

# The National Report On Aboriginal Inclusion

## News & Solutions

### INSIDE

**MAY 2003  
ISSUE TWO**

- 1 The Role Of Elders In The Workplace
- 1 Canada's Number One Employment Resource For Aboriginal People: The Inclusion Network
- 2 BC AHRDAs Are Building A Trades Agenda
- 2 Sponsors Of The Inclusion Network
- 3 Mentoring For Vocational Success
- 4 Keith Henry: A Profile Of Aboriginal Success
- 5 AHRDCC Partners With The Environment Sector
- 7 Promising Practice: BladeRunners
- 8 The Survey Results Are In!
- 8 Announcing The New AHRDA Portal

## The Role Of Elders In The Workplace

by Kelly Lendsay

The role of Elders and their relationship to an organization's culture is an important discovery for non-Aboriginal organizations. In addition to ceremonial roles, Elders can play the role of facilitator, counselor, arbitrator and team builder. They often provide strategic insights into opportunities and challenges facing organizations and individuals. They are particularly sensitive to the stresses and demands facing people and provide words of wisdom to people and work teams.

The Royal Commission on Aboriginal Peoples (RCAP) defined traditional Aboriginal culture as "A way of life shaped by intimate relationships with the land, reinforced by a world view

**CONTINUED ON PAGE 6 >**

## Canada's Number One Employment Resource For Aboriginal People: The Inclusion Network



The Inclusion Network was designed to correct the employment conditions of Aboriginal people who have been designated as a disadvantaged group by the "Employment Equity Act." The purpose of the "Employment Equity Act" is to achieve equality in the workplace for women, Aboriginal peoples, persons with disabilities and members of visible minorities.

The Inclusion Network is more than a job board since it connects employers and educators to Aboriginal talent, while providing Aboriginal jobseekers with free access to both job and training opportunities. Currently, there are over thirty employers within the network that are looking for Aboriginal talent and have been posting jobs for almost two months. There are also up to date lists of training opportunities offered by universities, colleges and other training institutions. If you are an Aboriginal jobseeker, the Inclusion Network is your number one employment resource.

Employers, Educators, Aboriginal Employment officers and technicians across Canada are invited to participate in demonstrations and training presentations of the Inclusion Network, which are offered complimentary through conference calls.

If you would like to participate in an Inclusion Network Presentation please contact us at 1-866-711-5091.



**ABORIGINAL HUMAN RESOURCE DEVELOPMENT COUNCIL OF CANADA**



## British Columbia AHRDAs Are Building A Trades Agenda

British Columbia AHRDAs held a workshop on February 3, 2003 to explore opportunities for Aboriginal participation in the trades. Over 80 people were present at the Vancouver forum representing trades, employers, as well as Aboriginal, government, union and other interests. The dialogue provided an opportunity for participants to learn and exchange information about Aboriginal apprenticeship and trades employment. Facilitator Chris Corrigan led group discussions to identify ways of working together to encourage Aboriginal people to consider employment opportunities in the trades and to lay the groundwork for strategies that link Aboriginal talent with employers' needs.

The conference was co-organized by Natural Resources Canada and the Aboriginal Human Resource Development Council of Canada with the support of a steering committee. Ken Donnelly from Natural Resources Canada and Roy Mussell from the BC Council of First Nations and board member to the Aboriginal Human Resource Development Council, were the co-chairs for the event. The one-day workshop brought together employers from a wide array of trades occupations representing the fisheries, aerospace, construction and other sectors. Employers in British Columbia are facing a growing skills shortage in the trades area and they are enthusiastic about the potential for Aboriginal people to address this challenge.

Participants began the day-long workshop with presentations from the Canadian Apprenticeship Forum and the Construction Sector Council. The intent was to begin the day with information about the apprenticeable trades from a national focus. This was followed by a presentation by representatives from the Alberta Government and the Alberta Aboriginal Apprenticeship Project, an innovative multi-party approach to developing skilled Aboriginal

apprentices in Alberta. With this background the presentations focused on British Columbia, with presentations by the provincial government and local Vancouver AHRDA Holders. The intent of the forum was to drill down from the national level to the provincial and local levels to develop a coherent picture of the apprenticeable trades landscape and examine opportunities for Aboriginal people to enter this labour market.

Equipped with this baseline information, the workshop engaged participants in a facilitated dialogue about the ingredients needed to build a co-ordinated strategy that will increase the number of Aboriginal people in British Columbia who successfully complete BC apprenticeship programs and find long-term employment in the skilled trades. A report providing the meeting summary is listed on the Aboriginal Human Resource Development Council of Canada's Website, [www.ahrdcc.com](http://www.ahrdcc.com). Copies of presentations are also located at this site.

Tara Gilbert, the CEO for ACCESS, an urban AHRDA Holder based in Vancouver, was one of three AHRDA Holders who presented a Co-ordinated Aboriginal Apprenticeship Strategy as a pilot idea and potential province-wide model. "We want to build partnerships with employers, government and unions to help establish and maintain an Aboriginal Apprenticeship program that addresses the needs of First Nations and Métis peoples," said Gilbert. She and her AHRDA colleagues are in the process of building support for the Co-ordinated Strategy which will be rolled out over the coming months as support for the initiative builds.

For more information about the workshop please refer to the Council's Website or contact Rob Egan, Project Coordinator for the Co-ordinated Aboriginal Apprenticeship Strategy (CAAS) at 604-685-7933.

### A Special Thank You To The Newest Sponsors Of The Inclusion Network!



RBC  
Financial  
Group





## Mentoring For Vocational Success

**M**entoring is one of the oldest methods for teaching people how to succeed. It has a proven track record for helping individuals find the right career path, merge successfully into a new job, develop contacts in a chosen profession and add eye-catching details to a résumé.

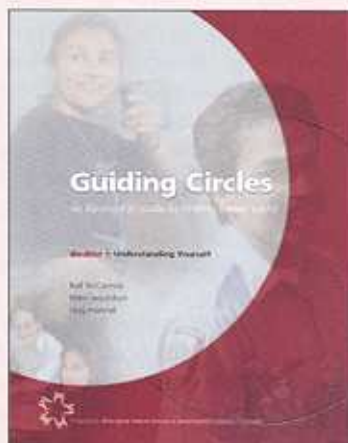
In the last few years there has been an increased awareness of the need for mentoring programs in Canada, particularly in the area of career development, where mentoring is helping potential and new employees develop essential life and work skills. In simple terms, mentoring helps people grow and develop while building productive teams and meaningful work lives. For this reason mentoring programs benefit not only the individuals involved but also the organizations these individuals operate in.

There are many types of valuable mentoring relationships such as situational, supervisory and informal coaching. However, the most successful mentoring relationships are arranged through a formal



mentoring program offered through organizations that have a stake in the protégé's personal and professional growth.

**EMPOWER**  
your clients to make  
meaningful career choices



**Guiding Circles**  
*an Aboriginal guide to finding career paths*

[www.guidingcircles.com](http://www.guidingcircles.com)

To be a mentor you need to have time to invest and a desire to help others. Mentors also need experience, organizational wisdom and their own career development plan. A mentor is expected to share organizational insight, act as a sounding board, provide developmental feedback and assist the protégé in expanding their network. In exchange for sharing and passing on their successes, mentors gain recognition, admiration and get opportunities to expand their own career prospects by practicing interpersonal and managerial skills.

A protégé must be willing to learn, accept feedback and devote time to identifying and clarifying their goals. If they do, they benefit by learning their strengths and gaining valuable insight into new opportunities that will open doors for them.

The key to successful mentoring begins with an initial discussion which should result in a mentoring agreement and plan. During the initial conversation both mentor and protégé should discuss expectations, scheduling, confidentiality and choose meeting locations and frequency. This is also a time to get to know each other and establish mutual trust and rapport.

**CONTINUED ON PAGE 4 >**



## Mentoring For Vocational Success CONTINUED FROM PAGE 3

Once the partnership has been initiated, the mentor will use listening, counseling, coaching, career advising and goal setting processes to help the protégé develop a career plan. The mentor will also help the protégé identify alternative options to learn about the career of choice, explore referral sources and build self-esteem.

During each meeting it is beneficial to discuss what is working and what needs to change. The mentor should also act as a facilitator by asking the protégé leading questions to engage an active review of career development plans and the need for continuing with the mentorship program.

When the time comes to conclude the mentoring partnership, both parties hold an equal responsibility to inform the other, provide feedback if necessary and express gratitude.

Whether you are an employer, educator, an AHRDA or LDM it would benefit your organization to provide mentoring opportunities as it increases Aboriginal training, recruitment and retention opportunities.

*If you have a mentorship program, you can promote it in the AHRDA Portal at [www.ahrdcc.com](http://www.ahrdcc.com).*

## Seven Steps To Developing, Implementing And Promoting A Mentoring Program

- 1** Determine the origin and the objectives of the program.
- 2** Find the resources for funding and supporting the program.
- 3** Develop the operational design and determine what channels will be used to distribute and promote the program.
- 4** Recruit volunteers, mentors and then protégés and match them according to career interests.
- 5** Launch pilot project.
- 6** Monitor activities, evaluate experiment and make necessary adjustments.
- 7** Develop your best-case practices and publish your success stories in this report!

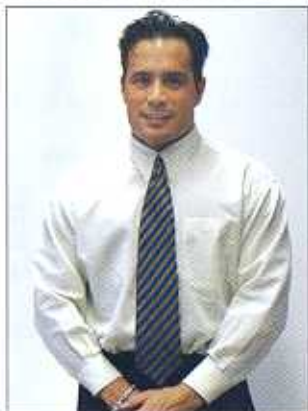
## Keith Henry: A Profile Of Aboriginal Success

*Chief Executive Officer, Métis Employment & Training of Saskatchewan Inc.*

To make this world a better place for our youth, we need to evoke a sense of community and to do that we need to be available, listen to people's needs, find ways to provide solutions and follow through to build upon results.

Keith Henry is doing exactly that. Currently, as the CEO of Métis Employment and Training of Saskatchewan Inc., Keith gets the chance to work within the community everyday, providing the same opportunities to youth and adults that helped him get to where he is now.

Perfectly satisfied within his career, Keith encourages youth to empower themselves through education. He says, "We will need educated leaders in the future who will have the knowledge and capabilities to continue to enforce real, positive changes within our communities."



A demonstrated leader and mentor within the Métis community, Keith contributes his successes to both education and the guides who have positively influenced him throughout his youth and adult career life. Keith was strongly influenced by his father who taught him to work hard and his grandfather who taught him what it takes to

be a leader and encouraged him to get an education so he could make changes within the system. Today, he looks to Al Rivard, the Minister of Métis Employment & Training of Saskatchewan Inc., for ongoing advice and wisdom.

Mr. Henry has gone full circle, from a place of training to a place where he provides training and is a shining example of the positive results that come from the training and employment opportunities offered to today's Aboriginal youth and adults.



## AHRDCC Partners With The Environment Sector

**A**bsoriginal employment opportunities in the environment sector are going to reach approximately 6000 positions in the next fifteen years.

BEAHR (Building Environmental Aboriginal Human Resources) is an undertaking of the AHRDCC in partnership with the Canadian Council for Human Resources in the Environment Industry (CCHREI). The long-term purpose of the initiative is to "positively influence the long-term employability of Aboriginal people in the environment sector".

As a partnership these two Sector Councils bring their expertise and mandates to the issues surrounding the need to address the upcoming workforce shortage in the environmental sector. CCHREI has a mission "to ensure an adequate supply of people with demonstrated skills and knowledge required to meet the environmental human resources needs of the public and private sectors". The AHRDCC mission compliments this partnership because of the long-term goal of the organization, "to enhance participation of Aboriginal people in Canadian labour markets".

An environmental practitioner can be defined as "Any person who performs work activities that contribute to the protection of the environment, the conservation of its natural resources (including the prevention, abatement and control of pollution), and environmental communications, research, and education". To that end there are three environmental sectors (environmental protection, conservation and preservation of natural resources; environmental education; communications and research) and 15 employment categories within these areas.

To gather input towards the BEAHR strategy, nine roundtable gatherings were held in 2002 in various locations across the country in Vancouver, Calgary, Moncton, Fort McMurray, Montreal, Toronto, Winnipeg,

Yellowknife and Iqaluit. In addition to this series, an Aboriginal Youth roundtable took place at the North American Indigenous Games in Winnipeg. As a result the BEAHR initiative identified four strategic goals to meet the target of training and supplying 6000 positions to the environmental sector. These are: education for future employment, resource materials, career awareness and career development. The complete report details the action plan to address each of these goals in detail.



One action item resulting from the pilot project is a newly formed national steering committee working towards the development and delivery of a career awareness multi-media package for Aboriginal youth. *Aboriginal Enviro-Careers* is planned to be available in Fall 2003. The kit may contain a CD-ROM, classroom activity booklet and teacher's guide, video and will also include access to a website. AHRDCC's Manager of Aboriginal Skills and Learning, Trina Maher, is working with the *Aboriginal Enviro-Careers* Steering Committee to ensure that the content will be reflective of the needs of the Aboriginal community.

For more information on this initiative, please contact our office or visit the BEAHR website at: [www.beahr.com](http://www.beahr.com).

---

Some of the BEAHR National Steering Committee include: Alan MacDonald, Barry Hochstein, Bill Auberle, Bill Hyslop, Clay Buchanan, Cynthia Waugh, David Tuccaro, Donna Kisoun, Doug Craig, Edgar Doull, Frank Palmater, Joe Linklater, Joseph O'Neill, Karen Decontie, Lorraine Rekmans, Maurice Evans, Nataly Longpre, Noreen McAteer, Paul Bercier, Shannon Campbell, Simon Brascoupe, Sophie Sliwa and Virgil Masayevsa.

---

**As a partnership these two Sector Councils bring their expertise and mandates to the issues surrounding the need to address the upcoming workforce shortage in the environmental sector.**



## The Role Of Elders In The Workplace

### CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1

*Aboriginal are very different today than what they were 25 years ago, or 50 years ago, or 400 years ago, we have to allow for those changes to occur, just the same as our ideas about what is English has changed."*

The role of Elders is becoming more valued in many non-traditional circles. For example, some organizations have adopted 'Elders into the workplace' to provide support and guidance to employees. In many cases, non-Aboriginal employees have taken the opportunity to seek support from these Elders. Many colleges and universities have 'Elders' as counselors and teachers. Corporate leaders are integrating our Elders' teachings and quotes into corporate messages. Elders have become engaged in program development, partnership creation and community alliances. They also bring a wonderful sense of humor. These are but a few examples of how Elders are a part of a strategy to increase workplace retention and provide employee support.

I have been fortunate to meet Elders across Canada and the Council has been fortunate to have many Elders such as Irene Lindsey from Ottawa, Lillian McGregor from Toronto, Noel Knockwood from Halifax and Henry Gardipy from Saskatoon, to name only a few.

Irene Lindsey is one of our grandmothers and her advice and guidance to the Council at the Ottawa meetings has been very much appreciated over the past two years. Irene reminds us *"that we need to be respectful of all peoples and show respect for all things...we need to focus on the people who really need us. These people are the ones who benefit from our work. We need balance and harmony in our work, our personal lives...when I'm asked to participate in a meeting and provide an opening prayer, I think about the organization and what they are trying to do. There is a cycle to everything and the day will have a beginning and an end, we start in the east until we go to sleep in the west. I refer to my medicine wheel teachings and share these with the people. The people have to live through the day and I try to concentrate on what their difficulties might be and I ask for guidance. Throughout the meeting people will often refer to the opening prayer and the messages and I feel good if I can help lead the people."*

Many modern day Elders travel with their cell phone, calendar and communicate via email and the moccasin telegraph. They bring many gifts to the new relationships and the partnerships emerging in Canada today.

**Kelly Lendsay with Elder Irene Lindsey** ▶

**"Some organizations have adopted Elders into the workplace to provide support and guidance to employees."**

Kelly Lendsay, President  
AHRDCC



## Promising Practice In The Spotlight: BladeRunners

**B**ladeRunners is the name given to participants of this initiative and provides Aboriginal youth with work experience and training in construction and related trades.

Each participant is entitled to 1120 hours of training over a 6.5 month time period. A three dollar subsidy is paid directly to an employer who must contribute a minimum of an additional eight dollars. The BladeRunner subsidy is intentionally modest to induce sincere employer participation.

In recognition of both the cyclical nature of the construction industry and the multiple barriers facing participants, BladeRunners have 18 months to expend the subsidy. Participants whose subsidy has expired are called "Senior BladeRunners" and continue to receive mentoring and support as needed. Senior BladeRunners, in turn, often act as mentors for new recruits.

The objectives of this program are:

- To identify and recruit into the BladeRunners program participants aged 19 - 28 who have multiple barriers to employment.
- To provide local, meaningful work experience for participants in construction and related trades, with training to enhance long-term employment prospects.
- To create ongoing support for participants to ensure long-term attachment to the workforce, and where possible, laddering individuals into apprenticeship positions in the trades.
- To maintain and strengthen existing partnerships with community organizations, employers and the building trade unions.

The BladeRunner program began with a 1994 Pilot, which offered employment for street-involved young people, aged 19 to 28. They were offered work on the construction of the GM Place arena in Vancouver and later the Ford Theatre and Collingwood Village projects. The program eventually expanded to nine sites around the province.

Until 2002, the program was funded and administered by the Province's Community Development Unit. Now the provincial initiative is managed by A.C.C.E.S.S. and the Vancouver project is co-funded and administered by A.C.C.E.S.S. Key stakeholders include community groups, employers, the building trade unions and different levels of government.

The total cost of the program per participant is \$10,000 including the training and in one year the *Return on Training* investment averages \$12,500 per participant. This does not include the multitude of other savings to the social infrastructure such as health, education and justice. In fact the Blade-

Runners initiative has demonstrated such a tremendous value to the community that private sector employers have also contributed to the program.

Each year 50 participants take the A.C.C.E.S.S. training and are given work placement in construction and related trades. After two years, 80 per cent of participants are still employed and 75 per cent of participants continue to work in construction with half of those entering into apprenticeships in the trades field.

For further information, see this Promising Practice on the Inclusion Network site or contact:

Tara Gilbert, CEO  
A.C.C.E.S.S.  
Phone: 604-685-7933  
E-mail: tara@buildingfuturestoday.com

---

**The BladeRunners program is the only Canadian initiative to ever receive the international award for excellence in youth employment programming (Promising and Effective Practices Network Award, National Youth Employment Coalition, Washington, DC).**

---



## The Survey Results Are In!

In a recent survey conducted by Insightrix Inc. on behalf of the AHRDCC and the AHRDA Forum Steering Committee, AHRDA and LDM managers have had the opportunity to express their thoughts and perceptions on a variety of management practices and challenges they are facing day-to-day.

With the AHRDA Renewal 2004 approaching, survey invitations were emailed to over 260 AHRDA/LDM managers and 159 or 61.1% (76.7% AHRDA, 55.4% LDM) responded.

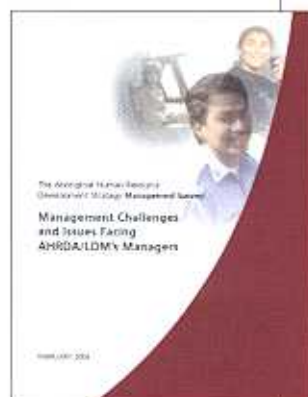
82% of respondents said 'national vision' for the AHRDA Human Resource Strategy should be a top priority and 86% believe it is important to create cooperative programming strategies among the AHRDA network. When asked "What would you like to see heading into the renewal?" one survey respondent indicated, "More national consistency in delivery."

Enhanced communications is another issue that seems to be at the forefront of AHRDA's focus for the future. As one respondent indicated when asked "What is a top issue that must be addressed by AHRDA's?", the answer was "Communication. With so many subdivisions and committees in today's workplace, it gets easy to miss out on available services and resources."

Promotion of the AHRD Strategy is needed. Over half (56%) of respondents believe Canadian employers do not understand the AHRD strategy, and only 18% believe that AHRDAs are recognized in Canadian workplaces. 88% agree they need more effective ways to reach employers.

**Survey results and raw aggregate data are available at [www.ahrdcc.ca](http://www.ahrdcc.ca).**

**Themes and trends are currently being analyzed and will be available soon.**



## Announcing The New AHRDA Portal

The AHRDA Portal is the most recent resource developed by the AHRDCC in support of AHRDAs and LDMS.

Through this portal you can gain access to employment and economic development resources including: templates, informative articles, best-case practices,



sample proposals and business plans. By filling out the simple form online, the user can take advantage of the electronic posting feature for orga-

nizational news, announcements and events to the national AHRDA community.

It is our objective to continue building the portal in partnership with AHRDAs and LDMS so together we can create a central location of resources in support of your client and project needs and developments. We would like to hear from you. Please send your requests for content and ideas for development to Trina Maher, Manager of Aboriginal Skills & Learning at [trina.maher@ahrdcc.com](mailto:trina.maher@ahrdcc.com).

To gain access to the AHRDA Portal go to [www.ahrdcc.com](http://www.ahrdcc.com).

### The Report On Aboriginal Inclusion

Brought to you by the

Aboriginal Human Resource Development Council of Canada  
820 – 606 Spadina Crescent East, Saskatoon Saskatchewan  
Canada S7K 3H1

Telephone: 1-866-711-5091

Email: [contact.us@ahrdcc.com](mailto:contact.us@ahrdcc.com) • Website: [www.ahrdcc.com](http://www.ahrdcc.com)

Submissions and letters to the editor are welcomed. Please send your comments and requests to:

**Managing Editor:** B. Ann Jones

Phone: (306) 956-5390 • Email: [bann.jones@ahrdcc.com](mailto:bann.jones@ahrdcc.com)

*The Council wishes to acknowledge the support of HRDC and our private sector sponsors.*