AN ABORIGINAL YOUTH RESEARCH LEARNING CIRCLE

FINAL REPORT

Submitted to:

Centre of Excellence For Child and Youth Centred Prairie Communities
- **Main Office**
&
- **Winnipeg Network c/o Institute Of Urban Studies (IUS)**

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I. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY:

The Aboriginal Youth Research Learning Circle, a Centre of Excellence-sponsored project involved community members, ages 16-29 years of age in a cooperative learning process utilizing participatory action research methods. The main goal of the project was to create a learning opportunity with youth aimed at building greater research capacity at the grassroots level within the urban Aboriginal community. Ma Mawi determined the need for such a study after gathering feedback from inner city youth. The initial target of 8 participants was surpassed and 13 were accepted.

Aboriginal youth met a total of 24hours from mid-May to mid-September of 2002 in a process involving them as both participants and researchers in training. While the design was flexible and primarily shaped by the participants' needs/interests, a staff from Ma Mawi Wi Chi Itata Centre facilitated the process and initial design for a Level I Community Researcher Certificate, issued jointly by the Centre of Excellence and Ma Mawi. Utilizing a strength-based approach, participant learners had an opportunity to be introduced to common research issues and methods with a special emphasis on community based approaches and Aboriginal issues.

Participants acquired knowledge and enhanced their skills by asking questions, clarifying, sharing, and researching special interest areas. Topic areas included: research terminology, values and ethics, Aboriginal identity and perspectives, models of community development, qualitative research methods, and proposal writing.

Qualitative data analysis of process evaluations indicated sustained interest in the subject area on the part of participants. This was demonstrated by consistent attendance, a very low drop out rate (only one), average to above average levels of participation, and generally positive ratings for each session. Findings were analyzed in 4 main areas, namely: 1) awareness, understanding, and reflection; 2) sharing and building our knowledge; 3) skills development; and 4) participation and action opportunities.

The project was also examined against the broader questions, which form the Centre of Excellence's community research mandate. Testimonies and feedback of participants identified certain factors, which impact urban Aboriginal youth. Enabling factors were noted to be: emotional and financial supports to stay in school, supports for personal healing (1-1, group), the importance of staying connected to one's culture, creating meaningful learning opportunities which are action-oriented and provide positive alternatives. Constraining factors which were noted included: financial pressures, especially if young parents/families, personal development issues that impact one's day to day life – feeling inferior as an Aboriginal person, isolation, racism, victimization, social pressures, e.g. violent gang lifestyle, and the lack of real or perceived

alternatives, lack of support to understand and navigate one's way through confusing bureaucracies, e.g. finding post secondary funding, etc. Youth participants also provided some insight into ways in which Winnipeg's communities may reduce the negative impact of societal factors on the well-being of children and youth. They reported the following: equipping youth with practical skills to do their own social analysis, providing access to knowledge, information, and supportive opportunities to learn, especially in areas that youth would not customarily have, inclusion -involving them as partners in community based initiatives – welcoming their voice; youth experiences can inform the research and learning process, giving power away from existing institutions and groups and more in the hands of youth.

In spite of the learning circle's research methodological limitations, participants confirmed that the experience had an apparent favorable effect on their well-being. Youth participants reported feeling stronger, increase pride, more confident, valued, and included. Participants report that the knowledge gained was meaningful, useful, and practical. Participants were able to report that the experience reinforced for them the value of education, staying in school, completing a course of study, or career. Some of the participants have seized the opportunity to work on a contract basis as paid community research assistants.

The Learning Circle was supported by a combined grant from the Centre of Excellence for Child and Youth Centred Prairie Communities (central office) and the Winnipeg Network through the University of Winnipeg's Institute of Urban Studies (IUS). Budget categories included: participants' and guest speakers' honoraria, on site child-care, bus tickets, and food/beverages for meetings. Ma Mawi and other in-kind contributions were in the form of staff time, meeting space, and supplies.

Overall, we can conclude that the Learning Circle experience was an important process for building youth capacities. It takes a further step toward the vision of more Aboriginal-controlled community research in Canada (Battiste, 2000). Some conceptual work has been done to develop a more advanced Level 2 and Level 3 Learning Circles. A project of this nature has direct benefits to the mandate and vision of the Centre of Excellence. It is a step forward to identifying a pool of engaged youth who are interested in doing research. It further gives youth an opportunity to have a voice in *mediating* community-based issues, which matter to us all.

II.BACKGROUND:

Ma Mawi Wi Chi Itata Centre:

The Ma Mawi Wi Chi Itata Centre was established in 1984 by the Aboriginal Community to serve the Aboriginal community living in Winnipeg.

Ma Mawi has invested in a neighborhood based practice model aimed at identifying innovative policy and practice initiatives to create and sustain family-supported neighborhoods. This approach is based on principles that emphasize the return of capacity to the community to care for its members, through neighborhood networks, skills sharing and coordinating neighborhood resources. One method used to achieve this is to build on and support the strengths that exist in community members – youth – adults – families.

The work of our Centre is based on 4 directions, which have been given to us through Community consultations. They are:

These directions translate into the action statements:
- Focus on building healthy communities
- Facilitate greater involvement of the community through various economic and social opportunities
- Strengthen community capacity by transferring skills and opportunities to address those factors that affect the health of our community and its families
- Facilitate partnerships within neighborhoods to ensure that support is focusing on community members helping each other
- Facilitate the development of the Aboriginal community through opportunities to learn from one another, collectively address local issues, and build community capacity to support each other
- To work in close collaboration with the community to develop and maintain preventative services for Aboriginal children and families
- To use a community development and capacity building approach within neighborhood based sites

- Continue to maintain strong partnerships with private, public, and government stakeholders.

A Commitment to Youth Development:

Within Aboriginal culture, youth play an important role – they are our future leaders, educators, and helpers. Ma Mawi has long recognized that youth are key informants – they have a unique perspective, they are the voices for our future. We rely on youth for input and look for every opportunity to involve them in finding solutions to problems and generating new knowledge.

The Learning Circle was consistent with Ma Mawi's youth development strategy of capacity building. While being an ambitious project, it created an opportunity for Aboriginal youth to gather, share knowledge and experiences, and to acquire new skills, which have allowed them to contribute to community capacity.

"I liked that the floor was open to our choice to take
ownership of this project and help lead".
Participant

Ma Mawi believes in building upon the strengths that exist within the community. By providing youth and adults with a community learning and training opportunity, we are upholding this belief. We also believe that the project was pertinent to the health and well being of children and youth. Youth and young adults were involved in every step of the project: from its design, planning, implementation, to the testing and evaluation of outcomes.

Involving community members in an opportunity to build their own research capacity promotes self-esteem, builds skills in all kinds of areas (personal confidence, team work, reflection and critical analysis, presentation, etc.), develops leadership, and represents a way of giving back to one's community. All of these are positive factors, which empower people and contribute to enhanced health and well-being.

Ma Mawi's vision and plan for research and evaluation is expressed in the following graphic:

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The Aboriginal Research Learning Circle represents one step in our efforts to breathe life into our community agency plan. It is also consistent with the National Aboriginal Youth Strategy (1999) and the broader vision of more Aboriginal controlled/determined community research (Smith, 1999).

Centre Of Excellence:

The Centre of Excellence for Child and Youth Centred Prairie Communities was the funding source. Its mission is:

> *A Prairie Centre, which makes existing knowledge accessible, creates new knowledge, and uses both to influence policy and practice and to promote communities' capacity to support children and youth, with an emphasis on Aboriginal communities.*
> *COE Mission Statement*

The project was considered pertinent to the work of the COE as it is directed at-the-level-of-Community. Over the course of the Research Learning Circle participants were given opportunities to reflect on their meaning and operational definitions of 'community' and on the three broad research questions, i.e. mediating factors, which form part of the COE's overall conceptual framework and research plan.

> *"The topic which interested me the most was the opportunities that are possible with being an Aboriginal researcher. I am really interested in becoming more involved with my community and working towards a healthier lifestyle." Participant*

III. PROJECT DESCRIPTION:

Project Goals:

Project goals and anticipated outcomes were as follows:

Goals	Accomplishments/Outcomes
To increase the research skills and capacities in community members	Target group of 8+ complete intensive training process (a toolbox of skills, etc), Participants remain involved and contribute input to a second phase, Participants are increasingly connected with local community based organizations and aware of community issues.
To apply participatory action research methods in developing a community research training curricula of value to local groups and organizations	Completion of a community based research training curriculum – Community Researcher Certificate – Level I.
To document phase 1 activities and results	Completion of interim and final reports on schedule.

Capacity Building Focus:

Capacity building refers to programs, which provide opportunities for educational and personal growth. The following checklist developed by the Winnipeg Coalition of Community-Based Youth Serving Agencies (20 Best Practices: A Program Development Tool Kit, February 2002) served as a useful guide to designing and planning of the project:

- ✓ **Youth Input**: Youth have a meaningful role in shaping program?
- ✓ **Creating Opportunities:** Program provides opportunities for youth to gain knowledge and develop new skills?
- ✓ **Accessibility To Learning:** Program introduces youth to experiences and opportunities that are otherwise not available to them?
- ✓ **Designed For Success:** Activities are designed for success; youth are presented with stimulating yet attainable challenges in a supportive environment?
- ✓ **Holistic:** Program is integrated within a holistic, linked network of community services for youth?

A Continuous Learning Orientation:

The learning within the project was of a holistic nature with participants progressing through various stages. We adopted a continuous learning orientation within 'the circle' . This allowed everyone to learn at his/her own pace. Collectively, the learnings were in turn shared for the benefit of the whole. The learning cycle (4 areas) repeated itself through the project's term.

Research Methods:

"For centuries past our people have conducted research. It was not written in a scientifically standardized form but was kept within the confines of the mind and spirit and it was just as valid and reliable. Hunters for example knew which waters held the most healthy fish, which plains the buffalo traveled and which soils grew certain medicines. This knowledge came through the test of experience over time…

Back then the medium for sharing this information was modeled or shared in talking circles and gatherings, and communities grew in their wealth of knowledge. Today the most powerful medium we have to disburse and share knowledge and visions is the written text and the internet. Today we are faced with different challenges".

Source: Nechi Institute (http://www.nechi.com/Research/htm.)

Basic principles, which helped to guide the learning process were proposed by youth advisors and Ma Mawi staff members. The aim was to create a worthwhile learning opportunity, which placed value on:

- Making the learning process fun,
- Acknowledging and utilizing everyone's gifts, assets, and life experiences to the fullest,
- Reinforcing active participation, and
- Keeping the training meaningful, practical, and grounded

Qualitative (interpretative) methods were favored – we were most interested in learning approaches and group processes that worked to build personal, group and capacity within a specific *community of interest.* Therefore, the design remained flexible. In addition to process, we were also interested in the content analysis – is the material relevant to peoples' real life experiences?

> *"I liked the group evaluation and ethics discussion. It was fun*
> *to do our own evaluation sheets and I picked up some good ideas about ethics."*
> *Participant*

The methodology had obvious limitations: small sample, no comparison group, and more of a focus on education/training rather than research.

Selection Criteria & Process Of Recruitment:

In order to ensure an open and fair process, selection criteria and an acceptance process were developed. These served as a guide, however in reality, we did not want to say 'no' to any youth who had a keen interest in the project. As a result, the number of participants we ended up with as a core group was 13 (instead of 8-10).

Selection criteria:

- Target group: youth, young adults ages 16-29 years,
- Preference given to Aboriginal youth, (based on self identification)
- Person resides in local neighbourhood where Ma Mawi and partnering groups are present,
- Person not currently receiving direct support services from Ma Mawi,
- Person may be in school, employed, volunteering, or unemployed,
- Person willing to commit to the entire training period,
- Openness to doing a research placement in a community based organization (time-permitting),
- Person expresses some interest/aptitude in research, computer work

Focused recruitment process:

- Ma Mawi distributed/posted a general information letter to a range of community based organizations describing the opportunity (training incentive is noted but not specific amount),

- Information/orientation meeting hosted by Ma Mawi for interested community members and local groups on May 22nd,
- Interested persons completed applications, which were reviewed by a Project Committee. Follow up interviews arranged where necessary,
- Participants will be asked to sign a 'participant agreement form'

Ethics:

The proposal was submitted to the University of Winnipeg's Senate Committee on Experimental Ethics for review, and approval granted. In the process the Committee made the following comments, ".

Participants in learning about ethics, developed a set of team standards as an expression of their values and principles.

Research Team Standards

Confidentiality: What is said in the group, stays in the group. Information that is shared is considered private.

Respect: We respect and value each other's points of view. We listen to others with an open mind and shared equally. There are no wrong answers. Each question is important to our learning.

Punctuality: We show up on time.

Commitment: We are involved and participate in the learning process in every way. Together, we help to create a learning opportunity.

Participation: Participation looks different to each person. We fully participate in the process to ensure a successful outcome for all.

Decisions by consensus: We commit to making decisions through consensus.

Fair play: Our shared activities will be based on fair play, shared values and principles, i.e. Respect of each person, respect of issues being discussed.

Data Collection:

The Research Circle was by nature training as well as research. We were interested in knowing what works in terms of learning styles and approaches (formal, cooperative, activity based, presentations). We recorded the process in written format (not audio taped as earlier proposed) and were feeding information back to the group. All data was kept confidential. Names of individuals were not identified and participants were free to share any or all of their comments. Records (written and electronic) were kept in a safe and secure filing system with access only by those directly concerned. All primary source data was destroyed at the end of the project. Participants were asked for their consent to record any comments (in a non identifying way), which may be reported in the training curriculum or final report.

Consistent with participatory approaches time alloted at each session to share process data – reflect upon it – analyze it, then make needed improvements or necessary changes on a collective basis.

"Nice to know that people can change the future." Participant

Creating A Culture Of Participation:

- Meetings for the most part, took place in a circle – the circle symbolized our equality and the fact that each person had a place/a role in the learning process.

- Time was spent establishing safety, trust, and a fun, cooperative learning climate.

- Team standards were developed, which helped to reinforce values and establish a group identity.

- A participation agreement, as a way of honoring our commitment to each other, was developed and signed by each member.

- The group as a whole chose to waive certain Aboriginal customs such as opening prayer or smudging at each meeting. This was done out of respect as not everyone in the group felt comfortable nor shared this orientation. This does not mean that discussions were not put through an Aboriginal lens when reviewing or analyzing western approaches. Everyone in the group agreed that our experiences, values, and knowledge as Aboriginal persons were an important common denominator in our learning circle.

- Time constraints: Project could have been designed with a longer period of learning, integration, and application. The project could have been delivered as a 24 hour block; however, this would have not allow in-between time for reflection and learning assignments. 24 hours did not allow for many applied projects.

- Stages of group development: By the 3rd session group members were demonstrating increased trust and comfort levels. This allowed for constructive feedback session by session. A few of the participants felt comfortable to issue a challenge to other group members or to express some discontent about some aspect of the program, all taken as healthy signs – that divergent views and opinions were okay to share. As a result, the writer believes that group members were called to a higher level of participation and achievement.

E.g. "*Would have like it if everyone would have done their learning assignment." "We need to work harder and faster." "Stopping to review material you just covered; this does not help to move the group along. The group is being held back."   Various Participants*

Overview of the themes/topics covered:

Note: A more detailed description of the instructional modules is provided under 'attachments'.

- A 101 Questions and Big Words (ongoing)
- Strengths Inventory
- The Importance Of Knowing Who You Are
- Participant Agreement
- Approaches to Learning and Retention
- Developing session to session process evaluation form

- Ethics in research; values, confidentiality
- Research guidelines involving Aboriginal Peoples
- Stages of group development
- Knowledge, skills, attributes, experience valued in a community based researcher

- The research cycle (ongoing)
- Aboriginal research agenda – personal, social, political analysis
- Experienced Focus group process on indigenous research model: focus on healing, colonization, etc

- Community (operational definitions)
- Community organizational practice models
- Review of job opportunities/profiles (ongoing)

- Capacity Building model/process
- Capacity inventories (based on the work of John McKnight)
- Research on resiliency (handouts)
- Overview of research and evaluation methods (qualitative and quantitative)

- PATH planning (as a community building tool)

- Participatory action research
- Guest presenters

- Celebrating our accomplishments

Meeting Structure and Schedule:

A typical meeting involved the following activities:

- Icebreaker (shared task),
- Community announcements*,
- Housekeeping,
- Follow up agenda items
- Collectively generating or agreeing to an agenda, input (formal learning – knowledge and skill development, presentation, cooperative work, discussion),
- Next session's learning assignment(s), and
- Completing the process evaluation sheets.

* Examples of community announcements included: update on NAIG activities, residential school healing walk (Peguis Community initiative), personal stories, sharing of employment ads, local articles of interest from papers or websites, etc.

Participants were encouraged to sign up and share learning circle responsibilities – For example, follow up tasks between meetings, icebreaker/energizer, time keeper, scheduling, co-facilitator, & clean up.

In all, ARC Participants met for a total of 24 hours. The meeting schedule was as follows:

Wednesday, May 14 (2 hours) Information Meeting
Thursday, June 13 (2 hours)
Wednesday, June 19 (2 hours)
Tuesday, June 25 (2 hours)
Sunday, July 7 (2 hours)
Thursday, July 11 (2 hours)
Thursday, July 18 (2 hours)

Monday, August 12 (2 hours) PATH Planning Session
Monday, August 19 (2 hours) Guest Speaker *
Monday, August 26 (2 hours) Guest Speakers
Monday, September 9 (2 hours) Guest Speaker/Presentations
Final Meeting (2 hours) – Celebration
Total Hours: 24

* Short List of Guest Speakers
- ✓ Demographics - Darren Lezubski
- ✓ Action Research & Indigenous Peoples - Leslie Spillett, Mothers of Red Nation
- ✓ First Nations – COE Child Welfare Site (Maryln Bennett)
- ✓ Tracy Willmott – Research Assistant with the C.O.E. (spoke about research opportunities through the IUS and the C.O.E.)

At several sessions, participants also felt comfortable in bringing along a friend.

IV. FINDINGS:

"Sometimes there's not enough time to really get into what these projects have taught us. And if changes occurred after learning these things."
Participant

"Good, a lot more done today, good meeting, good icebreaker."
Participant

PARTICIPANTS:

Strengths/risks -

The project acknowledged and built upon the strengths of the participants as a whole. During the course of the learning circle, a small number of the participants shared about their life experiences, which one might consider risk factors. These included: a) social support risk factors: home difficulties, prior involvement with gang activity, violence, lack of hope in one's future prospects; b) health/personal risk factors: healing and recovery issues; and c) economic risk factors: financial stress, and challenges to entering the job market. The strength-based approach had an apparent positive effect in that it created an atmosphere which reinforced the values of acceptance, encouragement, and support for meaningful learning and constructive life choices.

Some of the gifts, talents, strengths, and capacities
we bring…we share:

Humor   Open-mindedness   People-person skills

Writing skills Interpersonal skills   Patience   Curiosity

Knowledge of computer programs   Knowledge of website design

       Public speaking abilities   Knowledge of sports

Artistic skills Connected to my community   Persistence

Number of Participants -

As the table below indicates, a total of 18 youth applied. 13 were accepted and have continued to come as a core group. Of those who applied (5 did not continue – 2 did not show for orientation and were not available for follow up, 2

came to orientation and chose not to continue, 1 came for 1st session then had an unplanned move out of Winnipeg.

| # OF YOUTH WHO APPLIED/SHOWED INTEREST	18
# OF YOUTH ACCEPTED/FOLLOWED THROUGH	13
TOTAL # OF YOUTH WHO COMPLETED	12*

* One youth attended three quarters of the program, then dropped out.

In total there were 8 females and 5 males; ranging in age from 16 to 28 years. The 13 youth participants were consistently involved in the research learning circle. Prior learning discussions also indicated that 4 of the youth had been involved in school-based research projects and a smaller number (2-3) in community projects. The participants were all of Aboriginal descent, representing Metis and First Nations, from all parts of the city.

Profiles -

AVERAGE AGE	23 years			
GENDER (F/M)	8 / 5			
EDUCATION (pre)	2 High school	2 University	6 Employed/Training Program	3 In between things
EDUCATION (post)	2 High school	2 University	7 Employed/Training Program	1 In between things / 1 unkn

Rate of Participation -
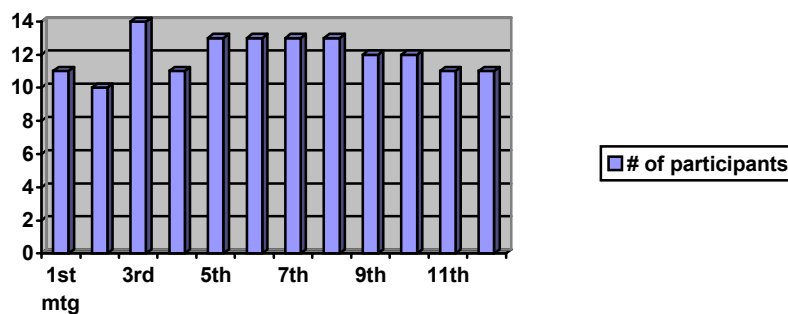
* Note: One group member did not return after August 12th. A second youth left to attend university out of the country (August 19th).

Member Ratings of Participation -
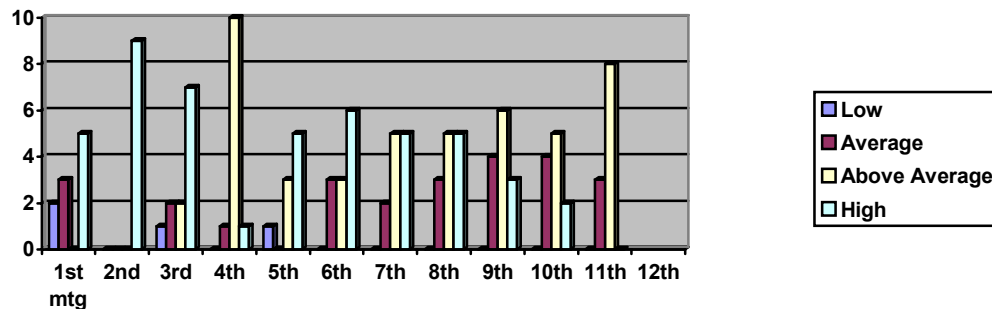
Ratings Of Group Participation

"I learned that in community care (model) that it is possible for anyone to make changes for the better."
Participant

"I feel a little more commitment from the class would improve our output of knowledge."
Participant

Note: The 12th (final) session was not rated by participants.

PROCESS ISSUES:

The project was asked to respond to questions (A-C), which form part of the conceptual research framework for the Centre of Excellence.

A. What societal factors affect the well-being of children and youth in Winnipeg?

Coding of testimonies and participant feedback in this study suggested the following factors impact urban Aboriginal youth:

Enabling factors:

- Emotional and financial supports to stay in school
- Supports for personal healing (1-1, group)
- Staying connected to one's culture - guidance and (re)learning opportunities
- Creating meaningful learning opportunities which are action-oriented and provide positive alternatives

Constraining factors:

- Financial pressures especially if young parents/families
- Personal development issues that impact one day to day life – feeling inferior as an Aboriginal person, isolation, racism, victimization
- Social pressures, e.g. violent gang lifestyle, and the lack of real or perceived alternatives
- Lack of support to understand and navigate one's way through confusing bureaucracies, e.g. to find post secondary funding

B. Describe ways in which Winnipeg's communities may be reducing the negative impact of societal factors on the well-being of children and youth?

Reports of the experiences and learnings of Aboriginal youth from this study suggest the following ways:

- Equipping youth with practical skills to do their own social analysis
- Providing access to knowledge, information, and supportive opportunities to learn, especially in areas that youth would not customarily have
- Inclusion -involving them as partners in community based initiatives – welcoming their voice; youth experiences can inform the research and learning process
- Giving power away from existing institutions and groups and more in the hands of youth

C. What has been the apparent effect on child and youth well being of communities' ability to mediate societal factors?

"I feel a strong sense of pride".

This study has some obvious methodological limitations, e.g. small sample, lack of comparison group, primarily an education/training focus rather than a research focus. Nevertheless, we are able to say that the experience had an apparent favorable effect on the youths' well-being:

- Youth participants report feeling stronger, more confident, valued, and included
- Participants report that the knowledge gained was meaningful, useful, and practical
- Participants were able to report that the experience reinforced for them the value of education, staying in school, completing a course of study, or career.

Outcomes:

The table below describes the project's broad outcomes as originally proposed:

Broader Project Outcomes Met:
1. A group of community youth were involved and completed a research/training process, 2. Participants contributed their input to a possible second phase, 3. Participants increased their connections to community resources, 4. A Level I curriculum was compiled 5. Interim and final reports were completed for the funder

More <u>direct outcomes</u> were examined under the 4 related headings of:

- Awareness, understanding and reflection,
- Sharing and building our knowledge,
- Acquiring new skills, and
- Participation and action opportunities

The outcome statements in each area were based on participant observations, group discussions, and individual written feedback from process evaluations.

<u>Awareness, understanding and reflection:</u>

"I really enjoyed the presentation; it opened my eyes to see how wide the field of research is and how complicated it can be."

" Enjoyed hearing her presentation. I felt a sense of strength and pride from hearing her honesty in her presentation."

"I really enjoyed the presentation from both women. And felt a strong sense of empowerment form them."

"I really like the idea within the Aboriginal community of (research) always leaving something with the community, instead of taking away." Participant, in response to the concept of '"pastahow (Cree word) if you take something from someone or a community, you have to give something back, this keeps life in balance. In this way, all knowledge is spiritual knowledge." COE For Women's Health Research Bulletin, 2002

Group cohesion developed in fairly quick order – which suggests a high level of receptivity and readiness on the part of the youth to learn.

Sharing and building our knowledge:

Learning New Knowledge And Skills

"Interesting learning new things".

"Learned a lot about census and the process of obtaining information."

"This meeting was sooooo interesting."

"If knowledge is power; then sharing our knowledge is even more powerful."

Process evaluation forms indicated that all participants had some basic level understanding of the topics covered. Before/after session ratings suggested that participants learned new knowledge or skills with each session.

Acquiring new skills:

"The speaker gave great information and teaching tools on becoming a researcher."
"I really like the discussion, it was interesting, but it would have been better if this was done over 2-3 classes."

Capacity Building

There is strong evidence that capacity building occurred with all participants. Using Case's (February 2002) 'best practices' checklist as a guide, we can say that:

- ✓ Youth Input: Youth in this learning circle had input into the process and a direct and meaningful role in helping to shape the sessions
- ✓ Creating Opportunities: The program provided opportunities for youth to gain knowledge, enhance or develop their skills
- ✓ Accessibility to Learning: The program introduced youth to an experiential learning opportunity that would otherwise had not been easily available to them in the community
- ✓ Designed for Success: The learning circle built upon peoples' strengths, interests, and experiences. Opportunities to create learning challenges were created.
- ✓ Holistic: The learning circle philosophy was grounded in Aboriginal values and tied as much as possible to the day to day realities of Aboriginal youth.

Other Related Skills

Participants reported enhancing their skills in areas other than research. They include: presentation, communication, critical thinking, group interaction, organizing and searching for information, writing a research funding proposal, and group facilitation.

Participation and action opportunities:

"Very helpful information for my goals."

"This information will really help me out, I need to create a survey for a city project."

"I really enjoyed that she shared a lot of information that I could relate to and information that gave me another view of where I'd like to go."

"I could relate to a lot of it (presentation). She (guest speaker) sprang a spark that I had on the back burner for a while."

"Aboriginal Youth are a positive force for change."

Staying In School

Participants reported that the learning circle encouraged them to stay/return to school.

Networking Skills

Participants reported that the learning circle helped increase their networking opportunities both amongst themselves and externally.

Applied Knowledge

Participants commented that the planning/training session using P.A.T.H. was one of the most useful in that it was an opportunity to apply the tool. Some participants also added that they have since found the tool to be a helpful tool in their own life.

Building A Better Community

A participant responded directly to the question of whether we completed project goals in the following way:

"Yes and no. Yes, because we brought people together to focus on a better society for Aboriginal people who had to share their feelings and insights with

people they did not know. Also that we could meet individuals from different backgrounds and communities and share our insights together. No, because it would have been better for some hands on experience in starting to make a better community for the people. But if I could only choose one, yes or no, it would be yes, because all things must have a start – a vision."

Additionally, participants commented that the learning circle had opened doors for them in the following ways:

Renewed interest in working with youth in the community

Tools and a desire to better one's community

Consideration of running a learning circle of their own in the future

"The likelihood that this knowledge learned will be used in the community is good, because now that I have some tools to help the community and some steps to understanding what it takes to make a community better. All I have to do is apply myself".

Ongoing Community Interest

There is ongoing interest on the part of research and funding organizations. For instance, the Institute of Urban Studies (IUS) invited research learning circle participants to consider helping as paid research contracts. The Aboriginal Single Window Initiative is also very open to considering proposals from Ma Mawi for future Learning Circles (Level I, II…). Ma Mawi are also exploring other organizations and government departments who would be interested in the development of youth competencies in the area of community research.

CHALLENGES/LESSONS LEARNED:

With any participatory community undertaking there are challenges and lessons to report. We note the following:

- It was very important to the participants that they receive an honorarium each session. This helped them in their daily lives and provided an added incentive.
- Other supports were helpful and appreciated by the youth- on site child care, transportation support in the form of bus tickets, snacks/supper meal
- Written notes were kept of each learning session.
- A personal support/advocacy component may also be an important feature to incorporate in any future learning circles. There are occasions where youth face an issue that is negatively impacting their lives. In this way, the whole person is valued.

- The sharing of responsibility and tasks occurred gradually over time. Some of the more straightforward tasks such as typing of notes, leading the icebreaker/energizer are more readily shared by participants. Facilitating or co-facilitating a session was more involved. Hiring a youth as project co-facilitator may help to ensure that the work is shared.
- Audio-taping of sessions was not feasible.
- Level 1 (delivered in its current format – 24 hours) did not allow enough time for community placements or applied projects. The group also generated a list of possible 'guest speakers/presenters'. Due to time constraints, only 4 were scheduled.
- Flexibility was key!

VI. PROJECT EXPENDITURES

As noted in the Executive Summary, main project budget categories included: participants' and guest speakers' honoraria, on site child-care, bus tickets, and food/beverages for meetings. Ma Mawi and other in-kind contributions were in the form of staff time, meeting space, and supplies.

The table below provides an account of overall project expenditures based on the 2 grants received by the COE. All funds were expended over the course of the project's term.

Revenue/Source	Requested Contribution	Actuals
COE – Winnipeg Network	$ 4,800	$ 4,800
COE – Central Office Contract	$ 8,000	$ 8,000
TOTAL REVENUE	$12,800	$12,800
Expenditures/Categories	**Budgeted Amount**	**Actuals**
Participants' Training Incentives	$ 9,800	$ 9,800
Honoraria: Elder/Advisors, Guest Speakers	$ 700	$ 800
Materials/Supplies	$ 300	$ 450
Food/snacks/feast	$ 500	$ 480
Ma Mawi Administration Fee	$ 500	$ 500
TOTAL EXPENSES	$ 11,800	$12,030
TOTAL BALANCE	$ +1,000	$ -230

* Ma Mawi In-Kind (staff time, internal resources)		$3,500

VII. CONCLUSIONS
&
FUTURE IMPLICATIONS:

"I can see myself being able to run a learning circle in the future".
Participant

The findings confirm that the Aboriginal research learning project had merit. The experience provided opportunities for youth to gain knowledge and develop new skills and encouraged each one of them on the individual learning paths. Participants were grateful to have been involved in the cooperative learning process, one, which they recognize would not otherwise be easily accessible for Aboriginal youth in the inner city.

From an **Aboriginal community perspective**, the learning circle represents a modest yet important step, a 'promising practice' towards developing (youth) leadership and expertise within the urban Aboriginal Community in the area of research and evaluation.

From **the perspective of the Centre of Excellence**, the learning circle represents a community-based application for/with Aboriginal youth aimed at enhancing their health and well being in areas of intellectual, social, cultural, and spiritual development.

Funders and policy makers MUST take note that Aboriginal youth are an important force for social change. If provided the opportunity, they bring insight and experience to community matters. Youth have a high level of interest and a thirst for opportunities. Future policies that may impact youth in the community need to be inclusive and empowering.

Future Learning Circles:

The table below describes a vision for future learning circles. Given the interest and response on the part of youth participants, there are important future areas to explore and develop in the Aboriginal Community.

"If I was responsible (for planning a future research learning circle) one change I would make would be time. I feel more time together could open up more insights and vision on accomplishing our project goals. The second thing I would change is some real hands on stuff – where we work together to better a community or help, etc." Participant

ABORIGINAL YOUTH RESEARCH LEARNING CIRCLE
VISION AND GOALS

Our Vision:
To develop leadership and expertise within the urban Aboriginal Community in the area of research and evaluation.

Our Goals:
- To increase the research skills and capacities in community members, especially willing urban Aboriginal youth.

- To create opportunities for social action and participation, utilizing research as a community development tool.

- To work towards a vision of Aboriginal-directed and supported community-focused research.

Level 1:
Introductory level where participant learners have an opportunity to increase their awareness, share knowledge and develop skills in the field of research and program evaluation.

* The attached instructional course modules are considered Level 1.

Level 2: Proposed
Intermediate level where participant learners have an opportunity to apply their skills in the community with a special emphasis on participatory action research oriented initiatives. Youth participants are involved in a work-study format. Participants are placed in various community-based organizations, being of service by helping with various research-oriented projects as determined by the agency.

Level 3: Proposed
Advanced level where a pool of participants are sufficiently trained, serving as resource people or community growth facilitators to local groups, organizations, and agencies wishing to conduct community research projects or program evaluations. This could conceivably become a micro-enterprise; a small scale community economic development project.

A FINAL WORD

This inspiring quote from one of the participants provided a concise summary of what was personally and collectively accomplished:

"Some of the things I gained are friendship, knowledge, and applicability. Overall I gained the knowledge of what I can do to make a better me, and the focus on the vision on making a better tomorrow for the Aboriginal people and its culture."
- September 2002

VI. REFERENCES

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VII. ATTACHMENTS

ABORIGINAL RESEARCH LEARNING CIRCLE

GLOSSARY

ABORIGINAL PEOPLE
A constitutional term that encompasses indigenous people within Canada known as Indian, Inuit, and Metis. It is also a general term used to describe the various native people and groups within Canada. It is not our Wording and can sometimes be seen as a "controlling" term.

ACTION RESEARCH
Sometimes also referred to as 'participatory action research', 'participatory appraisal', 'an interpretative approach', 'reality based research'. The systematic collection and analysis of information on a particular topic for the purpose of informing political action and social change. PAR is attractive to community-based researchers because it not only produces knowledge, but it offers opportunities for skill-building and informal learning, analysis and planning activities, social interaction, affirmation of goals, and empowerment.

AGE COHORT
Term used in demographic research - refers to age structure or age group, for example, 15-30 years.

ASSESSMENT
Study or analysis of something. Examples, 1-1 assessment of a child; Needs assessment of a community.

ASSET (ORIENTATION)
Other words for asset include: strengths, or capacities. In this orientation or approach one looks at the positive aspects of a person, group or community, rather than their liabilities, deficits, or needs.

ASSUMPTIONS
Statements of those things taken to be true for the purpose of argument, investigation through the research process.

BIAS
A distortion of research results by means of neglected or undeclared factors.

CASE STUDY METHOD
Usually complements other methods; involves a
1. Very detailed story to illustrate what is being suggested by other methods, or what the numbers or data indicates
2. Adds a human side to any research or evaluation
3. The outline is flexible - usually written by an 'objective' person - however it is better and more powerful if it is written in the first voice in the individual or group's own words, For example, stories of women living in poverty; youth who are in care.
4. With this method you are trying to prove a point.

CENSUS
A complete enumeration of an entire population. A POST-CENSAL SURVEY is a survey which draws a specific sample from census gathered data. For example, the Aboriginal Peoples Survey.

CONSTRUCT
A theoretical concept which describes the focus of your study or assessment. For example, if I were to administer a pre and post test on looking at changes in self-esteem over time, the theoretical construct I am looking at is 'self esteem'.

COMMUNITY
John McKnight describes community as "the space where citizens prevail". A community comprises: 1) shared membership, 2) identifiable commonalities, 3) a shared base of values, norms; 4) needs in common and a desire to meet them; and, 5) connections of common experience and mutual support (Israel, Checkoway et al, 1994, p. 151). Community may be thought of as a network of people. The link between them may be: where they live (boundaries, geographical), the work they do (professional affiliation, interest), their ethnic background (identity, class), they way they live (values, norms, lifestyle, income, need).

COMMUNITY RESEARCH
Research which has as its scope community. Community members are not necessarily involved in the process.

COMMUNITY BASED RESEARCH
Research which has as its scope community and where research related activities take place and involve members in the process.

DATA
Facts produced by research. Facts or figures from which conclusions are drawn. Various adjectives are used to describe the kind of data: hard (usually statistics), soft (qualitative), grey (grassroots/personal stories, etc), rich, thick, deep.

AGGREGATE DATA

Data which cannot identify a particular individual.

CHARACTERISTICS
variable which you can normally do something about

ASCRIBED CHARACTERISTICS
Characteristics or variables, which are fixed such as gender (male/female).

BASE LINE DATA
Is your starting point from which you compare.

FLAT DATA
Data which is descriptive in nature, offers basic profiles. It does not however, allow for cross tab comparisons.

CROSS TABULATED DATA
Or multivariate analysis is where you draw comparisons, create interactions between various categories of data.

DATA ANALYSIS
Process where researchers systematically organize or make sense of the facts produced by research. There are various approaches and tools available to do simple to very complex analysis.

DEMOGRAPHICS
Demo from Greek means understanding; graphics means people. Demographics is the study of human populations, their size, territorial distribution, and composition, and the components of change, which may be identified as natality (fertility), mortality, and territorial movement (migration) (Patton). Typically, demographics focuses on the following specific areas: population change, age structure, families, households, language, ethnicity, labour force, education.

DISSEMINATION
Usually expressed as one's 'dissemination plan' - one's plan on sharing the information, the results of one's research.

ETHNOGRAPHY
Is a qualitative research method where data is obtained through 1-1 or group interviews and where the participants' have an important role to play in helping the interviewer/researcher develop a rich understanding of the meaning and understanding of a shared experience. Ethnography pays particular attention to cultural experiences and viewpoints

EVALUATION

A way of measuring if a project is doing what it says it will do. A planning tool – serving as a useful and positive experience that promotes learning and action ('evaluation for learning'). The use of research techniques/approaches/methods to assess the outcome of an intervention (program effectiveness issues). In social work, there are several types of evaluations: **impact or outcome evaluations** and **evaluative research**. Outcome evaluations ask whether the intended outcome (achieved or anticipated results or changes in participants) was reached. An impact or outcome evaluation will tell you about the effects of a project. Or, was the goal achieved? Evaluative evaluations also ask whether the outcome was achieved but in addition it seeks to determine if the outcome can be tied to a specific activity or intervention. **Clinical evaluation** is evaluation at the level of individuals or groups usually in treatment or healing. **Process or formative evaluation** is an ongoing dynamic process where information is added continuously. A process evaluation will tell you how the project is operating. **Program evaluation** focuses on the level of program development and community work.

FOCUS GROUP METHOD
Purpose is to stimulate thinking and ideas - looks at meaning. A structure group interview approach, which is interested in respondents' meaning or interpretation of issues.

FOURTH GENERATION EVALUATION
A term used by Americans Guba and Lincoln to describe the application of a method to evaluation. It is different than the '3 generations of evaluation' in that the evaluator in this method becomes more of a facilitator - helping participants thorough a process of self-evaluation.

GENDER
Our identity as women and men - refers to the characteristics, roles, and values that a specific culture has determined to be feminine or masculine.

GENERALIZATION
The extent or degree in which you can use the results of one study to explain other phenomena.

GOALS/PROGRAMS
General statements that describe what we expect to accomplish. Goal statements are expected to broadly describe, define and organize the work of the agency/program/study project, and to bring its mission to life.

HPYPOTHESIS
Hypotheses are research questions that can lead answers or even build up to a theory.

INDIGENOUS
Those peoples who embody historical continuity with societies, which existed prior to the conquest and settlement of their territories by colonizers. The term is used to describe international and global peoples.

INDIGENOUS KNOWLEDGE
Also used with the words traditional and local knowledge, knowledge which is developed by a given community as opposed to knowledge generated through universities, government research centers, and private industry (western systems).

INFORMANTS
People who give information. People who are interviewed (sometimes called interviewees) or questioned to provide information for a research project.

INDICATORS
A sign or ..that tells you the level of a question or problem.
There are at least 2 types: 'distal' (means not directly related) or 'proximal' (directly related).

INDEPENDENT AND DEPENDENT VARIABLES
Independent variables are those variables in a research study which will not be changed over time and remain fixed. Dependent variables are those variables, which are 'manipulated', changed, tested over time. These terms are often used when describing an experimental design.

INTERVIEW METHOD
Interviews are a tool in both qualitative and quantitative approaches
  1 Can range from being unstructured/open ended to highly structured
  2 Interview guides can be structured to have a variety of questions (open ended, close ended, close ended with an unordered response, partially close ended)
  3 Interviews can focus on 'general respondents' all the way to 'key informants' (experts)

INTERVIEW GUIDE
A list or series of open-ended questions for interviewers to ask of informants in each interview for a specific research project or for a specific part of a research project.

IMPACT
Can be viewed as a description of the total measurement of process results and outcomes over an extended period of time.

LIKERT SCALE(S)
A response (or self anchored) scale used to gauge peoples' responses, For example, 1 (low).....5 (high)

LIABILITIES (ORIENTATION)
This approach focuses on a person's, group's, or community's needs or weaknesses as opposed to an asset orientation. Community needs assessments are an example of a liabilities focus - where people look at needs, service gaps, and how best to meet those needs.

LITERATURE REVIEW
A comprehensive review of the "literature" (what has been written usually in academic journals/books) on particular subject areas. Lit reviews are usually conducted with research and evaluation reports so that you take time to review what has been written in the past.

LOGIC MODEL
A process which examines relationships between interventions and expected results. A logic model uses brief, carefully formed statements that focus on targets, means and ends of interventions. Goals are broken down into mini-goals or objectives, each of which has its own set of inputs and processes that produce different impacts. A kind of flow chart or model which describes all of the research related components of a project.

MEASURES
An adequate or due portion. A moderate limit. A distance between 2 places marked for its length, width, distance. A tool used to evaluate or rate an individual or group experience, e.g. a clinical measure to assess depression.

METHODOLOGY
An operational framework or design or plan with specified rules and controls that govern the research process.

MODEL
A conceptual way of describing or trying to explain the way things work or will work.

OBJECTIVE APPROACH
An approach which values the perspective, views, and opinions of those outside of or distanced from the situation, event, organization, project, etc as the basis for making an assessment or judgment. Having to do with outside views, facts, uncolored by feelings or opinion, distanced, external, without a personal or subjective point of view.

OBJECTIVES
Measurable statements which are oftentimes tied to broad goals for a program/project. For example, a main goal is to develop the research capacity of community members. Some objectives could be: increases in self-confidence, increases in communication and presentation skills. Objectives are like mini-goals.

OPERATIONAL DEFINITON
The breaking down of a definition into several practical components so that it can be measured. For example, self-confidence can be broken down into feeling statements or behaviours.

OUTCOME
Changes usually expressed as: 1) knowledge and skills gained - short term, 2) behaviours - medium range and 3) values, conditions, and status - usually long term. Are the actual impacts/benefits/changes for participants during or after programming, For eg. A

program outcome for a 'stop smoking' program would look at - participants who quit smoking (outcome) vs the number who went through it (outputs)

OUTCOME INDICATOR
Observable and measurable checkmarks toward an outcome target. What you'd see, hear, read, etc that would indicate or tell you you're making any progress.

OUTPUTS
Usually refers to #s only - for example, # of people who participated, who went through a program.

P.A.T.H.
Stands for Planning Alternative Tomorrows with Hope. Can serve as a personal planning tool (care plan for an individual), a program planning/visioning tool or a community planning/mobilization tool. It has a positive orientation, is very participatory, and produces a very colorful planning document.

POLICY
A principle, plan or course of action. A statement of belief, position or value. A position that is being taken by an organization, government, etc which usually includes written steps, procedures, methods, sometimes enforced by laws to ensure that everyone's actions are clear and consistent. For example, a conflict of interest policy. Policies tell people what to do, procedures tell people how to do what they must do.

PRACTICE
For example, social work or medical 'practice' is a term, which is commonly heard. A practice usually means that it is a professional group with its own code of ethics, set of standards, common body of knowledge and approaches.

PRIMARY SOURCE
Where the researcher is obtaining information/data from the source themselves - the person.

PROCESS RESULTS
Products produced through the program's activities. They measure the extent, level or volume of service activity and consumer use. Process results can be used to measure the efficiency of the program/agency.

OUTCOME RESULTS
Changes or benefits that happen to those being served occurring as a result of program activities. They may include changes to attitude, behaviour, skills, knowledge, or capacity to function.

SOCIAL CAPITAL
Focus on the establishment of relationships within a community which can be used to strengthen its capacities. Represents citizen involvement (both formal and informal) in

the community and the mutual level of trust amongst community members. It has been linked to health. It is seen as a 'mediating factor' . The greater the investment in social capital, the greater the health of the citizens and the community. Social capital keeps bad things from happening to good people. It is measured by the degree of trust, relationships between people and networks of support.

QUALITATIVE METHOD
involves the collection of data or information (by means of interviews, etc) which will provide a description of the circumstances and conditions of the situation, community or problem as the primary basis for developing an analysis. (Source: Action Research For Women's Groups).

QUANTITATIVE METHOD
Involves the collection of data or information (by means of questionnaires, structured interviews, or counting) which will provide an account of the magnitude of the situation or problem based on numbers or statistics.

QUESTIONNAIRE
A series of specific questions (often with a checklist of possible answers for the respondents to choose from) to be handed or mailed to respondents for them to answer on their own without the researcher being present.

RESEARCH
A way of knowing - A process - A discipline. Research is answering questions about some aspect of the observable and relational world. For something to be considered research (not just information) it has to involve:
   1 Systematic method(s) of collecting
   2 Has to be valid over time - focused on what you say you are studying
   3 Reliable - the study method can be repeated over time
   4 Involves some analysis of information into data

RESEARCH DESIGN
Various kinds of formats that the research project will follow to collect and analyze the data - experimental, quasi-experimental, non-experimental, etc.

SAMPLING
a method to gather data - randomly, select, matching techniques, judgemental sample, convenience sample. Random sampling is where individuals in a research study are chosen at random - names picked out of hat, a telephone book where the data can be generalized as opposed to a select sample where you are only looking at youth ages 10-12 or single men and this data cannot be generalized to the rest of the population.

RESPONDING
To reply to a letter or question.

RESPONDENTS
Someone who answers or provides responses to a question/nnaire.

RELIABILITY
A way of determining the strength of your theory or study over time. Is it a reliable result? In other words, does the same thing happen/same finding repeats itself over time. Reliability refers to how well you are measuring something. If the measure is not reliable, it will not give consistent and accurate readings over time.

SAMPLE
A single item from a larger whole (sample item). A separated part of a population, community, etc selected to illustrate the whole population, community, etc. A group of individuals, which are selected for a research study or for evaluation purposes.

SECONDARY SOURCE
Sources of information or data such as documents, previous reports, etc. (see primary source)

SCALE
A way to measure things - both internal and external. For example, a self-anchored scale is a rating scale the participant answers which measures their thoughts, feelings or beliefs or changes over time. For example, a scale which looks at people who 'feel down' would have at one end #1 rock bottom to #3 in the middle "putting in an average day' to #5 "high as a kite".

STANDARDIZED MEASURES
There are 2 categories: published and unpublished. Published measures have met accepted standards of reliability and validity, so you can use them with assurance that they will in fact measure what you think they will. Unpublished measures are those measures that have been developed and used in research and practice situations but are not published commercially.

SURVEY
A general view, inspection, or investigation of the condition, amount, etc of something. To ask questions about people or products to a large number of people to see what they think about people or products. The purpose of a survey is to determine what properties of a pre-defined population has a particular attribute or opinion. Types: mail, telephone, face to face (in person), drop off, survey/questionnaire.

STATISTICS
Information and meaning derived by counting the number of people holding similar views, having similar experiences of a situation, problem, community, etc.

<u>TECHNOLOGY</u>
Hardware (equipment, tools, instruments, and energy sources) and software (a combination of knowledge, processes, skills, and social organizations) that focus attention on particular tasks.

<u>TYPOLOGY</u> (descriptive categories)
Placing things or people into categories. For example, when one looks at gang involvement there we can focus on/study the following 4 typologies: hard core members, up and coming, being initiated, those at risk

<u>THEORY</u>
A theory is an educated guess about the way things work

VALIDITY
Refers to what the measure measures. If a measure is not valid, it will not measure what you think it measures.

RESEARCH CIRCLE CURRICULUM

TABLE OF CONTENTS

- BACKGROUND TO PROJECT
- 4 PROJECT COMPONENTS (VISUAL REPRESENTATION)
- 101 QUESTIONS
- BIG WORDS
- STRENGTHS INVENTORY
- KNOWING WHO YOU ARE
- PARTICIPATION AGREEMENT
- LEARNING STYLES
- PROCESS EVALUATION FORM
- ETHICS
- KNOWLEDGE, SKILLS, ATTRIBUTES, & EXPERIENCE VALUED IN A COMMUNITY RESEARCHER
- STAGES OF GROUP DEVELOPMENT
- THE RESEARCH CYCLE
- THE FOCUS GROUP METHOD
- COMMUNITY – OPERATIONAL DEFINITIONS
- COMMUNITY ORGANIZATIONAL PRACTICE MODELS
- CAPACITY BUILDING MODEL/PROCESS
- ASSET BASED MODEL
- MEDIATING FACTORS IN COMMUNITY (RESEARCH ON RESILIENCY)
- AN INTRODUCTION TO RESEARCH AND EVALUATION METHODS (QUALITATIVE AND QUANTITATIVE)
- PLANNING ALTERNATIVE TOMORROWS WITH HOPE (P.A.T.H.) TOOL
- PARTICIPATION ACTION RESEARCH
- LIST OF RESOURCE PERSONS/GUEST PRESENTERS
- COMMUNITY RESEARCH ASSIGNMENT
- GLOSSARY (COMPILED BY ARC PARTICIPANTS)
- PARTICIPANT APPLICATION FORM

"For centuries past our people have conducted research. It was not written in a scientifically standardized form but was kept within the confines of the mind and spirit and it was just as valid and reliable. Hunters for example knew which waters held the most healthy fish, which plains the buffalo traveled and which soils grew certain medicines. This knowledge came through the test of experience over time…Back then the medium for sharing this information was modeled or shared in talking circles and gatherings, and communities grew in their wealth of knowledge. Today the most powerful medium we have to disburse and share knowledge and visions is the written text and the internet. Today we are faced with different challenges". Source: Nechi Institute (http://www.nechi.com/Research/htm.)

"Research is ultimately about who has the power to define the social reality, and what counts as knowledge. The power relation that is embedded in the research process and the standpoint of the research must be made explicit in any research that attempts to include marginalized and disadvantaged groups." Building Diverse Affirming Communities, 1997.

"If you are generating knowledge (then) you are generating power, so as an evaluator you have to be careful about what you say." Nsaeem Manjee, African Evaluation Association

"Evaluation is inherently political because funds, research interests, and the organization's future are involved." Michael Quinn Patton

"Research is a powerful tool that can enable Aboriginal peoples to not only look at the root causes of current social issues and the relationship between certain factors but to also look at how we can work together to bring about positive change in our communities. Research assists in developing materials, curriculum, programs, and a wealth of knowledge in order to grow as a nation in an ever changing society." Nechi Institute, ibid

ABORIGINAL YOUTH RESEARCH LEARNING CIRCLE
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Our Vision:

To develop leadership and expertise within the urban Aboriginal Community in the area of research and evaluation.

Our Goals:

- To increase the research skills and capacities in community members, especially willing urban Aboriginal youth.

- To create opportunities for social action and participation, utilizing research as a community development tool.

- To work towards a vision of Aboriginal-directed and supported community-focused research.

Level 1:
Introductory level where participant learners have an opportunity to increase their awareness, share knowledge and develop skills in the field of research and program evaluation.

* The attached instructional course modules are considered Level 1.

Level 2: Proposed
Intermediate level where participant learners have an opportunity to apply their skills in the community with a special emphasis on participatory action research oriented initiatives. Youth participants are involved in a work-study format. Participants are placed in various community-based organizations, being of service by helping with various research-oriented projects as determined by the agency.

Level 3: Proposed
Advanced level where a pool of participants are sufficiently trained, serving as resource people or community growth facilitators to local groups, organizations, and agencies wishing to conduct community research projects or program evaluations.

ABORIGINAL RESEARCH LEARNING CIRCLE
LEVEL 1

SUBJECT AREA: 101 QUESTIONS

LEARNING OBJECTIVE:

    To provide an opportunity for participants to ask questions and to create a group list.

SUGGESTED INSTRUCTIONS/ACTIVITIES:
This activity is done at the first meeting of the learning circle as a way of finding common themes and needs. Participants are invited to list any number of questions that they would like answered during the course of the learning circle. In this way, participants' learning needs are acknowledged and they help with content planning for future learning circle meetings.

This activity can take up to 30 minutes.

The questions can then be group or sorted (i.e. research terms) according to themes.

INSTRUCTIONAL AIDS/RESOURCES:
Flip chart and markers.

REFERENCES:
None noted.

OTHER:
N/A

ABORIGINAL RESEARCH LEARNING CIRCLE
LEVEL 1

AREA: BIG WORDS

LEARNING OBJECTIVE:

To provide an opportunity for participants to learn common research 'terms and jargon' in a fun, non-intimidating way.

INSTRUCTIONS/ACTIVITY:

This activity is done at the first meeting of the learning circle and on an ongoing basis until completed. A brown paper bag is filled with a number of small cut pieces of paper each having a research term written on it. Participants are invited to pick 2 'big words' from the bag and to spend time before the next meeting coming up with their: personal definition and a dictionary definition. This activity takes place at each learning circle until all word definitions are completed. New words can be added as the learning process unfolds. A volunteer from the group of participants is asked to compile the list into a comprehensive glossary.

This activity can take up to 15 minutes.

INSTRUCTIONAL AIDS/RESOURCES:
Brown paper bag with pieces of paper.

REFERENCES:
None noted.

OTHER:
See completed glossary within this booklet.

| ABORIGINAL RESEARCH LEARNING CIRCLE |
| LEVEL 1 |

SUBJECT AREA: STRENGTHS INVENTORY

LEARNING OBJECTIVE:

To provide an opportunity for the group of participants to openly identify their strengths and capacities.

SUGGESTED INSTRUCTIONS/ACTIVITIES:

This activity is done at the first or second meeting of the learning circle as a way of setting a positive learning climate. By having participants collectively identify their personal strengths, life experience, and abilities youth feel valued and recognized. It also conveys the message that knowledge and wisdom exists within the group; challenging a narrow view of knowledge. Participants are invited to list any number of strengths and a list is generated and then posted.

This activity can take between 15-30 minutes.

INSTRUCTIONAL AIDS/RESOURCES:

Flip chart and markers.

REFERENCES:

Kretzmann, McKnight, J. Communities From The Inside Out: A Path Toward Finding and Mobilizing Community Assets, 1993; Source: http:www.northwestern.edu/ipr/abcd/adcdtopics.html

ABORIGINAL RESEARCH LEARNING CIRCLE
LEVEL 1

SUBJECT AREA: KNOWING WHO YOU ARE

LEARNING OBJECTIVE:

To provide an opportunity for participants to explore and share background issues in relation to culture – using the 'Indigenous Research Agenda' as a guide.

To develop self-awareness, understanding and reflection skills.

SUGGESTED INSTRUCTIONS/ACTIVITIES:

This activity can be a powerful experience for participants. It may take 1-2 sessions depending on the level of sharing. Members are provided with a copy of the 'Indigenous Research Agenda' and are invited to share about their own personal experiences of being a person of Aboriginal ancestry. The guide allows participants to identify factors, which have impacted their lives to the present moment. The discussion places their lives in common and introduces the development of critical reflection skills – an important attribute to being a researcher.

There are at least 2 ways in which the discussion can take place. One approach is to have an open-ended sharing circle. Another is to use a focus group approach.

This activity will be at least 1 session (approximately 2 hours). Two sessions will allow for a thorough discussion of the 4 directions outlined in the Indigenous Research Agenda, namely: healing – de-colonization – transformation - mobilization

INSTRUCTIONAL AIDS/RESOURCES:

Flip chart and markers.
Handouts – Various materials outlining core Aboriginal values, beliefs, traditions, and practices, e.g. the medicine wheel, code of ethics, values, etc.; Indigenous Research Agenda (graphic), Focus Groups

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OTHER:
N/A

**ABORIGINAL RESEARCH LEARNING CIRCLE
LEVEL 1**

SUBJECT AREA: PARTICIPATION AGREEMENT

LEARNING OBJECTIVE:

To agree on a format which describes our learning expectations and responsibilities to one another.

To develop team standards (~ group norms).

To establish trust, safety, and a positive working climate.

SUGGESTED INSTRUCTIONS/ACTIVITIES:
These two activities are done at the first meeting of the learning circle. Participants are asked what 'team standards' they wish to have to support the learning circle and ensure a positive learning experience. Team standards such as 'being on time', 'respecting other people's viewpoints' are examples of our shared commitment. These are written on a flip chart and then developed into a poster format with each participant receiving a copy. A draft participant agreement is presented to members for their feedback and together the group agrees to a format. Each participant signs the same agreement as part of their commitment to the group.

Allow 30-45 minutes for these activities.

INSTRUCTIONAL AIDS/RESOURCES:
Flip chart and markers.

REFERENCES:
None noted.

OTHER:
N/A

ABORIGINAL RESEARCH LEARNING CIRCLE
LEVEL 1

SUBJECT AREA: LEARNING STYLES

LEARNING OBJECTIVE:

To provide an opportunity for participants to explore their own learning styles and intelligences.

To begin to reflect on what is meant by 'knowledge'.

To establish a trusting learning climate and an appreciation of peoples' diverse gifts.

SUGGESTED INSTRUCTIONS/ACTIVITIES:
This fun activity teaches participants that there are a number of learning styles and intelligences – that not one way is the right way and that each person brings unique gifts and perspectives to the group. A learning styles inventory is given to participants and then discussed. An inventory on multiple intelligences is also given to demonstrate that individuals possess many different types of knowledge.

In this way participants are introduced to assessment tools.

This activity can take up one session.

INSTRUCTIONAL AIDS/RESOURCES:
Flip chart and markers.
Learning Styles Inventory and backgrounder.
Multiple Intelligences assessment tool and backgrounder.

REFERENCES:
Felder, R. M., and Soloman, B. Learning Styles and Strategies/Index of Learning Styles; http://www2.ncsu.edu/unity.
Howard Gardner, Multiple Intelligences; Source: http:/www.aenc.org/KE-Intellligences.html.
Learning and Retention Rates, **Native Learning Styles**, Laurentian University Sudbury, 1988.

OTHER:
N/A

ABORIGINAL RESEARCH LEARNING CIRCLE
LEVEL 1

SUBJECT AREA: PROCESS EVALUATION FORM

LEARNING OBJECTIVE:

To involve participants in the development of a session by session evaluation tool.

To introduce participants to the 2 main types of evaluation: process and outcome. A process (evaluation) tool will be developed.

To provide participants with an opportunity to learn and/or practice group interaction and organizational skills.

SUGGESTED INSTRUCTIONS/ACTIVITIES:
This activity is a done near the end of the first meeting of the circle involving participants in learning about different ways of evaluating sessions. Participants are provided with different examples of 'workshop evaluation forms' and divided into groups. Their task is to review the different formats and come up with one that is simple and yet is effective, i.e. captures the information we need. Their drafts are presented and the group works together to develop a form that will be used to evaluate each session over time.

This activity can take up to 30 minutes.

INSTRUCTIONAL AIDS/RESOURCES:
Flip chart and markers
Sheet with small group work instructions
Sample evaluation forms

REFERENCES:
Two page handout on the 2 different types of program evaluations: process and outcome.

OTHER:
N/A

ABORIGINAL RESEARCH LEARNING CIRCLE
LEVEL 1

SUBJECT AREA: 101 QUESTIONS

LEARNING OBJECTIVE:

To provide an opportunity for participants to ask questions and to create a group list.

SUGGESTED INSTRUCTIONS/ACTIVITIES:
This activity is a done at the first meeting of the learning circle as a way of finding common themes and needs. Participants are invited to list any number of questions that they would like answered during the course of the learning circle. In this way, participants' learning needs are acknowledged and they help with content planning for future learning circle meetings.

This activity can take up to 30 minutes.

The questions can then be group or sorted (i.e. research terms) according to themes.

INSTRUCTIONAL AIDS/RESOURCES:
Flip chart and markers.

REFERENCES:
None noted.

OTHER:
N/A

**ABORIGINAL RESEARCH LEARNING CIRCLE
LEVEL 1**

AREA: BIG WORDS

LEARNING OBJECTIVE:

To provide an opportunity for participants to learn common research 'terms and jargon' in a fun, non-intimidating way.

INSTRUCTIONS/ACTIVITY:
This activity is a done at the first meeting of the learning circle and on an ongoing basis until completed. A brown paper bag is filled with a number of small cut pieces of paper each having a research term written on it. Participants are invited to pick 2 'big words' from the bag and to spend time before the next meeting coming up with their: personal definition and a dictionary definition. This activity takes place at each learning circle until all word definitions are completed. New words can be added as the learning process unfolds. A volunteer from the group of participants is asked to compile the list into a comprehensive glossary.

This activity can take up to 15 minutes.

INSTRUCTIONAL AIDS/RESOURCES:
Brown paper bag with pieces of paper.

REFERENCES:
None noted.

OTHER:
N/A

ABORIGINAL RESEARCH LEARNING CIRCLE
LEVEL 1

SUBJECT AREA: STRENGTHS INVENTORY

LEARNING OBJECTIVE:

To provide an opportunity for the group of participants to openly identify their strengths and capacities.

SUGGESTED INSTRUCTIONS/ACTIVITIES:
This activity is a done at the first or second meeting of the learning circle as a way of setting a positive learning climate. By having participants collectively identify their personal strengths, life experience, and abilities youth feel valued and recognized. It also conveys the message that knowledge and wisdom exists within the group; challenging a narrow view of knowledge. Participants are invited to list any number of strengths and a list is generated and then posted.

This activity can take between 15-30 minutes.

INSTRUCTIONAL AIDS/RESOURCES:
Flip chart and markers.

REFERENCES:
None noted.

OTHER:
N/A

ABORIGINAL RESEARCH LEARNING CIRCLE
LEVEL 1

SUBJECT AREA: KNOWING WHO YOU ARE

LEARNING OBJECTIVE:

To provide an opportunity for participants to explore and share background issues in relation to culture – using the 'Indigenous Research Agenda' as a guide.

To develop self-awareness, understanding and reflection skills.

SUGGESTED INSTRUCTIONS/ACTIVITIES:
This activity can be a powerful experience for participants. It may take 1-2 sessions depending on the level of sharing. Members are provided with a copy of the 'Indigenous Research Agenda' and are invited to share about their own personal experiences of being a person of Aboriginal ancestry. The guide allows participants to identify factors, which have impacted their lives to the present moment. The discussion places their lives in common and introduces the development of critical reflection skills – an important attribute to being a researcher.

There are at least 2 ways in which the discussion can take place. One approach is to have an open-ended sharing circle. Another is to use a focus group approach.

This activity will at least 1 session (approximately 2 hours). Two sessions will allow for a thorough discussion of the 4 directions outlined in the Indigenous Research Agenda, namely: healing – de-colonization – transformation - mobilization

INSTRUCTIONAL AIDS/RESOURCES:
Flip chart and markers.
Handouts – Various materials outlining core Aboriginal values, beliefs, traditions, and practices, e.g. the medicine wheel, code of ethics, values, etc.; Indigenous Research Agenda (graphic), Focus Groups

REFERENCES:
Smith, L. **Decolonizing Methodologies: Research and Indigenous Peoples**, University of Otago Press, Dunedin, 1999, p. 117.
Focus Groups (various sources)

OTHER:
N/A

ABORIGINAL RESEARCH LEARNING CIRCLE
LEVEL 1

SUBJECT AREA: PARTICIPATION AGREEMENT

LEARNING OBJECTIVE:

To agree on a format which describes our learning expectations and responsibilities to one another.

To develop team standards (~ group norms).

To establish trust, safety, and a positive working climate.

SUGGESTED INSTRUCTIONS/ACTIVITIES:
These two activities are done at the first meeting of the learning circle. Participants are asked what 'team standards' they wish to have to support the learning circle and ensure a positive learning experience. Team standards such as 'being on time', 'respecting other people's viewpoints' are examples of our shared commitment.

These are written on a flip chart and then developed into a poster format with each participant receiving a copy. A draft participant agreement is presented to members for their feedback and together the group agrees to a format. Each participant signs the same agreement as part of their commitment to the group.

Allow 30-45 minutes for these activities.

INSTRUCTIONAL AIDS/RESOURCES:
Flip chart and markers.

REFERENCES:
None noted.

OTHER:
N/A

ABORIGINAL RESEARCH LEARNING CIRCLE
LEVEL 1

SUBJECT AREA: LEARNING STYLES

LEARNING OBJECTIVE:

To provide an opportunity for participants to explore their own learning styles and intelligences.

To begin to reflect on what is meant by 'knowledge'.

To establish a trusting learning climate and an appreciation of peoples' diverse gifts.

SUGGESTED INSTRUCTIONS/ACTIVITIES:
This fun activity teaches participants that there are a number of learning styles and intelligences – that not one way is the right way and that each person brings unique gifts and perspectives to the group. A learning styles inventory is given to participants and then discussed. An inventory on multiple intelligences is also given to demonstrate that individuals possess many different types of knowledge.

n this way participants are introduced to assessment tools.
This activity can take up one session.

INSTRUCTIONAL AIDS/RESOURCES:
Flip chart and markers.
Learning Styles Inventory and backgrounder.
Multiple Intelligences assessment tool and backgrounder.

REFERENCES:
Felder, R. M., and Soloman, B. Learning Styles and Strategies/Index of Learning Styles; http:/www.aenc.org/KE-Intellligences.html.
Howard Gardner – Multiple Intelligences
Armstrong – Multiples Intelligences
Learning and Retention Rates -

OTHER:
N/A

ABORIGINAL RESEARCH LEARNING CIRCLE
LEVEL 1

SUBJECT AREA: PROCESS EVALUATION FORM

LEARNING OBJECTIVE:

To involve participants in the development of a session by session evaluation tool.

To introduce participants to the 2 main types of evaluation: process and outcome. A process (evaluation) tool will be developed.

To provide participants with an opportunity to learn and/or practice group interaction and organizational skills.

SUGGESTED INSTRUCTIONS/ACTIVITIES:
This activity is a done near the end of the first meeting of the circle as a involving participants in learning about different ways of evaluating sessions. Participants are provided with different examples of 'workshop evaluation forms' and divided into groups. Their task is to review the different formats and come up with one that is simple and yet is effective, i.e. captures the information we need. Their drafts are presented and the group works together to develop a form that will be used to evaluate each session over time.

This activity can take up to 30 minutes.

INSTRUCTIONAL AIDS/RESOURCES:
Flip chart and markers
Sheet with small group work instructions
Sample evaluation forms

REFERENCES:
Two page handout on the 2 different types of program evaluations: process and outcome.

OTHER:
N/A

ABORIGINAL RESEARCH LEARNING CIRCLE
LEVEL 1

SUBJECT AREA: ETHICS

LEARNING OBJECTIVE:

To provide an opportunity for participants to ask questions, explore, discuss, and learn about personal ethics and ethical considerations within the field of research.

SUGGESTED INSTRUCTIONS/ACTIVITIES:

Ethics is introduced at 2 levels: one's personal orientation towards life (values, beliefs) and within the research community. The facilitator invites the group of participants to discuss what does 'ethics' mean to each person. What does ethics mean to the Aboriginal Community? Their thoughts are written out on the flip chart paper. Some instruction/handouts are given regarding ethical matters in research – for example, the treatment of humans and animals, informed consent, acceptable methods of research, etc. A handout is also given describing 'ethical guidelines when conducting research within the Aboriginal' and the importance of respecting culture. Participants are asked to explore and determine their own personal code of ethics and the importance of self awareness and respect as desired qualities in a community researcher is stressed. Various examples are given to the group to discuss which illustrate the importance of working from an ethical standpoint as a researcher. For example, confidentiality. What does it mean? How does it translate if you are conducting a research project in a reserve community? What are the guidelines that researchers must follow to ensure fair and ethical practices?

Allow an entire session for this activity (2 hours).

INSTRUCTIONAL AIDS/RESOURCES:

Flip chart/markers
Small group work – handout on ethical questions
Handout, Native Code of Ethics, Source: **The Sacred Tree**, Four Worlds Development Project, University of Lethbridge, Alberta, 1998; pp. 74-82.
Handout, Research Involving Aboriginal Peoples, section 6. Source: 'Ethical Conduct for Research Involving Humans, http://www/nserc.ca/programs/ethics.
Principles of Community Building, Source:
http:national.unitedway.org/cbprncpls.cfm.
The Boston Foundation: Catalyst For Community . Guiding Principles for a New Social Contract. (source unkwown)
  Some Rules About Confidentiality, Barnsley, J., Ellis, D. **Action Research For Women's Groups**. Women's Research Centre, 1987.

| **REFERENCES**: |
| N/A |

| **OTHER**: |
| N/A |

| **ABORIGINAL RESEARCH LEARNING CIRCLE**
LEVEL 1 |
| **SUBJECT AREA**: KNOWLEDGE, SKILLS, ATTRIBUTES, AND EXPERIENCE VALUED IN A (COMMUNITY) RESEARCHER |
| **LEARNING OBJECTIVE**:

To explore and discuss the personal attributes and various skills set considered necessary to be a community researcher. |
| **SUGGESTED INSTRUCTIONS/ACTIVITIES**:
This group activity involves the facilitator enlisting participants' views on what they consider to be important personal, communal, and professional attributes and skills in order to be a credible community researcher. Thoughts are listed on a flip chart and then compiled. Some examples of how these capacities might apply to real life situations are also discussed. The facilitator might also share examples of real life job advertisements where organizations, groups, etc are looking for researchers. This shows the range of skills sets and qualifications that are possible and the many different jobs that apply.

This activity can take from 30-45 minutes.

Note: Real life job ads are brought in to the group on a regular basis by the facilitator to provide examples of how broad and diverse the field of research is. |
| **INSTRUCTIONAL AIDS/RESOURCES**:
Flip chart/markers
Sample job ads |

ABORIGINAL RESEARCH LEARNING CIRCLE
LEVEL 1

SUBJECT AREA: STAGES OF GROUP DEVELOPMENT

LEARNING OBJECTIVE:

To teach participants that groups form and develop according to stages and how this information might apply not only to this learning experience but also in their future work in the community.

SUGGESTED INSTRUCTIONS/ACTIVITIES:

A handout is provided describing the various stages in which a group typically forms and develops over time. Examples are provided and participants are asked to make an assessment of where they think the 'learning circle' is at and what evidence there is for their judgement. Further discussion takes placed as to how this knowledge might be helpful in the work of a researcher. For example, being able to assess where a particular neighbourhood or community is at in their formation may be helpful in terms of the work of community needs assessment or community development.

This activity can take up to 30 minutes.

INSTRUCTIONAL AIDS/RESOURCES:

Flip chart/markers
Stages Of Group Development, Competency Based Training Modules – Manitoba Family Services, not date.

REFERENCES:
N/A

OTHER:
N/A

**ABORIGINAL RESEARCH LEARNING CIRCLE
LEVEL 1**

SUBJECT AREA: THE RESEARCH CYCLE

LEARNING OBJECTIVE:

To provide participants with information on the research cycle.
To introduce participants to research terminology.
To collectively reflect and critique the research cycle – what is missing? Western models of knowledge vs Aboriginal ways of knowing.

SUGGESTED INSTRUCTIONS/ACTIVITIES:
Two handouts are provided and used as the basis for discussion. The facilitator introduces the basic research process. Reference is also made to more participatory models such as action research. Opportunities for group discussion are created. Western practices are reviewed and critiqued in light of Aboriginal history. This session can also draw from the earlier handout of the Indigenous Research Agenda.

This activity can take an entire session (2 hours)
The questions can then be grouped or sorted (i.e. research terms) according to themes.

INSTRUCTIONAL AIDS/RESOURCES:
Flip chart/markers
Handouts of 2 different examples of describing a typical research cycle.
Reference to the handout, Indigenous Research Agenda.
Background document on action based research as an alternative view.

REFERENCES:
Winnipeg School Division #1 Handout.
Jackson, E.T., Kassam, Y. (Ed.). **Knowledge Shared: Participatory Evaluation In Development Cooperatives**, Kumarian Press, 1998.

OTHER:
N/A

ABORIGINAL RESEARCH LEARNING CIRCLE **LEVEL 1**
SUBJECT AREA: COMMUNITY
LEARNING OBJECTIVE: To provide an opportunity for participants to explore in detail both the personal and academic definitions of community so as to understand its many components in relation to research. To explore the various mediating factors (both positive and barriers) which impact community life.
SUGGESTED INSTRUCTIONS/ACTIVITIES: Note: Participants are given a learning assignment at end of previous session asking them to write out their personal definition of community and a dictionary version. The facilitator introduces the discussion by inviting participants to share their own personal definition of what community means to them. From this discussion, the group identifies common themes and issues, which describe the various types of communities. The facilitator then introduces definitions of community found in social sciences literature – community of need, interest, geographical, professional, etc. The group continues to explore and appreciates that there are various kinds of community and ways of studying community – asset focus vs need focus. Particular attention is given to understanding what makes the Aboriginal Community unique – its shared history, values, beliefs, traditions, and cultural ceremonies. This activity provides a foundation upon which to explore in the next session the various community organizational practice models. Participants are given an opportunity to review these models prior to the next session. They are given the following learning assignment: to choose one of the models and come prepared to introduce the various components to the group.

This activity will take an entire session.

INSTRUCTIONAL AIDS/RESOURCES:
Flip chart and markers
Handout on various definitions of community from literature.
Handout of 'An Overview of Community Organizational Practice Models'.

REFERENCES:
Participants own research.
How To Build Community (poster), no date. Source unknown.
Community Development: Promoting Health Through Empowerment and
Participation; Source: http://www.hc-sc.gc.ca/hppb/wired/community.html.

OTHER:
N/A

**ABORIGINAL RESEARCH LEARNING CIRCLE
LEVEL 1**

SUBJECT AREA: COMMUNITY ORGANIZATIONAL PRACTICE MODELS

LEARNING OBJECTIVE:

To introduce youth participants to various descriptive models and orientations to working at the level of community.

To discuss and critique the various models.

To provide potential future researchers with a 'toolbox' of various background knowledge and skills to working at the level of community.

To provide participants with an opportunity to practice their research, organizational,

and presentation skills.

SUGGESTED INSTRUCTIONS/ACTIVITIES:
Note: Participants were provided with a handout outlining all of the relevant models at the previous session; they were asked to organize a 5" presentation to the entire group on 1 of the models of community organizational practice.

The facilitator provides an opportunity for the group to ask questions and to discuss what is being shared. Examples are provided and participants are encouraged to speak from their experience about what models they are already familiar with or are most interested in. An opportunity is created to critique the material through an Aboriginal lens with the facilitator emphasizing the need now and in the future for the development of Aboriginal specific models.

This activity takes an entire session.

INSTRUCTIONAL AIDS/RESOURCES:
Handout of 'Community Organizational Practice Models'

REFERENCES:
Community Practice Models, Weil, M., Gamble, D., **Encyclopedia of Social Work**, 19th Edition, 1995; pp. 577-597.
Zastrow, C., **The Practice of Social Work**. Fourth Edition, 1992, Wadsworth, Inc., pp.248-249.
Community Work: British Models, Popple, K., **Journal Of Community Practice**, Volume 3, Number ¾, 1996, pp.147-180.
Jackson, E.T., Kassam, Y. (Ed.). **Knowledge Shared: Participatory Evaluation In Development Cooperatives**, Kumarian Press, 1998.

OTHER:
N/A

ABORIGINAL RESEARCH LEARNING CIRCLE
LEVEL 1

SUBJECT AREA: CAPACITY BUILDING

LEARNING OBJECTIVE:

To introduce participants to the term, its meaning, models, application, and process.

To demonstrate the importance of the notion of capacity building within community, in this case, the Aboriginal Community.

The work at Ma Mawi as a learning organization is given as an example of c-b.

SUGGESTED INSTRUCTIONS/ACTIVITIES:

The facilitator introduces the term capacity building to the participants. C-B is also synonymous with other terms. C-B is placed into the context of an asset-based orientation to looking at community. C-B has many levels: personal, familial, social, organizational/systems, and communal. Participants are taught a couple of models of capacity building and how it can apply to community work such as Ma Mawi's. A discussion takes place as to how the process of conducting research can also promote c-b. Participatory Action Research (PAR) as an example can result in positive social change through the development of capacities.

This activity can take an entire session (2 hours).

INSTRUCTIONAL AIDS/RESOURCES:

Flip chart and markers

Handout on capacity building model from, Jackson, E.T., Ksaaam, Y. (Ed.)
Knowledge Shared: Participatory Evaluation In Development Cooperatives, Kumarian Press, 1988.

Web site on the work of John McKnight in the USA.

Taking Back The Community, Ma Mawi's Strategic Planning Document, December 2000.

REFERENCES:

OTHER:
N/A

ABORIGINAL RESEARCH LEARNING CIRCLE
LEVEL 1

SUBJECT AREA: UNDERSTANDING NEIGHBOURHOODS

LEARNING OBJECTIVE:

To introduce participants to urban planning research and the work that has been done in recent years by John McKnight in the USA on strong neighbourhoods.

SUGGESTED INSTRUCTIONS/ACTIVITIES:
Participants were provided with a handout regarding how to understand and assess neighbourhoods. The facilitator engages participants in a discussion as to their own experiences of looking at neighbourhoods. The research of John McKnight on neighbourhoods is described and various applications are explored, e.g. urban Aboriginal sector, reserve communities.

This activity can take up to 1 hour.

INSTRUCTIONAL AIDS/RESOURCES:
Flip chart and markers
Handouts on the work of John McKnight – June 2002 Winnipeg Presentation.
Warren, **Neighbourhood Organizer's Handbook.**
William, **Neighbourhood Organizing**.

REFERENCES:
OTHER: N/A

ABORIGINAL RESEARCH LEARNING CIRCLE **LEVEL 1**
SUBJECT AREA: MEDIATING FACTORS IN COMMUNITY
LEARNING OBJECTIVE: To provide an opportunity for participants to explore in more detail the notion of mediating factors at the level of community. The research on resiliency in youth (protective factors) is used as an example.
SUGGESTED INSTRUCTIONS/ACTIVITIES: The facilitator introduces participants to the work of the C.O.E. and the importance of looking at mediating factors which impact (both positively and adversely) child and youth outcomes. The concept of resiliency is also explored in some detail. This activity can take up to 1 to 1.5 hours.
INSTRUCTIONAL AIDS/RESOURCES: Flip chart and markers Protective Factors Research: What Can We Learn From Resilient Children? From Bonnie's Research Centre, AHTDS Prevention Resource Centre, 1987. Handout from the Centre of Excellence for Child and Youth Centred Prairie Communities (CO.E.) – broad research questions   Croll, L, Robson, J., **Caring For Children and Youth Who Have Been Sexually Abused: A Training Manual For Child and Youth Care Workers and Foster Parents**, Health Canada, 1991; pp. 316ff.

REFERENCES:

OTHER:
N/A

**ABORIGINAL RESEARCH LEARNING CIRCLE
LEVEL 1**

SUBJECT AREA: OVERVIEW OF RESEARCH AND EVALUATION METHODS
(QUALITATIVE AND QUANTITATIVE APPROACHES)

LEARNING OBJECTIVE:

To explore and to learn as a group what is meant by information-knowledge-research.

To introduce participants to the various kinds of research and evaluation methods.

To give participants an opportunity to practice some of common qualitative methods
– the interview, the survey, questionnaires, case study, focus group, sharing/talking
circle

To provide participants with an opportunity to practice their presentation skills.

SUGGESTED INSTRUCTIONS/ACTIVITIES:
This learning is done over several # of sessions. The facilitator also provides ample
opportunity for participants to learn to develop research tools, e.g. survey, etc and to
practice their application.

INSTRUCTIONAL AIDS/RESOURCES:
Flip chart and markers
Handouts describing the various methods
Sample interview guides, surveys, questionnaires taken from various public
sources/organizations. For example, AFM, Stats Can., Aboriginal Healing
Foundation, NAIG Summer 2002 Survey, Winnipeg School Division #1 (parent
survey, bullying survey), Provincial and Federal Government Publications.

REFERENCES:
Community Development and Research; Source: Solicitor General of Canada
www.sgc.gc.ca/epub, 1996.
How To Conduct Your Own Survey, 1994.
Gubbels, P., Hornick, J.P., Nicoll, M. An Alberta Community Needs Assessment
Survey, **Canadian Journal of Program Evaluation**, Volume 4, No.1, 1989, pp.49-
66.
Denzin, **Handbook of Qualitative Research.**
Zastrow, C. **The Practice of Social Work**, Fourth Edition, 1992, Wadsworth, p. 234.
Taking Time To Listen: Using Community Based Research To Build Programs,
Four Worlds International Institute For Human and Community Development,
Lethbridge, Alberta, 1985.

OTHER:
N/A

ABORIGINAL RESEARCH LEARNING CIRCLE
LEVEL 1

SUBJECT AREA: PLANNING ALTERNATIVE TOMORROWS WITH HOPE
(P.A.T.H.)

LEARNING OBJECTIVE:

To provide participants with an opportunity to conduct a PATH planning session.

To provide participants with an opportunity to practice their facilitation skills.

SUGGESTED INSTRUCTIONS/ACTIVITIES:
The facilitator introduces PATH as a planning tool for individuals, families,
organizations, and communities. Following the presentation, the facilitator asks for 3
volunteers from the group – one to assume the role of lead facilitator, the other two
as helpers/transcribers (artists). Each participant is asked to bring a friend to the
next session. All group members are provided with background information about
the PATH and the steps involved. The assigned facilitators are provided with
specific instructions re: facilitation, art work, etc. The facilitator asks the group to
decide on a topic relevant to the Aboriginal Community, which will serve as the focal
point for the PATH planning process (next session). For example, the place of

information technology within the Aboriginal Community.

This activity can take an entire session.

INSTRUCTIONAL AIDS/RESOURCES:
P.A.T.H. paper and colourful markers.

REFERENCES:
Pearpoint, J., O'Brien, J., Forest, M. **PATH: A Workbook For Planning Positive Possible Futures**, Inclusion Press, Toronto, Second Edition, 1998.

OTHER:
Food and beverages

ABORIGINAL RESEARCH LEARNING CIRCLE
LEVEL 1

SUBJECT AREA: PARTICIPATORY ACTION RESEARCH (PAR)

LEARNING OBJECTIVE:

To provide participants with an introduction to PAR and its application within the research community.

SUGGESTED INSTRUCTIONS/ACTIVITIES:
The facilitator teaches the background to PAR and its various definitions, e.g. action base research, reality based research, etc.

This activity can take an entire session.

INSTRUCTIONAL AIDS/RESOURCES:
Handouts on PAR, including examples of relevant research studies.

REFERENCES:
Barnsley, J., Ellis, D., **Action Research For Women's Groups,** Women's Research Centre, Vancouver. 1987
Dixon, J. (1995) "Community stories and indicators for evaluating community development". **Community Development Journal**, 30(4): 327-336. (October 1995).
Inclusive Social Policy Development: Diverse Affirming Communities, 1997.
Zuber-Skerritt, O. (ed), 1991, **Action Research For Change and Development**. Avebury, Aldershot.
Kemmis and McTaggart, 1988, **The Action Research Planner**. Deakin University, Geelong.
Dickson, G. (2000) "Aboriginal Grandmothers' experience with health promotion and participatory action research". **Qualitative Health Research,** 10(2): 188-213. (March 2002).
Reality Based Research, American Indian Policy Centre; Source: http//:www.airpi.org/reality.html, 1998

OTHER:
N/A

ABORIGINAL RESEARCH LEARNING CIRCLE
LEVEL 1

SUBJECT AREA: COMMUNITY RESOURCES

LEARNING OBJECTIVE:

To generate a list of local community resource people some of which might be invited to speak on a specific area of research.

To provide an opportunity to look into a specific research area in more depth.

SUGGESTED INSTRUCTIONS/ACTIVITIES:
The facilitator invites participants to list what local individuals, groups, organizations are involved in research related areas. In this way, two things are accomplished: 1) the development of a local resource guide and 2) a speakers list. Depending on the group's time schedule, members by consensus agree on a short list of possible guest presenters. Volunteers from the group agree to contact various speakers and a schedule is developed.

Examples:

- ✓ Demographics and Statistics - Darren Lezubski, Managing Director of the Centre of Excellence For Child and Youth Centred Prairie Communities
- ✓ Action Research & Indigenous Peoples -Mothers Of Red Nation, Leslie Spillett
- ✓ First Nations – COE Child Welfare Site - Maryln Bennett, Coordinator
- ✓ Prairie Research Associates
- ✓ Centre of Excellence for Prairie Women's Health Research
- ✓ Metis Family and Community Institute (MCFI)
- ✓ Child and Family Services Research Group (U. of Manitoba)
- ✓ Linda Campbell, private consultant
- ✓ Gerry Kaplan, private consultant
- ✓ Cultural Advisor - Mr. Henry Swampy

Note: Outside of local resources, there a # of web based research minded resources which the facilitator shares with the group during the course of the learning circle. For example, John McKnight's related web site, Statistics Canada, C.O.E's national links, etc. In this way, participants have at their disposal a broader list of resources.

INSTRUCTIONAL AIDS/RESOURCES:
As requested by the guest presenters.

REFERENCES:
As provided by the guest presenters

OTHER:
Food and beverages for meeting
Honorarium for presenters

ABORIGINAL RESEARCH LEARNING CIRCLE
LEVEL 1

SUBJECT AREA: COMMUNITY RESEARCH PROPOSAL (FINAL ASSIGNMENT)

LEARNING OBJECTIVE:

To challenge participants to research a topic and present to the group following a research proposal format.

Participants develop skills in research proposal development, budgeting.

Note: This is an opportunity to integrate the knowledge they have acquired over the course of the learning circle, for e.g. the research cycle, research methods, community models.

SUGGESTED INSTRUCTIONS/ACTIVITIES:
Well in advance, the facilitator hands out a final assignment, which can be done individually or in groups of up to 3 participants. Members are asked to research a topic, which they consider relevant to the Aboriginal community and to develop a realistic research project proposal based on a format. Participants are to imagine that they have a funding grant of $25,000 to conduct their research. Participants are expected to submit a written proposal description and make an oral presentation to the group lasting between 5 – 10 minutes.

This activity takes an entire session (2 hours).

INSTRUCTIONAL AIDS/RESOURCES:
Handout – final assignment
Flip chart/markers, a-v presentation equipment as needed by participants

REFERENCES:
N/A

OTHER:
N/A