analysis. This may include help making a career choice, employment maintenance, job search techniques, going back to school or apprenticeship. Counsellors work with the client to determine their interests and, if they meet the requirements, they then develop a SMART action plan that is strategic, manageable, attainable, realistic and timely.

As counsellors work with the clients, they listen empathetically and compassionately to gain an understanding into the client’s needs and strengths and, together with the client, come up with an approach. A client may then go for upgrading, essential skills or other training or be placed directly with an employer. Counsellors continue working with each client throughout the action plan while maintaining their files – keeping records of apprenticeship hours, training at college and the transition from one level to the next in the client management system.

The well organized event saw all members of staff from across the province arrive in Regina to participate in three days of team building and professional development.
The MNBC ASETS is the place to start building a better future. It delivers a unique and diverse assortment of education, training and counselling supports and financial services. Programs are designed to help the Métis people across British Columbia overcome barriers that may stand in the way of success and self-sufficiency. Our vision is to help our Métis clients reach their full educational and employment potential.

MNBC offers a drop-in job search resource room with computer access, telephone, faxing, photocopying, job postings and information services for anyone looking for work. Counsellors are available to assist with career planning, resume development and job search strategies. Guidance and encouragement are offered to the clients as they move toward their employment goals. Partnerships are developed with organizations and companies that match their employment needs to the needs of our clients, creating a win-win situation for both partners.

In Alberta, Métis Training to Employment counsellors help clients think systematically about their future and the education that is necessary to achieve an occupational goal. Staff members build relationships with institutions in the community to support the needs of the client. They develop networks of support and find agencies that are waiting to help clients succeed.

Employers advertise job openings at MTES centres. MTES help clients apply for these jobs and provide assistance with resume writing, interview tips and promoting marketable talents. Employment tools are also available. Clients can access a wealth of information on training offered at educational institutions, view information about occupations and take home a pamphlet full of job hunting or career tips.

Through MTES Disability services, clients have access to professional support to determine the extent and nature of their disability and to create an individualized action plan leading to meaningful employment. Clients can also access assistance for technical support and equipment aimed at improving their employability or to maintain their employment.
WHERE ARE THE GAPS?

Canada’s labour market is affected by a demographic shift resulting in retirements and a growing gap between skills demand and supply. Overall Canada’s population grew by 15% between 1996 and 2011, due in large part to the impact of immigration. Canadian fertility rates alone are not sufficient to even maintain Canada’s labour force at current levels moving forward, let alone meet increasing demand for a skilled labour force. Aboriginal people on the other hand represent the fastest growing component of the Canadian population. Between 1996 and 2011, Canada’s Aboriginal population grew by over 75%, increasing from 799,000 in 1996 to some 1.4 million in 2011. It is also a very youthful population: 54% of Inuit are under 25; 49% of First Nations are under 25; and 41% of Métis are under 25 - compared to only 29.5% of Non-Aboriginal Canadians. The median age of Aboriginal Canadians is 27.7, whereas for Non-Aboriginal Canadians, the median age is now 40.6 and rising.¹

The Métis are the fastest growing component of Canada’s Aboriginal population. Métis population counts have more than doubled since 1996 and, if existing trends continue, more than 100,000 Métis will be entering the labour market in the Métis Homeland region within the next 15 years. Métis are a significant part of the Aboriginal population in Canada. In the Prairie Provinces Métis account for from 33% to 44% of the Aboriginal population, and in Ontario and British Columbia roughly 30%.

Métis can make an important contribution to filling labour shortages and meeting labour market skills gaps moving forward, particularly in Western Canada, where the majority of Métis live and where labour demand is expected to be strongest for the foreseeable future. Métis are already highly integrated into the labour market: labour market participation is as high or higher than that of the general population. Most Métis work and pay taxes – over $1.6 billion in income tax in 2010 – but we continue to be plagued by high unemployment and low incomes.² While there have been improved labour force outcomes for Métis people over the past 15 years, major gaps with the Non-Aboriginal population remain in education attainment and skills development that must be overcome if Métis are to contribute their full potential to meeting Canada’s labour market needs.

“...The Aboriginal community is the largest untapped labour force in Alberta, and the Métis represent the fastest growing population within the Aboriginal community. They are younger than the non-Aboriginal population, urban and highly mobile, making them an ideal partner to help alleviate labour woes.”

Calgary Chamber of Commerce, “Closing the Gap: Partnering for Métis Labour Market Success”, p. 3

TOO MANY MÉTIS YOUTH ARE NOT COMPLETING HIGH SCHOOL

As of 2011, 29.0% of Métis between the ages of 20-24 in the Métis Homeland were not attending school and had no high school diploma compared to 16.4% of Non-Aboriginal youth.³ Although more of our young people complete high school than First Nations or Inuit, Métis youth high school drop-out rates remain unacceptably high - about double those of the Non-Aboriginal population.

¹ Eric Malenfant and Jean-Dominique Morency, Population Projections by Aboriginal Identity in Canada, Statistics Canada, Ottawa, December 2011
² Special Run 2011 NHS
³ Special Run 2011 NHS
LOWER PROPENSITY TO PURSUE POST-SECONDARY EDUCATION

Only about 6.5% of youth who do not complete high school go on to post-secondary. This is the same for both Métis and Non-Aboriginal populations, but because proportionally more Métis youth fail to complete high school, the impact on Métis is much greater.

However, even Métis youth who complete high school have a lower propensity to pursue post-secondary than the Non-Aboriginal population. Within the Métis Homeland, only 37.4% of Métis between 20-24 years of age who complete high school go on to complete post-secondary studies of some kind, compared to 47.6% of Non-Aboriginal youth.\(^4\) It is in this age group that foundational skills to succeed on the labour market are most likely to be learned. Higher high school drop-out rates combined with a lower propensity of high school completers to pursue post-secondary translate in a marked gap relative to the Non-Aboriginal population in the proportion of Métis youth attending school in this critical age group, as shown in Chart 1.

CHART 1
Proportion of Age Group Attending School, Métis and Non-Abo, Métis Homeland, 2011

CHART 2
Highest Level of Educational Attainment, Métis and Non-Abo 20-64 years of age, Métis Homeland, 2011

HIGHER EDUCATION GAP

The vast proportion of new jobs that are to be created by the Canadian economy in the future will require a university degree or equivalent. If this proves to be true, then Métis have a great deal of catching up to do. As matters currently stand, approximately 75% of Métis in the Métis Homeland who complete post-secondary obtain trades related or college certificates and diplomas, compared to only 50% of Non-Aboriginal Canadians in the region. About 25% of Métis men study construction trades or mechanics; while women enter health-related fields in about equal proportion.\(^5\) While trade certificates and college diplomas can lead to jobs, especially once labour force attrition is taken into account, the fact remains that proportionally fewer Métis are obtaining university diplomas and degrees that the jobs of the future will increasingly demand.

\(^a\) Special Run on 2011 NHS database
\(^b\) Special Run on 2011 NHS database
The 1996 Canadian Census figures showed that a smaller percentage of Métis people had university degrees than was the case even for First Nations. According to the 1996 Canadian Census, only 4.1% of the Métis adult population had a university degree, compared to 4.5% of First Nations and 13.5% of Non-Aboriginal Canadians.

The latest Statistics Canada figures – for 2011 – show that the proportion of Métis with a Bachelor’s degree or better has increased to 9.3% nationally and to 11.0% for the population under 65 in the Métis Homeland. This is still well below Non-Aboriginal Canadians, 21.4% of whom have a university degree nationally and 37% under 65 in the Métis Homeland region. Despite a remarkable improvement over the past 15 years, a great deal more has to be done to close the higher education gap.

INVESTMENTS THAT BENEFIT ALL

A number of independent studies have been published showing the fiscal impact over the longer term of investing in improving educational and related labour market outcomes for Aboriginal people. For example, Sharpe and Arsenault concluded in a 2010 study that closing the education and labour market income gaps between Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal Canadians by 2026 would lead to cumulative benefits of $400.5 billion (2006 dollars) in additional output and $115 billion (2006 dollars) in avoided government expenditures over the 2001 to 2016 period. Applying their methodology to Métis specifically, the same authors concluded that if, by 2026, Métis reached the 2001 education level of non-Aboriginal Canadians, “...over these 25 years, additional GDP would culminate in a staggering $81.6 billion ($2006)”. Moreover, tax revenues would grow by an additional $33.5 billion over the period 2001-2026.

More recently, Eric Howe, professor in the Department of Economics at the University of Saskatchewan, examined the economic benefits of closing the Aboriginal education gaps in the Province of Saskatchewan. He concluded that life-time individual monetary benefits would amount to $16.2 billion but that, combined with non-monetary individual benefits and external social benefits, they would add up to a staggering $90 billion just in Saskatchewan.

Howe conducted a similar study in Alberta where the economic impacts were even more spectacular. Examining the files of 1,496 Métis clients that had

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6 Special Run 2011 NHA
7 Sharpe, Andrew and Jean-Francoise Arsenault, “Investing in Aboriginal Education in Canada: An Economic Perspective”, Centre for the Study of Living Standards (CSLS), Research Report No. 2010-3, Ottawa, 2010

“A mind is a very expensive thing to waste.”

Dr. Eric Howe

Kayla Kramer, 22, won the Governor General’s Academic Medal for her high academic standing at Grande Prairie Regional College (GPRC) in the 2012-2013 academic year. The medal is one of the most prestigious awards that a student in a Canadian educational institution can receive.

Kayla Kramer
Grande Prairie Regional College, Animal Health Technology-BC

“Kayla’s achievement is exemplary, and it is of particular note that she is the first student of Animal Health Technology to have accomplished top academic standing at GPRC,” said the College’s Vice-President of Academics and Research, Susan Bansgrove.

Her love of animals helped her win the award. “I always thought animal healthcare was interesting and fascinating,” she said. “It was easier to study for things because I actually enjoyed what I was studying for.”

Kramer is a lifelong resident of the Peace Country and grew up near Flyfish Creek outside of Fort St. John. Growing up in that more rural location may have given her an advantage over other students, she said. “There’s more large animals because there’s more land,” she said.

After graduation, Kayla moved back to Fort St. John and became an animal health technician at the North Peace Veterinary Clinic.
funded by RLI, he was able to project a lifetime earnings increase exceeding $564 million and an increase to the provincial tax base that surpasses $267 million. He demonstrated a seven-fold increase in lifetime earnings of a Métis woman, who stands to earn $390,000 over a lifetime of work if she does not complete her grade 12 education, but her lifetime income increases to $2.8 million if she completes a Bachelor’s degree or higher education.

The report concludes that Alberta stands to lose billions of dollars if it fails to invest in Aboriginal education.

**SKILLS DEVELOPMENT: IMPROVING LABOUR MARKET OUTCOMES**

Métis Nation ASETS holders are concentrating on addressing skills development among the constituency that is most in need of training assistance to succeed on the labour market. Some 68% of our clients come to us with a high school diploma or less; and 53% are under the age of 25.

The objective is to provide them with training that will lead to long-term, meaningful and remunerative employment. We try to prepare clients for a career, not just a job. This means helping them attain certified or industry recognized accreditations in occupations for which there is documented demand on the labour market. A client will on average work with us for 336 days before we deem him or her employment ready.

In the following sections, we will review the kinds of activities that our ASETS holders undertake to close the skills gaps with the Non-Aboriginal population.

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**Derek Klassen**  
**Red River College, Aircraft Maintenance and Manufacturing**

Derek Klassen was sponsored by the Manitoba Metis Federation to attend the Red River College ACCESS Aircraft Maintenance and Manufacturing program.

In his earlier years, Derek worked alongside his father fixing aircraft. He gained a ‘passion for planes’ and this resulted in Derek excelling in the Aircraft program. He was at the top of his class in theory and practical application. His commitment and dedication led to a full time position as an Aircraft Maintenance Engineer-in-training with a local carrier, Perimeter Air.

Derek is married and has three children. He looks forward to furthering his education in the Aviation field and thanks the Manitoba Metis Federation for all the support and guidance.

“With the Aboriginal Education Gap, Alberta is leaving over a quarter of a trillion dollars unrealized and unclaimed - money that is essentially lying on the ground, waiting to be picked up.”
Labour market development programs were transferred to Aboriginal governments and organizations not just because we reach our people better but also because we are in the best position to tailor programs to the needs of our respective communities. As originally conceived, Métis ASETS holders share with the Government of Canada the common objective of assisting people “prepare for, find and keep employment”. However, we have some flexibility to deploy program tools that best fit the needs of our constituencies and our clients.

Métis do not have access to the post-secondary assistance programs that Aboriginal Affairs and Northern Development Canada provides to First Nation and Inuit students. Yet we are not rich and have comparable economic statistics to First Nations off-reserve. To address the gaps in post-secondary attainment for Métis, it is important to encourage and support more of our people to attend college and universities. One of the most significant ways to narrow education gaps is through Métis endowment funds.

Métis Endowments

Métis endowment funds have now been established at major universities and colleges in Manitoba, Alberta and Ontario. These endowments have been created on a matching dollar-for-dollar basis with post-secondary institutions. **To date, Métis Agreement Holders have invested a total of $16 million in endowments and have leveraged $16 million, generating total endowment funding of $32 million.**

The Gabriel Dumont Institute in Saskatchewan also administers its own $2.5 million endowment with funding received from the Province and private sector partners, supplemented by contributions from its labour market agreement.

These endowments are managed by universities and colleges, which have expertise in this area. **They have generated over $4.8 million in revenues up to this point, which has gone to provide bursaries to close to 4,000 Métis students.** They will continue to provide bursaries for our post-secondary students in perpetuity. Métis Endowments enable more people to pursue higher education.

16 million in endowments
+ 16 million leveraged
= 32 million total endowment funding

4.8 million in revenues which has gone to provide bursaries to close to 4,000 Métis students.
The Gabriel Dumont Scholarship Foundation (GDSF) trust, established in 1986, administers scholarships for Saskatchewan Métis. The $2.5 million scholarship fund is based on an initial federal grant received in 1985 combined with an investment of $1.3 million by Gabriel Dumont Institute Training and Employment under the AHRDA in 2008. Scholarships are awarded on the interest earned on the fund’s principal. A Scholarship Trustees and Selection Committee awards scholarships twice per year. The GDIT&E scholarship funds are intended to support Saskatchewan Métis people in labour market related training and transition.

Funds are used to lever agreements with business, industry, crown corporations, individuals and others to develop targeted scholarship and/or bursary initiatives/programs. Partnerships include matching GDI-partner scholarship contributions, as well as career mentorship and summer employment opportunities for scholarship recipients.

George Gingras knows well the challenges that come with completing a university degree. But through it all, he was motivated by one thought: he was going to be the first person in his family to graduate with a university degree.

George graduated with a Bachelor of Fine Arts from the U of S in 2013. He currently works as the administrative coordinator and in outreach education with Gabriel Dumont Institute Publishing.

His favorite part of working for GDI Publishing is being able to apply his knowledge of Métis and First Nations art and art history in the applied work he does in outreach and education, and in organizing cultural events and promotions. He enjoys working with other historians, curriculum developers, linguistics experts, and Métis elders and knowledge keepers.

George first approached GDI looking for help to complete university. GDI helped alleviate some of his worries about owing money for tuition and books. “They were able to accelerate my graduation, which would have taken me another two years to complete without their help. I always acknowledged that the funding I received was a gift, and I was not going to take it for granted.”

Since graduating, George has been accepted into a Masters of Fine Arts program through the Vermont College of Fine Arts, and in the future, he plans to pursue his doctorate. He’s also in the process of opening up an online store to sell fine art prints, reproductions, and original paintings, drawings and sculptures.
**MMF Endowment Fund**

In 1999 the Manitoba Metis Federation Endowment Fund was established through partnerships with the University of Brandon, College Universitaire de Saint Boniface, University College of the North, University of Manitoba and the University of Winnipeg to support talented Métis students pursue their educational goals.

To date, contributions from all partners totals over $14 million with over $2.2 million in awards being distributed to 1,718 Metis students attending participating universities.

The awards are funded from the interest on the capital contributions to the fund, maintaining the principal value and creating a legacy for future generations. Award amounts vary at each post-secondary institution and range from $500 to $3,000 with the average being $1,500 per student.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Manitoba Métis Federation - Endowment Investments as of February 2014</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Balance of Fund:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MMF Contribution:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Leveraged Amount:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Number of Awards:</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**SaskTel Scholarship Renewed For Three More Years**

In March 2009, GDIT&E and SaskTel officials signed an agreement to establish a three-year SaskTel Métis Scholarship Award for 2009-2012.

The award is funded by an annual donation of $9,000 by SaskTel and matched by GDIT&E bursary under the GDI Scholarship Foundation II.

The aim of the award is to recognize leadership, academic achievement, financial need and community involvement of Métis students pursuing post secondary education in engineering, business, computer science, or any other field of study that is related to SaskTel.

According to the agreement, SaskTel provides career mentorship to scholarship award recipients and also informs them of available summer job opportunities with SaskTel. Between 2009 and 2012, 24 SaskTel Métis Scholarship Awards totalling $48,000 were awarded to successful Métis students. And, in recognition of the success of the first three years of the scholarship award, SaskTel and GDI representatives signed an agreement to renew the award for another three years covering 2012-2015. The terms of reference, including eligibility and the amount of funding remain unchanged.

**Annalise Sewchuk**

University of Alberta, Medicine

Before she decided to enter into medical studies, Annalise searched for a focus as she pursued her Bachelor of Science Degree. Support from the Rupertsland Institute (RLI) relieved some financial pressure and enabled her to devote a summer to an unpaid research internship at the Canadian Centre for Behavioural Neuroscience (CCBN) at the University of Lethbridge. This experience inspired her passion for clinical neuroscience and cemented her interest in medicine.

The following summer, Annalise was employed at the facility and was granted the chance to present research she had been working on for two years. By working with some of Canada’s top researchers in increasingly challenging roles, she gained indispensable confidence that led to her application for medicine at the University of Alberta.

In her first year of medical school Annalise was one of ten recipients of the Alberta-wide Hnatiuk Award, which entails a return to work agreement for rural Alberta upon graduation with her medical license. Now in her third year of medical school, Annalise looks to the future in rural family practice rotation in High Prairie. “I almost cannot believe how far I have come in my seven years of post-secondary education and am thankful to RLI for choosing to invest in me. The bursary truly did help out at a crucial fork in the road career-wise.”
Métis Education Foundation - AB

The Métis Education Foundation holds 11 endowments with post-secondary partners and disbursements in the form of Métis Scholar Awards have reached 392 Métis students in Alberta since 2009.

Established in 1991 by the Métis Nation of Alberta, the Métis Education Foundation (MEF) assists, encourages and supports Métis students in pursuing full time studies. Today, the MEF holds 11 endowments with post-secondary partners across Alberta. The MEF vision is to place an endowment in every post-secondary institution with significant Métis enrolment.

Métis Scholar Awards - 2013-2014 (Rupertsland Institute)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>INSTITUTION</th>
<th>ENDOWMENT AMOUNT</th>
<th>TOTAL ANNUAL AWARDS</th>
<th>TOTAL ANNUAL AWARDS VALUE</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>MacEwan University</td>
<td>$2,000,000</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>$84,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Norquest College</td>
<td>$750,000</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>$15,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Portage College</td>
<td>$1,000,000</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>$19,500</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>University of Alberta</td>
<td>$4,000,000</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>$115,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>University of Calgary</td>
<td>$1,500,000</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>$60,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lethbridge University</td>
<td>$1,000,000</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>$35,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mount Royal University</td>
<td>$500,000</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>$17,500</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NAIT</td>
<td>$2,410,000</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>$23,500</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Grande Prairie College</td>
<td>$500,000</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>$4,500</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lethbridge College</td>
<td>$500,000</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>$21,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Athabasca University</td>
<td>$400,000</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>$10,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>$14,560,000</strong></td>
<td><strong>104</strong></td>
<td><strong>$405,000</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The Métis Scholar Awards were created to assist Métis students who would not typically qualify for funding under the RLI Training program. As only the interest from the endowments is disbursed, these agreements maintain their principal value and support Métis students in perpetuity. The value of the awards varies from $1,500 to $20,000 depending on the institution and program of study.
Closing the Gap

Métis ASETS holders are collaborating with post-secondary institutions to develop curriculum, develop delivery models and to support transitions of students into the workplace. The following highlights key Métis ASETS partnerships.

Métis Nation British Columbia & Justice Institute of British Columbia Signing - BC

President Bruce Dumont (MNBC) and President Michel Tarko (JIBC) signed a Memorandum of Understanding at the AGM Banquet on September 28, 2013 that recognizes both the MNBC and the JIBC’s common interests in education and research fields. The Justice Institute of British Columbia is a public, post-secondary educational institution that is focused on training professionals in the justice, public safety and social services fields.

In addition to the MOU, JIBC also signed a Métis Learners Protocol, which acknowledges and affirms the consultation and collaboration needed to incorporate Métis ways of knowing in the development and delivery of programs and services. The protocol sets out a path for the work of defining the needs of Métis learners and improving their learning experiences, and establishing the parameters for use of traditional and cultural knowledge.

MNBC President Bruce Dumont stated, “post-secondary education and training is vital for Métis peoples, their families, and communities. This agreement will serve to advance the participation of Métis learners in post-secondary education and to ensure that British Columbia’s post-secondary institutions reflect the unique history and culture of the Métis peoples of British Columbia.”

JIBC President Dr. Michel Tarko stated “Providing culturally appropriate education and services to Indigenous learners, and increasing the number of Indigenous learners, are essential components of how we define educational excellence at JIBC. This agreement contributes to a diverse learning environment that values the distinct circumstances and needs of British Columbia’s Métis peoples. We look forward to working collaboratively with MNBC on a variety of knowledge building activities that will benefit Métis students.”

Bursary Recipients Algoma University

In January 2014 Algoma University celebrated the academic achievements of its students at its 20th Annual Algoma University Student Awards. Among the awards, 11 Métis students were presented with the Métis Nation of Ontario (MNO) Bursary. The Bursary is one way the MNO strives to create more opportunities for Métis students in post-secondary education. Recognizing the absence of dedicated post-secondary financial assistance for Métis students, the MNO initiated its bursary program in 1998. Today, 36 post-secondary institutions across Ontario offer the bursary.

Recipients of the bursary are Diandra Bellerose, Corey Caple, Mitchell Case, Kimberly Cavanagh, Megan Gjos, Jocelyn Moreau, Bernadette Pizzey, Taylor Smith, Kristal Strawbridge, Chelsey-Ann Waddell and Lyndsay-Lee Waddell.

Algoma Awards ceremony - Left to right: Bernadette Pizzey, Kristal Strawbridge, Diandra Bellerose and Corey Caple

Congratulations to these deserving Métis students!
On December 6, 2013 the Métis Nation of Ontario (MNO) and Northern College signed a historic Memorandum of Understanding (MOU).

The MOU is intended to strengthen and formalize the long-standing positive working relationship between the MNO and Northern College. The agreement establishes several key areas for collaboration and partnership including: increasing Métis participation in, and access to, Northern College programs and services, engaging in joint Métis research initiatives and promoting Métis content in curriculum.

The MOU with Northern College is part of a larger relationship building process that includes bilateral partnerships with post-secondary institutions and an MOU between the MNO and the Ministry of Training, Colleges and Universities.

According to MNO Chair France Picotte
"this is a significant achievement for the Métis people in Ontario because it demonstrates a commitment to forge a lasting relationship between post-secondary institutions and the MNO."

On the day of her graduation from the University of Alberta, Nicole Kostrosky-Wareham was one of the few graduates who was required to request leave from a classroom job to attend the ceremony.

The road to this accomplishment began during a time when Nicole and her husband were financially challenged. But she received funding in her fourth year of university from the Rupertsland Institute Métis Training to Employment Program and was able to stay focused on her studies and graduate.

Nicole was nominated for the Edwin Parr Teacher Award for first year teachers and the school district then selected her as one of their top five nominees.

"I am incredibly excited about what lays ahead and thankful for the education I was able to receive. My fourth year at university was an integral part, and the financial support helped to keep me focused, driven, and dedicated to the path I have chosen."
Rupertsland Centre for Métis Research

On May 31, 2011, RLI, the Métis Nation of Alberta and the University of Alberta (U of A) formally announced the creation of Canada’s first Métis-specific academic research centre called the Rupertsland Centre for Métis Research (RCMR).

The announcement is the culmination of many years of effort beginning with the signing of a memorandum of understanding (MOU) between the MNA and the U of A in 2007. As a result, a formal Working Group was established between RLI (previously MNA’s LMD program) and the U of A to negotiate the development of the RCMR.

The Working Group’s proposal for an academic centre, as submitted to the U of A Strategic Initiatives Group, the Centres and Institutes Committee, and Academic Planning Committee, highlighted the following:

The central purpose of the RCMR will be to serve as an expansive academic research program specifically designed for Métis concerns. A leading priority for the RCMR will include the development of a policy think tank. Additionally, the goals and objectives of the academic research centre will include:

• the formation of local, provincial and national connections with Métis communities;
• building research capacity to advance Métis-specific research; and
• training and employing student researchers.

Under the guidance of RCMR’s Executive Council the MNA, RLI, and U of A are able to address the institutional deficit in research for Métis people.

Justin Martin
University of the Fraser Valley,
Architectural Drafting

“I cannot thank Métis Nation British Columbia enough for your support throughout my Architectural Drafting program at the University of the Fraser Valley. The assistance allowed me to really focus on my studies and I am proud to say my marks were in the 80th to 90th percentile.

The Architectural Drafting program gave me confidence and expertise in blueprints. The knowledge I now have in construction enabled me to seek employment in the electrical field. I would not have pursued this career path without my training.

I am proud to say that, within three weeks of completing the program, I secured employment with Col Electrical and began work on a multi-million dollar project building a massive drill to be used in a mine up north. As you can see from the smile on my face I am feeling pretty good about myself.”

These agreements and subsequent resourced work plans have increased critical capacity for MNO to engage education partners and advance educational issues. Activities allow for greater support for students in the K-12 and post-secondary systems and increased attention to making successful transitions through school toward long term employment. The MNO and these Ministries share a number of common goals and have in working collaboratively have achieved measurable results. MNO is looking to take another step forward with Ontario by collaborating on targeted investments in employment and training to build a more efficient and comprehensive labour market development strategy in Ontario.

MNO representatives stressed the success of the Framework Agreement. “Métis communities and people have achieved success after success” indicated President Lipinski “in all areas right across the board from the Métis Voyageur Development Fund to Memoranda of Understanding with government ministries, universities and colleges to the renewal of the Aboriginal Healing and Wellness Strategy to the many Duty to Consult and Accommodate engagements across the province, to name a few. We have achieved a great deal working together with the Government of Ontario.”

When Megan decided to attend university it was a difficult decision. She knew she wanted to become a teacher and have a career she could be proud of, but as a mature student, she knew she would have to make a lot of sacrifices. Megan and her husband lived two hours away from the closest university, and since most of her friends had already started their careers, she wouldn’t have much peer support when she got there.

Megan made an appointment at the Metis Employment and Training office in Dauphin Manitoba and was encouraged to find that she qualified for services. MET helped reduce the financial burden, and made post-secondary school accessible. During her studies, MET helped Megan stay focused, offering career counseling and interview preparation for when she completed her course. In May 2013, Megan celebrated graduation from the Bachelor of Education program and accepted her first job as a Grade 4/5 teacher with LT Col Barker VC School in Dauphin.

“**It is never too late to return to school and have your dream job. I hope I can be a role model for my students to follow their dreams and never give up.”**
Preparing Métis for Post-Secondary Education

Métis ASETS are involved in a range of activities that encourage and support secondary students as they transition into post-secondary education. The following articles showcase examples of how the Métis ASETS are working to prepare Métis for post-secondary education.

Back to School Métis style - Infinite Reach Program - ON

The Infinite Reach Métis Student Solidarity Network serves as a community of learners with the ability to inspire Métis students to achieve their full potential. It is a network of post-secondary students who have the common goal of working together to enrich and enhance their post-secondary education experience. Members form a community of Métis learners within their college or university and support each other in academic pursuits.

Infinite Reach facilitators are upper year students who offer assistance to incoming students by helping them adjust to university life and they work to create and maintain a sense of community among Métis students.

In September 2013, Métis post-secondary students from across the province reunited in Ottawa for the Métis Nation of Ontario (MNO) Infinite Reach Facilitator orientation session. New and returning facilitators were given a three-day orientation session to familiarize themselves with the MNO, the Infinite Reach Program, go over the facilitator manual, code of conduct and tips to prepare themselves for the new fall semester at their respective institutions.

Infinite Reach Facilitator’s, staff and community members at the University of Ottawa. (Left to right) front row: Wanda Botsford, MNO Education Officer; Chantal Cote, MNO Educational Analyst/Officer; Sahra Maclean, Carleton University; Brianne Gasselin, Hearst University; Tegan Mandeville, Loyalist College; Senator Lois McCallum; and Senator Roland St. Germain. Second row: Sheila Grantham, MNO Education Officer; Nikki Doucette, Sault College; Christine Skura, Ryerson University; Alicia Bloue, University of Waterloo; Marie-Louise Lariviere, Wilfrid Laurier University; Kian Connor, Laurentian University. Third row: Mitch Case, Algoma/Shingwauk University; Katelyn Lacroix, Wilfrid Laurier University; Jesse LaFleur, Seneca College; Jessica Maclean, University of Toronto; Kailyn Wilson, Lakehead University; and Melody Chislett-Morris, Sault College. Back row: Mathew Lafreniere, University of Ottawa; Elijah Cardarette, St. Clair College; Brad Lafortune, University of Ottawa; and Jesse Donovan, University of Toronto.
March Break Camp - ON

Twenty-two Métis high school students from across Ontario gather in Mattawa for the 2014 Métis Nation of Ontario Infinite Reach March Break Camp.

Held at the Canadian Ecology Centre, the four-day retreat provided an opportunity for students to receive a wealth of information on post-secondary options, pathways to employment opportunities and to learn about the MNO and its Infinite Reach Solidarity Network and their culture and heritage. Students participated in sessions on post-secondary opportunities, resume-writing workshop as well as cultural activities of finger weaving, beading and moccasin making. The camp provided to be a great opportunity for students to build networks with each other, with the Infinite Reach Facilitators and with the MNO staff and community members. Many students showed up to March break camp as strangers and left as great friends.

Participants and staff of the MNO Métis Ready to Work workshop. (Left to right) back row: Jessica MacLean, Chanelle Larocque, Ashley Desjardins, Deidre Thomson, Sydney Ducharme, Gabrielle Fayant and Senator Roland St. Germain. Middle row: Rebekah Wilson, Melody Chislett, Sarah MacLean, Steven Pelletier and Freeman Jones. Front row: Tegan Mandeville-MacKay and Guylaine Morin-Cleroux.

Sudbury school student Alexandre Savoie during one of the beading workshops.

The Métis Nation of Ontario (MNO) has leveraged both provincial and federal funding to implement successful industry focused skills development projects in the areas of apprenticeships, tourism, energy, housing and mining. These projects utilize and enhance the existing MNO ASETS infrastructure and are delivered in partnership with industry associations and post-secondary partners. The MNO Northern Employment in Energy Project (NEEP) and Navigating Employment Pathways Tourism and Hospitality projects are examples of this approach. Programs are comprised of in class components combined with placement and on the job experience opportunities that lead to employment.
Kristy Majeran
University of Manitoba, Registered Nurse / BN

Kristy Majeran was born and raised in Thompson, Manitoba. In her high-school graduating year, she was given an opportunity to try out for the University of Manitoba Bison Women’s hockey team that led her to continue her education. Kristy was accepted to the team, making her a student athlete.

Kristy is a success on the ice and in the classroom, working tirelessly to balance her athletic pursuits and academic career. She successfully completed her education at the University of Manitoba, earning the title of Graduate Nurse with a baccalaureate in Nursing. She then wrote her Canadian Registered Nurse Exam in October 2013 and accepted a position at the Victoria General Hospital on a family medicine unit.
March 27, 2014

On behalf of Park Avenue Vending and Coffee Co., I would like to express a sincere thank you to the Manitoba Metis Federation for being a generous partner with us. In addition to receiving wage subsidies for the individuals that we hired, we gained access to their pool of Metis Job Seekers with a wide range of skills and abilities. Finding and hiring the right employee can be expensive and time consuming — especially so for a small business. The Manitoba Metis Federation ASETS helped with us during the hiring process: developing a job description, screening candidates, and conducting interviews.

The individuals that we employed through the Wage Subsidy program have had a tremendous impact on our business since they joined the team. They have really settled into their roles and continue to show improvement in their skills, work ethic and general attitude. We are happy to have them on board and feel confident that they will only continue to improve, and be productive members of our team long after the end of the Wage Subsidy.

As any small business owner knows, it’s hard to get good advice and good help. Sometimes you have no idea where to turn. I can honestly say that the MMF ASETS program and representatives have helped me propel Park Avenue Vending forward. I would definitely recommend their programs to any organization, small or large that is looking to take that next step forward and grow their business.

I look forward to continuing the relationship with the MMF to assist us with our needs as we continue to grow.

Sincerely,

B.J
(Bernard Jamault)
President
Park Avenue Vending & VIP Coffee CO.
(204)229-6318
The Canadian Chamber of Commerce recently identified the “Top 10 Barriers to Competitiveness in Canada”. The number #1 barrier is skills shortages. According to the Chamber, Skills gaps cost the economy billions of dollars annually in foregone GDP.1

Given the demographic reality of an aging population and shrinking labour force growth, combined with the policy complexity of Canada’s labour markets, these projected shortages and gaps will take time and collaboration to resolve. To address the skills gap, the Chamber proposes to focus on four areas – upskilling; education; immigration; and Aboriginal workforce development.

The Métis ASETS could not agree more. The job market is demanding increasing levels of accreditation and most new jobs require post-secondary education. We want our people to succeed in the labour market and that means providing them opportunities for skills that will lead to successful, long-term, gainful employment.

As a group, Métis ASETS holders support our clients in courses up to two years in duration to enable them to obtain college and university certificates and diplomas - and most diplomas require up to two years of study today. Many of our clients go on to higher education. This is not about ‘training for the sake of training’ but rather the best way to ensure that Métis people obtain credentials that will lead to meaningful employment. These articles highlight successes in training and apprenticeship initiatives.

Trainee

Project-Based Training
Skilled Labour/Heavy Equipment Operators - WERI - MB

Winnipeg Environmental Remediations Incorporated (WERI), in partnership with the Metis Economic Development Organization (MEDO) and Metis Employment & Training, developed a 12-week training initiative for four Métis candidates in heavy equipment operation.

With so many resource extraction and infrastructure projects on the go in Manitoba, there’s an increasing need for skilled equipment operators.

The goal of this initiative was to help train and develop four experienced heavy equipment operators. In the interests of workforce development, WERI is committed to providing opportunities for Métis people to gain essential practical operating hours on heavy equipment.

Trainees were sent to various WERI worksites for on-the-job-training. All trainees were provided with 210+ hours on various pieces of heavy equipment, and were hired-on after completing the program. Three of the clients were able to advance in their careers, and two secured promotions at their place of employment, thanks to the extensive training they received.

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1Skills gaps cost Ontario’s economy up to $24.3 billion in foregone GDP annually, as estimated by Stuckley, James and Daniel Munro. The Cost of Ontario’s Skills Gap. The Conference Board of Canada. June 2013.
Primary Care Paramedic Training Program - Winnipeg - MB

The Manitoba Metis Federation partnered with Oshki Annishinabe Nigaaniwak (the City of Winnipeg’s Aboriginal Youth Strategy), the Winnipeg Fire and Paramedic Services, the Centre for Aboriginal Human Resource Development, First Peoples Development Inc., and Manitoba Aboriginal and Northern Affairs in the delivery of an 11-month Primary Care Paramedic course for Aboriginal youth and young adults.

The Manitoba Metis Federation recruited six qualified candidates to participate in the Primary Care Paramedic Training Program that took place from October 2013 to September 2014. MMF Winnipeg Region Metis Employment and Training is providing funding and support to the six qualified candidates.

In total, 16 individuals are enrolled in the program consisting of First Nations, Non-Status and Métis participants. The program includes classroom, lab and scenario training (720 hours) followed by hospital clinical (60 hours) and ambulance practicum (240 hours). It prepares individuals for employment as Paramedics with the City of Winnipeg by offering training components required by the City.

Rebekah Wilson
Sheridan College, Journalism/Author

Rebekah Wilson is thankful to the MNO for providing funding that helped her make the concept of the book into a reality. Wilson received funding through MNO’s Métis Culture Based Economic Development Grant (MCED) program.

Wilson recently authored a children’s book entitled The Tiny Voyageur: A Young Girls Discovery of Métis History. The story is illustrated beautifully by artwork of her father Jeffrey Wilson. While being a fun story that children love, it is also educational and it promotes Métis culture.

The idea for the story arose when Wilson was working on a project while a journalism student at Sheridan College. Wilson hopes that her book will create a greater awareness about Métis history and heritage in young people. “I’m so proud of my Métis roots and I want others to feel the same,” stated Wilson, “and for those who are not Métis, just for them to get an idea of the culture and know who we are.” The Tiny Voyageur and its French counterpart La Petite Voyageuse were officially released in January 2014.
GDI Apprenticeship Program Exceeds Expectations

Gabriel Dumont Institute Training and Employment (GDIT&E) is one of 79 holders of the Aboriginal Skills and Partnership Fund (SPF) across Canada. SPF is a demand-driven, partnership-based program that funds projects contributing to skills training for Aboriginal workers leading to gainful employment. GDIT&E administers the fund in the form of its Aboriginal Apprenticeship Initiative.

Less than three years ago, the Aboriginal Apprenticeship Initiative was started at GDI following an agreement between Human Resources and Skills Development Canada (HRSDC) and GDIT&E. The goal was to increase Aboriginal participation in apprenticeship to at least 120 clients, and to establish at least 60 partnerships with employers in 17 or more different designated trades in Saskatchewan.

One of SPF’s earliest actions was to meet with potential employers and apprentices and explain the program. They held open houses across the province and placed ads in newspapers and on social media sites. SPF also surveyed clients and employers to learn how to make the program more effective. The survey results were used to prepare more than ten reports to Service Canada. Four more reports are due by May 2014.

A total of 230 Aboriginal clients have been placed with employers to date. SPF’s goal was to have these clients placed in at least 17 different trade areas. GDI has met this goal. The top five most popular trades are carpenter, electrician, welder, plumber and heavy-duty mechanic, making up over 80% of the placements (or 169 clients). The bottom five — meat cutter, locksmith, sheet metal worker, industrial mechanic and pipefitter — account for 4% of the placements (or 8 clients).

Another goal was to have at least 60 employer partnerships. To date, we have signed 263 partnerships and the project partners have consistently stated that they find the partnerships useful and that they are happy with the support they receive from GDI. continued on page 32

Valine Gaudet
SIAST – Electrician Student

Life was not always easy for Valine Gaudet, a second-year electrician student at Saskatchewan Institute of Applied Sciences and Technology, but the Gabriel Dumont Institute helped turn things around for her.

“Moving from a past of low self esteem and poverty, working with GDI has allowed me to make an easy transition to becoming self-reliant and positive,” Valine said.

Before Valine had ever heard of GDI, the signs outside the institute piqued her interest. When she entered the building, she says she was greeted with smiles and encouragement. She knew before she talked to anyone at GDI what she wanted to do, but she didn’t know where to start.

GDI helped create a smooth transition from employment to post-secondary apprenticeship training, and back to employment.

Valine credits hard work and dedication as the secret to her success. In school, she’s learning mathematics, how to read blue prints and the importance of the codebook. “Safety and code come hand in hand,” she said. “Safety is everyone’s responsibility.” She thrives with the hands on work of being an electrician, and she plans to one day become a journey person and start her own company.

“GDI set me up for life.”
The partnering employers include those who have offered placements for our clients and those who have not yet, but are willing to do so when they need an apprentice. After the clients have worked for six months in a particular trade, they are indentured with the Saskatchewan Apprenticeship and Trades Certification Commission as registered apprentices in the province. A target of the program was to have at least 120 indentured clients by January 2014. By end of January SPF had 125 indentured clients. Partly because of this success, the SPF agreement was amended in October 2013. Under the new agreement, GDI received additional funding from HRSDC and is expected to have at least 140 indentured apprentices by March 31, 2014. To date, GDI has 152 indentured clients and has met and or exceeded all its targets.

GDI Partners to Deliver Aboriginal Heavy Equipment Operator Program

On July 26, 2013, GDI Training & Employment in partnership with the City of Saskatoon, Saskatoon Tribal Council, and Saskatchewan Indian Institute of Technology (SIIT), celebrated graduation of eight students from the Aboriginal Heavy Equipment Operator and Class 1A License Pre-employment Training Program. This program has proven successful since its inception in 2010, having graduated 30 students, with 86% of the graduates gaining long-term employment in Saskatchewan.

Alain Thibert
Red River College, Power Engineering Program

Alain Thibert graduated from the Power Engineering program at Red River College (RRC) in 2013. He excelled through the program and was fortunate to be hired by RRC as a summer student at the end of his first year.

Alain is now working at DTZ, part of the Unico Group, a large corporation that will be expanding its operations in the Winnipeg over the next while. He enjoys his work and looks forward to advancing in the company and in his career as a Power Engineer.

Alain stopped by the office to express his gratitude and appreciation for being funded, as it helped him reach his full potential and in his words, “the assistance I received from the MMF helped me become a meaningful contributor to society.” Alain has a wife and three children at home. His family will benefit for years to come thanks to his dedication and to the assistance of the Metis Employment and Training Department.
Joselyn Britton  
Chef de partie - Tusq Restaurant & Staqatto Piano Bar

In her culinary arts studies Joselyn Britton has learned practical applications like the basic properties of soups, stocks, and sauces and how to produce well-balanced and flavorful dishes, but she’s also learned a lesson about attitude: “To just have fun and enjoy what you are making for people every day.”

Jocelyn first heard about Gabriel Dumont Institute’s Training and Employment opportunities from her father Harvey Britton, who is the current president of the Métis local of Batoche. She had already finished her first year as a professional cooking student at SIAST before looking into GDI for training opportunities.

In her work as a chef de partie at Tusq Restaurant, Joselyn sets up the line for lunch service, preps for the evening service and helps the chef and pastry chef with their duties in the kitchen. But her favorite part is the customers who come through the door. “It is such a good feeling when people leave the restaurant happy after having something that we made.”

Her goal is to become a Red Seal journeyperson, and someday open her own restaurant.

“An organization like GDI helps young Métis people realize there are opportunities out there for them.”
April 11, 2014

VIA E-MAIL: jason.deback@gdihe.gdfs.org

Jason DeBack
Apprenticeship Co-ordinator
Gabriel Dumont Institute
Training and Employment

Dear Mr. DeBack:

Re: Cameco and Gabriel Dumont Institute - Training and Employment Apprenticeship Partnership

This letter is to express Cameco Corporation’s appreciation to Gabriel Dumont Institute Training and Employment (GDI) for partnering on apprenticeship training. This partnership supports Cameco’s goal to increase employment of residents of northern Saskatchewan in the trades. For approximately two years GDI played an important role by providing financial support for six apprentices at Cameco’s Rabbit Lake operation.

Cameco takes our apprenticeship program very seriously. In addition to on the job training and formal classroom training offsite, these apprentices are required to spend time with the Rabbit Lake work place educator. This additional academic support has increased their chances of success and all six are making steady progress in their apprenticeship.

All six are northerners of aboriginal descent. They are anticipated to obtain journey person status in the next few years and will be transitioned to permanent positions in their trade. Their employment in a skilled trade will have positive outcomes for themselves, their communities and the north for years to come.

Throughout the partnership, the staff at GDI was professional and great to work with. On behalf of Cameco, thank you.

Russel Mercredi
Senior Specialist, Workforce Planning & Talent Acquisition
Human Resources
Cameco Corporation
Closing the Gap

Employment remains the ultimate objective and is the key measure of ASETS program success. All ASETS holders are required to upload client data to Employment and Social Development Canada (ESDC) on a monthly or quarterly basis. Since the beginning of ASETS in 2010 to December 31, 2013, the five Métis Nation ASETS holders have together served 9,945 clients, of which 2,221 were still in the process of completing their interventions as of December 31. Of the remaining 7,724 clients who completed an ‘Action Plan’, approximately 58% had found employment within 24 weeks and 22% had returned to school, which translates into an 80% success rate.

The following highlights successful employment outcomes for Métis people in a variety of initiatives and sectors.

**Targeted Wage Subsidy Program**

**MEDO / MEP Brothers Ltd.**

As a result of a joint venture agreement between the Metis Economic Development Organization (MEDO) and MEP Brothers Ltd., the opportunity arose for MEDO/MEP to work closely with the Metis Employment and Training (MET) Department, to develop a targeted wage subsidy program which helps Métis citizens receive training and meaningful employment throughout its business divisions.

MEP Brothers Ltd. specializes in the distribution of environmental spill control, safety, rubber, industrial and hydraulic hose and fitting products. MEP provides gaskets manufacturing, industrial and hydraulic hose assembly, and rubber fabrication.

Metis Employment & Training currently funds two targeted wage subsidy program clients for MEP Brothers. The first client works for a division in the organization called Orange Energizing Solutions Corporation Inc. (Orange) as a Gasket Assembler and is being funded for one year. The second client works for Brothers Industrial Supply, a division of MEP brothers, as a Warehouse Operations Foreman.

**Leonard Erstelle**

**Arnold Brothers Transportation Academy, Class 1 Driver**

Leonard Erstelle was on dialysis for 3 years prior to receiving a new kidney on February 2, 2012 through the Living Donor Paired Exchange Program. This was made possible by his fiancée, Karen Flett, who donated her kidney and in-turn received a donated kidney for Leonard.

Leonard has a grade10 education, with no formal training or certification, and had worked in construction for 30 years. He felt he was getting too old to continue in this line of work and wanted to be able to make a decent living to support himself and his family. He approached the Winnipeg Local Management Board seeking sponsorship for the Class 1 Driver Training Program at Arnold Brothers Transportation Academy, completed the program and is now employed full-time as a Class 1 driver.

“I would like to take this opportunity to personally thank Manitoba Metis Federation’s Metis Employment & Training for helping to support the cost of my training with Arnold Brothers Ltd. “If it was not with the support and help of your office, I would have never been able to achieve my goal of becoming a professional truck driver. On behalf of my family, thank you for all you have done.”
GDIT&E Partnership for Practical Nursing program

Dumont Technical Institute (DTI) is the second largest practical nursing (PN) training provider in Saskatchewan, having graduated over 200 practical nurses since 2000. Since August 2012 DTI has partnered with GDIT&E Training & Employment to deliver the two-year Practical Nurse program. The partnership is beneficial to both parties, DTI benefits from increased funding to provide additional seats, and GDIT&E Training & Employment benefits from being able to promote Métis specific seats in the high demand PN program.

DTI offers 14 seats in its PN programs in each of three locations - Saskatoon and Prince Albert and Regina. Recruitment is focused on Métis people who have exited from the secondary school system, require assistance to overcome barriers to enter the labour market and have demonstrated the desire through a defined career action plan related to the health field. Students are linked with GDIT&E Employment Counsellors who monitor their progress and assist with finding full-time employment after their training is complete.

DTI provides its students with a high quality educational experience that is rigorous, facilitates self and on-going learning and enhances professionalism. As such, graduates are favoured among health regions across Saskatchewan. At the time of graduating, most (82%) of the graduates already had obtained jobs while the remaining (18%) secured jobs soon after graduation. In June 2013, 23 students from the Prince Albert and Saskatoon PN programs graduated and 22 of those students were working full time as Practical Nurses immediately.

For the 2013 Prince Albert graduates, the journey was far from smooth. Clinicals were held during weekends due to space issues, and on-going renovations in Prince Albert meant rearranging a few things. However, the graduates look back and say that the detours made them stronger and perhaps prepared them for their workplace.

To the students, the program not only meant learning and making lifelong friendships, as well as sacrifice and determination, but it was also a pathway to securing a good future for themselves and their families and perhaps an inspiration to the future generations.

Carley Gervais
Ontario Provincial Police

Carley Gervais, daughter of Métis Nation of Ontario (MNO) citizen Sgt. Grant Gervais, joined the ranks of the Ontario Provincial Police (OPP) after completing Police Foundations and a long, strenuous training program at Ontario Police College. Carley is posted to the OPP Caledon detachment where she and her fellow officers are committed to the safety of the public.

The Gervais family is grateful to the MNO for funding part of Carly’s police training through MNO Education and Training programs. Her parents, stepparents, siblings, and entire extended family are proud of what she has achieved at such a young age.

Congratulations to Carley for this wonderful achievement and best of luck with such a honourable career!
March 26, 2014

Michael Ohs began his career with Corix in April 2012, and was part of the Métis ASETS program for the first year of his employment. The one year wage subsidy program allowed Corix to bring on an employee with entry level skills and to develop this employee into a skilled Utility Operator, who now plays an important role within the company. Michael has been with Corix for almost two years and continues to advance in his career.

The requirements of the ASETS program proved extremely beneficial to Corix as well as to the employee’s success. We found the measurable goals and the submission of monthly reports on Michael’s development was extremely useful to both Corix and Michael. This component meant that Michael received constant training and development while in the program and was able to advance at an accelerated rate.

In a highly competitive market, the Métis ASETS program has had a positive impact on our business.
MNO Métis Youth Ready to Work
Transitions to the Labour Market Workshop

On November 16, 2013 Métis youth from across the province gathered in Toronto to attend the Métis Nation of Ontario (MNO) Métis Youth Ready to Work: Transitions to the Labour Market workshop.

This one-day workshop offered a unique opportunity for Métis youth to connect with Métis culture and history, develop new skills and experiences and engage with fellow youth. It featured an overview of the MNO including an in-depth focus on MNO’s education and training programs, a resume writing workshop, job preparedness orientation and a budgeting class.

John Budarick, a Métis paramedic, shared his experiences in completing post-secondary education and entering the workforce. Another feature of the day involved a representative from the 2015 Pan Am Games, Ken Ross, who held a brainstorm session with the students to gather ideas about youth participation in the Games. Students were full of energy and left the session feeling optimistic about what their futures hold.


Cara McKenna
Journalist

“I am genuinely grateful to the Métis Nation British Columbia for their support as I went through a diploma program in journalism at Langara College. Before starting the program, I was living in Vancouver making minimum wage at a grocery store, living on a very tight budget. I know I wouldn’t have been able to make the jump to attend school without the employment program’s support.”

After graduating in April 2013, I was given a temporary contract working at the Canadian Press in Vancouver during the provincial election campaign. I wrote news and feature stories that showed up in newspapers across the country, including the Globe and Mail, the National Post, Vancouver Sun and the Province. Soon after my contract ended, I was hired as a staff reporter at the Nanaimo Daily News where I have been since August 2013.

Recently, I found out I am a finalist for a Ma Murray award for best feature series, which is a huge honour in this industry. The series I am nominated for is one I wrote around the Stz’uminus First Nation and how they are opting out of parts of the Indian Act to manage their own lands. It feels great to be recognized for this and I hope to keep making a difference.

I went into journalism to tell Indigenous stories, well, because I have seen misunderstanding in the media that has translated into misunderstanding in the general public.”
Employer Partner Speaks About Their Experience
Reinhardt Plumbing, Heating & Air Conditioning Ltd.

Reinhardt Plumbing, Heating & Air Conditioning Ltd is a successful Regina-based company that speaks to the “Saskatchewan Dream”. Started out of a kitchen in Lumsden 25 years ago, the company has over 50 employees including four GDI Aboriginal Apprenticeship Initiative clients. Patty Reinhardt, a co-owner of the Reinhardt Plumbing and Heating, was invited to share her company’s experience with the Gabriel Dumont Institute Training and Employment staff. Here are excerpts from her speech.

“Thank you Gabriel Dumont Institute for partnering with us to promote Aboriginal participation in apprenticeship. My husband Dale and I started Reinhardt Plumbing and Heating in 1988 with one employee from our acreage near Lumsden. About 10 years ago, we added a shop and office in Regina having outgrown the acreage. We are a family owned and operated business and both our sons are involved as well. They worked their way through Saskatchewan apprenticeship and understand what it takes to make it in the trades.

One of the biggest challenges to small businesses is attracting and retaining quality employees. The GDI Aboriginal Apprenticeship Initiative has assisted us in hiring hardworking and dedicated apprentices.

I was first contacted by representatives of GDI in early 2012. In September, we struck gold when we interviewed and hired Rob Parrell. Rob has received rave reviews from all of his direct supervisors and is considered one of our best apprentices. We are going to miss him while he is away for his first technical training at SIAST for eight weeks.

After the success with Rob, we have hired three more apprentices through the GDI program and have been pleased with all of them. GDI has been very accommodating with timing and location of the follow-up interviews and will even come to meet with the apprentices at a job site.

The growing economy in Saskatchewan has created a shortage of skilled workers in the trades. The Apprenticeship Initiative answered the challenge by creating an opportunity and incentive for employers like us to source and hire Aboriginal apprentices and we are hopeful that these apprentices will continue in the trade and become certified journeypersons.

The GDI apprenticeship program is a win-win opportunity for our company and for our employees. The apprentices can increase their knowledge and earning potential as they progress in the trade and we all reap the benefits of the extra skilled tradespeople that are from our province and are invested in our province.”

Andrew Kushelniski
DA Watt Consulting, Jr. Drafting Technologist

“After a number of different jobs and work experiences, I felt I needed to take a career path that would better my future. I have always had a knack for creativity and design that had a big influence in my career choice. After doing some research I found what I was looking for, “Engineering Design and Drafting”.

After two great years of attending SAIT Polytechnic I am proud to say I have successfully completed my diploma in Engineering Design and Drafting. Going to school for a career that you really want to do makes a huge difference in accomplishing goals. I am currently employed at DA Watt Consulting as a Jr. Drafting Technologist. I am blessed to have such a great job right out of college; I couldn’t have pictured my plan to work out any better than it has.

I want to say a special thank you to the Métis Nation British Columbia Métis Employment and Training Program and all the people who are involved with the support and funding. I am so lucky to have great people helping me to a great career. All of your hard work is greatly appreciated!”

I am blessed to have such a great job right out of college; I couldn’t have pictured my plan to work out any better than it has.
Métis Summer Cultural Program

This summer, 15 Métis youth embarked on a journey of self-discovery as they joined the Métis Nation of Ontario’s (MNO) Summer Youth Cultural Program (SYCP). SYCP is a community-based initiative comprised of students who deliver Métis inspired programs across Ontario through experiential education and a “hands on, minds on” approach.

Gaining an experience that will last a lifetime, youth spent the summer connecting to their roots, sharing Métis history, and immersing themselves in all things Métis. Before the students could deliver the programs, they first took part in two weeks of comprehensive training. The 15 interpreters first came together at the MNO office in Midland and then reunited at Old Fort William, a former North West Company post near Thunder Bay, to begin their second week of training and full immersion into the Métis way of life.

This year provided a unique opportunity as the War of 1812 bicentennial celebrations took place across the province providing SYCP interpreters the chance to attend the events and re-enact what life was like for Métis people during the war. The interpreters concluded their summer by attending the MNO 20th Annual General Assembly (AGA) where they set up a cultural display that included historic Métis artefacts.

When asked about his overall experience, Lakehead University student Will Stolz said, “Being involved in this program opened my eyes to the culture within my family. It’s way more than a job; getting paid is just a bonus.”

Maggie Hodgson
Saskatoon Health Region – Technician

Originally from Îla-à-la-Crosse, Maggie Hodgson moved to Saskatoon in 2003 to take SIAST’s Chemical Technology program with the hopes of returning to her northern community and securing employment. However, “life happened,” and Maggie found the opportunity to take GDI’s pre-employment program with the Saskatoon Health Region. Maggie was again successful in completing a program and was hired with the Saskatoon Health Region as a sterile processing and distribution technician.

Even though Maggie was busy with her three young children, their activities and working full time, she still wanted to do more with her life. Maggie saw an advertisement for the GDI Practical Nursing program, and knew that was her next step.

“It wasn’t easy, but with great perseverance and struggle I managed to graduate from the nursing program with honours,” she said. “There were many times I wanted to give up but with the support of the instructors, class mates, and GDI staff I was able to reach my goal.”

Maggie graduated from the nursing program in the spring of 2013, and works for the Saskatoon Health Region at St. Paul’s Hospital in Saskatoon. “GDI has a very good reputation in the Saskatoon Health Region’s eyes. Let’s keep it going and make our Métis community proud.”
March 20, 2014

To Whom It May Concern:

Aquatera Utilities is a regional provider of water, wastewater and solid waste management services dependant on a skilled workforce willing to live and work in north western Alberta. Given the chronic labour shortage in Alberta and the acute skilled labour shortage in this region, we look to all potential sources of skilled labour to fill our staffing needs. Métis people, especially those who have availed themselves of the training available to them, are a significant resource for our company. We have employees of Métis ancestry at all levels in Aquatera.

Today’s workforce need a variety of skills to function adequately in the workplace. We have partnered with various programs and projects including the Aboriginal Job Shadow program Aboriginal Skills Employment and Training Strategy programs offered in collaboration with Grande Prairie Regional College. These programs provide valuable skills and experience to support the development of a skilled Métis workforce. These programs need to continue and expand as the demand for locally grown skilled workers can only increase.

We applaud the contributions to these programs from every level of government. They are meeting an important need.

Sincerely,

Wendy Gregg, B. Admin., CHRP
The transition from school to work can be difficult for new graduates. Entering the competitive job market with little work experience is a hurdle new Métis graduates often face, but with assistance can it be overcome.

Nick Allard is one young Métis citizen who has experienced firsthand the benefits of MNO’s education and training programs. Currently residing in Ottawa, Allard is a Senior Regulatory Affairs Officer at Health Canada. A position he believes would have been difficult to achieve without assistance.

Working with the Regional Employment and Training Coordinator, Allard approached the Sault Area Hospital with the concept of creating a summer internship through MNO’s Summer Career Placement Program. MNO was able to provide the funding to subsidize the wage and make the position a reality.

“The program helped me quite a bit,” explained Allard. “It gave me a lot of hands on experience in clinical research and helped me see into the industry and essentially where I wanted to go with my career.”

This was not the only way the MNO helped Allard achieve his goals. Through the Métis Training Purchase Program, the MNO provided funding that paid for his year’s tuition and also assisted with his living expenses. “This diploma was critical” explained Allard, “it is what got me my internship with Health Canada and, after graduating, and I was bridged into the position I hold today. Without MNO’s assistance it would have been much more difficult to get this position, a position I love and is exactly what I wanted to do.”

Lisa Wipf was born in Fort McMurray in 1988 to a Métis family with a vast history in the area. Caring for the community and supporting the elders through the changes is what inspired her choice of career. She felt that becoming a Registered Nurse would allow for a number of opportunities to care for others.

The first three years of nursing school involved balancing classes, clinical rotations and working full time. Lisa applied to the Rupertsland Institute and the support she received not only helped her in her last year of studies, it also helped her parents who were subsidizing monthly costs for two other children in university.

Lisa’s marks went up an entire grade point, which she believes was the result of the extra time that Rupertsland financial support provided for. Lisa graduated with a Bachelor of Science in Nursing and found a full time position with the Labour and Delivery unit of the Northern Lights Regional Health Centre.

“Everyday serves as a challenge but an opportunity to learn and provide for the community. I do hope one day to go on and complete my Masters in Nursing to become a Nurse Practitioner and care for the community at outreach clinics within the community.”
March 24, 2014

Métis Training to Employment – Northwest Region
9615 – 100 Street
Peace River, AB T8S 1J7

Re: Letter of support for Métis Works – Closing the Gap

AHS values the diversity of the people and communities we serve and is committed to attracting, engaging and developing a diverse and inclusive workforce.

At AHS, we pride ourselves on supporting the next generation of health care professionals by providing practice education, student placement and mentorship opportunities to our next generation of health care professionals. In northern Alberta, we have a young, vibrant Métis youth population and many opportunities for skilled health professionals. Through partnerships such as the Aboriginal Student Job Shadow program, we are reaching out to Métis youth, planting seeds for higher education and helping them build dreams for the future.

Since 2010, AHS has supported eight students participating in the Aboriginal Student Job Shadow program. One example of a success story involves a young woman who, after finishing a job shadow placement and completing academic upgrading, obtained a position as a nursing attendant. Just last year, she connected back with me to discuss her interest in pursuing a career as a registered nurse.

AHS believes in investing in youth, including participating in programs that give Métis youth opportunities to explore health careers. But we need strong partners like Rupertsland Institute to build confident, successful youth through skills-to-employment programming.

As an employer, AHS has the ability to provide job shadow and mentorship opportunities to students, but looks to partners like Rupertsland Institute to provide funding support to enable the program to continue year-after-year. Together, we have created a strong, relevant program that opens doors for Métis youth to reach their career goals.

Sincerely,

Carla McQuaig
Advisor, Workforce Diversity & Inclusion
Recruitment Strategies
Theresa Hinter
Thompson Rivers University (Kamloops), Greenhorn Truck Driver Program

“I spent many years working to provide for my family and found many times I was struggling to make ends meet. I frequently spent my days dreaming ‘if only there were another avenue’. During these moments my thoughts seemed to always bring me to the trucking industry. Throughout my childhood and then into adulthood I seemed to be surrounded by people who had successfully advanced financially in the industry and seemingly did so with enjoyment. I spent more and more time in conversation and listening to the many stories from others within the industry my desires became more deeply ingrained. This was something I truly thought I could have success with.

As my desired occupation was geared more toward men than women, I knew I would have more hurdles to overcome. I knew I could not just enter into this without in-depth defensive driver training and mechanical knowledge of the equipment I would be operating.

I entered into the “Greenhorn Truck Driver” program at Thompson Rivers University, and this provided me the training I required. My journey had begun. After completing the program, I was able to obtain full-time employment with a trucking company. I have since travelled many highways from Vancouver to Toronto and down into Chicago, Detroit and Minneapolis. I am so grateful for all the efforts, understanding and time that the MNBC staff extended to help me achieve my goal.”

Shauna Taylor
Alberta Health Services, Practical Nurse

After a lifetime of dreaming of becoming a nurse, Shauna Taylor’s dream became reality. Having been adopted as a baby, she learned years later that she was Métis. Her Métis mother had already passed away but her birth father, a proud Métis man, told her stories of her heritage.

Thanks to the encouragement of people in her life, Shauna decided to pursue her dream of becoming a nurse. With assistance from the Rupertsland Institute (RLI), Shauna was able to go to school full time, work part time and continue to be the best mother she could be.

Shauna graduated from Bow Valley College in Calgary from the Practical Nurse program. Because of the help she received from the RLI and love for her Métis heritage, Shauna pursued work in the Aboriginal arena and now works for Alberta Health Services as an LPN at the Santuari Hospice. Shauna also works casually for the Elbow River Healing Lodge, an Aboriginal health care clinic in downtown Calgary and as an Aboriginal Liaison in all the hospital sites in Calgary.

“Because of my experience working at the hospice, I am able to serve Aboriginal residents that need hospice care and provide support to the residents, families and our staff. All of this was made possible because this Métis woman was given a helping hand in becoming a nurse.”
Kelly Horsberger  
Regional Employment and Training Coordinator  
 Métis Nation of Ontario  
 75 Sherbourne Street  
  Toronto, Ontario  
  M5A 2P9

February 13, 2014

To Whom It May Concern:

I am writing this letter in support of the Métis Nation Employment and Training Program. Through the Métis Nation, our organization had the benefit of accepting a sponsored student as a legal assistant to our legal clinic, Justice for Children and Youth. The sponsored student was a recent graduate of Humber College Paralegal Program. She was a perfect fit to our organizational mandate, and had a positive skill set that grew in her time at our clinic. Our clinic does not have financial means to pay for student placements or many part-time legal assistant type roles, and so the grant from Métis Nation was crucial to making the placement a success.

The sponsored student gave considerable support to the homeless youth legal outreach program called Street Youth Legal Services. As a number of homeless youth in Toronto are aboriginal, we are always seeking to strengthen ties with aboriginal communities and agencies in the GTA and through Ontario. With some connections that we did not previously have, our sponsored student was able to assist in building broader links between our clinic and the aboriginal community. We now enjoy a closer relationship with organizations we previously did not have contact with. The sponsored student also made a significant contribution providing information on housing issues in legal education seminars and individually to clients.

For the sponsored student, I know the placement gave her the opportunity to get quickly involved in her field of knowledge – an opportunity that is difficult in this current job market. Since completing her placement, she was able to secure a job in the field. We miss her, and wish her the best of luck.

I cannot give enough praise the work of the Métis Nation of Ontario. I strongly suggest continued funding, and I hope that we may again be able to partner in a sponsorship arrangement. If you have any questions or would like further feedback, please do not hesitate to contact me.

   [Signature]

Johanna Macdonald  
SYLS Lawyer, JFCY

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**Canadian Foundation for Children Youth and the Law**  
415 Yonge St., Suite 1203  
Toronto, Ontario  
M5B 2E7  
www.jfcy.org
ESOC
February 1, 2014

YesYouCan Employment would like to offer our ongoing support for the programs and services made available to Aboriginal peoples by the Métis Nation of Ontario (MNO) through the Aboriginal Skills and Employment Training Strategy (ASETS).

The staff and management are highly respected in our community and provide an invaluable service. We have been fortunate to partner with this organization and have had a success hire in our organization and can speak first hand to excellence in service provided.

Continuing support to access these invaluable services for our young, diverse and growing Aboriginal population is critical in the North. MNO staff ensures easy access to service and programs, excellence in service and adds value to our Northern community in supporting this population.

We look forward to continuing to work with MNO to get clients into good jobs and to strengthen our economy.

[Signature]
Chief Inspiration Officer
YesYouCan Employment
MÉTIS ASETS CONTACTS

BRITISH COLUMBIA

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Abbotsford BC, V2T 6C7
1-800-940-1150

Lower Mainland
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Surrey BC, V3T 4K8
1-778-395-0385

Kootenays
#240-1113 Barker Street
Surrey BC, V3T 4K8
1-888-471-3306

Northwest
#304-4546 Park Avenue
Terrace BC, V8G 1V4
1-877-638-4776

Vancouver Island
#103-335 Wesley Street
Nanaimo BC, V2B 3L7
1-888-632-9450

Thompson/Okanagan
#13-1800 Tranquille Road
Kamloops BC, V2B 3L9
1-855-376-9263

North Central
#200-513 Ahbau Street
Prince George BC, V2M 3R8
1-877-561-2754

Northeast
10021-100 Street
Fort St. John BC, V1J 3Y5
1-888-700-1957

ALBERTA

Rupertsland Institute
10060 Jasper Ave
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(780) 801-9977
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Bonnyville
5102 – 51 Street
Bonnyville, AB
Phone: 780-826-7368

Lac La Biche
Suite 101, 10107 – 102 Ave.
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Calgary
5, 2611-37th Avenue N.E.
Phone: 403-250-8902
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<td>Edmonton</td>
<td>3rd Floor, 12308 – 111th Avenue</td>
<td>780-423-2237</td>
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<td>Grande Prairie</td>
<td>9840 – 97th Avenue</td>
<td>780-539-5477</td>
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<td>High Prairie</td>
<td>4910-51 Ave, Box 96</td>
<td>780-523-2004</td>
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<td>Peace River</td>
<td>9615 – 100th St.</td>
<td>780-624-0703</td>
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<tr>
<td>Medicine Hat</td>
<td>#919 Tractor Ave. SE</td>
<td>403-504-4056</td>
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<tr>
<td>Red Deer</td>
<td>Unit #1, 5015 – 48 St.</td>
<td>403-342-6636</td>
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<tr>
<td>Saskatoon</td>
<td>917-22nd Street West</td>
<td>306-242-6070</td>
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<tr>
<td>Medicine Hat</td>
<td>#919 Tractor Ave. SE</td>
<td>403-504-4056</td>
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<tr>
<td>Red Deer</td>
<td>Unit #1, 5015 – 48 St.</td>
<td>403-342-6636</td>
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<th>Location</th>
<th>Address</th>
<th>Phone</th>
<th>Fax</th>
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<tr>
<td>Winnipeg</td>
<td>1st Floor 150 Henry Avenue</td>
<td>204-586-8474</td>
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<tr>
<td>Manitoba Metis Federation Regional Offices:</td>
<td></td>
<td>204-947-1816</td>
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<tr>
<td>Interlake Metis</td>
<td>Employment &amp; Training</td>
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<td>The Pas Metis</td>
<td>Employment &amp; Training</td>
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</table>
Thompson Metis Employment & Training
171 Cree Road
Thompson MB, R8N 1P1
Phone: 204-677-1430
Fax: 204-677-2240

Winnipeg Metis Employment & Training
412 McGregor Street
Winnipeg MB, R2W 4X5
Phone: 204-589-4327
Fax: 204-582-2711

Manitoba Metis Federation Outreach Offices:
Interlake Region, Selkirk, MB
Southwest Region, Portage La Prairie, MB
Northwest Region, Swan River, MB
Thompson Region, Churchill, MB

ONTARIO

Métis Nation of Ontario Head Office
500 Old St. Patrick St, Unit #3
Ottawa ON, K1N 9G4
PH: 613-798-1488
TF: 800-263-4889
FX: 613-722-4225

Employment and Training Sites:
Fort Frances
426 Victoria Ave
Fort Frances ON, P9A 2C3
Phone: 807-274-1386
Toll-Free: 888-793-3334
Fax: 807-274-9773

Dryden
34B King Street
Dryden ON, P8N 1B8
Phone: 807-223-4535 ext. 301
Fax: 807-223-4540

Thunder Bay
226 South May Street, Main Floor
Thunder Bay ON, P7E 1B4
Phone: 807-624-5014
Toll-Free: 800-256-2595
Fax: 807-622-2899

Timmins
347 Spruce Street South
Timmins ON, P4N 2N2
Phone: 705-264-3939
Toll-Free: 888-497-3939
Fax: 705-264-5468

Sault Ste. Marie
26 Queen Street East
Sault Ste. Marie ON, P6A 1Y3
Phone: 705-254-1768
Toll-Free: 1-877-737-6693

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101 Worthington Street East
Suite 237
North Bay ON, P1B 1G5
Phone: 705-474-2767
Toll-Free: 888-825-1742
Fax: 705-474-9427

Sudbury
260 Alder Street (Upstairs)
Sudbury ON, P3C 5P4
Phone: 705-671-9855
Toll-Free: 866-339-2531
Fax: 705-674-9908

Bancroft
91 Chemaugon Street
Bancroft ON, KO1 1C0
Phone: 613-332-2575 x 26
Toll-Free: 877-407-1180 x 26

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629 Division St.
Kingston ON, K7K 4B7
Phone: 613-549-1674 ext. 306
Fax: 613-549-3735

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380-9TH Street East
Owen Sound ON, N4K 1P1
Phone: 519-370-0435

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355 Cranston Crescent – Box 621
Midland ON, L4R 4L3
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Toll-Free: 888-684-7347
Fax: 705-527-9363

Toronto
311-75 Sherbourne Street
Toronto ON, M5A 2P9
Phone: 416-977-9881 X 112
Toll-Free: 888-466-6684
Fax: 416-977-9911

Hamilton
445 Concession Street
Hamilton ON, L9A 1C1
Phone: 905-318-2336
Toll-Free: 888-546-3847
Fax: 905-318-2207