

# **Developing a Sustainability Indicators System to Measure the Well-being of Winnipeg's First Nations Community**

**Framework Development and the Community Engagement Process (Preliminary Report)**

July 2008

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Prepared for the Assembly of  
Manitoba Chiefs

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*Developing an Indicator System to Measure the Well-being of Winnipeg's First Nations Community: Framework Development and the Community Engagement Process (Preliminary Report)*

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This work is a product of a joint project between IISD and the Assembly of Manitoba Chiefs to develop culturally specific sustainability indicators to help understand the current state of the urban First Nations community, what course the community is on, and how far the community is from where they want to be. The initiative involved working collaboratively with the AMC and community members to build lasting capacity at the local level to set up maintain and use indicators to improve decision-making. The ultimate goal is to make a positive impact on human well-being, economic development and environmental sustainability. The views expressed remain those of IISD and do not necessarily reflect those of the funder, nor should they be attributed to them.

## **Executive Summary**

First Nations people have been counted and studied since the time of early contact. The data that have been collected have largely been used to tell stories about First Nations people, not tell First Nations stories. Developing an indicator system for Winnipeg's First Nations community is an opportunity for the First Nations people of this city to tell their story.

Over the past year, the International Institute for Sustainable Development (IISD) has been working on a joint project with the Assembly of Manitoba Chiefs (AMC) to measure the well-being of Winnipeg First Nations community. Measures were sought to illuminate the current state of the urban First Nations community, what course the community is on, and how far the community is from its common-vision of the future. With this knowledge comes the power to effect positive change, celebrate success, and reconnect and empower the community.

The project was designed with a bottom-up approach that directly engaged the grassroots community to accurately frame, identify and measure the well-being of the community through a series of semi-structured forums. In these forums, First Nations people and their service sector providers were directly engaged to help us understand the issues and concerns of the community.

One of the most powerful aspects of this process has been the ability to bring individuals with different stories and experiences together and unite them on common issues and concerns. The open dialogue and sharing has created an enriching process for all that are a part of the work. The next step envisioned in this project is to unite the community in the development of a vision for the future. With the vision and baseline indicators, the community will have the tools to set goals, monitor progress and effect positive change.

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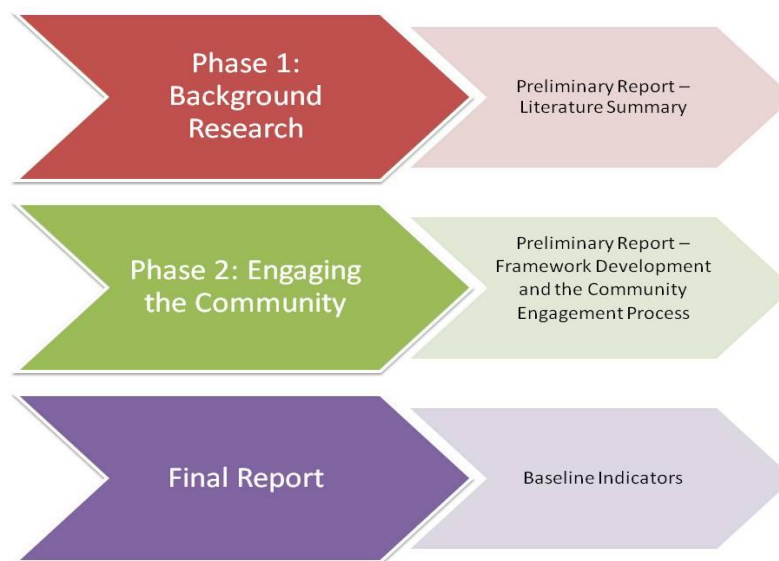
## Project Background

The International Institute for Sustainable Development (IISD) and the Assembly of Manitoba Chiefs (AMC) began designing a joint project to develop measures of well-being (sustainability indicator system) for Winnipeg's Urban First Nations community, early in 2006. The project initiated was based on a desire to understanding the current state (issues and concerns) of the Winnipeg First Nations population. The objectives of this initiative were:

- To build an improved understanding of the challenges facing Winnipeg's First Nations communities for both the First Nations and non-First Nation public and decision-makers;
- To help to identify critical problems and vulnerabilities and their underlying causes where policy action by First Nations and/or other actors is necessary;
- To help to identify the past successes of Winnipeg's First Nations community and factors that made success possible;
- To develop a set of goals, specific targets and building on past successes identify options for policies and actions that will help meet those goals through engagement and consultation;
- To build capacity of the AMC and in the First Nations community of Winnipeg to better diagnose problems and successes, and to develop confidence in envisioning, planning and implementing collective and individual action in the interest of achieving a positive future.

In order to accomplish these objectives, the project was divided into two phases both with individual outputs and a final report on the baseline indicators for Winnipeg's First Nations community (see Figure 1).

**Figure 1. Project Phases & Outputs**



Work on this joint project formally began in June 2007 with Phase 1: Background Research. The product of the first phase was a pre-publication document entitled: *Building Knowledge, Measuring Well-being: Developing Sustainability Indicators for Winnipeg's First Nations Community*.<sup>1</sup> The document is a review and summary of relevant literature and available data sources, which were used to help develop sustainability indicators for the urban First Nations community in Winnipeg. The contents of the document form an historical overview of First Nations people in Canada; summarize framework methodologies and data sources relevant to First Nations; describe the profile of the First Nations population; explore increasing urban migration; and examine the needs of the growing urban community and the services available.

In order to accomplish the goals of the project, it was necessary to do more than just a review of the literature—the community also needed to be engaged in a meaningful way. Phase 2: *Engaging on the Issues*, involved a series of community engagements, held in April, May and June 2008. The results of this process make up the contents of this preliminary report.

The final component of this project, which is anticipated to be delivered in the fall of 2008, will be a report on the baseline indicators. Once the final report is completed, the community will be invited to celebrate this project milestone and launch the final report at the Ralph Brown Community Centre.

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<sup>1</sup> [http://www.iisd.org/pdf/2007/building\\_knowledge.pdf](http://www.iisd.org/pdf/2007/building_knowledge.pdf)

## **Creating the Framework to Measure Well-being**

The development of indicators to measure the well-being of Winnipeg's First Nations community was proposed to help understand the current state of the urban community, what course it is on, and how far the community is from where it wants to be. Indicators were seen as positive way for to raise awareness of problems and issues; help in priority-setting, planning and resource allocation; evaluate performance of programs, projects or interventions; provide evidence to support concerns, claims or positions; and help influence policy and decision-making.

A framework is a simple way to show complex relationships. The framework developed for this project is based on the traditional Medicine Wheel. The Medicine Wheel was chosen because there was an identified need to look at the issues in a holistic manner, understanding that everything is connected and issues should not be dealt with in isolation. The Medicine Wheel was ideal as it is a simple model of complex social, cultural, economic and environmental relationships and behaviours that affect the well-being of a community. In addition, the Medicine Wheel has also been used in a number of other indicator initiatives, and it is easy for people to identify with and understand.

The selection of the Medicine Wheel as the basis of the framework for this project was based on research and discussions with the Assembly of Manitoba Chiefs. The selection was also validated by the community in the engagement sessions. The parts of the framework—Major Categories, Key Issues and Measures—were developed through a series of community engagements.

## **Engaging the Community**

The engagement component of this project involved Winnipeg's First Nations community and its service sector practitioners. These two groups were involved because it was felt the community is best understood by the people who live and work in the community. With each forum we were able to attract a mix of age groups, individuals from various parts of the city and even individuals from outside the city and province. The broad spectrum of participants at each forum helped us to gain a more complete understanding of the issues and concerns impacting the well-being of First Nations people in all areas of the city.

The forums were grass-roots focused and directly engaged the community in the process of identifying the key issues and concerns impacting well-being. The information collected at each of the forums is being used to inform the creation of baseline indicators that measure the well-being of Winnipeg's First Nations community. The indicator system is intended to be a mirror in which members of the First Nations community in Winnipeg can recognize themselves. It is reflective of the issues the community feels are central to its well-being.

Below is a brief summary of the purpose of each of the engagements which were held with the community. The notes that were taken during each of the meetings are provided in the Appendix of this report. Names of participants have been removed in support of the right for confidentiality.

### **Meet & Greet Information Session**

The Meet & Greet Information Session was held at the Ralph Brown Community Centre on April 9, 2008. The purpose of the Meet & Greet was to create an opportunity for the community to learn about the project, ask questions and provide us with its input and comments. The meeting proved to be a great opportunity to dispel myths about the project, get to know the community and service sector providers, and listen to advice the community had to offer.

There were a total of 27 registered participants at the Meet & Greet Information Session and more than half of those participants identified themselves as First Nations people (Meet & Greet Survey Results 2008).

### **Feast & Forum 1**

Feast & Forum 1 was held at the Ralph Brown Community Centre on April 30, 2008. The purpose of the meeting was to identify what issues and concerns impact the well-being of the community and what are the priority issues the community wants to measure. This forum proved to be an effective and powerful tool to engage the urban First Nations people and their service sector providers. The community felt comfortable talking about the issues that matter most to them and often did so by telling moving stories to provide more contexts to the important issues.



There were a total of 48 registered participants at Feast & Forum 1 and 35 of those participants identified themselves as First Nations people (Feast & Forum 1 Survey Results 2008).

## **Feast & Forum 2**

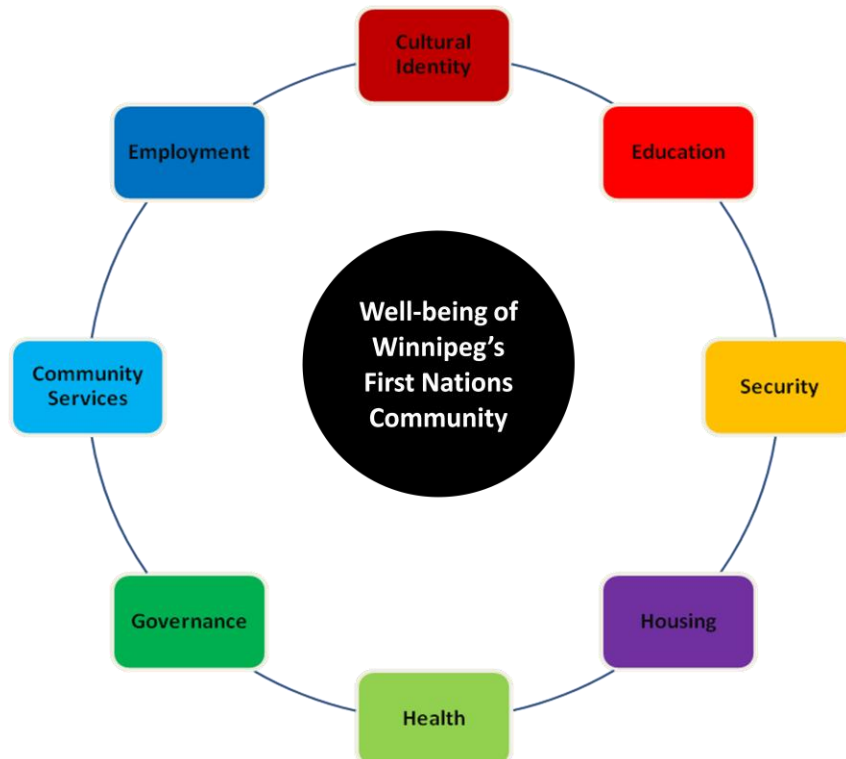
Feast & Forum 2 was held at the Ralph Brown Community Centre on June 4, 2008 from 5 to 8 P.M. The purpose of the meeting was to confirm the prioritization of the key issues and begin thinking about what the community needs to measure in order for to gauge whether there has been progress towards improving key issues.

There were a total of 24 registered participants at Feast & Forum 2 and 19 of those participants identified themselves as First Nation (Feast & Forum 2 Survey Results 2008).

## Issues Identified by the Community

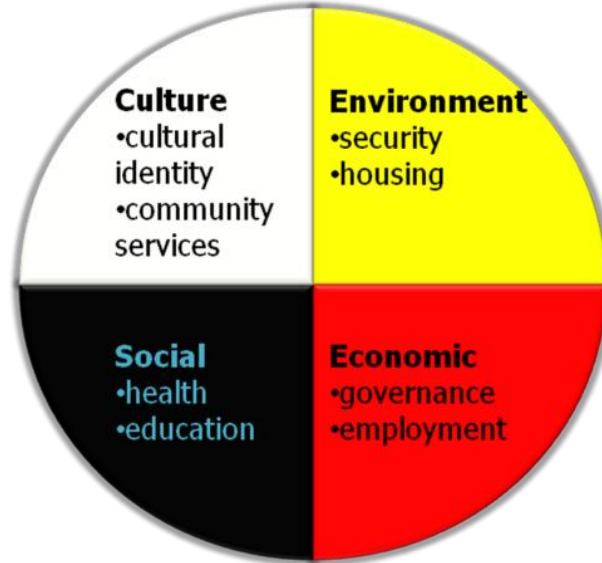
At the first Feast & Forum, Winnipeg's First Nations community and its service sector providers were asked to identify the issues that impact the well-being of First Nations people in the urban centre. Figure 1 illustrates the key issues that impact the well-being of Winnipeg's First Nations community as voiced by the community in group presentations and discussions.

**Figure 2. Key Issues Impacting the Well-being of Winnipeg's First Nations Community**



During the group presentations and discussions we also sorted the issues into the four domains of well-being (environment, economic, social and cultural) with the community. Sorting the issues was very challenging as many of the issues were interconnected and could fall under more than one domain of well-being. Figure 2 illustrates how we ended up sorting each of the key issues.

**Figure 3. Domains of Well-being and Issues Impacting Well-being**



Forum 1 elicited the identification of many issues that impact the well-being of the community. Since we prioritized and selected only the key issues, (figure 2) to ensure that the indicator system is manageable, many of the issues voiced by the community were left out. In order to give respect to the voice of the community, this report includes the complete list of issues identified by the groups that participated in the first Feast & Forum below.

Group 1

- Financial Situation
- Homelessness—access to adequate housing
- Discrimination/Racism
- Employment
- Addictions
- Working poor
- Security
- Gotten away from our “collective-ism” Go back to traditional ways
- Adequate health care
- Parenting skills/healthy parents = healthy families/children
- Elders need to be looked after in better ways
- Culture
- Education—Canadian history and impact on Aboriginal people
- Youth involvement
- Heal from residential schools legacy—survivors/ inter-generationally affected
- Mental health
- Awareness of residential schools among youth—all youth
- Helping one another—people transitioning to city from rural/reserves—learning what services are available—culture shock

- Funding process does not work—creates fighting and failure
- More funding for Aboriginal schools so children can learn traditional ways
- Helping Northern communities/reserves
- Pollution—need to recycle/take care of Mother Earth
- Safety—in cultural practices
- Look after sacred places—Whiteshell Provincial Park
- Create other sacred places like Thunderbird House
  - o More visibility/access to teachings and traditional ways
  - o More services not just in the North end
- Community watch—keep the neighbourhood safe
- Youth—teach them traditional culture
- Honouring the family—Balance work/home life
- Combat stereotypes through awareness/education
- Recreation—subsidize sports fees
  - o Where can we access bursaries for sports?
- Aboriginal community centre (racist people at centre family went to)
- Learning about the land—science and other subjects can be taught through cultural ways of hunting and gathering
- Coordination of services—alignment of programs to meet specific needs
- Cultural sensitivity training
  - o Mandatory for police, government employees, paramedics, doctors, nurses, etc
- Employment—help Aboriginal people find work
- First Nations governance

### Group 2

- Racism—combat stereotypes for everyone
- Security
- Collectivism
- Elders
- Command with story –media (Mass Graves of residential schools)
- Youth involvement—Mental health awareness
- Community watch for Aboriginal people
- Healthy lifestyle support
- Sport subsidies

### Group 3

- Having a home
- Having a job
- Empowerment
- Good schools
- Identity
- Good bingo spot
- Community support/involvement

- Helping the homeless people/protecting the homeless

#### Group 4

- Employment
- Cultural (assimilation)
  - o Transition bicultural
  - o Health
    - Diabetes, STD
- Education
- Housing
- Government services—INAC Education
  - o Lack of info on services
- Drug and alcohol issues
  - o Addictions and treatment accessibility
- Gangs, violence and crime
- Abuse—physical and sexual
- Incarceration
- Poverty
- Disability issues
  - o Poor reporting and categories
- Prostitution
- Government policies are lacking
  - o Need prevention programs
- Government programs not meeting objectives
- Sense of belonging
- Community involvement
  - o AMC being involved at grassroots

#### Group 5

- Education
- Leadership
- Community development
- Accountability
- Economic development
- Infrastructure (community centres)
- Health
- Housing
- Justice
- Natural resources
- Employment/unemployment
- Treatment centres
- Cultural activities/awareness
- Law and legislation that reflect Aboriginal values
- Long-term commitments to funding

- Sport and recreation
- Language

#### Group 6

- Infrastructure
- Housing—home ownership/subsidized rental
- Awareness of support systems
  - o i.e. transition, cultural support resources, organizations
- Safety
- Health
- Income/employment
- Education—western and indigenous
- Community
- Cultural/identity
- Leisure/physical activity/arts
- Treaty/inherent rights/urban reserves
- Relationships
  - o Community, organizations, First Nations, family, domestic
- Spirituality
  - o Church, experience, traditional, lifestyles
- Accountability
  - o Different levels of self, community, leadership
- Social services
  - o social assistance, child and family services
- Empowerment
  - o children, youth, adults, Elders

## **What the Community Wants to Measure**

The second Feast & Forum was an opportunity for the community to brainstorm what it is we need to measure to inform progress on the key issues. By engaging the community and service providers in the process of identifying measures, we can ensure that the information collected can serve more than one purpose and is identifiable within the community. When the community was asked to think about measures, they were also asked to think also about how the measure could be used. The results were a mix of measures that can serve to inform progress on priority key issues and assist the community in examining the effectiveness of community services, identifying where barriers might exist, helping to understand why barriers are present, providing background for funding applications, and pushing various community initiatives.

The measures identified by the community are listed below. Each proposed measure is sorted under the most relevant key issue. For clarity it must be noted that the major categories, key issues and measures are all intimately connected and we have sorted them only for the purposes of interpretation and explanation.

### **Environment**

#### **Security**

- Number of First Nations police officers
- Number of First Nations people in jail
- Number of crimes against First Nations people

#### **Housing**

- Number of First Nations people who own their own home
- Number of First Nations people who rent
- Number of First Nations people who live in low income housing
- Number of First Nations people who lack affordable housing/are homeless

### **Economic**

#### **Governance**

- Number of First Nations people eligible to vote
- Number of First Nations people who actually vote
- Number of programs teaching First Nations governance
- Number of First Nations students studying governance
- Number of First Nations people in leadership or governance roles

#### **Employment**

- Number of First Nations owned businesses
- Number of First Nations run businesses
- Length of employment
- Sectors of employment

- Number of First Nations people considered working poor

## **Social**

### **Health**

- Number of First Nations people receiving home care
- Number of First Nations people in personal care homes
- Number of First Nations people with a disability
- Number of First Nations people with chronic health conditions
- Number of First Nations children registered in recreational sport

### **Education**

- Number of First Nations teachers
- Number of First Nations children/youth registered in school at beginning of year and those successfully completing the year's studies
- Number of First Nations people attending post-secondary school
- Number of First Nations people graduating from post-secondary school

## **Culture**

### **Cultural Identity**

- Number of First Nations people speaking native languages
- Number of schools with First Nations curriculum
- Number of First Nations cultural events
- Number of First Nations people accessing/consuming traditional foods
- Number of First Nations Elders invited to teach traditional ways in schools

### **Community Services**

- Number of community service organizations serving First Nations people
- Number of First Nations people volunteering
- Distribution of services for First Nations in the city



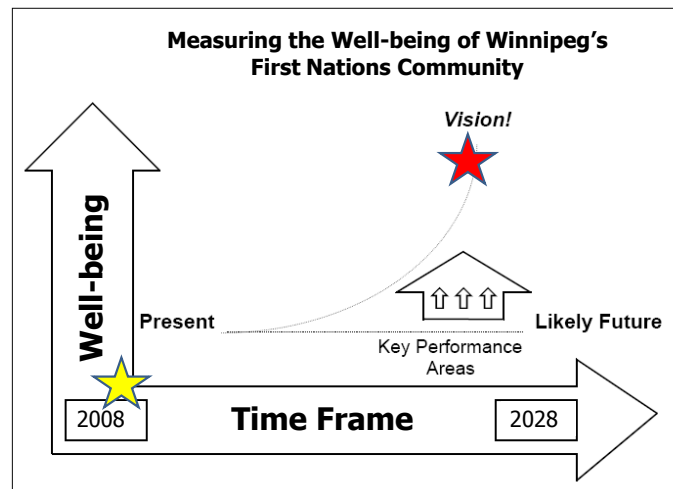
## Recommendations

The following recommendations are based on community inputs heard throughout the engagement process. Many recommendations arose during the engagement with the community, but the four listed below were the ones echoed by the majority of participants and were of most relevance to this project.

### 1. Continue on with the project

One of the comments we heard consistently throughout the engagement process, was the need to ensure that this project does not end up as another report that sits on the shelf. The momentum and dialogue has been built up and the community has voiced that they want to keep this process going. This report concludes the work required for the establishment of baseline indicators to measure the well-being of Winnipeg's First Nations community, but we should not be stopping there.

Figure 4. Measuring the Well-being of Winnipeg's First Nations Community



*Adapted from: The Community Visioning and Strategic Planning Handbook 2000<sup>12</sup>*

With the baseline in hand, it is now necessary to work with the community to develop a vision for the future, while building the necessary capacity to maintain, update and manage the indicator system. With the baseline indicators and the shared-vision the community will be able to set goals, monitor progress and affect positive change.

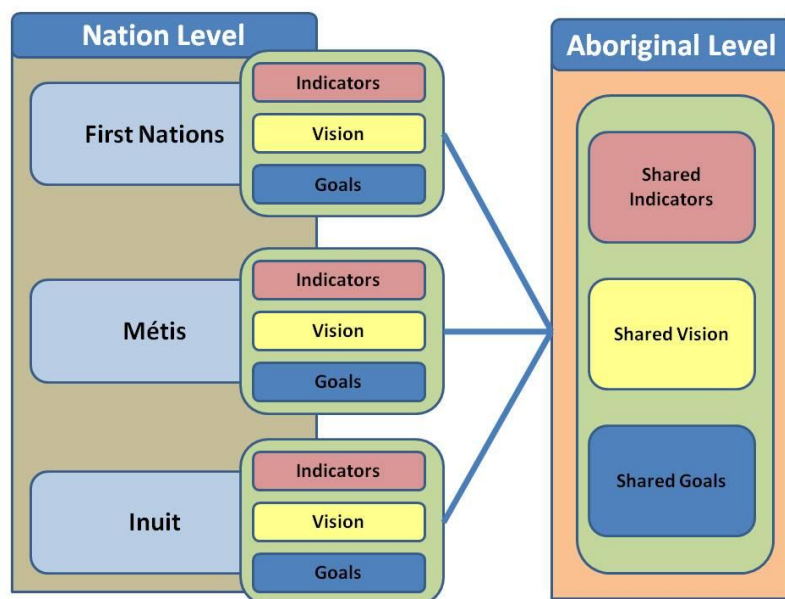
## 2. Explore opportunities to work together

A key concern that arose in the engagement process was unity among Nations. Many community members see the key issues impacting the urban First Nations community as ones that affect all urban Aboriginal peoples.

From the IISD's perspective, there are a couple of ways to further this work and make it more inclusive of the three Nations, while at the same time ensure the distinctions are made between First Nations, Métis and Inuit peoples. As a starting point, we need to look at unity in terms of working together and learning from each other's experience. If we do that, it is possible to see that we can utilize this project to help improve the collective well-being of the three distinct Nations. Once Winnipeg's First Nations community completes the process of developing their indicators, vision for the future and action plan; the methods, research and community experiences will be a valuable resource that can be shared with other communities wishing to undergo a similar process. Building capacity in one community, will in a sense serve to build capacity in another.

Building on community level capacity building, there is an opportunity to work collectively to develop visualization tools to enhance communications. The IISD has developed an interactive web-based indicator system that incorporates place-based distinctions, multiple languages, regional comparison features and multi-media reporting at both a regional and community level. By adapting this existing platform, IISD could work with the three Nations to develop a system with specific Nation level indicators and overarching Aboriginal level indicators.

**Figure 5. Platform to Measure Well-being**



### **3. Examine ways to coordinate communications & services**

Another comment that we heard from the community was the need to coordinate communications and services for First Nations people. Many community members highlighted the duplication of services and the fact that most organizations are not aware of what others are doing. It was suggested that there is a need for coordinated communications to keep the community informed on events, news, funding opportunities, employment, training, services, etc. Since not all community members have access to email or internet, creative solutions need to be explored to ensure communications are effective.

### **4. Engage the urban people**

A common theme that we heard from the community was the disconnection between the urban community and urban leadership. On reserve, members have the opportunity to engage with their Chief and Council a few times a year and talk about the issues and concerns facing the community. When First Nations people choose to reside in the urban environment they feel that they do not have the same opportunities to engage with the urban leadership. Participants raised this point because they felt that one of the key issues impacting their well-being was governance and they saw value in the forum process as a means to raise their issues and concerns.

## **Appendix 1: AMC/IISD Info Session Notes / Ralph Brown Community Centre / April 9, 2008**

Approx. 28 people attended—including IISD and AMC staff

Q: There's a lot of research going on re: First Nations health, but not well-being. Why is that?

A: Vancouver has a study re: well-being, but it's not First Nations-focused said Christa.

Q: Re: indicators, why not get other city community centre's involved to help spread the word about this study and the gathering of info and data...What can I do or what can others do in other parts of Winnipeg to provide data, facts and figures?

A: Yes, talk to us at IISD and AMC. We can guide you now with this project and in the future.

Q: Is it possible for you to make this presentation at the Aboriginal Seniors Resource Centre? I'm sure they'd be interested and willing to help spread the word.

A: Yes. Let's talk at the break.

Q: After your study's data/info is gathered, what then?

A: What we gather will be put together in Final Report featuring a series of recommendations made jointly by AMC/IISD and participants.

Q: A concern was voiced about using posters and using the local media, TV, (APTN/NCI) radio and the internet/e-mail communications outlets to help spread the word about this study.

Q: Is this study limited to urban setting only?

A: Only as a starting point. The idea is to start with the First Nations community here in Winnipeg and then make it available to all First nations communities connected to AMC in our province.

Q: A female rep from North Point Douglas Residents Committee indicated that her organization is gathering like-oriented data for its own database via direct contact and door-to-door canvassing. She indicated that it was difficult to get answers to questions on its surveys since apathy was high in the neighbourhoods her team visited. But she also indicated what feedback they did receive was worth their time and efforts.

A: Christa admitted that such efforts are a challenge and indicated that she'd talk to this person following the Q and A session to discuss creative solutions and/or exchange contact info.

Q: Several people from the audience (as well as Christa herself) voiced the opinion and agreed that issues such as access and transportation are very real challenges to lower income people in the area of Ralph Brown Community Centre.

A: Laszlo indicated that the Balaton Tool could be used in the course of the AMC/IISD study to track and measure the various factors such as environment, access, transport that affect the well-being of the First Nations community in Winnipeg.

Q: Why not put the survey questionnaire forms for gathering data and info on the IISD.org and AMC websites to effectively spread the word? A: Christa indicated she would look into that.

Q: A young boy named Chad (10 years approx) suggested posters for the study be displayed at all the schools in Winnipeg for the same reason. A: As above, Christa thought was a great idea.

After 7 P.M. (approx.) a related suggestion was made to develop a direct mail campaign throughout Winnipeg and Manitoba, perhaps targeted to First Nations people...though the issue of privacy via mailing lists arose as did the movement of First Nations people generally (too often, they move by the time the material is ready, FYI)

Also at this point, it was suggested by another audience member that a direct mail list could be created by accessing AMC band-by-band via the First Nations elections office and/or the First Nations Reserve Lists through the AMC. Again, the privacy issue arose as did a certain reluctance to participate (suspicion of what the real intent might be a la the use or sales of any mailing list by organizations etc)

Also the use of First Nations community newspapers band-by-band or via Colleen Simard's (FP columnist) newly-created area newspaper as well as The Drum and Grassroots as related distribution outlets was suggested in terms of taking out advertisements etc.

Overall impressions by IISD staff were that this was a very good, positive first step and all looked forward to the April 30 meeting also at Ralph Brown and meetings in May and June (dates/times TBA).

The Closing Prayer followed and the draw/presentation of the \$100 grocery gift certificate for completing the evening's survey questionnaire.

## **Appendix 2: AMC/IISD Feast & Forum 1 Notes / Ralph Brown Community Centre / April 30, 2008**

Approx. 70 people attended—including IISD and AMC staff

After a recap of the previous meeting on April 15, 2008; Christa asked people to provide examples of indicators relevant to the project

1. Aboriginal world view versus Western world view, in order to connect with or build a system of indicators for sustainability
2. Education/crime statistics/youth
  - three children going to public schools
  - number of children having problems is high (FAS, FAE)
  - children who would study
  - aboriginal community is in crisis
  - put in place a legislation to recognize the fetus as a living thing
  - it's time to take for aboriginal women to take the traditional position
  - risky for some aboriginal women to be in that environment
  - 65% of aboriginal students not graduating from high school
3. Home ownership versus renting a home
4. The fetus as a living thing or organism; the person here wants to get the federal government to pass legislation to recognize a fetus as such
5. The First Nations Medicine Wheel as an example of a community indicator, Christa said, within a cultural-specific or Aboriginal-specific framework/maps out the four aspects of well-being as in culture, environment, social and economic

A comment was made by a First Nations woman that First Nations, Aboriginal organizations are too fragmented; they need to be more united, demonstrate their unity within their respective communities and to the community at large

Further to that, the same person identified herself as living 47 years in Winnipeg (to support her view above) to which Christa agreed unity is important and that the First Nations community should celebrate its successes both within and beyond its jurisdiction

Group Activity #1—Which categories should be considered in the development of our project tool?

People in attendance then broke into groups of approx. 12 per table (five table groups in all), flip chart paper was distributed and discussions were followed by presentations as follows:

## Table 2 Indicator Categories and Issues

### Environment

- land use

### Economic

- employment
- poverty
- disabilities

### Cultural

- bi-cultural; a transition from cross-cultural
- a sense of belonging, a sense of community involvement
- involve more First Nations chiefs need to be more aware of issues faced by urban First Nations people

### Social

- health, disease, diabetes, addictions, alcohol and drugs
- education
- housing
- government services
- crime, prostitution
- gangs
- violence
- abuse, domestic, physical
- incarceration, prisons, jail

## Table 5 Indicator Categories and Issues

Economic, Environment, Social and Cultural overlapped very much in the eyes of this group; so that the following issues were seen as having a place under all the above

- leadership
- accountability
- community development
- infrastructure
- justice
- natural resources
- long-term commitment to funding
- sports and recreation
- language, traditions and customs

#### Table 4 Indicator Categories and Issues

-as presented by 12-year-old Chad (a very vocal and intelligent First Nations boy who was present at the previous meeting); his group likewise saw an overlap of issues related to indicators much as the above group saw them

- having a home
- having a job
- having empowerment
- having good schools
- having a cultural identity and pride in one's heritage
- having a good bingo spot
- helping and protecting the homeless

#### Table 3 Indicator Categories and Issues

Here, the overlapping and duplication of previous categories by other groups was noted and listed similarly

- housing
- safety and health
- income, employment and unemployment, economic development
- education; residential school survivors
- arts, leisure and cultural development
- treaty rights
- urban reserves
- relationships of family, friends, community/empowerment of all generations from children and adults to parents, grandparents and elders
- spirituality
- accountability
- social services
- technology

#### Table 1 Indicator Categories and Issues

- Finance and why funding often does not work/setting ourselves up for failure
- homelessness
- discrimination and racism, stereotypes (cultural and otherwise)
- security
- a need to return and respect the traditional First Nations ways
- health, both mental and physical
- parenting skills, elders looked after and cared for
- neglect, pollution, the need to combat both; improved recycling
- northern communities/residential schools/mass graves (no media reporting)
- safety
- sacred places preserved as well as creation of new sacred places
- more services available for First Nations with better coordination based on specific needs
- language, customs, traditions



- youth
- diabetes, health, disease
- recreation and sports
- transportation
- need for Aboriginal/First Nations community centres

A discussion of Priorities followed the above; specifically Who You Are, cultural identity

1. A teenage First Nations youth cited a sense of belonging and/or a sense of pride was important to have and to cultivate and cherish versus an environment of peer pressure to join gangs
2. A middle-aged First Nations man vocalized his desire to do his part, to help his Aboriginal community, specifically, youth and shared a story about a child he knew whose dream it was to become a police officer (emotional) and also congratulated the Feast & Forum as being an important gathering attended by very important First Nations people
3. Another First Nations middle-aged man told a story of a remote control and his grandmother's learning curve with it; with the conclusion being First Nations need to be educated so that technology is something it embraces, learns from and contributes ideas
4. A 32-year-old Winnipeg police officer agreed that housing is a serious issue; recounted his own childhood where he studied in a church basement at University of Winnipeg to get his high school diploma and said a prayer every day to ultimately study and become a police officer; which abruptly became a personal and emotional plea for this series of Feasts & Forums to "make something happen" (positive)
5. A First Nations woman cited her list of priorities as follows: youth, being Aboriginal as the Number One Industry in Manitoba due to health, jail/prison, education, crime/sex crimes. Her remarks became a reminder for an upcoming First Nations event/ a march. She also mentioned NDP MP Pat Martin's Federal bill to abolish Canada's 1-cent coin; which she wanted to amend into a motion to use the dollar-value of that total for all the pennies to, in turn, support the First Nations cause(s)
6. Another First Nations woman stressed the need for a united front for Aboriginal/First Nations peoples, the need to grow and learn together, to get stronger as a result and ultimately to accomplish great things through this unity while being positive for self-respect and winning the respect of others
7. Another First Nations woman wanted to know if these IISD/AMC Feast & Forum meetings would/could/should result in a true First Nations census—to which Christa responded in positive agreement that it would be ideal

Laszlo Pinter of IISD re-emphasized a point made by Christa earlier—“knowledge is power”—and that the Feast & Forum sessions are not only about economic/monetary/income or employment data/statistics. But rather real, tangible issues that affect people’s everyday lives and futures. He stressed the project will be useful and understandable by the members of the AMC, the First Nations communities.

Christa concluded the session with a promise to compile and sort through the findings of the various groups present tonight and to present her summary at the start of the next Feast & Forum.

After which, Christa then reminded everyone where/when the next meeting will take place (Wednesday, May 28, 2008 again at the Ralph Brown Community Centre).

The closing prayer followed and the draw/presentation of the \$100 grocery gift certificate for completing the evening’s survey questionnaire.

## **Appendix 3: AMC/IISD Feast & Forum 2 Notes / Ralph Brown Community Centre / June 4, 2008**

Approx. 18-25 people attended—including IISD and AMC staff / no AMC rep

MB Liberal leader Dr. Jon Gerard and his assistant were present/late arrivals and said a few words: re: his interest in the project, IISD in general and wished all concerned 'best of luck'

After a recap of the previous meeting on April 30, 2008; Christa asked people to break up into groups of approx. six members each, gave them flip-chart paper to discuss indicators of measurement relevant to them and the project as they saw it.

Overall, the main difference I witnessed was a blurring of Aboriginal and First Nations in the descriptions and discussions. In the previous meetings, the term 'First Nations' came into conversation far more frequently than during this meeting—where Aboriginal was used by itself or in the same breath as First Nations/one behind the other quickly or simultaneously.

Three groups in total—approx. 18 people altogether

Generally, each group's spokesperson outlined the concerns and issues they felt were most important; after approx 1 ½ hours of discussion.

Unfortunately, this time each respective group's spokesperson spoke extraordinarily fast and softly (perhaps out of nervousness) and was difficult to keep up with in terms of capturing every item they presented. Here's where the actual flip chart record group-by-group will fill in whatever blanks are apparent in the notes herein. (FYI)

Indicators/issues listed included Governance, Cultural Identity, Community Services, Employment, Security, Education, Health and Housing.

### **Group One / Table One**

-Asked the question: 'How do we effectively measure spirituality?'

-Also spoke generally of challenges to measure and track numbers of First Nations and Aboriginal people re: being 'too transient' in terms of their lifestyles/move around too much

-Asked the questions: 'How do we accurately define what leads First Nations/Aboriginal people to gang activity?', 'Why is there no First Nations' funeral homes in Winnipeg?' and when there appear to be such businesses 'Why are they not owned/operated by First Nations people'

### **Group Two / Table Two**

-Asked 'How do we keep Aboriginal/First nations employment programs working?'

-Here, the group's spokesperson basically asked for more of everything, citing neighbourhood watch, more First Nations/Aboriginal police, anti-crime programs, more homes and housing

- more programs to reduce gangs and gang activity, an increase of teaching Aboriginal/First Nations culture
- more examples continued in the same vein: hire more Aboriginal elders to work at schools and in the education system overall in both Winnipeg and Manitoba
- while others came across more as a Wish List such as reduce health concerns like diabetes, and/or increase the number of Aboriginal/First Nations post-secondary students and grads
- break down barriers for Aboriginal offenders; help and heal First Nations offenders
- create more opportunities for employment of First Nations convicted offenders
- develop a 'real' First Nations network (that works) for more access to sports and scholarships
- more liberty, unity and technology opportunities within Aboriginal communities were listed / requested

### **Group Three / Table Three**

- Much duplication of the two preceding groups' listings
- Interestingly, this group's spokesperson favoured/wanted/argued for more of a consolidated/homogenized approach to Aboriginal peoples versus Inuit, Métis and First Nations distinctions
- Which would have been grounds for further discussion, if the AMC rep were present for this portion of the discussion since the concept of the IISD/AMC project is specifically targeted to First Nations communities
- Such a position was contrary to the concept of individualized cultural identity—from this group
- Asked for more of many things (as did Table 2/Group 2) such as more access for Aboriginal peoples to the Internet throughout the city of Winnipeg
- The above could be used as a tool for Aboriginals new to Winnipeg to used to city life versus life on the reserve(s)
- Spokesperson also stressed the need for more Aboriginal special events in the rural areas and cited the National Aboriginal Day at the Forks celebration as a positive step in the right direction since it has spawned many more celebrations in the city and in the country
- Stressed *take care of your family first* re: security in Aboriginal communities
- Asked for more youth involvement and recognition
- Cited AIDS/HIV as the number one risk to Aboriginal/First Nations youth
- Stressed that more education is needed/independence sought after
- Questioned the length of terms of office for politicians
- Wanted to know how many Aboriginals ran for office in Winnipeg
- Complained of lack of First Nations representation or voice or presence in most elections
- Stressed that employment opportunities for Aboriginal people often resulted in no call backs
- Cited no First Nations hiring practices and even joked that 'if white employers don't want First Nations people as employees, they should have a sign that says 'Aboriginals Need Not Apply'
- It was pointed out that many employers including city, provincial and federal governments have a self declaration section to offset that situation
- Manitoba Hydro cited as an example of a positive step to hire more Manitoba Aboriginals across the board in various positions—especially management

### **Open Forum Discussion**

- One audience-member spoke of resume services that are available to Aboriginal communities in Winnipeg; and that more were needed to give more access to teenage Aboriginal girls
- Another member wanted to know why more Aboriginal youth were not involved in the yearly mock parliament session at the MB legislature
- Another member cited the Manitoba Theatre for Young People as a positive example for youth involvement programs that work and have been in place for years
- Another complained that access to such arts programs is limited in Winnipeg
- Another asked 'what's out there for Aboriginal governance? Why not more young people involved in that? If they do exist, where are these programs and why doesn't the First Nations community know about them? Communications gap?
- The mobility of the First Nations and Aboriginal populations throughout Manitoba was cited as an ongoing problem re: leaving the reserve(s) and also returning to the reserve(s) after unsuccessfully going to Winnipeg, not finding employment etc as well as accurate tracking of such movements over time
- This would, another member said, help determine how/where the First Nations community is going re: successes, strengths and weaknesses

Christa Rust then spoke of the overall intent of the IISD/AMC project as a means to achieve a vision of community that First Nations people want for themselves

She went to say that unity can achieve a long-term plan through concentrated dialogue

Christa went through the next steps of the process and stressed that IISD does not simply want to create and file a report of its findings, but rather develop a baseline that is tangible and that can be used to create a working, growing database for long-term use for and by the First Nations community in Winnipeg and beyond; to effectively multiply the success of these forum sessions into something that can be used and re-applied all over Manitoba by First Nations peoples

She also stressed the need and value of a true exchange of information and thanked the people present for their enthusiasm, energy and positive attitudes towards completion of the project

The Aboriginal Vision for the North End was cited by an audience member as example of what Aboriginal people can do to create a program that works for themselves and future generations

Nona Pelletier then added the Big Picture re: what IISD is all about world-wide to put into perspective where the AMC/IISD project fits within IISD's overall mandate (consistency)

She invited the people present to visit the IISD website to discover more about IISD

An older First Nations man then cited a study from southern Ontario that that predicted the birth of the last full-blooded First Nations person will take place in 2065; and then wondered how that would affect Manitoba and Winnipeg

Christa then spoke of plans to create/develop community indicator systems for Métis and Inuit communities throughout Manitoba as well as together with First Nations as Aboriginals

A male audience member feared that there would be no follow-up, no results from this study

Christa assured him that this would not be the case; and that indicator systems are 'never ending' and/or 'ongoing' by definition, with regular reports back to the community in question as 'par for the course'; to which a woman responded that meetings of this kind should have been held a long time ago and were much appreciated

Christa also concluded the meeting by saying there will be a follow-up meeting at the end of July, end of summer or perhaps early fall to report the results/findings and to celebrate same with drumming and possible media coverage