



**Native Women's
Association of Canada**

41st Annual General Assembly

Annual Report 2015



July 11-12, 2015

**Le Centre Sheraton Montréal
1201 Rene-Levesque Blvd West, Montréal, QC**

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Overview

The Native Women's Association of Canada (NWAC) was incorporated in 1974 and is one of the five officially recognized National Aboriginal Organizations (NAOs) whose purpose is to represent and speak at the national level, on behalf of Aboriginal women in Canada.

NWAC is led by an elected president whose term is three years. The president is the official spokesperson for NWAC and has the authority to act on behalf of the Board of Directors. NWAC is governed by a Board of Directors that includes the President of NWAC, the President or designate of each of the Provincial/Territorial Member Association (PTMAs), as well as four (4) Elders and four (4) youth to represent the four (4) directions.

The head office of NWAC is located in Akwesasne with a satellite office established in Ottawa, Ontario. There are approximately 25 full-time staff which is comprised of an Executive Director and two Directors and 3 Senior Managers. The files being addressed by NWAC include: employment and labour, health, human rights and international affairs and environment, and addressing all forms of violence with a special focus on missing and murdered Aboriginal women and girls.

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Noreen McAteer (West) Fort Vermilion, AB	Annie Modeste (North) Fort McPherson, NT

4 Regional Youth Representatives

Chenise Hache (East) Nova Scotia Native Women's Association	Youth South Vacant
Kari-Dawn Wuttunee (West) Saskatchewan Aboriginal Women's Circle Corporation	Youth North Vacant

Mission

To help empower women by being involved in developing and changing legislation that affects them, and by involving them in the development and delivery of programs promoting equal opportunity for Aboriginal women.

Objectives

The principles or objectives of the Native Women's Association of Canada include to:

- Be the national voice for Aboriginal women;
- Address issues in a manner which reflects the changing needs of Aboriginal women in Canada; Aboriginal peoples in our role as mothers and leaders;
- Promote equal opportunities for Aboriginal women in programs and activities;
- Serve as a resource among our constituency and Aboriginal communities;
- Cultivate and teach the characteristics that are unique aspects of our cultural and historical traditions;
- Assist Aboriginal women's organizations, as well as community initiatives in the development of their local projects;
- Advance issues and concerns of Aboriginal women;
- Link with other Aboriginal organizations with common goals.

Vision

We have a vision of Aboriginal communities where all individuals have an opportunity to develop their talents in order to achieve their full potential. We see communities where all people can lead healthy lifestyles by maintaining balance in their spiritual, mental and physical health. We see Aboriginal communities where our children identify with their heritage and have pride in their culture. We see communities that seek to broaden their knowledge about things that affect them, as well as their relationship with the environment and the land. We see communities where all our people can learn our history and traditional ways, while attaining a high level of academic education with the broader society.

In order to accomplish this, we envision strong Aboriginal families that nurture their children to be proud of their background and comfortable in a predominantly non-Aboriginal environment. We imagine families where all Aboriginal people accept and exercise their responsibilities to contribute to a strong community.

We also envision an Aboriginal community that understands and respects the diversity and uniqueness of all Aboriginal Nations: a community that communicates and works in unity with all Aboriginal organizations to maintain solidarity and enhance the ability to exercise our Aboriginal and Treaty rights. We envision an Aboriginal community that assumes the responsibility of selecting leaders who will be role models for our youth and the following generations. We envision an Aboriginal community that

determines how our natural resources are utilized and at the same time co-exist in cooperation with society free of racism and discrimination.

Messages

President's Message

It has been an honour to have the opportunity to assume the role of President, after having worked for many years as the Vice-President of the Native Women's Association of Canada (NWAC) and as the President of the Ontario Native Women's Association. I would like to thank the former President, Michèle Audette, for her years of service and I wish her well in her future endeavours. NWAC has been thoroughly engaged both domestically and internationally for more than 40 years working to advance the rights of Indigenous women and girls, and this year has been no exception.

NWAC is continuing to call for a National Public Inquiry into the crisis of Canada's missing and murdered Aboriginal women and girls, now reaching over 1180. Unfortunately, substantial and significant action from the Government of Canada (GoC) has yet to be implemented and while overall female homicide rates have decreased, the number of missing or murdered Aboriginal women and girls keeps rising.

NWAC has worked with many allies including our Provincial/Territorial Member Associations, the Assembly of First Nations, the Canadian Feminist Alliance for International Action, many unions, and others to address the high rates of violence against Aboriginal women and girls and the GoC's failure to respond appropriately to this crisis. Our women and girls experience widespread discrimination and are amongst the most socially and economically disadvantaged groups in Canadian society—a reality which is deeply rooted in colonization. Discrimination against Aboriginal women and girls is also embedded in the culture of the Canadian criminal justice system. The marginalization of Aboriginal women and girls by society at large and by the justice system not only makes them prey for violent men, but is also used by the GoC as a justification for failing to protect them.

Despite overwhelming statistics concerning the difficult realities Aboriginal women face, the GoC has failed in their obligation to exercise due diligence to adequately prevent the violence, investigate reports of disappearances and murders, and bring perpetrators to justice. Authorities, and in particular the Federal Government, have failed to implement a comprehensive National Action Plan to address the violence, including measures to address the social and economic factors contributing to increased risk of violence, appropriate training for police, prosecutors and judges in all jurisdictions, effective police protocols for properly investigating missing Aboriginal women and girls, the creation of reliable systems for disaggregated data collection, co-ordination across police jurisdictions, and the creation and implementation of accountability mechanisms. Initiatives to address issues thus far have been piecemeal and ineffective.

With a National Strategy, we can begin to address the disadvantaged social and economic conditions of Aboriginal women and girls, including poverty, inadequate housing, low educational attainment,



inadequate child welfare policies, programs, services, numerous health issues and the over-criminalization of Aboriginal women.

NWAC is committed to eliminating violence against Aboriginal women and girls and knows that the safety and security of women in communities is directly linked to Aboriginal Peoples' self-determination and the dismantling of the social, political, and economic barriers that impede the rights of Aboriginal Peoples. NWAC will continue to address the barriers to our human, civil, political, and social rights; barriers that have caused disproportionately high rates of poverty, violence, and dispossession of lands and resources. The solutions are in the regeneration of Aboriginal values and structures that respect and encourage the full participation of Aboriginal women and girls in society. Self-determination and nationhood with independent governance structures and capacities will enable us to address poverty, violence, and the restoration of our traditional territories.

Strong and meaningful implementation of the UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples and the many rights it affirms within Canada will greatly contribute to improvement of safety, security, wellness, and strength for Aboriginal women and girls, and as a result, for Aboriginal societies and communities as a whole.

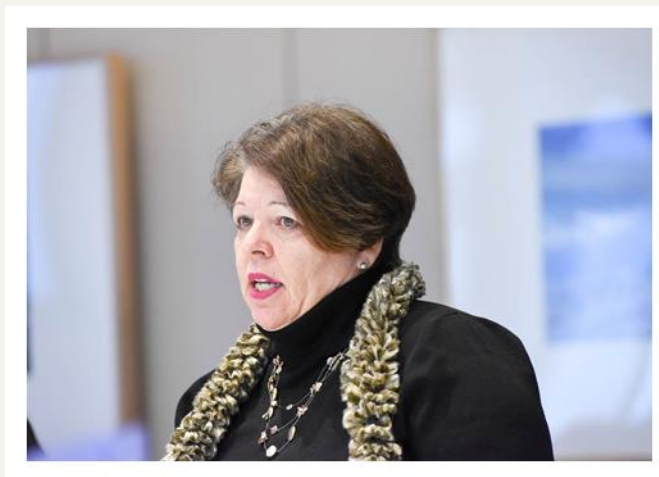
I look forward to continuing this important work for many years to come.

Dr. Dawn Lavell Harvard, President

Annual Message from the Executive Director

Kwey, Hello, Bonjour!

It gives me great pleasure to be with you today in Montreal, Quebec on Mohawk territory, one of the oldest cities of Canada with lots of old-world charm that is mixed with the very modern. I hope you get the chance to visit the many sites that this city has to offer during your stay here and to go to the 25th Kahnawake Pow-Wow that is being held as well today and tomorrow.



First though, I would like to take a moment to thank the Mohawk Nation for allowing us to meet here and to acknowledge the Elders, guests, leaders and delegates from all parts of Canada who have travelled from afar to be here for our 41st AGA. Again this year, the AGA is falling on my NWAC work anniversary with this being my fifth year as the Executive Director of NWAC.

My report will briefly highlight the work that has been accomplished since the last AGA, which was held exactly one year ago in Halifax, Nova Scotia. Please keep in mind that separate and more detailed reports have been written by the directors/managers detailing the work they've accomplished on each file such as: health, international affairs and human rights and environment, violence prevention and safety, entrepreneurship, labour market development and strategic partnerships to list some of the topics we've addressed in the past year. I would encourage you to read all their reports and see what each department has achieved in the past year which is aimed at improving the living conditions of Aboriginal women throughout Canada.

I have yet to encounter a non-busy year for NWAC! It seems that every year gets busier and more hectic than the last. I regard this as being positive as it demonstrates that NWAC is doing what it should be doing, which is to keep Aboriginal women issues at the political forefront and again this past year we have succeeded in doing that at both the national and international levels. And, while I agree that much more work is needed to improve the conditions of Aboriginal women in Canada, NWAC is seriously held back by its lack of access to financial resources and capacity required to move things further along and at a faster pace. We can only hope that things will improve in these two areas in the future!

In August, the former President of NWAC, Michèle Audette, Judy Clark, President of the Prince Edward Island (PEI) Provincial/Territorial Member Association (PTMA), and I attended the annual Council of Federation (COF) meeting that was held in Charlottetown, Prince Edward Island. This gathering is the only opportunity that the five official National Aboriginal Organizations' (NAO) leaders and the

Premiers of each Province and Territory meet at a private and closed-door session to discuss issues relevant to each. These meetings have been going on since 2009 and entail a great deal of preparation throughout the year through the Aboriginal Affairs Working Group process of which I am a member along with the other four NAO representatives. It was at the Charlottetown meeting last summer that the Premiers agreed to support the first National Roundtable for Missing and Murdered Aboriginal Women and Girls that was held in February in Ottawa, Ontario.

Last fall was especially busy because three major events had to be concurrently planned. In addition to NAWS IV, the October 4th Vigil on Parliament Hill had to be organized without staff in the Violence Prevention and Safety division, and planning for the National Roundtable had to begin as well. Although only to be held in February, this latter event, which evolved from the COF meeting of August, was to involve all levels of government i.e. Federal/Provincial/Territorial governments and the five NAOs. All the planning, negotiating and budgeting was left in the hands of the NAOs, who had to assume this work without any additional resources or capacity. Countless hours were spent on tele-conferences and in face-to-face meetings throughout the fall and winter in the planning of this event and even up to the actual day of the Roundtable.

Many of the NWAC staff and I spent a great deal of time and effort in the planning and organizing of the fourth National Aboriginal Women's Summit (NAWS IV), which was held in Membertou, Nova Scotia in October. Cheryl Maloney, President of the Nova Scotia PTMA, and me sat on a National Planning Committee that provided advice and guidance to the NAWS IV coordinator for several months before the gathering. About 170 women from all parts of Canada attended NAWS IV as well as high level officials and other dignitaries including a significant number of the NWAC Board of Directors. The event was a great success according to the evaluations completed by the participants. If you want more information on NAWS IV, NWAC has produced a report that is available here in hard copy and is also posted on our website, where it can be downloaded. I would encourage you to read the report in preparation for NAWS V to be held in the not too distant future.

At the same time as the planning of NAWS IV and the National Roundtable, plans for the ninth October 4th vigil had to be undertaken as well. About 100 people or more participated in last year's vigil, which was significant as the event was held on a rainy and cold Saturday. People were asked to meet at the Canadian War Museum and march up to the steps of Parliament Hill. The dignitaries who attended and addressed the crowd were: former Kitigan Zibi Chief Gilbert Whiteduck, Justin Trudeau as well as his spouse, Sophie Grégoire, Dr. Stanley Vollant, Dr. Carolyn Bennett, Alex Neve of Amnesty International, President Clément Chartier of the Métis National Council, Congress of Aboriginal Peoples National Chief Betty Ann Lavallée and several family members including Connie Greyeyes, Randy Napoleon and the mother and aunt of Ramona Shuller. It was a solemn event with most of the speakers and people asking for action and supporting the call for a National Public Inquiry.

In September, I attended the World Conference on Indigenous Peoples at the United Nations in New York City, New York and in November I also accompanied the former NWAC president, Michèle Audette, who spoke at an international conference on prostitution and trafficking in Paris, France. The issue of trafficking is a worldwide problem that is affecting Aboriginal girls in Canada and is an issue that NWAC must continue to address.

In December, I attended a meeting organized by the Royal Canadian Mounted Police in Prince Albert, Saskatchewan. We heard first-hand how RCMP constables face many challenges in working in northern Aboriginal communities that have very limited resources. Interim President Dawn Harvard and 1st Vice-President, Marion Horne also attended this two-day meeting.

In January, the final report of the Inter-American Commission on Human Rights (IACHR) was released. The recommendations of this report clearly indicate that more needs to be done in our society to ensure the safety and wellness of Aboriginal women and girls in Canada. Dawn was sought to do interviews from television, radio and newspaper outlets upon the release of this report. It received wide coverage but, to date, little action has ensued.

Discussion and negotiations for the shaping of the Roundtable took up a great deal of my time during the months of January and February 2015. Consensus had to be achieved by all parties – the five NAOs and the Federal/Provincial/Territorial governments –before any decision on the Roundtable process could be put into action. I think you can all well imagine how challenging and frustrating such a process can be without me going into specifics. Nonetheless, the first Roundtable was held in February and every jurisdiction committed to addressing violence against Aboriginal women and girls in a more collaborative manner. They committed to a second National Roundtable in 2016; the development of a National Prevention and Awareness Campaign, that Manitoba will host an inaugural forum on policing and justice responses and the officials also approved the Framework for Action document that was presented at the Roundtable. I, and other NAO representatives, continue to work on this file to ensure that there is follow-up to the commitments made and to help design a better more workable process for the second Roundtable.

Project proposals were submitted to Aboriginal Affairs and Northern Development Canada (AANDC) last February 2014, as required. Eight of the 10 projects submitted were approved with Contribution Agreements only signed this past December. So the work that ought to have been carried out over a 12-month period, as per the project proposals' timelines, had to be completed in three or four months, that is by the end of the fiscal year, March 31, 2015. I am pleased to say that all the work has been completed in that shortened time span, and to inform you that 10 proposals have been submitted for the 2015-16 fiscal year. We are hoping that all our proposals will be approved so we can address issues that affect Aboriginal women.

A two-day Board of Director's meeting was held in Gatineau, Quebec in February 2015. All other meetings with the full Board and/or Executive Council were carried out by phone due to budgetary constraints. It was at the February Board meeting that the former President, Michèle Audette, relinquished her role as President of NWAC to pursue other career challenges. Dawn Lavell Harvard, 1st Vice-President, was selected by the Board of Directors to complete the three-year term, which is ending at this AGA in July 2015. The NWAC president for the next three years will be elected at this AGA.

In March, or *March Madness* as we like to call it, everyone at NWAC scurries to complete their work and to spend their project funds by March 31st. If project funds for specific projects are not spent, they must be returned to the funder. Usually, the last quarter of the fiscal year is when NWAC has the most staff on board and has to seek out the assistance of consultants to finish the projects on time and to meet the project deliverables as per the Contribution Agreements. It is also during this busy period that we have to develop new project proposals to fit the government's criteria.

As well in March, the long awaited report of the United Nations Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW) was released and with that came the preparation of press releases and speaking points for the President and Board members. This report, as well as the IACHR report, condemns Canada for its treatment of Aboriginal women but regardless which national or international body states this fact, it seems to not make a difference to those who are in power to bring about change. Notwithstanding this fact, NWAC should be proud that through their perseverance and commitment to the issue of violence against women, international bodies like the UN CEDAW and IACHR listened to them and came to Canada to investigate. This is no small feat!

In April, I submitted to AANDC all the proof of the work that was completed by NWAC throughout the previous fiscal year to account for the core funding received. Copies of all press releases, final project reports, number of meetings attended, presentations and speeches must be provided and approved before the next year's core funding is released. Since 2008, NWAC's core funding has remained relatively the same although the workload has significantly increased.

May and June are devoted to the planning and organizing of the Annual General Assembly (AGA), which is NWAC's main public event. An AGA ad hoc planning committee made up of volunteer Board of Directors and staff conceptualizes the event and the staff put these ideas into action. This year's volunteer AGA ad hoc committee members were: Dawn Harvard, Marian Horne, Judy Clark, Ruth Kidder, Chenise Hache and Noreen McAteer. Please join me in thanking them for being on the committee, which does take time and effort on their part.

Above are the outstanding highlights of the past year. As you will note by way of the Interim President's and my report, as well as those provided by the Directors and Managers, NWAC remains active on all fronts and is involved in many ventures that show promise of improving the status quo of

Aboriginal women in Canada. And, while we still have a long way to go, I sincerely believe that if we remain united, committed and persevere in our efforts, we can and will bring about positive change for Aboriginal women in Canada.

In closing, I would like to thank the Board of Directors for their support, which I greatly appreciate, as well as the staff who continue to provide me with the day-to-day assistance needed to move NWAC's mandate forward.

Migwech, Merci, Thank you!

Claudette Dumont-Smith, Executive Director

Current Files

Labour Market Development (LMD) Annual Report

Over the last year, the Labour Market Development (LMD) department of NWAC had three (3) major programs that we have managed and delivered. These programs are as follows:

- the Aboriginal Skills Employment and Training Strategy (ASETS);
- the Strategic Partnership Agreement (SPA); and
- Barriers and Opportunities in the Resource Development Sector (BORDS).

Aboriginal Skills Employment and Training Strategy (ASETS)

Prepared by: Dan Peters

In the 2014/15 and for the 2015/2016 fiscal year, NWAC has eleven (11) Provincial/Territorial Member Associations (PTMAs) delivering the ASETS program across Canada.

The ASETS program was initiated in 2010 and has been extended to March 31, 2016. In an effort to ensure NWAC's inclusion in any new programming, during the past year, the LMD Team worked hard to maintain our accountability, increase our partnership base, and improve our client results.

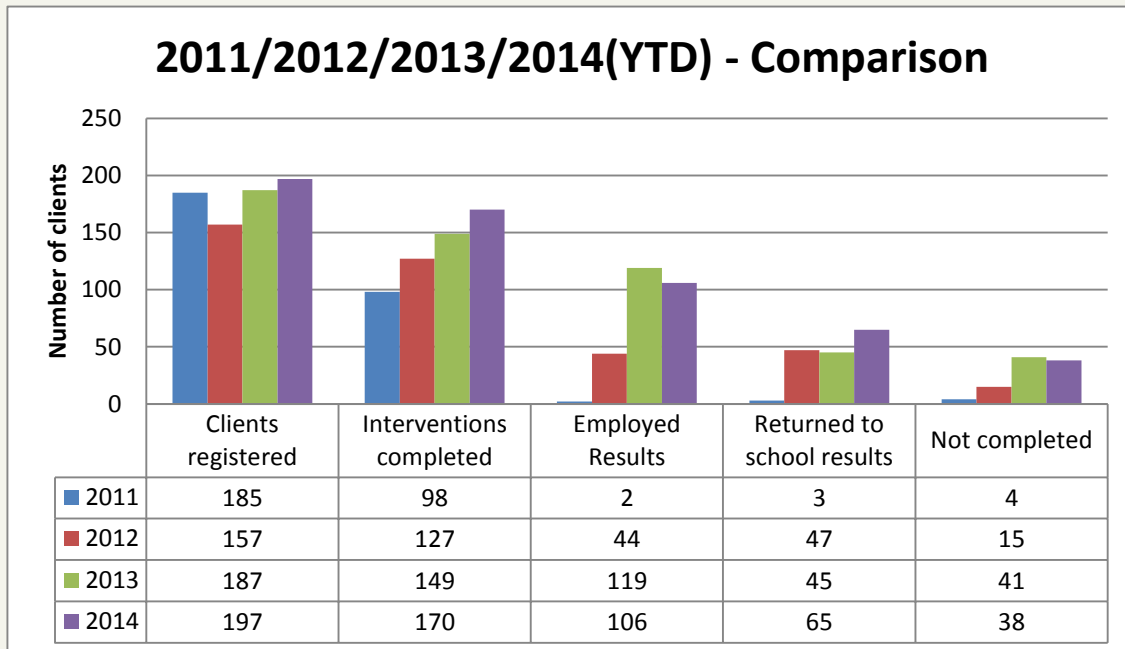
In the area of accountability, the LMD department verified that all financial and narrative reports required by the Employment and Social Development Canada (ESDC) were submitted on or before program deadlines. The LMD department was able to monitor overall ASETS spending and ensure that no dollars associated with the 2014/2015 program would need to be returned to the Government of Canada.

In terms of partnerships, the LMD team has renewed and obtained new labour market partnerships that leverage private and public sector partners to hire Aboriginal women. The LMD department continued to use the partnership vehicle entitled, the 'Spirit of Cooperation' document. To date, the LMD department has renewed or initiated 9 of these documents with the following:

1. ATS Canada;
2. Securitas;
3. Canadian Apprenticeship Forum;
4. Greyhound Canada;
5. The Momentum Centre;
6. Correctional Service Canada;
7. Wood Manufacturing Council;

8. Spirit Link Communications;
9. Urban Circle Training Centre;

Client results are integral to our success; the KETO database was another area that we continue to focus our efforts. LMD-ASETS dedicates a staff person to guarantee all entries by the ASETS Coordinators are complete and closed as required. As the following chart indicates, our data is accurate and reflective of the hard work that ASETS Coordinators completed during program delivery. It should be noted the final upload for data results will not occur until after the 2015 AGA. We are anticipating record results.



Key Events for ASETS

The LMD team with some welcomed support from our NWAC sister program the Strategic Partnership Agreement was able to engage, participate, educate as well as identify partners in the following events:

1. Canadian Aboriginal Minerals Association (CAMA);
2. Prospector and Developers Association of Canada (PDAC);
3. NWAC’s Aboriginal Women’s Business Entrepreneurship Network Conference AWBEN);
4. Aboriginal Financial Officers Association of Canada(AFOA);
5. Canadian Apprenticeship Forum;
6. Canadian Social Enterprise Conference;
7. Coordinator Trainings; and

8. Site visits and KETO training.

Helen Bassett Commemorative Student Award

The LMD manages the annual Helen Bassett Commemorative Student Award. After a review of all applicants, awards of \$1000 were given to four (4) Aboriginal youth from each of the four directions. The following individuals were the 2014 recipients of this scholarship:

- Caitlin Tolley
- Britnee Sheridan
- Sierra Bearchell
- Alyssa Flaherty-Spence

Upcoming Priorities

LMD-ASETS, activities will continue to focus on supporting our Sub-agreement holders and developing partnerships. We are looking forward to being a participant in any government discussions regarding new training and employment programming. We are also working towards actively promoting the NWAC-ASETS program particularly through the success stories of the Aboriginal women NWAC-ASETS and Sub-agreement holders have supported over the years. A summative evaluation is in the works and will be initiated in the fall of 2015.

APRIL WETRADE - NORTHWEST TERRITORIES

April Wetrade is a busy young Mom who works for ATS Services in her community of Gamlét Northwest Territories as an Observer/Communicator. In partnership with ATS the Native Women's Association of Canada (NWAC), was able to ensure her job start was a good one.

April's typical day at work starts off as observing the sky conditions and checking the rain gauge, doing opening readings and checking equipment to see if it's working properly. After the opening tasks April says, "I make my pot of coffee and look out the window and enjoy the view of beautiful Gamlét." Then every hour on the hour April goes outside to do the observation components of her job.

"The best part about working in the community is that you're close to family and friends who provide a great support network". As an Aboriginal woman I know I am strong and had a confidence I could succeed in the training and do well in the job, and I did and am doing well in my job."

DIANE ZOE - NORTHWEST TERRITORIES

Diane Zoe was sponsored through the Native Women's Association of the NWT. Diane is a young single parent of four children. Diane and her four children live in Yellowknife. Diane is originally from the small Dogrib community of Whati, approximately 200 km northwest of Yellowknife and has a population 500.

She is taking the Adult Education Program. When I first spoke to Diane regarding her application for funding to attend this program, I asked her why she wanted to take upgrading, she replied, "Because I want to be able to read to my kids, and help them with their school work"

Diane has won a literacy award from the NWT Literacy Council. She was also in the local news paper in February with her son working on a school project.

Diane plans to continue her schooling and her career plans are to be a classroom assistant.

Labour Market Development (LMD) Annual Report -- Strategic Partnership Agreement (SPA)

Prepared by: Beverly Blanchard

Although under the departmental umbrella of LMD, the Strategic Partnership Agreement (SPA) is a separate unit that focuses on policy development, consultations and partnership development. It also works closely with the ASETS program.

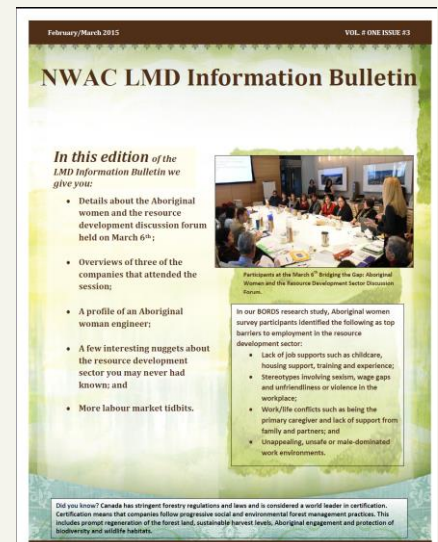


Although funding for the 2014-2015 SPA was not received until September 2014, we still managed to meet all of our deliverables. This past year, the SPA program was involved with two (2) ASETS Coordinator workshops. One was held in Toronto in November, and the second was held in Vancouver in March. We also conducted a youth employment and training survey in the winter/spring of 2015. The results of this survey will be released in the summer of 2015. The SPA program also funded and participated in Board/Project Committee meetings, as well as attending tradeshow and conferences that included some of the following:

1. Canadian Aboriginal Minerals Association (CAMA);
2. Prospectors and Developers Association of Canada (PDAC);
3. NWAC's Aboriginal Women's Business Entrepreneurship Network Conference (AWBEN); and
4. Aboriginal Financial Officers Association Canada (AFOA).

Attendance at these conferences was important for the brokering of partnerships, and we began developing a database of partners. To date we have approximately 100 corporate partnerships. One of these partnerships resulted in the signing of a Spirit of Cooperation with Running Deer Resources who has created the site www.workwarrior.ca. This site is an innovative solution designed to match employers with employees.

We also delivered a financial literacy workshop and a webinar entitled, "Diversity in the Trades-Aboriginal Women to the Canadian Apprenticeship Forum (CAF) audience. In addition, in the summer of 2014 we began developing and delivering the LMD-Information Bulletin on a quarterly basis. This newsletter is distributed to PTMAs, government and private sector partners.



Also through the SPA program, we provided the funds so the Outreach Coordinator could conduct three (3) site visits to Sub-agreement Holders to either provide one-on-one training to ASETS Coordinators and/or monitor how well the Sub-agreement Holders are delivering the ASETS in their region.

**Bridging the Gap: Aboriginal Women
and Resource Development**



Prepared by:
The Native Women's Association of Canada
March 2015

Barriers and Opportunities in the Resource Development Sector (BORDS)

The SPA team also managed and delivered the Barriers and Opportunities in the Resource Development Sector (BORDS) project. Funded by Aboriginal Affairs and Northern Development Canada (AANDC) this project's initial research was focused on exploring the barriers and opportunities Aboriginal women may be experiencing in gaining access to employment and training in the resource sector. The project also explored the experiences of companies in the industry. Based on the research results, on March 6th the project team held a discussion forum with Aboriginal women leaders and industry representatives to discuss how to bridge the gaps that are preventing Aboriginal women from participating in these projects. The report and recommendations from this session was distributed to PTMAs and over 100 companies, Aboriginal organizations and other sector specific agencies.

Upcoming Priorities - SPA

The SPA team will continue identify and seek out opportunities to improve Aboriginal women's well-being and employment/training opportunities. We have submitted two (2) proposals to AANDC to continue the dialogue with the corporate sector and are awaiting approvals for the projects. We will also submit a proposal to ESDC's Skills and Partnership Fund (SPF) once the call for proposal has been made.

Violence Prevention & Safety Department

Submitted by Gail Gallagher

NWAC is best positioned to undertake work in violence prevention on behalf of and for Aboriginal women and girls. NWAC, with funding from Status of Women Canada (SWC) has been instrumental in building awareness and leading social change in violence prevention and awareness through the Sisters in Spirit (SIS) and the Evidence to Action (ETA I & II) projects. These projects, SIS in particular have been instrumental in identifying and framing the issue and creating actions and responses to address it. While both projects aimed at ending extreme violence, with one heavily focused on identifying root causes and missing and murdered Aboriginal women and girls, Project PEACE aims solely at promoting safety, violence prevention and solution-based approaches for Aboriginal women and girls through engagement processes.

The Project PEACE acronym represents Prevention, Education, Action, Change and Evaluation through which personal safety nets can be created to provide the foundation of safety, which once established will support and build momentum towards a continuum of actions leading to greater economic stability and a decrease in poverty.

The Violence Prevention & Safety Manager was involved in all aspects of the planning of the recent February 27th, 2015 National Roundtable on Missing and Murdered Aboriginal Women and Girls, held in Ottawa, Ontario. In addition, the Family Gathering held on February 26th, 2015 and the Peoples Gathering held on February 27th, 2015 were two events also held at the same time.

To date, the Violence Prevention & Safety department has completed 16 focus groups in the following 4 regions: North, South, West and East. Two separate urban focus groups were held for Aboriginal women and girls and Aboriginal men and boys, as well as two separate rural focus groups. National webinars are planned next, in which participants will review survey results and outcomes from focus group discussions. Finally, the VPS Senior Manager will work towards development of two toolkits, one designed specifically for Aboriginal women and girls and one for Aboriginal men and boys, in order to address issues of violence and perceptions of safety experienced by Aboriginal women and girls. Recently, an external evaluator was hired, in order to evaluate these two toolkits once they are completed within the next 10 months.

In June 2015, the Violence Prevention & Safety Manager, Gail Gallagher and the PEKE Manager, Amy Nahwegahbow will be submitting an Elder abuse joint proposal to the Employment and Social Development Canada “Community Based Projects for Seniors”.

Activating Social Change Through Awareness & New Tool Generation

Prepared by: Cherry Smiley

Domestic violence affects not only the individuals directly involved, but also the people close to them and the communities they live in. Without education, intervention, and support, these experiences can continue in an ongoing cycle of fear and violence. For Aboriginal women and children this can be extreme and, in some cases, lead to death. A comprehensive, national effort to reduce violence and increase safety for Aboriginal women and children living on and off reserve is required to adequately address this issue. To meet this need, the Native Women's Association of Canada (NWAC) has completed the project, *Activating Social Change Through Awareness & New Tool Generation*.

The project has led to the creation of a new toolkit that is responsive to the immediate safety needs of Aboriginal women and children, *You Are Not Alone: A Toolkit for Aboriginal Women Escaping Domestic Violence*. The toolkit, available online at www.nwac.ca, supports Aboriginal women, children and their communities by introducing the concept of community safety planning. The toolkit includes a sample community safety plan and template, information about domestic violence, and *Who's Who?: A Resource Guide for Aboriginal Women Escaping Domestic Violence* that lists domestic violence resources across Canada. A video, now available online, and promotional items, including posters, t-shirts, change purses, water bottles, and bags, have been created to raise awareness about the issue of domestic violence. This project engaged experts and grassroots individuals across all levels, Aboriginal women survivors of domestic violence, and included partnership engagement and dialogue at the national level. Available in both official languages, the toolkit and promotional items have been well-received and feedback has been very positive. Nearly all printed toolkits have been distributed across Canada, and high demand for the resource has resulted in a second printing.

By raising awareness about the impacts of domestic violence, and through the promotion of community safety planning, the project promoted the need for building safer communities for Aboriginal women and children.

National Aboriginal Women's Summit IV

Prepared by: Cherry Smiley

The Native Women's Association of Canada (NWAC) and the Government of Nova Scotia co-hosted the fourth National Aboriginal Women's Summit (NAWS IV) from October 20 - 22, 2014 at the Membertou Trade and Convention Centre in the Membertou First Nation community, Nova Scotia. Planning for NAWS IV was overseen by a National Planning Committee, which was co-chaired by Denise Moore, Coordinator, Nova Scotia Office of Aboriginal Affairs, Aboriginal and Intergovernmental Relations, and Claudette Dumont-Smith, Executive Director of the Native Women's Association of Canada. The Planning Committee also consisted of representatives from the following organizations: the Assembly of First Nations, the Congress of Aboriginal Peoples, Inuit Tapiriit Kanatami, the Métis National Council, the Native Women's Association of Canada, the Nova Scotia Advisory Council on the Status of Women, the Nova Scotia Native Women's Association, the Nova Scotia Office of Aboriginal Affairs, Pauktuutit Inuit Women of Canada, and Women of the Métis Nation. A volunteer Provincial Planning Committee, consisting of Aboriginal women in the Mi'kmaq

territory, was established to support the Summit. This committee worked to develop the welcoming and cultural components of the gathering.

Previous NAWS Summits were held in 2007, 2008 and 2012 in Corner Brook, NL; Yellowknife, NT; and Winnipeg, MB respectively. NAWS I and II addressed multiple issues affecting the overall well-being of Aboriginal women in Canada, while NAWS III focused primarily on the issue of missing and murdered Aboriginal women and girls.

The theme of NAWS IV was *Promoting Empowerment, Equity, and Leadership*. NAWS IV was framed as an opportunity for Aboriginal women from across Canada to come together to share knowledge and engage in a solutions-based approach to existing recommendations developed in previous NAWS gatherings. This approach provided an opportunity for Aboriginal women, organizations, provincial and territorial governments, and key stakeholders to bring their knowledge and experiences to NAWS IV. The NAWS IV agenda also provided an opportunity for participants to experience the traditional ceremony, cultural showcase, and economic successes that make up the Membertou First Nation community.

The objectives of NAWS IV were to:

1. Provide a forum for sharing best practices and knowledge exchange;
2. Raise awareness on the range of issues affecting Aboriginal women in all their diversity;
3. Develop culturally-relevant and accessible responses to issues affecting Aboriginal women, their families and communities;
4. Increase the level of engagement and collaboration amongst Aboriginal communities, governments and Aboriginal organizations; and,
5. Assess previous NAWS recommendations and identify solutions-based actions.

Over 170 Aboriginal women delegates, speakers, and panelists, and over 30 provincial, territorial, and Aboriginal officials attended NAWS IV. Participants engaged in solutions-based discussions and engaged with past NAWS recommendations separated into 9 thematic areas:

1. Access to education
2. Capacity building and program development
3. Culture and tradition
4. Economic security
5. Gender equity
6. Health and safety
7. justice issues
8. 8.Legal strategies
9. Violence prevention
10. Environmental respect [Leadership panel only]

NWAC has developed a NAWS IV final report that will be disseminated to all NAWS IV delegates and will soon be available on the NWAC website at www.nwac.ca

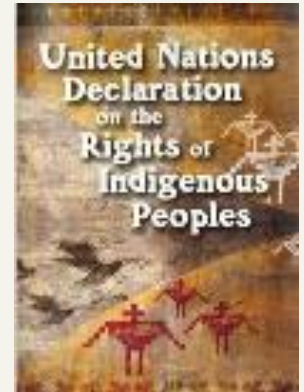
International Affairs and Human Rights

Prepared by: Teresa Edwards

Overview

The work in International Affairs and Human Rights continued to focus on ensuring that Aboriginal women's rights, distinct needs, and concerns are taken into account and implemented in relation to key Aboriginal issues that arise within Canada.

The United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples (Declaration) is the universal human rights instrument that is celebrated globally, and its implementation has resulted in significant improvements in the lives of Indigenous Peoples, and particularly Indigenous women, who are the most vulnerable in our population. NWAC is dedicated to ensuring that all Indigenous women experience the “minimum standards for the survival, dignity and well-being of the Indigenous Peoples of the world,” as stated within the Declaration. It outlines the individual and collective rights of Indigenous Peoples; affirms our right to live free from violence and discrimination; and protects our right to enjoy culture, identity, language, employment, health, and education. The Declaration further promotes our full and effective participation in all matters that concern us, and our rights to pursue economic and social development. This has motivated NWAC to collaborate with Elections Canada to inform women about how, when, and where to vote, and how they can become involved in decision-making roles at the local, regional and national levels.



Despite their endorsement, the Federal Government continues to view the Declaration as an aspirational document. As Indigenous women, we must breathe life into it at every opportunity in our day-to-day lives, implementing our rights and our commitment to using its clauses and principles in all areas of our lives, as well as in all of our own documentation.

IAHR believes that financial security for women will help them to establish their own personal security and safety and has been working with our partnerships within our Provincial/Territorial Member Associations (PTMAs) and their memberships, as well as other Aboriginal and equality seeking organizations to deliver workshops across Canada on financial literacy with workshops called, “Money Matters.”

We have also continued to work strategically with Indigenous organizations in Canada, the Americas, and international community to raise public education and awareness of Indigenous human rights violations that are continuing to happen in Canada today. Our lobbying to outside organizations, including Shadow Reports, Joint Statements, Presentations, Panel Participation, Press Releases, Standing Committees, etc. to the Senate, Universities, Conferences, Memberships, Annual Assemblies, Unions and numerous United Nations Committees, the Organization of American States, and the Human Rights Council, etc. is to ensure that the Government of Canada be held to accountable to the Global community and to other Canadians for ongoing issues of concern to Aboriginal Peoples, particularly women.

Promoting Civic Participation of Aboriginal Women in Canada

NWAC developed a culturally relevant and gender sensitive Resource Guide that explains the Canadian electoral system and importance of civic participation so to inspire young Aboriginal women to engage

in politics. IAHR conducted a literature review and focus group. From this research, IAHR created a resource guide to identify common challenges for young Aboriginal women, shared potential solutions, and encouraged Aboriginal women adopt leadership roles. It further suggested ways in which young Aboriginal women could participate in democracy and civic life at all levels of society (community, band, provincial, federal, etc.). Fostering a better understanding about the voting process in Canada would increase Aboriginal women's confidence to vote and even run for leadership positions. Their participation then could create more positive change in their communities and set a model for future generations.

Elections Canada

This year, NWAC is conducting other electoral participation workshops focused on providing voter information and addressing some of the specific obstacles Aboriginal women often face as barriers to participating in elections. With this initiative, NWAC strives to provide culturally relevant, gender specific information on the voting process, as well as encourage and promote overall political awareness in a non-partisan way. Information at the workshops on where, when, and the ways to register and vote is provided with the support and collaboration of Elections Canada.

With the upcoming federal elections quickly approaching, the importance of civic participation is even greater than usual for Aboriginal peoples. Being a bystander has never been an option for Aboriginal women. They are resilient; they are caretakers and leaders, dedicated to creating positive change in their communities. However, while very active in their communities, statistically, Aboriginal women are under-represented at Canada's election polls. On average, Aboriginal peoples have had a voter turnout that is 20 percent lower than their Canadian counterparts. With these workshops, NWAC is hoping to change that!

The participation of Aboriginal women in the electoral process is impeded by many barriers that include few opportunities or little support to reach voting stations and inadequate information about the electoral process. Some may also be deterred by a perception that candidates do not represent Aboriginal peoples or their interests and that their votes make little difference. However, Aboriginal women's votes do matter, and the more who vote, the more difference it can make!

Voting is the most basic form of democratic participation, and it has a major impact on society. Aboriginal women must tap every possible resource in order to bring about change, especially by influencing or running for leadership positions within the Canadian political system. It is a place where they can make great changes on issues affecting all Aboriginal peoples.

Resources to Register to Vote

General information on registering and voting

www.elections.ca/content.aspx?section=ele&dir=2015ge&document=index&lang=e

Information for Aboriginal Voters on the Electoral Process available in multiple Aboriginal languages

www.elections.ca/content.aspx?section=vot&dir=abo/info&document=index&lang=e

Aboriginal Voters

www.elections.ca/content.aspx?section=vot&dir=abo&document=index&lang=e

Civic education resources

www.elections.ca/content.aspx?section=vot&dir=yth&document=index&lang=e

Resource for Voting Employment Opportunities

Elections Canada Website

www.elections.ca/content.aspx?section=emp&lang=e

Resources to Follow the 2015 Canadian Federal Elections

National Post: Federal Election 2015

news.nationalpost.com/tag/federal-election-2015

Globe and Mail: Election 2015

www.theglobeandmail.com/news/politics/elections/

Election Almanac 2015 Federal Election

www.electionalmanac.com/ea/canada/

Up For Debate

NWAC is a member of the Up For Debate Alliance for Women's Rights. As part of this alliance, NWAC has been pushing for more awareness of women's issues as well as calling for a public debate between party leaders for the next federal elections to put issues faced by women at the forefront of this year's political initiatives.

Women were the majority of voters in the last federal election. Yet, the last time federal party leaders publicly debated the issues that matter to women and girls in an election campaign was over 30 years ago.

From discrimination to violence, leadership to employment, the pay gap or sexual harassment—these are issues that affect women and girls. They are also issues that matter to Canadians. And they are issues that politicians aren't talking about. What we need is simple: we need a public space for conversation; we need a broadcast leader's debate.

The New Democratic Party and the Green Party have agreed to participate in a debate, but the Liberal Party of Canada, the Conservative Party of Canada and the Bloc Québécois have not.

Join the Up For Debate campaign! Stand alongside over 100 women's organizations and their allies and demand that the issues women and girls care about are #UpForDebate in the 2015 federal election!

What can you do?

1. **Send a message** to Prime Minister Stephen Harper, Liberal Leader Justin Trudeau and Bloc Québécois Leader Gilles Duceppe through our website.

2. **Sign the Change.org petition** <http://chn.ge/1BDDaDh>
3. **Collect Signatures** on the print version of our petition. www.upfordebate.ca/sites/upfordebate/files/up_for_debate_paper_petition_feb_2015.doc

Send a letter to Prime Minister Stephen Harper, Liberal Party Leader Justin Trudeau, and Bloc Québécois Leader Gilles Duceppe:

Dear Prime Minister Harper, Liberal leader Justin Trudeau and Bloc Québécois leader Gilles Duceppe:

In the 2011 federal election over half a million more women turned out to vote than men. Yet issues that specifically affect women in Canada received little attention in the election debates.

From discrimination to violence, leadership to employment, the pay gap or sexual harassment—these are issues that affect Aboriginal women and girls and matter to all Canadians.

I urge you to commit to participate in a nationally broadcast debate focused specifically on women and girls during the 2015 federal election campaign.

www.upfordebate.ca/take-action

More You Can Do

Tweet using #upfordebate, write a letter to your editor about the issue, post one of the articles on Facebook with a commentary or all of the above! You can make sure you always receive the campaign communications directly by signing up at www.upfordebate.ca/take-action Please feel free to use the text and send an email to your own supporters too.

Aboriginal Women and Financial Literacy

NWAC undertook its *Financial Literacy for Aboriginal Women: Money Matters* in partnership with its Provincial/Territorial Member Associations (PTMAs) and other organizations, as well as with support from Aboriginal Affairs and Northern Development Canada. This economic empowerment project provided financial literacy training to Aboriginal women, particularly those in urban areas. Around the world, improving women's economic situations is viewed as one of the most effective ways to reduce poverty for women, their families, and their communities. Efforts to provide economic opportunities and stability to Aboriginal women are investments in their families, communities, and future generations.

NWAC has held and continues to hold a series of workshops across Canada that focuses on skills development and advocacy. The skills development component introduced financial skills, services and entitlements, and systems navigation. The advocacy component then demonstrated different processes to use those financial skills. Participants were engaged to determine their personal challenges and the relevant services

The workshops highlighted other programs through which participants could gain access to banking services, file tax returns, address debt problems, apply for social assistance, manage personal resources, and learn to avoid rent-to-own or pay-day loan schemes. These services also were divided into regions and compiled into a Financial Literacy Resource Guide to ensure that participants continued to have support after the workshops. NWAC's guide included other handbooks on budgets, credit, and savings;

online calculators to help create budgets and calculate loan interests; online financial literacy classes, webinars, and consultations; as well as free, local financial literacy workshops.

In their feedback, participants indicated the workshops were engaging and its materials were useful. Aboriginal women also expressed how the workshops have helped them to feel empowered and how they have feel better equipped to meet financial concerns. They have regularly expressed that they hope the project to continue and that they can access other similar workshops in the future.

Due to the success of the program and additional support received from the Ontario Federation of Indigenous Friendship Centres, this project will extend until September 2015. A final report and copies of workshop materials will be accessible on NWAC's website soon: www.nwac.ca

Aboriginal Women's Business Entrepreneurship Network

The NWAC Aboriginal Women's Business Entrepreneurship Network (AWBEN) built on the successes from its first year. The second annual NWAC AWBEN conference was held on February 11th, 2015 at the Museum of Canadian History. More than 100 Aboriginal women entrepreneurs and business people from across Canada participated to share wisdom and knowledge about best business practices, as well as to network with fellow entrepreneurs.

Currently, AWBEN has 965 Facebook followers, 733 Twitter followers and 650 MailChimp subscribers. The AWBEN activities are designed to benefit Aboriginal women entrepreneurs through education, networking, providing knowledge and to gain access to business development resources from all levels of government and the private sector.

The NWAC AWBEN sector also developed a survey to profile Aboriginal women who are in business or want to get into business. Eighty-nine women participated in the survey. Highlights of the survey are as follows: the majority of respondents are status First Nations, are between 21-49 years old, 35% are married, 18% are single, 57% have a dependent child and are the primary income earner of the household. Further, 65% of those who responded stated they currently own a business and 35% stating they were interested in starting a business. Seventy-one (71%) said they started their business using personal funds. Forty-five (45%) said they started their business with \$5000. or less. More information on the survey results can be obtained by contacting the NWAC head office.

In the past year, the following activities were carried out under the NWAC AWBEN file:

1. Updated the AWBEN website www.awben.ca (with resources for Aboriginal entrepreneurs)
2. Developed the IT journal www.theitjournal.ca (featuring 80+ short videos of Aboriginal entrepreneurs from across Canada) was launched on International Women's Day on March 8, 2015. Our featured entrepreneurs were:
 - a. Lisa Charleyboy (Urban Native Magazine, BC)
 - b. Sonia Boileau (Nish Media, Quebec)
 - c. Brenda Holder (Mahikan Trials, Alberta)
 - d. Helen Oro Designs (Beaded Sunglasses)
 - e. Fran Hunt-Jinnouchi (Evedar's Bistro Road House Bar & Grill)
 - f. Heather Abbey (Shop Indigenous)
 - g. Marie-Cécile Nottaway (Wawatay Catering)
3. Produced four entrepreneurship webinars
4. Gave a 'Build Your Own Website' class
5. Organized the 2015 AWBEN conference (100+ participants)
6. Created mentorship opportunities with Telus Canada & the University of Ottawa
7. Created a survey to better help and understand Aboriginal women's barriers

The NWAC AWBEN team designed a partnership-building package (that included a partnership letter, posters, fact sheets, and an AWBEN brochure) that was used at tradeshow and meetings to promote the goals of this project.

Thus far, the NWAC AWBEN partnerships have been established with:

1. Telus Canada (The Eagles Program)
2. The University of Ottawa
3. Simon Fraser University
4. The National Association of Friendship Centres
5. First Peoples Innovation Centre
6. Okwaho Network
7. Nish Media
8. Start Up Canada
9. She Native
10. Algonquin College

The NWAC AWBEN staff attended tradeshow and conferences that included:

1. Status of Women “Investing in the Future”
2. Startup Canada
3. Hack-a-thon Business Boot Camp
4. Peoples Social Forum
5. Power of the Arts: Michaëlle Jean Foundation
6. Congress of Aboriginal Peoples Leadership Forum
7. Global Entrepreneurship Week

AWBEN will be working on other projects to promote entrepreneurship during the next year if funding becomes available.

Human Trafficking “Boyfriend or Not?” Project

Funding from the US State Department allowed NWAC to examine the continued exploitation of Aboriginal women in the sex trade. This research was relevant to international and cross-border trafficking of Aboriginal women, in addition to internal trafficking. IAHR conducted a literature review and interviews with experiential survivors and service providers. This research found that women in the sex trade are introduced at an early age to sexual exploitation, with many abused or trafficked as minors. In the interviews, Aboriginal women suggested that they were targeted specifically since the society often turns a blind eye. Another common theme in the interviews was substance abuse; in fact, many interviewees identified drugs and/or alcohol as a coping mechanism. Yet, service providers indicated that substance abuse was a barrier to personal healing, exit support, and genuine change. Both experiential survivors and service providers emphasized the need for a multi-faceted approach with culturally appropriate services and treatments, as well as a non-judgmental environment. From these conclusions, NWAC outlined over 25 recommendations to ensure that national policies, educational practices, legal mechanisms, and social programs support sexually exploited Aboriginal women.

The final report is available on the NWAC website: www.nwac.ca

Our Spirits are Not for Sale: A Handbook for Helping Sexually Exploited Aboriginal Women and Girls

NWAC's position is that prostitution exploits and increases the inequality of Aboriginal women and girls on the basis of gender, race, age, disability, and poverty. NWAC has passed a resolution that supports the abolition of prostitution. This means that NWAC's goals are to end the prostitution of women and girls through legal and public policy measures that recognize the state's obligations to (i) provide for basic needs and (ii) to protect women and girls from male violence. NWAC is a member of the Women's Coalition for the Abolition of Prostitution, a panCanadian coalition of women's organizations including the Canadian Association of Sexual Assault Centres, the Canadian Association of Elizabeth Fry Societies, Action ontarienne contre la violence faite aux femmes, Concertation des luttes contre l'exploitation sexuelle, Regroupement québécois des centres d'aide et de lutte contre les agressions à caractère sexuel (CALACS), and Vancouver Rape Relief & Women's Shelter. Our own research as well as the input of our partners has led NWAC to take this strong abolitionist stance and work to support the exiting of Aboriginal women and girls from prostitution and sex trafficking.

In the context of NWAC's position on prostitution and the organization's experience in research on prostitution and sex trafficking, NWAC worked on and recently completed a new resource, *Our Spirits are NOT for sale: A Handbook for Helping Sexually Exploited Aboriginal Women and Girls*. Financial support for this resource was generously provided by Aboriginal Affairs and Northern Development Canada and the Department of Justice Canada. The impetus for this resource came from the research NWAC conducted previously, but builds on it with additional interviews, reviews, and engagements with relevant stakeholders, including experiential survivors of sex trafficking as well as front-line service providers. The focus of this Handbook was to address a gap identified in NWAC's research of limited resources aimed specifically at Aboriginal women and girls to, in accessible language, break down the components of what constitutes sex trafficking and sexual exploitation, the rights of Aboriginal women and girls struggling with exploitation, as well as addressing justice system issues. The Handbook also gives insight into the reasons behind Aboriginal women and girls' increased risk for trafficking and sexual exploitation, includes resources from across Canada that they can use to exit situations of exploitation, and includes best practices for those working directly with survivors of exploitation and sex trafficking. There is additional material in the Handbook that helps Aboriginal women understand their rights when facing arrest as well as information on how to file complaints against officers and apply for appeals and record suspensions.

To access the Handbook, please go to our website: www.nwac.ca

5-Year Review of the Repeal of the Canadian Human Rights Act

NWAC had completed a 5-Year Review of the Repeal of the *Canadian Human Rights Act*, as well as delivering sessions and surveys on human rights and will continue to inform Aboriginal women of their rights within all human rights instruments and encourage their implementation in Canada. IAHR is currently waiting on approval of funding for many other projects from AANDC and other organizations over the coming months to carry out more important work.

Governance

Other areas of work included continuing to implement NWAC's five (5) year Strategic Plan by building on our internal governance and capacity. Strategic planning is an important tool for NWAC. It sets out the steps NWAC will follow to achieve its mission and vision. NWAC's 2011 – 2016 Strategic Plan is based upon the mission and vision statements taken from NWAC documents. NWAC's IAHR hosted a session with all Directors from NWAC to review the Strategic Plan to ensure that we are all moving in the same direction – to help empower management by being involved in developing and changing legislation which affects the women we represent, and by ensuring that we continue to involve them in the development and delivery of programs promoting equality for Aboriginal women. The Directors also reviewed Financial and Human Resource Policies so as to communicate the information to all NWAC staff.

NWAC's IAHR also hosted a Staff Workshop and Appreciation Day to review our Vision Statement and General Objectives to identify how we are working to implement them. Our vision continues to be that we aim to support our membership to foster Aboriginal communities where women have an opportunity to develop their talents; are encouraged to live healthy lifestyles by maintaining balance; are encouraged to learn our history and traditional ways; accept and exercise their responsibilities to contribute to a strong community; and, are accepted in a society free of racism and discrimination.

NWAC Data Needs: The Socio-Economic Status of Aboriginal Women in Canada and Aboriginal Societies

All four (4) NWAC departments were involved in a data mining exercise for Statistics Canada to generate a complete picture of Aboriginal women's socio-economic status within both Canadian and Aboriginal societies. NWAC worked with a data analyst to detail the priority areas, identify the queries, pull the data sets, and assist in the development of fact sheets. These fact sheets are available on the NWAC website: www.nwac.ca

International Meetings and Events

The United Nations Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination Against Women

In a report released in March 2015, the United Nations Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW) concluded that Canada's ongoing failure to address the extreme violence against Aboriginal women and girls constitutes a "grave violation" of their human rights. After extensive examination of evidence, the CEDAW Committee concluded that Canada has and is violating Articles 2, 3, 5 and 14 of the Convention on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women. These articles require States parties to take all appropriate measures to eliminate discrimination against women, to

modify social practices that discriminate against women, and to take into account the special problems encountered by women living in rural and remote areas.

The CEDAW Committee further found that there are ongoing police and justice system failures to respond adequately to the violence, dismissive responses to family members, lack of diligence in investigations, and lack of effective mechanisms for oversight of police practices and conduct, including the practices and conduct of the RCMP.

The Committee also found that Canada has failed to properly take into account the root causes of the violence. It states unequivocally that the realization of economic and social rights, including the right to adequate living conditions on and off reserve, is necessary to enable Aboriginal women to escape from violence.

The United Nations CEDAW Committee oversees the implementation of the Convention on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women by the 188 countries that have ratified it. Canada ratified in 1981. Residents of states that have ratified both the Convention and its Optional Protocol can make individual complaints when their rights have been infringed or can request an inquiry into systemic violations of human rights by their governments.

NWAC and the Canadian Feminist Alliance for International Action (FAFIA) made the original request to the CEDAW Committee in 2011 to inquire into the crisis of murders and disappearances of Indigenous women and girls. The UN CEDAW Committee has considered voluminous and detailed evidence from Canada about the steps that it is taking, but it finds them insufficient, inadequate, and uncoordinated. NWAC will continue to lobby to hold Canada to account for its failure to correct the situation.

NWAC Participated in the 14th Session of the United Nations Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues (UN PFII) - New York City, New York

The goals of NWAC's participation at the Session of the Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues were to ensure the integration of an Indigenous women's perspective into the discussions held during the sessions and at side-events to ensure that they would be reflected in the final report of the meeting. We worked collaboratively with member States, representatives of non-governmental organizations and other United Nations entities throughout the session. A series of parallel events provided additional opportunities for information exchange and collaboration.

NWAC is proud to announce our successful participation in this year's UN PFII where, as an organization, we have been able to broaden our skills and, knowledge, and we are constantly expanding our networks. However, the primary focus is to ensure that the issues impacting Aboriginal women in Canada are discussed at the highest levels. As an organization, NWAC's participation in (4) four Joint Statements has given voice to Aboriginal women on an international platform. They were on numerous topics such as Violence Against Women, Trafficking, Implementing the Declaration and the World Conference and can be seen at the following links:

Human rights: (A) Implementation of the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples (with specific focus on economic, social and cultural rights)

www.quakerservice.ca/wp-content/uploads/2015/04/PFII-2015-Joint-statement-on-UN-Declaration-Apr-27-15.pdf

Human Rights – Implementation of the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples – Eradicating Violence against Indigenous Women and Girls

www.quakerservice.ca/wp-content/uploads/2015/04/Fourteenth-Session-of-the-Permanent-Forum-on-Indigenous-Issues-NWAC-Statement-April-25-Final.pdf

Outcome of the high-level plenary meeting of the General Assembly known as the World Conference on Indigenous Peoples

www.quakerservice.ca/wp-content/uploads/2015/04/PFII-2015-Joint-Statement-on-Outcome-of-World-Conf-on-IPs-FINAL-April-20-15.pdf

Extreme Extraction and Sexual Violence Against Indigenous Women in the Great Plains

www.statements.unmeetings.org/media2/4658047/native-womens-association-of-canada-2.pdf

Environment

Because we no longer receive a set aside of funding for a full-time staff to oversee a department of Environment, IAHR monitors issues in this important area. For 2014-15, IAHR applied for and secured two small projects funded by Environment Canada (EC) regarding:

- Aboriginal Engagement and Dialogue: Environmental Priority Issues; and,
- Report on Aboriginal Traditional Knowledge and Aboriginal Women.

For the *Aboriginal Engagement and Dialogue: Environmental Priority Issues* project, IAHR facilitated dialogue with Aboriginal women on priority issues related to the environment, such as climate change, access and benefit sharing of genetic resources, and biodiversity.

In particular, IAHR developed an online survey to determine Aboriginal women's awareness of Access and Benefit Sharing (ABS); its issues for Aboriginal women, their families, and their communities; as well as views regarding a federal ABS policy. The survey then was distributed to NWAC's PTMAs, NAOs, and other Aboriginal stakeholders that work on environmental issues across Canada. Its results were shared among our membership and used to provide input to EC about a federal ABS policy.

For the report on Aboriginal Traditional Knowledge (ATK) and Aboriginal women, to inform its ATK engagement strategy, EC collaborated with NWAC to gather input from Aboriginal women about its engagement strategy to protect Aboriginal women's role in any discussions as well as how to increase their participation on ATK protocol development and engagement. NWAC's research showed the need to examine the unique role of Aboriginal women in relation to ATK, obstacles to dialogue between Environment Canada and Aboriginal women, in addition to strategies for improving those relations. Those issues and EC's guiding principles became the focus of NWAC's *Aboriginal Women and Aboriginal Traditional Knowledge: Input and Insight on Aboriginal Traditional Knowledge* report. The document contains a literature review on ATK and Aboriginal women's roles, a survey, an analysis of its results, as well as recommendations for future action based upon the literature and survey data.

Recurring themes emerged in the literature and survey: The relevance of inclusiveness of Aboriginal women in decision-making on ATK, the importance of ongoing communication in ATK projects beyond a single engagement session, and the need for there to be mutual benefits in an ATK project rather than one-sided outcomes were the most critical results. Aboriginal women further suggested that EC adopt multiple methods for engagement. Direct engagement seemed to be preferred since Aboriginal sharing circles and focus groups were the most popular choices; however, they also supported female-specific events, individual discussions, and alternative meeting methods. Requests for meals, childcare, and transportation were also suggested as a way to increase accessibility and participation among Aboriginal women. From greater engagement, it was hoped the federal government would understand First Peoples' spiritual relationship with land, recognize ATK as a source of resources (such as employment), negotiate co-management, or perhaps even support community-based management.

Ongoing Priorities

IAHR will continue its work to push for the implementation of the UN Declaration in Canada with respect to the socio-economic human rights for Aboriginal women. **IAHR thanks its partners who have supported and continue to support our important work:** Aboriginal Affairs and Northern Development Canada, Ontario Federation of Indigenous Friendship Centres, Justice Canada, Environment Canada, Statistics Canada, Elections Canada, the United States of America Embassy, the Global Fund for Women, Canadian Labour Congress, Unifor and many Unions, Canadian Women's Foundation, as well as many other private organizations and individual allies.

Pathways PEKE (Partner for Engagement & Knowledge Exchange)

Prepared by: Amy Nahwegahbow

To promote health equity among First Nations, Inuit and Métis Peoples, the Canadian Institutes of Health Research (CIHR), is investing \$25M over ten years in a new signature initiative called Pathways to Health Equity for Aboriginal Peoples.

In June 2014, the Native Women's Association of Canada commenced its work as a Partners for Engagement and Knowledge Exchange (PEKE), in the Pathways Initiative to improve the health and well-being of Aboriginal women, families, and communities through health research, knowledge exchange, and action.

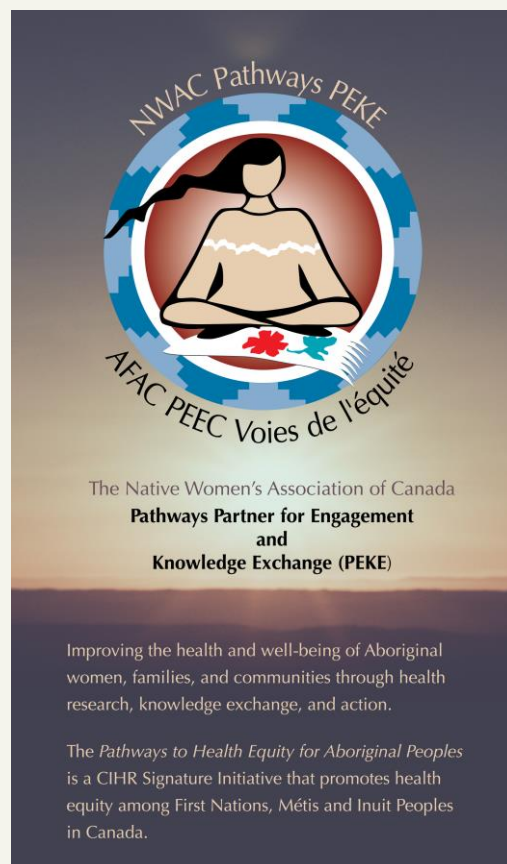
Indigenous knowledge and Indigenous ways of knowing is an essential aspect of developing the evidence base in how to design, offer and implement programs and policies that promote health and health equity in four priority areas: suicide prevention, tuberculosis, diabetes/obesity and oral health. In partnership with First Nations, Métis and Inuit communities across Canada community protocols, cultures and traditional knowledge aims to enhance the Pathways initiative.

The uniqueness of this research initiative is that it is community-driven; through on-going engagement between researchers, and Aboriginal communities in Canada, research outcomes will be translated into actionable and viable solutions expected to create real change and improvements in health outcomes.

The NWAC PEKE:

- helps facilitate a receptive environment for learning and collaboration across research teams and Aboriginal communities.
- supports the translation of research findings into policies and scaled-up interventions.
- engages Aboriginal peoples', communities and organizations to incorporate Aboriginal voices, ways of knowing, and culture into the research.
- supports the full participation of Aboriginal women and applies a cultural framing that reflects their histories, and current realities and circumstances.

Through the application of a culturally-relevant gender based analysis (CR-GBA), the NWAC PEKE will assess policies and programs from a gender perspective to better understand how women and men differ in patterns of illness, risk factors, treatments and social contexts. This will lead to better health outcomes for both Aboriginal men and women.



NWAC PEKE partners include the Congress of Aboriginal Peoples (CAP), the Aboriginal Nurses Association of Canada (ANAC), and the National Aboriginal Diabetes Association (NADA), each national in scope with reach into both urban and rural communities on and off reserve.

NWAC PEKE Advisory Committee

An NWAC PEKE Advisory Committee was established to provide advice and guidance to NWAC PEKE activities. They serve as an important vehicle for community outreach and mobilizing community involvement. The Advisory Committee composed of Aboriginal health professionals and community members from across Canada, will help move forward from the perspectives of Aboriginal peoples, reflecting genuine respect for self-determination and interest in the collaborative development of culturally driven, safe health and community interventions to improve outcomes.

The NWAC PEKE Advisory Committee has met twice and provided valuable input on work plan activities such as the partnership / engagement plan, environmental scan of priority partners; knowledge translation plan; health factsheets; needs assessment on the health research priorities of Aboriginal women; discussion paper on gender inequalities and the impacts on the health of Aboriginal women; and the development of webinars on ethical research practices with Aboriginal women.

In March 2015, the Advisory Committee met in Ottawa and attended the CIHR Annual Pathways meeting to engage with researchers, community partner and other stakeholders to identify best practices for Aboriginal engagement and knowledge exchange.

The work of this fiscal has laid the foundation for building strong partnerships in health research that will lead to action and positive health outcomes for Aboriginal women and their children.

