

Strengthening Connections with Culture & Traditional Values in the Aboriginal non-profit sector



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“Someone close to me became very sick. She had little family in town, so I stayed with her night and day at the hospital. After several days, I had to call my boss. My paid sick days had run out. To my surprise, the Executive Director of my non-profit agency said “no problem, take the time you need, we’ll work it out.” I was shocked. A few hours later my ED showed up at the hospital with co-workers and Elders. They brought food and drums. The food kept coming for days. My loved one pulled through. I was so touched. This is when I knew I was working in the right sector, and would continue to do so the rest of my life, or as long as they would have me! I previously worked in government.”

-ANP sector employee, at Victoria Sharing Circle

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Executive Summary

Project overview

In August 2012, the BC Association of Aboriginal Friendship Centres (BCAAFC) commissioned a team from the Victoria Native Friendship Centre (VNFC) to undertake a research project to strengthen connections with Aboriginal culture and traditional values in British Columbia's Aboriginal non-profit (ANP) sector. Our research project is one of four projects commissioned to develop the ANP Sector Human Resources (HR) and Workforce Strategy.

This report provides a summary of our journey, including what we learned and experienced. It culminates in a list of recommendations to help create a culturally-anchored workforce able to draw upon unique traditions and values to best serve clients and communities.

Through a variety of research methods focused on engaging ANP sector employees and volunteers in communities across the province, the project team documented many examples of promising practices for culture and traditional values in the workplace. These practices are referenced in the report and listed in the Cultural Self-assessment Tool (Appendix A), where they are presented in a format to assist BC ANPs. This tool is a living document.

The project team generated findings about the state of culture in BC's Aboriginal non-profit sector, its value to agencies, and considerations for successful implementation in the workplace. These findings form the basis of the recommendations and were echoed across group sessions, sharing circles, individual interviews, the literature review and sector survey.

Overall, our research revealed that incorporating culture and traditional values in the workplace improves employee morale and organizational outcomes. It also leads to better recruitment and retention of qualified employees.

Survey results support a direct correlation between culture in an organization and employee satisfaction, recruitment and retention.

- 93% of those surveyed in the sector are more satisfied in a workplace that incorporates culture and traditional values
- 88% of those surveyed are more likely to work for and remain in an organization that encourages indigenous cultural practices and traditional values

Our work also illustrates that while culture is alive and well in BC ANP organizations, there is little formal research or literature about it. However, limited groups do exist and are creating an emerging community of practice to look at the effective implementation of culture in the workplace.

Findings for the BC Aboriginal non-profit sector also include:

- Culture is not static; it originates from the territory where the Aboriginal non-profit is located and is influenced by the individuals within the organization
- A diversity of models exist for successfully incorporating cultural practices into an organization, both in practice and in policy
- In a financially constrained sector, access to resources for cultural mentors; leadership and staff training; cultural policy development; and recruitment efforts are paramount

Along with better benefits and pensions, workplace wellness, mentorship and professional development, the following recommendations are brought forward to support the development of a strong and united Aboriginal non-profit sector with the wisdom and strength to successfully serve Aboriginal communities in a good way for generations.

Summary of Recommendations

Through our primary and secondary research, we learned that efforts need to be made in the following four areas:

Cultural Policy Development: reflecting culture in the organization's policies (e.g. cultural leave), mission statement and core documentation, as well as programming

Organizational and Community Practice: providing support for cultural and traditional practices in the workplace through resources, mentors, research, gathering, tools and collaboration

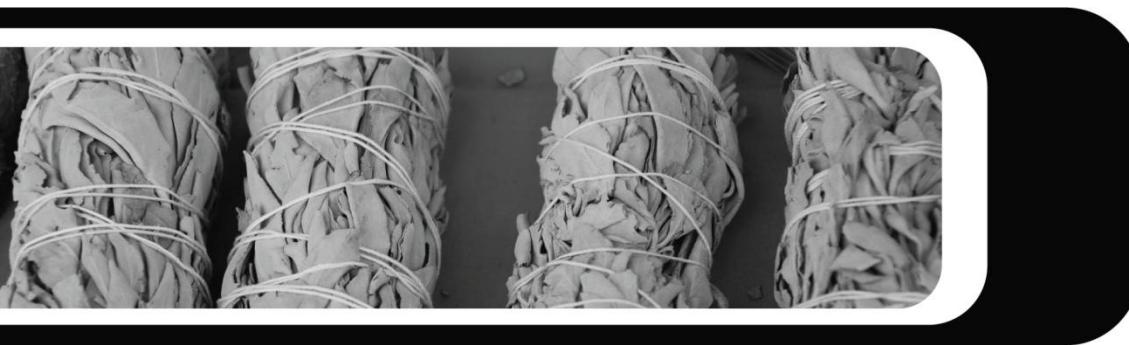
Recruitment and training: Strengthening the sector by emphasizing recruitment and promotion of Aboriginal employees and offering training and education to all members of the sector and our stakeholders, with particular focus on youth development

Elder Involvement: Increasing the role of Elders in our organizations, entrusting them with the responsibility of guiding our future and the role of culture in the workplace

To achieve the above, and thereby help ANP sector employees better serve their clients and communities, it is recommended that the ANP Strategy support:

- Making HR specialists, policy experts, and cultural mentors available to BC ANP agencies
- Creating resources (e.g. Cultural Self-assessment Tool) and sector gatherings to support development of community of practice, cultural programming and workplaces
- Aboriginal recruitment and training initiatives for the sector
- Enhancing the role of Elders in BC ANPs, including at the provincial level
- Aboriginal led research of work-based culture and programming
- Enhancing engagement with funders to promote indigenous approaches for service delivery

The complete list of recommendations is presented in section four.



Methodology

About Our Team

The Victoria Native Friendship Centre assembled a team to use an “Indigenous Approach” to engage the non-profit sector community and deliver this important strategy. This team consists of: Bruce Parisian, Aboriginal Non-Profit Executive Director; Dr. Leslie Brown, Academic and Community Based Research; Kim Cameron, HR Strategist; Ron Rice, Advisor on Matters of Culture and Protocol in traditional and urban contexts; Ron Lees, Facilitator and Communicator; Marek Tyler, Cultural Facilitator and Analyst; and Sebastian Silva, Researcher and Analyst.

Project Purpose

The team began its work by defining the purpose of the project. From the onset, we saw this project, *Strengthening Connections with Culture and Traditional Values in the Aboriginal Non-profit Workplace*, as a way to:

- 1) Explore and document examples of culture and traditional values in the ANP workplace (promising or wise practices), and how to successfully implement culture
- 2) Investigate the value and impacts of culture and tradition in the workplace
- 3) Determine whether incorporating Aboriginal culture and traditional values in the workplace leads to greater employee satisfaction, recruitment and retention

With supporting research in hand, our primary objective was to develop a sector-driven strategy with a set of recommendations to create a more culturally-anchored ANP workforce.

Indigenous Approach

In accordance with local First Nation protocols, the team established an internal Cultural Council comprised of two Elders and two Youth requesting them to “Call to Witness” the work to be done. Establishing an engaged “Indigenous Approach” from the beginning of the project provided the team the cultural foundation to engage with all six provincial regions in a good way and effectively gather the needed cultural data and information. We also called upon our Cultural Council to review project work and key materials.



Commencing in October 2012, and in cooperation with three other contracted research teams, we met with the Aboriginal Non-profit Advisory Committee, whose purpose is to guide the ANP Human Resource and Workforce Strategy. Practicing cultural protocol, we had the Advisory Committee “Call to Witness” the work that was being done by all the teams. We also asked for their advice about our research, including how to best engage non-profit agencies in local communities. We gifted them for their work and included a printed question in each gift about our strategy.

In July 2013, a follow-up Advisory Committee meeting was arranged allowing each team to present their preliminary findings and recommendations. Advisory Committee feedback was documented and incorporated in the final strategy.

Indigenous approaches and values influenced all of our research methods. Adopting an indigenous approach allowed us to engage with members of the ANP sector respectfully and gain (and share) valuable information. Our approach included following local protocols in the territories visited, witnessing, gift giving, utilizing a dialogic approach to interviews and sharing circles.

Our project Elders and Youth as well as the Strategy Advisory Committee were relied upon as valued resources to consult for the duration of the contract. They provided encouragement when needed and reminded us of our purpose and how to achieve it.

Strategy Team Collaboration

Through the BCAAFC, we came together and met with the other contracted Aboriginal Non-profit research teams to strategize and develop a cooperative working model. It was recognized that from the perspective of employees in the ANP sector, our four separate projects were in fact all part of a larger whole. It was also recognized that as a collective we would be more effective working and engaging communities together, rather than asking for people’s time separately and creating consultation fatigue. It was also a way to leverage each other’s strengths and achieve savings in engagement and travel costs.

The work was done mostly through the creation of three committees comprised of members from each of the project teams. These included:

1. Survey Development Committee: Developing joint survey instruments
2. Communications Committee: Developing website and communications materials
3. Regional Engagement Committee: Planning sharing circles in regions



The work from these committees led to the development of two survey instruments combining the research areas of two project teams each; construction of website visuals and materials; unified communications strategy with letters to all ANPs; and coordinated planning and promotion of regional sessions. Once the survey, communication and planning work was complete, individual committees were dissolved and the Strategy was managed by the BCAAFC through a committee of project leads.

Information Gathering

Overview

The project team utilized a range of research methods. These included a literature review, a survey, key informant interviews, and regional facilitated group sessions (sharing circles). In addition to embracing an indigenous approach, standards for conducting research in an ethical manner were followed and the rights of participants were well communicated and honoured.

Research supporting documentation included:

- Key informant interview questionnaires
- Survey instrument (hard copy and online)
- Framework for capturing examples of culture in the workplace, which became the foundation for the organization's "Cultural Self-assessment Tool" (Appendix A)
- Analytical framework for the literature review (sources and themes)
- Facilitated session materials, including guiding questions to stimulate participant interaction

Over the twelve-month duration of the contract, our team consulted broadly to best inform the overall findings and recommendations in support of our Strategy Paper. Stakeholders consulted included, but were not limited to: (1) The BCAAFC and ANP Advisory Committee; (2) employees or volunteers in the ANP sector in six defined regions across British Columbia, in all identified sectors (treatment, child and family, housing, health, employment); (3) Elders and Youth, including BC Youth Council; (4) Individuals involved in implementing Aboriginal culture in the workplace in a variety of sectors (interviews only); and (5) researchers and facilitators from the project teams.

ANP Sector Key Informant Interviews

The BC Aboriginal Non-profit sector consists of hundreds of organizations. Using our "Key Informant Questionnaire," our team conducted interviews with a list of individuals from organizations representing various participants. These were done using a consistent interview instrument as a guide. Over the duration of the contract, our team conducted approximately 15 formal key informant interviews with frontline staff, volunteers, administrators, Youth, Elders, and executive directors, predominantly from the Vancouver coastal, Vancouver mainland and Interior regions.

Many more informal conversations about Aboriginal culture and traditional values in the workplace were carried out and interviewees were also encouraged to complete the online survey anonymously. Knowledge gleaned during initial interviews helped develop the survey tool and prepare for facilitated group session. We also conducted a limited number of interviews with individuals from the public (Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal), academic and private sectors to see what can be learned from these sectors.

Sector Survey

Our project paired with the *Workplace Wellness and Work-life Balance* project team to create a joint survey (see Appendix F). The survey was developed to capture promising cultural practices in the workplace and the value culture can bring to organizations. The survey used simple language and a limited number of questions. It also acknowledged the diversity and uniqueness of Aboriginal cultures from the many First Nations in BC.

Participation was controlled to ensure that only employees or volunteers in the Aboriginal sector could participate. As such, the results represent findings specific to the ANP sector. A link to the online survey as well as hard copy versions were sent to all ANPs on a master list provided by the BCAAFC. Surveys were also distributed at the regional sessions.

Incentives in the form of a prize draw for a chance to win Carey Newman jewellery or an iPad were also offered to encourage participation. Instructions stated clearly that prize draw winners would be required to prove they work or volunteer in the ANP sector in order to claim their prize.

It should be noted that a non-randomized approach was used. This was done to capture as many promising practices of culture in the workplace as possible and to allow everyone interested in sharing information an opportunity to participate. Survey results are consistent with findings from multiple lines of evidence, including interviews, and facilitated community sessions.

A total of 147 individuals took the survey, either online or in paper form. All paper copies were transcribed into the online tool to create on central information repository.

Literature Review

The literature review was conducted in late 2012 through the summer of 2013 by the Victoria Native Friendship Centre Project Team. It built off an initial review done by Liam White as part of UVIC's LE, NONET program. Its aim was to document existing research in the field of Aboriginal culture in the workplace. It also provided potential information for sharing at the facilitated sessions. Both literature reviews are included in Appendix B. We found the literature limited in content and scope. Few studies could be found examining the impacts of Aboriginal culture in the workplace, or the role of women in the sector, and fewer still were conducted by Aboriginal researchers.

Facilitated sessions - Provincial Sharing Circles

As part of our team mandate to make the strategy “by the sector; for the sector”, and in cooperation with the three other contracted research teams, we embarked on six Provincial Sharing Circles. These facilitated data gathering sessions took us to six regions over the months of January through June 2013. Locations included Victoria, Vancouver, Kamloops, Kelowna, Prince George and Terrace. The locations were identified by the project teams with support from the Advisory

Committee for their accessibility and large number of ANPs, as well as geographic distribution (modeled on First Nations Health Regions).

During these sessions, our team's facilitators engaged participants to:

- Share information about the ANP Workforce and HR Strategy Project
- Learn specific examples of promising cultural practices in the workplace
- Learn successes and challenges faced by ANPs in making culture part of their workplace

Following the guidance of our Cultural Advisory Committee, we followed regional protocols by first writing and hand delivering (when possible) letters to all BC ANP's to extend an invitation to participate in ANP Regional Sharing Circles. Letters were delivered and mailed followed by phone calls to each ANP and then finally with emails. Alongside and in support of traditional invitation protocol, all Sharing Circle information was published on the www.aboriginalnonprofit.ca website.

Due to smaller than anticipated participant numbers at the first three sessions, our team contracted Kelowna coordinator, Tanya Gregoire (Youth) for the Kelowna Sharing Circle to help boost participation and awareness among local ANPs. In accordance with her regional cultural teachings, she traveled to each local ANP and gifted each organization with a sage bundle to invite them to the Kelowna session.

Utilizing a regional Indigenous approach can require more time and budget but utilizing this approach did drive higher participation while also achieving clarity of intent and demonstrating respect for local protocol and participant's time.

The Sharing Circles were treated as gatherings where employees and friends in the sector were able to share experiences and connect (or re-connect) with one another. Cultural protocols were followed, including opening prayers, talking circle formats, and gifting. Elders shared their wisdom, and mentored the youth in attendance, who also shared their perspective. Sessions were powerful and warm, with singing, laughing, good food and many shared stories.

Though considerable efforts were dedicated to recruitment, including mass mail-outs, direct phone calls and site visits, attendance at some of the sessions was not as high as expected. We were reminded on several occasions how busy ANPs are and the challenges of freeing up staff for important initiatives such as cultural or professional development. The sessions were nevertheless hugely rewarding from a research perspective. The smaller numbers allowed for more in-depth discussions, resulting in rich and very informative discussions. Attendance ranged from 7-25 participants, with participants from various organizational positions (front line staff, executives, etc.).

Youth Outreach - Gathering our Voices

In addition to the facilitated sessions with members of the ANP sector, we were advised by our Cultural Council to promote the ANP HR and Workforce Strategy to Youth. We organized a workshop as part of the provincial youth conference, Gathering Our Voices (Penticton, BC). Our project lead, Marek Tyler, and Caring for First Nations Children Society's Samantha Tweet, facilitated eight focus groups. The workshops attended by between 6-12 participants from across BC

were an opportunity to engage Youth directly. Participants were made aware of the workshops through conference communication channels and materials.

The workshop construct allowed information to be shared about the four project areas and the sector more broadly. It also served to gather feedback and promote upcoming Regional Sharing Circles. Not all youth in attendance were employees or volunteers within the ANP sector. Only those employed or volunteering in the ANP sector were invited to take surveys. Attendance at the conference also served the function of promoting awareness of the ANP sector. Many Youth were not previously aware of the ANP sector and as such, had not considered it as a career option.

The intent for participating at this Youth event was to:

- Have discussions with Youth and accompanying chaperones from ANP agencies
- Collect information through focus groups and surveys from individuals who work or volunteer in the ANP sector
- Capture Youth perspectives and viewpoints regarding culture (an example of how culture can be viewed was shared in relation to Gitxsan dancers - see Appendix C)
- Promote the Strategy – thereby increasing its visibility and overall participation

The range of viewpoints, from volunteers to executive directors, at all of these engagements allowed a broad set of issues to be examined for this sector to strengthen connections with culture and traditional values in the workforce as a tool for HR recruitment and retention.

Analysis

The findings in the following section are based on the research conducted during this project. They were developed by analyzing the information learned through the various data collection methods, including: (1) the literature review; (2) the interviews and facilitated sessions; and (3) the surveys. The analysis was a grounded emergent analysis built dynamically as participant contributions increased. Sessions and interviews were initially constructed from literature review findings and then evolved as we met and spoke with more people.

Thematic analysis of survey responses and community engagement notes revealed consistent patterns. The findings section shares learnings spanning multiple lines of evidence. Findings confirmed by more than one line of evidence were considered for discussion and inclusion. For example, if a finding was identified in both the literature review and heard in the community sessions (two out of three sources), it attained a level of validation which confirmed it was strong enough to share.

The result is a set of findings sourced through literature and community of practice and confirmed on more than one occasion. In most cases, themes heard as part of the community sessions and interviews were aligned with survey findings. Findings from the literature review were limited in numbers but supported by findings from interviews, survey results, and community sessions.

While there are undoubtedly more findings to draw upon in relation to culture in the workplace, the findings presented in this report are those which, through our research with members of the sector, were identified as most important for effectively embedding culture in the workplace.



Research Findings & Discussion

Introduction

This Final Strategy Paper for the Aboriginal non-profit sector by the Victoria Native Friendship Centre project team explores how this sector can strengthen connections with culture and traditional values as a working tool for HR recruitment and retention.

We conducted research to answer the question: Does a strengthened connection with culture and traditional values in the workplace bolster HR recruitment for the Aboriginal non-profit sector? We also sought to document what constitutes promising or wise practices in embedding culture and tradition in the workplace, and looked at the impacts of doing so.

What emerged is a telling tale of the value of a culturally-anchored workforce and the widespread importance of tradition in the Aboriginal non-profit sector.

We successfully gathered information from six regions in British Columbia. Of the one hundred and forty-seven (147) surveyed participants, the majority were female (88%) adults (90%) between the ages 30-56 (76%), self-identified as First Nations (68%), Métis (11%), or non-Aboriginal (24%).

Strategically, participants from all sectors participated in group sessions, interviews and surveys. The majority of those surveyed work in the Child and Family Sector (40%). We also collected responses from individuals in the following sectors: Health (25%); Housing (20%); Employment (21%); and treatment (11%).

Individuals across a variety of organizational positions contributed. As part of the survey, we heard most from frontline staff (31%) and administration staff (31%), managers/supervisors (25%) and executive (20%). We also heard from volunteers such as student interns and board members.

We thank all those who participated in this research project and helped create this culture strategy for the sector.

1. State of Culture and Traditional Values in the ANP workplace in BC

1.1 Culture is alive and well in BC ANPs

Aboriginal culture in the workplace has several dimensions. It is usually expressed through traditional practices employees use in their workplaces, such as observing protocol. It is also found in the values or 'ways of being' which shape interactions at all levels of the organization.

It is important to note that our research focused on Aboriginal culture and traditional values in the workplace, not 'workplace culture', which is how an organization runs its operations, fosters an environment and cultivates certain feelings amongst its members.

In our research, we learned that culture is dynamic, and not always easily communicated in words. Typically, it starts with culture from the territory where the ANP resides, then broadens to reflect the people within the organization and the community it serves.

We observed a number of factors or pillars seemingly common among most organizations incorporating Aboriginal culture. Yet because all First Nations are unique, and by extension ANPs, it is the responsibility of each ANP to determine the foundations of culture in their organization and how this extends to all aspects of the organization. The Cultural Self-Assessment tool in Appendix A captures many of the practices and values that were shared with us which reflect Aboriginal workplaces. We also sought to capture some of these through quotes and stories which are in this report.

Aboriginal workplaces are often marked with an emphasis on family, community, traditional wisdom, and doing what's right in a good way. They also place great value on protocol, the natural world, and individuals as whole beings, respecting each person's individuality and ways of practicing culture. In speaking with an ANP finance administrator, she related the following story:

"At first, I was the new non-Aboriginal person taking care of the books. I tried my best to fit in but I was still an outsider. Over the first year, I was asked to help make food for community feasts, participate in staff sharing circles and smudging. After about a year, I realized that I was no longer the white lady working in finance but I was now one of the team."

Another employee in the sector relayed the following: "I think about being a part of a supportive, caring team. Like a family. It takes courage to support your fellow staff and it also takes courage to ask for their support. When you work at an ANP, you are not alone, you are working with a team, a courageous team, and you will work hard for them because you care about them."

The Sharing Circle in Kamloops was fortunate to have a Youth attend. Not only did he support the Kamloops' Sharing Circles' Elder with the day's protocol but his input proved very important in capturing the idea that practicing culture at work is not just something that you do. "Culture is not a box that you check once per day, but something that you live throughout the whole day, because it's what you do - respectfully practising culture in all of your dealings, from working with Elders to developing organization programs." Simply put, culture is not about doing, but being and living who you are.

In the course of our research, almost every ANP worker we engaged stated that culture was practiced in their workplace in some way. Results from the survey confirm this, with 86% of respondents stating that “Culture and traditional values are strongly embedded in their workplace.”

The majority of sector employees engaged were women due to the fact that the sector is predominately comprised of female staff. Based on our interviews and sessions, we found that women are very much aware of the importance of practicing culture in the work place and usually play leadership roles. This was not reflected in the literature, which is a definite gap, given the role of women in the ANP sector.

In all cases, male and female participants alike stressed the importance of culture in their lives and expressed a desire to see more culture and traditional values embedded in the workplace.

1.2 There is a very rich diversity of practice

There are many ways and varying degrees of cultural expression within ANPs. For some organizations, culture is expressed frequently and explicitly. For others, it is ever present but more implicit. An example of this is the degree to which some organizations have culture written into policy, while others follow such norms but only as orally expressed.

The degree of culture integration depends on a number of factors, including the level of cultural competency of staff and leaders and whether Elders or cultural mentors are present. We also noticed that expressions of culture in the workplace were strongly present in more remote communities but less explicitly stated, while in urban agencies with individuals from diverse Aboriginal (and non-Aboriginal) backgrounds, culture was more explicitly stated.

During every community session, employees and volunteers from the ANP sector gave examples of culture and traditional values being expressed in the workplace. In the survey tool, almost everyone who took the survey answered this question, providing concrete examples.

We found that culture and traditional values were often expressed as:

- Spirituality, ceremony, cultural work
- Visible displays of culture in the workplace: art, languages, music
- Access to Elders
- Culture reflected in the programming and processes of the organization
- Acknowledgement of the territory and people where the organization is located
- Cultural education, policy
- Feasting, gatherings

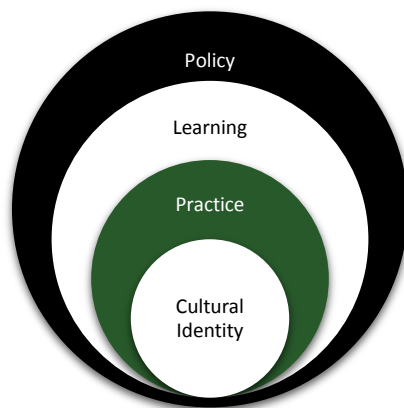
The complete list of practices is documented in the draft Cultural Self-assessment Tool (Appendix A). While the tool itself can evolve and become a resource for ANPs, the examples of culture in the workplace within it form an integral part of our research and this report.

1.3 There is a limited body of knowledge

While there are many examples of culture being expressed in the workplace, there is very limited research documented on culture in the workplace and the value it offers. A significant finding from our literature review is that more Aboriginal led research is needed to understand the role of culture and traditional values in the workplace.

Beyond the limited documented body of knowledge, there is an emerging community of practice. The ANP Strategy's focus on culture in the workplace is really a shining but rare example of a project focusing on Aboriginal culture and traditional values in the workplace.

To date, what we have are leaders and employees from the sector coming together and practicing culture in their work and relations. But there is little in the way of gatherings or resources dedicated specifically to building awareness of how culture can be practiced effectively in the non-profit workplace. This research project, and in particular the facilitated sessions, provided an opportunity to gather and share, and the community welcomed it.



Of note is the role of cultural liaisons in Friendship Centres. These cultural liaisons coordinate and bring together individuals from various centres to share wise practices and promote further integration of culture in the workplace.

Victoria's Native Friendship Center has actively invested in and developed policy that provides employee cultural training and learning systems and supported practice. The result of this healthy support system is a strong cultural identity for both employees and the organization as a whole.

2. Value of Embedding Culture in the NP Workplace in BC

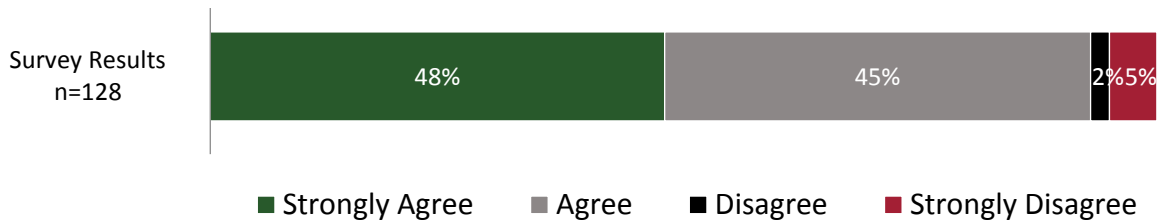
2.1 Promotes employee satisfaction, attraction and retention

Meeting ANP sector employees from across the province answered important questions. We wondered whether cultural practices and Indigenous values in the workplace might lead to more satisfied employees, and be a factor in recruiting or retaining them.

We asked if employees working in organizations that embed culture are more fulfilled, or satisfied, as employee satisfaction is identified as a powerful determinant of employee retention.

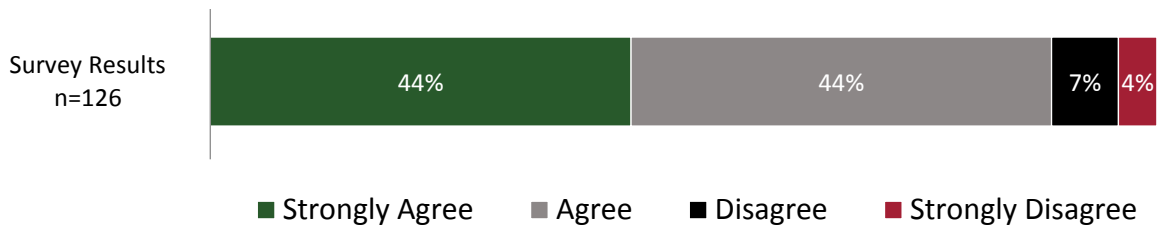
Repeatedly we heard that employees feel more fulfilled and satisfied when culture is practiced and traditional values are present in the workplace. The survey results confirmed this finding; with an overwhelming majority of survey respondents (**93%**) *agreeing* they feel more satisfied in a workplace that incorporates culture and traditional values.

“I feel more satisfied in a workplace that incorporates culture and traditional values”



We also inquired whether culture was a factor in their decisions to work for ANP organizations. Once again we were told by employees on several occasions that yes, culture is a main reason why people come to work in the sector, and why they stay. Survey results reveal ***that 88% of respondents agree*** they are more likely to work and remain employees of organization that foster traditional culture and values.

“I am more likely to work for, and remain an employee of, an organization that incorporates culture and traditional values”



A participant at the session in Victoria said she joined an ANP to connect and learn more about her culture. Because of the ANP’s focus on cultural education and culture being practiced in the workplace, she felt the benefits of working for the ANP extended well beyond her paycheck. It was an opportunity to learn who she was and where she came from.

2.2 Improves organizational outcomes

In addition to making an organization more appealing to current and prospective employees, embedding Aboriginal culture and values in the workplace provides many benefits. Below are some of the benefits stated by respondents as part of the survey or in-person sessions and interviews, or documented as part of the literature review. Aboriginal culture and values in the workplace are valuable because:

- Supports individuals by enhancing their ability to manage stress, resolve conflict
- Helps staff better understand their clients, and to reach them, ultimately providing services that have better outcomes and lasting impacts on lives

- Creates a sense of purpose and helps motivate employees
- Promotes collaboration, individuals working together to accomplish challenging tasks
- Reduces competition, helping with team-work and trustworthiness
- Is congruent with ways of knowing and being
- Creates a sense of spiritual safety
- Encourage workplace well-being by creating a positive and safe environment, helping when negative feelings or conflicts arise
- Utilizing Elders, House Chiefs, and extended communities, problems can be resolved within the context of culture and traditional ways

A culturally anchored workforce is not only better able to cope with the challenges of working in the non-profit and social services sectors, it is better empowered to achieve organizational outcomes and serve clients who need their help, thereby achieving higher measures of success.

Culture is also essential to promote healing and address the deep and lasting impacts of colonialism and residential schools.

2.3 Fosters individual and community development

Culture in the workplace brings value that extends beyond the ability to do one's work. Research participants also stated that culture in the workplace:

- Supports development of individuals; individual growth and learning
- Helps build pride in Aboriginal identity
- Provides teachers and role models for staff and community members
- Helps employees connect to their traditional heritage and helps pass on these traditions and teachings from generation to generation
- Brings community closer to organization and staff
- Creates a sense of belonging and community
- Provides a platform for unity, collective action
- Builds a sense of community by bringing people together and helping with team-work and trustworthiness
- Promotes healing which can make it easier to deal with workplace stress

"I was asked to drive the school bus one morning. It was my first time, so I took great care. As I approached one of the stops, I could see one of the children walking across the street with their proud parent. All the cars from the four corners stopped to let them cross. It's amazing the power a child commands. As the child stepped onto the bus, barely able to make it up that first step with his small legs, a little easier on the second, he looked up at me, the man driving the bus with a hugely pleased grin on his face, and said without hesitation "you're not my bus driver!" The child's environment was different and he had no trouble saying it out loud. This is what First Nations people want to see in their children, empowering each to speak their mind."

- Cowichan Elder and cultural advisor,
Victoria Sharing Circle

3. Implementing Culture in the Workplace

3.1 Determinants of culture in the workplace

In our research and various lines of inquiry, we found consistent themes arising when it comes to promoting culture in the workplace. This section builds upon previous findings and describes the factors which are usually associated with culture thriving in the workplace.

Supportive Leaders

In both the literature and our sessions with ANP sector employees, we heard that leaders play an important role in promoting cultural practices and traditional values in the workplace. Without the support of leaders, it is difficult for cultural initiatives to take root.

There is usually greatest cultural expression in organizations where leaders not only encourage, but practice culture, leading by example, and a space is created by leaders for culture and traditional values to shape the direction and interactions within an organization. It is also important for leaders to communicate the value of promoting Aboriginal culture and values in the workplace.

Presence of Elders and knowledge holders

The importance of Elders and knowledgeable individuals in making space for culture in an organization was stated in all of our research. Through stories, experience, and connection to the past, Elders are universally believed to be necessary for culture to thrive in any environment, including places of work. Elder involvement in the organization is helpful because Elders have a strong presence and can help raise morale and lower tension among employees. From a cultural perspective, they are traditionally the ones empowered to practice culture and speak with legitimacy about it.

Culture as policy

Many of the ANP organizations that showed deep levels of culture had culture written into their policies. We often heard the importance of this, since it sends a strong message of the importance of culture as part of the organization's activities and identity. Included was culture being specifically referenced as part of organizational documents and practices, as well programming. Examples observed:

- Culture advanced as part of a mission statement and core organizational documents such as strategic plans and annual reports
- References to culture in programming of the organization, in descriptions of programs and their mandates
- Culture advanced in the human resource (HR) policies of an organization, including hiring practices, training, and benefits (such as cultural leave)
- Culture present in an organization's policies, such as for conflict resolution

“We usually get the call the same day or the day before - that the fish is coming in. So at the last minute I asked for the day off and it was granted but it wasn’t paid, and when I got up there the fish hadn’t come in. So I had not gotten paid that day, and paid to travel and got no fish, which is an important source of food for my family. When the fish did come in I couldn’t afford to go, so I missed an opportunity to go and learn how to clean and can the fish, plus an opportunity to spend time with my aunties and uncles and do my part in the process. Those times are very important when we can all be together.”

- ANP sector employee

According to sharing circle participants, other important reasons for having culture documented in policy include:

- It sends a clear message to all about the value you place on culture, including your staff, clients, and funders
- Putting culture and values into policy ensures that the impact goes beyond the current employees of the organization and into the future
- Putting into writing your cultural policies helps remove ambiguity and provides clarity as to what staff can expect, also reducing the potential for arbitrary or inconsistent application

Some Aboriginal employees stressed that having documented policies and protocols for cultural practices and cultural leave is extremely important. We were also told that policies aimed at leave to attend funerals or mourn lost ones should include extended family. Participants remarked that cultural policy development should be informed by employees and guided by Elders and cultural advisors.

Cultural policy does not have to be written to be relevant. We spoke to a number of individuals who said culture was practiced in their organization without formal written policies in place. Allowances are made for individuals to take time off, for example, to be with family during difficult times or participate in ceremonies or gatherings, despite the absence of written policies.

Aboriginal employees foster culture in the organization

We stated earlier that in most workplaces, culture was brought into the environment by employees. In keeping with this idea, it was found in the literature and in our primary research with ANP communities that the presence of employees of Aboriginal descent is one of the strongest determinants of whether Aboriginal culture and traditional values are present in the workplace.

In light of this, HR practices that promote recruitment, retention and participation of Aboriginal employees at all levels of an organization are important to promoting culture in the workplace.

Education

Cultural sensitivity training remains a widespread approach to encourage Aboriginal culture and values in the workplace. Cultural education and training, including ongoing cultural professional development for staff, leadership, board, and volunteers, highlights the importance of culture and creates shared understanding. Both the literature and primary research (interviews, sessions and survey) support the finding that education remains one of the strongest means to ensure respect for and practice of culture in the workplace. Findings also suggest that training and education need to be entrusted to individuals with the knowledge and experience to deliver it effectively to avoid insensitivity or arousing cultural tensions. This includes a wide variety of initiatives meant to educate, stimulate and engage employees and others in a better understanding of culture and tradition. The shape of which can include many approaches, from more formal educational initiatives to group activities: learning history, experiential workshops such as drumming, and taking part in community events, ceremonies and gatherings.

Gathering, events and ceremonies

While culture and values are expressed in a person's actions or are included in organizational policies, we observed that culture is strongly expressed when people gather. When an important meeting is called, or members from various organizations or Nations come together for a purpose, special consideration is placed on observing cultural protocol and traditional ways. In ANP organizations, this is expressed at family open houses, feasts, celebrations, even annual general meetings. The act of holding events or gatherings of community members (or visitors) encourages the celebration of cultural ways and traditions.

3.2 Factors for successfully implementing culture in the workplace

Must be genuine and involve staff, Indigenous approach

In order for culture to flourish, it must be done genuinely and with the support of staff. Implementing Aboriginal culture and values in an organization in a superficial manner will not work because it will be perceived as disingenuous and artificial by both Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal people. Staff engagement and leadership in implementing cultural practices needs to ensure there is support as the practices will reflect the individuals in the organization. Practical evidence also suggests that creating cultural committees or identifying culture leads (can be on rotating basis), is an effective way to promote culture in ANP agencies. Finally, it is important to use an Indigenous approach, such as using a holistic perspective to incorporate culture and values in the workplace.

Knowledgeable cultural mentors, Elders

Implementing culture in an organization is a challenge that requires the guidance and leadership of culturally knowledgeable individuals. The support of individuals such as Elders and culture mentors helps agencies create an authentic process grounded in tradition that reflects local protocol and the spiritual and emotional needs of those affected.

Like all life skills, some individuals possess more experience, knowledge or ability than others. Some people are great carvers, others are wonderful weavers, some people cook very well, others sing, drum or dance mightily. Some are great with numbers and spreadsheets, others with fishing nets or classrooms full of children.

Those who take a central place in advancing cultural practices, ceremonies and teachings of their communities are often those ideally positioned to support individuals and organizations in integrating culture in the workplace. Acquiring the support of such individuals is an important factor in embedding culture successfully in the workplace.

Sufficient investment of resources

Culture and traditional values in ANP agencies help people become more connected and more productive in their organization, and contribute to their ability to offer better services and achieve better results for their clients. But like most workplace initiatives, advancing culture requires organizational support which includes dedication of time and money. For example:

- Reflecting culture in policy requires people with the skills to do so, as well as their time. Not all organizations have full time HR personnel on staff or individuals who can write policy or review organizational documents
- Cultural mentors or Elder mentors assisting in implementing culture or providing cultural services may require payment for their effort. On site Elders or cultural liaison roles are highly valued, but they are also structural costs which need to be factored
- Supporting traditional practices such as protocol, requires acquiring gifts and demonstrating hospitality in greeting guests





- Gatherings and feasts also cost money and staff time, which is either paid or unpaid, but also can take time away from providing other services
- Placing art in the organization and other cultural symbols can require money to buy them
- Educating staff and providing cultural training requires staff resources and materials for those taking the workshops, doing site visits, etc.

Wise investments in observing protocol and traditional practices pay-off in the long run, but they are a cost that must be budgeted for by organizations in the present. For cash-strapped agencies in the non-profit sector, allowances for cultural workplace policies and practices are fundamental to success.

A strategy to create a culturally-anchored workforce and embed culture and traditional values in ANP organizations must make the case for culture in the workplace and seek allowances to support organizations in pursuing this objective, as well as advance creative ways for culture to thrive in an environment with limited resources.

Collaboration and learning from others

We learned as part of our literature review, interviews and regional engagement sessions that having organizations meet and share experiences was instrumental to learning wise or promising practices. The entire project, truly, was an exercise in learning from the community and sharing what we learned. This is expressed in our report findings and through the Cultural Self-assessment Tool, which is a compilation of all the promising practices we learned from ANP organizations across the sectors and province.

Sharing resources, such as personnel, is a practice that was also advanced during sessions, particularly when talking about HR resources and those specializing in policy. This may be a viable solution for culture as well, with cultural resources or ‘experts’ available to provide services to ANP organizations, either as a trade or at a reasonable cost. This may be enabled by sector-wide collaboration or through a provincial cultural council or committee (pool of experts, Elders) to serve the non-profit sector.

It also became apparent that while the ANP sector is unique in many regards, the opportunities and challenges with implementing Aboriginal culture and traditional values in the workplace are shared across many sectors. The academic sector has made considerable strides in this regard, and many governmental bodies (Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal alike) have made efforts to reflect cultural

practices in their organizations. These and the private sector can also be sources of learning as it relates to recruiting and retaining Aboriginal talent to the non-profit sector.

Engaging the local community, youth

Through many interactions, one theme raised repeatedly was the pivotal role of the territory on which the ANP organization operates. Having strong connections with local knowledge holders and communities supports meaningful integration of culture and creates a bond with the land and region which the ANP serves. Being involved in cultural or community events in local communities also promotes traditional practices and values. It also helps ANPs establish relationships with their client's families, making them more effective in serving them.

Further to this, engaging local communities helps connect with youth who may be interested in serving their communities by working in ANP agencies, and provides them with services or volunteer/employment opportunities to support their development. Connecting with youth is a great way to understand the needs and aspirations and learn from their knowledge.

A proven youth engagement strategy is volunteerism. Similar to learning cultural practices by mentoring and learning from Elders, youth are provided the opportunity to support ANP agency management on program development and implementation, are included in committees and board meetings. Youth engaged with local agencies learn the practical skills to represent on provincial councils.

In a rapidly changing world, it is essential to fine-tune recruitment strategies to attract young, bright talent. Collaborating with youth and community groups in the Aboriginal community can also help foster Aboriginal cultural practices for the future sector workforce.

3.3 Challenges implementing culture

Our report has identified factors which support creating a culturally rich workplace. We also learned, through our literature reviews and primary research, that there are a number of factors which challenge organizations when addressing culture in the workplace. These include:

- Finding the right cultural knowledge holders to support the process
- Avoiding tokenism, and navigating cultural tensions or sensitivities
- The cost of cultural practices and cultural development
- Non-indigenous approaches and models of care/service delivery

Individuals with insufficient knowledge

Having the right cultural mentors to support individuals and organizations in advancing teachings or cultural ways in the workplace is indispensable. Cultural liaisons are valuable resources in organizations such as Friendship Centres which bring together Aboriginals from different Nations and non-Aboriginals alike. Individuals with insufficient knowledge and experience to handle this role are not likely to achieve good results. Employees need to trust and support the individuals selected as cultural teachers and mentors.

It should also be noted that some Elders and individuals are still profoundly affected by the legacy of colonialism and residential schools. Asking the help of wounded healers means also being there to help them and being sensitive to their healing needs.

Tokenism

A sensitivity to and an emphasis on managing the different backgrounds in an organization is appreciated. It is also essential to manage diversity without resorting to tokenism, or pan-Indianism. Individuals from different First Nations share similarities but also differences. Culture is unique, dynamic and highly personal to every individual and organization. Celebrating Aboriginal diversity is an important element of culture and tradition. Finding ways to accommodate various practices, including the needs and customs of others (e.g. some people may not smudge or be allergic to smudging, so they may need to work out of office when this occurs), demonstrates respect and caring.

Clashing values, Aboriginal vs. non-Aboriginal

We did not personally encounter many instances where this was an issue. In fact, our experience is that non-Aboriginals who work in ANPs support highly the role of culture and traditional practices in the workplace. In our survey, non-Aboriginals actually rated their satisfaction (96%) and likelihood of working for an ANP (93%) with culture higher than individuals who identified themselves as Aboriginal!

This was, nevertheless, an area flagged in the literature, particularly as it relates to cultural training and integrating Aboriginal culture in the workplace, with non-Aboriginals. It is stressed that this must be done with sensitivity and with the support of all those involved. Moreover, we did hear some anecdotal evidence during the sharing circles of non-Aboriginal individuals claiming the right to use “cultural leave” for events of religious practices that fall outside the realm of “Aboriginal Culture and Traditional Values.”

As a tool for promoting Aboriginal culture and traditional values, it appears reasonable among many Executive Directors to limit the use of the cultural leave for participation in events and activities related to Aboriginal culture, for Aboriginals and non-Aboriginals alike. Nevertheless, managing this dynamic is a reality that many ANPs are faced with and having clearly stated policies and parameters shared with new employees can be helpful to avoid misunderstandings and conflict.

Cost of cultural benefits and traditional values in the workplace

While implementing culture in the workplace does not need to have a high cost, a number of organizations struggle with allowances for cultural leave and the cost of adopting traditional practices. This can be particularly demanding for individuals with large families and cultural demands. For example, some individuals may have to attend several ceremonies or funerals that go well beyond the number of days allocated for cultural leave (e.g. chiefs). Doing work in an Indigenous way can also require the taking of time to do the work right, which can be a challenge for organizations with heavy caseloads and extensive administrative requirements (writing Requests For Proposals, reporting requirements, etc.).

In light of this, implementation of cultural policies, programs and initiatives need to be adaptable and consider the reality of constrained resources of BC ANPs. Creating unrealistic demands that stretch people and organizations beyond their limits is not desirable. Investments in human and material resources to support cultural development are vital.

Non-Indigenous approaches

We learned in our interviews and group sessions that certain workplaces or service delivery practices which are not traditional or necessarily aligned with indigenous values and approaches can be challenging for ANPs. The examples shared with us on several occasions are unions and government sanctioned models of care or service delivery.

While some unions have successfully advocated for the rights of Aboriginals to bring culture into their workplace, unionized environments can also be challenging for ANPs, particularly on the issue of volunteerism. Unions may raise expectations of payment for effort expended and challenge the culture of volunteerism, which is traditionally a vital resource in many ANPs, as most non-profit sector organizations.

Another item raised on numerous occasions is the sector's ability to deliver services in the way that best serves Aboriginal clients. We heard repeatedly that services must be delivered in a culturally appropriate way and with consideration to the individual as a whole person. Program requirements which constrain an ANP's ability to deliver services in a cultural way limits their chances of success. Because of this, it is necessary to engage governments and funders to build awareness and ensure that models of care and service delivery align with Aboriginal culture and traditional values. Administrative, service and funding requirements that run counter to Indigenous approaches and values must be examined and addressed so that employees in the sector can do their good work and be successful in helping people and lifting up communities.

Recommendations

The Strategy's Four Baskets:

As the Aboriginal Non-profit HR Strategy moves forward building momentum and unifying the sector, it will be vital to ensure that any policies, programs and services support and fill the following four baskets that the Sector told us matter most to them.

1. Cultural Policy Development

Culture and Traditional Values are at the heart of the Aboriginal Non Profit sector's identity. There are a diversity of models that successfully assert culture as a key driver for development, economic growth, and legacy. Yet despite its importance, levels of incorporating cultural practices and traditions in policy (such as cultural leave) are still variable. There are also ANPs that don't specifically refer to culture in their mission statements and organizational documents. Cultural policy and strategic vision establish clear objectives and a genuine commitment from leaders.

2. Organization and Community Practice

At an organizational level, incorporating culture and traditional values in the workplace improves employee morale and service outcomes. At a staff level, this means providing organizations with the material and human resources to develop a rich community of practice. This is so important given that culture and traditional values in the workplace create greater employee satisfaction, recruitment and attraction. Culture and traditional values also provide a sense of pride in Aboriginal identity and encourages intergenerational sharing of traditions and teachings.

3. Recruitment and Training

Recognizing that Aboriginal and culturally-aware employees support culturally rich workplaces, an HR strategy supports the ANP sector, utilizing HR resources to promote recruitment, professional development, ongoing training and education, continual career development for youth and succession planning – all enriched with cultural practices and values and helping create a culturally-anchored workforce.

4. Involvement of Elders

An engaged Indigenous workplace empowered by Elders as cultural resources helps at all levels. It supports embedding traditional values into the policies; guides the workforce as teachers and mentors; substantiates cultural decisions and recommendations; and promotes respectful communication with local Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal communities. Elders should figure prominently at all levels in



organizations, including the provincial ANP sector, and be engaged in bringing culture to the workplace.

Culture weaves through all the projects and is at the core of the HR and Workforce Strategy. Filling these four baskets with the knowledge, intent and resources required to advance the cultural development of the sector, and then sharing their content with the community, will lead to a culturally anchored workforce empowered to serve and achieve positive outcomes.

The recommendations below don't necessarily require a lot of dollars, but they do require time and attention and meaningful awareness by ANPs about how they can be put into place. They also depend on the success of the other Strategy components. Just as culture weaves through each of them, workplaces must be healthy (wellness, work/life balance) and support individuals personally (benefits, pensions) and professionally (mentorship and professional development) in order for culture to thrive.

The Strategy's Recommendations:

Based on our research and engagement with the Aboriginal non-profit community in BC, we recommend that the following be undertaken to support Strengthening Connections with Culture and Traditional Values within BC's ANP Sector:

1. Establishment of allowances for human resources (HR) specialists and cultural liaisons or mentors to assist in cultural policy development and implementing culture in the workplace
2. Support of Aboriginal-led research and evaluation of the impacts of implementing work-based Aboriginal cultural practices and programming
3. Development of organizational resources (e.g. Cultural Self-assessment Tool) to support cultural development, as well as education and training
4. Engagement of government and other funders in promoting models of care and service delivery that align with cultural practices, traditional values and Indigenous approaches
5. Bringing together Aboriginal non-profit sector employees to share promising and wise practices for culture in the workplace and creating a community of practice
6. Recruitment practices and initiatives which consider the importance of culture for Aboriginal employees in the non-profit sector, including Youth
7. Creation of permanent Elders Cultural Advisory Council for ANP sector and actions to enhance the role of Elders in ANPs across British Columbia. Consideration can also be given to include Youth representative on the Elders Cultural Advisory Council.
8. Exploration of funding models and options to ensure long term, sustainable funding of ANP sector organizations and workforce cultural development



Appendices

A. Cultural Self-assessment Tool – List of Promising Practices

Strengthening Connections with Culture & Traditional Values in the Aboriginal Non-profit Workplace

A Self-Assessment Guide for Aboriginal Non-Profits



**Developed as part of the Aboriginal Non-Profit Sector
Workforce and Human Resources Strategy**

Victoria Native Friendship Centre Project Team
November 2013

Draft v 1.0

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Strengthening Connections with Culture and Traditional Values in the Aboriginal Non-profit Workplace

About this tool

This self-assessment guide was developed by (and for) BC's Aboriginal non-profit (ANP) sector. It was created in 2013 following a series of interviews, surveys and facilitated sessions with employees and volunteers from the sector across the province. Elders and Youth also contributed to the development of this guide.

This tool is a starting point for Aboriginal non-profit organizations who wish to make culture more a part of their workplace. It is a collection of examples of First Nations culture and traditional values reflected in the workplace and in the human resources policies of organizations.

Those who shaped this document shared examples that were meaningful to them. In addition to specific examples of cultural practices, this tool incorporates values or "ways of being," since culture is "about who we are, not what we do."

Why use this tool

Research has shown that employees in the ANP sector are more satisfied and likely to work for, and remain employees of, organizations which have culture in the workplace. Given the importance of attracting and retaining good, qualified staff, this tool can be used by organizations to help raise employee morale and create a greater sense of purpose and well-being. It can also be used in program management and evaluation of grant applications to illustrate how culture is expressed and used to create positive outcomes.

How to use this tool

This tool is meant only as a guide to identify areas of strength and opportunities. It should not be seen as a measurement of success or failure. The value and applicability of this tool's criteria will vary in different organizations; you may be doing only one or two of the examples shared in each of the categories and still rank yourself highly.

Assessment scale

This scale from 1-5 is designed to help you rank your organization in each category. This guide is a living document. BC Aboriginal non-profit organizations can add or remove cultural practices to make it appropriate to their circumstances. If you have suggestions for improving the document, please contact the BC Association of Aboriginal Friendship Centres. We are all stronger when we collaborate and work together!

Rating System	
5 =	We do an excellent job
4 =	We do a good job
3 =	We do a satisfactory job, but still need improvement
2 =	We do an unsatisfactory job
1 =	We do a very poor job or nothing
N/A =	This category is not applicable or more information is needed to rate it

Rating System					
5 = We do an Excellent job	4 = We do a Good Job	3 = We do a Satisfactory job but still need improvement	2 = We do an unsatisfactory job	1 = We do a very poor job or nothing	n/a = not applicable/ insufficient info

Categories – Cultural Practices

1) Protocols and Traditional Practices in the Workplace	5	4	3	2	1	n/a

“Meetings are opened and closed respectfully, with a welcoming environment and practices.”

- ANP sector employee

Examples to help you determine your level of integration in this category:

- Acknowledgement of local territory, clans and nations
- Acknowledgement of those present and of their ancestors
- Opening and closing prayers
- Safe talking circles
- Elder involvement
- Youth involvement
- Traditional foods are served
- Gifting takes place
- Prayer honorariums
- Witnessing takes place
- Drums and drumming
- Sweat lodges/cleansing takes place
- Sweeping rooms or smudging with cedar, sage, sweet grass
- Brushing off
- Pipe ceremony, offering tobacco
- Traditional language spoken at meetings
- Use of talking sticks, feathers, rock
- Staff show gratitude and give thanks
- Sashes, traditional art is displayed
- Spirituality



Notes & Suggestions:

Rating System					
5 = We do an Excellent job	4 = We do a Good Job	3 = We do a Satisfactory job but still need improvement	2 = We do an unsatisfactory job	1 = We do a very poor job or nothing	n/a = not applicable/ insufficient info

2) Elder Involvement

5 4 3 2 1 n/a

Our agency looks to Elders and community members for guidance and direction. We participate in prayer together and share in teachings together, honouring where we all come from.

- ANP sector employee

Examples to help you determine your level of integration in this category:

- Elders teachings
- Elders are available to staff as counsellors, cultural advisors and mediators
- Elders consulted in program development and implementation
- New offices blessed by Elders
- Elders, grandmothers and grandfathers are included in meetings
- Elders are included in committees, boards, human resources and staff and executive meetings
- Elders are given opportunities to share stories about the past
- Elders are accommodated to ensure they are comfortable, there are frequent breaks, decaf coffee is available, served food first, etc.
- Elders not asked to heal others if still dealing with their own emotional challenges



Notes & Suggestions:

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3) Culture-Based Human Resources and Employee Benefits	5	4	3	2	1	n/a

Examples to help you determine your level of integration in this category:

- Employees can adjust their schedules to reflect cultural practices
- Employees can request time off for cultural leave (harvesting, fish canning, funerals, etc.)
- Cultural leave is paid
- There is a formal documented policy for cultural leave
- National Aboriginal Day recognized as statutory holiday, celebrated
- Employees can take time off to attend cultural conferences, rallies, demonstrations (e.g. ANP Workforce & Human Resources Strategy workshops, Idle No More)
- Cultural liaison on staff
- Hiring practices include importance of culture in organization
- Bereavement leave 5 days/year
- Bereavement leaves includes extended family (aunts, uncles, cousins, etc.)



Notes & Suggestions:

Rating System					
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4) Events and Gatherings	5	4	3	2	1	n/a

Examples to help you determine your level of integration in this category:

- Sharing meals and eating together regularly, and using this time to share cultural teachings in an inclusive way
- Elder gatherings are held
- Community feasts to share information and build relationships/ Potlatches
- Traditional food is served (e.g. Bannock, moose, venison, smoked salmon, fish head soup, etc.); leftovers sent home with Elders, families
- Blessing food, thanking cooks and helpers
- Traditional activities (singing, music, dancing, and story-telling) are part of gatherings
- Dance groups evenings, pow wow, round dance, etc.
- Traditional events (naming and coming of age ceremonies and other milestones) are celebrated
- Community members are invited to be a part of the planning process
- Participation in/teaching of traditional Fishing/Hunting/Gathering (root digging, berry picking)
- Sweat lodges/cleansing takes place
- Medicine gatherings
- Sun dance, mask dance
- First salmon ceremony, first spring burning
- Activities outdoors



Notes & Suggestions:

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5) Cultural Teaching and Training - Understanding the Past and How it Shapes the Present

5 4 3 2 1 n/a

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"I think for me the philosophy of the First Nations Code of Ethics are embedded in our practice. We are both housing and health and as such require all staff to understand Cultural Competency. As a Society we strive to ensure that Holistic practices are represented in all aspects of our service and organization."

- ANP sector employee

Examples to help you determine your level of integration in this category:

- Cultural workshops such as drumming, drum making, weaving (basket making/cedar hats), beading, etc.
- Cultural advisors and Elders are available in the workplace
- Culturally knowledgeable individuals are valued and supported
- Access to language programs or ability to work in the Indigenous language
- There is a cultural committee
- Cultural teachings are routinely shared
- Cultural competency training is available to employees, including history of colonialism, residential schools and related abuses
- Teachers are well-versed in culture
- Cultural artifact making such as medicine pouch, dream catcher, etc.



Notes & Suggestions:

Rating System					
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6) Wellness, Support, and Self-Care	5	4	3	2	1	n/a

“Meaningful role for an Elder to be part of programs. Taking care of one another: if a staff member is facing a personal struggle, there is the recognition of our humanness and other staff provide support. There is financial support available from employer for counseling or other creative supports.”

- ANP sector employee

Examples to help you determine your level of integration in this category:

- The members of a workplace treat each other as a family, not just as co-workers
- Workplace promotes self-care and balance, holistic view
- Individuals are treated as whole person and supported in their development
- Employees can request time off to participate in treatment programs
- Practice respect, honesty, understanding and openness
- Culture is foundation of treatment programs
- Staff support each other during times of personal struggle
- Grief and loss supports - staff come together as a group, smudging/crushing, sweating, etc.
- Workplace includes Elders, Youth, families, and parents



Notes & Suggestions:

Rating System					
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7) Organizational Structure and Conflict Resolution	5	4	3	2	1	n/a

“The reason I continue working in ANP agencies is because I feel safe; if that's culturally, emotionally, spiritually.”

- ANP sector volunteer

Examples to help you determine your level of integration in this category:

- Interlocking circles with shared responsibility and open communication instead of a hierarchical pyramid with bosses and top-down communication
- Clarity of purpose and expectations for different circles: work updates and planning; sharing; healing; “round table”
- Important large meetings are based on Long House/Big House model instead of Board meeting model
- Elders are involved in resolving conflict
- Ensure all voices of staff are heard
- Team-based approach to problem solving
- No gossiping – dealing with it in person
- Healing circles
- Restorative justice principles embodied
- Conflict resolution viewed as opportunity for growth
- Open and inclusive approach



Notes & Suggestions:

Rating System					
5 = We do an Excellent job	4 = We do a Good Job	3 = We do a Satisfactory job but still need improvement	2 = We do an unsatisfactory job	1 = We do a very poor job or nothing	n/a = not applicable/insufficient info

8) Youth Involvement and Development	5	4	3	2	1	n/a

Examples to help you determine your level of integration in this category:

- Teaching and empowering Youth
- Youth involved in the organization (e.g. Youth board members, etc.)
- Coaching Youth and providing volunteer and work experiences
- Programs dedicated to supporting Youth development
- Employees given space to deal with situations involving their children
- Youth consulted in program development and implementation
- Youth included in committee, board, meetings



Notes & Suggestions:

Rating System					
5 = We do an Excellent job	4 = We do a Good Job	3 = We do a Satisfactory job but still need improvement	2 = We do an unsatisfactory job	1 = We do a very poor job or nothing	n/a = not applicable/ insufficient info

9) Workplace Environment	5	4	3	2	1	n/a

Examples to help you determine your level of integration in this category:

- Workplace is treated like a community or extended family, and a part of the larger Aboriginal community
- Importance of family recognized and given strong priority
- Time and space is provided for people to bring culture in the workplace
- Cultural art and artifacts in workplace
- Culture practiced daily working with Aboriginal clients
- There is a cultural suite – a room dedicated to culture with special objects, teachings, etc.
- Elder's room or space
- Working together, helping each other finish projects
- Family are allowed to visit workplace (when appropriate)
- Artists invited into offices to sell their goods
- Using Native language
- Laughing, quality time in/out workplace
- Delivering programs and services in a good way following tradition and culture



Notes & Suggestions:

Rating System					
5 = We do an Excellent job	4 = We do a Good Job	3 = We do a Satisfactory job but still need improvement	2 = We do an unsatisfactory job	1 = We do a very poor job or nothing	n/a = not applicable/ insufficient info

10) Organizational Practices to Implement Culture	5	4	3	2	1	n/a

Examples to help you determine your level of integration in this category:

- Culture is part of organization's mission statement, constitution, strategic plan
- There is acknowledgement of location on cultural practices and events
- There are opportunities for staff to share culture; culture is staff-led
- Leadership supports practicing culture and is accommodating
- Culture is a priority even when the delivery of services is contracted out
- Cultural practices are inclusive
- Workflow planning is based on seasons and traditional calendar
- Acknowledgement of the power of words and the challenges of translation
- Recognition that culture is personal and private and cannot be imposed
- Use social media to promote cultural events
- Respect for all First Nations represented in the organization
- Traditional concepts of time; includes "down time" and time for unexpected personal challenges
- Include culture in research work



Notes & Suggestions:

Bringing it all together

To track how much culture is rooted in your workplace, add up all the scores from each category.

Area	5	4	3	2	1	n/a
1) Protocols and Traditional Practices in the Workplace						
2) Elder Involvement						
3) Culture-Based Human Resources and Employee Benefits						
4) Events and Gatherings						
5) Cultural Teaching and Training - Understanding the Past and How it Shapes the Present						
6) Wellness, Support, and Self-Care						
7) Organizational Structure and Conflict Resolution						
8) Youth Involvement and Development						
9) Workplace Environment						
10) Organizational Practices to Implement Culture						
Total (out of 50):						

How we're doing as an organization

Tracking your level of cultural integration over time will help you assess how your organization is doing in terms of culture in the workplace.

Assessment to help you assess how much culture is rooted in your organization			
Maximum total out of 50	0-10	Low	Significant effort and great opportunities for improvement
	11-25	Moderate	Considerable effort and great opportunities for improvement
	26-39	High	Some effort required and key opportunities for improvement
	40-50	Very High	Small effort required and opportunities for improvement

Moving Forward

If your overall score reflects a moderate or low level of cultural practices and policies in your workplace, you may want to involve your team in developing an approach to more fully embed culture in your workplace. You can also reach out to individuals or organizations with experience in doing this.

Conversely, if you have assessed yourself as having a high or very high level of culture in the workplace, you may want to mentor others who may benefit from your guidance and experience.

In either case, you have probably made notes about what you could do to reflect culture and values in your workplace.

As a staff or through a cultural community, you can develop a plan of action to help move your organization in the direction which best reflects your objectives about how culture and traditional values should be reflected in your workplace.

Culture Action Plan Sample Template

A plan of action includes steps your organization will take to accomplish a goal or specific action. It involves identifying:

- 1) What you want to do, and why
- 2) Who is going to do it, and by when
- 3) Guidance or directions for those responsible

Example:

Category Name: Elder Involvement					
Category Rating: 2/5					
#	Action to take	Rationale / Reason	Individual (s) Responsible	Due Date	Notes
1.	Ask local Elder to sit on our Board	Ensure Elder wisdom at the table	Jenny	By March 31	Steve knows an Elder who has experience in Aboriginal non-profits who may be available
2.	Ask volunteer Elder to assist in cultural training, if available	Ensure all staff share cultural	Roger	February 28	Cultural training workshop happens the first Monday of every month

	and willing to do so	sensitivity			
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These are a few examples of specific actions that can be included in a plan of action to bring your organization to a cultural place that is right for you.

A few key points to keep in mind (based on advice from employees in the sector):

- Involving all staff is essential
- It's extremely important to have the support and leadership of decision makers
- Forming a cultural committee or group to move this along helps
- Culture in an organization starts with the territory the organization is located on, and then broadens to reflect the culture of individuals who are part of the organization
- Putting cultural practices into policy can be very valuable
- Everyone should be free to participate (or not) in the manner that feels right to them
- Elders and traditional knowledge holders are keys to success

Final Remarks

The tool should be used with flexibility to suit your organization's structure, objectives, goals, and unique circumstances to help you craft a plan to strengthen connections with culture and traditional values in your workplace. Elders, knowledge holders, leaders and Youth can assist staff in this process. Staff in other Aboriginal non-profits may be a resource to you as well.

It is with our deepest respect that we give thanks to all who serve in the Aboriginal non-profit sector. With your insight and willingness to envision a future for generations to pursue careers in the Aboriginal non-profit sector, we were able to develop a tool to assist in assessing culture and traditional values in the workplace.

B. Literature Reviews

Literature Review



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I. Introduction

Background

This literature review is part of the *Connections with Aboriginal Culture and Traditional Values in the Workplace* project, which is one of four projects created to conduct research and develop the Aboriginal Non-Profit Sector Workforce and Human Resource Strategy (ANP strategy).

Building off the work of the Government Non-Profit Initiative (GNPI) and a desire to see a distinct Aboriginal workforce strategy, the 1st Indigenous Human Resource (HR) gathering, entitled “Advancing the Aboriginal Non-profit Workforce,” took place in Vancouver, BC in November 2010. A follow-up gathering was held in Victoria, BC in 2011 and led to the creation of *The Action Plan*, which defined the goals, priorities, and projects developed from the discussions.

According to *Advancing the Aboriginal Workforce: An Aboriginal Non-profit Sector Human Resources and Work for Value Strategy Action Plan (The Action Plan)*, the aim is to create a strategy to “address the gaps in HR and workforce resources for ANP organizations throughout BC” (BCAAFC, 2011, p. 1).

The strategies discussed at the Gatherings were grouped into five Key Result Focus Areas in order to “strengthen the Aboriginal labour force within individual organizations and the sector as a whole in the years ahead” (BCAAFC, 2011, p. 3). One of the Key Result Focus Areas, “Strengthening Connections with our Traditional Values,” is the focus of this literature review.

This literature review was conducted in late 2012 through the summer of 2013 by the Victoria Native Friendship Centre Project Team. The overall research project was directed by the BC Association of Aboriginal Friendship Centres (BCAAFC), enabled by funding through the Canada-British Columbia Labour Market Partnership (LMP) Agreement for the Aboriginal Non-profit sector.

Purpose

This literature review is a component of the *Connections with Aboriginal Culture and Traditional Values in the Workplace* research project. It was undertaken to provide an understanding of the research conducted to date in the field of Aboriginal culture in the workplace. Findings from the literature review are presented to complement the survey and other primary research. They provide a source of evidence supporting the recommendations presented by the VNFC project team.

With the research findings and recommendations from the project teams, the BCAAFC will be able to create a well-informed workforce and HR strategy for the ANP sector.

Scope of the Literature Review

This literature review examines research concerning how Aboriginal culture and traditional values are implemented and practiced in the workplace through a variety of policies, programs and wise practices. It also looks at some of the impacts, namely benefits and challenges, of doing so.

The review does not explore the issue of “workplace culture” more broadly, or the impact of cultural practices as practiced by other ethno-cultural groups.

While the literature review is focused primarily on impacts for ANPs within BC, studies and examples from outside of BC and other sectors (e.g. government, academic and for profit) are studied as well, since some of the lessons learned and best practices could relate to and benefit the BC ANP sector.

Research Questions

At the onset of this literature review, these questions were formulated to guide the process:

- 1. What does the literature say about the types of workplace initiatives currently underway that help support Aboriginal culture and values?*
- 2. What does the research conclude about why it is important to develop and support Aboriginal culture and values in the workplace?*
- 3. What more can be done, in terms of policies, programs and best practices, to better support Aboriginal culture and values in the workplace moving forward?*
- 4. What are the shortcomings of the research and literature on the subject of Aboriginal culture and values in the workplace?*

II. Background Aboriginal Culture

The term “Aboriginal” is used in this document as a collective name for the indigenous peoples of Canada and to refer to the original people of this land and their descendants. Within Canada, the three groups of Aboriginal peoples are: First Nations, Métis, and Inuit (British Columbia First Nations History & Background).

The term “Aboriginal culture” is used frequently throughout this literature review. It is important to recognize there is no single Aboriginal culture per se, and that many cultural distinctions exist between and within each of the Aboriginal ethnic groups (Aboriginal Construction Careers).

British Columbia alone is home to over 200 distinct First Nations communities – more than any other province or territory in Canada (British Columbia First Nations History & Background). The Haida, Coast Salish, Kwakwaka'wakw, Gitksan, Tsimshian, and Nisga'a people, and many others, reside in BC, each with a unique language, cultural practices and customs (British Columbia First Nations by Region).

For the purpose of this literature review, the notion of Aboriginal culture and traditional values will refer to universal or shared general concepts such as the regard of Elders in the communities, oral traditions, holistic perspectives, legends and stories, health/medicine practices, ceremonies, and the

interconnectedness of all living things (Worldviews and Aboriginal Cultures: Where Hearts are Rooted).

Aboriginal Peoples in the Workforce

Aboriginal people are Canada's youngest and fastest growing population, (Human Resources and Skills Development Canada, n.d.). According to Statistics Canada (2011), population projections estimate that Aboriginal people could account for about 5% of the total Canadian population by 2031. The average annual growth rate for the Aboriginal population during this period is estimated to be up to 2%, compared with about 1% for the non-Aboriginal population (Statistics Canada, 2011). Additionally, in 2011, the median age of the total Aboriginal population in Canada was 28 years, compared to 41 years for the non-Aboriginal population (Statistics Canada, 2011). According to the article "What Works: Effective Policies and Programs for Aboriginal Peoples of Canada," this data substantiates the significance of the number of Aboriginal people in the Canadian workforce presently, and projecting to the future (Caverley, 2006).

The Aboriginal Non-Profit Sector

In British Columbia, human resources in the Non-profit sector are represented to a greater extent by the Aboriginal population in comparison to non-Aboriginals. According to *Advancing the Aboriginal Non-Profit Workforce: Report for the 1st Indigenous HR Gathering (The HR Report)*, "compared to the non-Aboriginal workforce, it is estimated that a disproportionate number of Aboriginal people work within non-profit agencies, out of any other sector" (BCAAFC, 2011, p. 6). With this in mind, insight into the non-profit labour sector merits special examination. (BCAAFC, 2011).

The numbers point to a solid representation of Aboriginal people in this workforce. But barriers do exist. What major factors hinder the ability of Aboriginal people to participate fully and thrive in the non-profit sector? According to the Human Resource Council for the Non-profit Sector (HR Council) website, these barriers are mainly due to a lack of defined HR policies in ANP organizations. These barriers include:

- The enduring impacts of colonization and the residential school system;
- Low wages, poor benefits, and a lack of pensions;
- Recruitment and retention challenges;
- A disregard for employee wellness; and
- A disregard for cultural and customary practices.

Studying the impact of culture in the workplace can provide insight into whether culture can address or counteract some of the above challenges and promote employees' well-being and satisfaction, leading to better attraction and retention of good, qualified employees in the sector.

Aboriginal Culture and Values

What is Culture?

To expand on the meaning and interpretation of the term “culture” (O’neil, 2006). Dr. A. R. Elangovan, Professor of Organizational Behaviour at the University of Victoria, defines culture as “a set of values, guiding beliefs, understandings and ways of thinking that are shared by members of an organization or community and is taught to the new members as correct” (2012, p. 3).

Additionally, the “tip of the iceberg” analogy is often used when describing culture. The visible upper tip are the observable behaviours and practices which can include clothing, dance, language, food, music, greetings, symbols, signs, ceremonies, and stories (Elangovan, 2012; Aboriginal Construction Careers). The bottom of the iceberg are the underlying values and beliefs which can include assumptions, attitudes, feelings, perceptions, spiritual beliefs, worldviews, and relationship rules (Elangovan, 2012; Aboriginal Construction Careers).

As they relate to the workplace, some general observations of culture and values of Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal people can be made. (McCaughey, Bruning, Rubin, & Bell, 2005). The Aboriginal Human Resource Council (AHRC) illustrates some comparisons between them.

Traditional Aboriginal Culture	Mainstream/Western Culture
Community is the foremost of all values	Individualism is the foremost value
Knowledge transmitted orally	Tradition of printing and literacy
Goals are met with patience	Goals are met with aggressive effort
Work is often motivated by group need	Work is motivated by ambition
Assertiveness is non-communal	Assertiveness is a basic social skill
Listening skills are prized	Communication skills are prized
Nodding signifies understanding	Nodding signifies agreement
Collective decisions are consensual	Collective decisions are put to a vote
Family is extended family	Family is nuclear family

Aboriginal Culture in the Workplace

Culture in the workplace often has two denotations. One refers to organizational culture - how an organization runs its operations, fosters an environment and cultivates certain feelings amongst its members. This type of workplace culture is often associated with workplace wellness, explored by another project team as part of the ANP strategy.

The second denotation of culture, and the focus of this literature review, is how well an organization supports an individual’s or group’s unique ethno-cultural identity in the workplace so that they feel comfortable and secure being themselves in that environment.

The magnitude of this meaning of culture grows as today’s organizations are becoming increasingly diverse (Redpath & Nielsen, 1997). According to the article “Diversity, Ethnicity, and Values:

Canadian Aboriginals, Non-Aboriginals and Workplace Outcomes,” creating a positive climate of diversity requires the integration of organizational policies and practices which address various group needs. These basic value structures are lacking, especially for Aboriginal people in the workplace (McCaughey, Bruning, Rubin, & Bell, 2005).

These cultural distinctions are important, especially when Aboriginal culture and values is the anchor that binds Aboriginal communities together, underpins all workforce and HR development initiatives and improves organizational effectiveness (BCAAFC, 2011).

III. Key Themes from the Literature

A. Education of Aboriginal Culture and Values

A key finding from the literature review points to education as an important first step towards understanding Aboriginal values, attitudes, perceptions, beliefs, customs and practices, especially in the workplace (Working Effectively with Aboriginal Peoples; Aboriginal Construction Careers).

Organizations that make concerted efforts to provide educational opportunities for their staff members tend to promote better understanding and integration of Aboriginal culture and values in the workplace as a whole.

According to the website *Working Effectively with Aboriginal Peoples*, among the many benefits of learning about Aboriginal culture and values include:

- A better understanding of Aboriginal culture for non-Aboriginal people;
- A better understanding of Aboriginal culture for Aboriginal people who have not been raised in traditional environments;
- A better appreciation for cultural richness and contributions Aboriginal people make to Canadian society and the economy;
- More effective communication with Aboriginal people;
- A better understanding of the important issues facing Aboriginal people;
- A better understanding of clients and co-workers who are of Aboriginal descent; and
- A better understanding of the relationships between business and Aboriginal communities.

Cultural Sensitivity Training

Cultural sensitivity training can go by various names, such as cultural awareness training, diversity management, cultural competency training and cross-cultural training, however the concepts and topics covered in Aboriginal cultural sensitivity training largely remain the same. According to the Aboriginal Recruitment Guide from Environmental Careers Organization (ECO) Canada, the topics include:

- The diverse demographics of Aboriginal people, including terminology;
- The historical and legal issues in attempting to assimilate and colonize Aboriginal people over the past 100 years;

- The loss of rights, language and culture;
- The contributions of Aboriginal people to Canada; and
- The impact of 100 years of accumulated issues.

The most widespread way to learn about Aboriginal culture and values in the workplace, according to the report *Widening the Circle: Increasing Opportunities for Aboriginal People in the Workforce*, is cultural sensitivity training (Allen, 2013). Training can vary from “firm-wide yearly seminars on Aboriginal culture and the history of Aboriginal people, to middle-manager sensitivity training, to casual ‘Lunch and Learn’ sessions where community Elders are brought in as guest speakers” (Allen, 2013, p. 15).

Generally, organizations that incorporate Aboriginal cultural sensitivity training achieve greater recognition of and respect for the importance of Aboriginal culture and values in the workplace. Cultural sensitivity training is deployed in many organizations across the for-profit, non-profit and government sectors owing to the relative ease to implement and its accessibility.

A recent example of a government initiative is Government of the Northwest Territories (GNWT) which will be launching Aboriginal Cultural Awareness Training for employees of the its public service. During the training, “participants will gain increased understanding about Aboriginal culture; enhanced awareness, recognition and respect in the workplace; and a renewed spirit of inclusion among GNWT employees,” (Abernethy, 2013, p. 1). According Glen Abernethy, an MLA of the Northwest Territories, “The training material is relevant, comprehensive, and informative, and will promote an inclusive work environment through broadened cultural understanding” (2013, p. 1).

The national food chain, Tim Hortons, is an example of a for-profit company that is also offering Aboriginal education opportunities. Their website states “Our education efforts are centered around raising awareness of the issues and opportunities facing the Aboriginal community, within the Tim Hortons Family” (Tim Hortons, p. 1). With the assistance of the Millbrook First Nations of Truro, Nova Scotia, Tim Hortons developed a comprehensive online training program for their Restaurant Team Members and Corporate Employees. Since 2009, over 200,000 Restaurant Team Members have completed this training (Tim Hortons).

Cultural sensitivity training is a step in the right direction. Executed poorly, however, may bring about challenges and difficulties, for example:

1. Cultural sensitivity training promotes a perception that the cultural difference of the Aboriginal “Other” is the problem;
2. Diversity management can tend to group all ethno-cultural minorities into a single unit, without acknowledging specific Aboriginal differences; and
3. Aboriginal cultural awareness training can be perceived as a band-aid to a much larger, socio-political issue (Denis, 2007).

Review of organizational practices in BC’s ANP sector suggest that many (but not all) organizations offer some form of cultural awareness training to their employees. Programs vary and may include:

- Sharing of cultural practices, participation in cultural events or gatherings, visiting culturally significant sites, drumming, creating cultural artifacts together

- Workshops that combine educational components (e.g. pre-contact, colonialism, history of residential schools) as well as experiential learning to “act out” historical events or practices
- Elders’ recollections and survivors of residential school speak of their experiences

Existing literature reveals the importance of education towards supporting Aboriginal culture in the workplace. Not just education itself, but education delivered with due care, consideration and preparation. Successful outcomes from the field endorse the benefits of these forms of education. Strategic efforts to promote culture in the workplace should give priority to delivering quality educational components.

B. Aboriginal Employment Initiatives

Building a strong Aboriginal employee base is also vital to fostering Aboriginal culture and traditional values in the workplace, the research also points to. Aboriginal employees are often thought leaders on their culture and can help shape the organization’s policies and programs on Aboriginal culture and values.

Efforts that promote employment of Aboriginal peoples in various positions throughout the organization ensures Aboriginal voices are heard and promotes culture in the workplace.

An important step in building a strong Aboriginal workforce is implementing employment initiatives to encourage Aboriginal participation in the workplace, described in more detail below.

Recruitment Strategies

Recruitment practices that consider important shared values help build a stronger Aboriginal workforce, thus helping to strengthen culture and values in the workplace. Practices can include crafting comprehensive job requirements, seeking relevant channels to advertise jobs, and applying inclusive job interview techniques.

Comprehensive Job Requirements

Efforts can be made to encourage inclusion and mitigate exclusion of applicants at the recruitment stage, for example, with careful consideration of job requirements. This is true in the for-profit and non-profit sector. As documented in the Calgary Chamber of Commerce (2009) report entitled *Completing the Circle: Realities, Challenges and Strategies to Improve Aboriginal Labour Market Outcomes in the Calgary Region*, some employers have chosen to revisit and modify job requirements for all applications. In doing so, they found that they were able to increase the recruitment and training of Aboriginal employees who might have otherwise been overlooked in their search for new talent.

Relevant Job Advertising Channels

To ensure Aboriginal people are made aware of job opportunities, organizations can tailor their recruiting efforts by making themselves more accessible to Aboriginal communities (Allen, 2013). This can be done by advertising through appropriate channels. According to *Completing the Circle*, an emphasis on advertising through Aboriginal publications or Aboriginal job boards significantly improved capacity to hire new Aboriginal employees (Calgary Chamber of Commerce, 2009).

Inclusive Job Interview Techniques

Applying inclusive and holistic job interview techniques for screening applicants may result in a greater degree of success for Aboriginal candidates. For example, according to the Aboriginal Human Resource Council (AHRC), an important interview practice is ensuring the interviewers are effective and culturally-sensitive, with knowledge of the interviewees' background and experience, and can respond to each candidate on the basis of individual merit. By being aware of factors which may unfairly limit a candidate, the interviewer can more accurately assess an Aboriginal candidate's resume and qualification with a change of focus. (Aboriginal Human Resource Council).

Employee-retention Strategies

Building a strong Aboriginal workforce, and thus fostering Aboriginal culture and values in the workplace, requires employers to not only recruit more Aboriginal people, but also consider strategies to retain employees once hired.

The literature identifies several strategies to this end. For example, the Alberta Chamber of Commerce's 2011 report *Aboriginal Labour Force Strategy – Tapping into an Underutilized Pool of Labour Supply*, states “pre-employment preparation training regarding workplace etiquette and expectations” may help Aboriginal employees feel more comfortable in the work environment (p. 3) and stay with the organization.

The Calgary Chamber of Commerce's (2009) *Completing the Circle* identifies three additional retention strategies:

1. Tie current or potential employment to a rewarding career;
2. Recognize employee success; and
3. Offer mentorship in the early stages of employment.

The opportunity for skill development is also cited in the literature. As said by the *Aboriginal Labour Force Strategy*, a more accepting and inclusive work environment which offers its employees applied skill development and upgrading programs can prove rewarding for both employees and employers (Alberta Chambers of Commerce, 2011). This can help Aboriginal employees enter new positions and promotions within the organization.

Are there common factors leading Aboriginal employees to leave organizations? The publication, *Widening the Circle*, provides some reflections as to the grounds given Aboriginal employees who leave organizations. The non-profit sector, in particular experiences high employee turnover rates. Uncovering issues which move people to leave their jobs provides useful insight as to how employers can help support, and ultimately retain, Aboriginal employees (Allen, 2013).

Promoting Management Positions

Greater effort to encourage Aboriginal employees to enter into management positions, especially in the ANP sector, is cited in the literature review. Doing so helps Aboriginal culture and values permeate all levels of the organizational (Allen, 2013).

Aboriginal organizations are often structured and managed in ways that may be different from non-Aboriginal organizations. Aboriginal management schemes are “based upon a collectivist orientation to life which gives rise to a group oriented, non-hierarchical organization which operates by consensus and encourages holistic employee development” (Chapman, McCaskill, & Newhouse, 1991, p. 333). This is often not the case in non-Aboriginally-run organizations.

The 1997 article “A Comparison of Native-Culture, Non-Native Culture and New Management Ideology” by Lindsay Redpath and Marianne O. Nielsen, identifies additional key differences between Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal organizational practices. Organizations managed by Aboriginals are more likely to:

- Have a reluctance to compete in the traditional business sense;
- Have a different orientation toward time and space;
- Emphasize consensus decision-making and collaboration; and
- Put family needs before business goals.

With more Aboriginal leaders in an organization, observing and honouring traditional values and culture is more likely to flourish in the workplace.

C. Collaboration and Learning

Another prominent finding from the literature shows that collaboration and learning from the success of others (from Elders, educational institutions, Aboriginal communities, and other organizations) are key to ensuring culture and values are well implemented in the workplace.

Collaboration also requires engagement, which in turn requires resources (e.g. time, money, staff). In any community of practice, it is a worthy investment to collaborate and learn from the successful programs, policies and best practices of others.

Learning from Educational Institutions

Educational institutions across BC and Canada have achieved considerable success in addressing cultural awareness for Aboriginal people and instilling Aboriginal culture and values in work environments (Allen, 2013). For example, they often provide workshops and discussions on how to better integrate Aboriginal culture and values for both Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal students and staff. Additionally, in many of them, formal offices exist to promote awareness, support and provide practical advice and intervention where appropriate (Allen, 2013). In light of this, certain practices can be learned from the academic sector and adopted by non-profit organizations.

There are numerous examples of post-secondary schools in BC that demonstrate how the education system can support and promote Aboriginal culture and values. A notable example is the Nicola Valley Institute of Technology (NVIT) located in Merritt, BC. NVIT is an Aboriginal public post-secondary institution and is a member of the Indigenous Adult and Higher Learning Association (IAHLA) which works on behalf of Aboriginal-controlled adult and post-secondary education institutes in BC. Although it is not required that students be Aboriginal, NVIT provides education

from an Aboriginal perspective. In addition to academic programs and courses such as Social Work and Health Care Assistant, NVIT offers a range of Aboriginal-centred programs including Aboriginal Community and Health Development and Aboriginal Early Childhood Education.

University of British Columbia Okanagan (UBCO) is another post-secondary school with marked progress pertaining to Aboriginal culture and values in the organization. In 2008, UBCO created an Aboriginal teacher education program aimed at preserving the language and culture of the region's First Nations, which at the time was feared to be disappearing. Students fluent in First Nations languages, were trained to become certified teachers as per the BC College of Teachers' requirements and able to work in public schools (The Canadian Press, 2008). Training students as teachers of First Nations languages was an innovative approach towards helping First Nations culture thrive in BC.

A news article from the *Vancouver Sun* entitled "Schools Discuss How to Integrate First Nations' Values, Culture," journalist Shawn Conner (2012) interviewed Shirley Swelchalot Shxwha:yathel Hardman, University of Fraser Valley's (UFV) senior adviser on indigenous affairs, who explained an approach used there. Hardman said, "One way some post-secondary institutions are indigenizing is by incorporating First Nations cultural icons. The UFV, for instance, has built a replica of a Sto:lo longhouse with a capacity of 300" (Conner, 2012, p. 1).

According to the UFV Vice-Provost, Peter Geller, "these gathering spaces help Aboriginal students feel welcome. Other things aren't monetary. The culture of the institution, and how it embraces indigenous traditions and values — those costs are less tangible, but if we don't do them, that has costs as well" (Conner, 2012, p. 1).

The University of Victoria (UVic) is yet another post-secondary institution that demonstrates nurturing Aboriginal culture and values. First Peoples House opened at UVIC in 2010, to "create an academic and cultural centre for Indigenous students, and a welcoming space on campus for the broader community" (First Peoples House, n.d., p. 1). Indigenous approaches are also promoted at various levels of the University, including its Indigenous Governance program. There is also The Centre for Aboriginal Health Research, which seeks to "improve the health and well-being of Aboriginal peoples through the products and processes of community-based research and knowledge translation" (Centre for Aboriginal Health Research, n.d., p. 1). UVic's Indigenous Student Handbook, which encompasses a multitude of resources for new Aboriginal students and staff, is another example of a resource designed especially for UVIC's Aboriginal population.

Learning from Aboriginal Communities

Non-profit organizations can nurture community relationships in a myriad of ways. According to Jane Allen's 2013 report, *Widening the Circle*, these include:

- Aligning the organization's objectives with those of the community;
- Participating in community festivals and cultural gatherings;
- Engaging youth through mentorship, speaking at high schools, inviting youth to site visits, and supporting Aboriginal youth programming;

- Promoting the organization as an ally to Aboriginal communities by sponsoring, attending career fairs, and other marketing tools;
- Embedding Aboriginal consultants or liaison workers in the workplace; and
- Providing internships, scholarships, and mentoring programs.

New Gold Inc. is an example of a private sector firm collaborating with an Aboriginal group, the BC Aboriginal Mine Training Association (BCAMTA). Together they are “build[ing] training and employment programs that suit the environment and the individuals so [they] can build long lasting careers for the community members around that project” (BCAMTA, p. 1).

While natural resource companies have a stake in engaging with First Nations to ensure the commercial success of their ventures, some of these companies have effective Aboriginal recruitment and retention strategies for employees and exhibit genuine desire to learn from local communities.

Building relationships and creating networks with Aboriginal communities contributes to ensuring Aboriginal culture and values are supported in the workplace. It is also important for organizations, especially in the non-profit sector, to build relationships with community Elders, respected for upholding traditional culture and values, and a vital connection to the territory upon which the non-profit organization may operate. Collaborating with Aboriginal communities encourages multi-directional communication, voices for all stakeholders. Organizations must also be patient and demonstrate that a long-term relationship, and not a quick fix, is the goal.

Learning from Aboriginal Elders

Possibly the most important finding emerging from the research speaks to the role of Elders in Aboriginal communities, as pillars of culture and values properly and traditionally instilled in the workplace, be it the non-profit sector or others.

Aboriginal Elders are the keepers of the traditional knowledge. They guide communities towards the future by interpreting hundreds of years’ worth of story, myth, tradition, and beliefs. According to *Aboriginal Elders and Community Workers in Schools*, they are “recognized and respected by their own family and community for such attributes as having knowledge that is accompanied by wisdom, kindness and appropriate moral behaviour” (Saskatchewan Education, 2001, p. 5).

The literature outlines many benefits of the presence of Elders in work environments. According to the 2001 report by Saskatchewan Education entitled “Aboriginal Elders and Community Workers in Schools,” the key over-arching benefit is that Aboriginal people will see themselves and their cultural heritage reflected and respected within the workplace. The report outlines other benefits which include:

- Enhancing cultural perspective for all employees;
- Building relationships with the Aboriginal community;
- Promoting awareness of culture, traditions and customs;
- Addressing social and cultural issues and disparities;
- Providing mentorship opportunities for Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal employees; and

- Promoting harmony, well-being and balance.

The research outlines many ways that an organization can collaborate with Aboriginal Elders in the workplace. For example, Elders can act as consultants to an organization and consult on best practices for incorporating Aboriginal culture and values in the workplace. The wisdom of Aboriginal Elders can also be embedded in the fabric of the organization and called on to engage and support the organization's members. Elders should ideally have their own space, be invited into workplace conversations, and have the opportunity to mentor both Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal employees (Oxfam Australia).

Whichever way an organization collaborates with Aboriginal Elders, the key consideration is to work together from the beginning. The Elders need to be regarded as the primary guardians and interpreters of Aboriginal culture and values. They should be given much, if not complete, control when working with an organization to help implement Aboriginal cultural practices (Oxfam Australia).

D. Challenges of Integrating Aboriginal Culture and Values in the Workplace

Despite the number of examples that illustrate how Aboriginal culture and values are supported in the workplace, the research also identified many challenges.

Budgetary logistics need to be considered. Many of the findings in this literature review were learned from large, for-profit organizations who can more easily afford resources, such as time, money and expertise of HR specialists, needed for initiatives to support Aboriginal culture and values in the workplace. However, for smaller organizations and non-profits, such as ANPs, those resources may be in shorter supply. Insufficient time, money and expertise hinders their ability to implement those initiatives, therefore the policies and programs may not materialize (Calgary Chamber of Commerce, 2009). This may be a factor contributing to a lack of Aboriginal HR policies in the ANP sector.

Another reality to deal with is tokenism in the workplace. Tokenism is the practice or policy of “making no more than a token of effort or gesture, as in offering opportunities to minorities equal to those of the majority” (Random House Dictionary, 2013, p. 1). It can happen that initiatives supporting Aboriginal culture in the workplace are perceived as disingenuous by Aboriginal employees because the initiatives come from a place of insincerity. As a result, implementing Aboriginal cultural practices in an organization in a superficial manner will not work. As referred to in the section above on Cultural Sensitivity Training, if not well thought out and executed, the training may be a wasted effort or even a step backwards.

Certainly not least of the difficulties, gleaned from the research, is the lingering presence of inherent racism aimed at Aboriginal peoples. This prejudice and stereotyping often underpins many of the difficulties Aboriginal people face in the workplace. According to a study in the report entitled “What Works: Effective Policies and Programs for Aboriginal Peoples of Canada,”

“respondents...acknowledged the realities of subtle discrimination and racism that occurs in some workplaces,” (Caverley, 2006, p. 12). Aboriginal participants in the study stated they felt acts of discrimination, bias and stereotyping created an unwelcoming work environment (Caverley, 2006). Cultural sensitivity training can be used as an effective way to counter ignorance and prejudice; however, evidence continues to expose racism-based rifts and resentment in the workplace.

IV. Limitations of the Research

This section addresses the third and fourth of the research questions: *What more can be done, in terms of policies, programs and best practices, to better support Aboriginal culture and values in the workplace moving forward?* and *What are the shortcomings of the research and literature on the subject of Aboriginal culture and values in the workplace?*

To begin with the latter point, what *hasn't* been said, but should be?

Missing in the research is material about Aboriginal women, in the workforce and women's roles in Aboriginal communities. Despite the fact that employees in the Aboriginal non-profit sector is comprised largely of women, there is a dearth of academic material from which to learn. Drawing from D.N. Caverley again, Aboriginal women will more likely face workplace harassment, limited access to childcare resources and other more general disadvantages, which is why they are said to be at a double disadvantage compared to men (Caverley, 2006). Clearly there is a need for more study and closer examination about Aboriginal women's issues in the workplace.

Also noticeable in its absence is Aboriginal-led research. Many of the references used for this literature review are from non-Aboriginal sources. This can be considered an overall weakness as research from non-Aboriginal-led sources can be perceived as outsiders to the Aboriginal community in which they investigate. Conversely, findings from Aboriginal-led research can provide a unified voice for Aboriginal peoples (McCaughey, Bruning, Rubin, & Bell, 2005).

Much of the research and data about Aboriginal culture and values in the for-profit and non-profit sector primarily dealt with cultural sensitivity training and little else to do with specific HR initiatives the non-profit sector is currently implementing. The gap in the literature speaks to both of the research questions listed above – what research is missing and what more can be done? The few HR initiatives identified in the literature lacked clarity and completeness. Further research should seek out more examples of organizations that specifically and explicitly show how their initiatives help support Aboriginal culture and values in the workplace.

V. Conclusion

This literature review is a component of a multi-stakeholder initiative focusing on HR strategies in ANP organizations throughout BC. One of the Key Result Focus Areas, “Strengthening Connections with our Traditional Values,” provided the impetus for this literature review.

Some examples of encouraging strides towards strengthening Aboriginal culture in the workplace come from organizations which have devoted funding, employee time and HR practice expert

resources towards improving their strategies. Those organizations generally tend to differ fundamentally from the Aboriginal non-profit sector in size and ability to fund such initiatives. They include post-secondary schools, government and big business. However, the ANP sector can derive great benefit by studying the experiences of others.

This review includes explanations for terms used throughout the document and findings on:

- Shared and commonly-accepted notions of culture and values among Aboriginal people in British Columbia, yet acknowledging distinctness within the many groups and bands of Aboriginal people;
- Demographic profile of Aboriginal people in the workplace, and specific to the non-profit sector;
- The importance of tradition and culture for Aboriginal people integrated at every level of the hiring process through the workplace environment and employees' careers;
- What has been done to support and strengthen Aboriginal tradition and culture in the workplace;
- What are the ramifications of inadequate efforts to support tradition and culture in the workplace;
- What are the obvious gaps in the research; and
- What more can be done to develop, support and implement Aboriginal tradition and culture in the workplace.

The research data for the review was derived from journal articles, government reports, websites, and news articles. Examples from the government, academia, the for-profit, and the non-profit sector were obtained from these sources. While there is limited material available specific to the non-profit sector, many of the lessons learned and best practices found in other areas can be applied to the non-profit sector.

The main beneficiary of this study is the Aboriginal non-profit sector in BC. Sheer numbers point to the growth potential of Aboriginal employees in this sector, but this study deals with qualitative, rather than quantitative factors which can lead to fulfilling careers and a flourishing industry.

Fundamental to this study is the notion of people's individual values, and how those values relate to their workplace environment. Hundreds of different bands of Aboriginal people live in British Columbia, each with distinct aspects of cultures. It is accepted that among the many diverse groups there are shared values and traditions underlying the expression of culture.

One important question posed in this study looks at what importance does an individual's culture have in the workplace – or why is it important to develop and support integrating culture in the workplace. The findings speak to the correlation between people's comfort and sense of belonging where traditions and culture are upheld and given their due respect. The opposite also holds true – where tradition and culture are absent or disregarded, Aboriginal people are less likely to have thriving careers within an organization. A lack of understanding about and integration of Aboriginal values can even thwart Aboriginal participation or entry into the workplace itself.

Racism continues to rear its ugly head in the workplace, obstructing efforts to create a welcoming and inclusive environment.

What then are foundations of best practises to develop, implement, support and uphold traditions and culture based on Aboriginal values in the workplace?

Education, or promoting cultural awareness, is an area which has shown to produce successful outcomes. Shared knowledge of customs and aspects of Aboriginal values leads to better understanding and appreciation for the culture.

Most of the examples cited in the material used for this study refers to cultural sensitivity training as a vehicle for education. Organizations in the private and public sector have been known to incorporate cultural sensitivity training, with varying degrees of success.

Examining employment practises and initiatives is also dealt with in this study.

At the recruitment stage, strategies which incorporate and reflect understanding of Aboriginal values can increase opportunities for Aboriginal people to enter the labour force and help knock down barriers. What may seem obvious, but expressed in the research material nonetheless, is ensuring job opportunities are made known in advertising channels available to Aboriginal people. Potential employers can benefit from learning or applying different interview techniques in order to avoid inadvertently excluding Aboriginal people from the screening process.

The literature sheds light into some general differences how Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal employees approach practices in the workplace environment, such as decision-making processes, competition, personal priorities, even methods of communication.

To maintain the kind of workplace that encourages employees, and for this study, Aboriginal employees, to be successful and remain with an organization, the literature suggests several strategies aimed at retaining employees, summarized as offering mentorship at early stages of employment, recognition of employee success, promoting Aboriginal employees to management positions, and appreciating an Aboriginal approach to the structure of the organization itself.

Findings in the literature also emphasize the importance for businesses, or employer organizations, to collaborate with Aboriginal communities. Examples illustrate how culture and tradition in the workplace are strengthened when relationships exist which extend beyond the employees themselves. Shared learning collaborations, participation in community events and cultural gatherings, mentorship programs are among the activities that can be pursued. Places of employment would do well to recognize Aboriginal Elders, their revered place in society, and ensure their presence is respected and integrated into the workplace.

Schools and education institutions around BC stand out with broadminded strategies and implementation. Nicola Valley Institute of Technology among others can be looked upon for inspiration to incorporate Aboriginal culture and values at every layer of the organization, aimed at benefitting students and staff, be they Aboriginal or not.

This review examines information published. It also makes note that there doesn't yet exist a great wealth of relevant information published from which to draw. That much of the material comes from research led by non-Aboriginals is also noteworthy. And the review also exposes areas of concern of which scarce material can be found. For example, little data is available which addresses Aboriginal women in BC's workplace, despite the fact that women play a large role in the non-profit sector.

Some interesting themes recur throughout the literature which address not just the mechanics used to deploy strategies to strengthen culture in the workplace. They refer to underlying qualities of sincerity and authenticity in the desire to establish the type of environment which makes Aboriginal employees feel welcome, appreciated and valued. Going through the motions towards strengthening Aboriginal culture, such as a weak cultural sensitivity program, by itself is not enough. Strategies and the downstream initiatives meant to improve the workplace environment for Aboriginal people, need to be understood as genuine. Knowledge, respect and understanding of Aboriginal values must be interwoven into all levels of consciousness in the workplace.

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**Indigenous People and the Workplace
LENONET Research Paper**

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Indigenous peoples in Canadian workplaces present many interesting challenges. At the heart of these challenges is the tension between treating everyone the same and giving allowances for some people because of heritage or circumstances. This tension is the impetus for this research. Treating some people differently because of their heritage or circumstances, in this case Indigenous peoples in a colonial context, seems to run against the idea of fairness. Fairness is questioned when some people receive different treatment and perceived benefits. While this notion is something that has to be addressed; it is not the point of this paper. This paper will focus on descriptions of how Indigenous peoples are treated in Canadian workplace policies, and will refrain from a prescriptive view of what should happen.

This tension raises an interesting question beyond whether or not it is fair. Examining whether or not it is fair is not within the scope of the paper, because the arguments regarding fairness are complex and numerous. Instead, this research examines how companies create policies that, instead of mitigating this tension, actually sidestep it by giving allowances for these differences. However, academic literature is limited to date on the subject of how companies are taking a progressive view of human resources and respecting Indigenous workplace values. This rendered this research difficult, as the point was to review those academic sources.

An outline for the progress of this research would be appropriate here, however, there is a preface to this research which outlines the ways that the literature is insufficient. There are two major issues with in the academic literature. First is the use of Indigenous ways of healing into policies. These policies are not crafted to reflect an Indigenous values but rather are used as alternatives or additions to existing procedures. Second is that many of the articles talk about dealing with problems in the workplace. These articles deal with models that are used to diffuse the issues and even why those models did not work. The main problem with this is that they do not deal with the root cause of such tensions. The root being casual racism and the resulting tension and

problems. Other issues may be that the interactions between Indigenous people and settlers are in high stress environments where tempers and emotions flare up. Finally there are a select few articles that do explicitly talk about how Indigenous values were incorporated into workplace policy but these are specific to the nation which the article is about. This does unfortunately limit its direct applicability but there are still broad lessons to be learned and cross-applied.

The research itself can be categorized into 3 main areas being: workplace management, Indigenous values within an organization or an organization which is Indigenous, and finally a miscellaneous section which usually has a specific point but does not fit into the other categories. Workplace management is the largest umbrella because it covers the most diverse literature. Articles range from healthcare services to school workplaces and also include reasons why diversity management has failed. This large umbrella holds the most research about how Indigenous values are incorporated into human resources.

The second category is much more specific. This section includes articles discussing organizations that have successfully incorporated Indigenous workplace values either in their policies or on the ground. Examples include how an Indigenous-run casino successfully reworked their management team to include Indigenous values to credit union run by and for Indigenous people. There are few articles which detail how Indigenous organizations do incorporate Indigenous values into their policies but unfortunately most of the research simply stated that they do.

Lastly is the miscellaneous category. This is a difficult area because each of the articles is a one off. This is to say that a new category would have to be created to fit each individual article. One example is an article that discusses how Elders can be thought of as an institution within Indigenous values and how that translates into workplace policies. This category has the most diverse issues that are all uniquely important to learn from.

The body of academic literature on Indigenous values being incorporated into the workplace is sadly lacking. If an organization was to attempt to incorporate any Indigenous values or have policies that allow for Indigenous values I would not be surprised if they failed. Failure would stem from few successful examples, and fewer research materials on these successes. There is little in the way of research which could help guide an organization in achieving their goal. More research is needed.

As stated in the preface to the research, most of these articles have cross application to the research project at hand. In Indigenous Studies we learn to take the information available and understand it within a new context, because many Indigenous research fields are still new and developing. Specific research is needed focusing on the use of Indigenous workplace values within the policies and management of non-Indigenous and private companies. Furthermore, research is needed on the employment of Indigenous workers by said organizations and companies. Once available, this precise research can be used to help produce a guideline for organizations wishing to incorporate Indigenous values. Once in place, new policies would benefit Indigenous employees. Although some non-Indigenous individuals and companies find this hard to believe, they would also receive benefits, for example fewer tensions, improved relations and improved morale.

But what should this research focus on? I make the suggestion that this research should seek out organizations that explicitly show how their policies reflect an Indigenous perspective. The primary example of this is the Assiniboine Credit Union, based in Winnipeg. This organization has many Indigenous employees and has policies that reflect their workers. Research should ideally be

able to show how an organization might emulate or learn from an credit union like this. Secondly the Indigenous run casino industry has lessons as well. These are much more specific to relations between a non-Indigenous management and the employees being mostly Indigenous. Their policies are useful to show how a non-Indigenous management may successfully incorporate Indigenous values, specifically healthcare, into their policies.

It is unclear whether research or policies come first, in this egg or chick situation. Can research be extrapolated from these few ideal situations to produce a guideline, or must more workplace policies be created for research to have a base?

This research project should be seen a call to action. It may not be widespread and for everyone. But it does show a need for Indigenous values to be respected within the workplace management in all of Canada.

While I was reading the literature (or lack of) on Indigenous cultural workplace policies I noticed two distinct trends that will have to be address at a latter date.

The first is that there is literature about culturally appropriate policies. However, these predominantly deal with the delivery of services such as healthcare. Healthcare is an important example because it has successfully incorporated Indigenous ways of healing into policy and practice. For example sweat lodges are used in some rehabilitation clinics in the Prairies. These policies show that is is attainable for a policy to be culturally appropriate.

But there is an issue with this. These examples do not directly relate to how an organization might respect Indigenous workplace culture. Instead these policies must be viewed as examples of how to use Indigenous beliefs but they are not policies that translate into human resource policy. For example the sweat lodges would be useful to treat illness but could not be a reason for leave. There has to be a policy that allows for culturally based leave. Other issues such as integration of Elders into an organization has to be in a role larger than simply as a consultant because Elders can in some ways been seen as an institution within Indigenous culture. Implementing Indigenous beliefs on a company or organization in a superficial manner would not work.

I would suggest this research is not a a definitive answer but a series of what ifs. Perhaps these what ifs may be detrimental but I do believe it is not my place to say what policies should be used. If anything the models shown in the literature represent plausible scenarios that might be useful. I do hope that this research can produce a clear path for an organization to adopt culturally appropriate workplace policies for Indigenous people.

The other major issue I noted is that these policies are often aimed at dealing with problems within a company. The root cause of these problems are not discussed, only models for conflict resolution are presented. I suggest these conflicts to be indicative of larger issues. In the case of culturally appropriate policies for Indigenous people, this root problem is racism and the colonial context. The research I found was often focused on healthcare and I would suggest it is because the employees only come into contact with Indigenous people in stressful scenarios. While this is conjecture I do believe that this should be something to consider when looking at management strategies for resolving conflict between Indigenous and settler employees.

These two issues should only be a preface to the formulation of an answer to how an organization might adopt culturally appropriate policies for Indigenous employees. However these two issues do cast large shadows and must be dealt with.

Management of the workplace is a complex system. The literature review showed that there

was a heavy concentration of diversity management with regards to Indigenous peoples. The following articles shown all relate to management and Indigenous people whether it been in an Indigenous organization or a hospital.

C. R. Roche's article *Paths Towards Reconciliation in the Workplace: Exploring the Aboriginal cultures Awareness Workshop* and regards an organization with Indigenous workers and clients. The primary use of this article for my research is that it provides a model to approach the integration of Indigenous values into a workplace, and the reasons that it was not successful. This paper focuses on policies in healthcare, for example hospitals, that accommodate Indigenous culture. The policies put in place workplace awareness workshops, with the goal of better accommodation of Indigenous values among healthcare workers and patients. Some workers choose to ignore, or had difficulties accepting and understanding, the message of these workshops. This choice was driven by the perception that the policies promoted provide preferential treatment of Indigenous peoples. Since this article is from 2012 it shows that research is currently being conducted on this subject.

Chapman, McCaskill and Newhouse produced a 1991 article titled *Management in Contemporary Aboriginal Organizations*, which surveys Indigenous organizations, with comparisons to Western companies. This paper shows the significant difference in the perception of workplace management by Indigenous peoples compared to non-Indigenous. These differences in perception are shown through concepts including consensual decision-making, in which the whole group has input. The Indigenous employees preferred this method.

The importance of this paper is that it demonstrates methods that a manager (Indigenous or otherwise) can incorporate Indigenous ways towards improved relationships with Indigenous employees by including them in the decision-making process.

Rocky Dwyer's 2003 article *Career Progression of Aboriginal Executives in the Canadian Federal Public Service*, looks at the progression of Aboriginal executives in public service and in the government through a myriad of vectors including job assignments and education levels. This paper shows the barriers that Indigenous people face in the workplace. Among these barriers is paternalism. Non-Indigenous managers are quoted in this article as treating Indigenous workers in a childlike fashion.

The conclusion shows that workplace management needs to take into account Indigenous ways for retention and morale. This paper also reveals how Indigenous people face a glass ceiling in public service, and do not rise to higher positions. Specific policies are needed to retain and promote Indigenous employees. Perhaps management would do well to adopt Indigenous workplace values if they are to retain Indigenous employees.

The collaborative article *Aboriginal Education as Cultural Brokerage* by Cherubini, Trudeau and Hodson is about Indigenous teachers and how they relate to their workplaces. In Canada, education has not prepared Indigenous teachers teach respectfully about Indigenous language and culture. This article also covers decolonization of education. Decolonization of education allows for Indigenous teachers to become protectors of their own culture and brokers with the rest of Canada.

While this paper does not deal strictly with workplace management, it is an example of a workplace that needs to be adapted to Indigenous ways of teaching and respecting Indigenous values. The current problematic values are taught to non-Indigenous children about Indigenous culture and language. These issues are cyclical, so workplaces that engage children are excellent platforms for policy reform

S. Mills 2011 article *The Difficulty with Diversity* discusses the process that mills in Canada have diversified their employees and encouraged Indigenous workers to apply for promotions. However, this was seen as preferential treatment of Indigenous women by the white women at the mills. The idea of a meritocracy is seen as a way to re-inscribe racism. Diversity management allowed for more racism. This is therefore an example of how a non-Indigenous company tried to have more Indigenous workers but their management strategy did not work well. This article follows others reviewed as it does not show workplace policies that are designed to keep Indigenous workers but rather shows a model that failed. This relates to the research topic because it shows how promoting minorities can raise unintentional consequences, in this case racism. Furthermore, diversity management can be seen as a model that does not work and does not incorporate Indigenous ways, because the unique context of Indigenous peoples are lumped in with other minorities.

Ambtman, Hudson, Hartry and Mackay-Chiddenton wrote a 2010 article titled *Promoting System-wide Cultural Competence for serving Aboriginal Families and Children in a Midsized Canadian City*. This article covers how an Indigenous organization, Circle of Courage, improved services to Indigenous people through encouraging larger organizations to change and adapt. The Circle of Courage helps organizations do this by supporting Indigenous workers within the organizations.

The point of including this paper is to show a contrasting model of Indigenous workplace policies. Rather than have the organization institute its own changes, this article displays how an external group, Circle of Courage, teaches organizations how to establish changes. This third party model is unique in its management of tensions and diversity issues within organizations.

Another useful point about this is showing how an organization can improve services to Indigenous people who use those services. While it is outside of the scope of the research question, it does have a useful look at relations between organizations and Indigenous people.

Agocs and Burr's *Employment Equity, Affirmative Action and Managing Diversity* covers the problems with diversity management without a specifically Indigenous or minority focus. However that does not mean it is not useful as a literature review. It contains many useful definitions that are wide ranging and can be used to describe other issues as presented in other papers. Furthermore this paper has several suggestions for models to use for management theory. These include regulation of the workplace through policies. These can be used to see if any other articles or person has used these methodologies in their research

Natcher, Davis and Hickey's 2005 *Co-Management* considers a company wishing to work with an Indigenous group. However it does show a model for how a company should conduct itself. This does not however directly relate to how a company might develop policies that are culturally appropriate thus rendering this article not as relevant.

Next category is about Indigenous organizations and how they are run. The three articles in this range from management, to remaking organizations to follow Indigenous values, to finally a current credit union that does in fact incorporate Indigenous values into their human resources with regards to hiring and retention.

First is S. Gröschl's article *Integrating Aboriginal Peoples into Canada's Casino Industry* examines the opening of a casino on Cree lands in Saskatchewan and the management team involved, and within my classification system belongs within two categories, both regarding its management, and as an Indigenous workplace. The article reports that the original HR/management were Dutch and had no understanding Indigenous cultures. Their workplace management did not work well because

it did not take into account any Indigenous ways of being. Tension developed between Indigenous workers and their foreign management. After a year a new management team was brought in, and workplace morale improved. Indigenous workers were accommodated through initiatives to include Indigenous ways of being. These included use of the medicine wheel. The new management also took strides to improve worker health by offering sweats and other Indigenous ways of healing. For alcohol rehabilitation, Indigenous ways of healing included on site presence of Elders. This case study is an example of effective workplace policies reflecting Indigenous workers in a for-profit company (even though this casino is an Indigenous casino).

The 1996 article *Organizational Transformation: A Case Study of Two Aboriginal Organizations* by D. Newhouse and I. Chapman investigates 2 Aboriginal organizations. Each has been moderately successful as a non-profit and tried to remake themselves in accordance with Indigenous values and ways of being. The paper labels the organizations A and F. F managed to succeed while A did not. Organization F emphasized participation of its workers throughout their process of change. Also, F has a strong leader. Conversely, Organization A tried to force a complicated system onto the company, and lacked an overall leader. This article highlights the importance of strong leadership when an organization attempts to realign their values with those of Indigenous peoples, and that participation by all is essential for success.

This paper is useful to our project because it provides an example of an Indigenous organization that did succeed and what can be done to avoid failure. Furthermore, these lessons can be applied to non-Indigenous organizations that seek to work with Indigenous people. Learning to adapt and cross-apply research is essential for the success of my paper.

The final article in the Indigenous organizations category is the Canadian Centre for Policy Alternatives' 2007 book *Doing Community Economic Development*. This has a very useful chapter on the banking sector of Manitoba and in particular the Assiniboine Credit Union. This union has several policies that make it attractive as a model that any company should look at for culturally appropriate policies. For example, its policy includes a holistic approach in the evaluation process of employees. These practices also reflect the local area and the culture there, rather than a pan-Indigenous accommodation. The model put forth by the Assiniboine Credit Union should be used by a company as a way to start looking at how they might incorporate Indigenous ways of management or workplace policy, but it must be tailored outside of the Assiniboine community for the specific needs of other groups.

Lastly is the miscellaneous category. The use of Labour Unions as a methods of promoting Indigenous values is examined by Mills and Clarke. This is important because it shows another method of having Indigenous values be in the workplace beyond human resources or management. From there is a article on recruitment of Indigenous police officers. Finally Indigenous Elders and organizations is the topic of the last article.

Mills and Clarke's recent article *We Will Go Side-by-side with you*, covers the integration of Indigenous people with labour unions. Labour unions provide a place for Indigenous workers to be heard and have their concerns addressed. Unions are a platform that can be used by Indigenous people so that their cultural beliefs and ways are accommodated.

There are some issues with this use of Labour unions. Some Indigenous organizations are anti-union. Labour unions, which are predominantly white, can be seen as another colonial tool for assimilation. Also, unions historically superseded sovereignty on Indigenous reserves and lands

because then state laws apply.

However unions do provide a space for Indigenous workers within a community. Unions could adapt their strategies to waylay these concerns and better integrate Indigenous ways into unions themselves. The opportunity for issues to be addressed is in line with Indigenous ways because it is a participatory method and an inclusionary one as well. Unions could be used as a way to further Indigenous ways of life in a workplace setting.

Singh and Agocs 2000 article *Recruitment, selection and promotion of visible minority and aboriginal police officers* covers the recruitment of minorities and Indigenous people into police forces. The most basic interpretation of the method is that it opens up the workplace for Indigenous people because it dispels the old image of the workplace. This belongs in the miscellaneous category as it does not directly cover workplace interactions, management, or policies. Rather it can be used to show why Indigenous people do not work in certain areas. The perception that the police are a group of racist white men is a policy problem because police forces need a way to correct that perception. Without correcting the perception the cycle will continue. Regardless of what method is used, this model can be used to show how to recruit Indigenous people. This is why this paper is important for research on workplace policies that reflect Indigenous way of knowing and being. To cross apply this lesson to human resource and management, we can assert that policies which deal with recruitment of Indigenous peoples can be used in other areas other than law enforcement because some areas may not be considered based on historical grievances or past racism.

What is an elder? What do Elders do? is Stiegelbauer's 1996 article on the role of Elders within Indigenous organizations and communities. There is a section which directly addresses how an Elder might fit within a organization. This is particularly useful if a company or organization would wish to promote culture-based workplace policies. Elder involvement is shown to be helpful because Elders have a strong presence that can raise morale and lower tension. This source has a plan for how to involve Elders respectfully such as consultations with Elders and treating them with respect.

Researching, and writing this paper, was a difficult task. There was little in the way of literature and concrete evidence. Instead it seemed to be small snippets of information dispersed over a large field of research that tangentially relates. Occasionally articles which dealt with the research topic were found. However the frequency of these did not lend much morale. If anything it served to show how bleak this research was. In the process of writing this paper I went back to see if these was anything new; perhaps on the off chance a new article was released or I had missed something. A resounding no was the answer. All the links were either in my history, and thus coloured purple, or new articles happened to contain one key word and yielded no new information.

Having finished with the analysis of the review I had to think about what I wanted to say in this paper. Did I want to call for sweeping reform or modest gains? Or rather should it be purely analytical? I chose instead to present this paper as both a call for action and a review of previous literature. That is to say that the literature, or lack of it more precisely, shows a need for this type of research.

The last concern I had with the research was the lack of an Indigenous voice. Many of the researchers can from non-Indigenous backgrounds. They are outsiders to the communities they survey and research so in depth. While it is easy to get snarled in the semantics and debates of outsiders versus insiders, I do think it warrants mention in the paper. More Indigenous researchers are needed because it is them who need to assert intellectual sovereignty over research about

themselves and their people. This concern could have been a footnote or in the preface but I believe it, in tandem with the call for more research, provides a basis for how future research will be conducted.

Thank you for the opportunity to write this paper. It is a culmination of many hours spent in the library, countless cups of coffee drained, and a series of bitter disappointment of how there is such a lack of research on this issue. Perhaps there will be a time when there will be a guideline for those companies, and organizations, private and non-profit, Indigenous or not, to see how they might incorporate Indigenous values into their workplaces through management, human resources, and company policy.

Thank you,
Liam White

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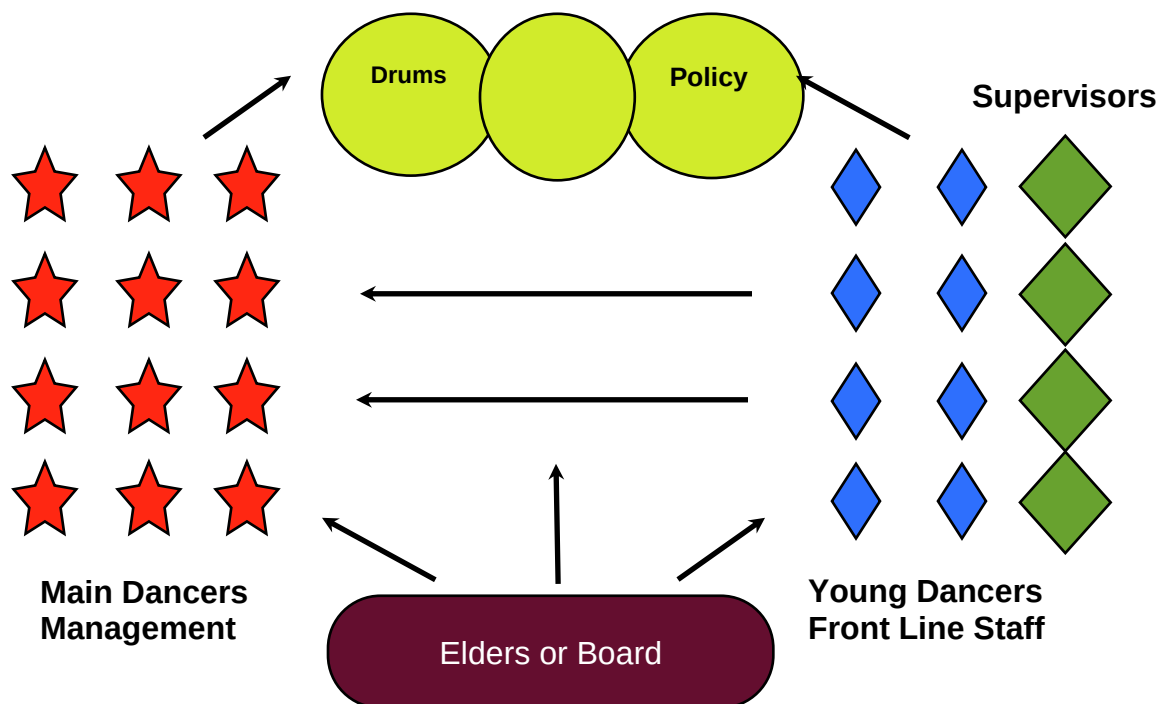
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C.Gitxsan Dancers

Gitxsan Drumming Group

While facilitating an Aboriginal Non-Profit (ANP) workshop at Gathering Our Voices 2013 Youth Conference, I asked the young audience about their culture and how they practice it. A young man said that he was in his Gitxsan Drumming Group and that it taught him a lot about how to learn and practice their songs and dance. I asked him if he could describe it to the rest of us. He walked up the white board and promptly illustrated a drumming group; from young dancers, main dancers, to Elders and the roles that they play in the drumming group.



To begin, everyone listens to the ● "Drums" for the stops, starts, and tempo of the songs. The ◆ "Youth" learn the dance by watching the ★ "Main Dancers" across the floor, trying to mimic their dance moves while at the same time being guided through the dance by ◆ "Adults". During the entire dance, the ● "Elders" watch all the dancers and drummers to make sure that everyone is doing their job and performing the songs and dance correctly.

When he was finished I saw that he had also drawn the basic non profit management structure.

- ◆ - Young Dancers or Front of Line Staff
- ◆ - Adults or Supervisors
- ★ - Main Dancers or Management
- - Elders or Board
- - Drums or Policy

Most people begin their ANP careers as a ◆ Front Line Staff with ◆ a supervisor overseeing their day to day work. Successful front line staff watch and learn from their fellow staff, their ◆ Supervisors and ★ Management and sometimes promoted to management positions. Management take their direction from their ● Board. The Board, Management, Supervisors, and Front Line Staff all follow the lead of ● Policy.



During the Gathering our Voices youth conference (March 19-22, 2013) we had our doors open for 8 separate workshops, each of which provided a new group of youths and adults with different backgrounds, experiences, and expectations. As we talked with each group we gathered their input on the 4 areas of the ANP project while educating them of their opportunities as they enter the workplace.

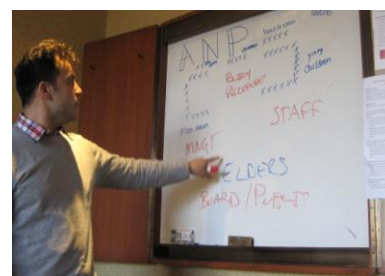
Mentorship and Professional Development: With experience of mentorship in sports and



cultural activities the youth understand the need for mentorship and professional development. An excellent example came from two Gitksan youth who shared their experience dancing; they begin as youth (staff) who watch and learn from the main dancers (management and executives). Everyone stays in sync following the drummers (policy). Meanwhile the elders (board and stakeholders) watch and provide guidance and support. For the youth an ideal job means the best-fit possible utilizing their various skill sets, the

opportunity for growth and some control over it, and consideration of different barriers such as learning challenges. The youth want strong leadership at work as well as mentorship from outside their organization, just as an uncle would teach his nephew rather than his son.

Pensions and Benefits: While this topic is extremely important it was more difficult for the youth to discuss. For those who have given it some thought they want benefits that will extend to their children, provide consideration of their culture, and be easily accessible. They are finding their benefits from the Non-Insured Health Benefits (NIHB) Program more limited and difficult to use. Cultural benefits were identified as in important need to accommodate cultural activities and protocols. When discussing pensions the main concern was how to keep the entire contribution, theirs and their employers, when they leave and what amount of time they need to put into an organization to ensure they receive the entire pension.



Connections With Culture: The youth want to incorporate who they are and the skills they have developed into their workplace. Parts of their culture they want to see at work include food sharing, languages, cultural protocol, traditional games, song, drumming and dance. Cultural

sensitivity, acceptance, and respect are very important; they want to be themselves and not change their appearance, personality, or beliefs for their job, they want it to contribute to their job. The youth would like their workplace to provide knowledge and exposure to their culture. Because of the youths involvement in their culture they have a need for flexibility that will accommodate their family, traditions, and cultural activities.

Workplace Wellness: Wellness for the youth is having an active workplace through sports, team activities, community gardens, youth/adult addiction programs, and a warm work environment. They want the organization they work for to be family focused and understanding of the various needs families have. As a part of wellness they want a flexible workplace that welcomes culture as a part of healthy living. They seek self-satisfaction, respect, honesty, communication, pride and dedication in their jobs to achieve wellness in the workplace.

E. Glossary

Aboriginal: an aboriginal inhabitant of a place, inhabiting or existing in a land from the earliest times or from before the arrival of colonists; indigenous. The term "Aboriginal" refers to the first inhabitants of Canada, and includes First Nations, Inuit, and Métis peoples. This term came into popular usage in Canadian contexts after 1982, when Section 35 of the Canadian Constitution defined the term as such. Aboriginal is also a common term for the Indigenous peoples of Australia. When used in Canada, however, it is generally understood to refer to Aboriginal peoples in a Canadian context. This term is not commonly used in the United States.

ANP Strategy: Aboriginal Non-Profit Sector Human Resource and Workforce Strategy (ANP Strategy) is funded through a Labour Market Partnership (LMP) Agreement between the Ministry of Jobs, Tourism and Innovation and the BCAAFC. The ANP Strategy seeks to improve HR and workforce capacity of Aboriginal non-profit organizations throughout British Columbia. Specifically, the ANP Strategy is designed to use an Indigenous approach to understanding and addressing the gaps in HR resources for Aboriginal non-profit organizations.

Culture: A set of values, guiding beliefs, understandings and ways of thinking and being that are shared by members of an organization or community and is taught to the new members. Also often refers to the language, customs, and art of a particular group.

Cultural tensions: A state which may arise when two or more segments of society with different ethnicities or cultural backgrounds are in disagreement or do not trust each other, with a possibility of conflict or violence.

Aboriginal Non-profit sector: The Aboriginal Non-profit (ANP) Sector is a collective of hundreds of Aboriginal non-profit organizations across British Columbia in the areas of housing, employment, drug and alcohol treatment, health, and child and family services. These non-profit organizations serve predominantly (though not exclusively) Aboriginal and are not for profit and non-governmental.

Pan-Indianism: A philosophy and movement promoting unity among different First Nations groups in the Americas, regardless of tribal or local affiliations. Also refers to a phenomena observed when First Nations people relocated to urban centres or gathered in university environments and sought the support of other First Nations individuals in pan-Indian student or service organizations. The danger with Pan-Indianism is that by adopting a generalised version of First Nations culture based on common dominators (e.g. "powwow culture"), pan-Indianism threatens the individuality or purity of each culture, as it may conflict with - or fail to capture- the uniqueness of each First Nations cultures.

Policy: a course or principle of action adopted or proposed by an organization or individual to guide decisions and achieve rational outcomes. A policy is a statement of intent, and is implemented as a procedure or protocol. Policies are generally adopted by the Board of or senior governance body within an organization whereas procedures or protocols would be developed and adopted by senior executive officers.

Tokenism: Appropriating a First Nations cultural practice/belief without having been gifted and taught the meaning and intent behind the practice, as well as given permission to use it. The policy or practice of making only a symbolic effort toward the inclusion of cultural practices or members of minority groups to prevent criticism. This token effort is usually intended to create a false appearance of inclusiveness and deflect accusations of discrimination.

F. Survey

Questionnaire



BC Aboriginal Non-Profit Sector Human Resource and Workforce Strategy

Survey

Strengthening Connections with Culture and Traditional Values in the Workplace & Workplace Wellness and Work-Life Balance

Survey available online at: <https://www.surveymonkey.com/s/WellnessAndCulture>

Please return to: **Attention of Marek** at

marek@vnfc.ca (email)

250.384.1586 (fax)

Victoria Native Friendship Centre: 231 Regina Avenue Victoria, BC V8Z 1J6 (mail)

Introduction

Thank you for taking this survey and sharing your knowledge and experience! The survey is designed for people who work or volunteer in the Aboriginal non-profit sector.

This research is being conducted on behalf of the BC Association of Aboriginal Friendship Centres (BCAAFC), who is managing the Aboriginal Non-Profit (ANP) Sector Human Resource and Workforce Strategy (ANP Strategy). The Strategy seeks to use an indigenous approach to strengthen the ANP workforce.

Specifically, this survey is designed to identify promising practices as they relate to:

- 1) Culture and Traditional values in the Workplace
- 2) Workplace Wellness and work-life balance

The information collected will lead to a collective sector-wide strategy to deeply embed culture and workplace wellness in HR and workforce practices within the Aboriginal non-profit sector. We recognize that each community has their own unique cultural identity. Our intention with this survey is to elicit responses according to your own unique cultural perspective. Our goal is to learn how to “uplift the people who uplift our communities.” We can’t do this without you!

The information you provide is anonymous (we won't ask your name) and it will only be used for the purpose of this study. The survey should take about 10-15 minutes to complete. You can stop taking the survey at any time. Materials produced in the course of this initiative will be the property of the BCAAFC.

If you'd like to be entered into a random prize draw at the end of this initiative please send an email to the address provided at the end of the survey. If you have any questions about this research please email anpstrategy@bcaafc.com. For questions about this survey please contact surveysupport@elevateconsulting.ca

Many Thanks!

Section I - Respondent Demographic Questions

Tell us a little bit about yourself

1. Do you identify as...

☐ A Youth	☐ An Adult	☐ An Elder
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2. Your background – Are you ...

- ☐ First Nations/Aboriginal
- ☐ Metis
- ☐ Inuit
- ☐ Non Aboriginal
- ☐ Other, please specify _____

3. What age group are you in?

- ☐ Under 18
- ☐ 18-29
- ☐ 30-46
- ☐ 47-56
- ☐ 57-66
- ☐ 67 and Over

4. Gender

☐ Female	☐ Male	☐ Other
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5. In what region of BC do you work?

- ☐ Fraser
- ☐ Northern
- ☐ Vancouver Coastal
- ☐ Vancouver Island
- ☐ Interior
- ☐ Other, please specify...

—



6. To which sub-sectors does your organization belong? Check all that apply

- ☐ Health Sector
- ☐ Housing Sector
- ☐ Employment Sector
- ☐ Treatment Sector
- ☐ Child and Family Sector
- ☐ Multi-service/multi-sector agency

7. What role(s) do you play in the Aboriginal non-profit sector?

- ☐ Executive
- ☐ Manager/supervisor
- ☐ Frontline staff
- ☐ Administrative/clerical
- ☐ Student/intern
- ☐ Volunteer
- ☐ Board Member
- Other, please specify

8. What size of Aboriginal non-profit organizations have you worked in? (Select all that apply)

- ☐ Small (less than 25 employees)
- ☐ Medium (25 – 50 employees)
- ☐ Large (more than 50 employees)
- ☐ Don't know/no answer

Section II - Culture and Traditional Values in the Workplace

9. Please select your level of agreement with the following statements:

	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree
I feel more satisfied in a workplace that incorporates culture and traditional values	☐	☐	☐	☐
I am more likely to work for, and remain an employee of, an organization that incorporates culture and traditional values	☐	☐	☐	☐
Culture and traditional values are strongly embedded in my workplace	☐	☐	☐	☐

10. Please share examples where culture and traditional values that are important to you have been practiced effectively in the workplace.

11. Why are these practices important to you?

12. Do you have any advice on how Aboriginal non-profit organizations can adopt Human Resource practices that are culturally relevant to you?

Section III - Workplace Wellness and Work-life Balance

13. How important are the following to you in creating a positive workplace environment?

	Not important	Somewhat important	Important	Very important
Healthy workplace relationships	☐	☐	☐	☐
Healthy leadership	☐	☐	☐	☐
Access to counseling or coaching	☐	☐	☐	☐

Learning or development opportunities	☐	☐	☐	☐
Collaborative organizational culture	☐	☐	☐	☐
Acknowledgement of good performance	☐	☐	☐	☐
Incentives for good performance	☐	☐	☐	☐
Cooperative environment	☐	☐	☐	☐
Healthy eating programs	☐	☐	☐	☐
Exercise programs/equipment	☐	☐	☐	☐
What else is important to you?				

14. How much of a challenge are the following for you in your organization?

	Not a challenge	Somewhat of a challenge	A challenge	A large challenge
Lateral violence or negative coworkers	☐	☐	☐	☐
Negative gossip	☐	☐	☐	☐
Lack of support from managers	☐	☐	☐	☐
Lack of organizational direction	☐	☐	☐	☐
Too much work	☐	☐	☐	☐
Wearing too many hats	☐	☐	☐	☐
Limited resources to do my job properly	☐	☐	☐	☐
Job security	☐	☐	☐	☐
Lack of opportunity to advance	☐	☐	☐	☐

Other, please share: _____	☐	☐	☐	☐
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15. How important is it for your organization to offer the following to support you in achieving work-life balance?

	Not important	Somewhat important	Important	Very important
Flexibility	☐	☐	☐	☐
Providing work-share opportunities	☐	☐	☐	☐
Creating healthy eating programs	☐	☐	☐	☐
Offering flex days	☐	☐	☐	☐
Days off for family or community events	☐	☐	☐	☐
Providing onsite daycare	☐	☐	☐	☐
Providing daycare allowance	☐	☐	☐	☐
Providing exercise programs/ equipment	☐	☐	☐	☐
Other, please share: _____	☐	☐	☐	☐

16. Please respond (Yes or No) to the following statements:

Statement	Yes	No
Is healthy eating a challenge for you in your day-to-day life?	☐	☐
Do you find time to exercise regularly on a weekly basis?	☐	☐
Do you suffer from burnout as a result of your job duties?	☐	☐

Section IV - Going Forward

If you had three wishes to make your organization a healthier and more culturally relevant place to work, what would you wish for?

Participation Incentive – Prize Draw

Individuals from the Aboriginal non-profit sector who fill out a survey can be entered into a random draw to win either a new iPad or [Carey Newman](#) piece of artwork. To enter the draw, please send your email address or a phone number to anpdraw@mahiganconsulting.com. The information you provide will not be shared with anyone and will only be used for the purpose of the draw. Please note winners will have to demonstrate they work or volunteer in the ANP sector. You can enter up to twice by filling out each survey. Good luck!

Thank you for taking this survey!

