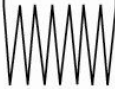


**Native Women's
Association of Canada**

40th Annual General Assembly

Annual Report 2014



July 13-14, 2014

Delta Halifax
1990 Barrington Street, Halifax, NS

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Overview

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

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

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

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Sharlene Paul

4 Regional Elder Representatives

Agnes Potter (East) Bear River First Nation, NS	Elize Hartley (South) Hamilton, ON
Noreen McAteer (West) Fort Vermilion, AB	Annie Modeste (North) Fort McPherson, NT

4 Regional Youth Representatives

Denise Bernard (East) Aboriginal Women's Association of PEI	Syndyn Baxter (South) Ontario Native Women's Association
Kari-Dawn Wuttunee (West) Saskatchewan Aboriginal Women's Circle Corporation	Erin Linklater (North) Yukon Aboriginal Women's Council

Mission

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

Objectives

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

- to be the national voice for Aboriginal women;
- to address issues in a manner which reflects the changing needs of Aboriginal women in Canada; Aboriginal peoples in our role as mothers and leaders;
- to promote equal opportunities for Aboriginal women in programs and activities;
- to serve as a resource among our constituency and Aboriginal communities;
- to cultivate and teach the characteristics that are unique aspects of our cultural and historical traditions;
- to assist Aboriginal women's organizations, as well, as community initiatives in the development of their local projects;
- to advance issues and concerns of Aboriginal women;
- to link with other Aboriginal organizations with common goals.

Vision

We have a vision of Aboriginal communities where all individuals have an opportunity to develop their talents in order to achieve their full potential. We see communities where all people can lead healthy lifestyles by maintaining balance in their spiritual, mental and physical health.

We see Aboriginal communities where our children grow up with a strong identification of and pride in who they are and constantly seek to broaden their knowledge of the things that affect them and their relationship with the environment the land. We see communities where all our people have an opportunity to learn our history and traditional ways while attaining a high level of academic education with the broader society.

In order to accomplish this, we see strong Aboriginal families where the responsibility of education begins in the home and families nurture their children to be proud of who they are, and to be comfortable in a predominantly non-Aboriginal environment. We see a community where all Aboriginal people accept and exercise their responsibilities to contribute to a strong community.

We also envision an Aboriginal community which understands and respects the diversity and uniqueness of all Aboriginal Nation, a community which communicates with each other and works in unity with all Aboriginal organizations to ensure a strong voice in maintaining and enhancing the exercise of our Aboriginal and treaty rights. This is a community which assumes

responsibility in selecting leaders who will be role models for our youth and the following generations.

Finally, we see an Aboriginal community which determines how our natural resources are utilized and can co-exist in cooperation with society- free of racism and discrimination.

Messages

President's Message

Michèle Audette

This has been a year filled with emotion, challenges and mobilization initiative. We are currently faced with an extremely difficult political situation despite the support we have received at international, inter-American and Canadian levels, as well as from civil society. This support has involved recognition for all the work done by the Native Women's Association of Canada: its 40 years of struggle and engagement, its 40 years of raising public awareness and gaining sympathy for our cause. However, I have come to realize that we are in the midst of a human rights crisis thanks to the current Conservative government. Over 28,000 people signed our petition and that of the Public Service Commission of Canada. All thirteen (13) Premiers and the Special Rapporteurs of the Organization of American States and the United Nations have supported our demands for a public inquiry into the fate of our stolen sisters. However, once again, we have come up against a wall. We have met with a total lack of sensitivity to our concerns on the part of those people who insist that this government is doing such a wonderful job for Aboriginal women and girls. And yet, ever since I arrived at NWAC, we have been constantly subjected to cuts — yes, cuts — be it with regard to the environment, human rights, public safety and violence prevention, or administration.

Every time, we have offered to work with this government in a truly cooperative way, but to no avail; the existing political forces have ignored and continue to ignore the vitality of our great organization. Luckily, there are also some kind souls within the federal government who really want to believe in us.

As I said a year ago, we won't give up. We will continue to work for the survival of our national organization.

I would like to take this opportunity to thank and congratulate our employees and tell them how much I admire them. They have stayed with us, in some cases right to the very end, despite knowing that funding for their positions would not be renewed. It is heartbreaking to witness the departure of such a competent team, who brought the issue of missing and murdered women to public attention and raised awareness about this situation amongst thousands of Canadians.

In March, during an interview on "Power & Politics" on CBC, Radio-Canada's English network, I announced that if the Prime Minister did not put the recommendation for a national public inquiry back into the final report of the Parliamentary Committee on Missing and Murdered Aboriginal Women and Girls, I would make this priority a personal and professional issue in the next federal election.

As a person who is committed to improving justice, I have decided to put my words into action and will run for nomination in my beautiful federal riding of Manicouagan! October 2015 is fast approaching and I encourage all of you who are here today to participate in the next federal election under the banner that best reflects your values!

I invite you to read the annual report. Please take note of the quality of our work and, especially, of the fact that the report is filled with hope and passion for our cause. We have every reason to be proud!

Once again, we have been present in every forum. We took part in the United Nations Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues met with the United Nations Special Rapporteur on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples and with the members of the United Nations Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination Against Women, and made a presentation to the Aboriginal Affairs Ministers Working Group. It is also important to mention all our advocacy efforts before numerous parliamentary committees, including the Special Committee on Violence Against Indigenous Women. Once again, our organization has shared our views and heightened Canadians' sensitivity to our concerns through a range of events — actions that testify to our diversity, our strength and our desire for a better today and a better tomorrow!

Happy 40th Anniversary NWAC and long life to the beautiful, strong and resilient people we all are!

Annual Message from the Executive Director

Kwey, Hello, Bonjour!

I am very pleased to be with you today in this beautiful city as we celebrate NWAC's 40th birthday. I would like to take a moment to thank the Mi'kmaq nation for allowing us on their beautiful and breathtaking territory and to acknowledge the Elders, guests and the leaders who are amongst us today. I, too, have something to celebrate on a personal level, as it is four (4) years, nearly to the day – July 12, 2010 – that I accepted the position of Executive Director for NWAC. I must say that I have encountered many challenges along the way but have also reaped many rewards, both professionally and personally, so I would like thank you – Board members and staff - for supporting me during both the smooth and not so smooth times. NWAC has a lot to be proud of and I am very pleased to be playing a role in advancing the cause of Aboriginal women albeit at a pace that is not as fast as I would like it to be, but I guess in this business small victories are what one can hope for and I think we, as a collective, have achieved many victories over the past 40 years.

Our last AGA was held last August in Ottawa. I will report on the major activities that the national office undertook since that time. However, you will also find in this report sections written by the other Directors that highlight the major work they carried out in their respective areas over the past year. Needless to say, things have been hectic during the past eleven (11) months and will remain so for the next while as NWAC must prepare once again for the Council of Federation meeting to be held in Charlottetown next month and in the planning of NAWS IV, which will be held in Membertou in October. These are two (2) very major events with NWAC playing a co-host role for NAWS IV. As well, NWAC is anticipating the release of the final reports from the two (2) international organizations that visited Canada during the past year to investigate the issue of Missing and Murdered Aboriginal women. Their reports will surely entail a lot of media attention and NWAC will have to prepare for whatever is stated in the reports.

In September, NWAC received and hosted the visit from the Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW). NWAC assisted and facilitated this visit. The two (2) Commissioners heard testimony for two days at the NWAC office before they continued on with their journey out west to Vancouver, Prince George, Whitehorse and Winnipeg. As just mentioned, this report as well as the Inter-American Commission on Human Rights (IACHR) report will soon be released and will be distributed to the PTMA's upon receipt, as some of you will also be contacted by the media in your particular area to comment on the findings/results.

In October, I attended the inaugural meeting of the Young Leaders Movement in Banff along with Kari-Dawn Wuttunee and Erin Linklater, two(2) of the NWAC youth board members, to participate in a countrywide youth movement. The CEOs and Executive Directors of each NAO and representatives from five (5) non-Aboriginal organizations, YMCA, YWCA, Big Brothers-

Big Sisters, Community Foundations of Canada and Pathways to Education also participated at this event. I am sure that Kari-Dawn and/or Erin can provide you with additional details on this endeavour if you are interested.

In November, I attended the Aboriginal Affairs Working Group meeting in Winnipeg along with Michèle Audette and Vanessa Tait, the former President of NWAC's Manitoba PTMA, Moon Voices. All five (5) NAOS leaders and Ministers of Aboriginal Affairs from each Province and Territory meet at the AAWG annual gathering and agreed to collaborate in working in their respective regions on the following issues: Missing and Murdered Aboriginal women; education, economic development, emergency preparedness and housing. These issues will now be brought forward to the Premiers at the COF meeting in August in PEI for their endorsement. NWAC also received a visit from a Chinese women's delegation, who were keen on hearing about the conditions of Aboriginal women in Canada and of our organization.

After about one (1) year of searching for more affordable office space, NWAC finally came to an agreement with the University of Ottawa to sub-lease about three-quarters ($\frac{3}{4}$) of the space we had on the 9th floor. The negotiations were very long and very tough but in the end I think that NWAC took the best deal that came forward and will result in a significant cost saving for NWAC. The downside of this effort is that the NWAC staff is now housed on two (2) different floors in the same building and in much smaller quarters. The move took place in December with very little effect on the day-to-day operations of NWAC. Also in December, a meeting was held with a senior official of the Aboriginal Affairs and Northern Development Department (AANDC) to introduce the departments 'new' funding process, which dramatically changed from previous years. As of the upcoming new fiscal year, all NAOs and ARO (about 130 across Canada) must now compete for the same \$20M project funding pot. NWAC submitted ten (10) projects on the due date these proposals were to be submitted, but, to date, has not received confirmation of any of our projects as being approved. Needless to say, this is putting NWAC under much financial strain, as staff has to be laid-off when funding is not accessed through AANDC and/or other sources.

NWAC held the first Aboriginal Women in Business Entrepreneurship Network (AWBEN) conference in January. Several board members participated and a big draw or win for NWAC was to have one of the Dragons – Brett Wilson – attend and speak to the participants. Also in January, meetings were held with officials from Environment Canada and AANDC for the purpose of working jointly on projects and to access funding. An Executive Council meeting was also convened in January.

A two-day Board of Director's meeting was held in Ottawa in February. It is always to the association's benefit to have face-to-face meetings instead of by teleconference. Much more can be achieved in this manner, however, our current core funding only allows for one face-to-face

meeting, so in-person meetings are dependent on NWAC's success in accessing funding from other sources other than core funding. In February, I also attended a meeting hosted by the Canadian Human Rights Commission in Montreal and, with Michèle Audette, had a face-to-face meeting with Mr. Paul Martin to discuss how to get Aboriginal women more involved in the corporate world. It appears to me that Mr. Martin is committed to advancing the conditions of Aboriginal people and is aware of the important role Aboriginal women play in bringing about change. In addition, NWAC prepared, with Dr. Carolyn Bennett's office, a petition calling for a National Public Inquiry to be presented to the House of Commons – a petition that was signed by many Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal people, however, this does not seem to have an impact on the Harper government.

The Special Parliamentary Committee report, "Invisible Women: A Call to Action – A report on Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women in Canada", generated a lot of media attention, mostly negative from NWAC's perspective as it fell short from NWAC's expectations. NWAC had broken away from this Committee because NWAC felt their inclusion in the work of the Committee was not as NWAC had requested early on in the process. In March, Regional Chief Googoo approached NWAC to participate in the Circle of Hope march for Missing and Murdered Aboriginal women that will be held July 15. Initial plans had to be modified since because Chief Googoo recently underwent cardiac surgery and will be on leave for some time to come. It was because of this invitation that NWAC decided to have this AGA in Halifax. The first National Aboriginal Women's Summit IV (NAWS IV) planning meeting was held as well in March. NAWS IV will be an event that will be held in Membertou, Nova Scotia, in October. The government of Nova Scotia and NWAC will co-host this major event.

As most of you know, April is a very busy month for all organizations as fiscal year-end reports must be prepared and submitted to funders. NWAC must submit not only final project reports but must report on all activities undertaken by the President and the organization such as, the numbers of meeting attended, NWAC must also submit copies of press releases and presentations and speeches and of course financial reports. Throughout all this, multiple teleconferences were held throughout the month in preparation for the second meeting between NAO leaders and Provincial/Territorial leaders that was held again in Winnipeg in May.

In May, I attended the AAWG meeting where our president was the main speaker on the issue of missing and murdered Aboriginal women and girls. The NWT government has taken the lead in hosting future AAWG meetings to be held wherever the Premier so designates.

A first meeting was held in Ottawa with officials from the Canadian Institutes of Health Research – Institute of Aboriginal Peoples Health to discuss the Partners for Engagement and Knowledge Exchange (PEKEs) project, which officially began June 15. I also met with Dr.

Marlene Brant-Castellano, who would like NWAC's participation in the planning of the 20-years post-RCAP event.

Activities in June have for the most part been focused on the planning and organizing of the 40th NWAC AGA. I also travelled to Welland, Ontario which is about a seven-hour drive from Ottawa, to receive a \$7250 cheque that the students of the Notre Dame College School had collected by way of a walk to prevent violence against women. This year NWAC was chosen to be the recipient of this funding drive. Teresa Edwards and I met with UNIFOR, a union representative group, who is greatly supportive of NWAC and wishes to continue to support the work that NWAC does especially on the issue of missing and murdered Aboriginal women and girls.

These are the highlights of the past year. NWAC continues to be regarded as the source of expertise on all matters pertaining to Aboriginal women. Countless requests come in on a daily basis seeking NWAC's advice and input on the development of policy papers, university research papers and even books, as well as many invitations to speak at events and to participate at roundtables, conference, annual meetings and/or be part of committees. We try to meet the requests that are aligned to the goals and aspirations of NWAC and those that will move NWAC's agenda forward.

Migwech, Merci, Thank you!

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'M. Brant-Castellano', is placed on a white rectangular background.

Current Files

Labour Market Development (LMD) Annual Report

Prepared by: Beverly Blanchard, Acting Director LMD

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

- the Aboriginal Skills Employment and Training Strategy (ASETS);
- the Strategic Partnership Agreement (SPA); and
- Cultural Connections for Aboriginal Youth (CCAY).

In addition, we also managed the Helen Basset Commemorative Student Award.

Aboriginal Skills, Employment and Training Strategy (ASETS)

In the 2013/14 fiscal year, NWAC had ten (10) Provincial/Territorial Member Associations (PTMAs) delivering the ASETS program across Canada. This fiscal year (2014/15), we once again have ten (10) Sub-agreement Holders across Canada.

Initiated in 2010, the ASETS program is in its final year, and due to sunset in March 2015. Although we anticipate a new Aboriginal employment and training program, as of writing there has been no discussion by the government regarding the ASETS replacement.

In an effort to ensure that NWAC will be included in any new programming, during the past year the LMD Team has worked extremely hard to improve our accountability, increase our partnership base and improve our client results.

In the area of accountability, the LMD department has ensured that all financial and narrative reports required by the Employment and Social Development Canada (ESDC) have been submitted on or before program deadlines.

Through the approval of a reallocation policy by the Board of Directors in February, the LMD department was able to closely monitor the overall ASETS spending and ensure that no dollars associated with the 2013/2014 program would have to be given back to the Government of Canada.

Also at the February 2014 Board meeting, the LMD department presented three (3) new manuals.

1. Orientation Manual - Sub-Agreement Holders

2. Orientation Manual - Client Case Management
3. ASETS Partnership Procedures and Protocol

These manuals were approved by the NWAC Board, and were distributed to the ASETS Coordinators. We also had each of these manuals translated into French and they became part of the 2014/2015 Sub-agreement Holder package. Recently, we completed the ASETS Administration Manual and we are looking forward to it being brought forward to the NWAC Board for approval.

In the area of partnerships, the LMD team has been busy creating and developing new ways to cultivate and establish partnerships. We have designed a partnership building package which includes a partnership letter, posters, fact sheets and an ASETS brochure. This package can be distributed at tradeshow and meetings.

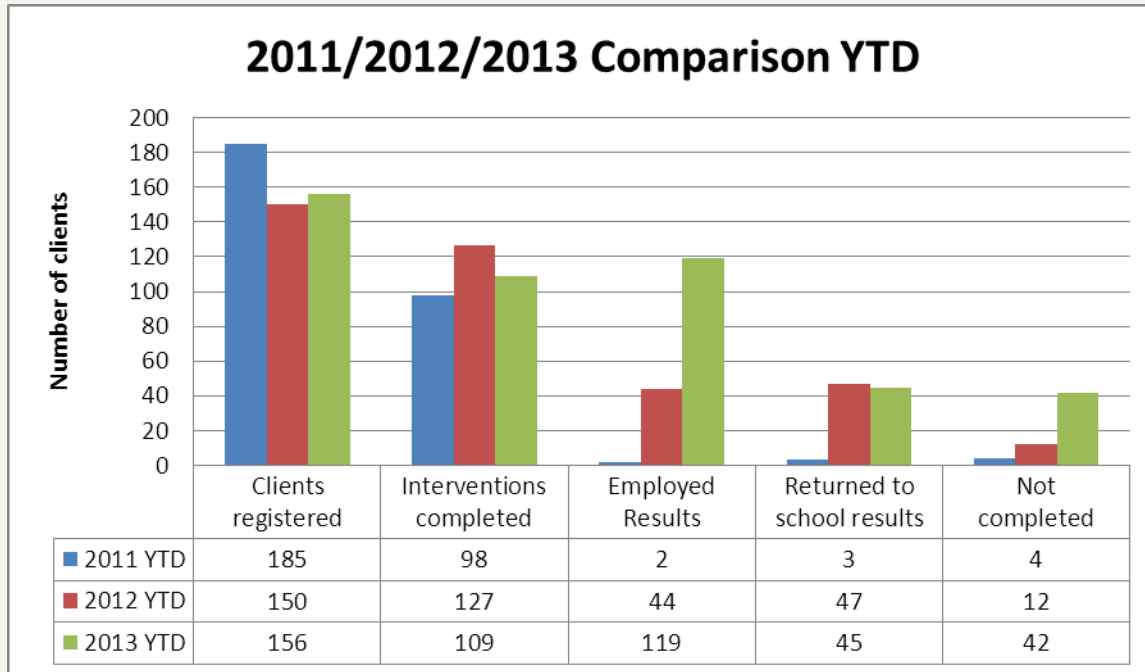


In addition to the Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) we signed with Correctional Service Canada last year, the LMD department has created a new partnership vehicle entitled, the ‘Spirit of Cooperation’ document. To date, the LMD department has signed four (4) of these documents with the following companies:

1. ATS Services-Technology Services;
2. Securitas;
3. Abbott;
4. Canadian Apprenticeship Forum.

Since client results are integral to our success, the KETO database was another area that we focused our efforts. Over the last two (2) years, we have been losing client data in the ESDC

Gateway Upload. In an effort to solve this problem, the LMD department dedicated a staff person to guarantee all entries by the ASETS Coordinators are complete and closed as required. As the following chart indicates, our data is now more accurate and reflective of the hard work the ASETS Coordinators have been doing in delivering the program.



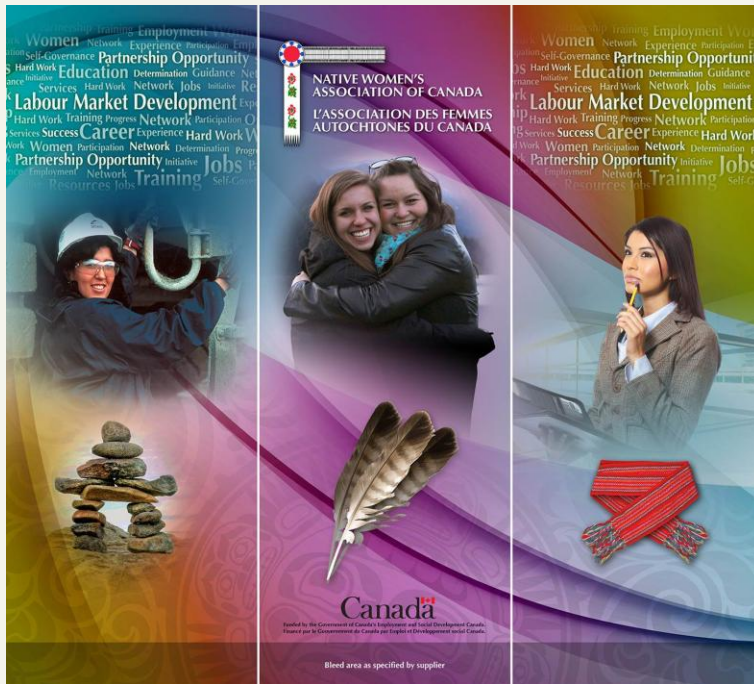
In addition to the monitoring of the KETO database, we also streamlined all the forms associated with program. Where necessary we have had these documents translated, and ASETS Coordinators can now access all forms and manuals through the ASETS Portal on the NWAC website.

Strategic Partnership Agreement (SPA)

The SPA program is another ESDC program and is closely tied to the ASETS program. The SPA program allows the LMD department to develop policies, fund and participate in Board/Project Committee meetings, and attend tradeshow and conferences such as:

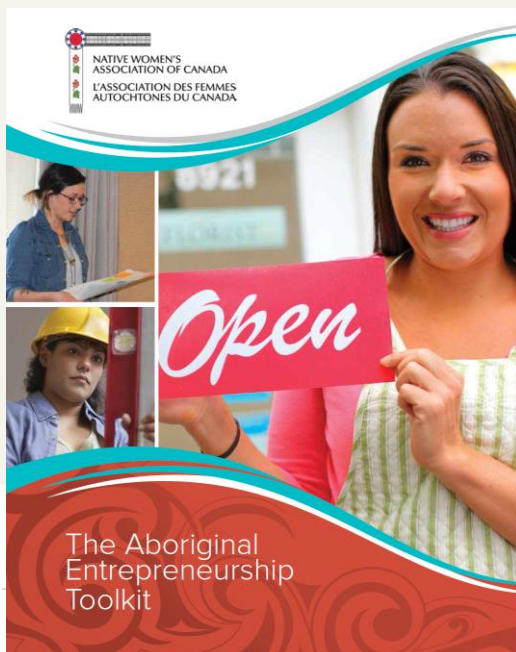
1. CUPE Biennial Convention;
2. Aboriginal Entrepreneurship Conference and Tradeshow;
3. Startup Canada;
4. Prospectors and Developers Association of Canada; and
5. NWAC Aboriginal Women business Entrepreneurship Network Conference.

In order to support our conference work, we had promotional materials designed to better reflect our programming. The following image is our tradeshow banner.



Through the SPA program we also provided one-on-one training with those ASETS Coordinators who needed assistance with entries in the KETO database. In addition, we completed four (4) site visits to monitor how well the Sub-agreement Holders are delivering the ASETS in their region.

Canadian Cultural Aboriginal Youth (CCAY)



Although the CCAY project received its funding late in the year, we still managed to design a practical entrepreneurship toolkit for Aboriginal youth. To test this toolkit, the LMD department delivered a workshop to seventeen (17) Aboriginal youth over two (2) days. The youth found this toolkit to be extremely beneficial and the LMD department is now looking for funding to create a second toolkit to meet the needs of Aboriginal youth.

Helen Bassett Commemorative Student Award

Each year the LMD manages the Helen Bassett Commemorative Student Award. After a review of all applicants, awards of \$1000 were given to four (4) Aboriginal youth from each of the four directions. The following individuals were the 2013 recipients of this scholarship;

Brenda Schwab (WEST)

Brenda is a First Nations law student at University of British Columbia. Brenda has already completed a degree in English and Indigenous Studies at the University of Victoria as well as an Aboriginal Youth Internship placement with the Victim Service and Crime Prevention Division at the Ministry of Justice. Through her advocacy and support, Brenda hopes to improve the lives and safety of Aboriginal women.

Katlyn Pettipas (EAST)

Katlyn is a Métis woman in her first year of Journalism at University of King's College in Halifax. Katlyn is extremely involved in her community as a member of the Kespu'kwitk Métis Council of Yarmouth. She plans to use her education in Journalism to spread awareness on human and aboriginal rights issues.

Alyssa Flaherty-Spence (NORTH)

Alyssa is a young Inuk student at the University of Ottawa studying Law after having already completed a degree in Political Science. She has dedicated much of her time to programs involving Aboriginal women and at-risk youth and hopes to use her postsecondary education as a tool to promote their socioeconomic development.

Brianne Gosselin (SOUTH)

Brianne is a young Métis woman studying Psychology with a minor in Native Studies at Hearst University. After completing her degree, her goal is to attend medical school to study Gynecology. She is the Region 3 Métis Nation of Ontario Youth Council representative, and dedicates much of her time to volunteer work in her community. Brianne intends to use her education to promote health and provide Aboriginal women with her knowledge and expertise.

Upcoming Priorities

The Labour Market Development department activities will continue to focus our efforts on supporting our Sub-agreement Holders and developing partnerships. We are looking forward to being a participant in any government discussions regarding new training and employment programming.

Violence Prevention & Safety Department

Submitted by: Irene Goodwin, Director

The Violence Prevention and Safety (VPS) department formally referred to as “Evidence to Action” (2011-2014) and previously, “Sisters in Spirit” (2005-2010), reflects an evolving approach to addressing violence prevention and safety in the lives of Aboriginal women and girls. VPS recognizes that violence – in all its debilitating forms - affects Aboriginal women and girls throughout their lives. The work of the VPS department has enabled the completion of two (2) important projects:

- Evidence to Action II, funded by Status of Women Canada
- Trafficking Project “Boyfriend or Not,” funded by the United States Embassy.

Evidence to Action (ETA) II Project

The overall goal of this project aimed at reducing the levels of violence experienced by Aboriginal women and girls. By increasing access to resources for women, families, communities, governments, educators and service providers, the project supported many activities organized around four (4) key thematic areas: education, tools for communities, partnerships, and community responsiveness. The results achieved included strengthening the ability of communities, governments, educators and service providers to effectively respond to issues of violence against Aboriginal women and girls, developing tools to support Aboriginal women, girls, families and communities to develop violence prevention strategies, and responding to experiences of violence. The success of the Evidence to Action initiative was evidenced by increased awareness of the issue of missing and murdered Aboriginal women and girls, by heightened support and involvement in the SIS Vigils held yearly on October 4th, by involvement of families of the missing and murdered women at ETA-healing workshops, and by the requests for information sessions at local schools and organizations. In addition, there has been overwhelming support by non-Aboriginal Canadians and representatives at all levels of government to request that a National Inquiry into Missing and Murdered Aboriginal Women and Girls be established. Evidence to Action has helped raise awareness of the issue of violence in the Aboriginal communities both nationally and internationally; and locally over 58,500 individuals were directly engaged in some capacity with the ETA project. This project ended in April 2014.

The impact of Evidence to Action will continue:

- Tools and resources such as the Community Resource Guide (CRG) have been disseminated to service providers, community agencies, partners and shareholders;
- SIS Vigils have augmented in numbers and in participants throughout the years, from 4,355 participants at 67 registered Vigils (2011) to 14,040 participants at 216 registered vigils (2013) for a final count of 458 SIS Vigils reaching over 29,770 participants;
- Three (3) Family Gatherings enabled 83 participants from all areas of Canada to heal and honour 42 missing and murdered Aboriginal women and girls, provided them with the tools

and support needed in order that they further help other families from their communities, and enabled them to form long-term support networks;

- Short documentaries were produced to honour the lives and memories of seven (7) missing or murdered women, and shared through the NWAC website;
- Over 4,400 Community Resource Guides were shared with Educators – at all levels of teaching, Community stakeholders – including First Nations, Inuit and Métis communities, and Police and Justice-related service providers, in addition to more than 23,300 CRGs that were accessed through the NWAC website;
- Forty-three (43) Community Engagement Workshops reached over 2,500 participants such as service providers, community leaders, educators and other key stakeholders;
- The clinical tool entitled “Good Relations: Supporting Aboriginal Women & Families Who Have Experienced Violence” was developed and tested involving 120 individuals in five (5) locations across Canada; and,
- Information-sharing and raising awareness on violence and safety prevention, and extreme violence at numerous events across Canada.



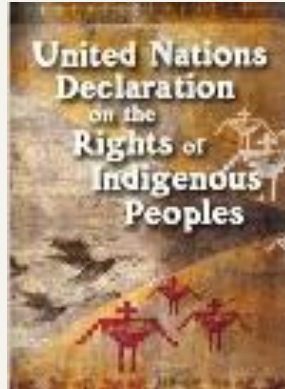
Human Trafficking “Boyfriend or Not?” Project Update

Funding received from the US Embassy has enabled NWAC to look at how Aboriginal women, who are currently being exploited by the sex trade, who have been exploited in the sex trade in the past, or who have experienced human trafficking, understand and define their relationships with men, especially men who may direct or control their activities. Research conducted with Aboriginal women suggests that women’s perception of the role of their male ‘partners’ is changing. This project provides a venue for individual women to share their understanding and knowledge gained from their life experiences. The outcome will be a report that enables a better understanding of the interpersonal relationships and dynamics that underpin sex trafficking. This research is relevant to situations of international or cross-border trafficking of Aboriginal women, as well as to situations of internal trafficking. NWAC has been liaising with our partner organizations including US partners, advising them of its project goals, timeframes, and process. NWAC staff has established a set of ‘key characteristics’ for individuals to participate in the interview process; and has begun to utilize its partner networks to identify Aboriginal women

who meet these desired characteristics. An Interview matrix has been developed and written in plain language to guide the individual interviews with Aboriginal women participants. A FAQ document has also been developed. Consultations with our selected partner organizations have been completed, as well as a `literature review`. The interviews with Aboriginal women began in August 2013 and ran through to summer 2014. The final report will be made available in both official languages on the NWAC website once completed. The project is expected to be completed by October 2014.

International Affairs and Human Rights

Submitted by: Teresa Edwards



Overview

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

The United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples is the universal human rights instrument that is celebrated globally, and its implementation would result in significant improvements in the lives of Indigenous Peoples, and particularly for Indigenous women as they are the most vulnerable within our population. The Declaration indicates that the rights apply without distinction to Indigenous women and men, and that the rights in the Declaration are the "minimum standards for the survival, dignity and well-being of the Indigenous Peoples of the world." The Declaration sets out the individual and collective rights of Indigenous Peoples, as well as their rights to live free from violence, to enjoy culture, identity, language, employment, health, education and other issues. It prohibits discrimination against Indigenous Peoples, and promotes our full and effective participation in all matters that concern us and our right to remain distinct and to pursue our own visions of economic and social development.

Although the Federal Government has endorsed this Declaration, they continue to view it as an aspirational document. However, as Indigenous women, we have to breathe life into it at every opportunity, within our day to day lives, implementing our rights and committing to using its clauses and principles in all areas of our lives and in all our own documentation.

IAHR has continued to build on the positive partnerships that we have established with other national Aboriginal and equality-seeking organizations, including our Provincial/Territorial Member Associations (PTMAs) and their memberships, other Aboriginal and equality seeking organizations. We have continued to work strategically with Indigenous organizations in the

Americas and globally while participating in meetings at the United Nations and been active in national and international committees in order to bring about positive social change.

We have participated in various national and international committees where NWAC's lead role has ensured that women's voices were included in holding the Government of Canada accountable when addressing issues of concern to Aboriginal Peoples generally.

Some Projects and Responses to Domestic Legislative Measures

Aboriginal Women's Business Entrepreneurship Network

In recognition of the importance of financial independence and empowerment for Aboriginal women to promote equality, the Native Women's Association of Canada has created an Aboriginal Women's Business Entrepreneurship Network (AWBEN) to cultivate successful business skills for Aboriginal women and support the development of their networks for entrepreneurial success. This is done through workshops, mentoring, and larger training and networking sessions. NWAC staff have been very active over 2013-2014 and the program already has numerous accomplishments.

AWBEN has delivered one (1) day Financial Literacy classes across Canada to 150 up-and-coming Aboriginal women entrepreneurs. AWBEN has also maintained an active presence at several conferences and tradeshows to generate membership (StartUp Canada, Canadian Council for Aboriginal Business Conference, McGill Aboriginal Awareness Week, Urban Aboriginal Strategy Entrepreneurship Meeting, Assembly of First Nations General Assembly, and the Native Women's Association Aboriginal Entrepreneurship Toolkit Meeting).

The first annual AWBEN conference was held this year in January in Ottawa and was a great success, and brought in business people from across Canada to share their voices on the importance of entrepreneurship and self-sufficiency for Aboriginal women. We look forward to doing even more to promote Aboriginal women's economic empowerment in the year ahead.

Promoting Civic Participation of Aboriginal Women in Canada

NWAC recently completed a culturally relevant and gender sensitive Resource Guide that will empower young Aboriginal women to engage in civic participation in Canada. The focus was to help young Aboriginal women better understand the electoral system and the importance of civic participation in Canada. For this project, NWAC conducted a focus group and completed a literature review. From this, NWAC staff developed a resource guide to identify challenges in the electoral system faced by young Aboriginal women as well as share solutions and promote Aboriginal women in leadership roles. The culmination of this work, the easy-to-read resource guide, provides a culturally-appropriate and gender-sensitive framework for engaging young Aboriginal women and suggests ways in which these young electors can participate in democracy and civic life at all levels of society (community, band, provincial, federal, etc.) As well, it raises awareness about the importance of democratic and civic participation, including as a form of empowerment to accomplish community objectives.

The guide hopes to inform young Aboriginal women by explaining the voting process in Canada to make participants feel more confident when going to vote. By developing confidence to run for a leadership position in their community or elsewhere, it will also encourage them to play a larger role in shaping their community and possibly taking on a leadership position. NWAC is waiting on funding to carry out workshops across Canada with the developed resource guide.

AANDC project on Areas for Action in Ending Violence Against Aboriginal Women

NWAC also completed a substantial report examining best practices for prevention and intervention to stop violence against Aboriginal women. The report consists of an extensive literature review that gathered the recommendations of relevant reports and presents both an analysis and a listing of recommendations and best practices identified as culturally relevant. An effort was also made to collect recommendations and best practices for whole family efforts with a focus on men or children. A logic model was made from the recommendations to streamline options for short-, mid-, and long-term action and divided into the following groups to implement: individuals and families; shelters and related organizations; communities; provincial, territorial governments; federal government. This review will help to inform relevant stakeholders and those facing violence on what has been tried and valued in the areas of violence prevention and intervention for Aboriginal women in Canada.

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

NWAC completed a project for Statistics Canada where we completed a data mining exercise that saw participation by all four (4) NWAC departments in an effort to generate a complete picture of Aboriginal women's socio-economic status within both Canadian and Aboriginal societies. NWAC worked with a data analyst to detail the priority areas, identify the queries, pull the data sets, and assist in the development of a series of fact sheets that will be posted on the NWAC website and made available publicly and to our constituents.

Governance

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

NWAC's IAHR also hosted a Staff Workshop and Appreciation Day to review our Vision Statement and General Objectives to identify how we are working to implement them. Our

vision continues to be that we aim to support our membership to foster Aboriginal communities where women have an opportunity to develop their talents; are encouraged to live healthy lifestyles by maintaining balance; are encouraged to learn our history and traditional ways; accept and exercise their responsibilities to contribute to a strong community; and, are accepted in a society free of racism and discrimination.

The Staff received training about the FISH! Philosophy – a practice that helps to bring new energy to a workplace and commitment to work. It was inspired by a business that is world famous for its remarkable energy and commitment to service — the Pike Place Fish Market.

Organizations around the world are using the FISH! Philosophy to: Provide amazing service that makes customers want to come back again and again; Build a culture where employees love to give their best every day; Build effective leaders who inspire through their example; and, Improve teamwork and build trust.

Standing Committees and Human Rights Committee Presentations

Throughout the year the Director of IAHR accompanied by the President, and the Executive Director, to do presentations before Standing Committee on Finance, The Standing Senate Committee on Aboriginal Peoples, Standing Committee on Justice and Human Rights and the Continuing Committee of Officials on Human Rights. The purpose of the presentations was to try to influence Government legislation such as *Bill C-36, Protection of Communities and Exploited Persons Act, Bill C-23 Fair Elections Act, Speech from the Throne, Budget 2014*, etc., as well as programs and policies to ensure that they meet the needs of, or are aimed at improving the lives of Aboriginal women and their families.

National and International Conferences and Meetings/Partnership Development & Collaboration

The United Nations Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination Against Women and the Inter-American Commission on Human Rights

Women's equality rights have now been recognized in United Nations treaties like the *Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW)*, and the *Beijing Platform for Action* is supposed to be implemented, and governments and civil society are expected to behave in non-discriminatory ways. Canada is also a member of the Organization of American States, and anti-discrimination treaties for the region of the Americas also apply here. However, discrimination continues, and social and economic inequality is rising.

NWAC and the Canadian Feminist Alliance for International Action (FAFIA) appeared before the Inter-American Commission on Human Rights (IACHR) in March 2012, and again in 2013, to bring to the attention of this important regional human rights body the hundreds of disappearances and murders of Aboriginal women and girls and to urge the Commission to undertake an investigation of the human rights crisis in Canada.

Also, NWAC and FAFIA made a request to the UN Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination to undertake an inquiry into the murders and disappearances and Canada's failures to meet its obligations to protect women from violence.

NWAC has worked with its Provincial/Territorial Member Associations, community groups and other non-governmental organizations, practicing and academic lawyers, and equality experts, to facilitate the investigations that both the CEDAW Committee and the IACHR undertook in Canada in 2013 to assess the situation of missing and murdered Aboriginal women in Canada and the violations of human rights taking place.

Both the IACHR and the CEDAW Committee are expected to issue reports on the murders and disappearances of Aboriginal women and girls in Canada between September and December of 2014. NWAC and its partners will continue to support the IACHR and the CEDAW Committee with any follow-up work and will ensure that these reports receive attention when they are released.

NWAC Participates in 58th Session of the United Nations Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues (UN PFII) - New York City, New York

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

NWAC is proud to announce our successful participation in this year's UN PFII where as an organization, we have been able to broaden our skills, knowledge and constantly expanding networks. However, the primary focus is to ensure that the issues impacting Aboriginal women in Canada are discussed at the highest levels. As an organization, NWAC's participation in three (3) Joint Statements gave voice to Aboriginal women on an international platform. They were: *Joint Statement on the implementation of the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples (UNDRIP)*; *Joint Statement on the Principles of Good Governance Consistent with the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples*; *Global Indigenous Women's Caucus (GIWC) Joint Statement Agenda Item 4 - Human Rights*.

Environment

For 2013-14, NWAC's IAHR took over the work on two environment related projects funded by Environment Canada (EC): 1) Aboriginal Engagement and Dialogue: Environmental Priority Issues; and 2) Species At Risk Act (SARA).

Through the Aboriginal Engagement and Dialogue: Environmental Priority Issues Project, NWAC was able to engage and dialogue with Aboriginal women on environmental priority issues such as climate change, access and benefit sharing of genetic resources and biodiversity.

This collaboration has helped support Aboriginal women's involvement on environmental stewardship.

NWAC completed the following activities: reviewed and provided input into EC's 5th National Report to the Convention on Biological Diversity; developed and conducted an online survey to examine the level of awareness and issues related to Access and Benefit Sharing (ABS) on genetic resources as it relates to Aboriginal women, their families, and communities, as well as views on a domestic ABS Federal policy. The survey was distributed to NWAC's PTMAs, NAO's and other Aboriginal partners / stakeholders that work on environmental issues across Canada and will be discussed at NWAC's Annual General Assembly. Results from the survey will be shared with our membership and used in our policy work on ABS; and additionally, NWAC participated in on-going policy dialogue led by EC on international climate change issues following the United Nations Climate Change Conference.

The Species at Risk Act (SARA) project increased collaboration between the federal government and NWAC on the implementation of environmental legislation and policy, such as the SARA, while also advancing Environment Canada's priorities and supporting Aboriginal environmental stewardship and objectives. This project supported the federal government commitment under SARA "to prevent Canadian indigenous species, subspecies, and distinct populations from becoming extirpated or extinct, to provide for the recovery of endangered or threatened species, and encourage the management of other species to prevent them from becoming at risk."

The representatives of the National Aboriginal Council on Species at Risk (NACOSAR) continue to provide advice to the Minister of Environment on the administration of the Act and to provide advice and recommendations to the Canadian Endangered Species Conservation Council (CESCC). This project has enabled NWAC to participate in on-going policy dialogues with Environment Canada contribute to every facet of issues regarding species at risk and SARA. As a P & P Committee member, NWAC provided technical support to NACOSAR and reviewed policy as it pertains to species at risk in Canada. NWAC reviewed research, existing policies, provided recommendations regarding species at risk and NACOSAR. The NACOSAR is currently working on the development of three (3) case studies on the following: 1) Aboriginal socio-economic impact analysis within SARA implementation; 2) Aboriginal rights and title, species at risk, extinguishment of Aboriginal rights; and, 3) Engagement processes under SARA.

Upcoming Priorities

IAHR will continue its work to push for the implementation of the Nordic Model with respect to the legislation on prostitution in follow-up to the Bedford case and to implementing all socio-economic human rights for Aboriginal women. We are currently developing a Guide to help women escape trafficking for Justice Canada, and will continue working on NWAC's Update on the 5-Year Review of the Repeal of the *Canadian Human Rights Act*, as well as delivering a session on human rights. The IAHR will also continue work on environmental issues such as Access and Benefit Sharing and Traditional Knowledge and preparing for the World Conference on Indigenous Peoples in 2014. IAHR is currently waiting on approval of funding for many other projects from AANDC and other organizations over the coming months.

NWAC IAHR thanks the funders and partners who have supported and continue to support our important work: The Department of Aboriginal Affairs and Northern Development Canada, Statistics Canada, Justice Canada, Environment Canada, the United States of America Embassy, Canadian Labour Congress and many of its Unions, the Global Fund for Women, Canadian Women's Foundation, and many other organizations and individual allies.

National Aboriginal Women's Summit IV

The Government of Nova Scotia along with NWAC will co-host and assist in the planning of the fourth National Aboriginal Women's Summit (NAWS IV) to take place in Membertou (Cape Breton) from October 20-22, 2014. A national steering committee has been developed and comprised of representatives from the five (5) National Aboriginal Organizations (NAOs), Pauktuutit Inuit Women of Canada, Nova Scotia government representatives and Nova Scotia Aboriginal regional organizations. Federal government representatives from Status of Women, Aboriginal Affairs and Northern Development, Health Canada and other federal departments have been invited to participate on the national steering committee as the planning process moves forward.

The three (3) previous summits were held in 2007, 2008 and 2012 in Corner Brook, NL, Yellowknife, NT and Winnipeg, MB, respectively. NAWS I and II addressed multiple issues affecting the overall well-being of Aboriginal women in Canada, while NAWS III focused primarily on the issue of Missing and Murdered Aboriginal women and girls.

NAWS IV will be more solutions-oriented compared to the previous NAWS events and will provide an opportunity for delegates – Aboriginal women and stakeholders - to share success stories or best practices as part of a solutions-based approach.

The objectives of NAWS IV are:

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

The overall theme will focus on leadership, empowerment and equity and will address issues such as:

- Entrepreneurship and economic opportunities
- Impact of legislation (MRP, Human Rights)
- Environment
- Poverty & food security
- Child welfare (impacts on the family, child and community)
- Social media and safety
- Reconciliation of women's traditional roles and activities
- Leadership/governance/civic engagement
- Violence and Missing and Murdered Aboriginal Women and Girls
- Jurisdictional issues
- Health

It is anticipated that about 250-400 delegates will attend NAWS IV and will include Aboriginal women (First Nations, Inuit and Métis), federal/provincial/territorial government representatives and corporate partners/speakers.

Although NAWS III was held quite recently – Fall 2012, the main and only topic addressed was the matter of missing and murdered Aboriginal women and girls, which still remains a high priority for NWAC and other NAOs. It is now timely and necessary to verify the progress that has been made on the strategic directions recommended at NAWS I and II.

Gauging the current situation and condition of Aboriginal women will assist all stakeholders to develop and implement relevant and effective policies at the community, regional and national levels. Follow-up on the proposed recommendations of NAWS I and II is necessary to determine their impact and share success stories and lessons learned. This gathering will provide those in attendance with an opportunity to assess the outcomes of the previous NAWS events' recommendations and build on those successes.

NAWS IV will provide an opportunity for all participants – Aboriginal women, F/P/T government representatives and other stakeholders - to learn of best practices that are currently in place and to implement similar but modified models in other regions and communities to meet the specific needs of First Nations, Métis and Inuit women. NAWS IV will be heavily focused on identifying successful community-based solutions.

Aboriginal women and other stakeholders at NAWS IV will also be made aware of existing barriers that have impeded or have prevented the implementation of recommendations, i.e. the solutions identified at NAWS I and II such as: lack of funding, lack of capacity building, lack of political will/leadership, etc. Being aware of these barriers and how to address/remove them are necessary to implement former recommendations and develop actions to improve the lives of Aboriginal women in Canada.

A final report of NAWS IV will be developed in both official languages and will be made available electronically in a timely manner following the event. The report will be disseminated to all NAWS IV delegates and stakeholders. The final report will act as a blueprint for future policy and program development and implementation by various stakeholders at the community, regional and national levels. The report can also serve as a tool to measure and monitor the situation of Aboriginal women in subsequent years.

Finally, the NAWS IV agenda will support traditional ceremony, cultural showcase, and an opportunity for delegates to experience the economic venues that are unique to the Membertou community.