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**First Nation Small Business  
and Entrepreneurship in Canada**

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## **Abstracts by Major “Pull-Out” Section**

**This paper can be divided up into five useful and stand-alone packages. The following are short summaries of the “detachable” pull-out sections, which may be of interest to individuals for specific reasons, outlined below. Please note that the entire paper, including each section, comes with dozens of useful links and references located in the endnotes.**

### **Section One: Prevailing Views on Aboriginal Entrepreneurship and Small Business**

This section provides an introductory overview of two diametrically opposed views voiced by Aboriginal leaders and other researchers regarding First Nation small business and entrepreneurial activities. Typically, researchers and leaders were either for or against small business and entrepreneurship in Aboriginal communities. However, the section provides evidence that the issues may not be so black and white, and there may be ways in which small businesses and entrepreneurship can produce positive outcomes for Aboriginal communities and individuals. This section may provide helpful ideas to those leaders, managers, and educators attempting to discuss the extreme views, while also providing ideas for the clarification and resolution of concerns regarding business development and entrepreneurship in Aboriginal communities. It also presents small business and entrepreneurship as an important strategy to be clarified in larger discussions on self-government and economic development.

### **Section Two: Defining Small Business and Entrepreneurship**

This section provides some general definitions of small business and entrepreneurship, including a brief discussion of the characteristics and values commonly associated with the entrepreneurial individual. Emerging definitions that relate directly to Aboriginal and First Nation small business and entrepreneurship will then be introduced and discussed. While this section may appeal to the academic or researcher, it is also an important definitional guide for community leaders and managers. For example, Indigenous entrepreneurship may be defined in a much broader way than it is described in mainstream literature. These broader definitions reflect a more community-based, environmentally friendly, culturally sensitive and socially responsible approach to business.

### **Section Three: The Current State of First Nation Small Business & Entrepreneurship in Canada**

This section provides a descriptive overview, including a demographic profile, of First Nation small business and entrepreneurs in Canada. It begins with a general overview of the two million plus Canadian small businesses and entrepreneurial activities. It then describes First Nation entrepreneurs and small businesses, allowing the reader to develop insight into the similarities and differences that exist between First Nation, Aboriginal, and mainstream Canadian small businesses and entrepreneurs. This section also highlights information regarding on- and off-reserve businesses, Aboriginal women and young entrepreneurs, and the exponential growth of Aboriginal organizations in Canada over the past two decades. Leaders and managers could use the information in this section to provide rationale for the development of entrepreneurial initiatives in their communities, or for their members.

#### **Section Four: Promoting, Supporting, and Leading First Nation Small Businesses and Entrepreneurs**

This section profiles a number of national, regional, and local Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal led programs and services that promote and support Aboriginal and First Nation small businesses and entrepreneurs in Canada. It also describes support programs associated with financial institutions, corporations, academic institutions, researchers, and other related Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal sources and individuals. This section may be particularly useful for individuals and communities interested in starting a small business or leaders eager to support entrepreneurs or individuals interested in becoming involved in small business ventures.

#### **Section Five: Growth of Small Businesses: Other Opportunities and Challenges**

The section offers some insight into some of other emerging opportunities and challenges available to Aboriginal entrepreneurs. It begins by exploring how Aboriginal entrepreneurs are handling the new – increasingly knowledge-based – global economy. Additional areas covered in this section include discussions on Aboriginal women entrepreneurs, young entrepreneurs, urban reserves, businesses located in rural communities, and other “unique” initiatives, including inmate-owned and operated businesses. This section looks at some of the new areas of activity in which Aboriginal entrepreneurs are working and thriving, highlighting some of the issues that Aboriginal communities and entrepreneurs face when becoming involved in small business activities. Other items are also entertained, including ideas on: evaluating, monitoring, and policing government initiatives and corporate partnerships; addressing social, cultural, and environmental responsibility; and, determining the adequacy of current information on aboriginal and small businesses

## **Introduction**

There are thousands of Aboriginal organizations in Canada.<sup>1</sup> They are owned, managed and staffed, wholly or in part, by First Nation (status and non-status Indian), Inuit, and Métis men, women, and youth. They exist in every region in the country where they perform profit, not-for-profit, co-operative, voluntary, and governmental tasks and functions. While large Aboriginal organizations act at international, national, regional, and local levels, smaller ones continue to attend primarily to community needs and demands. Most important, many of these organizations are playing an increasingly active role in supporting movements by Aboriginal peoples in regaining control and authority over their own economic, social and political affairs. This trend includes recovering, managing and governing land and resources, defining and pursuing sustainable economic and social development, and promoting varied business and entrepreneurial activities.

Indigenous organizations and entrepreneurs have existed for thousands of years. In Canada, the number of contemporary Aboriginal organizations has grown exponentially over the past 10 to 20 years. In the early 1990's there was an estimated 6,000 Aboriginal organizations in Canada, and the number now stands at over 30,000.<sup>2</sup> In particular, there has been a tremendous increase in for-profit organizations, particularly small businesses and entrepreneurs. Of the 6,000 organizations listed in the early 1990's, it was estimated that approximately 50% were not-for-profit and governmental, while the other 50% were private businesses. Today, approximately 3,000 organizations continue to provide not-for-profit and governmental services to Aboriginal peoples and communities, while the number of small businesses now stands at over an astounding 27,000.

While the growth of Aboriginal organizations over the past two decades, "has had both a political and social [and economic] impact on Canadian society... little has been written about these organizations and the role they have played in the development of Canada."<sup>3</sup> To remedy this situation, a number of analysts, research institutions, and community managers and leaders have started to piece together a useful picture of the history, development, growth, and the day-to-day operation of these organizations.

Furthermore, a major aspect of this research story requires the examination of First Nation small businesses and entrepreneurs in Canada. Interested parties appreciate that there is much to learn about these small businesses and entrepreneurs, particularly the role that they play

in relation to community economic and political development. It is important that they are doing this work, since it is necessary to track the products and services these businesses provide. It is also valuable to account for the social and economic value First Nation small businesses and entrepreneurs are adding to Canadian society, especially First Nation communities.

This paper adds to our knowledge base, by:

1. describing the prevailing views on Aboriginal small business and entrepreneurship
2. defining small business and entrepreneurship in general terms
3. describing the current state of First Nation entrepreneurship and small business development in Canada
4. listing and discussing some of the challenges that First Nation small business owners and entrepreneurs in Canada face, and providing ideas and avenues for the enhanced support and promotion of those entrepreneurs thinking about starting a small business, and
5. highlighting and discussing those avenues of growth for Aboriginal business that are still in need of attention, including the challenges and opportunities facing Aboriginal women, youth and other entrepreneurs.

The paper will end with some thoughts on further questions regarding Aboriginal small business and entrepreneurship in Canada. Current research on Indigenous small businesses and entrepreneurs will be highlighted throughout the paper.

Before moving to the first section I need to clarify two issues for those reading or hoping to utilize this paper. First, while the paper is primarily directed at and about First Nation entrepreneurs and small business owners, some of the research, literature and examples utilized in this paper inevitably involve the larger body or group of Aboriginal entrepreneurs and small business owners, including, Métis, Inuit, as well as non-status and off-reserve First Nation individuals and communities.

Second, it is important to note that, in this paper, there is a distinction between individual entrepreneurship and privately owned small businesses and community enterprises (or community-owned businesses), and social/community entrepreneurs, that should be kept in mind. For the most part, this paper focuses on the first group – individuals participating in privately held and individually owned profit-oriented ventures. But, for example, in the next section, Cardinal and others were probably talking more about community than individually-owned enterprises.

For the most part, I would argue that the similarities between the two outweigh the differences, particularly in the First Nation community context. Both employ local peoples, especially in communities where unemployment is an issue. Individuals operating their own

businesses not only provide employment to themselves, they also often employ family and community members. Community enterprises also employ community members, but usually in larger numbers. As well, First Nation entrepreneurs usually sell services or products not readily available in the local community setting, which is also true of community enterprises.

However, there are differences. Small business entrepreneurs often specialize in service or product areas not deemed viable by larger community enterprises. For example, managers of community enterprises may not feel it is important enough – financially, culturally, or socially – to rent out videos or to sell gas or convenience store items. But, an entrepreneur might. As well, there may be a propensity for elected First Nation leaders to feel it is necessary to become involved in – for better or for worse – community- or tribally-owned enterprises. Entrepreneurs and privately owned small businesses may not feel the immediate political effect of band leaders or councilors, but elected leaders can have a supportive or detrimental effect on private forms of business ventures.

The next section highlights the two often cited, yet diametrically opposed views of Aboriginal business enterprise development. Although the comments pertain to primarily community-owned enterprises, the concern over small business and entrepreneurial activities in the context of First Nation cultural, social, political, and economic development remains the same in many of the current discussions.

## **1. Prevailing Views on Aboriginal Entrepreneurship and Small Business**

This section will provide a brief contextual overview of two diametrically opposed views voiced by Aboriginal leaders and other researchers regarding First Nation enterprise development and entrepreneurial activities. Typically, researchers and leaders were either for or against business and entrepreneurship in Aboriginal communities. As well, these contradictory views were usually raised within larger discussions on how best to promote First Nation self-governance and economic self-sufficiency while preserving community and traditional ways. As we will see, the issues may not be so black and white, and there may be ways in which small businesses and entrepreneurship, as well as community-based enterprises and ventures, can produce positive outcomes for Aboriginal communities and individuals.

### **1.1 The Opposition to Aboriginal Small Business and Entrepreneurship**

At first the concept of small business and entrepreneurship was viewed as overly individualistic, anti-community, and more of a Western-European government strategy than an Indigenous approach to economic and community development. This view was expressed by a number of prominent Aboriginal leaders vehemently opposed to promoting commerce and business activities within their communities. In 1973 the National Indian Brotherhood (NIB) released a *Statement on Economic Development of Indian Communities*, which “warned against promoting private enterprise at the expense of the entire community.”<sup>4</sup> Peter Douglas Elias discusses the NIB views commenting, that at the time:

some aboriginal communities and organizations shunned entrepreneurship, saying private interest was foreign to their traditions. Individual and communal interests would be thrown into conflict. Since federal and provincial programs support individual interests, those interests would prevail. In the end, the result could be a fatal blow to tradition.<sup>5</sup>

Elias concludes that regardless of the various concerns voiced by First Nation leaders, “many economic development plans [did] include a role for entrepreneurship and small businesses.”<sup>6</sup> He provides evidence that confirms individuals and institutions were challenging the “apparent contradiction between private enterprise and traditional lifestyles.”<sup>7</sup> In fact, throughout the late 1970s and 1980s, entrepreneurship began to take hold, grow, and develop in many First Nation communities, due “on the one hand, to dissatisfaction with the results of community business development and, on the other, to an increasing emphasis by government on entrepreneurship.”<sup>8</sup>

## 1.2 The Acceptance of Aboriginal Small Business and Entrepreneurship

At the same time, however, the alternative view accepting Aboriginal entrepreneurship and small business development was emerging. As early as 1977, prominent and persuasive Aboriginal leaders, such as Harold Cardinal, were presenting the case that the development of First Nation businesses—especially in the service industry—was one (and possibly the only) way Aboriginal peoples could become free from government and corporate control. But, for Cardinal, there existed an untenable compromise that had to be dealt with before economic development programs would become effective and business could flourish. This position is made quite clear in his statement, that:

Either we do things the way whoever controls the programme, or has the money, or the primary interest, wants them done, or we forget the whole thing. (But) “if economic development is to further the development not only of individuals, but the development of a people, such a compromising situation cannot be tolerated.... The only way we can avoid that killing initial compromise is to have our own resources, expertise, and organizational base. This will allow us to set up our own business, to establish working relationships with other Canadians in all walks of life, and to compete in the world.”<sup>9</sup>

But Cardinal, who was, right up until his death in 2005, relentless in his call for the reinforcement and reinvigoration of First Nation culture and tradition, also warned that, in the end, “...economic development policy..., should strengthen our identity as Indian people.”<sup>10</sup> He believed that:

Rather than looking at economic development from the capitalistic view of making the most dollars possible, or from the socialist view of ensuring better distribution of capital, we must examine our development processes to make certain they are designed not only to help us out of our poverty, but to reinforce our identity as Indian people.... In order to accomplish this reinforcement of our cultural identity the planning for any meaningful development policy in an Indian community is going to have to involve as an integral part of the planning process, the elders, or the traditional people, who can give thrust and direction to any economic approach.<sup>11</sup>

In his work, Cardinal highlighted the potential value of First Nation business, and suggested that private enterprise could enhance economic and political freedom for Aboriginal peoples and their communities in ways that were consistent with Aboriginal culture and tradition. In order for these positive outcomes to occur, he stressed the need to promote relevant business training and community-based organizational planning and capacity building.

Cardinal also linked his views on the success of Aboriginal private enterprise—intentionally or not—to the settlement of land claims and Indigenous control over resources required for community-based economic and business development. It was becoming obvious that small business and entrepreneurial activities based on secure and accessible resources were vital to the economic well-being of First Nation communities.

### **1.3 Self-Government and Aboriginal Small Business and Entrepreneurship**

The imaginative connections linking Aboriginal economic and business development to political self-governance and land claims were carefully examined by the Royal Commission on Aboriginal Peoples (RCAP) during the early 1990's. In their final report, the commissioners concluded that:

Self-government without a significant economic base would be an exercise in illusion and futility. How to achieve a more self-reliant economic base is thus one of the most important questions to be resolved. What measures need to be taken to rebuild Aboriginal economies that have been severely disrupted over time, marginalized, and largely stripped of their land and natural resource base? The question is urgent, and not only because progress toward self-government would be severely constrained in the absence of effective measures to rebuild Aboriginal economies.... achieving a more self-reliant economic base for Aboriginal communities and nations will require significant, even radical departures from business as usual.<sup>12</sup>

Interestingly, one of the 'radical departures from business as usual' suggested by RCAP is the development and support of more Aboriginal small businesses. One of the nine steps RCAP recommended in rebuilding Aboriginal economies in Canada was the need to develop and support Aboriginal businesses.

Over time Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal leaders and thinkers began to see that small business activity initiated by Aboriginal entrepreneurs was an important and essential element in the freeing of Aboriginal peoples and communities from government, religious, and corporate control. It is also worth noting that from 1996 onwards much of the discussion about Aboriginal economic and business development came to Canada via researchers located south of the border. Many of these ideas came from the Harvard Project on American Indian Economic Development. Today, many Canadian researchers cite the Harvard findings of the eight external opportunities and internal assets they determined were critical to effective business development strategies and the development of tribal economies.<sup>13</sup>

Harvard researchers recommended private (especially micro) enterprise with tribal member ownership as one of four economic development models “emerging in Indian Country”. However, they also noted that the success of a private enterprise strategy was essentially dependent on “political institutions capable of protecting investors and entrepreneurs, and capable of enforcing workable business codes and the law of contract.”<sup>14</sup> Moreover, the principal Harvard researchers—Stephen Cornell and Joseph P. Kalt—reiterate through their work the critical connection between self-governance and economic development. They warn that:

The power of self-governance in and of itself is no guarantee of economic development. Such power can be the key to creating an environment in which self-determined economic development succeeds, or it can create an environment in which self-determined economic development becomes impossible.<sup>15</sup>

Their work accentuates the critical match between self-governing institutions and culture, and they remind readers of the essential, and often necessary, separation of politics from business.

Small business and entrepreneurship can assist in the development of Aboriginal communities and their economies. But, it is important to note that perhaps the success of such ventures depends upon the community at hand, and the situation in which potential community entrepreneurs find themselves. Communities with more resources and experience with governance may provide more stable footing for potential entrepreneurs. Conversely, communities with invasive political processes or leaders may limit the success of local entrepreneurial activities. Or, for example, communities with experience in the development and support of small businesses may provide a more fertile ground for potential entrepreneurs. A 1987 study conducted in British Columbia, found that:

band-operated enterprises predominated in communities just forming their economic development capacities. Bands with mature development capacities favoured small businesses. As bands acquire knowledge of the business environment, as they gain management experience, and as they add full-time development specialists to their staffs, they tackle all forms of initiative. Once a band has brought about community-based development, attention turns to private enterprise.<sup>16</sup>

Prior to 1980, many Aboriginal leaders and organizations considered individual enterprise a threat to their communities and cultural traditions. Nevertheless, as Hindle and

Lansdowne revealed in a recent study, contradictions between business and culture should not be overemphasized. They have found that:

the major lesson learned... was that Indigenous entrepreneurs can use their heritage—they don't have to lose it when they set out in pursuit of venture success.... The potent allegories of indigenous tradition can show the way to what might be—as well as what has been. There need be no paradox, no contradiction, no values sacrifice, no false dichotomy between heritage and innovation.... Indigenous tradition echoes to the footsteps of brave spirits on new paths. That is where entrepreneurs travel.<sup>17</sup>

Our current understanding of Aboriginal entrepreneurship and small business development has been informed by those groups and individuals that have either opposed or accepted it as a viable strategy. Despite the continued debate, many see that these are not mutually exclusive approaches and that entrepreneurial development of small businesses should be viewed as a strategy—one among many—that can allow for enhanced economic self-reliance and political self-governance at the community level.

For many community leaders and managers, Aboriginal entrepreneurship and small business development seems to make intuitive and strategic sense as a viable option for Aboriginal community and economic development. However, the support of this particular sector of the Aboriginal economy is still a problem for some Aboriginal peoples and others. This concern, in fact, affects other aspects of Aboriginal business development, such as the sharing of Aboriginal entrepreneurship stories in the classroom. For example, David Newhouse, in a paper on modern Aboriginal economies, tells a story about the time, in 1993, when he brought Victor Buffalo, the Chair of Peace Hills Trust Company, to talk to students and provide a public lecture. In his article, Newhouse describes the after-effect of the visit:

After one of the lectures, a few students approached me and my colleagues to express their indignation that Mr. Buffalo had been invited to speak. They explained that Mr. Buffalo was not an Indian because he had not once used the word sharing in his presentation, he was wearing a suit and he was exploiting his own people. The exploitation was the making of a profit through the loaning of money. Mr. Buffalo's company loans money to Indian bands on the basis of cash flow, using the contribution agreements of the government as a form of collateral rather than the usual collateral of plant, equipment and land.<sup>18</sup>

While Professor Newhouse was 'sharing' a story about a representative of a medium-sized business, the promotion and study of Aboriginal business, private entrepreneurship, and enterprise development in all of its forms continues to be opposed in some communities, and a

number of educational and organizational venues. For example, in recent years I have been told of accounts where members of our Edwards School of Business Aboriginal Business Student Society (ABSS) were ostracized by individuals and leaders of larger University of Saskatchewan Aboriginal student societies, in meetings they attended, because they were not ‘Indian’. In the words of these students, to be a respected and acknowledged part of these larger groups, they needed to be studying Aboriginal Law, Native Studies, or Native Education, and not business. Business and commerce was bad: foreign.

Regardless of the views for or against entrepreneurship and small business development, the reality is that entrepreneurs located in Aboriginal communities are increasingly creating and operating their own small businesses. Therefore, when band administrators and planners discuss Aboriginal self-government (or governance), self-sufficiency, and community economic development, it is important that they consider how small business and entrepreneurship can add positively to the movement. The evidence that this is occurring is mounting.

At a recent announcement event and related major national conference on Aboriginal economic development, National Chief Phil Fontaine articulated the Assembly of First Nations view that First Nations communities in Canada were “open for business”<sup>19</sup>, challenging corporate Canada to establish, enhance, and increase their activities with First Nations governments and business in order to fully realize employment and economic growth potentials.<sup>20</sup> He also stated that the leaders of First Nation communities were ready to partner with corporate interests in order to ensure that First Nation individuals would be employed in larger numbers, and that First Nations entrepreneurs would be supported to assist in the activities of corporations operating on or near Indigenous communities.

Chief Fontaine’s conference announcement suggests that economic development initiatives should build on existing best practices. For example, in individual First Nation communities, like the Osoyoos Indian Band located in southern British Columbia, the focus on business is also apparent. Their corporate motto is “in Business to Preserve Our Past by Strengthening our Future. Clarence Louie, Chief of the Osoyoos First Nation since 1985, lives by his message, which is “Socio-economic development is the foundation for First Nations self-reliance, our communities need to become business minded and begin to create their own jobs and revenue sources, not just administer government program that are often under funded.”<sup>21</sup>

To assist in this endeavour, and determine whether or not entrepreneurship and small business ownership is right for you or your community, it is important to be able to describe and discuss small business and entrepreneurship in general. We will now turn to these two interesting, yet contested, terms.

## **2. Defining Small Business and Entrepreneurship**

This section provides some general definitions of small business and entrepreneurship, including a brief discussion of the characteristics and values commonly associated with the entrepreneurial individual. Emerging definitions that relate directly to Aboriginal and First Nation small business and entrepreneurship will then be introduced and discussed.

### **2.1 Small Business**

In Canada a small business is “often defined as a business that is independently owned and operated, is not dominant in its field, and meets certain standards in terms of employees or annual revenues.”<sup>22</sup> Usually, businesses are defined by the number of people they employ. For example, a business that employs 1 to 50 people is small. A medium-sized business employs 50 to 499 employees, while a large business typically employs 500 or more people. Industry Canada provides a Canadian definition of small business based on the number of employees where “...goods-producing firms are considered "small" if they have fewer than 100 employees, while for service-producing firms the cut-off point is seen as 50 employees.”<sup>23</sup> A business that employs 1 to 4 people is further described as a micro business. Often small and medium-sized enterprises are referred to as SMEs. According to the Canadian Bankers Association, “banks define small businesses as those having authorized credit limits of \$500,000 or less.”<sup>24</sup> Interestingly, Microsoft defines a small business as one with 1 to 50 personal computers.<sup>25</sup>

Furthermore, businesses are often divided into two classes—employer and indeterminate.<sup>26</sup> Employer businesses maintain a payroll of at least one person (possibly the owner), while an indeterminate business does not have any employees registered with the Canadian Revenue Association. Such businesses may indeed have no workforce (they may be simply paper entities), or they may have contract workers, family members and/or only the owners working for them. The "indeterminate" category was created because workforce information about these businesses is not made available to the public.<sup>27</sup>

### **2.2 Entrepreneurship**

Generally, the way in which a small business is described does not really vary that much, but this is not the case for the concept of ‘entrepreneurship.’ The word ‘entrepreneurship’ is borrowed from the French language—derived from the word *entreprendre*, which means “to

undertake, to pursue opportunities, to fulfill needs and wants through innovation.”<sup>28</sup> But not everyone can agree on its practical and operational definitions or the entrepreneurial processes involved. Typically, organizational researchers propose that entrepreneurs play a key role in the creation, development, and operation of small businesses. Hence, they usually define entrepreneurship as “accepting the challenge of starting and running a business”.<sup>29</sup> Nevertheless, there are many other definitions that further define entrepreneurship in increasingly specific ways.<sup>30</sup>

Entrepreneurship is usually, but not always, used in relation to individuals involved in for-profit activities. Increasingly, communities and organizations that pursue unique, innovative and creative social and non-profit objectives are described as engaging in community, or “social entrepreneurship.”<sup>31</sup> Perhaps a more useful and inclusive definition of entrepreneurship states that:

Entrepreneurship is a human, creative act that builds something of value from practically nothing. It is the pursuit of opportunity regardless of the resources, or lack of resources, at hand. It requires a vision and the passion and commitment to lead others in the pursuit of that vision. It also requires a willingness to take calculated risks.<sup>32</sup>

For those involved in profit and not-for-profit entrepreneurial activities in First Nation communities, the ideas that emerge from this definition are useful and can make sense. In order to create meaningful community-based change, there is a need for creative action, and the pursuit of opportunity regardless of the resources at hand. This requires visionary leadership and commitment from community members, which are risky endeavours that need to be appreciated.

So who are these entrepreneurs? Researchers have attempted to compile lists of the traits and characteristics of successful entrepreneurs. They include, but are not limited to:

- a passion for business
- tenacity despite failure
- confidence
- self-determination
- the ability to manage risk and take advantage of the opportunities that come from change
- a tolerance for ambiguity
- initiative
- the need for achievement
- attention to detail and perfection
- concern for the passing of time
- creativity, and
- an ability to look at the bigger picture in holistic ways.

As well, studies also suggest individuals become involved in entrepreneurial activities for several reasons, including the ability to:

- use personal skills and abilities
- gain control over their lives
- build something for their family and communities
- become involved in challenging activities
- live independently and freely
- feel recognized
- attain financial and other tangible/meaningful rewards
- satisfy personal expectations.<sup>33</sup>

It is important to note that not all individuals with these traits, characteristics or motivations will be automatically successful in business. Further, while a number of these characteristics and motivations are critical for business start-up, additional managerial skills and organizational abilities are required for business growth and maintenance.<sup>34</sup>

### **2.3 First Nation Small Business and Entrepreneurship Defined**

Researchers, small business support, and financial institutions are beginning to define Aboriginal small business and entrepreneurship in specific and practical ways. In terms of a general definition of Indigenous entrepreneurship, researchers propose that:

Indigenous entrepreneurship [is] the creation, management and development of new ventures by Indigenous people for the benefit of Indigenous people. The organizations thus created can pertain to either the private, public or non-profit sectors. The desired and achieved benefits of venturing can range from the narrow view of economic profit for a single individual to the broad view of multiple, social and economic advantages for entire communities. Outcomes and entitlements derived from Indigenous entrepreneurship may extend to enterprise partners and stakeholders who may be non-Indigenous.<sup>35</sup>

On a practical and day-to-day basis, institutions usually define small business and entrepreneurship according to their own needs, programs, and/or activities. For instance, banks, lending institutions, and federally funded organizations have to define which category the potential small business owner would fall under before these institutions can promote, finance, and support their entrepreneurial and small business development programs. For example, a young entrepreneur hoping to access support and funding may be defined in many ways by

financial institutions and other organizations, which include being: 35 and under<sup>36</sup>; between 15 to 30 years of age<sup>37</sup>; between 18 and 29 years of age<sup>38</sup>; or between 18 and 36.<sup>39</sup>

Likewise, First Nation small businesses and entrepreneurs are usually regarded in ways that are similar to mainstream definitions. However, Aboriginal—especially First Nation—entrepreneurs may also need to provide proof of constitutional or legal status, or a connection to a particular community in order to receive funding and support. For example, if an individual or organization wants to access services and programs provided by Aboriginal Business Canada (ABC), the applicant must be a Aboriginal individual residing in Canada, or a Canadian corporation, partnership, association or other legal entity that is majority-owned or -controlled by Aboriginal people residing in Canada. An Aboriginal individual is a person who is one of the following:

- a Status Indian
- a Non-Status Indian
- an Inuk, or
- a Métis;

To be considered, the applicant must be of Aboriginal ancestry and be an acknowledged member of a Canadian national, provincial/territorial or local/regional First Nation, Métis, Inuit, Status or Non-Status Indian organization.<sup>40</sup>

In terms of the Aboriginal entrepreneurial type, a listing of traits, characteristics, and motivations has not been developed to date. It would be interesting to determine whether the listed traits (provided earlier) are culturally bound or reflect the characteristics of entrepreneurs regardless of culture, social status, or location. Some researchers feel that this is an area worthy of further exploration. For example, Michael Morris, Minet Schindehutte and Jack Lesser note that:

A notable lack of attention has been devoted to the role of values in successful entrepreneurial activities. Typically, such Western values as individualism, competitiveness, material gain, and a strong work ethic are implied or explicitly integrated into discussions of entrepreneurship, regardless of where it occurs.... For members of ethnic groups, it would seem that values of the subculture could become internalized to the point that they affect entrepreneurial motives and behaviors. Thus, values of bravery, wisdom, or respect for earth shared by Native Americans might manifest themselves not only in career choices, but in the entrepreneur's approach to opportunity identification or network building. For an indigenous Australian, a value of community sharing of assets could significantly constrain the ability of the entrepreneur to grow a venture.<sup>41</sup>

In closing, it is important to note that Indigenous – including First Nation – “entrepreneurship should not be defined on the basis of opportunity, but rather cultural perception of opportunity.”<sup>42</sup> Emerging definitions should also take into account and acknowledge that the Indigenous entrepreneurial process often begins with and is driven by the quest for “self-employment based on Indigenous Knowledge.”<sup>43</sup>

We now turn to an overview of First Nation entrepreneurs and small businesses in Canada. First Nation entrepreneurship and First Nation small business are usually talked about as if they are one and the same. We will see in the next section that this assumption is accurate, since a majority of First Nation businesses in Canada are small and were initially created by entrepreneurs.

### **3. The Current State of First Nation Small Business and Entrepreneurship in Canada**

This section provides a descriptive overview, including a demographic profile, of First Nation small business and entrepreneurs in Canada, based on current research and available secondary information. It begins with a general overview of all Canadian small business and entrepreneurial activities, which then allows us to see how First Nation small businesses and entrepreneurs are similar too, but also different from the Canadian norm.

There are more than 2.2 million business establishments in Canada. Of the 1,048,286 businesses that employ one or more people, “slightly fewer than 3000 or about 0.3 percent have more than 500 employees. The vast majority of employer businesses (98 percent) have fewer than 100 employees, nearly 74 percent have fewer than 10 and 57 percent have only 1 to 4 employees.”<sup>44</sup> Every business in Canada either produces goods or provides services, and small firms employing less than 100 employees “make up 97 percent of goods-producing employer businesses and 98 percent of all service-producing employer businesses.”<sup>45</sup> About 95 percent of service sector businesses employ fewer than 50 employees.<sup>46</sup>

Businesses in First Nations communities are also either employer or indeterminate, as they provide goods and services to Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal consumers. A First Nation business can take one of many forms: sole proprietorships, partnerships, corporations, joint ventures, or co-operatives. Briefly, a sole proprietorship is a business owned by a single individual, while a partnership is a proprietorship owned by two or more people.<sup>47</sup> A corporation, or incorporated company, is a legal entity distinct from its owners, whereas in a joint venture individuals or organizations partner to share resources, skills, and risks, among other things. Often a non-Aboriginal individual or organization will enter a joint venture with an Aboriginal individual or organization to benefit from various tax advantages or procurement opportunities.<sup>48</sup> A co-operative is typically member, producer, or worker-owned, which operates in a democratic fashion to better serve the owners, and to provide the community with jobs, products and services in equitable, accessible, and wealth creating ways.<sup>49</sup>

First Nation small business and entrepreneurial activities are also supported through communally-owned entities such as development corporations, community-owned enterprises, and non-profit enterprises. To explain, a development corporation is a non-profit organization with locally elected Boards of Directors. A community-owned enterprise is a business whose shares are owned by a community, such as a First Nation. Further, non-profit enterprises provide

community members with economic development of business support and skills. Like development corporations, any surplus these non-profit entities accrue goes back into the organization to strengthen existing programs, build new programs, and provide services more effectively.<sup>50</sup>

Generally, as is the case with business in Canada, and regardless of the form the business assumes, the vast majority of First Nation businesses located on- and off-reserve are small. Like most Canadian businesses, the majority of First Nation enterprises are micro-businesses, since they employ one to four people. Most of these businesses produce goods and provide services to local consumers.<sup>51</sup>

The profiling of Aboriginal businesses and entrepreneurs by the Canadian government through Statistics Canada and Aboriginal Business Canada (Labour Canada) began, for all intents and purposes, in the early 1990's. This activity was prompted by emerging Canadian Census statistics, which showed a tremendous and surprising surge in Aboriginal business and entrepreneurial development.<sup>52</sup> The enhanced interest in Aboriginal entrepreneurs coincided with the emerging awareness of the overall value of the small business and entrepreneurial presence in both Canada and the United States.<sup>53</sup>

The latest information on Aboriginal small business and entrepreneurship is available via the Aboriginal Entrepreneurs Survey, 2002, which includes data from the 2001 Canadian Census.<sup>54</sup> Comparisons can be made to previous surveys and reports.<sup>55</sup> Information gathered from the 2001 Canadian Census suggests that there were 27,195 self-employed Aboriginal individuals in Canada at the time, representing close to 3% of the overall Aboriginal population. Almost 46% of this group (approximately 12,509) was identified as North American Indian (Status and non-Status First Nation, residing on- and off-reserve). North American Indian entrepreneurs operate in virtually every region of the country. A summary of some of the regional statistics is shown below.

- British Columbia (24% of total, or 6480 individuals): More than 50% were North American Indian (>3240 individuals), with approximately 1102 individuals (17%) residing on-reserve.<sup>56</sup>
- Alberta (18% of total, or 4935 individuals): Less than 33% were North American Indian (<1628), with approximately 296 individuals (6%) residing on-reserve.<sup>57</sup>

- Saskatchewan (9% of total, or 2530 individuals): Less than 40% were North American Indian (<1012 individuals), with approximately 380 individuals (15%) residing on-reserve.<sup>58</sup>
- Manitoba (11% of total, or 2860 individuals): Less than 30% were North American Indian (<858 individuals), with approximately 400 individuals (14%) residing on-reserve.<sup>59</sup>
- Ontario (22% of total, or 5985 individuals): More than 50% were North American Indian (>1317 individuals), with approximately 718 individuals (12%) residing on-reserve.<sup>60</sup>
- Quebec (7% of total, or 2020 individuals): More than 50% were North American Indian (>1010), with approximately 505 individuals (25%) residing on-reserve.<sup>61</sup>
- Atlantic Region (5% of total, or 1390 individuals): Almost 50% were North American Indian (695 individuals), with approximately 250 individuals (18%) residing on-reserve.<sup>62</sup>
- Northwest Territories, Nunavut & Yukon (4% of total or 1000 individuals): Approximately 290 individuals (29%) resided on-reserve.<sup>63</sup>

Other interesting, demographic details related to Aboriginal entrepreneurs follow. Of the 27,195 Aboriginal self-employed individuals recorded in the 2001 Census:

- 3920 entrepreneurs (over 14%) resided on reserve.<sup>64</sup>
- 9930 entrepreneurs were women and 17,265 were men.<sup>65</sup>
- More than 3535 entrepreneurs were youth between the ages of 18 and 29.<sup>66</sup>
- The majority of entrepreneurs (over 23,660) were older than 29 years of age. However, over 25% of Aboriginal entrepreneurs are under the age of 35.<sup>67</sup>
- 14,175 entrepreneurs (just over half) resided in urban areas and off-reserve.<sup>68</sup>
- 13,020 entrepreneurs resided in rural areas, with 3906 entrepreneurs (30%) living on reserve.<sup>69</sup>

Additionally, research reveals other interesting facts and details, including:

- On reserve businesses were more likely to be sole proprietors and hire Aboriginal employees, while businesses off-reserve were more likely to operate as a partnership and were less likely to hire Aboriginal employees.<sup>70</sup>

- Young Aboriginal entrepreneurs between the ages of 18 and 29 were more likely to operate their business as a sole proprietorship, and were more likely to hire part-time Aboriginal employees than older entrepreneurs.<sup>71</sup>
- Urban entrepreneurs were less likely to have employees, and were more likely to work in the secondary and knowledge economies, and have college or university training.<sup>72</sup>
- Female Aboriginal entrepreneurs were more likely to work in the secondary and knowledge economies, have college or university training, and operate in partnership than their male counterparts. In addition, they were less likely to have employees, and were less likely to worry about barriers to growth.<sup>73</sup>

In comparison to other Canadian entrepreneurs, Aboriginal entrepreneurs are younger on average.<sup>74</sup> Although there are fewer female entrepreneurs—Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal—than male entrepreneurs, this deficit is changing.<sup>75</sup> Women’s entrepreneurship increased by over 200% between 1981 and 2001, compared with a 38 percent increase for men.<sup>76</sup> In 2001, of all women entrepreneurs—and there were 715, 500 SMEs in Canada with at least one female owner<sup>77</sup>--only one percent were Aboriginal.<sup>78</sup> The number of self-employed Aboriginal women grew by 406% between 1981 and 1996<sup>79</sup>

According to Statistics Canada Aboriginal entrepreneurship grew 150% faster than the Canadian average between 1991 and 1996<sup>80</sup>, and 800% faster than the Canadian average between 1996 and 2001.<sup>81</sup> Despite the rapid growth of entrepreneurship in Aboriginal communities, fewer than 4 percent of Aboriginal adults owned a business in 1996 compared to the Canadian average of 7.9 percent. However, of the businesses surveyed in the Aboriginal Entrepreneurs Survey (2002), approximately 72% reported increased profits, while approximately 66% had operated for more than five years. The majority of Aboriginal entrepreneurs (approximately 77%), said that they operate a home-based business. These are encouraging trends.

All of the information in the surveys referenced in this section reveals that Aboriginal small businesses and entrepreneurs are supporting and promoting Aboriginal self-governance and economic development in important and valuable ways. For example, Aboriginal small businesses hire Aboriginal employees (even when other businesses and organizations are not). And Aboriginal entrepreneurs are creatively providing community members with needed, relevant, affordable and accessible products and services. A portion of the revenues that these

individuals and businesses earn stays in the community: it doesn't leak out to small businesses located off-reserve, owned and operated by non-community members.

Small business ownership not only provides personal freedom, self-confidence, and family pride, it adds value to the Aboriginal community within which it is situated. It prevents the loss of community resources and money, and provides employment and career development for community members wishing to remain in their communities or territories. All of the good things that are occurring due to the growth of Aboriginal entrepreneurs and small business development can be, in part, associated with the solid support and promotion these individuals and businesses are receiving from organizations and institutions located across Canada. And more can be done. The next section will profile a number of those institutions and organizations that are making a difference in the lives of Aboriginal entrepreneurs and their communities.

#### **4. Promoting, Supporting, and Leading First Nation Small Businesses and Entrepreneurs**

If you ask knowledgeable bankers, analysts, researchers, or the other individuals how Aboriginal entrepreneurs can start a successful small business that is able to compete and thrive locally, nationally, or globally, most will tell you that four elements are essential. First, entrepreneurs must be properly trained. Not only do they need to know the larger industry in which they are interested, they must also know how to do the work, and they must know how to manage their enterprise and supervise their employees. Second, they must be in a market that will profitably support their business services and products. This condition may require a market that expands beyond the confines of the local or community market. Entrepreneurs may also need to understand the labour market, if employees outside of the family or community are required. Third, entrepreneurs need capital and cash equity to finance their business start-ups and to continue their operation and expansion, if necessary.<sup>82</sup> Fourth, Aboriginal entrepreneurs will have an easier time of start-up and success, if their businesses are located close to a larger, often urban or international, market.

This section will profile national and regional/local Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal led programs and services that promote and support First Nation small businesses and entrepreneurs in Canada. As well, additional support that comes from financial institutions, corporations, academic institutions, researchers, and other related Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal support initiatives and programs will also be briefly mentioned.

This section does not include every program and service available to Aboriginal entrepreneurs and small business owners. Yet, it is important to acknowledge that many other supports that are not covered are still providing essential and effective services and are making a difference in Aboriginal business endeavours. Nevertheless, the information in this section will interest those who want to become a small business owner, or those that want to support these individuals. Of course, individuals will have different avenues of support depending on their communities experience with business and the services that are offered there.

##### **4.1 National Programs and Services**

A number of national Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal organizations lead, support, and promote Aboriginal small business and entrepreneurship in Canada. This section profiles some of the key players at this national level of activity.

Nationally, the name that most people associate with Aboriginal small business and entrepreneurship is called Aboriginal Business Canada (ABC). ABC is an Indian and Northern Affairs Canada program that maximizes Aboriginal people's participation in the economy through business development.<sup>83</sup> They do this by:

- Working with Aboriginal entrepreneurs and businesses<sup>84</sup>
- Working with Aboriginal financial institutions<sup>85</sup>
- Conducting research and policy analysis<sup>86</sup>
- Working with the national Aboriginal economic development board,<sup>87</sup> and
- Working with other partners.<sup>88</sup>

Other federally-based programs assist Aboriginal entrepreneurs in a variety of ways. For example, the Aboriginal Business Service Network (ABSN) has been established to provide Aboriginal entrepreneurs with governmental information and resources that they need for business start-up and operations, at no cost.<sup>89</sup> The ABSN builds on the well-developed and utilized structure of existing Business Canada service centres located across Canada.<sup>90</sup>

In addition, the federal government continues to play an important role in the development of Aboriginal entrepreneurs and small businesses through its Procurement Strategy for Aboriginal Business (PSAB). The strategy, launched in 1996, was initiated to 1) stimulate Aboriginal business development, and 2) increase the number of Aboriginal firms competing for and winning federal contracts.<sup>91</sup> A 2004 PSAB Progress Report<sup>92</sup> finds that 5,980 federal contracts were awarded that year to Aboriginal-owned firms for a total of \$244.91 million. Of these, a number of contracts are "set-aside" contracts, open exclusively to Aboriginal bidding. These set-aside contracts are mandated for contracts worth more than \$5,000 for goods and services that primarily benefit Aboriginal people. Although the 2004 results are encouraging, the dollar amount decreased dramatically that year since in 2003 federal contracts were awarded to Aboriginal businesses to the tune of \$500 million.

The Canadian Executive Service Organization (CESO), founded in 1967, is a not-for-profit organization that helps to build proud independent communities. In 1969 CESO embarked on a national Aboriginal Services Strategy, the primary goal of which was to build the capacity of Aboriginal individuals, communities and businesses to achieve greater self-sufficiency and growth. To support Aboriginal peoples in achieving self-sufficiency and self-determination, CESO focuses on capacity-building, which they accomplish through the:

- transfer skills and knowledge

- development of needed products and services
- accumulation and dissemination of best practices, and
- provision of accessible and cost-effective services

In terms of its business activities, CESO Volunteer Advisors (VAs) – those individuals that collectively form the backbone of CESO – assist Aboriginal individuals and communities with business planning assistance, and feasibility studies, among other things.<sup>93</sup>

One of the key Aboriginal national organizations involved in community, economic, and business development is the Council for the Advancement of Native Development Officers (CANDO). CANDO accredits institutions that offer courses and programs in Aboriginal economic and business development. CANDO also bestows yearly recognition of Aboriginal business leaders, at its national conference, through its economic developer of the year awards (to both individuals involved in business and economic development, as well as communities involved in business and community development). CANDO publishes the only journal in the world on Aboriginal economic development, highlighting real stories and theoretical pieces on Aboriginal business and economic development. CANDO provides assistance, training opportunities, and information to small business owners.<sup>94</sup>

#### **4.2 Regional and Local Programs and Services**

Aboriginal entrepreneurs and small business owners can also look to regional and local economic development programs, including provincial and municipal institutions and programs, for support and promotion. Most regional and local initiatives deal with individual clients and organizations assisting with the acquisition of equity and capital, and providing customized business advisory services supporting Aboriginal small business and entrepreneurial activities.

In Saskatchewan, for example, the provincial government – through the Department of Saskatchewan First Nations and Métis Relations<sup>95</sup> – oversees the Saskatchewan First Nations and Métis Economic Development Program. This program is designed to increase Aboriginal participation in the provincial economy, by, in part, providing non-repayable grants as initial funding to establish, acquire or expand First Nations and Métis owned businesses. Additional smaller grants may also be available to individuals needing assistance developing their business plan.<sup>96</sup>

The Saskatchewan government has also created the First Nations and Métis Fund, which will make investments in Saskatchewan-based First Nations and Métis businesses. Between 2006 and 2009, the Government of Saskatchewan is making \$20 million available to the fund, which will in turn make investments of between \$1 and \$3 million. Once a First Nation or Métis individual or majority owned corporation, partnership, association or other legal entity meets the Fund's eligibility requirements,<sup>97</sup> the individual or organization may apply for funds to 1) start-up a business, 2) invest in the early development stages of a business, 3) expand a business, 4) buyout an existing business, or 5) restructure an existing business.<sup>98</sup>

A particularly useful local tool for Aboriginal small business owners and entrepreneurs are the Aboriginal Community Futures Development Corporations (CFDC's) operating in communities located across Canada. For example, of the 33 individual CFDC's operating in British Columbia, a number are responsible for Aboriginal entrepreneurial and community development. For example, the Community Futures Development Corporation of Sto:lo (SCF) supports First Nation Communities within the traditional Sto:lo Territory through a range of community economic development initiatives and programs.<sup>99</sup> Another, of many cross-Canada examples, includes the Dakota Ojibway Community Futures Development Corporation (DOCFDC), which is mandated to assist and promote local economic development initiatives within the Dakota Ojibway Tribal Council Region.<sup>100</sup> In all, there are 268 CFDC's in Canada. Aboriginal businesses and entrepreneurs can access the services of any one of these CFDC's in their locale.

### **4.3 Financial Support**

In 1997 Elizabeth Jordan argued that, "The greatest challenge for Aboriginal entrepreneurs starting a business is financing – raising the money needed to start the business.... [especially] if their collateral is located on reserve." She also highlighted other challenges, including education, lack of market, and "the lack of credit history or the poor credit history of many Indians on reserve."<sup>101</sup> Jordan concludes her article on a fairly optimistic note, highlighting that:

Despite all the hurdles facing Aboriginal entrepreneurs, there is some good news. There are more business opportunities for Aboriginal people, more business education, and more resource developing in partnership with Aboriginal people than ever before. Banks have begun to make efforts to make loans more

accessible to Aboriginal people. Canadians, Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal, are beginning to realize the importance of encouraging entrepreneurship in Aboriginal communities.<sup>102</sup>

Since 1997, the growth of Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal financial institutions that provide financial assistance to Aboriginal small business enterprises and entrepreneurial initiatives has been incredible. These institutions operate at the national, regional, and local levels.

This growth was, in part, promoted by groups like the National Aboriginal Financing Task Force, created in Fredericton in 1995, including renowned leaders such as Chief Larry Sault,<sup>103</sup> Chief Manny Jules, and Chief Roy Whitney. The mission of the AFN endorsed Task Force was to “provide creative solutions towards empowering Aboriginal people to access capital.” In its 1996 report, the Task Force highlighted 21 recommendations based on seven steps toward achieving a promising economic future for Aboriginal people in Canada. In step three, they discuss the difficulties Aboriginal people face in offering lenders of capital character, collateral, and capacity (in addition to locale). According to the Task Force, “The most effective way (and probably the only way) for Aboriginal communities to address their current socio-economic challenges is to create wealth through business activity.”<sup>104</sup> For some time, this activity has been supported by mainstream by financial institutions.

Mainstream banks and financial institutions offer an array of programs that target Aboriginal small businesses and entrepreneurs. Examples of the Canadian financial institutions that provide specialized services to Aboriginal individuals, businesses, and communities include the BMO Bank of Montreal,<sup>105</sup> the Royal Bank of Canada (RBC),<sup>106</sup> and the Scotiabank of Canada.<sup>107</sup> While these and other banks provide Aboriginal banking services because it means good business, they also participate in initiatives that bolster Aboriginal economic development and self-government initiatives. Many banks support a number of unique programs that assist Aboriginal youth and women, while honouring Aboriginal culture and tradition.

For example, RBC launched its Aboriginal Student Awards Program in 1992. Since that year, the bank has awarded \$4,000 a year to five Aboriginal students for post-secondary education expenses. Each award may extend to a maximum of four years of funding for university students and two years of funding for college students.<sup>108</sup> On February 22, 2006, the University of Saskatchewan announced a \$250,000 gift from Scotiabank that would be used to support graduate Aboriginal programming in the College of Commerce. The money will be used

to support a bridging program into the MBA program as well as scholarships. According to the University of Saskatchewan website, the new Scotiabank MBA Bridging Program is designed to encourage the next generation of Aboriginal business leaders to consider upgrading their skills with an MBA from the U of S.<sup>109</sup>

In addition, the Business Development Bank of Canada (BDC) through its Aboriginal banking programs and services<sup>110</sup> sponsors an Internet-based national Aboriginal Youth Business Plan Competition with online modules, mentoring and business plan templates for Aboriginal youth in Grades 10-12. The program is designed to increase Aboriginal youth participants' awareness of entrepreneurial/business opportunities, management/business skills, and e-commerce and technological capacities.<sup>111</sup> Meyers Norris Penny's Aboriginal Services recently launched their nine-week Aboriginal Self-Employment Training Program, which is "designed to assist Aboriginals with the launch of a new business venture and provide them with the tools to help them succeed."<sup>112</sup>

Aboriginal institutions are also making a name for themselves in banking and finance. These institutions are critical to the development and operation of Aboriginal small business and entrepreneurs, as they are a part of the Aboriginal communities they serve, and therefore are better equipped to meet the unique financial needs of their Aboriginal clients. Of note, are two national Aboriginal financial institutions: Peace Hills Trust, and the First Nations Bank of Canada.

Peace Hills Trust, "Canada's first and largest First Nation Trust Company... offer[s] a range of financial services to First Nations, their members and non-native clientele."<sup>113</sup> Established in 1985, Peace Hills Trust is owned by the Sampson Cree Nation of Hobbema, Alberta. The Trust employs over 120 people, serving more than 20,000 customers through a network of eight regional offices.<sup>114</sup> They specialize in providing financial services to First Nation small, and medium sized businesses.

The First Nations Bank of Canada was officially launched in 1996. It is a federally-chartered bank serving Aboriginal and Non-Aboriginal people throughout Canada.<sup>115</sup> An affiliate of The Toronto-Dominion Bank, First Nations Bank provides banking services to First Nation and non-Aboriginal customers through its branches and offices located in Saskatchewan, Manitoba, Quebec, Ontario, and the Yukon Territories. One of the provincial institutions that assisted in the creation of First Nations Bank of Canada was the Saskatchewan Indian Equity

Foundation (SIEF). SIEF is a regionally based non-profit corporation that was established in 1982 to assist First Nation individuals and communities located in Saskatchewan with start-up funding for Saskatchewan.<sup>116</sup>

Aside from the mainstream and Aboriginal chartered banks, trust funds, the BDC, and government sponsored financial programs, a variety of alternative sources of funding also exist for Aboriginal entrepreneurs.<sup>117</sup> However, Aboriginal Capital Corporations (ACCs), as a group, are the largest provider of Aboriginal financial services in Canada.<sup>118</sup> There are 32 active ACCs located across Canada, making up the largest portion of what are called Aboriginal Financial Institutions, or AFIs. There are 45 AFIs located in Canada in total – 32 active ACCs and 13 Aboriginal Community Futures Development Corporations. Aboriginal Capital Corporations (ACCs) concentrate on providing developmental loans, such as loans to enterprises, which are not yet ready to successfully secure business loans from banks. The National Aboriginal Capital Corporation Association (NACCA) has been established to provide products and services such as training, access to capital initiatives, advocacy and other institutional capacity-building to all of the Aboriginal Financial Institutions.<sup>119</sup>

#### **4.4 Corporate Support**

Following the release of the Royal Commission on Aboriginal Peoples (RCAP), Robin Wortman (1997) prepared a paper on the Challenges and Opportunities for Corporate Canada given the findings and recommendations presented in the RCAP report. In it he clarified that: “It is in the best interest of corporate Canada that Aboriginal people of this country are given the opportunity to recapture their entrepreneurial spirit and apply their talents in business development and employment as business owners.”<sup>120</sup>

Today, private and governmental corporations and businesses (including financial institutions, some of whom were covered in the previous section) have taken heed of this challenge, and are developing unique programs that are supporting and promoting Aboriginal small business and entrepreneurship across the country. Many are doing this for business reasons, for example to promote stable and profitable environments that enhance corporate business activities in or near Aboriginal communities. And corporate participation is being prompted by First Nation leaders, like AFN National Chief, Phil Fontaine. The AFN has just initiated a corporate challenge. Chief Fontaine explains:

We have a challenge, a wake-up call of sorts for corporate Canada, and indeed the rest of the world. Take notice of the growing tide of young, qualified and talented First Nations professionals and business people ready and willing to do business. Consider what this alone can do for your bottom-line. Then, consider how First Nations involvement can diversify your business activity.... Corporate Canada is about to be hit by a wave of opportunity never seen before. We are inviting corporations to accept the AFN Corporate Challenge, and sign up their support with the AFN. In doing so, you will have the opportunity to participate in the National Chief's Corporate Table – a catalyst for innovation. The table will also ensure that corporate Canada and First Nations partnerships respect the fundamentally important relationships. Together, we can more effectively focus on finding solutions and creating strategies that respect the environment and provide direct benefits to First Nations, and all other Canadians. We are ready to use our advantage, and realize that potential in Canada's 21<sup>st</sup> century economy. After all, what's good for First Nations people is good for all Canadians.<sup>121</sup>

The idea of Canadian corporations supporting Aboriginal entrepreneurs is not new. There are dozens of corporations that work in and with Aboriginal communities and assist in the development of Aboriginal small businesses.<sup>122</sup> For example, Syncrude Canada Ltd., “the world's largest producer of crude oil from oil sands and the largest single source producer in Canada,”<sup>123</sup> is the largest industrial employer of Aboriginal people in Canada.<sup>124</sup> In a 2003 presentation on Corporate Social Responsibility, Jim Carter – then President and Chief Operating Officer of Syncrude – highlighted Syncrude's work in the Aboriginal community. He clarified Syncrude's belief in promoting and supporting Aboriginal business, employment, education, and training. And procurement is a key to the way in which corporations carry out their business with Aboriginal communities. In his presentation Carter also pointed out that his company is committed to assisting Aboriginal peoples to successfully bid on work contracts, noting that in 2002 “Syncrude did \$82 million dollars worth of business with Aboriginal firms alone, and well over \$500 million in the last decade.”<sup>125</sup>

Other corporations are also making a difference in the lives of Aboriginal entrepreneurs. For example, Cameco Corporation, the world's largest, low-cost uranium producer providing almost 20 percent of the world's uranium demand, depends heavily on Aboriginal businesses to assist in and enhance their activities. According to a recent report on resource industries in Alberta and Northern Saskatchewan, “Cameco has a buy-Saskatchewan policy... [and] in 2004, the company purchased goods and services worth \$81 million from northern Saskatchewan businesses.” Many of these businesses are Aboriginal-owned, operating in “aviation, trucking,

environmental services, catering, mining, industrial maintenance, construction, road maintenance, janitorial, security, and fabrication.”<sup>126</sup> Cameco also plays a proactive role in Aboriginal employment, education, and community relations.<sup>127</sup>

The Alberta Chamber of Resources (ACR) has identified a set of factors corporations should think about when attempting to contribute to the success of Aboriginal business development. The five factors are to:

1. Plan for Aboriginal business participation by matching business opportunities with Aboriginal business capabilities
2. Ensure that the Aboriginal or Aboriginal/corporate venture has adequate management capacity in place
3. Use procurement as a tool to provide opportunities for Aboriginal suppliers
4. Structure business arrangements with Aboriginal communities, by following clear principles that are defined at the outset by corporate governance
5. Invest in strengthening the business capacity of the Aboriginal community.<sup>128</sup>

These are excellent points that companies can follow if they are interested in developing or improving their Aboriginal-corporate relations programs.

#### **4.5 Education Programs and Training Institutions**

In 1996 the National Aboriginal Financing Task Force highlighted “an overall need to increase the levels of education and training among Aboriginal people. In addition, there is a particular need at this time to have more Aboriginal people develop entrepreneurial and financial management skills.”<sup>129</sup>

But entrepreneurial training and education – even in general terms – are still not always relevant or adequately financed. For example, K. K. Myrah and R. R. Currie tell us in 2006 that although “there has been tremendous growth in the demand for entrepreneurship education the last three decades, accompanied by a large surge in the offering of entrepreneurial programs and courses by educational institutions and agencies,”<sup>130</sup> more work has to be done to ensure that educators promote entrepreneurship in innovative ways backed by adequate resources.

This suggestion is especially true of entrepreneurship, management, and small business education programs specifically designed for Aboriginal learners wanting to operate businesses in the unique Aboriginal legal, constitutional, often cultural, context. This context presents an additional challenge for those Aboriginal individuals pursuing a career in small business.

However, the situation in many mainstream educational institutions seems to be changing, and

new opportunities for specialized education are also developing in many Aboriginal educational institutions.<sup>131</sup>

Over the past two decades, Aboriginal institutes, colleges, and universities have developed unique programs that are serving the educational needs of individuals pursuing careers in Aboriginal entrepreneurial, business, and economic development. For example, the Nicola Valley Institute of Technology (NVIT), a leader in Aboriginal post-secondary education in Canada, offers a selection of 1-year certificates and 2-year diplomas, leading to further educational opportunities, through its Administrative Studies Department.<sup>132</sup> According to the NVIT website, the Department of Administration & Community Economic Development Studies provides programs designed to assist individuals and communities to meet the leadership and management challenges of business and Aboriginal self-sufficiency and self-government.<sup>133</sup>

Most students can take courses at NVIT, located in Merritt (south-central British Columbia). But, NVIT also sends facilitators trained in adult and Aboriginal education to communities located throughout B.C. NVIT also trains individuals interested in economic and business development outside the province, in Aboriginal communities located in Lutsel k'e (NWT), Truro (Nova Scotia, with the Confederacy of Mainland Micmacs), and Moose Factory (Ontario).

The First Nations University of Canada<sup>134</sup> – with headquarters in Regina, Saskatchewan – houses the School of Business and Public Administration (POBPA). The primary goal of the First Nations University of Canada's School of Business and Public Administration is to help students acquire the knowledge and skills they need to manage emerging Indian-controlled government and business organizations. And like NVIT, "each student is encouraged to develop his or her own management style and approach, consistent with both traditional and contemporary Indian values."<sup>135</sup> For the 2005-2006 academic year, the University has a full-time enrollment of approximately 1200 students.<sup>136</sup>

While there are dozens of other Aboriginal post-secondary institutes and colleges that offer training and education in Aboriginal small business, management, and entrepreneurship, students also now have a growing number of non-Aboriginal educational selections from which to choose. For example, the University of Saskatchewan (U of S), through its Edwards School of Business (ESB), offers undergraduate electives in Aboriginal business, and the only MBA Indigenous Specialization in North America.<sup>137</sup> This unique U of S Program prepares students

with post-graduate education in managing Aboriginal organizations, and Indigenous economic development, and strategic planning for Aboriginal businesses and communities. The ESB also employs a Director of Aboriginal Business Education Programs<sup>138</sup>, and students have organized an Aboriginal business student's society, with a mandate "to support and enhance positive awareness of Aboriginal business issues within our institution and community... [and] foster and build a strong relationship between the Aboriginal business community and our members."<sup>139</sup>

Cape Breton University (CBU)<sup>140</sup> offers a First Nations option through its MBA (Community Economic Development) Program. In this unique option, graduate students take electives in land claims, self-government, and planning for CED in First Nations communities, as well as CED in Urban and Rural First Nations Communities.<sup>141</sup>

#### **4.6 Researcher Support**

Recently, a number of articles and books describing and analyzing Aboriginal small business and entrepreneurial development have been published. Many of these works are being used in courses and programs designed to train and develop Aboriginal managers, entrepreneurs, and business owners. The materials typically profile the general state of Aboriginal businesses, offer specific insight into entrepreneurial endeavours, and also provide ideas for those individuals thinking of starting a business. For instance, in 1992 Wanda Wuttunee profiled a number of case studies of what was occurring in Northern communities (including Aboriginal) entrepreneurs,<sup>142</sup> while in 1995 Peter Douglas Elias showcased Aboriginal businesses and Aboriginal economic development in the North.<sup>143</sup> As well, Katherine Chiste released her textbook in 1996 on Aboriginal Small Business and Entrepreneurship in Canada,<sup>144</sup> and in 1999 Robert Brent Anderson followed with an important text that profiled Aboriginal economic and small business development in Canada.<sup>145</sup> Anderson included in his analysis a chapter on entrepreneurship and new venture creation in the Aboriginal context.

Current research on Aboriginal entrepreneurs and small businesses in Canada focuses specifically on the success of Aboriginal enterprises, and the relation amongst Aboriginal self-governance, enterprise development, and wealth creation. Researchers have also started to define "Indigenous" entrepreneurship, and some are even beginning a critical evaluation of earlier studies on Aboriginal entrepreneurship and small business.

In 2002, Anderson published an additional textbook on Aboriginal Entrepreneurship and Business Development<sup>146</sup>, which “considers how the process of entrepreneurship can be shaped and conducted to suit the characteristics, needs and circumstance of Aboriginal peoples.”<sup>147</sup> In 2004, Wuttunee published a book that, in part, looked at Aboriginal business, arguing that Aboriginal communities and individuals realize success when they integrate traditional wisdom into sustainable economic strategies instead of focusing solely on profits.<sup>148</sup>

The Journal of Small Business and Entrepreneurship,<sup>149</sup> a journal of the Canadian Council for Small Business and Entrepreneurship, published a special issue on entrepreneurship among Indigenous peoples in 2005. The articles in this publication—the first of its kind—not only highlighted empirical and qualitatively-based case studies on Indigenous entrepreneurs located around the world, they also contemplated specific terms and concepts related to Indigenous entrepreneurship. A major concern addressed throughout the papers is the possible contradiction between private enterprise and the strengthening of Aboriginal culture and community.

At the regional and local levels, researchers have started to profile the Aboriginal business sector in specific regions. For example, there has been research on the emerging entrepreneurial presence in Saskatchewan<sup>150</sup>, and analysts are gathering information about the experience of First Nation business enterprises located in Saskatchewan and across Canada.<sup>151</sup> For example, a profile of Aboriginal small business and entrepreneurs in British Columbia was created based on the 2002 Aboriginal Entrepreneurs Survey.<sup>152</sup>

The indication is that there is a great deal more writing in the works on Aboriginal small business and entrepreneurs. For example, the upcoming International Handbook of Research on Indigenous Entrepreneurship—which will include 49 chapters highlighting Indigenous entrepreneurship research—profiles case studies of Indigenous entrepreneurial activities taking place in Africa, Asia, Europe, the Americas, and the South Pacific.

#### **4.7 Related Support**

A growing and assorted number of Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal individuals and organizations are also helping Aboriginal small business owners and entrepreneurs in a number of unique, important, often indirect, ways. Aboriginal reporters and newspapers and magazines are profiling Aboriginal small business and entrepreneurial success stories. Aboriginal leaders

are promoting and supporting Aboriginal entrepreneurship and small business initiatives in their own communities, which in turn leads the development of business mentors and advisors. And various Aboriginal organizations, like the Aboriginal Chamber of Commerce, are playing a growing and vital role as regional and national institutions that support and develop Indigenous entrepreneurs and business owners. For example, there is the Aboriginal Financial Officers of Canada (AFOA), an organization that is encouraging Aboriginal young adults to enter into the finance profession.<sup>153</sup> They are developing those individuals who will in turn assist new Aboriginal entrepreneurs.

Other Aboriginal organizations are also exploring and researching the value of entrepreneurship and small business development to their communities. For example, a Think Tank on First Nations Wealth Creation, initiated by the Skeena Native Development Society (located in Terrace, B.C.) highlighted three cornerstones essential to “create the institutions, make available workable property rights and enable the entrepreneurial thinking necessary to produce the prosperity and cultural well-being of the First nations people...” These cornerstones are:

1. The availability to First Nations people of governance powers and jurisdiction that will enable the market system to function;
2. The ability of First Nations people to control the use and development of their lands to enable capital formation;
3. The thorough understanding by First Nations people and relevant stakeholders of the economic model itself: the entrepreneurial thinking that needs to be enabled for effective entrepreneurship to flourish.<sup>154</sup>

The authors conclude that increased on-reserve property rights utilized by communities with leaders that “think” in market-oriented ways are essential elements to wealth creation in First Nations communities.

There are a number of institutions and initiatives that acknowledge and support the growth and development of Aboriginal entrepreneurs and small businesses. For example, the National Aboriginal Achievement Foundation recognizes the contributions of Aboriginal entrepreneurs through its National Aboriginal Achievement Awards.<sup>155</sup> Tribal Council Investment Group of Manitoba, Ltd. promotes business development and mentoring through its unique programs and investments.<sup>156</sup> The Aboriginal Workforce Participation Initiative,<sup>157</sup> through Indian and Northern Affairs Canada, shares information about Aboriginal entrepreneurs and businesses through its educational programs. Writers<sup>158</sup> and film makers<sup>159</sup> have shared

stories and biographies of Aboriginal business peoples. There are a number of Aboriginal entrepreneurial success stories and specific case studies available on DVD and video,<sup>160</sup> and on the Internet.<sup>161</sup> And even CTV and CBC<sup>162</sup> have started to profile Aboriginal business success stories. Aboriginal newspapers, like *aboriginaltimes*,<sup>163</sup> *Windspeaker*,<sup>164</sup> *Eagle Feather News*,<sup>165</sup> and *SAY*<sup>166</sup> and Aboriginal television stations, like the Aboriginal Peoples Television Network (APTN)<sup>167</sup> report on Aboriginal small business and entrepreneurship events and success stories on a monthly, weekly, and even daily, basis. And the list of supporting actors continues to grow.

This section of the paper highlighted and described a number of corporate, government, community, and other organizational programs designed to support and promote Aboriginal entrepreneurs and support Aboriginal small businesses. Aboriginal leaders need to build on these examples. But, as Fred Wien proposes, more must occur if Aboriginal businesses are to become even more successful, including:

- improving access to capital through the establishment of banking facilities at the community level, making funds available to establish micro lending circles, strengthening the Aboriginal capital corporations, making greater use of revolving loan funds, surmounting problems to access to credit on reserve..., and establishing a national Aboriginal development bank
- supporting entrepreneurship through improved business advisory services, including support for new entrepreneurs in the critical months after the business is established, [and]
- improving and expanding access to markets through measures as the establishment of effective contract set aside programs,<sup>168</sup> support for a trade promotion capacity with Aboriginal economic development institutions, and the labeling, protection and promotion of uniquely Aboriginal products.<sup>169</sup>

It is worth noting that in the time since the RCAP report was published in 1996, many of the recommendations for the building of Aboriginal business have been realized. However, this has not necessarily occurred because the governments of Canada have responded to the RCAP recommendations. Indeed, it has occurred due to the imagination and creative initiatives of Aboriginal entrepreneurs and those that supported them.

Despite the success that Aboriginal small businesses in Canada has had serving local markets to date, and regardless of the support systems that are in place which assist established small businesses and budding entrepreneurs, there is room for the expansion of entrepreneurial

activities and the promotion of small business development in other, often overlooked, sectors of the Aboriginal economy. The next section will look at some of these areas of growth.

## **5. Growth of Small Businesses: Other Opportunities and Challenges**

As we have seen, it is clear from the research that the number of Aboriginal entrepreneurs is growing, and they are diversifying and building on their business experiences and success. This includes the movement of Aboriginal entrepreneurial activities out of the local market and into national and international markets, which is evident in the current statistics. In part, this involves the increasing participation of Aboriginal entrepreneurs in the emerging knowledge economy.<sup>170</sup> Seasoned entrepreneurs are also finding opportunities in diverse areas of business development due to emerging opportunities presented by new markets and partnerships.

All in all, many Aboriginal entrepreneurs that have taken advantage of the support described and touched upon in the previous section continue to grow and diversify. This section offers some insight on some of other emerging – albeit non-typical – opportunities and challenges available to Aboriginal entrepreneurs. The areas covered in this section include discussions on Aboriginal women entrepreneurs, young entrepreneurs, urban reserves, rural communities, and other initiatives, including inmate-owned and operated businesses. This section looks at those areas, and discusses the potential opportunities and growth associated with each area. It begins, however, with a look at how Aboriginal entrepreneurs are handling the new, global, and often knowledge-based, economy.

### **5.1 Continued Growth and Diversification**

There is plenty of room for growth and diversification of Aboriginal small business initiatives and activities. This is especially true for those entrepreneurs that have experienced success in their small business activities, and have developed connections to finance, capital, and government/corporate support and programs. Many Aboriginal entrepreneurs are beginning to look at new markets and opportunities that exist outside of their local communities. And these entrepreneurs are being further supported by corporations and government agencies.

For example, the promotion of Aboriginal participation in international trade has been led and promoted by the Department of Foreign Affairs and International Trade. In March, 2001, the Department in partnership with the Council for the Advancement of Native Development Officers (CANDO) piloted a workshop on international trade for Aboriginal entrepreneurs in Edmonton, Alberta. The workshop was intended to train economic development officers with little or no experience in trade activities to better assist entrepreneurs in their communities in

order to seize and benefit from business opportunities overseas.<sup>171</sup> An interesting government interdepartmental initiative is Aboriginal International Business Development (AIBD), which “is an interdepartmental Committee made up of 29 federal government departments and agencies who are working collectively to promote the success of Aboriginal small- to medium-size enterprises (SMEs) in export markets.”<sup>172</sup>

But there are still entrepreneurs in need of additional support and assistance, including Aboriginal women, youth, and entrepreneurs working in remote or urban settings. And there are needs for the development of Aboriginal businesses in places where few corporations or governments go, including our penitentiaries. The following highlights some of the challenges and opportunities in these areas.

## **5.2 Aboriginal Women Entrepreneurs**

Census data highlights that the number of self-employed Aboriginal women grew by 406% between 1981 and 1996<sup>173</sup> However, statistics can be misleading. According to a 1998 study:

Compared with Aboriginal business in general, Aboriginal female entrepreneurs were doing badly. The percentage of female entrepreneurs declined from 1991 to 1996, and the number of females whose businesses failed was proportionally higher than expected. Female-owned companies were smaller and considerably less profitable,... and it seemed that once females' businesses failed, females did not continue as entrepreneurs.

These findings seem somewhat contradictory, especially since “female entrepreneurs had better training than male entrepreneurs... were more skilled at business planning and often had extensive written business plans.”<sup>174</sup> However, it was determined that female entrepreneurs “did not have as strong an ongoing commitment to developing innovations or core competencies, and this was probably the main factor that hurt their companies.”<sup>175</sup>

Although the number of female Aboriginal entrepreneurs increased between 1996 and 2001 census surveys (from 7265 to 9930), and although they continued to lead Aboriginal men in business training and education, the challenges facing female entrepreneurs seem to have remained the same.<sup>176</sup> Statistics reveal that enhanced education and business planning do not mean and increased entrepreneurial competencies or increased business innovation for women. If Aboriginal women face the same barriers as all women do in Canada, then perhaps it is not only gender, discrimination, and family roles, but also factors such as “size, sector, and growth

potential of their business... (including) personal credit worthiness.”<sup>177</sup> More research is required to get to the source of the problems Aboriginal women entrepreneurs face. This is also true for the deeper understanding of Native American women entrepreneurs.<sup>178</sup>

### **5.3 Young Aboriginal Entrepreneurs**

It is important to note that a number of Aboriginal youth involved in entrepreneurship and small business face many of the same barriers to success that Aboriginal women entrepreneurs do, and these barriers must be addressed given the growing potential of this sector of the Aboriginal population. However, it seems that the biggest challenge to young, new Aboriginal entrepreneurs is the successful start-up, which relies heavily on having an adequate base of business skills. After the skills have been learned, the sky is the limit. This was articulated in an earlier speech given by Yovhan Burega,<sup>179</sup> with the Canadian Bankers Association in 1998, when he said that “given the right educational tools, there is nothing to stop young aboriginal entrepreneurs from succeeding, from creating new jobs, and from contributing to the economic development of communities across Canada.”<sup>180</sup> There is a great deal of resources available for young Aboriginal entrepreneurs. For example, the Provincial Government of Manitoba, through its Department of Education, Citizenship, and Youth, runs an Aboriginal youth entrepreneurship program that has as its objectives:

- To provide inner city high school students of Aboriginal origin with the opportunity to explore careers in the financial and business sector
- To encourage students to stay in school
- To help students gain confidence and self-respect
- To provide business with a rewarding experience through their involvement in the internship program, and
- To encourage the business community to enhance diversity within their workplace.<sup>181</sup>

In addition, to keep pace with the educational training required of Aboriginal businesses doing business in and with resource companies, for example, Aboriginal youth interested in starting a business may also require training in the trades.<sup>182</sup>

Aboriginal youth and those leaders and parents that support their efforts should find ways to draw upon local services and programs available to them. A good place to start is the Government of Canada’s Youth Entrepreneurs Info-Guide.<sup>183</sup>

## 5.4 Inmate-Owned and Operated Businesses

Aboriginal business and entrepreneurship is taking hold in new and unique areas of economic activity. For example, many Aboriginal inmates are beginning to see the value of starting and operating inmate-owned businesses while incarcerated in provincial and federal institutions and penitentiaries.<sup>184</sup> This is particularly true of a specific class of inmates called “Lifers”. Lifers are those male and female individuals that are serving a life sentence. There are approximately 2,700 lifers in Canada. Interestingly, these individuals may be best served by business training, as they are also the most stable and consistent group in the federal correctional system. Luciani (2000) has noted, “While incarcerated, lifers tend to be the most well-adjusted, co-operative offenders who maintain and even strengthen their community resources while making the most of programming opportunities to address criminogenic needs, improve their educational and employment skills.”<sup>185</sup>

Very few federal inmates own or operate their own businesses, although there are new ways to become a business person working inside federal penitentiaries, via CORCAN’s Inmate Operated Business (IOB) Commissioner’s Directive 737 (CRC, 1997) and Standing Order 737. This is unfortunate, as entrepreneurship and the development of small business skills by the lifers would assist with their successful re-integration into Canadian society once they become released from prison. If these individuals were able to develop independent skills that are useful on the “outside” they will not have to face rejection when they apply to work in other peoples businesses, and will be less apt to re-offend and return to prison.

But businesses are being created within the confines of Canadian prisons. For example, InsideArt is an inmate owned and registered arts marketing co-operative operating out of the Mountain Federal Institution, a medium security facility operated by the Correctional Service of Canada. It is located in Agassiz and currently houses 468 federally sentenced, male inmates. InsideArt Co-op was founded by three Lifers at the institution, each of whom are private business owners. These and additional members become sole proprietors through a new initiative, called Inmate Organized Business. A majority of the members of the co-op must be inmates, but non-inmate artists living in the community may become members as well. While sanctioned by Correctional Services Canada (CSC), the co-op is not a government program, but an incorporated co-operative established to market and sell the work of its member owners.

Other non-co-op inmate artists may sell their art through the co-op, but at a commission that goes to the co-op.

The co-op continues to benefit from outside assistance. Most of the start-up and ongoing operational work was obtained through funding from the Canadian Ministry of Western Economic Diversification. This funding was used to provide entrepreneurial training and support to the inmates between 2002 and 2004. In 2005, InsideArt was formed with funding from the Cooperative Development Initiative.

The high-end artwork includes woodwork, glass, and photography that sell for \$12 to \$8000. The co-op manages a website – InsideArt.ca – which has the capability of handling sales on-line. Members of InsideArt also sell their wares at a number of popular outdoor festivals, including the Harrison Festival of the Arts, Langley’s Arts Alive, and the Abbotsford Farm & Country Market. InsideArt has been showcased at events and conferences across Canada, and last November participated in the Circle Craft Annual Christmas Craft Market in Vancouver. This is the largest art retail show in Western Canada, a 5-day co-operative event that entertains over 35,000 visitors purchasing work from over 260 craftspeople.

The evidence and arguments presented in this paper point to the following assertions. First, Aboriginal small businesses and entrepreneurs are growing in number, and they are playing an increasingly important social and economic role in Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal communities located across Canada. Second, Aboriginal small business and entrepreneurial activity is not contrary or antithetical to the quest for self-government or the promotion of tradition or cultural heritage for Indigenous peoples or Indigenous communities. In fact, small business and entrepreneurial ventures can build on and at the same time strengthen traditional and cultural pursuits. Third, in order to succeed, Aboriginal entrepreneurs and small business owners can use a supportive hand from band administrators, leaders, and other institutional stakeholders that understand the unique opportunities and challenges facing entrepreneurs and small business owners. Fourth, Aboriginal entrepreneurs must continue to build on current initiatives, and move into new areas of growth and expansion, not only locally, but also regionally, nationally, and internationally.

For the rest of this section, I reflect on additional questions that emerge from a reading (and writing) of this paper. These include questions on the:

- need for entrepreneurial education

- evaluation, monitoring, and if required, policing of government initiatives and corporate partnerships
- stewardship of Aboriginal small business social, cultural, and environmental responsibility, and
- adequacy of current (generally available) information on Aboriginal and small businesses.

## 5.5 Entrepreneurial Education

A number of analysts and leaders would argue that entrepreneurship is an alternative path to education, assuming that you can become a successful business owner without a formal education or training. For example, Eric Howe argues that: “Although education is a path out of poverty... another path out of poverty is entrepreneurship – starting your own business.”<sup>186</sup>

While Aboriginal business and entrepreneurship may be a practical option for those individuals not interested or suited for post-secondary education, it is important to reflect on whether an entrepreneur can make it these days without any training or education. For example, participation in knowledge-based and international businesses requires advanced levels of business education and training. And, young entrepreneurs interested in doing business with mining or resource companies should think twice about the educational requirements of the business before getting in too deep. The concerns over business training for Aboriginal entrepreneurs was strongly articulated in an early study of Aboriginal businesses across Canada, which found that while most Aboriginal entrepreneurs are profitable on a small scale, many are often short of business expertise and financing.<sup>187</sup>

However, there are others reasons why colleges and universities should provide courses on Aboriginal entrepreneurship and business management. A study in the U.S. found that:

There are two reasons why it is prudent to address the salient topic of American Indian business and management. First, in regions where there are relatively large proportions of American Indians, addressing these matters can encourage tribal members and managers to improve economic development activities and bring about efficiencies in organizational design and management. Second, such curricula can become a postcolonial bridge between American Indians and other communities to create greater awareness of tribal economies and organizations and their relationship with the dominant culture to facilitate cross-cultural dialogue and understanding, and to build public policies that enhance economic self-sufficiency and cultural integrity.<sup>188</sup>

Many would argue that the same stands for education on First Nations business and management in Canada.

## **5.6 Evaluating, Monitoring, and Policing Government Initiatives and Corporate Partnerships**

The number of First Nation small businesses and entrepreneurs in Canada is increasing. And, while most First Nation small business and entrepreneurial activity continues to occur locally—in remote locations, on-reserves, and within city limits—a small but growing number of First Nations small business owners and entrepreneurs are expanding their operations to regional, national, and international markets. More Aboriginal entrepreneurs are taking advantage of expanding opportunities in an evolving and competitive global economy. This growth has been increasingly supported by First Nation leaders, national Aboriginal organizations, and institutions and individuals operating in the larger business community.

However, First Nation communities and Aboriginal peoples must be cautious about the governmental, financial, and other corporative support of Aboriginal entrepreneurs. For example, in a 2002 review of the federal government’s Procurement Strategy for Aboriginal Business (PSAB), analysts found that, while over the five years the strategy had been in operation, PSAB “has been successful in meeting its stated objectives, and that a sound rationale for the strategy continues to exist” that “the belief now . . . , is that PSAB is more focused on the simple dollar value of Aboriginal contracting with little regard for how the opportunities are distributed.” Further, “perhaps the most important lesson to emerge from this research is that while the PSAB is a necessary tool for creating opportunity for Aboriginal firms, it is neither sufficient nor capable of significantly stimulating Aboriginal business development.”<sup>189</sup>

An Aboriginal organization that was formed to assist more Aboriginal businesses access the benefits PSAB has to offer is the Public Sector Aboriginal Business Association (PSABA), a non-profit association of Aboriginal business owners incorporated in 2006 to serve the needs of Aboriginal companies and entrepreneurs who are doing or plan to do business with the public sector. The goals of PSABA are to support the growth and expansion of strong and vibrant Aboriginal companies doing business with the Public Sector by:

- Networking with other business owners
- Developing promotional materials to encourage all Aboriginal businesses doing business with the Public Sector to join PSABA
- Providing a voice for Aboriginal business interests with all levels of government (Federal, Provincial & Municipal)

- Working with the government to refine the Procurement Strategy for Aboriginal Business (PSAB) and any future policy that directly impacts Aboriginal business in all levels of government, and
- Advocating on behalf of Aboriginal business to increase the number and accessibility of government contracts.<sup>190</sup>

And, there is always a possible flip side to the good that can come from Aboriginal-corporate relations. Corporations want to develop relations with Aboriginal communities through business development because it means, in part, a secure, predictable, and stable working environment. Aboriginal communities are looking to corporate partners to create wealth, employ community members, and development business capacity. But, Aboriginal communities and businesses desiring to work with Canadian corporations, either to supply products and services or to join in partnerships, should know intimately those with whom they are doing business. To assist in this, the Canadian Council for Aboriginal Business<sup>191</sup> (CCAB), a not-for profit organization funded entirely by the private sector, has created a Progressive Aboriginal Relations (PAR) program that recognizes and rewards leaders in understanding and accessing the fast-growing Aboriginal sector of the Canadian economy. The Progressive Aboriginal Relations program “sets out a framework for companies to enable them to establish performance benchmarks to assist in the development of mutually beneficial relations with Aboriginal people, businesses and communities and to assess their own progress over time.”<sup>192</sup>

### **5.7 The Aboriginal Small Business and Social, Cultural, and Environmental Responsibility**

Today, many Aboriginal leaders and managers accept the essential role the entrepreneur and small business activities to the survival and growth of Aboriginal communities and culture. Few community leaders or researchers worry if private enterprise *should* be entertained; rather they question *when* entrepreneurial activities should be entertained, *how* these activities should be supported, and *what* form or form small business initiatives should take. However, it is not always clear who benefits, where the profits go, or if culture is an important aspect in all entrepreneurial pursuits. But one thing is clear, many Aboriginal entrepreneurs and small to medium owned businesses are attempting to creatively integrate culture and tradition into their strategic plans and daily activities. For example, Peace Hills Trust hosts a yearly Aboriginal art contest “to promote the work of Native artists throughout Canada... in support of native culture.”<sup>193</sup>

It would be interesting to determine whether or not Aboriginal entrepreneurs are, in fact, building on, sustaining, and strengthening Aboriginal culture, tradition, and environmental and community values. And, it would also be interesting to determine whether all Aboriginal business owners socially responsible, and—if not—to better understand those that deviate from this ideal, promoting cultural, environmental, social, and community havoc and destruction rather than sustainable and equitable community development and self-governance.

Regardless of the formal research required to answer these and other questions, it seems certain that not all successful Indigenous businesses necessarily share community concerns for increasing Aboriginal employment or watching the environmental costs of their activities. But, in the end, it will be the socially, culturally, and environmentally responsible entrepreneurs that add to and strengthen sustainable Aboriginal governance and financial independence within and among Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal individuals, organizations, and communities in Canada through their business pursuits. This is happening, and is certainly an economic, political, cultural, and spiritual movement worth celebrating.

### **5.8 The Adequacy of Current Information on Aboriginal Entrepreneurs and Small Businesses**

More research on Aboriginal business is needed, especially research that can inform future entrepreneurial development in Aboriginal communities. Much of the research on Indigenous or Aboriginal entrepreneurs to date lacks depth, for at least two reasons. First, the last comprehensive study on Aboriginal entrepreneurs was published in 1998, and is based on 1996 census data. No such study has been undertaken since then, and an analysis of 2001 (and soon, 2006) needs to be conducted. This is a barrier to better understanding current trends and change, a concern that has been noted by researchers in their review of reports and documents, many of which utilize data contained in this core (1998) report, with no additional empirical research.”<sup>194</sup>

Second, most of the research to date lumps Inuit, Métis, and First Nation entrepreneurs and business owners together as “Aboriginal” or “Indigenous.” While this is helpful for national and international discussion, it hinders the specific determination of important aspects, challenges, and opportunities relevant to specific groups, like on- versus off-reserve First Nation entrepreneurs, for example. It is important to note that not all of the research is overly general in

nature. There are countless qualitative studies that provide snap-shot (and sometimes quite in-depth) coverage of individual owners and businesses through written and video case studies. These are particularly useful for both information sharing as well as for training and educational purposes. Nevertheless, the middle ground needs to be covered better, so that we can have a general national picture, individual snap-shots, AND group and/or region specific data.

Further, a number of themes related to First Nation small business and entrepreneurship are in need of research. For example, it would be interesting to determine how small business and entrepreneurial activities look in communities that have successfully negotiated land claims and self-government agreements, for example with the James Bay Cree or members of the Nisga'a Nation. Also, it would be interesting to see if the growth of Aboriginal entrepreneurs over the past 15 years is due to new business creation, or to individuals feeling more confident in identifying their business as "Aboriginal".

It would also be worthwhile to compare the research on Aboriginal small business and entrepreneurship with research being conducted on women and young entrepreneurs, small business development in rural economies, 'ethnic' entrepreneurship, Native American entrepreneurship, and family-based businesses, as all three areas have close connections to small businesses being operated by Aboriginal entrepreneurs. As well, more research has to be done in order to understand better the unique challenges Aboriginal entrepreneurs face in remote and urban settings. When looking at remote communities, additional questions regarding market links and the importance of internet access come to the fore.<sup>195</sup>

Last, but not least, it is important to understand why Aboriginal small businesses fail. Not all Aboriginal businesses are successful. This is true for every entrepreneurial activity, regardless of who the owner is or where he/she lives. Sometimes a great idea, a high level of motivation, consistent drive and determined desire are not enough.

## 6. Conclusion

Aboriginal small business is an relatively new and interesting growth industry in Canada. And creative, independent, committed, culturally astute, and hard-working Aboriginal entrepreneurs are adding value to the Canadian economy, while making a difference to them individually, as well as contributing to their families and communities. As the number of Aboriginal businesses and entrepreneurs continues to increase, so does our understanding of this unique sector of the world of Aboriginal organizations in general. It's actually quite exciting. Most everywhere you go, progressive communities are talking about their new community enterprises, and the successes of their new entrepreneurs and small business initiatives. The exponential growth of Aboriginal entrepreneurship and small businesses is indeed cause for celebration.

It is clear that the time is right to enhance the creation, development, support, and promotion of Aboriginal entrepreneurs and small businesses in Canada. Re-consider the following:

- “Self-government without a significant economic base would be an exercise in illusion and futility.... achieving a more self-reliant economic base for Aboriginal communities and nations will require significant, even radical departures from business as usual.”<sup>196</sup>
- “Entrepreneurship is the driving force in economic development throughout the world.”<sup>197</sup>
- “Every nation needs a strong, capable labour force and business community,”<sup>198</sup>
- “The most effective way (and probably the only way) for Aboriginal communities to address their current socio-economic challenges is to create wealth through business activity.”<sup>199</sup>
- “That small business is the engine for employment growth has become accepted as reality.”<sup>200</sup>
- “First Nation communities are open for business.”<sup>201</sup>
- Indigenous entrepreneurship [is] the creation, management and development of new ventures by Indigenous people for the benefit of Indigenous people.<sup>202</sup>
- There need be no paradox, no contradiction, no values sacrifice, no false dichotomy between heritage and innovation.... Indigenous tradition echoes to the footsteps of brave spirits on new paths.<sup>203</sup>

This paper provides strong evidence that an entrepreneurial spirit is alive, well, and prospering in Aboriginal communities located across Canada. Of course, this should not be surprising, as there has been an entrepreneurial spirit in Indigenous communities since time immemorial, evidenced through accounts of inter-tribal trade that spans the Americas, linking

Indigenous communities from Patagonia to the far northern reaches of the Circumpolar region.<sup>204</sup> That spirit continues to flourish in Canada today and the acknowledgment and support of Aboriginal entrepreneurship in small businesses, organizations, and communities is more important than ever. Small business provides First Nation peoples and communities with the means to become self-determining and free from corporate and governmental control, manipulation, and exploitation.

Entrepreneurship spurs others to become self-employed and find ways to even better serve their communities needs creating stronger and viable economic systems and institutions of governance. Small business activities requires the development of skilled and experienced employees and managers, which further promotes relevant professional development and educational activities amongst community members. And all of this can be accomplished without giving up those things that are most important to many, if not all, Aboriginal peoples: culture, community, tradition, heritage, indigenous knowledge, spirituality. If anything, self-directed and independent businesses – supported by their communities – generate wealth, which in turns benefit communities through the creation of jobs and the financial support of social and cultural activities and initiatives. To assist with the further development and understanding of emerging Aboriginal small businesses and entrepreneurial activities, a number of critical issue questions must be addressed. Throughout this paper a number of outstanding issues were introduced and discussed.

Then there are the outstanding questions. For example, regarding the first issue, there are questions around the fit of entrepreneurship and small business development with current attempts by Aboriginal peoples to develop their economies and communities. The primary question being, are current attempts to develop Aboriginal small business and entrepreneurship overly individualistic, anti-community, and more of a European and government strategy than an Indigenous approach to economic and community development? Each issue, and there are more to discuss, requires the discussion of such questions.

In the end, Aboriginal entrepreneurship and the development and operation of small businesses by First Nation owners and managers is a strategic, if not necessary, choice: one that is based on location, knowledge, culture, and historical circumstance, etc. However, no matter what the circumstance, David Newhouse reminds us that:

Aboriginal economies have chosen different development paths... Some are choosing to develop using mostly publicly owned businesses, other are choosing to foster the development of a small business community which consists mainly of individually owned businesses. Some are working closely with natural resource companies..., to develop both opportunities for business and employment. Others are choosing to emphasi[ze] traditional forms of harvesting activities.... Some are encouraging individuals to pursue high-tech careers or careers in mainstream organizations. While the paths that Aboriginal economies are choosing are different, most are encouraging the development of a business community as one of the primary driving forces for economic development.<sup>205</sup>

The promotion and acknowledgement of entrepreneurship and business development by Aboriginal leaders and communities is really about choice and strategy. It is not an either-or choice, pitting the wholesale adoption of entrepreneurship, small business, and capitalism against community values, tradition, or Indigenous histories and knowledge. Small business development and entrepreneurship are in the end community and government tools that, if structured and managed properly, will undoubtedly assist in the promotion, development and ongoing support of healthy, self-governing, and self-sustaining communities.

## Endnotes

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<sup>1</sup> Although this paper focuses on First Nation small business and entrepreneurship, it is important to note that most of the literature refers more generally to Indigenous (global), and Aboriginal (Canadian) organizations, businesses and entrepreneurs. The First Nation component is referred to, on occasion, in the literature, but authors often do not further distinguish between on- and off-reserve or status- and non-status First Nation individuals and organizations.

<sup>2</sup> The real number of Aboriginal businesses in Canada has never been officially tabulated or recorded. More often than not, the numbers were estimated through organizational lists and assumptions about organizations existing in Aboriginal communities or operating in urban, regional, or national levels. For example, the figure of 6,000 organizations comes from an early listing of Aboriginal organizations in Canada called ArrowFax (see a 1991 interview “On Describing Aboriginal Organizations and Management, and Understanding the Role These Organizations Can Play in the Retraditionalization of Aboriginal Communities”, conducted by Warren Weir with David Newhouse, an Aboriginal academic that has been studying Aboriginal organizations over the past 20 years at [http://www.uleth.ca/man/programs/majors/first-nations/case/resources/warren\\_weir\\_newhouse.pdf](http://www.uleth.ca/man/programs/majors/first-nations/case/resources/warren_weir_newhouse.pdf). Newhouse then cites a 1997 Aboriginal Business Canada report, that found approximately 14,000 Aboriginal businesses in Canada, See *The Care and Support of Aboriginal Economies*, in the Journal of Aboriginal Economic Development (Volume 1, Number 2: Winter 2000), Captus Press and CANDO, p. 80., The current number of 30,000 plus organizations is based on an estimate made by the author of this paper which combines the 27,000 plus entrepreneurs and small businesses tabulated in the Aboriginal Entrepreneurs Survey, 2002 with an estimate of non-business Aboriginal governmental and non-profit organizations. The estimate of this smaller sector of Aboriginal organizations in Canada, which is more than likely conservative in nature, places the number of Aboriginal government, non-profit, and co-operative organizations at approximately 3,000 in total, combining First Nation Band Councils (one per First Nation in Canada), educational institutions operating on reserve, First Nation, Métis and Inuit regional and national organizations (including the AFN), and other institutions such as health boards, tribal councils, and national Aboriginal organizations like the Council for the Advancement of Native Development Officers (CANDO) and the Aboriginal Human Resource Development Council of Canada (AHRDCC). Obviously it is important that, over time, the actual number of Aboriginal organizations, by type, be tabulated and listed.

<sup>3</sup> J. S. Frideres and R. R. Gadacz, *Aboriginal Peoples in Canada*, 7<sup>th</sup> ed., (Toronto: Pearson Prentice Hall, 2005), p. 315.

<sup>4</sup> P. D. Elias, *Development of Aboriginal People's Communities* (Ontario: Captus Press Inc, 1991) p. 88.

<sup>5</sup> Ibid.

<sup>6</sup> Ibid., p. 89.

<sup>7</sup> Ibid.

<sup>8</sup> Brant and Brant, 1985, “Indian Band Economic Development Potential and its Implications for Indian Self-Government,” in P. D. Elias, *Development of Aboriginal People's Communities*, p. 90.

<sup>9</sup> H. Cardinal, *The Rebirth of Canadian Indians*, (Edmonton: Hurtig Publishers, 1977), p. 47.

<sup>10</sup> Ibid, p. 46.

<sup>11</sup> Ibid, pp. 46-47.

<sup>12</sup> The Royal Commission on Aboriginal Peoples (RCAP) Final Report, Vol. 2, Chapter 5, (Ottawa: minister of Supplies and Services Canada, 1996), p. 775.

<sup>13</sup> See F. Wien, Ibid, pp. 109-110.

<sup>14</sup> S. Cornell and J. P. Kalt, “Reloading the Dice: Improving the Chances for Economic Development on American Indian Reservations”, in *What Can Tribes Do? Strategies and Institutions in American Indian Economic Development*, (Los Angeles: American Indian Studies Center, 1992), pp. 34 and 40-41

<sup>15</sup> S. Cornell and J. P. Kalt, p. 17

<sup>16</sup> J. Kafka, 1987, “A Study of Indian Controlled Economic Development Delivery Mechanisms: The B.C. Region,” in P. D. Elias, *Development of Aboriginal People's Communities*, p. 91.

<sup>17</sup> K. Hindle and M. Lansdowne, p. 140.

<sup>18</sup> D. Newhouse, *Modern Aboriginal Economies: Capitalism with a Red Face*, in the *Journal of Aboriginal Economic Development*, 1, No. 2 (Winter 2000): p. 55.

<sup>19</sup> AFN National Chief Phil Fontaine made this remark, and other similar comments, during his speech at the AFN's Corporate Challenge dinner (January 22, 2007), reiterating them during his opening remarks to delegates attending the Excellence in Action National Conference, held in Saskatoon Saskatchewan, January 23-25, 2007. The Excellence in Action conference was jointly hosted by the Federation of Saskatchewan Indian Nations (FSIN), the Clarence Campeau Development Fund (CCDF), and the Government of Saskatchewan. The focus of the symposium

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was to stimulate greater Aboriginal economic activity and labour market participation in all areas of Canada and sectors of the economy. See <http://www.excellenceinaction2007.com/>.

<sup>20</sup> For more on the AFN's Corporate Challenge, see <http://www.afn.ca/article.asp?id=3264>

<sup>21</sup> To see Chief Louie's biography, go to <http://www.excellenceinaction2007.com/Default.aspx?DN=e9a8405b-7f45-4e0b-84cf-4665f1f87f5a&l=English>. For more information on Chief Louie, and to visit the Osoyoos Indian Band Development Corporation, see <http://www.oib.ca/>

<sup>22</sup> W. G. Nickels, J. M. McHugh, S. M. McHugh, P.D. Berman, and R. Cossa, *Understanding Canadian Business*, 5<sup>th</sup> ed., (Toronto: McGraw-Hill Ryerson, 2005), p. 197.

<sup>23</sup> *Key Small Business Statistics*, July 2006 (Ottawa: Industry Canada, p. 3.). Also available at: <http://strategis.ic.gc.ca/epic/internet/insbrp-rppe.nsf/en/rd02026e.html>.

<sup>24</sup> Canadian Bankers Association. See The Online Glossary at: <http://www.cba.ca/en/ViewDocument.asp?fl=3&sl=68&tl=&docid=273>

<sup>25</sup> See Microsoft at: <http://www.microsoft.com/technet/itsolutions/smbiz/smbprgovw/default.mspx>.

<sup>26</sup> *Key Small Business Statistics*, p. 3.

<sup>27</sup> *Ibid.*, p.4.

<sup>28</sup> J.B. Vinturella, *The Entrepreneur's Fieldbook* (Toronto: Prentice-Hall Canada Inc., 1999), p. xix.

<sup>29</sup> W. G. Nickels, J. M. McHugh, S. M. McHugh, P.D. Berman, and R. Cossa, *Understanding Canadian Business*, p. 186.

<sup>30</sup> For example, an *entrepreneurial team* is defined as "a group of experienced people from different areas of business who join together to form a managerial team with the skills needed to develop, make, and market a new product," and *micropreneurs* are "entrepreneurs willing to accept the risk of starting and managing the type of business that remains small, lets them do the kind of work they want to do, and offers them a balanced lifestyle. See, W. G. Nickels, J. M. McHugh, S. M. McHugh, P.D. Berman, and R. Cossa, *Understanding Canadian Business*, (Toronto: McGraw-Hill Ryerson), p. 191. *Copreneurs* "are entrepreneurial couples who work together as co-owners of their businesses." See, N. M. Scarborough and T. W. Zimmerer, *Effective Small Business Management: An Entrepreneurial Approach*, (New Jersey: Pearson Prentice Hall), p. 23.

<sup>31</sup> See J. Quarter, *Canada's Social Economy*, (Toronto: James Lorimer & Company, 1992), p. 3.

<sup>32</sup> J. A. Timmons, *The Entrepreneurial Mind*, and Michael Warshaw, "The Entrepreneurial Mind," in P. Lambing and C. R. Kuehl, *Entrepreneurship*, 2<sup>nd</sup> ed., (Toronto: Prentice-Hall Canada Inc., 2000), p. 14.

<sup>33</sup> See P. Lambing and C. R. Kuehl, *Entrepreneurship*, 2<sup>nd</sup> ed., (Toronto: Prentice-Hall Canada Inc., 2000), p. 18.

<sup>34</sup> P. Di-Masi, "Defining Entrepreneurship," (n.d.), posted at: <http://www.gdrc.org/icm/micro/define-micro.html>.

<sup>35</sup> K. Hindle and M. Lansdowne, "Brave Spirits on New Paths: Toward a Globally Relevant Paradigm of Indigenous Entrepreneurship Research," *Journal of Small Business and Entrepreneurship* 18, no.2 (Spring 2005): p. 132.

<sup>36</sup> See the Young Entrepreneurs Association at: <http://www.yea.ca>.

<sup>37</sup> See Government of Canada's Youth Employment Strategy at: <http://youth.gc.ca/yoaux.jsp?&lang=en&geo=323&flash=1&ta=1&auxpageid=708>. Note that in their definition, youth between the ages of 15 and 30 years of age must also be 1) legally able to work in Canada, and 2) not receiving Employment Insurance (EI) benefits.

<sup>38</sup> See Aboriginal Business Canada for the 2001 Canada census definition of Aboriginal Youth at: <http://strategis.ic.gc.ca/epic/internet/inabc-eac.nsf/en/ab00453e.html>.

<sup>39</sup> See Aboriginal Business Canada for the definition of Aboriginal Youth able to participate in ABC Young Entrepreneurs Projects at: [http://strategis.ic.gc.ca/epic/internet/inabc-eac.nsf/en/h\\_ab00326e.html](http://strategis.ic.gc.ca/epic/internet/inabc-eac.nsf/en/h_ab00326e.html).

<sup>40</sup> This statement on ABC eligibility requirements comes directly and unedited from the ABC link <http://strategis.ic.gc.ca/epic/internet/inabc-eac.nsf/en/ab00124e.html> via its website at <http://strategis.ic.gc.ca/epic/site/abc-eac.nsf/en/home>. ABC, which is discussed in Section 4 of this paper, is a Federal program offered through Indian and Northern Affairs Canada (INAC), created to maximize Aboriginal people's participation in the economy through business development. The link to the eligibility requirements also outlines the evidence required to prove Aboriginal ancestry, with considerations. In addition, other requirements also include, but are not limited to; 10% to 15% cash equity, operational and/or management expertise in the proposed area of business, and demonstration of profitability.

<sup>41</sup> M. Morris, M. Schindehutte, and J. Lessier (2002), *Ethnic Entrepreneurship: Do Values Matter?*, in the *New England Journal of Entrepreneurship* (5.2), p. 35.

<sup>42</sup> L.P. Dana, "Entrepreneurship in a Remote Sub-Arctic Community: Nome, Alaska," in *Entrepreneurship: Theory and Practice*, 20, no.1 (Fall 1995): p. 67.

<sup>43</sup> L.P. Dana, "Editorial," in *Journal of Small Business and Entrepreneurship* 18, no.2 (Spring 2005): p. v.

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- <sup>44</sup> *Key Small Business Statistics*, July 2006, p. 5.
- <sup>45</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 5.
- <sup>46</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 5. For this data and additional information on numbers of employees by employer businesses, see Table 2.
- <sup>47</sup> For two guides to Partnerships and Limited Partnerships, see the CANDO publications: *Flying Together: A Partnership Guidebook* (Flo Frank: 1999), and *The Unlimited Potential of Limited Partnerships* (Al Solheim: 1999).
- <sup>48</sup> Procurement is a business contractual concept defines and discussed in Sub-Section 4.1.
- <sup>49</sup> Council for the Advancement of Native Development Officers (CANDO), *Community Economic Development Practice*, (Guidebook 3: n.d.), pp. 45-46.
- <sup>50</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 43-45.
- <sup>51</sup> See overview of findings from the Aboriginal Business Canada 2002 Aboriginal Entrepreneurs Survey, at the Statistics Canada site, through *The Daily*, at <http://www.statcan.ca/Daily/English/040927/d040927d.htm>
- <sup>52</sup> Aboriginal Business Canada, *Aboriginal Entrepreneurs in 2002* (Ottawa: Industry Canada, 2005.). Posted at <http://strategis.ic.gc.ca/epic/internet/inabc-eac.nsf/en/ab00313e.html>.
- <sup>53</sup> P. Lambing and C. R. Kuehl, *Entrepreneurship*, 2<sup>nd</sup> ed., (Toronto: Prentice-Hall Canada Inc., 2000), pp. 2-3. See also pp. 6-8 for a discussion of the increasing wave of interest in entrepreneurship that occurred globally in the 1980's and 1990's.
- <sup>54</sup> See the ABC site at <http://strategis.ic.gc.ca/epic/internet/inabc-eac.nsf/en/ab00426e.html> for all of the Aboriginal Entrepreneurs Survey, 2002 information, including an overview of the survey and methodology, articles, news releases, and the 12 regional and thematic Fact Sheets referenced in endnotes 30 through 48, below.
- <sup>55</sup> For example, see *The Road Less Traveled: Aboriginal Entrepreneurs Building Economic Independence in the 1990s*, Aboriginal Business Canada, 1998; *Aboriginal Businesses: Characteristics and Strategies for Growth*, Industry Canada, 1998; and *Aboriginal Entrepreneurs in Canada—Progress and Prospects*, Aboriginal Business Canada, 1998.
- <sup>56</sup> Aboriginal Business Canada, *Aboriginal Entrepreneurs Survey, 2002: British Columbia* (Ottawa: Industry Canada, 2002.). Posted at <http://strategis.ic.gc.ca/epic/internet/inabc-eac.nsf/en/ab00428e.html>
- <sup>57</sup> Aboriginal Business Canada, *Aboriginal Entrepreneurs Survey, 2002: Alberta* (Ottawa: Industry Canada, 2002.). Posted at <http://strategis.ic.gc.ca/epic/internet/inabc-eac.nsf/en/ab00425e.html>
- <sup>58</sup> Aboriginal Business Canada, *Aboriginal Entrepreneurs Survey, 2002: Saskatchewan* (Ottawa: Industry Canada, 2002.). Posted at <http://strategis.ic.gc.ca/epic/internet/inabc-eac.nsf/en/ab00433e.html>
- <sup>59</sup> Aboriginal Business Canada, *Aboriginal Entrepreneurs Survey, 2002: Manitoba* (Ottawa: Industry Canada, 2002.). Posted at <http://strategis.ic.gc.ca/epic/internet/inabc-eac.nsf/en/ab00429e.html>
- <sup>60</sup> Aboriginal Business Canada, *Aboriginal Entrepreneurs Survey, 2002: Ontario* (Ottawa: Industry Canada, 2002.). Posted at <http://strategis.ic.gc.ca/epic/internet/inabc-eac.nsf/en/ab00431e.html>
- <sup>61</sup> Aboriginal Business Canada, *Aboriginal Entrepreneurs Survey, 2002: Quebec* (Ottawa: Industry Canada, 2002.). Posted at <http://strategis.ic.gc.ca/epic/internet/inabc-eac.nsf/en/ab00432e.html>
- <sup>62</sup> Aboriginal Business Canada, *Aboriginal Entrepreneurs Survey, 2002: Atlantic Region* (Ottawa: Industry Canada, 2002.). Posted at <http://strategis.ic.gc.ca/epic/internet/inabc-eac.nsf/en/ab00427e.html>
- <sup>63</sup> Aboriginal Business Canada, *Aboriginal Entrepreneurs Survey, 2002: Northwest Territories, Nunavut And Yukon* (Ottawa: Industry Canada, 2002.). <http://strategis.ic.gc.ca/epic/internet/inabc-eac.nsf/en/ab00430e.html>
- <sup>64</sup> Aboriginal Business Canada, *Aboriginal Entrepreneurs Survey, 2002: On Reserve/Off Reserve* (Ottawa: Industry Canada, 2002.). Posted at <http://strategis.ic.gc.ca/epic/internet/inabc-eac.nsf/en/ab00435e.html>
- <sup>65</sup> Aboriginal Business Canada, *Aboriginal Entrepreneurs Survey, 2002: Gender* (Ottawa: Industry Canada, 2002.). Posted at <http://strategis.ic.gc.ca/epic/internet/inabc-eac.nsf/en/ab00434e.html>
- <sup>66</sup> Aboriginal Business Canada, *Aboriginal Entrepreneurs Survey, 2002: Youth* (Ottawa: Industry Canada, 2002.). Posted at <http://strategis.ic.gc.ca/epic/internet/inabc-eac.nsf/en/ab00453e.html>
- <sup>67</sup> *Ibid.*
- <sup>68</sup> Aboriginal Business Canada, *Aboriginal Entrepreneurs Survey, 2002: On Reserve/Off Reserve*.
- <sup>69</sup> Aboriginal Business Canada, *Aboriginal Entrepreneurs Survey, 2002: Urban/Rural* (Ottawa: Industry Canada, 2002.). Posted at <http://strategis.ic.gc.ca/epic/internet/inabc-eac.nsf/en/ab00436e.html>
- <sup>70</sup> *Ibid.*
- <sup>71</sup> Aboriginal Business Canada, *Aboriginal Entrepreneurs Survey, 2002: Youth*.
- <sup>72</sup> Aboriginal Business Canada, *Aboriginal Entrepreneurs Survey, 2002: Urban/Rural*.
- <sup>73</sup> Aboriginal Business Canada, *Aboriginal Entrepreneurs Survey, 2002: Gender*.
- <sup>74</sup> Aboriginal Business Canada, *Aboriginal Entrepreneurs in 2002* (Ottawa: Industry Canada, 2005.). Posted at <http://strategis.ic.gc.ca/epic/internet/inabc-eac.nsf/en/ab00313e.html>, p.2.

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<sup>75</sup> For further information on women entrepreneurs in Canada, see the Special Issue on *Sustaining the Momentum: Gender, Entrepreneurship and Public Policy*, Journal of Small Business and Entrepreneurship, Vol. 19, No. 2.

<sup>76</sup> C. Carrington, *Small Business Financing Profiles: Women Entrepreneurs* (Ottawa: Industry Canada, Nov 2004). Posted at [http://strategis.ic.gc.ca/epic/internet/insbrp-rppe.nsf/vwajp/WomenEntrepreneursProfile\\_Eng.pdf/\\$file/WomenEntrepreneursProfile\\_Eng.pdf](http://strategis.ic.gc.ca/epic/internet/insbrp-rppe.nsf/vwajp/WomenEntrepreneursProfile_Eng.pdf/$file/WomenEntrepreneursProfile_Eng.pdf), p. 1.

<sup>77</sup> In 2001 there were 715,500 SMEs (or 47%) in Canada with at least one female owner. The number of SMEs that were owned by a majority of women in 2001 was 18% up from 15% the previous year. See C. Carrington, p. 1.

<sup>78</sup> Ibid, p. 2.

<sup>79</sup> Aboriginal Business Canada, *Aboriginal Entrepreneurs in Canada—Progress and Prospects*, L-4.

<sup>80</sup> Aboriginal Business Canada, *Aboriginal Entrepreneurs in Canada—Progress and Prospects* (Ottawa: Industry Canada, 1998.). Posted at [http://strategis.ic.gc.ca/pics/ab/440\\_ref\\_rep001\\_e.pdf](http://strategis.ic.gc.ca/pics/ab/440_ref_rep001_e.pdf).

<sup>81</sup> Aboriginal Business Canada, *Aboriginal Entrepreneurs in 2002*.

<sup>82</sup> In fact, it may be boiled down to two key limitations, or challenges, including a lack of business education and capital available in the form of loans. See, for example, the reflections offered by Bruce Burton, financial consultant and former Assistant Vice President of Credit for the Business Development Bank of Canada. See his article on Exploring Aboriginal Entrepreneurship, in *Aboriginal Banking*, a magazine published by the Business Development Bank of Canada (Autumn, 2006).

<sup>83</sup> To access the ABC website, go to [http://strategis.gc.ca/epic/site/abc-eac.nsf/en/h\\_ab00070e.html](http://strategis.gc.ca/epic/site/abc-eac.nsf/en/h_ab00070e.html)

<sup>84</sup> ABC provides support to Aboriginal entrepreneurs for a range of activities including business planning, start-up, expansion and marketing. They provide eligible majority-owned Aboriginal enterprises with: financial assistance; business information and resource materials; and referrals to other possible sources of financing or business support. ABC works with clients: of all Aboriginal heritage groups; on-reserve and off-reserve; and in urban, rural and remote areas.

<sup>85</sup> ABC works with a network of 54 Aboriginal Financial Institutions, including Aboriginal Capital Corporations, Aboriginal Community Futures Development Corporations and other Aboriginally-owned or controlled lending institutions. These organizations act as developmental lenders (providing loans to enterprises that are not yet ready to secure business loans successfully from banks) and offer business advisory services. Some of these organizations have diversified their operations and act as third-party delivery agents for the Aboriginal Business Canada program, primarily in rural and remote communities.

<sup>86</sup> ABC conducts Aboriginal economic research and policy analysis in order to ensure their suite of program priorities continue to meet the needs of our clientele. An example of this work is the Aboriginal Entrepreneurs Survey, which was conducted in partnership with Statistics Canada and other federal partners.

<sup>87</sup> ABC works closely with the National Aboriginal Economic Development Board (NAEDB), a private-sector body that provides advice to the Government of Canada on matters related to Aboriginal economic and business development. The NAEDB also reviews and provides recommendations on proposals to ABC involving large investments, and guides the program in setting funding priorities. For more information on the NAEDB, a body that “continue[s] engaging Cabinet, government departments, Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal business leaders and other stakeholders, to ensure opportunities for Aboriginal entrepreneurship and economic development are generated, maximized and seized to their full potential,” go to <http://www.naedb-cndea.ca/epic/site/naedb-cndea.nsf/en/home>

<sup>88</sup> On an ongoing basis, ABC collaborates with federal partners in its approach to Aboriginal business development, including Industry Canada, Western Economic Diversification Canada, the Business Development Bank of Canada, and Statistics Canada. ABC also works with a range of non-government partners on various initiatives. For example, it are currently conducting a two-year pilot project with Canadian Executive Services Organization (CESO) to deliver personalized mentoring services to our youth entrepreneur clients.

<sup>89</sup> For information about ABSN, including links to the services and information it provides, go to [http://www.cbcs.org/servlet/ContentServer?cid=1091626045548&pagename=ABSN\\_FE%2FCBSC\\_WebPage%2FCBSC\\_WebPage\\_Temp&lang=en&c=CBSC\\_WebPage](http://www.cbcs.org/servlet/ContentServer?cid=1091626045548&pagename=ABSN_FE%2FCBSC_WebPage%2FCBSC_WebPage_Temp&lang=en&c=CBSC_WebPage)

<sup>90</sup> See <http://canadabusiness.gc.ca/gol/cbec/site.nsf/en/index.html>

<sup>91</sup> For more on the Procurement Strategy for Aboriginal Business, including a link to their progress reports to 2004, see [http://www.ainc-inac.gc.ca/saea-psab/index\\_e.html](http://www.ainc-inac.gc.ca/saea-psab/index_e.html). To view eligible Aboriginal business contractors, or to be registered on the list, go to [http://strategis.ic.gc.ca/cgi-bin/sc\\_coinf/ccc/index\\_gen/company.pl?lang=e&profileId=629\\_t](http://strategis.ic.gc.ca/cgi-bin/sc_coinf/ccc/index_gen/company.pl?lang=e&profileId=629_t)

<sup>92</sup> To see the 2004 PASB Progress Report, see [http://www.ainc-inac.gc.ca/saea-psab/pub/pr/2004/per2004\\_e.pdf](http://www.ainc-inac.gc.ca/saea-psab/pub/pr/2004/per2004_e.pdf)

<sup>93</sup> For more on CESO, including its Aboriginal Programs, refer to <http://www.ceso-saco.com/english/national/aboriginal/index.php> and its associated home links.

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<sup>94</sup> For more information on CANDO and its support of Aboriginal business, community, and economic development, see <http://www.edo.ca/home>

<sup>95</sup> See <http://www.fnmr.gov.sk.ca/> for more on the Saskatchewan government's Department of First Nations and Métis Relations – a Department that was created to provide the Government of Saskatchewan with a more focused approach to its work involving First Nations and Métis people.

<sup>96</sup> See [http://www.fnmr.gov.sk.ca/html/ecdev/ecdp\\_program.htm](http://www.fnmr.gov.sk.ca/html/ecdev/ecdp_program.htm) for more on the Saskatchewan First Nations and Métis Economic Development Program.

<sup>97</sup> To read about the Government of Saskatchewan's First Nation and Metis Fund (FNMF), including a summary of the eligibility requirements, types of investments, preferred economic growth sectors for investment, and types of available financing, access the FNMF brochure, through <http://www.cicorp.sk.ca/fnm-fund/FNMF-brochure.html>

<sup>98</sup> See <http://www.cicorp.sk.ca/fnm-fund/about-fnmfund.htm> for more information regarding the Saskatchewan Government's First Nation and Métis Fund.

<sup>99</sup> For more information on the Sto:lo CFDC (SCF), see <http://www.stolocf.com/>. The Sto:lo CFDC—like other Aboriginal CFDC's—offers a range of services to existing and new Aboriginal small businesses, including:

- Business Services to Aboriginal Entrepreneurs
- Full Business Resource Center
- Access to SCF Loan Capital to qualified Aboriginal Businesses
- Business Counseling
- Community Economic Development Initiatives
- Implementation of Economic Sector Strategies throughout Sto:lo

SCF is a member of the British Columbia Community Futures Development Association (BC CFDA) and is funded by Western Economic Diversification. For more information on Community Futures - a national rural economic renewal initiative - and to access the network of the 268 Community Futures economic development offices across Canada, go to <http://www.communityfutures.ca/home/index-eng.html>

<sup>100</sup> See <http://www.docfdc.mb.ca/index1.html>

<sup>101</sup> E. Jordan, The Challenge of Financing First Nations Small Businesses, in *Aboriginal Issues Today: A Legal and Business Guide*, edited by S. B. Smart and M. Coyle (1997), International Self-Counsel Press Ltd., North Vancouver, British Columbia, p. 215.

<sup>102</sup> Ibid, p. 219.

<sup>103</sup> Larry Sault was, among other things, former chief of the New Credit First Nation, Deputy Grand Chief of the Association of Iroquois and Allied Indians, and more recently vice-president of CESO Aboriginal Services. For an interview with Sault, see "Grassroots Volunteerism Builds a Foundation for the Future" in *aboriginaltimes*, volume 3, issues 7, April 1999 (pp. 20-23).

<sup>104</sup> Report of the National Aboriginal Financing Task Force, Pre-Final Report, *The Promise of the Future: Achieving Economic Self-Sufficiency Through Access to Capital*, March 22, 1996 (p. 9). Other recommendations include support and restructuring of Aboriginal Capital Corporations (ACCs), the expansion of the Aboriginal financial network, set-aside government contracts, taxation incentives, human resource development in financial management, the creation of a national Aboriginal database and business directory, and remote access to internet. They also recommend that Aboriginal communities put more effort in letting the private sector know they are open for business and partnering with non-Aboriginal businesses.

<sup>105</sup> For more information about the BMA Bank of Montreal's Aboriginal banking programs, and the BMO Bank of Montreal's Aboriginal Banking Unit – created in 1992 – see

<http://www4.bmo.com/aboriginalbanking/0.4442.35649.975748.00.html?pChannelId=244704>

<sup>106</sup> For more information about Aboriginal banking at the Royal Bank of Canada, or to contact one of RBC's Aboriginal banking manager, see

<http://www.rbcroyalbank.com/RBC:RcdDfo71A8YAAoB8W3E/aboriginal/index.html>

<sup>107</sup> For more on Scotiabank's Aboriginal banking services, including links to their 22 Aboriginal banking centres located across Canada, see [http://www.scotiabank.com/cda/content/0,1608,CID338\\_LIDen,00.html](http://www.scotiabank.com/cda/content/0,1608,CID338_LIDen,00.html)

<sup>108</sup> For more information on the RBC Aboriginal Student Awards program, or to start an application process, see <http://www.rbc.com/uniquecareers/campus/aboriginal-student-awards.html>

<sup>109</sup> For more on this Scotiabank initiative, or the University of Saskatchewan's MBA Indigenous Specialization, see <http://www.commerce.usask.ca/programs/mba/background.aspx?sm=p80>

<sup>110</sup> For more on BDC and their Aboriginal banking services and initiatives, see [http://www.bdc.ca/en/i\\_am/aboriginal\\_entrepreneur/default.htm](http://www.bdc.ca/en/i_am/aboriginal_entrepreneur/default.htm)

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<sup>111</sup> For more information on the BDC competition, including links to past award winners and an application form, see <http://www.bdc.ca/espirit/en/default.htm>

<sup>112</sup> In partnership with Alberta Economic Development, the Meyers Norris Penny's nine-week program offers management training, business plan assistance, networking support, and five hours of individual business coaching with MNP's experienced consultants. For more on Meyers Norris Penny's Aboriginal Services, see <http://www.mnp.ca/03clients/AboriginalSEProgram.php>. And for an overview of the Meyers Norris Penny business, see <http://www.mnp.ca/00home/>

<sup>113</sup> For more information on Peace Hills Trust, including an overview of their corporate profile and governance structure, see <http://www.peacehills.com/>

<sup>114</sup> Peace Hills Trust offices are located in British Columbia, Alberta, Saskatchewan, Manitoba, and Atlantic Canada.

<sup>115</sup> For more information about the First Nations Bank of Canada, including an historical overview and links to their annual reports, see <http://www.firstnationsbank.com/history.jsp>

<sup>116</sup> For more on the Sasatchewan Indian Equity Foundation, or SEIF, and the programs and services SEIF provides Aboriginal entrepreneurs, see <http://www.sief.sk.ca/>

<sup>117</sup> Alternative sources of funding typically include private sources (personal savings from family or friends), credit unions, loan circles (where a group of borrowers pool resources and lend money to one another), credit cards, and First Nation community-based loans or guarantee of loans). See E. Jordan, *The Challenge of Financing First Nations Small Businesses* (pp. 216-219).

<sup>118</sup> Report of the National Aboriginal Financing Task Force, Pre-Final Report, *The Promise of the Future: Achieving Economic Self-Sufficiency Through Access to Capital*, March 22, 1996 (p.13).

<sup>119</sup> See [http://strategis.gc.ca/epic/site/abc-eac.nsf/en/h\\_ab00155e.html](http://strategis.gc.ca/epic/site/abc-eac.nsf/en/h_ab00155e.html). For more on the National Aboriginal Capital Corporation Association, see <http://www.nacca.net/>

<sup>120</sup> R. Wortman, *The Royal Commission Report on Aboriginal Peoples: Challenges and Opportunities for Corporate Canada*, a paper prepared for the Royal Bank of Canada's presentation on the Royal Commission on Aboriginal Peoples, called *The Cost of Doing Nothing: A Call to Action* (1997), p. 23. The papers in the report can also be accessed through the Royal Bank web site at

[http://www.rbcroyalbank.com/RBC:RedLwo71A8YAAx468QY/aboriginal/r\\_comm.html](http://www.rbcroyalbank.com/RBC:RedLwo71A8YAAx468QY/aboriginal/r_comm.html)

<sup>121</sup> This invitation, from AFN National Chief Phil Fontaine, is highlighted on the inside cover of the program that was handed to participants at a gala dinner announcing the AFN Corporate Challenge, January 23, 2007, Saskatoon, Saskatchewan.

<sup>122</sup> For some of the examples, see the section on business development in *Corporate Aboriginal Relations: Best Practice Case Studies*, by P. Sloan and R. Hill (Toronto: Hill Sloan Associates Inc., 1995). For a review of resource industry corporations working with Aboriginal businesses in Alberta and Northern Saskatchewan, see the section on business development in *Learning from Experience: Aboriginal Programs in the Resources Industries* (Alberta Chamber of Resources, January 2006).

<sup>123</sup> Syncrude Canada Limited. (2005). See [http://www.syncrude.com/who\\_we\\_are/index.html](http://www.syncrude.com/who_we_are/index.html)

<sup>124</sup> See [http://www.syncrude.com/community/images/ab\\_review2002.pdf](http://www.syncrude.com/community/images/ab_review2002.pdf) for Syncrude's (2002) *aboriginal review*.

<sup>125</sup> See Syncrude's *The business case for corporate social responsibility*, at <http://www.syncrude.com/investors/speeches18.html> (2003)

<sup>126</sup> *Learning from Experience: Aboriginal Programs in the Resources Industries* (Alberta Chamber of Resources, January 2006), p. 47.

<sup>127</sup> For information on the Cameco Corporation, see <http://www.cameco.com/>

<sup>128</sup> *Learning from Experience: Aboriginal Programs in the Resources Industries* (Alberta Chamber of Resources, January 2006), p. 55.

<sup>129</sup> Report of the National Aboriginal Financing Task Force, Pre-Final Report, *The Promise of the Future: Achieving Economic Self-Sufficiency Through Access to Capital*, March 22, 1996 (p.10).

<sup>130</sup> K. K. Myrah and R. R. Currie, Examining Undergraduate Entrepreneurship Education, in the *Journal of Small Business and Entrepreneurship*, Vol. 19, No. 3 (July 2006), pp. 233-253.

<sup>131</sup> List some of the programs at places like Trent, UofL, UofS, UVic, NVIT, SIIT, and FNUC

<sup>132</sup> For more on the Nicola Valley Institute of Technology (NVIT), see <http://www.nvit.ca/>

<sup>133</sup> See <http://www.nvit.ca/dept.asp?deptID=2>

<sup>134</sup> For more on the First Nations University of Canada, see <http://www.firstnationsuniversity.ca/>

<sup>135</sup> For more information on the First Nations University of Canada School of Business and Public Administration, see <http://www.firstnationsuniversity.ca/default.aspx?page=20>

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- <sup>136</sup> See [http://www.firstnationsuniversity.ca/images/Info\\_July\\_2006.pdf](http://www.firstnationsuniversity.ca/images/Info_July_2006.pdf) for the First Nations University of Canada *Information Sheet*: February 2005 to June 2006.
- <sup>137</sup> For more information on the University of Saskatchewan's MBA: Indigenous Management Specialization, go to [http://www.commerce.usask.ca/programs/mba/specializations\\_indigenous.aspx?sm=c27](http://www.commerce.usask.ca/programs/mba/specializations_indigenous.aspx?sm=c27)
- <sup>138</sup> See <http://www.commerce.usask.ca/programs/aboriginal/message.asp>
- <sup>139</sup> See <http://www.commerce.usask.ca/studentclubs/abss/index.htm>
- <sup>140</sup> For more on Cape Breton University, see [http://www.cbu.ca/cbu/\\_main/home.asp](http://www.cbu.ca/cbu/_main/home.asp)
- <sup>141</sup> See the following for an overview of Cape Breton University's MBA(CED) Programs: [http://www.cbu.ca/cbu/\\_main/default\\_main.asp?topic=programs&id=mba\\_ced&menu=School%20of%20Business](http://www.cbu.ca/cbu/_main/default_main.asp?topic=programs&id=mba_ced&menu=School%20of%20Business)
- <sup>142</sup> W. A. Wuttunee, *In Business For Ourselves: Northern Entrepreneurs*, (Montreal: McGill-Queen's University Press, 1992).
- <sup>143</sup> P. D. Elias, *Northern Aboriginal Communities: Economies and Development*, (North York: Captus Press Inc., 1995).
- <sup>144</sup> K. B. Chiste, *Aboriginal Small Business and Entrepreneurship in Canada*, (North York: Captus Press Inc., 1996).
- <sup>145</sup> R. B. Anderson, *Economic Development among the Aboriginal Peoples in Canada: The Hope for the Future*, (North York: Captus Press Inc., 1999).
- <sup>146</sup> R. B. Anderson, *Aboriginal Entrepreneurship and Business Development*, (North York: Captus Press Inc., 2002).
- <sup>147</sup> See an overview of R. B. Anderson's book, *Aboriginal Entrepreneurship and Business Development* at the Captus Press website, posted at <http://www.captus.com/>.
- <sup>148</sup> W. Wuttunee, *Living Rhythms: Lessons in Aboriginal Economic Resilience and Vision*, (Montreal: McGill-Queen's University Press, 2004).
- <sup>149</sup> The Journal of Small Business and Entrepreneurship, Vol. 18, No. 2 (Spring 2005).
- <sup>150</sup> Saskatchewan and Aboriginal Peoples in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century: Social, Economic and Political Changes and Challenges (also referred to as the "Red Book"), Regina: PrintWest Publishing Services, 1997.
- <sup>151</sup> R. B. Anderson, A. M. Peredo, B. Honig, L. P. Dana, and W. Weir, *The Saskatchewan Experience*, in L.P. Dana and R. B. Anderson (eds.), *International Handbook of Research on Indigenous Entrepreneurship*, (Cheltenham, UK: Edward Elgar, 2007): pp. 352-365.
- <sup>152</sup> Aboriginal Business Service Network – B.C., *BC Aboriginal Entrepreneurs: A Growing Force* (BC Aboriginal Small Business Profile, n.d.), posted at [http://www.firstbusiness.ca/guides/bc\\_aes\\_profile.pdf](http://www.firstbusiness.ca/guides/bc_aes_profile.pdf).
- <sup>153</sup> For more information on AFOA, see <http://www.afoa.ca/index.asp>. An individual may become a member of AFAO through this site, which includes access to tools and management information tailored, in part, for small business owners. It also includes a subscription to the AFAO Journal of Aboriginal Management (or JAM).
- <sup>154</sup> Skeena Native Development Society, *Masters in our Own House: Report of the Think Tank on First Nations Wealth Creation*, (Vancouver: West Coast Reproduction Centre, 2003), p. 3.
- <sup>155</sup> See [http://www.naaf.ca/html/awards\\_e.html](http://www.naaf.ca/html/awards_e.html)
- <sup>156</sup> See <http://www.tcig.biz/>
- <sup>157</sup> For more on the Aboriginal Workforce Participation Initiative, which was launched in 1991, see [http://www.ainc-inac.gc.ca/ai/awpi/index\\_e.html](http://www.ainc-inac.gc.ca/ai/awpi/index_e.html)
- <sup>158</sup> See, for example, *Chief: The Fearless Vision of Billy Diamond*, by Roy MacGregor (Ontario: Viking - Penguin Books Canada Ltd.) 1989.
- <sup>159</sup> See, for example, *Venturing Forth*, a series of documentaries filmed by Brenda Chambers, that has been shown on the Aboriginal Peoples Television Network (APTN) starting in 1999 (Chambers, herself an Aboriginal entrepreneur, was named one of Canada's "Top-40 Under-40" entrepreneurs in 2003, also receiving a National Aboriginal Achievement Award in 2005, the Global Indigenous Entrepreneur Award from the World Summit of Indigenous Entrepreneurs in 2003 and an Aboriginal Media Arts Award for *Venturing Forth*.) She own Brenco Media Inc., located in Kelowna, B.C. See <http://www.venturingforth.com/> and [http://www.naaf.ca/html/b\\_chambers\\_e.html](http://www.naaf.ca/html/b_chambers_e.html)
- <sup>160</sup> For example, see *Open For Business* (Carleton Productions, 2004: at [carletonproductions.com/ab\\_biz](http://carletonproductions.com/ab_biz)) and *The Storyteller: Aboriginal Business Leaders* (Alberta Economic Development, 2006: produced by the idea factory! At [ideafactory.ca](http://ideafactory.ca)).
- <sup>161</sup> See, for example, the cases profiled by the Department of Indian and Northern Affairs Canada, at [http://www.ainc-inac.gc.ca/nr/ecd/aen\\_e.html](http://www.ainc-inac.gc.ca/nr/ecd/aen_e.html)
- <sup>162</sup> For example, the CBC National News presented a full-length feature on Chief Clarence Louie and business development supported and created at the Osoyoos Indian Band, February 7<sup>th</sup>, 2007.

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<sup>163</sup> For more on *aboriginaltimes*, a non-political forum (magazine ) initially published for the exchange of information to enhance the growing relationship between Corporate Canada and the economic union of Aboriginal communities, see <http://www.aboriginaltimes.com/>

<sup>164</sup> For more on *Windspeaker*, and the Aboriginal Multi-Media Society, see [http://www.ammsa.com/dsp\\_login.asp](http://www.ammsa.com/dsp_login.asp)

<sup>165</sup> For more on *Eagle Feather News*, a division of Aboriginal Consulting Services, see <http://www.eaglefeathernews.com/>

<sup>166</sup> For more on *SAY*, a magazine for Native/Aboriginal Youth, see <http://www.saymag.com/>

<sup>167</sup> See <http://www.aptn.ca/>

<sup>168</sup> Set-aside contracts for Aboriginal businesses participating in the Federal Governments Aboriginal procurement Strategy are mandated in cases where the end-users or client group are 80% Aboriginal. Aboriginal businesses must still bid for these “set aside” contracts on a competitive basis.

<sup>169</sup> F. Wien, *The Royal Commission Report: Nine Steps to Rebuild Aboriginal Economies*, *Journal of Aboriginal Economic Development*, Vol. 1, No. 1 (1999), p. 115.

<sup>170</sup> *Aboriginal Business Canada, Aboriginal Entrepreneurs in Canada—Progress and Prospects*.

<sup>171</sup> While I attended the Edmonton workshop, no materials were published for the public regarding the event. However, for further information regarding Aboriginal trade through the Department of Foreign Affairs and International Trade (DFAIT), please refer to their newsletter, *Aboriginal Planet*, posted at <http://www.dfait-maeci.gc.ca/aboriginalplanet/archives/august2005/cover-en.asp>. As well, for an overview of

<sup>172</sup> See the AIBD information sheet (n.d.), posted at [http://www.aboriginalcanada.gc.ca/abdt/apps/vats2.nsf/pAIBD\\_en.html](http://www.aboriginalcanada.gc.ca/abdt/apps/vats2.nsf/pAIBD_en.html). On the sheet you will find the objectives of the AIBD plan, including the ability:

- To maximize the accessibility and use of available government programs and services within the Aboriginal business community.
- To help identify the needs of Aboriginal SMEs at all stages of export development (potential exporters, export-ready firms and active exporters).
- To increase the level of participation by Aboriginal firms in mainstream trade activities and to develop special initiatives appropriate to unique opportunities and challenges.
- To address the strong need for capacity building and skills development in order to increase the number of export-ready and export active firms.
- To integrate and coordinate the participation of Team Canada Inc. partners so that the impact of existing and new federal government programs and services is maximized for Aboriginal companies.

<sup>173</sup> *Aboriginal Entrepreneurs in Canada—Progress and Prospects*, Aboriginal Business Canada, 1998, L4.

<sup>174</sup> P. 19 *The Road Less Travelled: Aboriginal Entrepreneurs Building Economic Independence in the 1990s*, Aboriginal Business Canada, 1998.

<sup>175</sup> *Ibid*

<sup>176</sup> 2002 survey gender

<sup>177</sup> SME FDI p. 12

<sup>178</sup> See, for example, Helen Ruth Aspaas’ 2004 article *Minority Women’s Microenterprises in Rural Areas of the United States of America: African American, Hispanic American and Native American Case Studies* (*GeoJournal*: 61), pp. 281-289.

<sup>179</sup> For more on Yovhan Burega, a former member of the *CBA/DIAND Working Group on Access to Capital* and former Vice President of the First Nations Bank of Canada, see

<http://www.cba.ca/en/viewDocument.asp?fl=5&sl=13&tl=70&docid=139&pg=1>

<sup>180</sup> See <http://www.cba.ca/en/viewDocument.asp?fl=5&sl=69&tl=84&docid=215&pg=1>

<sup>181</sup> See <http://www.edu.gov.mb.ca/youth/Employers/AboriginalInternship.html>

<sup>182</sup> For example, see the Alberta Government’s *ThinkTrades: Alberta Aboriginal Apprenticeship Project*, through which Aboriginal youth can learn the trades required of their business plans. See [www.thinktrades.com](http://www.thinktrades.com)

<sup>183</sup> See

[http://www.cbsc.org/servlet/ContentServer?cid=1101731549626&pagename=CBSC\\_FE%2Fdisplay&lang=en&c=GuideInfoGuide](http://www.cbsc.org/servlet/ContentServer?cid=1101731549626&pagename=CBSC_FE%2Fdisplay&lang=en&c=GuideInfoGuide)

<sup>184</sup> The following is based on work I have done with a group of First Nation and Métis ‘lifers’ living the federal penitentiary located in Prince Albert (PA), Saskatchewan. I became involved as a volunteer with the Lifers and the Joint Connections Co-operative starting the summer of 2003. I have traveled to Prince Albert to visit and work with the members approximately 10 times, between August 2003 and August 2004.

<sup>185</sup> Luciani, F. P. (2000). *Classifying Offenders Serving Life Sentences*. Correctional Services

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*Forum on Corrections Research*. Volume 12, Number 3, September 2000. Available at [http://www.csc-scc.gc.ca/text/pblct/forum/e123/123f\\_e.pdf](http://www.csc-scc.gc.ca/text/pblct/forum/e123/123f_e.pdf), p. 22.

<sup>186</sup> E. C. Howe, *Saskatchewan with an Aboriginal Majority: Education and Entrepreneurship*, University of Saskatchewan, unpublished, 2006, p. 10.

<sup>187</sup> *The Road Less Traveled: Aboriginal Entrepreneurs Building Economic Independence in the 1990s*, Aboriginal Business Canada, 1998.

<sup>188</sup> Muller, Helen Juliette (2000), *It Takes a Community to Create an American Indian Business and Management Course* (Journal of Management Education: Volume 24, Issue 2), p. 183.

<sup>189</sup> See the August 2002 report "Evaluation of the Procurement Strategy for Aboriginal Business" prepared by the Departmental Audit and Evaluation Branch of the Department of Indian Affairs and Northern Development: Corporate Services, with the collaboration of the Prairie Research Associates Inc., (pages i, ii, and iv).

<sup>190</sup> Information on the Public Sector Aboriginal Business Association (PSABA) was gathered at the recent Excellence in Action conference in Saskatoon, at a PSABA presentation by Holly Cooper, January 24, 2007.

<sup>191</sup> For more information on the Canadian Council for Aboriginal Business, see <http://www.ccab.com/>

<sup>192</sup> For more on CCAB's Progressive Aboriginal Relations (PAR) Program, including the list of corporations that have received PAR recognition, see <http://www.ccab.com/par/par-companies.php>

<sup>193</sup> See the link to their art contest at <http://www.peacehills.com/default.aspx?PageID=1016>, which also includes links to past contests winners and their artwork.

<sup>194</sup> SME FDI V. 1 p. 17

<sup>195</sup> For example, CANDO began to ask questions in its 1998 study, *Aboriginal Entrepreneurs on the Internet*. However, while internet access is still a key area of interest for many entrepreneurs and organizations, not much has been accomplished in this area to date. See John Cooper's 2000 article, *Wired For Business* (CMA Management, Volume 74, Issue 2: pp. 20-24.

<sup>196</sup> The Royal Commission on Aboriginal Peoples (RCAP) Final Report, Vol. 2, Chapter 5, (Ottawa: Minister of Supplies and Services Canada, 1996), p. 775.

<sup>197</sup> M. Morris, M. Schindehutte, and J. Lessier, p. 35

<sup>198</sup> Wortman p. 23

<sup>199</sup> Report of the National Aboriginal Financing Task Force, Pre-Final Report, *The Promise of the Future: Achieving Economic Self-Sufficiency Through Access to Capital*, March 22, 1996 (p. 9). Other recommendations include support and restructuring of Aboriginal Capital Corporations (ACCs), the expansion of the Aboriginal financial network, set-aside government contracts, taxation incentives, human resource development in financial management, the creation of a national Aboriginal database and business directory, and remote access to internet. They also recommend that Aboriginal communities put more effort in letting the private sector know they are open for business and partnering with non-Aboriginal businesses.

<sup>200</sup> D. Laentiis, Joanne (1994), *Beyond the Bounds of Traditional Lending* (Canadian Business Review: Volume 21, Issue 1), p. 19.

<sup>201</sup> AFN National Chief Phil Fontaine speeches and comments, referenced earlier.

<sup>202</sup> K. Hindle and M. Lansdowne, "Brave Spirits on New Paths: Toward a Globally Relevant Paradigm of Indigenous Entrepreneurship Research," *Journal of Small Business and Entrepreneurship* 18, no.2 (Spring 2005): p. 132.

<sup>203</sup> K. Hindle and M. Lansdowne, p. 140.

<sup>204</sup> See, for example, David Newhouse, *Modern Aboriginal Economies: Capitalism with a Red Face*, in the Journal of Aboriginal Economic Development, Volume 1, Number 2 (CANDO and Captus Press, Winter 2000), p. 57. In this article Newhouse briefly touches on Aboriginal business and trade spanning the 17<sup>th</sup>, 18<sup>th</sup>, and 19<sup>th</sup> centuries.

<sup>205</sup> David Newhouse, *The Care and Support of Aboriginal Economies*, in the Journal of Aboriginal Economic Development, Volume 1, Number 2 (CANDO and Captus Press, Winter 2000), p. 81.