

EDUCATION FOR ECONOMIC PROGRESS

HUMAN RESOURCE DEVELOPMENT

A FOUNDATION FOR BUILDING ABORIGINAL ECONOMIES



THE GABRIEL DUMONT INSTITUTE

OF NATIVE STUDIES AND APPLIED RESEARCH

*" Ultimately, vision gets translated into sales and profit growth and return on investment, but the numbers come after the vision. "
" (John Naisbitt and Patricia Aburdene, Re-inventing the Corporation, p. 26)*

INTRODUCTION

The Gabriel Dumont Institute of Native Studies and Applied Research is the educational arm of the Association of Metis and Non-Status Indians of Saskatchewan. It is a recognized and accredited educational institute offering University, Technical Institute and other adult educational programs which prepare Metis and Non-Status Indian people for economic participation in society.

The Institute's programs are designed to lead to opportunities for Aboriginal people to enjoy a full life, confident in their culture and heritage and able to compete equally in the economic life of this country.

Historically Aboriginal people practised self-government and controlled their own economic destinies. Today, the process of renewal is leading to exciting possibilities. The Gabriel Dumont Institute understands that economic development is not possible without appropriate tools, and education is one such tool. Therefore, the Institute is developing education programs to support the economic development needs of Aboriginal people.

ESTABLISHING THE NEED

Only when a community or a people is in control of its destiny does progress occur. This is a prerequisite to self-government.

Low education levels (an almost 50% functional illiteracy rate), high rates of unemployment (in excess of 30%), negative social service statistics (child apprehension, incarceration, welfare), substandard housing and outside government control are current facts of life. With few exceptions Aboriginal economies are virtually non-existent. The development of Aboriginal economies demands change. Although progress is being made in some quarters, the rate of change must accelerate.

What will accelerate the changes so urgently needed?

Aboriginal control (self-government).

An Aboriginal human resource base upon which to build for change.

An Aboriginal economic development strategy.

By building an Aboriginal economy in Saskatchewan, Aboriginal people will have the opportunity and potential to participate not only in key industries and sectors of that economy, but also in the institutions and structures of Canadian society. The building of such an economy will have

positive long-term implications for creating secure employment for Aboriginal people, for creating a capital base and for creating a human resource base with skills and abilities necessary to make economic development strategies and self-government successful.

WHAT IS ABORIGINAL ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT?

The development and growth referred to as economic development means the creation of an Aboriginal economy. This rests primarily upon two distinct, interdependent parts; employment development and business creation. Employment development is the result of education programs which prepare graduates for real jobs, jobs in production and in the service industry. Business creation seeks to develop the Aboriginal entrepreneur.

An Aboriginal economy does not mean a separate and distinct economy from the economy that exists today in Saskatchewan. An Aboriginal economy would build on, link into and become an integral part of the Saskatchewan economy by establishing provincial and regional financial and investment instruments, which would be collectively owned by Saskatchewan Aboriginal people; by strategically investing in the Saskatchewan economy as a collective on behalf of Aboriginal people; and by initiating and expanding Aboriginal small and community business enterprises.

Development is hampered if it limits itself to one type of industry. Reliance on primary producing activities results in a dependency situation and restricts local economic growth. Economic activities must, therefore, include all three types of industry:

resource use (primary industry) - agriculture, forestry, fishing, mining and trapping;

production (secondary industry) - the manufacture of finished goods; and service (tertiary industry)

the delivery of services, such as education, health, transportation, communication, sales and social programs.

Education programs developed and delivered by the Gabriel Dumont Institute are based upon an integration of the three types of industry. Primary and secondary business development and service delivery are all included.

All aspects of a community's activities are essentially part of its economic development. In addition to the formation of businesses, services such as social services, health services, education, communication and culture are all integral parts of economic development. A community requires human resources in all of these fields.

EDUCATION FOR ECONOMIC PROGRESS

"The corporation's competitive edge is people - an educated, skilled workforce unskilled people are the one obstacle to the promise of prosperity." (John Naisbitt and Patricia Aburdene, Re-Inventing the Corporation, p.139)

The aim of economic development vehicles described in the following section is to provide a basis for the implementation of a broad and comprehensive economic development strategy for Aboriginal people in Saskatchewan. Within this context, the long-term goal is to develop an Aboriginal economy in the province, out of which will come improved standards of living, greater independence and fuller participation in society's institutions and structures.

Aboriginal ownership and control of these investment and financial institutions is a fundamental principle, and is absolutely essential to the development of an Aboriginal economy. In fact, the building of such an economy and economic self-sufficiency for Aboriginal people will not be realized until Aboriginal people have the power to make decisions on those issues which affect their lives.

Although the Aboriginal controlled financial and investment institutions must first develop at the regional or provincial level, the focus of developing viable economies is at the community level.

The Gabriel Dumont Institute's strategy for supporting economic development is a three stage developmental process designed to provide education programs which will serve as a basis for moving a community from a state of virtually no economic development to a state wherein there are viable businesses and a skilled labor force. To accomplish this transition from dependence to independence, a three part education program is proposed. Part one consists of an Economic Development Literacy Program. The second part is Education for Business Creation. The third is formal education initiatives for economic development.

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT LITERACY PROGRAM

In order to be able to identify potential for economic growth and to advance the areas of verified potential to the development of real businesses and real jobs, a first step is to raise awareness and focus a community's economic development initiatives.

The goal of the Economic Development Literacy Program is to develop an awareness of economic and business development potential. To develop this awareness, a series of workshops are available for delivery to the communities. These workshops are aimed at the community and its leaders.

The community will learn about:

the role and importance of Aboriginal economic development;

the various means for effective economic development;

how to generally identify economic development opportunities in the community.

Community leaders will improve their knowledge of how to:

undertake comprehensive economic planning;

initiate action to achieve the stated goals;

identify and obtain needed help and financial assistance from governments, foundations, the private sector etc.;

direct and manage economic development projects.

EDUCATION FOR BUSINESS CREATION PROGRAM

Once an awareness of business opportunities has been achieved and an interest in business creation has been indicated, the business ideas must be implemented.

Workshops designed to answer questions related to business creation are available for delivery to the local level. These workshops comprise the *Education for Business Creation Program*.

This Program is aimed at community leaders and potential business people. Workshops offer training including the following:

basic business principles;

legal aspects of business, including incorporation, government regulations, environmental law, labour law;

financial aspects of business, including accounting, financial arrangements;

management, including employee relations, planning, implementation.

THE FORMAL PROGRAMS OF EDUCATION FOR ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

The development of a skilled group of workers to support self-government infrastructures is essential. Businesses need managers, accountants, policy developers and workers. Governmental services such as health, education, culture and social services require educated leaders and other professionals. The education programs needed to ensure that such workers are available is the human resource development function of the Gabriel Dumont Institute's formal academic programs.

The Institute has consistently educated Aboriginal people for real jobs in fields such as teaching, social work, human justice and electronics. In response to the growing demand for Aboriginal economic development, the Institute is expanding its educational scope to include economic/business programs. The Business Administration Program from the Saskatchewan Institute of Applied Science and Technology currently being delivered in Fort Qu'Appelle is an example.

A formal certificate and degree program in Native Management Studies accredited by the University of Regina is anticipated in the near future.

A Community Development Program is a third educational initiative designed to complement and support the economic development strategy.

All of the education programs presently being offered and those planned for the future ensure that an adequate resource base will be in place to properly manage an overall Aboriginal economy.

CONCLUSION

The Gabriel Dumont Institute has a role to play in preparing for Aboriginal Economic Development. Change and growth is inevitable. As is stated in the mandate of the Institute, "*sufficient people will be trained with the required skills, commitment and confidence to make the goal of self-government a reality.*"

Entrepreneurs and community leaders who are interested in the delivery of the Economic Development Literacy Program and the Business Creation Program to the community level should contact: Donavon Young, Director
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Chart A. EDUCATION FOR ECONOMIC PROGRESS

The NEED	Gabriel Dumont Institute PROGRAMS	PURPOSE and FUNCTION	RESULT	GOAL
Awareness of and identification of opportunities.	ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT LITERACY	To develop a knowledgeable supportive community.	A community & its leaders capable of forming policy & setting directions for economic development	DEVELOPED INDIVIDUALS & COMMUNITIES
Local business	BUSINESS CREATION PROGRAM	Business planning	Entrepreneurs	
Skilled workers	FORMAL EDUCATION PROGRAM	Infrastructure support services	Skilled work force	