

Advancing the Aboriginal Non-Profit Workforce

Report for the 1st Indigenous HR Gathering



BC Association of
Aboriginal Friendship Centres

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Advancing the Aboriginal Non-Profit Workforce: Report for the 1st Indigenous HR Gathering

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Cover art provided by Jamin Zuroski, who is of Ukrainian and Namgis First Nation descent. Jamin's artistic talents shine through BC communities with his traditional and contemporary style. In this print Jamin explains:

This print represents the perseverance and sustenance involved when we work for our communities. The salmon represents perseverance and is about respect for tradition, intuition, inner voice, determination, and ability to follow your vision. The hummingbird represents sustenance and is the great nectar of Life, great beauty, love and harmony, the tireless song of joy.

Acknowledgements

The BC Association of Aboriginal Friendship Centres (BCAAFC) wishes to express gratitude for the exceptional leadership of Elders Bob Baker and Marge White, and BCAAFC president Grace Nielsen and executive committee.

The BCAAFC would also like to thank Dan George for facilitating the day; Kevin Albers, Barb Ward Burkitt, Harvey McLeod, and Yvonne Rigsby-Jones for sharing their stories on the panel; Vancouver Foundation CEO Faye Whiteman for her presentation; Mark Medgyesi for his overall support; and to the Aboriginal Youth Interns Alisha Boulette and Alana Sayers.

Many thanks to the generous gift of time and valuable knowledge shared by each of the Aboriginal non-profit leaders and other community members who attended from across BC.

The BCAAFC gratefully acknowledges the generous financial and in-kind support of the Non-profit Sector Labour Market Partnership Agreement and the GNPI, towards hosting the 1st Indigenous HR Gathering.

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Advancing the Aboriginal Non-profit Workforce

Report for the 1st Indigenous HR Gathering: Executive Summary

November 16th, 2010 marked the first official time Aboriginal non-profit (ANP) organizations gathered together as a sector to speak to HR issues and opportunities, and share a voice for an Aboriginal driven workforce strategy. The 1st Indigenous HR Gathering, entitled *Advancing the Aboriginal Non-profit Workforce* took place in Vancouver, BC and brought together over 45 Aboriginal non-profit sector leaders from housing, drug and alcohol treatment, health, employment and child and family services from across the province.

The 1st Indigenous HR Gathering was convened to address the gaps in HR and workforce resources for ANP organizations throughout BC: Although resources do exist for organizational development within the broad non-profit sector, there are no specific Aboriginal dedicated HR or workforce resources for the ANP sector. Aboriginal workforce initiatives that do exist are generally geared towards HR support for the larger labour market, especially within construction, forestry, trade, business, and accommodation and food service industries.

The GNPI's Aboriginal Engagement Committee approached the BCAAFC in July 2010 to take the lead in organizing an event that would start the process of building an Aboriginal workforce strategy for the ANP sector. The 1st Indigenous HR Gathering, *Advancing the Aboriginal Non-profit Workforce*, was held last November to launch a number of important steps towards ANP labour market development.

Generous support for the gathering came from the Labour Market Partnership for the Non-profit Sector, housed at the Vancouver Foundation, as well as in-kind support from the Government Non-profit Initiative (GNPI) and the BCAAFC. Participants at the gathering discussed issues and opportunities facing the workforce, as well as next steps towards building a strategy designed to strengthen and sustain a robust British Columbian ANP labour market. The first draft of an Indigenous HR Framework was developed to serve as a 'lens' to guide ongoing workforce and HR development.

Objectives of the 1st Indigenous HR Gathering included:

- 1. Explore strategic linkages and strengthen collaboration between ANP organizations*
- 2. Broaden understanding about workforce opportunities and challenges*
- 3. Plan and develop clear action steps towards HR and workforce development*
- 4. Enable an Indigenous approach to addressing ANP labour market issues and inform the broader non-profit sector that employs Aboriginal workers*

Participants identified a number of workforce and HR issues within the ANP sector including:

- The unique context of the Aboriginal workforce
- Poor wages and benefits in the sector
- Challenges to recruiting and retaining Aboriginal employees
- High rates of worker turnover
- Limitations to developing long-term HR strategies due to annual funding cycles
- The need for more Aboriginal driven ANP workforce research

A range of current and future workforce opportunities for ANP organizations and the broader ANP sector were discussed:

- Offering “creative” benefits to employees such as employee wellness planning
- Offering sector benefits such as portable pension plans
- Mentoring frameworks for organizations and the sector that account for youth engagement
- Strategic HR planning
- Embracing a spirit of collaboration and partnership
- Continue gathering together as a sector
- “Collaborative Workshare Sector Agreements”
- Shared services
- Sector recruitment strategy
- Sector “central information hub”

The 1st Indigenous HR Gathering served as the first of many important conversations that brought together a range of ANP sector representatives and leaders to discuss sustainable workforce opportunities and issues. The day concluded on a positive note with a commitment towards ongoing collaboration; to gather again in the future; to establish an Aboriginal Labour Market Partnership Agreement for the ANP sector, and; to continue to support an ongoing relationship between the ANP sector and the mainstream Non-profit sector.

November 16th, 2010 marked the first official time ANP organizations gathered together as a sector to speak to an Aboriginal driven workforce agenda. Participants expressed a great interest in gathering together again in the future to address collective workforce issues and opportunities for the ANP labour force.

Advancing the Aboriginal Non-profit Workforce

Report for the 1st Indigenous HR Gathering

The 1st Indigenous HR Gathering, entitled *Advancing the Aboriginal Non-profit Workforce* took place on November 16th, 2010, in Vancouver, BC. For the first time, over 45 leaders from Aboriginal non-profit agencies came together as a sector to lay important groundwork towards strengthening the Aboriginal non-profit (ANP) workforce.

The 1st Indigenous HR Gathering brought voices from across BC, representing leadership in the ANP sector from housing, employment, drug and alcohol treatment, health, and child and family organizations (for a full list of participants, please visit appendix 1). The day was dedicated towards identifying workforce issues and exploring human resource (HR) strategies that will strengthen and sustain a robust British Columbian ANP labour market. Generous support for the gathering came from the Labour Market Partnership for the Non-profit Sector, housed at the Vancouver Foundation, as well as in-kind support from the Government Non-profit Initiative (GNPI), and the BCAAFC.

The following document captures the conversations as they were heard on November 16th, 2010, through a summary of reported workforce and HR issues and opportunities, recommendations for future action, and a draft Indigenous Framework for workforce and HR development.

I. Background and Context

Aboriginal non-profit organizations began in the late 1950s when the *Coqualeeza Fellowship Club*, now known as the Vancouver Aboriginal Friendship Centre Society, was formed. With historical events such as the 1961 lift of the federal travel ban prohibiting Aboriginal people from leaving their reserves, and the closure of BC's last residential school in 1984, Aboriginal people began to establish non-profit agencies to augment or replace informal networks of support, many of which were traditionally supplied by families and community. Over the course of 60 years, approximately 480 Aboriginal services and organizations have been created throughout BC¹, many of which are non-profit societies. Compared to the non-Aboriginal workforce, it is estimated that a disproportionate number of Aboriginal people work within non-profit agencies, out of any other sector.

Aboriginal non-profit organizations depend on a strong Aboriginal workforce. Aboriginal people are a significant resource for BC's non-profit labour market: The community continues to heal from the intergenerational effects of residential school and colonization and is BC's fastest growing population group. Although broader non-profit resources do exist for organizational development², there are currently no specific Aboriginal dedicated HR resources for the ANP sector. Aboriginal workforce initiatives that do exist are generally geared towards HR support for the larger labour market, especially within construction, forestry, trade, business, and accommodation and food service industries.

*A healthy
Aboriginal
workforce relies
on Indigenous led
HR policies and
practices that are
relevant to
Aboriginal
cultures and
communities.*

¹ Source: Aboriginal Organizations and Services 2009/10, Government of BC

² Please see the Centre for Sustainability's "Technical Assistance Program for Aboriginal Not-for-Profits" created to support capacity building efforts in BC ANP agencies

II. The Indigenous HR Gathering

Based on the gaps in workforce and HR resources for Aboriginal non-profits, the GNPI's Aboriginal Engagement Committee approached the BCAAFC in July 2010 to take the lead in organizing an event that would start the process of building an Aboriginal workforce strategy for the ANP sector. The 1st Indigenous HR Gathering, *Advancing the Aboriginal Non-profit Workforce*, was held last November to launch a number of important steps towards ANP labour market development through:

- Exploring strategic linkages and strengthening collaborations between organizations within the ANP sector, for the purpose of building and strengthening Aboriginal HR policy and practice.
- Broadening understanding about opportunities and challenges within the ANP workforce.
- Planning and developing clear action steps towards ANP HR and workforce development.
- Enabling an Indigenous-led approach to addressing the significant labour market issues for the ANP sector, and informing the broader non-profit sector that employs Aboriginal workers.

III. Proceedings: November 16th, 2010

Morning

The 1st Indigenous HR Gathering was opened by Elder Bob Baker of the Squamish Nation, who welcomed the gathering to his territory and commenced the day with a prayer. Dan George of Four Directions Management was introduced as the facilitator, followed by a brief presentation by Paul Lacerte and Amy Woodruffe, designed to give context for the discussions and familiarize the participants with previous ANP related activities, including:

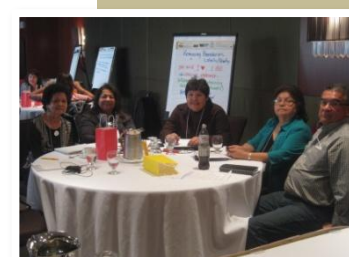
The role of the GNPI in supporting the movement towards strengthening the ANP labour market. The GNPI is an entity designed to improve the collaborative working relationship between government and the non-profit sector. The GNPI's Aboriginal Engagement committee (AEC) is intended as a broad and representative range of Aboriginal non-profit partners to address areas such succession planning and policy issues in the ANP sector.

Labour market research previously conducted with mainstream non-profit social service sector. In the last few years, extensive research on workforce and HR issues for the mainstream non-profit social service sector has been conducted by organizations including the Federation of Community Social Services of BC. Findings indicated that workers in this sector earn lower than average wages and benefits despite requirements for post-secondary education; there are high turnover rates amongst frontline employees; working conditions can be complex and challenging; and the workforce is 70% female. Employees often stay in the sector because of a commitment to their communities and desire to make a difference.

Objectives of the gathering were to strengthen relationships within the sector, broaden awareness about workforce challenges and opportunities, and build an Indigenous HR action plan.

A panel presentation concluded the morning session and provided an extremely rich conversation on HR issues and opportunities within Aboriginal housing, child and family, employment, and drug and alcohol treatment organizations. Kevin Albers, Barb Ward Burkitt, Harvey McLeod, and Yvonne Rigsby-Jones discussed workforce issues and opportunities in Victoria, Prince George, Mission, and Nanaimo respectively, including:

- **Limited financial resources to support HR development.** Grants and other funding sources for programs do not often support HR related activities.
- **Little or no pension benefits.** Many or most ANP organizations are unable to offer any pension plan to their employees.
- **Losing staff to other organizations that offer better wages and benefits.** It was widely noted that there is a lack of wage equity in the overall social service sector, as government agencies can offer better wages and benefits to employees doing the same or similar work in the ANP sector.
- **Good HR planning means strategic HR planning.** Pairing HR policy and practice with the organization's strategic plan increases the success of an organization in reaching its goals, and can inform long-term workforce needs.
- **Good HR practice demands creativity.** In a non-profit environment, wage compensation may not be competitive, but other HR practices may be able to compensate for the low wages such as job flexibility and workplace wellness strategies.
- **Sustainable HR practice is strengthened through partnerships.** Partnering with other ANP organizations around HR support can mitigate some of the funding limitations faced by many ANP agencies.
- **A Long-term multi-year funding agreement in one Aboriginal non-profit organization** has enabled the development of a long-term vision for organizational HR planning, such as a mentorship framework and succession plan.



Afternoon

The afternoon began with a presentation by Faye Whiteman, CEO of Vancouver Foundation, who discussed the GNPI and current and future efforts towards developing and improving relationships between the non-profit sector, the ANP sector, and government. Whiteman stressed the importance of an ongoing dialogue between all systems as a necessary component to sustainable development. While encouraging increased Aboriginal involvement within GNPI activities, Whiteman acknowledged that there is still learning to be done with regards to cultural protocol and ways of inviting Aboriginal participation and engagement in non-profit workforce planning and development.

The remainder of the day was centred on enriching small and large group dialogues that identified the core elements of an Indigenous HR framework designed to guide Aboriginal HR and workforce development for the ANP sector (please visit Appendix 2 for



framework). Participants also discussed workforce issues, opportunities, and actions for the ANP sector workforce. (Please see sections IV and V for a summary of these discussions.)

The 1st Indigenous HR Gathering served as the first of many important conversations that brought together a range of ANP sector representatives and leaders to discuss sustainable workforce opportunities and issues. The day concluded on a positive note with a commitment towards ongoing collaboration, and to gather again in the future to review the Indigenous HR framework and implement an ANP workforce strategy plan. Elder Marge White, pioneer of one of the longest running Aboriginal non-profit movements in BC, closed the gathering with a prayer.

IV. ANP Workforce Issues

In conversations on HR and labour force development, a number of issues were raised with regards to challenges to strengthening the Aboriginal workforce across the ANP sector. Overall, there was consensus that consideration must be given towards the unique context of the ANP sector and the ways in which history, culture, and economic conditions impact Aboriginal HR and workforce development. Issues included:

Poor wages and benefits. Overall, wages and benefits in the ANP sector are low. As a result, Aboriginal employees with post-secondary education that are trained in non-profit organizations are often lured by government agencies or other organizations that can offer more competitive wages and benefits (this has been referred to by some as the practice of “poaching employees”). Although this can be an opportunity for agencies to maintain competitive HR practices, it has also resulted in program closures for vulnerable clients as many ANP organizations are unable to fill job vacancies and maintain service contracts. Most ANP organizations are not unionized, and are unable to offer a pension plan to their employees. This is a significant issue for ANP employees because of disproportionate levels of poverty within Aboriginal communities.

Worker recruitment. Agencies outside the lower mainland and South Vancouver Island reported that they experienced difficulty in recruiting qualified Aboriginal applicants for skilled frontline positions that require post-secondary education. Many ANP organizations across all regions have experienced difficulty in recruiting for specialized positions such as Aboriginal finance and tech, as these jobs often command higher wages in other sectors.

Worker retention. The ANP work environment is commonly characterized by heavy workloads, mounting paperwork, and an increasing trend to “do more with less” as demand for services increase without additional funding resources. This has created stressful work environments for staff that need to maintain a high degree of flexibility and be able to manage change. As

Any workforce and HR development requires thorough consideration towards the unique context of the ANP sector such as culture, colonial history, the impact of residential schools, and economic conditions that have placed ANP agencies on unequal footing with their non-Aboriginal counterparts.

funding cycles are often annual, staff are laid off and rehired on an intermittent basis, thus limiting long-term organizational HR planning.

High worker turnover. It was reported that there is a very high turnover rate amongst Aboriginal employees in the ANP sector, especially in frontline positions. Research is needed to better understand this issue and why it is occurring.

Limitations to developing long-term HR strategies. ANP organizations usually operate on annually funded contracts without access to long-term stable funding. This has prevented agencies from engaging in calculated and strategic expansion and growth strategies in defined areas such as HR development. Grants and other funding sources for programs do not usually support HR related activities, making it difficult for an organization to offer comprehensive HR planning, benefits, or succession planning amongst their employees. Many ANP organizations desire to shift their HR tools and policies to reflect best practice, but lack the funding to support policy development and change.

Lack of operational funding. ANP organizations are challenged by the growing reality of having to deliver services with limited or reduced funding, coupled with an increase in operational costs due to inflation (rent, electricity etc). In addition, ANP organizations have historically been denied opportunities to apply for government funding and so have not had the same opportunities to develop the talent required to remain abreast of current funding sources and procurement practices (such as BC Bid).

V. ANP Workforce Opportunities

Many opportunities were identified as key factors to strengthening employees within individual organizations, as well as bolstering the overall ANP sector workforce. When considering workforce and HR development opportunities, a spirit of collaboration and partnership was felt as a way to strengthen any labour market activities and initiatives. Opportunities were noted as:

Offering creative benefits. Despite low sector wages, many organizations have found other ways to compensate staff such as flexible work arrangements and wellness planning (for example, supporting an employee's personal healing journey through offering paid leave while an employee attends drug and alcohol treatment). Some agencies noted that they are committed to offering professional growth opportunities such as space for lateral and vertical succession, and annual performance evaluations.

Mentoring Frameworks. Investing in the professional growth and development of employees is enhanced when mentoring frameworks are available. For example, offering a chance for staff to identify key career or job goals, and be matched with opportunities for both vertical

As a sector, there are gaps in understanding about common workforce trends across ANP organizations. More research is needed to build knowledge of issues and areas of opportunities for ANP workforce development.

Promoting a spirit of collaboration across the sector will lead to more partnerships - creating opportunities to share or leverage existing best HR practices; build a more unified ANP "sector voice"; and increase funding opportunities.

and lateral movement within an organization. Mentoring frameworks could also involve offering employees the opportunity to meet with Elders, community members, peers, supervisors, or staff from other organizations for mentorship. Mentorships enable mutual knowledge exchange and are a tool especially useful for engaging Aboriginal youth.

Wellness planning. The long history of colonization and the legacy of residential school make wellness a priority in any HR planning. Wellness planning involves considering employee wellness at an individual and organizational level, and can span anywhere from 2 to 7 or more years.

Strategic HR planning. Planning for HR and workforce needs of an organization will lead to increased operational sustainability. For example, HR planning can inform the grant application process and positively impact operational funding, sustaining the work of the organization into the future.

*"We are here not only
to help heal our
communities but also
to heal ourselves as
employees"
(participant voice)*

"Collaborative Workshare Sector Agreements". Employers may risk losing their employees to organizations who can offer higher wages and benefits for similar work (thus risking gaps in service delivery to the community). To mitigate this risk, the sector has an opportunity to develop an intentional process to address the issues associated with one agency "training up" an employee only to lose them to another ANP agency. A "Collaborative Workshare Sector Agreement" could help to alleviate the movement of talent and skill from one organization into the next through arranging shared resources and knowledge in exchange for sharing employees.

Offering "ANP Sector Benefits". As most ANP organizations are limited in the types of benefits they can provide, there is an opportunity to consider the ways in which the sector can work together to offer 'sector benefits' such as a portable pension plan that employees can access regardless of which organization they work for within the sector, or educational opportunities for any employee who works in the sector.

Sector recruitment strategy. The sector may be able to implement a strategy that works to recruit more young Aboriginal workers for ANP organizations, through initiatives such as sector branding and youth engagement. Additionally, the sector can create workforce evaluation tools that assist agencies in recruiting and retaining employees based on competencies that have developed from "lived experience" in addition to formal training and work experience.

Sector "Central Information Hub". Establishing an online "sector hub" such as a website, with social networking options, resources for workforce development, sharing best HR practices and other policies, and a roster of Aboriginal community experts or consultants will help to bolster workforce development.

Shared services. The sector has an opportunity to coordinate and plan shared services amongst ANP organizations within specific regions or across the province, such as shared policies and

practices, financial literacy tools, HR tools and templates, as well as sharing general issues and solutions.

VI. Recommendations for Next Steps for the ANP Workforce

A series of recommendations for next steps emerged out of the 1st Indigenous HR Gathering, including:

1. **Gather together again in the future.** A future gathering will allow the ANP sector to adjust and/or approve the Indigenous HR framework, establish an advisory or group to guide the process of hosting future gatherings and identify key sector HR and workforce activities for short and long-term labour market adjustments, and foster strategic linkages with First Nations and other community partners.
2. **Establish an Aboriginal Non-profit Sector Labour Market Partnership Agreement (LMP).** Targeted funding for ANP labour market development will help to build and strengthen HR capacity within the ANP sector and play a key role in maintaining quality non-profit service delivery for BC's fastest growing population group.
3. **Continue to support an ongoing relationship between the ANP sector and the mainstream Non-profit sector.** Ongoing relationship building will enable opportunities to inform the mainstream non-profit sector on key activities that will support Aboriginal employees across the broad non-profit workforce, as well as consider ways of strengthening and sharing resources between sectors in a culturally safe way.

November 16th, 2010 marked the first official time ANP organizations gathered together as a sector to speak to an Aboriginal driven workforce agenda. Participants expressed a great interest in gathering together again in the future to address collective workforce issues and opportunities for the ANP labour force.

Appendix 1 – List of Indigenous HR Participants

First Name	Last Name	Title	Organization
Kevin	Albers	CEO	M'akola Group of Societies
Willie	Alphonse	Executive Director	Nenqayni Wellness Centre Society
Bob	Anderson	Manager	North Vancouver Island Aboriginal Training Society
Rebecca	Ataya	Director, Member Engagement	The Federation of Community Social Services of BC
Bob	Baker	Elder	
Neil	Belanger	Executive Director	B.C. Aboriginal Network on Disability Society
Tammy	Belcourt	Executive Assistant	Central Interior Native Health Society
Alishia	Boulette	Aboriginal Intern	Ministry of Social Development
Gwen	Budskin	Director of Youth & Community Services	Prince George Native Friendship Centre
John	Clarkson	Aboriginal Consultant	HRSDC
Heather	Dickson	Special Advisor, LMP	Ministry of Regional Economic and Skills Development & Labour Market Development
George	Girouard	Executive Director	Conayt Friendship Society
Jan	Gottfred	Director	Ministry of Aboriginal Relations & Reconciliation
Barb	Grantham	GNPI Team Lead (Non Profit Sector)	Vancouver Foundation
Darlene	Hockman	Executive Assistant	Wilp Si'Satxw House of Purification
Karin	Hunt	Executive Director	Prince George Nechako Aboriginal Employment & Training Association
Denise	Lacerte	Program Manager	Spirit of Our Children
Paul	Lacerte	Executive Director	BC Association of Aboriginal Friendship Centres
Andrew	Leach	CEO	Aboriginal Housing Management Association Board of Directors
Lynette	Lucas	Education Manager	Nuu-chah-nulth Tribal Council
Carl	Mashon	Board Member	M'akola Group of Societies
Martha	Matthew	Director, CIPABRD	Shuswap Nation Tribal Council
Harvey	McLeod	Executive Director	Interior Salish Employment & Training Society
Mark	Medgyesi	Non-Profit and Voluntary Secretariat	Ministry of Social Development
Annette	Morgan	Executive Director	Dze L K'ant Friendship Centre Society
Ellen	Newman	Policy Analyst	BC Association of Aboriginal Friendship Centres
Pavan	Pahal	Primary Health Care Coordinator	Central Interior Native Health Society
Bruce	Parisian	Executive Director	Victoria Native Friendship Centre
Marlene	Rice	Executive Director	Coast Salish Aboriginal Employment and Training Society
Ron	Rice	Gaming Grant Support Officer	BC Association of Aboriginal Friendship Centres
Yvonne	Rigsby-Jones	Executive Director	Tsow Tun Le Lum Society
Sheldon	Robinson	Programs & Services Coordinator	Nisga'a Ts'amiks Vancouver Society
Colin	Sanderson	Apprenticeship Coordinator	Métis Skills and Employment Centre
Alana	Sayers	Aboriginal Intern	Ministry of Social Development
Tony	Schachtel	Program Development Technician	Tillicum Lelum Aboriginal Friendship Centre

Kathleen	Speakman	Executive Director	Centre for Sustainability
Cyndi	Stevens	Executive Director	Port Alberni Friendship Centre
Farley	Stewart	Executive Director	Prince Rupert Friendship House
Edna	Terbasket	Executive Director	Ki-Low-NA Friendship Society
Rhonda	Terbasket	Employment Counsellor	Ooknakane Friendship Centre
Barb	Ward-Burkitt	Executive Director	Prince George Native Friendship Centre
John	Webster	CEO and President	ACCESS
Sierra	Wells	FGC--Coordinator	Laichwiltach Family Life Society
Marge	White	Elder	
Faye	Wightman	CEO	Vancouver Foundation
Amy	Woodruffe	Project Manager	BC Association of Aboriginal Friendship Centres

Appendix 2 – Draft Indigenous HR Framework

Ongoing workforce and HR development in the ANP sector is guided by an Indigenous HR framework established by the ANP community. This framework is a living tool and is in its early stages based on findings from the “1st Indigenous HR Gathering” held in November 2010. The framework will be presented back to ANP sector representatives in the spring of 2011 for further discussion and additional iterations. The framework serves as a ‘lens’ to guide ongoing workforce and HR development, as well serve as an anchor for all future ANP workforce and HR initiatives. The framework is currently represented as a spiral, in order to depict the many elements of our lens as we move forward:

Family and community. Our families and our communities are embedded in every aspect of HR development for the ANP sector. Considerations are made towards the ways our workforce is influenced by our families and communities, as and well as how the ANP workforce impacts our families’ communities.

Culture and History. As Aboriginal people, culture is the anchor that binds us to our communities and proud history. Our culture underpins all workforce and HR development initiatives. We also acknowledge the impact that the legacy of residential school and colonization has had on our people and ANP workforce.

Elders are our keepers of traditional knowledge. Our Elders guide us as we move forward towards strengthening the Aboriginal workforce in the ANP sector. Elders are consulted with, and participate in every part of the process as we develop a workforce strategy for the ANP sector.

Allies. Our allies are those individuals and groups that we may be able to collaborate with and learn from, such as First Nations or Aboriginal HR organizations that target the general workforce, or mainstream non-profit organizations that have developed relevant HR tools.

Values and principles. Respect, trust, love, wisdom, integrity, honesty, transparency, courage, and humility, are what drives our principles of collaboration, support for one another, lifelong learning, and of course, keeping a sense of humour.

Collaboration. A spirit of collaboration is at the heart of all ANP workforce development, as the ANP sector is committed to working together towards the common goal of a strong, adaptive, and healthy workforce.

