



**Native Women's  
Association of Canada**

***NWAC Workshop on Reclaiming Our Nations  
Initiative  
Nation-Building and Rebuilding - Gathering  
Women's Wisdom***

**Citizenship, Membership and Nation-Building Issues**

Place Louis Riel, Manitoba Room  
Winnipeg, Manitoba  
November 23, 2011 - 5:30 p.m. - 8:30 p.m.

**Background:**

Through activism, policy analysis and advocacy, the Native Women's Association of Canada (NWAC) works to advance the well-being of Aboriginal women and girls, as well as, their families and communities. This work includes identifying gaps in the equal enjoyment of human rights by Aboriginal women and mobilizing action to address these gaps. A fundamental premise of NWAC's work is that the civil, political, cultural, social and economic rights of Aboriginal peoples cannot be realized without identifying the gender impacts of laws and policies applied to Aboriginal peoples and addressing the needs of Aboriginal women, in a culturally relevant way.

Prior to first contact, many Aboriginal societies were matriarchal and matrilineal in nature and focused on family, community and the continuity of tradition, culture and language. Aboriginal women were central to all of this as the first teachers in the home, as the healers, and as the givers of life.

While Aboriginal men and women had distinct roles, their roles were equally valued. The need to restore the value of Aboriginal gendered roles has motivated the development of culturally relevant gender-based analysis (CRGBA). CRGBA is a tool for use by anyone to assess policy, programs, projects, and/or legislation towards achieving more equitable outcomes for women and men and their families.

NWAC applies a gender perspective to human rights issues to ensure that decision-makers of all kinds - political leaders, judges, officials in all governments at all levels - are aware of equality gaps and issues that affect Aboriginal women and girls and have continued to do so with respect to the nation-building and re-building process.

NWAC and our Provincial/Territorial Member Associations have established positive reputations and have thorough structures in place to reach many women and their communities across Canada. NWAC has engaged and informed women, youth and Elders and their communities in discussions on nation-building, citizenship, and the relationships between our members, communities and Nations. Given that NWAC is also familiar with cultural practices, governance issues, protocols and traditions while dealing with First Nations, we were well placed to build on these established respectful relationships and have successful sessions with women on this important issue.

NWAC has facilitated a national dialogue on First Nations citizenship and membership. The dialogue was funded by the Department of Aboriginal Affairs and Northern Development Canada as part of the Exploratory Process to respond to the range of issues related to Indian Registration, membership and First Nation Citizenship.

In addition to holding Workshops, and asking women to identify issues that they have experienced regarding Indian Registration within the Indian Act, we have asked women to fill out Questionnaires to provide us with their views on Nation-Building for our future generations.

## **NWAC Workshops on Citizenship and Nation-Building and Re- Building – Common Remarks**

First Nations were organized on the basis of Indigenous Nations with distinct structures of government. These structures included Hereditary Systems, Clan Systems, Federations, Confederacies and Military Systems, Economic and Cultural relationships and alliances among all Nations. The current *Indian Act* structure of reserves and the governance on reserves that have resulted from the imposition of the *Indian Act* does not reflect First Nations political, legal, or traditional governance. There is general consensus among First Nations that this situation must change.

At every session that was held, our participants have indicated that this process was only one small step in the process that needs to continue to happen among First Nations Peoples in discussing the issue of citizenship, membership, identity and Nationhood.

Participants at every session expressed concern with an Exploratory Process that lasts from April to November 2011, and stated that it was insufficient time to reflect on how we can move from the systemic barriers within current Indian Registration legislation within the *Indian Act* and policies within the Department of Aboriginal Affairs and Northern Development, to true methods of Nation-Building among our communities across the country.

Women repeatedly indicated that there needs to be a one-year, two-year, five-year, ten-year workplan and ongoing process for collaboration and meetings between the Government of Canada and First Nations' Governments and among First Nations' women both on and off reserves, their families and communities and for our leadership to continue to gather information, discuss options and to strategize on how to move forward.

Our women have indicated that we need to focus on rebuilding and supporting our governance structures, supporting women's participation in decision-making and increasing women's participation and inclusion in any consultations that occur to strengthen our Nations. They have also acknowledged that there are best practices across the country for inclusive approaches to citizenship and we need to continue to build on these positive efforts.

We have been told that in order for further positive change to take place, there needs to be full engagement of our people, our communities, and our Nations. First Nations must be able to determine the tools they need to develop inclusive and healthy Nations, based on the fulfillment of our rights to self-determination and by affirming effective, efficient and successful First Nations governments.

Participants repeatedly reiterated that the Government of Canada needs to take a broader and more

inclusive approach to Indian Registration, expanding on the scope, beyond Bill C- 3 *Gender Equity in Indian Registration Act*, which was identified as a narrow interpretation to the *McIvor* decision. They also stated that the Government needs to commit to an in depth process to explore the complex and broader issues related to citizenship, membership and identity.

Comments were routinely made criticizing the current limiting exclusions from Indian Registration by the double mother rule and with the problematic policies that are currently implemented with the Unstated and Unrecognized Paternity that require a father to sign the birth registration where the couple is not married, in order for the child to receive full or accurate registration.

NWAC spoke about the need for a process that must include adequate funding for National Aboriginal Organizations in order to respond to the numerous requests, complaints, and emails that came in to the organization about the problems women are facing. The demands were many and quite regular from people calling NWAC for help. Often people expressed their preference to call NWAC rather than the Department because they would be assured that their requests would be responded to, whereas, they had been waiting for months to hear back from the Manitoba Registration Office.

Our Provincial/Territorial members also requested that more funding should go to them to empower provincial and territorial organizations, and First Nations generally, to engage fully with the grassroots communities in exploring all possible solutions given the complexities of the issues. They would require additional funds to help them to come to a consensus on as many issues as possible over the coming years and not simply for an eight-month Exploratory Process.

Many women referred specifically to the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples as the standard for a principled framework for partnership between First Nations and the Government of Canada. The Declaration's principles of partnership and respect can guide this work.

Participants affirmed that Article 3 of the UN Declaration: "Indigenous peoples have the right to self-determination. By Virtue of that right they freely determine their political status and freely pursue their economic, social and cultural development." There are numerous articles that affirm the right of self-determination, including related rights to lands, resources and territories and to indigenous cultural traditions and customs and systems of governance in all aspects of life. One of the general provisions of the Declaration sums up the vision of the advocates who fought for the adoption of the Declaration. It is Article 43, which states that, "The rights recognized herein constitute the minimum standards for the survival, dignity and well-being of the indigenous peoples of the world."

The women, men and Elders repeatedly reminded us that it is our right to determine our own membership according to traditional and historical practices, and which are affirmed in our Treaties, and is a fundamental right of every one of our Nations. Our citizenship and identity must be enforced and maintained by our own Peoples and not determined by the Government of Canada.

## Creating a Movement for Change – Guiding Principles Established for Nation-Building/ Reiterated at Workshops:

- **Establish a Vision for the Future:** Create a shared vision and establish a mandate for change, backed by the people, the Council and the Chief, and all leaders, making sure it is inclusive of women, youth, Elders and families.
- **Map Your Journey:** Identify how you intend to achieve your community’s vision, adjust the plan when needed to overcome challenges.
- **Exercise Your Rights and Live Your Culture:** Learn your rights and responsibilities, your inherent and Treaty rights and exercise your rights by living your culture, understanding women and men, Elders and youth all have important roles.
- **Moving Away from the *Indian Act*:** Take the time to choose and develop your own governance structures that are community-based and community-paced, inclusive and not exclusive of our women, children and grand-children.
- **Strengthening Governance at all Levels:** Make laws that benefit all citizens and reflect culture, and establish government to government relationships based on respect.
- **Make Progress and Achieve Outcomes:** By being engaged in the economy and having control of our traditional lands, while governing according to our traditions and customs we can achieve outcomes, establish nation-to-nation relations and restore our nations to the thriving communities they once were.





## **NWAC Workshop on the Reclaiming Our Nations Initiative**

*Nation-Building and Rebuilding – Gathering Women's Wisdom*

Place Louis Riel  
190 Smith Street  
Manitoba Room  
November 23, 2011  
5:00 p.m. – 8:00 p.m.

***Make Your Voice Be Heard!!***

### Agenda

1. Opening Prayer by Elder Barbara Nepinak
2. Introductions – Supper will be provided.

3. Presentation by the Native Women's Association of Canada – Citizenship and Nation-Building
4. Discussion
5. Questionnaires Completed and submitted by Participants
6. Wrap-Up

### **Meeting Highlights**

Our Elder for the evening was Barbara Nepinak, a well-respected Ojibway Elder, who is a member of the Pine Creek First Nations, and currently resides in Winnipeg with her husband Clarence, who is also a respected Elder.

Elder Nepinak did the Opening Prayer to start the meeting off in a good way, bringing everyone together for a common purpose. There were 24 participants present. Two were men and the rest were women.

The Facilitator from NWAC acknowledged the Peoples of the territory on whose land we had gathered and thanked the participants for coming to the meeting to discuss issues impacting on our Nations. She acknowledged and thanked the Elder Barbara Nepinak for conducting the prayer, and thanked the second Elder, Clarence Nepinak for helping to coordinate the meeting in Winnipeg.

Then Facilitator began the meeting by introducing herself, as did the other NWAC staff member, and then the circle opened for people to also introduce themselves. This provided everyone with an opportunity to talk about where they are from, or how they identify, and the link to either their Nation and/or connection to their Band, if any. This also allowed them time to discuss where they are currently working in Winnipeg, demonstrating the breadth of experience the participants had in their careers and workplaces.



**Clarence and Barbara Nepinak, Elders**

The Facilitator then went over the proposed agenda and by doing an overview of the history the history of Indian Registration, changes to the Indian Act, summarizing case law dealing with Indian Registration, and discussing existing gaps within Indian Registration that still exist today while the participants ate their supper.

Discussion ensued on the topic of Indian Registration and many participants had stories to validate how Indian Registration is still not working for many members of their family or for some of them participating in the session.

The participants further went on to discuss relative topics such as what it means to be "Aboriginal" or "First Nations," the effects of residual discrimination within the *Indian Act* registration such as the second generation cut-off limits imposed by the most recent *Bill C-3 An Act to Promote Gender Equity in Indian Registration*; problems relating disenfranchisement, and the difficulties families experienced where entire communities were not recognized or present when the Indian Agent came initially had come to their community or where Birth Certificates were lost due to church fires, etc., resulting in entire families not having Indian status and benefits associated with registration.

Participants spoke about the need to go to the United Nations with complaints to ensure that the Government of Canada will rectify the ongoing discrimination within the *Indian Act*, where Bill C-3 still did not correct situations, such as the case where women like Sharon McIvor, where she and her brother, who both have the same parents, have different Indian status and associated membership benefits.

Participants spoke about the need for First Nations to be able to assert jurisdiction over citizenship and issues related to governance and identity; in order to be able to develop Nations which are inclusive and look after their own citizens.





The participants talked about how there needs to be more resources and services available to status Indians so there is not a consequence lateral violence because of feelings of lack and because people are often feeling that there is already minimal resources and if we include other members, there will be even less to go around for everyone.

People discussed the relationship between programs and services and Indian status and Band membership; and how due to lack of funds, the communities are always in crisis situations when trying to serve their members.

Participants spoke about the high rates of couples and youth who are unmarried and therefore, when they have children, according to the Department of Aboriginal Affairs and Northern Development Canada (AANDC- referred to as the Department throughout this document) and their Unstated Paternity policy, which is not based in law, requires the father to sign to authenticate the birth registration of the child and associated benefits relating to status.

The Elders spoke about their views on identity and how our rights come from the Creator and not from the Government of Canada, and how we must assert our rights to determine our citizenship accordingly. We must remember our languages, our cultures, our traditions in re-building our Nations.

The Facilitator explained that NWAC currently does not have a Provincial Member Association in Manitoba and explained that NWAC was delivering workshops around Winnipeg to ensure that women have an opportunity to input into the discussions on the issue of citizenship. NWAC asked participants for ideas on how we can move forward in Nation-building and taking control over citizenship, moving from the *Indian Act* to reclaiming our Nations.

Afterwards others talked about what it means to be Aboriginal/First Nations. Each participant had their story to tell, sharing what was important to them about their lives, and why it is that they came to this meeting, and how they hope that their input will be used to advance issues and lead to improving the lives for future generations.

The participants stated that each Nation needs to define its own process, and there needs to be more than eight months allocated to First Nations to have these types of discussions and planning sessions.

They indicated that there needs to be multiple Councils for Youth, Elders, Women who would each have an opportunity to meet on their own but who would also have an opportunity to meet regularly and offer suggestions to Chiefs and Councils. In some communities, the Women's Council has veto power to overthrow the Chief and Councils' decision, if they feel they are abusing their authority. This was offered as a best practice and as a way to keep our leaders accountable.

People indicated that there needs to be mechanisms in place to ensure that this process is actually implemented and not just a process on paper. When the Women's Council advise the Chief and Council of this veto power, they must really be able remove Chief and Council and the process needs to be implemented and supported by the Community.

Participants discussed that there are serious issues relating to governance in some communities and that Chiefs and Councils have to be reminded to speak on behalf of their community and not just about their own individual issues. Chiefs and Councils have to realize that they aren't the only governing body. The feminist perspective is often interfered with, regularly, or at least the culturally relevant gender-based analysis needs to be taken into account in First Nations communities.

One woman stated that one of the things that we are missing within our communities is that we were not working together as a family. Communication and healing must begin in the homes. We must begin to improve our communication in the home first, where we can have Family Circles, where everyone has a voice and their views will be considered in the decision-making. This process can then be used by families, and community members, where they can have Sharing Circles and learn to resolve issues in a respectful way. We then can decide to work toward consensus-building with all our decision-making. Although it can be difficult to first establish the rules of engagement, by insisting that no one leaves the Circle until they can come together to decide who is going to take leadership, and how matters will get resolved, this helps to solve many problems. Circles in the community were then developed, and it is now been two years since this process was put in place and it has been very successful. Practising family solving problems collectively has now extended to beyond the family. We can practice this effectively now, and it is all about listening, respect, caring and sharing. We need to listen to each other and be humble about the process. Now the communities surrounding us have witnessed this as a best practice and they want to adopt that way of making decisions for their community. Now it is in practice on a solid level and does not take lots of energy to make these decisions.

One thing that is a concern to some is the organizational structure at Assembly of Manitoba Chiefs and how it is governed by current Chiefs. There are implications on individuals and other

Bands. For example, Dakota Bands are not part of the organization, and there is no structure set up for individuals who are grassroots people. There is not process within these organizations and how they are set up to ensure that there is a process to have everyone included in decision-making.

We have national organizations that represent Aboriginal people of this country and there is no grass roots input. There are some of us that are not attached to any organizations so they get left out. Only a select few people get to make all the decisions but they will make an impact on the rest of the people. In the last several years it has been cited that there will be a process in place to make decisions, yet they continue to make or carry on business where the women and grassroots people are not heard. We do not a voice. Only Chiefs can vote for the Grand Chief so that leaves individuals out. The Grand Chief then has a lot of power but it does not necessarily represent the voice of the people; there is a problem with representation.



For example, the women stated that voting stations are not accessibility for those who are disabled or who lack transportation, this leaves out many people in the process. Discussion ensued regarding how in the urban area voting stations are set up to meet the needs of the disabled citizens but in our communities they are not. A person on the reserve did not have the opportunity to vote, as a result of their disability and lack of access. There is not inclusiveness within our communities and the participants claimed that this needs to change.

Participants spoke about how they have a community pipe and how they continue to use it to make decisions and other leaders should do the same. They spoke about how we must be encouraged to learn our language. You remember the language and then you are removed from it, so then you have to relearn it.

Social media is a great way for disabled people to stay in touch with the outside world and it is a great way of reconnecting with people. It has a real important role in life and in communication among us.

Our ancestors were a good influence on us and can remind us to take what teachings we like and leave the rest; we can implement what feels good to our soul. Balance is important. Inclusion in the voting process using social media would be helpful. They are not afraid to get your points across. Communication needs a venue to get our messages across; mobile technology has caught

up with our teachings. Our leaders need to be able to respond to their audience and not always be scripted with their response. Participants spoke about how a good leader would not be afraid to answer any question, and be available to the people who voted for them.

Contracts for reserve people can use investments to reinvests into something else. Economic investments mostly benefit the men on reserve, and this needs to extend to the other half of the population. How do we use our inherent rights to bring women into conversation?

The group talked about how we must remember the teachings from the Elders, and that no matter how low you feel, or if you feel that life has knocked you down, you need to get back up and be proud of who you are. You are a beautiful person. We must continue to decolonize ourselves and not let what was done to us in the past, continue to be done to us by ourselves or others.

NWAC did an overview of some of the activities that they are undertaking within the Human Rights and International Affairs Directorate; providing the women with a wealth of documentation that has been written by NWAC, by the Department, and by other Aboriginal women and legal organizations on the topic of citizenship, membership, governance, and Nation-Building and Re-Building to ensure that the women present could review materials that take into account the role of women in these discussions.

We also provided additional copies so that each representative could bring the materials back to the women they serve or associate with in their communities, organizations, and Circles to ensure that the materials are distributed as widely as possible. Many copies of the Questionnaire have been distributed and in addition, others have been directed to our website to fill out the survey and return it to our office at [reclaimingournations@nwac.ca](mailto:reclaimingournations@nwac.ca).



The Facilitator provided the history of case law that have brought us to this point including the Lavell case, the United Nations complaint by the now Senator Sandra Lovelace, and then the subsequent Bill C-31, which saw many women and some of their children regain and gain Indian status under the *Indian Act*, yet many problems with registration continue today.

Further discussion ensued regarding Sharon McIvor's case and her pursuit to have equality before the law, as she has the same parents as her brother yet still has a lesser degree and entitlement of Indian status than him, even after the re-instatement in 1985.

Additional problems were discussed among the First Nations' women who were unmarried and how when they tried to register their newborn babies they were told that they had to have the father's signature to validate the Birth Certificate or it was marked void and considered to be unstated paternity on the certificate, even though the father had been indicated, and it was in fact, unrecognized paternity by the Department of AANDC.

After several hours of discussion, the NWAC Facilitator thanked everyone again for their participation and gave everyone her card. She offered her help to anyone that needed it and stated that they could email her and that she would do her best to help in any way possible. She stated that if she could not help, that she would network and connect the person with someone else who could be of assistance.

The Elder Barbara Nepinak offered a Closing Prayer to send us on our way back home to our families safely.

## Questionnaire Answers

NWAC went through the survey with the women, asking one question at a time, allowing the discussion to flow, and to include or change anything that the women deemed necessary within the Women's Circle.

1. What role do you see for Elders, youth, women, men and families in the re-building of your Nation? How will/should the diverse voices be heard in the process? How will everyone be involved in the implementation?
  - Elders in this community meet monthly on special projects or on issues of interest to both Elders and the youth. This will be a learning experience for everyone.
  - Have virtual teleconferences with the schools and organizations and speak to the B.C. Elders such as those who meet in Abbotsford every summer.
  - School net reaches the youth. They are very socially conscious. "Roots to Empathy" and similar programs are very successful and reach different levels of youth. We need to know what age appropriate and how to target the information so it reaches everyone.
  - All people applying to return to the reserve should be given a clean slate by the community.
  - Elders, not the Chief and Council need to have the final say.
  - Persons who should have natural members of the reserve should be reimbursed (redress) full monies immediately by Chief and Council and the Federal Government.
  - Elders should be our teachers.
  - Men are supposed to be role models.
  - Women are also role models and nurturers.
  - Youth must learn their culture, language and create change.
  - Elders have a fundamental role in the community to pass on wisdom teach youth that they are our future. Women are the nurturers, and the heart of the home.
  - Men are needed to be strong and not on drugs and alcohol or in jail. Healthy. Families are the basis of our communities.
  - Teaching the youth reaffirms our own teachings.
  - More youth centers where children can hang out and feel safe.
  - Women need to empower themselves.

- If we do not stand up for our rights as native people this government will find a way to eliminate our land bases, our language and our culture. This Government is a poor role model on governance.
- The voices of our youth need to be heard. We need to focus on what they feel they have lost. Teaching them reaffirms us.

2. What are the key steps and activities you deem necessary for Nation Re-Building? What actions must to be taken? What would be the outcomes?

- Rebuilding our Tribal Councils, and restructuring our organizations.
- There needs to be an emphasis on maintaining our languages.
- A Best Practice is the Conference on Aboriginal Diabetes: Elders and Youth are both involved in this conference as it the Youth Conference during Spring Break for Aboriginal Friendship Centres.
- Colleges and Universities should provide courses to educate our Youth on native issues specific to native culture.
- Essential components of Nation-Re-Building require the commitment to be here in a 1000 years and continuing to work on change to improve the lives of our people.
- Youth do not have spirituality; they need to be whole. Youth need this faith.
- Youth gatherings are needed to transfer our teachings.
- Mentorships with youth and Elders are needed to fill the intergenerational gap. Youth teach the Elders and the Elders teach the youth.
- Traditional healthy baby programs
- We must reclaim our citizenship, and we should reclaim our land.
- The government needs to be more open-minded and more respectful in trying to get people's opinions on issues.
- We need to train our First Nations people to initiate psychological healing of individuals.
- There needs to be exclusion of oppression in our communities and consider how it affects an individual.
- Education is necessary to understand the different types of oppression. We need a healing process for all of our communities for what was done to us.
- We need to accept all of our people that were C-31 and C-3 children and grand-children, without exception so that those who have lost connection with their reserves because of government rules can once again belong to their Nations.
- Policies are never written for our benefit.
- More people will be citizens; therefore, we need more land base please.
- AANDC should remember that they work for us, not for the Government.

- We need to solve our problems as a family, a community, and we can do it because we have the answers.
  - We need to welcome back our ceremonies and celebrations.
  - We must reclaim all our band members.
3. What would be the most important resource that you would need for Nation Re-Building? How would you make sure that you have them available to you? Would these be different for women/men/Elders/youth?
- There needs to be women services; shelters, leadership programs, education, anywhere near reserves in B.C.
  - Policy advisors are necessary among our governance structures so that we could have people who could learn to deal with Government bureaucracy.
  - It should be about how do we bridge the gap between our cultures and train our foster parents to keep the culture of the children who have been scooped by Child Protective Services.
  - It's about building healthy relationships. It's very difficult.
  - Concern to get certified as a teacher, college professors are telling her how to be teachers; yet our Elders are the real teachers but are not recognized.
  - We need more Aboriginal lawyers who understand the culture and how our children were lost to the non-native society.
  - We need to go back to the land and establish a new Nation and leave the reserve system behind.
  - Funding personal businesses for economic development and get every man woman and child who can work back to work and get the government off our backs.
  - Educate children and youth to think business.
  - Give Life-Skills courses to the youth so that they may become self-sufficient.
  - Develop a trade school for our youth with an emphasis for excellence. We need to have people become secretaries and accountants to make this work.
  - Train the trainer programs have to happen across the country.
  - We must go back to the holistic way of life.
  - We need more classes on parenting, cooking, child care, teaching children that they are valued and loved for who they are maybe they won't feel the need to join a gang.
  - We need government support to get these programs underway and to sustain them in the long-term, and not fund them as short pilot projects.



- If we teach a child where he comes from, who they are and then they should always be proud of themselves. That's the solution.
4. How can we use our culture, traditions, and inherent rights to advance our efforts? What accountability mechanisms have been put into place to ensure equality and benefits to everyone, over the long-term? How and who will you track your progress?
- We need to have Aboriginal people in all important positions.
  - Check the attendance in the schools.
  - If a youth is mentoring with an Elder maybe the Elder will keep track of time she or he spends with you.
  - If your school gives extra credit for donating your time to hospitals, food banks, and the elderly. Maybe the school can keep track of these hours.
  - By attending ceremonies, and going to language school and then speaking the language, we will become stronger.
  - Keeping our job requires attendance; we need to take our responsibilities seriously.
  - Women should teach the girls and the men teach the boys how to behave respectfully.
  - Band meetings where attendance would be noted would help community business and accountability.
5. Do you know of any traditional roles that women and men held in relation to governance and decision-making within your nation? Could they be useful today?
- Bury our ancestors and live off the land.
  - Refuse welfare.
  - Chiefs should be elected by the women and the Council of Elders will ratify the decisions.
  - Men were the leaders in the Blackfoot Confederacy. Their main role was to lead the women, children and the Nation.
  - Our men need to get healthy and claim their roles.
  - Everyone had a role that was valuable to the community.
  - Children were are still the most valuable resource.
  - I came from a matriarchal society; I'm unsure if the traditional governance would be useful today.
  - Having Elders and youth present when decisions are made regarding policy issues.

- Addressing the needs of special groups in the community the physically and emotionally disabled, etc.
- In the traditional wheel, the children are at the center of our world. They are future and our dreamers. Directly around the child are the women who nurture that child. The men surround the women and children and get what is needed for these two groups. Finally, the Elders that take the outside circle they give to all of us. Language, history, stories medicines and our culture.

6. In the past, what resources were the most important in helping you achieve success in your challenge? Do you know of any best practices or model that is being used by a Nation that may be useful to others?

- Teaching our youth about no drinking and drugging.
- Working long hours, take more time for you, and your family and friends.
- Ambition and goals help us to acquire education for the benefit of her children.
- Seeking to collect more life tools will help us to pass on our knowledge to our family.
- Disheartening to have our land taken away.
- We have to take care of our grandparents; if not for them many of our children would be in care.
- There are many programs out there; but not many for native people; that is a match to what we need.
- Lack of funding to attend programs could be problematic.
- Family supports are needed so women can participate.
- Daycare and Elder are needed so women can work and participate in leadership roles.
- Affordable housing is also needed.
- Transportation is essential.
- Food banks can help those living in poverty.
- Part time work in between classes helps sustain us.
- Taking time for prayer and meditation to practice gratitude helps us to feel better about our lives.
- Knowing that we belong somewhere and that we are loved by others helps us to grow.
- When we have someone who believes in us and our purpose and goals, we can excel in life.
- Health and courage are needed to overcome our many challenges.

- Educational Supports are essential in achieving success in life.
- Health services and Friendship centres help to support our well-being and identity.
- The Homeless Foundation and The Trinity Foundation are great resources.

7. What role do you deem appropriate for other governments (federal and provincial) and with the private industry in advancing your goals?

- The least involvement by any government the better.
- If private enterprise is willing to help, with no strings attached this would be helpful.
- We believe that the government should honor the treaties they have signed.
- Governments should support the efforts in re-building; since we need a systemic change and they are the cause of the damage.
- A change would require more than money; it will need good will on both sides.
- The government will need to not only consult with native people but they have to work with us on every level as full partners.
- Aboriginal youth is the fastest growing demographic and we need programs and jobs to empower them and governments can support these efforts.
- Governments can offer the programs and financial security to those students who are serious and will not waste the funding.

Thank you for your input; it will be included into a final report and posted on our website at [www.nwac.ca](http://www.nwac.ca)