

CONFERENCE REPORT CONTENT AND LEARNING

INTRODUCTION

Conference Background

Demographic studies indicate that the Aboriginal population has dramatically increased in size in recent years, and this population boom is expected to continue. Thus, while the Canadian population as a whole is aging, the Aboriginal population is growing younger with 53% under the age of 25 years. Currently, Aboriginal youth face a myriad of social and economic challenges, including unemployment, racism, health concerns, poverty and high education dropout rates (re: the 1996 Royal Commission on Aboriginal Peoples report). The challenge for Canadians, both Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal, is to work together to create the necessary environment in which Aboriginal youth can thrive.

The Conference

Crossroads 2000 brought together 60 influential Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal women from the Calgary area. The Conference sought to achieve an intercultural understanding and to address the challenges and opportunities faced by the urban Aboriginal youth. *Crossroads 2000* also created a network of women to promote the interests of Aboriginal youth. The Conference was designed to create an atmosphere of trust and compassion and to invoke the principles of respect, equality and dignity. All participants were encouraged to share their successes, hopes, plans and commitments to bettering our community for the Aboriginal youth.

Participation was by invitation only, with the number limited to ensure greater involvement. The selection was based on the Steering Committee members' network of women with knowledge, experience, and special interests on youth Aboriginal issues.

Crossroads 2000 was held at the Rimrock Resort Hotel in Banff, Alberta on October 27-29, 2000. The Council for Canadian Unity, the Aboriginal Opportunities Committee of the Calgary Chamber of Commerce, and the Canada West Foundation co-hosted *Crossroads 2000*. Since the Conference was generously sponsored (see list of sponsors at the back of this report), the conference registration fees, including accommodation and meals, were minimal.

Through the active involvement and commitment of the participants, *Crossroads 2000* provides a conference model which can be taken to other urban centres across Canada.



Conference Objectives

1. Create an opportunity to develop a network of influential Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal women from diverse communities, corporate, political, social and governmental backgrounds, and work towards a means to sustain it;
2. Raise the awareness of the participants' and the greater public's on the opportunities and challenges of Aboriginal youth;
3. Encourage the participants to make a personal commitment to take their learning to their spheres of influence in order to create opportunities for urban Aboriginal youth; and
4. Create a conference model that can be repeated in other urban centres.

ABOUT THE HOST ORGANIZATIONS

The Council for Canadian Unity (CCU) was established in 1964 to foster an enhanced knowledge, a better understanding of Canada's realities, and appreciation of our institutions and rich social and cultural diversity among Canadians.

As a non-partisan, not-for-profit national organization, the Council connects Canadians from all walks of life. The CCU fulfills its educational mandate through: 1) Youth programs, 2) Centre for Research and Information on Canada, and 3) programs intended to encourage citizens to participate in public affairs. For more information, please visit www.ccu-cuc.ca.

Michèle Stanners, Regional Director - West

The Canada West Foundation (CWF) is the only Canadian public policy research institute focusing exclusively on western Canadian public policy issues. CWF combines rigorous research standards with an easily accessible format and wide dissemination practices to ensure that their research has maximum impact upon public discussion and debate.

The CWF conference background report, '*Crossroads 2000 - A Women's Sharing Circle: Exploring Opportunities And Challenges Facing Urban Aboriginal Youth*' is available for free download from the CWF web site (www.cwf.ca). It should also be noted that the upcoming CWF research initiative, '*Urban Aboriginal Peoples*' (part of the Western Cities Project), will provide a forum for advancing the lessons of *Crossroads 2000*.

Roger Gibbins, Ph.D., President and CEO

The Aboriginal Opportunities Committee (AOC) has been a standing committee of the **Calgary Chamber of Commerce (CCC)** since 1980. The Committee was initiated with the intent of recognizing the importance of Aboriginal people and of assisting them in the development of economic parity in the Calgary community. The focus of the AOC is also to create awareness and opportunities in the areas of business and education.

Barry Brisson, Chair, Aboriginal Opportunity Committee, Calgary Chamber of Commerce



PRESENTATIONS AND DISCUSSIONS-THEMATIC SUMMARY

Ice Breaker and Beginnings – Symbolic Activity

FACILITATORS

Carol Crowe, Advisor of Aboriginal & Community Affairs, Dominion Energy Canada Limited
Bee Calliou-Schadeck, Northstar Energy

ACTIVITY OVERVIEW

The Ice Breaker was a symbolic branch decorating activity. This interactive activity was designed to develop a symbolism that represented a common bond among all participants. Each woman chose a branch from a fruit-bearing tree with a pre-attached leather grip. Throughout the Conference, the participants ‘decorated’ their respective branches, in a personally meaningful way, by using arts and crafts supplied (beads, bells, ribbons, etc.).

The branches represent the common starting point, including the symbolism of uniqueness (each being different), of strength (all together, they couldn’t be broken), of womanhood (fruit-bearing trees), and of community (part of a whole). Those branches united the women during the venue and will serve as a reminder of their personal and group commitment after the event.

The follow up to this activity took place on the last day of *Crossroads 2000*. Bee started the session by telling the story of the feathers... How she was walking down a path and found feathers, many of them. At the time, not knowing the reason why, she picked them up. She kept them for many years...

She went on to explain the meaning of feathers in the Aboriginal culture – the gift they represent. Then, every participants was given one of those feathers to add to her branch. Upon receiving it, the participant had the opportunity to share her Conference learning, feelings, personal commitment - the sharing circle. We called that ‘Beginnings’.

The response to the Ice Breaker and Beginnings activity was overwhelmingly positive. Participants showed enthusiasm and actively participated. It became a unique bonding idea that enriched the experience of all participants.

Setting the Landscape – The Past to the Present

OBJECTIVE SUMMARY – DAY ONE

- To meet and establish trust amongst participants.
- To explore and reflect on the question, ‘As a society, how did we get to this point in our history?’
- To discuss issues relevant to Aboriginal contributions and cultural education.



Role of Women (Key Note Addresses)

OBJECTIVE SUMMARY

- To set the tone and inspire.
- To present personal view of issues, such as: How did we get here? Why women? Why Aboriginal youth?

PRESENTERS

Honourable Pearl Calahassen, Associate Minister of Aboriginal Affairs, Government of Alberta

Audrey Poitras, Provincial President, Metis Nation of Alberta

Irene Pfeiffer, Managing Director-Western, Russell Reynolds Associates

SUMMARY OF PRESENTATIONS

Historically, Aboriginal people have been politically under-represented. Non-aboriginal political leaders did not well understand the needs of the Aboriginal communities.

Aboriginal culture is matrilineal and matriarchal; thus there is a great understanding within Aboriginal communities of the very strong role of women. Women are ‘the mainstay and the givers of life’. They have ‘the answers’ to the challenges because, as women ‘we care, we listen, we defend what we believe in’. Traditional women’s roles, as defined by daily family and community life, have eroded over time. The work of Aboriginal men and women was valued equally. There is a need to return to this equality. We need to believe in the strength of women and empower them for changes to take place.

Young people need to choose to take control of their lives by making better and wiser decisions - this is the challenge. Because of the past, Aboriginal people lost the ability to make decisions for themselves, including the ability to govern their lives. The resolution process must include the search for strength and the belief in oneself. Emphasis should be placed on the importance of parenting to teach moral and educational values. Aboriginal youth need guidance from the elders, leadership from parents, and support by their communities.

FOCUS QUESTIONS

- How can you get involved and take control of your own destiny?
- How best can we open doors for our youth – our future generations?
- What do we want?
- Where are we going?

SIDEBAR QUOTES

“We are at a crossroad, we need to accept the past choices and embrace the need for change.” (Poitras)

“We need to be more proactive, we have to believe in ourselves and in our collective power...” (Pearl)

“... so the youth mirrored the adults feelings of helplessness.” (Pearl)

??(Irene maybe – will listen to tape)



“Contribution of Aboriginal Peoples in Canadian Society”

OBJECTIVE SUMMARY

- To learn, consider, and discuss the place of Aboriginal people in Canadian history and their contribution to Society.

PRESENTERS

Carol Crowe, Advisor of Aboriginal & Community Affairs, Dominion Energy Canada Limited

SUMMARY OF PRESENTATION

There seems to be a need to recognize and to rectify the image of Aboriginal people. However, that cannot be achieved without first understanding the ‘Power of Image’ – What image comes to mind when you hear Aboriginal? Natives? Is it alcoholism? Poverty? Family? Strength? ...

Aboriginal people have contributed to society in various areas, for example:

1. Aboriginal people are people of the land with strong medicinal and healing beliefs.
2. Activities of hunting, fishing, trapping and gathering with related trading businesses.
3. Native soldiers in the Wars.

What is the acknowledgement of Canadians toward the Aboriginal people’s contribution today? The contribution of Aboriginal people continues to be forgotten and exploited; be it their land, culture, spirituality, or history. Therefore, the future of Aboriginal people is somewhat dependent on the youth. Aboriginal youth need to decide to make a difference and thus get involve and learn about, for example: environmental sciences, Canadian culture, health and wellness, and spirituality.

FOCUS QUESTIONS

- What does systemically mean to us?
- What needs to be done to acknowledge Aboriginal people?
- How can we acknowledge and celebrate (systemically, ethically, and legally) the contribution of Aboriginal people?

WORKSHOP - DISCUSSION AND DISCOVERY

1. Aboriginal self-identity needs to be defined, embraced and taught. Language and culture have to be taught within the school system and the communities.
2. Aboriginal people need to learn about their history and non-Aboriginal people need to acknowledge their contributions.
3. Need to address the roots of prejudices, myths and racism. Need to break those barriers through closer relationship and tolerance.
4. Need for recognition of cultural differences among Native people and acknowledge those distinctions – which would demonstrate an effort toward respect.
5. Media is portraying Aboriginal people in a negative light. Media should show positive reinforcement through success stories and role models.

SIDEBAR QUOTES

“There is a need for strengthening the knowledge that the commonalties among Aboriginal people”.
(Carol)

History of Aboriginal PeopleOBJECTIVE SUMMARY

- To develop a better understanding of the present Aboriginal situation with regards to social representation and fiduciary issues.

PRESENTERS

Dr. Cora Voyageur, Professor - Department of Sociology, University of Calgary, on ‘*Social Trends and Demographics*’ with a focus on socio-economic analysis of Native / Non-native, male / female population in Alberta and Calgary

Connie Tuharsky, Field Atkinson Perraton, on ‘*Fiduciary Obligations and Duties*’

SUMMARY OF PRESENTATIONS

The 1996 census data and analysis reveal much about the current socio-economic crisis facing women and Aboriginal people in Canada, particularly in Calgary. The census data uncovered, for example:

1. Potential underestimation of Aboriginal population (which affects government funding).
2. Increasing urbanization of Aboriginal people.
3. Demographic profile shows an increasingly large proportion of Aboriginal youth.
4. Aboriginal single-parent family issue.
5. Education level discrepancies.

The fiduciary obligations and issues lecture presented insights into the legal and moral obligations of the Federal Government. The Royal Proclamation and legal precedence set forth government obligations in keeping the land ‘in trust’ and to act on behalf of the Native people ‘in good faith’.

SIDEBAR QUOTES

“First Nations choose not to participate in the census, which is a big mistake”. (Cora)

“Is the government in a conflict of interest?” (Connie)

Cultural EducationOBJECTIVE SUMMARY

- To appreciate the importance and challenges of cultural education for Aboriginal communities.



PRESENTERS

Verna Kirkness, Associate Professor Emeritus, University of British Columbia, presented ‘*Cultural Education for Aboriginal People: Is it Attainable?*’

Rose Crowshoe, Financial Manager, Peigan Child and Family Services

SUMMARY OF PRESENTATION

Explained the significance of the accomplishments thus far in improving the Aboriginal education content and the work left to do. The importance of learning the history of Aboriginal people is found in learning about the contribution of ancestors. Education raises awareness to the tragic effects of colonization. Dialogue must begin with the understanding of the importance that culture plays in the learning process. How can we design a curriculum based on ‘education into culture, not culture into education?’ Elders will remain influential in providing perspectives on cultural education.

The biggest educational issues are that of language, and of self-knowledge. Aboriginal language education exists, but its effectiveness is in question.

There has been much progress made in cultural education and development; progress to be celebrated and to be proud of, such as:

- Aboriginal libraries.
- Native / Aboriginal Teacher Education Programs.
- Aboriginal television station.

However, many challenges remain.

The cultural education theme was demonstrated by the sharing of a personal experience from a member of the Sundance and Brave Dog Societies. Conveyance of the role of sacred ceremonies and the goals of bundles brought forth the depth and worth of Aboriginal culture. The knowledge of the Aboriginal rituals cannot be lost; it must be passed on through generations.

FOCUS QUESTIONS

- Where do we go from here?

SIDEBAR QUOTES

“I would suggest that cultural curriculum is available that is not being used...” (Verna)

“Knowing who we are helps meet the challenges.” (Rose)

Observing the Landscape – The Present to Future

OBJECTIVE SUMMARY – DAY TWO

- To understand the role of racism and its impact on Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal people.
- To consider examples of programs focused on bettering the future for Aboriginal youth.
- To generate ideas of new programs to help improve the situation.



Addressing Racism

OBJECTIVE SUMMARY

- To comprehend what racism is and its impacts in our lives and future generations.
- To build awareness and new knowledge.
- To learn to identify racism and express our feelings appropriately.
- To empower ourselves and our youth to overcome barriers of discrimination, prejudice and racism.
- To treat ourselves and others with respect and dignity.

PRESENTERS

Dr. Beth Hedva, Transpersonal Psychotherapy/Clinical Parapsychologist, Finkleman Communications Ltd.

Cheryl Makokis, Teacher, Sherbrooke Junior High School

SUMMARY OF WORKSHOP AND KEY INSIGHTS

Before the workshop discussions on racism could begin, the participants needed to ‘create a sacred space’ to provide a safe environment in order to explore and share thoughts, feelings and concerns about racism. In view of the subject matter, all beliefs and experiences were welcomed and respected. The learning process focused on the following questions:

1. What am I hoping to gain from this session?
 - There are at least two (or more) sides to a medal/coin.
 - Effects of racism in the cities and rural expressions (communities’ interactions).
 - How can prejudices within groups be handled?
 - Clarity of definition – to assist in monitoring oneself and others.
2. Why is it important that we address issues of racism?
 - Because racism exists! It includes actions and attitudes that perpetuate untrue stereotypes and conditioned responses.
 - May help us to find solutions to address the problems.
3. How does racism affect Aboriginal Youth?
 - Low self-esteem is the common feeling among the Aboriginal people.
 - The effect of racism on youth depends on the age group; however, it never lessens, only deepens with age. It grows from a feeling of shame and worthlessness to an identity crisis caused by a lost of self. The impact in lost opportunities for the youth cannot be ignored.
4. Define ‘overt racism’ and give examples of how to address it constructively.
 - Obvious behaviours and actions – not subconscious but intentional and deliberate.
 - Attitude of superiority.

Examples of constructive conduct:

- Education and awareness are necessary. As part of the curriculum in the education system, begin talking about racism at the early grades and carry it through to higher grades.



- Personal responsibility to address cliches, expressions, games, songs, etc.
- To address the offending party in a way that he/she can 'save face' and still be educated.

5. Define 'covert racism' and give examples of how to address it constructively.

- Meaning hidden, disguised – not knowing if one's actions / attitudes are racist.

Examples of constructive conduct:

- Address the gaps.
- Develop other ways to create awareness, do not only focus on racism.
- Support our youth's dreams.
- Teach how to retaliate positively.

6. What is 'systemic (i.e. institutional) racism' and give examples of how to address it constructively.

- Segregation, tokenism, quotas, etc.
- Assumptions and stereotypes.

Examples of constructive conduct:

- Bring customs and values into the work environment.
- Empower ourselves and our children.
- Celebrate customs and culture in schools.
- Showcase role models.
- Mentorship.

7. What is 'internalized racism' and give examples of how to address it constructively.

- A conditioned behaviour and learned response(s) based on ignorance and pre-conceived notions.

Examples of constructive conduct:

- Learn to take time to listen.
- Create conscious acknowledgement to remove boundaries.
- Take personal responsibility.
- Make a conscious effort to identify us all as human beings first and foremost.

8. How would I recognize if I'm part of the problem?

- If I have pre-conceived notions about groups.
- If I am deaf and/or silent about racism.

9. How does racism affect our behavior at work?

- Expectations of bad attitudes and behaviours create a barrier.
- Where does the motivation to excel come from then?

10. What can I do to be pro-active instead of reactive?

- Listen before reacting.
- Take the time to understand, learn how to be open-minded.



- Create and / or find the opportunity to educate / teach others about different cultures.
- Acknowledge racism and take responsibility for addressing the problem in a positive way.

The session continued with the viewing and discussion of the video entitled ‘*Tina Keeper*’. There was also sharing of ideas to help transform and improve institutional oppression around the issues of race and culture.

SIDEBAR QUOTES

“People just don’t know, not even when they are practicing racism.” (participant)

“(the session) led to a greater understanding of challenges and ways to overcome them.” (participant)

“(racism) is at the root of all the issues.” (participant)

“Racism is the start; the understanding of it is the heart, the catalyst for change.” (participant)

Address by Colleen Klein

OBJECTIVE SUMMARY

- To reflect on some of the positive Albertan programs and initiatives for Aboriginal youth.
- To invite ideas that would improve Aboriginal youth’s future.

PRESENTERS

Colleen Klein, Chair of Alberta’s Children’s Forum, Southern Office of the Premier

SUMMARY OF PRESENTATION

Faced with the 1996 census statistics that show the Aboriginal youth population growth while the number of elders decline, underlines the urgency of the issues and challenges of Aboriginal youth. There were three specific issues brought forward with examples of solutions adopted in Alberta.

1. The existing approach to schooling continues to fall short of expectations. However, one solution may be exemplified in Edmonton, which is the Amiskwaciy Academy. This Academy offers students a place to learn from an Aboriginal perspective.
2. The issues of offering health care programs and the delivery of relevant services that meet the specific needs of Aboriginal youth. The example presented was the Alberta Government’s Aboriginal Health Careers Bursary program, which supports students who wish to pursue a career in the health related field.
3. The last issue touched on was the importance of community involvement and leadership training. One of the solutions offered is The Future Leaders Program, which is a co-operative effort to provide Aboriginal youth the opportunity to improve and develop leadership skills through sports and recreation.

FOCUS QUESTIONS

- How can we better understand the learning needs of Aboriginal youth, and how to meet them?
- What can we do to make health care relevant to Aboriginal youth?
- What does the future hold for the young Aboriginal, and what can we do to help?

SIDEBAR QUOTES

“We can give young Aboriginal the tools and the opportunities they need to begin shaping a future for themselves.” (Colleen)

Young Women’s Voices PanelOBJECTIVE SUMMARY

- To share the experiences and challenges as young Aboriginal women.

PRESENTERS

Summer Stone-Child, Student, Mount Royal College

Deanna Cardinal, Native Student Centre Coordinator, Mount Royal College

Machelle Ryan, Technical Assistant, Dominion Energy Canada

Lisa Odjig, Student, Mount Royal College and World Champion Hoop Dancer

SUMMARY OF PRESENTATIONS

The young Aboriginal woman panelists focused on issues and barriers that they faced, and still are facing. They shared their personal stories – they were given a voice. They conveyed stories that illustrated some of the problems and solutions, such as:

1. Stereotypes and perceptions of youth by elders and communities.
2. Influences in the life of young people – need for positive images and encouragement.
3. Feeling of isolation and the importance of sharing.
4. Importance of education and learning to be proud of one’s background.

Some discussions ensued around the subjects of gang involvement, teen parenting, and employment opportunities.

FOCUS QUESTIONS

- How can we assist Aboriginal youth to overcome their challenges (cultural, academic, and social)?
- Who is raising Aboriginal children?
- How do we bring back meaning into our life?

WORKSHOP – DISCUSSION AND DISCOVERY

The group discussions revolved around three main themes: education, social programs, and co-ordination of services. Herein is a broad summary of issues and ideas that were raised:

1. Youth education issues:



- Must focus effort on cultural education – formally in school and informally in communities.
 - Need to incorporate spiritual values and principles into the school system to help youth develop a sense of pride in their ancestry.
 - Have to educate Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal youth about racism - their role in aggravating the situation and in improving it.
 - Provide career development education and role models in support of training choices.
2. Youth social program issues:
- Recognition and sharing of wisdom from elders and community leaders.
 - Need continued and increased support from mentorship programs.
 - There is a large number of Aboriginal youth who are parents and need assistance.
3. Co-ordination of services:
- Need to address issue of program awareness and accessibility.
 - Youths feel isolated. They need to have more options to participate in group activities.
 - Increase level of co-operation between agencies that run various programs.

SIDEBAR QUOTES

“Hearing the youth perspective, their stories, was inspirational.” (participant)

“Their stories came from the heart and dealt with today’s realities.” (participant)

“It was good to hear their voices. It made the issues come alive.” (participant)

“Aboriginal youth was the focus of the conference, it was good to hear from them directly.” (participant)

Program Landscape: – Youth Issues / Programs

OBJECTIVE SUMMARY

- To look at existing Aboriginal youth programs.
- To offer creative approaches to program development.
- To examine gaps in the programs and define areas that need improvement.

PRESENTERS

Barbara Milmine, Listening Circles Coordinator, The City of Calgary

Carrie Neilson, The City of Calgary

Connie Legrande, Urban Society for Aboriginal Youth

SUMMARY OF PRESENTATIONS

The panel provided insight into the strategies and policy development efforts currently being employed at the City of Calgary. Also highlighted was the effectiveness of the Royal Commission on Aboriginal Peoples, (RCAP), as a policy development tool.



The City of Calgary's "*Listening Circle*" offered an example of a unique process used to develop municipal policy. It was based on the traditional Aboriginal problem-solving model, with the goal of identifying needs and issues, as well as the means to address them. The process identified youth problem areas (in education and employment, justice and social services, and housing and transportation) and brought forth potential solutions. The next step is the project development, which is the finding of practical solutions and the development of action plans (includes funding commitment and ensuring participation by sector groups and law enforcement agencies).

One program emerging from the "*Listening Circle*" process was Calgary's Urban Society for Aboriginal Youth, which is the sole independent youth council in Canada. The Society seeks to empower youth, to represent the diversity of Aboriginal people, and to work at the common roots of social problems (i.e. poverty, residential schools, and treaties).

The Royal Commission on Aboriginal Peoples (RCAP) cites women and youth as being vulnerable and addresses solutions to be taken by municipal and provincial governments. The City of Calgary has adopted many RCAP recommendations, such as:

1. Co-management arrangement policies.
2. Collaboration policy at the provincial level.
3. Funding for Aboriginal youth programs.
4. Ways to ensure youth are involved in design and delivery.

Organizations and the public are urged to read RCAP to help in policy development. People are encouraged to use government policy as a tool for change, since government is held responsible to carry out commitments of policy.

Acknowledged in the panel discussion was the lack of programs available for Aboriginal people. In Calgary, for example, approximately 50% of child welfare case loads are Aboriginal children. Also, there is a discrepancy between the location of service programs and where the youth actually live.

SIDEBAR QUOTES

"The *Listening Circle* is to understand the needs and issues as well as the means to address them." (Barbara)

"We need appreciate the importance of support from the community and individuals." (Connie)

"RCAP can be a powerful tool to aid First Nation people and to renew Society." (Carrie)

Economic Development Opportunities Panel

OBJECTIVE SUMMARY

- To learn about and explore various employment possibilities, education and training.
- To share successes and encourage ideas for personal growth.



PRESENTERS

Elaine Cowan, President, Anokiiwin Employment Solutions, Inc.

Marie Delorme, President, imagiNATION Cards Inc.

Sherri Liddle, Aboriginal Outreach Worker, Youth Employment Centre

Belva Wesley, Officer in Charge, Royal Bank of Canada

Tracey Wosley, Manager of Stakeholder Relations & Aboriginal Affairs, Suncor Energy Inc.

SUMMARY OF PRESENTATIONS

The panel presented a look at the current status of opportunities for Aboriginal youth from various perspectives in the business community. Issues such as small business development, student education and skill development, and youth employment counseling were discussed.

Building a small business is something that women are more likely to succeed at than men, and need to be made aware of the programs and advice that are available to them. Essential skills must be learned in order to improve the chances for success.

Aboriginal youth can access educational, job search and business programs; for example: the Stay-in-School Aboriginal Program (for students interested in finance), University Student Awards, and the Youth Employment Centre's 'Aboriginal Youth Info Net'. There are also several initiatives involving Canadian banks and the Canadian Youth Business Foundation that offer business management services and financing opportunities.

Employment and Education were reiterated as the key issues with regards to Aboriginal youth. Development opportunities exist not only in large corporations and the public service, but also in employment services, education, mentoring, role modeling, and entrepreneurship.

SIDEBAR QUOTES

“Employment and education are the key issues when dealing with Aboriginal youth.” (Marie)

“Acquire the skills needed in the business world. Acquire information, back up, and experience.” (Tracey)

“Cannot ignore the importance of teaching accountability and responsibility.” (Sherri)

Painting the Landscape – The Future

OBJECTIVE SUMMARY – DAY THREE

- To consider the question: where are we going?

Maintaining the Network

OBJECTIVE SUMMARY

- To consider the question: “Where do we go from here?”



- To discuss the participants responsibility to continue their involvement

PRESENTER

Michèle Stanners, Regional Director-West, the Council for Canadian Unity

SUMMARY OF PRESENTATION

She reiterated the importance for each participant to make a personal commitment to improve the future for the Aboriginal youth. But also to follow through with their commitments. The true success of the Conference depends on the participants' willingness to pursue the initiatives and develop the ideas raised over the weekend.

The knowledge and solutions that came out of *Crossroads 2000* needed to be shared within the sphere of influences of all the women present. The synergy and momentum gained at the Conference have to be turned into positive and concrete actions.

SIDEBAR QUOTES

"I believe women will make a difference for Aboriginal youth. Now, let's get things done!" (Michele)

Wrap-up Summary

OBJECTIVE SUMMARY

- To summarize the Conference learning.
- To encourage the pursuit of personal commitment.

PRESENTER

Irene Pfeiffer (Honourary co-chair), Managing Director-Western Canada, Russell Reynolds Associates

SUMMARY OF PRESENTATION

She presented an overview of the weekend learning and accomplishments. She reinforced the importance of the new network, that each of the participants were a part of – a network of influential women. Women that can make a difference and bring about changes for the Aboriginal youth. She urged the participants to keep the network alive and to pursue the programs and initiatives that can better the future for our Society.

CONFERENCE LEGACY - POTENTIAL INITIATIVES

1. Develop, participate, and/or volunteer in a mentorship / partnership program.
2. Make the National Aboriginal / Metis Day (June 21st) into a statutory holiday.
3. Create cultural days in communities (i.e. food day, sports day) to help teach traditional ways.
4. Apply the racism learning in your own life and teach others about tolerance and understanding.
5. Develop more options for Aboriginal youth to participate in cultural and recreational activities.
Need to start and improve these types of activities and opportunities on Reserves.



6. There is a need for childcare, food, and transportation programs (drivers' training).
7. In Aboriginal culture, grandmothers and mothers are the teachers of values – but where are they? We must educate the children to become responsible adults. However, we also need to encourage elders to pass on the traditions because academic solutions are not enough by themselves.
8. The various agencies and organizations in Calgary are all run by different groups (Metis, Status, Non-Aboriginal, etc.). They need to work together!
9. Students are not using the Native Student Centres. Why not? How can the situation be improved?
10. Be involved politically – even if simply by learning about the system and participating in the voting process.
11. Recognize the potential of Aboriginal people and offer them education and training opportunities.
12. Incorporate Aboriginal culture into Canadian multiculturalism – share for unity.
13. Teach and learn from each other – Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal. The barriers of misunderstanding and prejudices are put up by each one of us.
14. Seek out information from various initiatives and support them in their endeavours.
15. Improve corporate human resources programs to hire and train Aboriginal youth.
16. Develop and support health, wellness, sports, and recreative programs for Aboriginal youth.
17. Present this *Crossroads 2000* Conference Report to spheres of influence in order to generate discussions and involvement from others in the community.
18. Consider bringing *Crossroads 2000* model to Chief and Counsellors from all Nations.
19. Be pro-active. Get involved. Share ideas and act on them. Now, today!

CONFERENCE KEY LESSONS

General Comments

1. Participants were the strength.
2. Going away to a removed location allowed for better participation and networking.
3. One-on-one relationships were built during the Conference.
4. Suitable holistic approach of relationship building / networking and addressing issues / solutions.
5. It was important to have a positive atmosphere to unable trust and sharing during the Conference.
6. The committee is pleased with the number and quality of daily evaluations.
7. During presentation, when appropriate, provide the reference in the Information Binder.
8. Make participants change sits during the day.

Conference Program

1. First day should have been focused more on interacting and learning about each others (need workshop discussion groups).
2. The Beginnings activity allowed for the women to participate in a 'sharing circle'.
3. The schedule was too tight and too full as per the program. Need to control the timeline as scheduled.



4. Carefully balance the depth versus the breadth of the topics. Fewer presentations would have allowed for more time for discussions.
5. Could have had more sessions with a focus on the youth.
6. Need for more workshop discussion groups – as much opportunities for interaction.
7. After the racism workshop, there should have been a strategy for formal closure.
8. Allow for quick stretching intermissions between the presentations.
9. Consider lunches without speakers to allow participants to network and converse.
10. Evenings presented relaxed and casual forums for networking.

Participants

1. Ideal number might be 50, as opposed to 60
2. Workshop discussion groups should have been limited to about 5 participants each.
3. Ensure that the traditionalists are present - they really added to the Conference.
4. Participants' affiliations should have been made clear (during Ice Breaker, or on nametags).
5. Need for more Elders to be present.

Speakers

1. Careful selection of speakers is needed.
2. Need for strong liaison with the speakers and clear direction to focus the presentations.

Logistics and Administration

1. Beautiful and peaceful venues (Rimrock Resort Hotel in Banff) was very conducive to a sharing circle.
2. The Information Binder, received ahead of the Conference, was useful to prepare for the weekend.
3. Microphone should have been used.
4. Very comfortable chairs are needed in a Conference of this type.
5. Need to keep the room cool.
6. Consider offering hot breakfast (rather than Continental).



ACKNOWLEDGEMENT OF SPONSORS

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Thank you!

Autumn Contractors Inc.



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CALGARY



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