



Aboriginal Human  
Resource Council

connections – partnerships – solutions

CAREERS

**National  
Aboriginal Career  
Development  
Dialogue 2008**

*Insights, Inspiration and Inclusion*

**April 21 -22, 2008**

Montreal, Quebec

**Summary Report**

[www.aboriginalhr.ca](http://www.aboriginalhr.ca)



Canada's leading innovators in Aboriginal recruitment, retention and advancement



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## Message from Aboriginal Human Resource Council

The Aboriginal Human Resource Council is pleased to present this summary report of our *National Aboriginal Career Development Dialogue: Insights, Inspiration and Inclusion* which took place in Montreal, Quebec on April 21-22, 2008. This gathering was a time for career and personal development subject matter experts to come together and discuss the challenges and the components to supporting the development of a healthy and productive Aboriginal workforce. The goal was to begin a dialogue to identify the necessary pieces to a career development strategy that will foster an Aboriginal workforce which is filled with hope, inspired with vision, and fully included in Canadian places of work and study.

The group of experts tapped into their knowledge, expertise and motivation and applied their collective wisdom toward a vision that may ultimately unlock the potential of Aboriginal people on a national scale. Each expert brought a piece of this national puzzle and together they shared insights into strategies, best practices and research that can help develop healthy and career-ready Aboriginal people.

Every day the Canadian media publish stories that focus on the shortage of skilled workers and the plight of Aboriginal people in urban and rural settings across our nation. Canadians are calling for urgent and innovative solutions at the national level. Employers are now motivated to recruit and retain an Aboriginal workforce. Aboriginal people are poised to be full participants in Canada's economy but many still face obstacles and personal challenges. The recipe for success -- where career-ready workers connect to a welcoming workplace -- may rest somewhere in a coordinated approach to regional social and employment programs informed by the mountains of research that has been done to help support the development of healthy Aboriginal Canadians.

As the only national public-private sector organization mandated to advance the participation of Aboriginal people in Canada's economy, the council is well positioned to work with Aboriginal organizations and other subject-matter experts to facilitate transformative solutions that connect workforce demand with the Aboriginal talent pool. The council's proven record for building alliances and partnerships that help employers advance Aboriginal people, along with the solid foundation it has created in career development through the *Guiding Circles* program, can be used to help develop building blocks of transformation for Aboriginal communities and people.

The Montreal meeting served as the starting point for a conversation in an ongoing dialogue intended to explore a national solution that brings resolve to issues that block the development of healthy Aboriginal workers. The conversation engaged participants in stimulating dialogue that will help extract the most relevant elements in personal and career development toward the creation of national policies and programs that will give the council and its partners a critical role in the resolution. The meeting focused on an employment vision for the future, not a solution for today.

The following summary contains the dialogue shared at this inaugural gathering and we hope it is the starting point for future solutions and fosters additional conversations.



## Introduction

On April 21-22, 2008 the Aboriginal Human Resource Council (AHRC) hosted a national meeting of subject-matter experts, researchers and practitioners of career and personal development in Montreal, Quebec. Participants included representatives from career organizations, professional counsellors, health and addictions programs, governments, Aboriginal Human Resource Development Agreement holders and special interest groups that represented youth and women issues. A full delegate list can be found in the appendix 1. The goal of the dialogue was to provide AHRC with insights into new strategies, best practices and research to help define the council's role in supporting the supply side of the Aboriginal workforce inclusion equation. The council realizes to increase its work towards Aboriginal career transformation it will need new strategies for the growth and sustainability of Guiding Circles, while also expanding its vision to look at the work necessary to better support the development of a healthy Aboriginal workforce. For these two reasons the council invited delegates from a variety of career and human development perspectives to gather and discuss these issues. The outcomes of the session included:

- An increased knowledge among participants of the council, its work, and in particular a greater awareness of how Guiding Circles has contributed and can continue to play a niche role for Aboriginal career development in Canada.
- Council staff gained an appreciation and awareness of the other pieces to an individual's career development pathway and will use this information to further identify future roles and initiatives for the council in its supply side work.
- The meeting fostered a new network of experts to begin collaboration on a national, coordinated Aboriginal Career Development strategy for Canada.
- The council gathered research and best practices from experts in attendance to be shared with a broader audience committed to advancing the Aboriginal Career Development agenda.
- Organizations participating in the meeting discovered new synergies that they wish to explore with the council to assist in their goals concerning Aboriginal community development.

The vision is to find new pathways that will lead to ALL Aboriginal people being ready and able to maximize their contribution to Canada's economy and workplaces.

The session agenda is contained in Appendix 2.

## Summary of Presentations from April 21

The evening of April 21<sup>st</sup> saw the delegates attend a working dinner to launch the meeting and provided background on the context and objectives for the dialogue to come. Opening remarks were made by Kelly Lendsay, President and CEO of the Aboriginal Human Resource Council. Each delegate then introduced themselves, touched on their work and what they hoped to get out of the meeting.

There was a presentation on *Guiding Circles*, the foundational council program which has provided the council with a front row seat to observe many of the challenges in Aboriginal career development. This awareness of the multiple issues impacting on personal development has motivated the council to embark on this journey into new areas of Aboriginal career development. There was also a special presentation by international guest, John Jefferies of Australia detailing his work with Indigenous Australians for career preparation. Mr. Jeffries also spoke to his work with inclusion strategies for the private sector.

### Guiding Circles

Trina Bučko, the council's National Manager of Career Development Strategies, presented an overview of the history, program development and current state of the council's involvement with the *Guiding Circles* approach to career development. The council has been working with Guiding Circles since 2002, when it initially partnered with career experts Dr. Amundson, Dr. McCormick and Poehnell to bring *Guiding Circles* to a national stage. It was launched by a national demonstration project of *Booklet 1: Understanding Yourself* that involved 11 Aboriginal organizations from various parts of Canada. Since its introduction this approach has continued to gain traction as an innovative, flexible and practical tool to assist individuals with self-assessment, career exploration and decision making. The unique infusion of Aboriginal worldview and contemporary career development strategies has made *Guiding Circles* one of the most recognized Aboriginal tools for career development in Canada and internationally and, in 2006 our partnership with the authors produced *Booklet 2: Finding New Possibilities*. The council's work to foster a national program delivery strategy has seen more than 1000 employment/career coaches in Canada and Australia trained to facilitate the *Guiding Circles* approach to career development.

A copy of the full presentation can be found in the Appendices.

### Indigenous Success Australia

John Jefferies, Executive Director, Indigenous Success Australia (ISA) was an international guest from Canberra who attended the meeting. Mr. Jefferies has many years of experience creating and implementing training and workforce inclusion strategies for the Indigenous population in Australia. His expertise gained from working on national initiatives within the Australian government (and more recently with some of the country's largest employers) brought many new insights to the discussion. Australian and Canadian Aboriginal peoples share many historical and present day challenges to entering the world of work and school;



thus the information shared by Mr. Jefferies further assisted the delegates in their dialogue to think not only of national but also international models for solutions.

Mr. Jefferies presentation provided an overview of his work with Indigenous communities and companies in Australia to help prepare people in career awareness and training for employment. Some of the private sector partners he has worked with include McDonalds Australia, Woolworths, Cement Australia and one of the country's leading financial institutions, St. George's Bank.

The training his group offers include a short, accredited mentorship program, cultural awareness, job readiness training and an Indigenous youth mobility program.

A copy of Mr. Jefferies presentation can be found in the Appendices.

## What is Human Resource / Career Development

While there was no single definition for *career development*, the participants were asked to consider what someone would look like whose human resource was fully developed. The participants stated the following:

### Mental

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#### Confident

- Educated -- they are continuously learning and willing to share their knowledge and skills to help train others;
- Empowered -- they feel that they could take an idea and run with it, they know and believe in themselves and follow their heart
- They are able to accept failure and move beyond it
- One who trusts their intuition and who are well grounded
- Drivers - they are at the wheel on the bus called "life;" whereas so many people today seem to be passive passengers; these individuals take charge of their own destiny
- "Success is liking who you are, liking what you do and how you do it"
- Imaginative -- they are able to look beyond the reality of today and see the possibilities of tomorrow
- Dreamers
- Resolute -- someone who understands where they are going, they have a sense of purpose
- "Who are you now and who do you dream of being?"

### Physical

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- Physically healthy

### Emotional

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- Happy
- Hopeful
- Socially skilled -- someone who can interact in social environments with confidence
- Empathetic -- they are able to put themselves in other peoples' positions
- Compassionate -- they have concern for others and are motivated to help others



- Enthusiastic

## Spiritual

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- They know their roots -- knowing their culture, history and spirituality is their foundation
- Someone who is standing on the earth and there are roots on their feet. The roots are the community and their people, as well as the teachings - what was understood from Mother Earth and how that is part of who people are
- Luminous - they have an inner strength
- Humble

## Traits / Characteristics

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- Resilient in their ability to bounce back from failure
- Passionate -- champions of both life and work
- Busy -- the more they learn, the more they want to become involved
- Patient
- Sense of humor
- Understanding
- Quiet confidence
- Tolerant
- Disciplined
- Curious
- Honest
- Open
- Creative, artistic
- Strategic -- someone who is able to plan to get themselves from where they were to where they wanted to go
- One who presents themselves well
- One who is able to step back and reassess their path
- One who is able to see the big picture;
- “You know that you’re here to serve, but not to be the main course”
- Being busy can sometimes lead to burn-out; being so developed creates opportunities to serve and it is sometimes difficult to maintain balance.

## Accomplishments

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- Contributor to the community
- Mentor/Coach -- they develop others, build alliances and support systems and seek help and clarification when appropriate
- Self-actualized -- they know themselves and understand their own limitations, strengths and skills, as well as their weaknesses and challenges
- Responsible for their own actions; they refuse to be victims
- One who has the capacity to find the resources they need, they are able to build their own network of supports
- Balanced, in the sense of not being too much of any one thing; they are well-rounded
- One who feels safe and unthreatened to say what they think and can make a contribution or a decision



- Understanding and respectful of all of their relations in the natural world - not just people, but all living things
- Reciprocal -- they are able to share the gifts that they were given with others
- Someone who takes advantage of opportunities

## Essence

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- GILSA -- natural part of everyone;
  - Greatness - needs to be brought out
  - Important - everyone needs to feel important
  - Loved - everyone needs to be loved
  - Secure - there is a need for a person to feel safe
  - Alive- everyone needs to feel passion

## The Human Resource / Career Development Field

Participants were asked (a) why they worked in the human resource / career development field and (b) why they attended the meeting. The participants responded as follows:

- To bring about change
- To be of service
- To develop potential
- Because it needs to be done
- We believe in what we're doing, our discussions and bringing our belief forward
- We believe in the people, the audience, the receptor, the beneficiary
- The work reflects our own values
- To rectify past wrongs
- Intuition - it feels right and it's the right choice
- Meeting an obligation; making a contribution to improve conditions to make the world a better place for the 7 Generations
- It's our responsibility
- Because we are visionaries - we see the potential and the possibilities that can be developed; we don't choose our work - it chooses us
- Tremendous high in making a difference
- If you help one, you help many
- It's an expectation - to bring the resources back to the community; some people are placed in their positions as opposed to the work choosing a person -- sometimes others chose the work for you
- Envisioning and imagining how the world could be better and how we can make a difference
- To develop a collective vision
- Work still needs to be done and attitudes still need to be fixed
- One cannot experience and witness an injustice and not react
- To encourage young people to tell their story to help themselves and others grow
- To develop curriculum that connects to Aboriginal students through various learning models



- To find resources for First Nations educational institutes
- To promote the academic credibility of First Nations educational institutes

The conclusion is that there is uniqueness attached to this work and it presents complex challenges.

## Sharing Best Practices

Participants were presented with a framework to identify components of a community of practice into three elements: Research; Strategies; and Activities. They were asked to focus their human resource/career development efforts/perspectives into the framework. Examples of programs, research and work was put into the framework and then a debrief discussion assisted the group to refine perspectives on what may contribute towards a successful community of practice in Aboriginal career development.

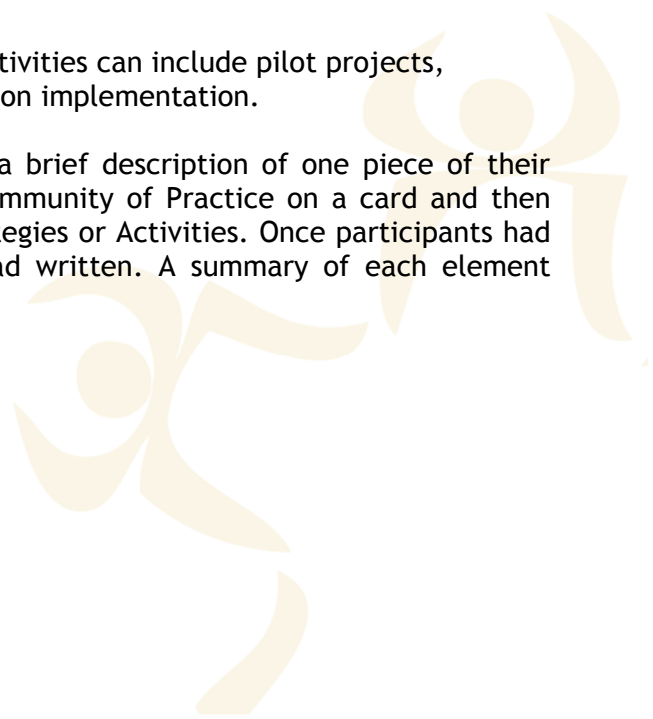
- Research focuses on creating new knowledge, new thinking, new intelligence by producing reports, studies, papers, etc. to inform and to provide evidence.

- Strategies create new approaches, plans and intentions to respond and can include partnerships and strategic plans for planning and preparation.

- Activities create results and reinforce values. Activities can include pilot projects, programs, community services, etc. with a focus on implementation.

RESEARCH	STRATEGIES	ACTIVITIES
Creating.... New knowledge New Thinking New Intelligence Examples Reports Studies Papers Focus... Inform	Creating.... Approaches Plans Intentions to Respond Examples Partnerships Strat Plans Focus.... Planning & Preparation	Creating.... Results Value Examples Pilot projects Programs Community services Focus.... Implementation

Participants were asked to write their names and a brief description of one piece of their work that they believe would contribute to the Community of Practice on a card and then tape it under one of the elements -- Research, Strategies or Activities. Once participants had completed their task, they spoke to what they had written. A summary of each element follows.





## Research

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The participants provided the following insights regarding research:

- Need to establish a baseline, an *AS IS* to be able to measure improvement
- Need to flip the lens - focus on “how Aboriginal people are being successful” rather than how they are failing.
- Aboriginal people are the most researched population in Canada. However, we need to connect the pieces of distinct research.
- Research is time consuming
- Need to do 10 minute research and share findings. These are small pieces of research that combine scientific methodologies, stories and indigenous methodologies
- Need to focus research on finding ways and means to achieve solutions
- Analyze data and best practices
- Undertake whole-being research - ethnographic studies
- Engage the communities at the start of the research

It was also shared that Aboriginal research methodology is rooted in life experience and oral communication (storytelling). Because it is not using “scientific methodologies” (statistical and quantitative), it is not viewed as legitimate evidence.

A detailed summary of the comments as well as the projects identified as Research is contained in [Appendix 2](#).

## Strategies

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The participants concluded that strategies be built in the following manner:

- Create intention to do something
- Generate solutions and ways and means to solve the challenge
- Develop models; mobilize applied research
- Find resources
- Execute common focus/priorities
- Partner with like-minded organizations to build bridges
- Determine success criteria and means to measure
- Coordinate / align efforts
- Address resistance
- To change, be flexible and be ready for constant readjustment

A detailed summary of the comments as well as the projects identified as Strategies is contained in [Appendix 3](#).



## Activities

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The general observation is that Research + Strategy = Activity

A detailed summary of the comments as well as the projects identified as Activities is contained in **Appendix 4.**

## General Observations

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- It is difficult to choose one activity / program and classify it under one of the elements.
- There are fewer in research
- We sometimes develop a solution then undertake research to validate the action
- Proper indicators are not always embedded in plans
- Aboriginal people know what they need

## Dialogue

### What is a Community of Practice?

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- It is a process that serves individuals of all ages through all phases of career/human development by all practitioners in the field.
- It is a community-wide process
- It is a combination of all the best stuff from everywhere

### What is a Working Well?

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- Partnering
- Broadening our base beyond our sphere of influence - we are moving out of silos
- Guiding Circles is a good training program:
  - Needs to be nurtured
  - Every kid needs to take this... but go to them (in the community)
  - Need to develop more trainers and facilitators to broaden its reach
- Needs funding as implementation is never done
- Blueprint Framework ( [http://www.lifework.ca/lifework/pr\\_blueprint.htm](http://www.lifework.ca/lifework/pr_blueprint.htm))
  - The Blueprint has been endorsed by Newfoundland, British Columbia, Alberta and Saskatchewan. Ontario has renamed the Blueprint “Choices Into Action” and offers a program through their Ministry of Education that had the same competencies as the Blueprint.
  - A number of people had been involved in the evolution of the Blueprint Framework, which is a generic map of learning outcomes. The framework is about self-esteem, feeling proud of oneself, interacting with others, getting better, dealing with change, balancing work and life, crisis management, etc.
  - The Blueprint Framework is well endorsed across the country, is funded by Human Resources and Skills Development Canada (HRDSC) and most provinces were involved in the development.



- The Office of Academic Career Development (OACD) undertook a study involving 60 different countries and cited that the Blueprint Framework was something that everyone in the business of career development should consider employing.
- The Canadian Career Development Foundation (CCDF) recently produced four working groups studying issues related to broadening access for post-secondary education. Ms. Lynne Bezanson, CCDF Executive Director, led one of those teams and produced a discussion paper that highlighted a lot of the issues being discussed at the meeting, including what is career development, what role does it play, what is missing, etc. She noted that the paper was not specifically focused on issues for Aboriginal students, but there were some references made. The paper is available at the following website: [www.neitheramoment.com](http://www.neitheramoment.com).
- The *Real Game* -- the question was raised as to whether anyone had looked at the applicability of the Real Game to Indigenous populations.
  - It was reported at the meeting that Dr. Rod McCormick, Associate Professor, University of British Columbia has reviewed the applicability of the Real Game in the context of Aboriginal usage and the Blueprint Framework for life designs. Additionally it was reported there were Aboriginal communities that used the Blueprint and the Game. It was said that although there was no strategic approach, people saw the applicability of the Real Game. The Real Game talks about connectivity and balance and does not preach The Game has not been specifically tested on Aboriginal communities or any ethnic group in Canada, although it is used by every one of those groups.

## What Needs to Improve?

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- Need to build capacity in trainers, facilitators, educators, etc. so that they will have access to tools and be able to use them.
- It was noted that there is no national endorsing body in career development. Need national standards or guidelines for career practitioners and provincial certifications.
- Need a warehouse / clearinghouse to share best practices across the country. A participant responded that the idea was not new and the CCDF had a Canadian clearinghouse, however, funding was cut 4-5 years ago and it no longer exists.
- Need to build generational capacity within communities that involves students, parents, grandparents and career practitioners. She mentioned that the concept needed to be embedded within communities so that it could be sustained.
- Since the majority of organizations are at the whim of government parties or funders, a move towards a public-private model is necessary. The Canadian Council for Public-Private Partnerships (CCPPP) focuses on building bridges and generating revenue to maintain those bridges. Any strategy that is based solely on 100% government funded activities is inherently vulnerable.
- In some instances, some communities have become too dependent on public funding and have lost their vitality, creativity and originality.
- There is a need for better measurement. It was mentioned that many projects seem to go on and on without demonstrating whether the program is actually working or not. A program that cannot demonstrate results will quickly lose the interest of funders.
- Everyone (including governments) should be committed to creating socio-economic parity between the Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal population and supporting strategies that get us there, whether it takes one day, twenty years or longer. He said that until that time, government should be honouring existing and new investments.



- It is an unfortunate reality that, while First Nations institutions are doing exemplary work at the First Nation community level, they are not core funded.
- Mentorship programs should be more formalized so young people in the communities have people they can talk to at any given time. Mentorship needs to begin at a younger age and people need at least three 3 mentors in the lives beginning at age 5.
- There is a need for a tool that could place individuals on career paths enabling them to go through a number of stages, to get their GED, get a job, enter into entrepreneurship, etc.
- Many times people receive training and then there are no jobs available. Many communities have essentially become experts in training and turned training into a form of social assistance. Perhaps there needs to be a 3-strike rule implemented because there is not an endless pool of funding of available.
  - Some did not agree with implementing a 3-strike policy with respect to training. They suggested that the piece that was missing was job placement. It was difficult to get a job without any experience, but how could a person get experience if they could not get a job? It was said that often people who participated in training programs became disillusioned because they were unable to secure employment immediately following their training.
- There is a need to move into the new millennium and recognize that communities are also built on-line. While there is nothing that can replace person-to-person interaction, the reality is that small communities around the country are being reached through technology. Need to consider what it would take to connect Aboriginal young people to the work force. Employers are desperate for employees but the problem is expecting Aboriginal employees to fit into their companies.

## General Comments / Observations

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- Need to step back and ask what career development looks like from a First Nations, Inuit or Métis worldview perspective. Not sure the Blueprint was the answer for career development for Aboriginal people as there were many different Nations, contexts, communities and experiences.
  - Need to consider Dr. Brokenleg's work done on Courage, modeled after the medicine wheel, which includes four aspects: belonging; mastery; independence; and generosity.
- There is a role for citizens, practitioners and other experts in the field to make their positions known to Members of Parliament.
- National Aboriginal Health Organization (NAHO) is partnering with the National Aboriginal Achievement Foundation (NAAF) to develop a mentoring framework and will use NAAF's database of bursary and scholarship recipients as well as NAHO's Role Model Program to help young people in communities. There is a need for transition pieces and a need to focus on the individual.
- As a Counselor, the traditional process has put counseling into a funnel and no one was satisfied with what came out of that funnel. Rather than focusing on jobs and job titles, focus on what sectors interested people. Often people want to know where the money is but they may not be willing to go there. For example, are they willing to become an underwater welder? People should be following their passion and getting the proper education to access the career that they want.
- A participant mentioned that some work done by the Caledon Institute of Social Policy looked at the achievements of Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal students according to



whether they graduated from high school. It showed that if an Aboriginal student graduated from high school they were just as likely to go on to some type of post-secondary training as anyone else; however, Aboriginal students were not likely to graduate from high school. It is important to get Aboriginal students through high school and how students perform in Grade 9 is a strong predictor of whether or not they will finish high school.

- It was suggested that the Caledon paper is quite simplistic and does not consider critical context and concepts. Research shows that if Aboriginal students graduated from high school, they would graduate from post-secondary institutions, but too many fall through the cracks. For example, on the Blood Reserve, there were 900 applicants for post-secondary education funds and of those 900, 150 fell through the cracks because of the narrow definition imposed by Indian and Northern Affairs Canada (INAC) guidelines. Those 150 had selected career paths that were not funded by INAC. For the remaining 750, the Blood Reserve could only afford to fund 350 applicants and of those 350 funded, those students only received \$600/month for living expenses which did not even cover half of rent in Calgary, AB. This speaks to the severity of under-funding in the education system.
- New research conducted by the University of Toronto concludes that if only one grade could be chosen to point to the greatest potential impact, the most critical would be Grade 3, because children switch from learning to read to reading to learn. The message is to invest in children.
- It was mentioned that when talking about career development for Aboriginal young people, they are only working with about 20% of the Aboriginal youth in the country and the other 80% are still lost. Those 80% had quit the system in grade school, let alone high school. He said that that reality needs to be addressed. One of the ways to address this issue is through entrepreneurship, which is fostered by promoting creativity.

## What is Required to Continue this Work?

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- Need to get information out there to everyone so that it does not just sit in the archives. It needs to get to the people who require it most.
- Need to consider the establishment of a Standing Committee that meets every few months to become more organized with respect to what resources are currently available and what resources may be forthcoming.
- Build/identify an organization with the capacity to create an on-line community because it would allow people to share the work that they were doing. It was mentioned that perhaps an Aboriginal Human Resources Council Facebook page would also be useful.
- It is important to determine how many Aboriginal Human Resource Development Agreement Holders (AHRDAs) had used Guiding Circles, how many AHRDA practitioners had taken the course, how many clients had received certification, etc. He stated that it is important to support Aboriginal clients getting jobs that lead to careers and Guiding Circles can be part of that solution.
- Ensure job placement is a part of training programs so that there are jobs available once the training ends.
- AHRDAs need to couple case management with employment services.
- Start the development of a collective vision.
- Support Aboriginal institutional research advances.
- Need to develop a common language for the career development field.



- Do not speak about careers without considering entrepreneurship.
- It was suggested that the group look at three or four actions that they could all do tomorrow and the next day to move forward in achieving the vision. It is necessary to organize efforts in a more coherent way to move further, better and faster in achieving that collective vision.
- Develop a human transition continuum that will achieve our vision of a fully developed Aboriginal Canadian.
- Ensure access in both official languages.
- This meeting is a first step. It was suggested that the group build on what already exists. There is a huge body of knowledge and they can partner on two or three specific pieces, which may or may not be the missing pieces. Then, bring smaller groups together to do additional work.

## Value of the Meeting

The group was asked how they thought the meeting and conversation went. Their comments:

- A participant commented that he had never participated in a group where there had been such good dialogue.
- Someone mentioned that they were used to working with a lot of political groups where some people would not even meet in the same room together. He said that there was a real willingness to collaborate and build on what worked.
- It was mentioned that this conversation is just the tip of the dialogue that needs to continue. The issues were explored very quickly and there are some issues that need to have deeper thinking around key components. She hopes that the work will eventually become part of a career development and human resources process to reach more people.
- A participant said that there is a lot of work to do and they need to continue to connect with each other. She said that she was surprised at how little she knew about what was happening with respect to career development in her own country. She said that it could be useful to address the vision within their own provinces to continue to open the dialogue and remove the boundaries across the country.
- A participant stated that she enjoyed the fact that everyone was open, honest and passionate about the work they do. She said that it was beneficial to make linkages and be informed of work that was occurring across the country. She thanked everyone for sharing their views.
- The comment was made that it was an interesting day with a lot of good dialogue. He said that First Nations communities and people are in trouble, although some communities do much better than others. He said that people need to continue with the work and never give up because they will eventually see the benefits and change. He said that if the children are the future, then the future is today and not 3 generations from now. He stated that there is a reason for everything and it is part of the Creator's plan and everyone has a purpose. He said that although some people are not spared and perish, those that are spared have an obligation to help everyone that they can; to save every child that they can be saved.



- A participant thanked the AHRC for the opportunity to hear from others. She mentioned that it was Earth World Day and it was a good time to come together to reinstate their promise to Mother Earth; to keep the earth healthy, clean and beautiful.
- Mr. Lendsay stated that people move from tears to hope and finally to change. He offered a quote by Mr. Charlie Coffey, Chair of the charitable arm of the council: “People may not remember who you are, people may not remember what you did, but they will always remember how you made them feel.”





## Agenda

Opening Prayer

Opening Comments Roundtable

What is Human Resources / Career Development?

Sharing Our Practices

Dialogue

What are the pieces needed to build an Aboriginal Human Resource / Career Development  
'community of practice?'

What is required to continue this work?

Path Forward

Closing Prayer





## Research

It was noted that there were fewer cards under Research, as research seemed to be embedded in programming.

A participant said that when programs were developed, a literature review was usually not done to determine the related research that supports the particular program. She mentioned that proper research strategies need to be built into programming.

The comment was made that a lot of times in Aboriginal communities they sell themselves short. She said that often their research is not scientific or pure research, but they traditionally knew what they needed in their communities and they applied life research or action research. There is a need to shift that paradigm to recognize this knowledge as a valuable form of research.

A participant stated that he is a quantitative researcher and that those types of research explained by the previous participant are considered legitimate. However, he said that in order to capture the whole picture, one also needs quantitative research in addition to qualitative research.

The question was raised as to whether qualitative knowledge is documented. She said that there is a new push to recognize Indigenous methodologies and stated that Professor Linda Tuhiwai Smith, Director of the International Research Institute for Maori and Indigenous Studies at the University of Auckland, New Zealand, is one of the forerunners in that field. A participant asked where oral histories fit into the methodologies when referring to documentation? She responded that when she was completing her thesis, the process that she used was storytelling. She said that she had to be conscious of the fact that there were stories that were documented, but there is knowledge contained in those stories that is not documented. Through the western research approach, the ability to get the richness of knowledge through the process of storytelling was lost.

A participant commented that they agreed with the use of Indigenous research methodologies, however, government does not encourage the softer side of social sciences or oral stories.

The comment was made that there is a need for oral histories and allowing opportunities for learning to occur. She said that there was also a need for doing the five or ten minute research programs, which could be as easy as thinking of an idea, discussing it with someone and then finding a way to share that information. She mentioned that if government will not fund that type of research, they need to think of more creative ways to get community research done.

In Manitoba, Healthy Child Manitoba administered a lot of the cross-Ministerial programs and they had a proactive position on research. They wanted to determine what the impacts of programs were and they were trying to build the research methodologies in a systematic way. They randomly selected children who could be tracked to determine if the program was



making a difference or if the program had a negative impact on the children. The research would determine what was working and not working to ultimately make the program stronger.

A participant stated that at NAHO, they produced a journal with studies and papers to build a knowledge base. She said that when they conducted research with communities they subscribed to the OCAP principles of Ownership, Control, Access and Possession. In doing so, they took an Indigenous and holistic approach to research. She noted that communities do not want researchers to go into communities, conduct the research and then leave. They want longer-term relationships, they want opportunities to build their research capacity and they want the research to be meaningful. She mentioned that communities were engaged in the research process from the very beginning and when the research was completed, the community determined how much of the research could be shared.

She noted that NAHO also has a journal on their website, with various authors who are peer reviewed. She mentioned that NAHO was responsible for knowledge transfer and dissemination to communities so that they could apply research that is relevant to them. She also said that NAHO recently launched their *Honouring Life Network*, which is a youth suicide prevention website.

A participant said that a lot of the conversation occurring was passing over his head and he felt a bit uncomfortable. He said that it was obvious from the cards placed under the categories that the room was filled with people who primarily administered activities. He mentioned that if one is to accomplish anything in politics or policy, it needs to be supported by facts and there is always the risk that the research will prove that initial assumptions could be wrong. He also mentioned that with respect to quantitative data, it had been his experience that highly scientific quantitative data was absolutely useless when developing policy. He continued that he was unsure if he understood the dichotomy made between traditional knowledge and research; he said that when he heard those words, he thought of mythology in the sense of stories people told about where they came from and what life was about. He stated that the discussions raised some interesting questions for him about what research should or should not be about.

A participant responded that the purpose was not to administer long-term research, but to break research down. She said that she loved the example of Facebook and getting someone to document a story because those were examples of research pieces. It provides an opportunity for people to discuss an idea and gather information. She wanted to encourage day-to-day research and empower everyone to gather research pieces; otherwise research becomes the purview of the policy researcher.

It was mentioned that there is a huge difference between academic research and government/organizational research. He said that government and organizations live in the real world with fiscal years. Academic research has to be rigorous and serve a purpose. He noted that there is an internal divide between researchers and policy makers and they do not understand each other's needs and that connection needs to be strengthened.

A participant stated that they did not know if there were any other groups that were more studied than Aboriginal people in Canada or Indigenous peoples in general. He said that the problem with research, with documents and papers, is that they sit in provincial and national



archives and were housed with hundreds and hundreds of studies that just sit on shelves. The research gathers dust and is seldom revisited. He stated that the research should be looking at ways to narrow the gap between First Nations people and the rest of Canada. He mentioned that he lives with those problems every day on the reserve and research is not going to provide the answers. He said that research satisfies the parliamentarians and bureaucrats and other societies that enough is being done on behalf of First Nations and also for the appearance that something is actually being done, however the gap between First Nations and the rest of the Canadian population continues to widen.

Specific programs noted in this section:

Description	Contributor
Advance and influence the health and well-being of FN, Inuit & Métis people through knowledge-based initiatives. Journal, conduct research (papers), knowledge transfer and dissemination, website searches, products (research tools).	Paulette Tremblay
Ensuring that policy-relevant research is done within the federal government to outside. Example: By setting out a conceptual framework (e.g. asking the “right” questions) to help diagnose what the challenges are, what the tools may be to tackle them, and who is best positioned to wield them.	Undisclosed
Support knowledge exchange in HR skill development.	Doug Moulton
A study of highly successful (academically) Aboriginal women in post-secondary and graduate studies programs to find out what contributes to academic success among Aboriginal students (e.g. key factors).	Dawn Howard



## Strategies

It was mentioned that at the Aboriginal Learning Knowledge Centre, the approach that is taken is not to look at victim blaming or deficit models, but rather to look at promising practices and mobilize this knowledge. They established 6 thematic areas and undertook a research scan of existing research. One finding was that people cannot always trust what is written because the researchers interpret data through their own eyes and that presents a danger of research becoming distorted. The participant said that the centre reviewed existing field notes and archives as well as oral interviews. They completed their scans and discussed promising practices and had developed a model that redefined success and could be applied in communities. They have many partners, including the Assembly of First Nations (AFN), AHRC, federal government, academia, private industries, communities and various national organizations. Focus groups are also conducted and as well as consultations with communities and organizations. She said that the bulk of their work lies in creating strategies and they rely on communities and other departments to carry the work out. The participant stated that one of the biggest challenges is securing funding to refocus programming based on the strategies.

Another participant commented that within Manitoba they have identified funding for a strategy that was developed through consultation with Aboriginal groups. Manitoba is taking a more horizontal approach and coordinating activities across three departments that have the mandate for education, training and economic development to really focus on what the strategy is trying to achieve, which is to make a difference in Manitoba with respect to Aboriginal participation; whether in education, in the work force, in economic development, etc. They are working on a Career Development Framework in the context of Aboriginal training and an action plan for looking strategically at what they had already determined as career activities.

A participant commented on labour force development and mentioned that the National Native Alcohol and Drug Abuse Program (NNADAP) has approximately 1000 workers across the country. He said one of the requirements to have a successful and meaningful program to address and challenge issues with respect to addictions is to have a qualified and superior work force. The program is able to bring knowledge and skills to its workers and is accredited; however, one of the major challenges of the program is the wage parity issue. The program had essentially become the training ground for other institutions, as workers gain the necessary skills and experience as a NNADAP worker and then leave for a better paying job. The program needs adequate funding so that they are able to retain qualified workers and build capacity within First Nation communities.

He further mentioned that with respect to land management, it is a defeating purpose to achieve self-government if there is no capacity to self-govern and carry out all of the activities of government. He said that it is a complex issue and they need authority over budgets. He stated that there is a lot of resistance to change and if the parliamentarians are not supportive, there is resistance within the civil service. He mentioned that there is a need for a paradigm shift in attitude and mentality of both provincial and federal governments in order for sustained and meaningful partnerships to occur.



A participant commented that as young people, they were very flexible and were constantly readapting and re-strategizing to collaborate with partners, including government. She said that at the end of the day, they are in a constant state of researching methods of doing things differently and better and that is the only way that the paradigm shift can happen.

Specific programs noted in this section:

Description	Contributor
Ensure policies, programs and services are inclusive and meet the needs of Inuit / Aboriginal people.	Anna Fowler
Designing, developing and implementing Indigenous employment strategies with and for the private sector and Indigenous communities.	John Jeffery
Youth Engagement & Empowerment - I am strategic and creative in my work; I generate ideas amongst my team and bring together the necessary pieces of the puzzle to turn those ideas into concrete actions. Keep my eye on the bigger picture. Rights based approach. Key role is as a motivator - I keep my team inspired and continuously nudge them in the right direction.	Kimia Ghomeshi
Create bridge between research and application (plan knowledge exchange events to share promising practices / research findings, to facilitate community planning, etc.). Partnership - ABCKC/CCL/AFB - communities Reports - Model on CCL site; outcome on AFN site	Vivian Ayoungman
Aboriginal Education and Training Action Plan. Cross departments planning and implementation. Departments of Education, Advanced Education, Training and Economic Development. 2 External Advisory Councils.	Veronica Dyck
Reframing and re-creating public policy and service to be inclusive of Aboriginal perspectives.	Eleanor Brockington
Support partnerships / shared strategies. HR planning.	Doug Moulton
Canadian Post Secondary Access Partnership Support the creation of community-based partnerships to provide student / family services that broaden access to post-secondary studies linked into a national partnership / network)	Undisclosed
Mobilize business / public to push / enable government action to invest in high risk kids.	Nora Lou Roos
Workforce development of national addictions workers. Capacity building First Nations governance / land and resource development	Undisclosed



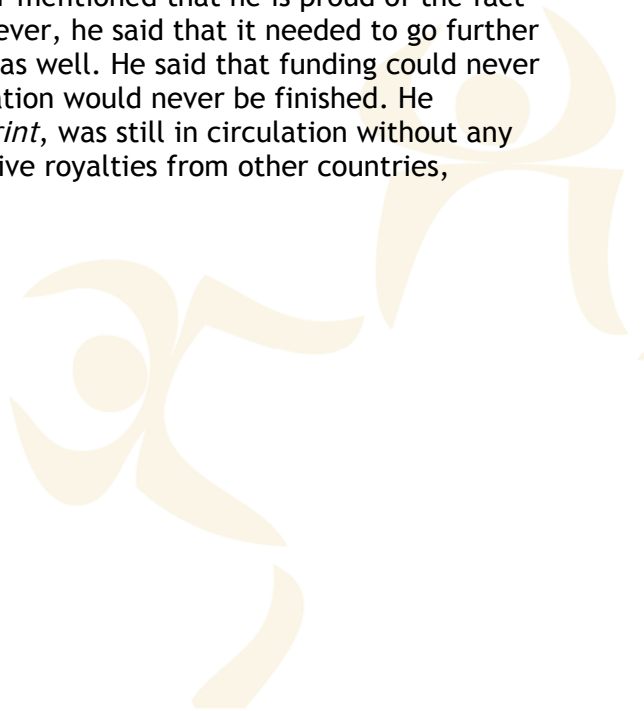
## Activities

A participant said that he went to Chisasibi, a Cree community in northern Québec. The community had approximately 800 young people and many of them were on income security. He said there are hundreds of communities like Chisasibi with thousands and thousands of young people where nothing is happening. He said that to him, it means that research is not achieving anything in those communities. He said that strategies are needed, but there is no real effort in Canada to do anything about it. The participant commented that there was not enough time at the meeting to really discuss strategies and only enough time to slightly touch on the discussion. He mentioned that he was interested in hearing more from the participants as they were really only receiving bits and pieces of information. He said that it was time to stop talking strategies and time to get out there and do them.

A participant commented that although the Research, Strategies and Activities sheets were placed in a linear fashion, she viewed them more as being linked together in a circle. She said that she had difficulty putting just one idea down in one section, because she felt that her work could have put between two of the categories.

A participant stated that they could combine the best programs that were currently working, such as the game *Prelude* that was being beta-tested in an interactive game format. It helps players answer a lot of questions around their talent and skills. From there, they can move to the *Real Game* -- understanding work and life and what happens in the real world and then perhaps they will move towards entrepreneurship and engagement and finally to Guiding Circles.

It was mentioned that a digital version of the *Real Game* had been provided to the Prince Albert School Board and the participant wanted to know how many Aboriginal people had been involved with the Advisory team. The response confirmed that there was good Aboriginal representation on those teams. He further mentioned that he is proud of the fact that the game still exists and is used in schools. However, he said that it needed to go further and be available to all Aboriginal kids and other kids as well. He said that funding could never stop because ideas would never stop and implementation would never be finished. He continued that the *Real Game*, along with the *Blueprint*, was still in circulation without any federal funding whatsoever. However, they did receive royalties from other countries, including Australia and Holland.





Specific programs noted in this section:

Description	Contributor
AHRDA program Dollars to connect Aboriginal people with training and internship opportunities, job placements to get them the necessary experience. Some scholarships.	Dawn Howard
Connector Increasing awareness Experience in multi-cultural counseling	Maria DeCicco
To create a transformed model of education and community (a new paradigm) based on new research and what works Put into action in conjunction with FN and inner-city communities (changelearning.ca)	Heather MacTaggart
To contribute to the development of families and co-workers in my community by providing opportunities they may not otherwise have: Training, educational opportunities, self discovery	Brenda Hall
Support for collaborative HR projects	Doug Moulton
Employment services that connect Aboriginal people to employers in Manitoba	Roberta Hewson
Supporting and motivating Aboriginal students in the B.Commerce (Honors) degree through spiritual/ personal support and by creating opportunities for community and reciprocity	Wanda Wuttenee
Connecting people and organizations (from every region) to develop, pilot and implement resources, programs for all of Canada - schools (all levels), community agencies, etc.	Phil Jarvis
Diversity issues assessment across the country. Communities, education curriculum best practices and opportunity for collaboration and engagement Deeper inclusiveness and engagement on Aboriginal and other diversity issues through sharing information, facilitating discussions and making presentations.	Marva Wisdom
Head Strategic Initiatives Build partnerships Establish relationship between economic development and activities Engage private sector Conduct research and evaluation to ensure activities achieve desired results.	Christopher Rastin
Building capacity Writing resources / curriculum / programs Teaching / equipping career practitioners/counsellors Supporting employers / associations to develop their people Speaking to influence others to make the world a much better place	Undisclosed
Catalyst to create horizontal partnerships.	Undisclosed
Entrepreneurship - simply put - create your own career and help others in the process.	Undisclosed



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Guiding Circles : An Aboriginal Approach to career  
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Canada's leading innovators in Aboriginal recruitment, retention and advancement



## The Aboriginal Human Resource Council

- The Aboriginal Human Resource Council (AHRC), formed in 1998, is a national public-private, not-for-profit organization with a mandate to advance the full participation of Aboriginal people in [Canada's labour market](#) on a national level.



Canada's leading innovators in Aboriginal recruitment, retention and advancement.



## The Aboriginal Human Resource Council

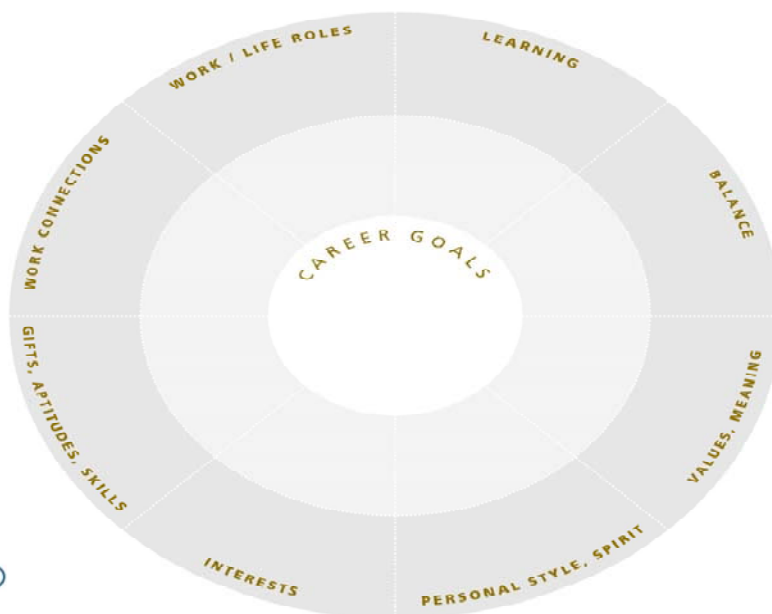
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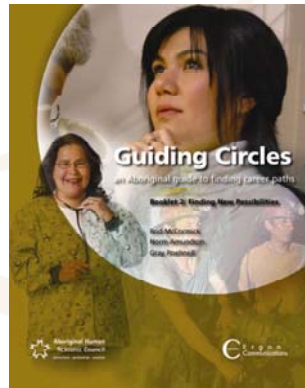
## The Career Circle





## Booklet 2: Finding New Possibilities

- Individual takes the information from Booklet 1 and continues now towards generating career possibilities.
- May also explore if they have the entrepreneurial spirit
- Narrows ideas down to a few and researches “career circles” of those opportunities to compare to their own circle
- Learns about decision making and puts together the beginning of a career path with the involvement and feedback of others

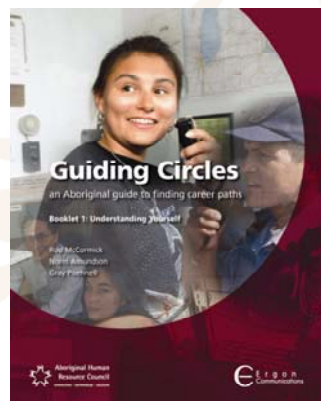


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## Booklet 1: Understanding Yourself

- Individual is encouraged to share life experiences and stories as the foundation for self assessment
- We know that individual self assessment is at its best incomplete; so we also involve community to provide feedback
- By completion of booklet individual has a positive, focused, self reflection completed and a few ideas about career and the journey process.



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## What makes Guiding Circles unique?

- Based on a foundation that is highly aware of the historical Aboriginal disconnect with school and work experiences
- Accessed by many types of organizations
- Flexible in the delivery style
- Helps to create relationship between client and coach
- Enhances self esteem by reinforcing positive life experiences and skills development



## Guiding Circles today

- Continues to gain traction as a nationally recognized approach for career development
- Distributed over 15,000 workbooks
- Trained close to 1000 facilitators
- Continually receiving positive response from communities in Canada and abroad





## Guiding Circles is....

“A people based approach to the hard questions involving preparing ourselves for the working world.”

“It digs right into the inside of the person. It focuses on the individual”

“Very good practical, useful and relatively easy process to implement”

“You get to look at the reality of life.”





## AHRC Presentation April 21

Prepared by

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## About Indigenous Success Australia (ISA)

- Indigenous Success Australia (ISA) is a wholly-owned Indigenous business, with two Indigenous Company Directors. Our business goal is to provide Indigenous Australians with integrated training, employment, small business and economic development solutions.
- ISA staff are primarily Indigenous, with degrees and qualifications in economics, adult education, coaching and mentoring and training. We regularly work with other professionals to supplement our expertise to deliver our clients high quality, integrated service solutions.

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## Doing Business with ISA

- Assistance across all three ISA service lines – Pre-employment training, job placement and retention programs
- Developing Aboriginal Employment and Training Strategies with the private and public sector
- Brokering working partnerships – private sector
- Maximising local employment and enterprise opportunities for Indigenous people

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## Maintaining a Culturally Aware Workforce

- Work with Indigenous communities
- Establish local partnerships
- Cultural Awareness Training
- Diversity champions

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## Our services

### Employment services

- ISA provides assistance to corporate and public sector bodies with recruitment and retention of Indigenous people into their workforces. Our employment services include:
- Employment Strategies – corporate, industry, or regionally based
- Job Placement services
- Post-placement mentor support services
- Community engagement

### Our partners

We work collaboratively with a wide range of companies to maximise employment outcomes for our clients and our partner companies.

Our partners include:

- Department of Education, Employment & Workplace Relations
- McDonalds Australia
- Cement Australia
- Stockland Group
- Woolworths Australia
- St George Bank
- Indigenous Business Australia
- Medicare Australia

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## Training services

ISA offers a range of accredited and non-accredited learning and development programs. Our training focuses on building competence and confidence leading to successful employment outcomes for Indigenous employees and their employers.

Our training capability includes:

- Accredited short course mentor program
- Cultural Awareness training
- Job Ready training
- Certificate II and III in Office Administration
- Corporate governance

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## Indigenous Youth Mobility Program

- A program targeting 16-24 year old Indigenous youth from remote areas of Australia
- Providing accommodation in selected project locations
- Providing employment, training or further education opportunities in selected locations

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# Aboriginal Human Resource Council

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connections – partnerships – solutions

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