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MAPPING THE URBAN ABORIGINAL SERVICE DELIVERY TERRIN:  
THEMATIC ANALYSIS OF ORGANIZATIONAL STRUCTURE, PROGRAMS & SERVICES,  
KEY PARTNERSHIPS, PROSPECTS & CHALLENGES

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UAKN REGIONAL PROJECT: MANITOBA

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## 1. Introduction and Context

Urban Aboriginal people in Canada have a long tradition of relying on public-private and non-profit sector to meet their needs. Between 1960 to 1990, a number of organizations, particularly, Aboriginal establishments have emerged from the Friendship Centre movement to support Aboriginal population living in the urban areas across Canada. (NAFC, 2013). Education, employment, skill development, health and healing, justice and reconciliation, culture and language and sports and recreation are some of the areas where most Aboriginal organizations are delivering services alongside the government (Newhouse and Peters, 2003). In 1997, the government of Canada developed the Urban Aboriginal Strategy (UAS) to provide flexible funding and partnership with other levels of government, Aboriginal, non-government, community-based organizations, and the private sector to support initiatives that increase the economic participation of Aboriginal people living in urban centres (AADNC, 2014).

Despite, the intention to uplift urban Aboriginal people socio-economic condition and to uphold and promote indigenous culture, there have been many barriers and gaps in service delivery. Some of these challenges are of fascial nature and include limited, stagnant and short-term funding for Aboriginal organizations to operate administrative activities, pay staff salaries, acquire technical resource to develop and implement programs and services (UATF, 2007). Other gaps are due to more historical factors such as systemic colonial discrimination and prejudice against Aboriginal people and devaluing and negation of Aboriginal organizations credibility to provide cultural responsive services based on indigenous teachings and practices (ibid.).

The intention of this research report has been to understand the development of the urban Aboriginal service delivery infrastructure in Manitoba. This objective is achieved through interviewing selected urban Aboriginal organizations service provides in Manitoba through exploring their organizational mandate and goals; programs and services particularly which aim to improve economic participation of the people, funding resources and gaps in the service and facilitating factors and threats to organizational sustainability. Together with an analysis on multi-level, stakeholder engagement to improve service delivery; the best practices and challenges and the some of the emerging partnerships in the last decade. The report also

pointed out the ways to improve relationships between urban Aboriginal organizations, non-Aboriginal organizations, organizations and future areas where partnerships are needed.

**Aboriginal People Mobility and Migration:** According to 2011 Census data, 56% of the off-reserved Aboriginal population has lived in urban centres and constitute the fastest growing segment of Canadian society (AANC, 2014). Observations on the trends of urbanization patterns in Aboriginal population have suggested mass levels of mobility; between urban and rural; on-reserve and off-reserve and within urban areas (Norris and Clatworthy 2011; Norris and Clatworthy 2003; Norris, Cooke et al. 2004). Aboriginal migration trends by group and gender have also shown women, non-status First Nation and Metis people being overrepresented in urban areas (Norris, Cooke et al. 2004; Norris and Clatworthy 2003).

The most critical factor, which pulled a number of Aboriginal people, in particular women and the non-Status into the cities and off-reserves has been impacts of colonial policies (Patrick, 2014; Peters and Robillard 2009). Land dispossession, deterioration of traditional livelihood and subjugation of identities, right to marriage and divorce, together with inadequate and limited opportunities of education, unemployment and lack of better housing and health facilities have contributed in Aboriginal urbanization (Patrick, 2014; Peters and Robillard 2009; Yanes, 2007; Newhouse and Peters, 2003).

Exploring the consequences of colonial oppression and racism against Aboriginal people, it is not difficult to understand the challenges they continue to face living in cities. While, moving off reserve meant an escape from difficult and struggling socio-economic situations, loss of family connection and familiar cultural environment to raise their family created a sense of uprooting and displacement (Norris and Clatworthy 2011; Ruttan et al, 2010). Together with, lack of skill training, adequate finances to support and low-levels of education, large number of Aboriginal people found themselves poor, homeless and inadequate health as they continue to move from neighbourhood to neighbourhood; cities to cities in search of work (Distasio et al, 2011; Ruttan et al, 2010; Berman et al., 2009). As a result, high incidences of single-parents, substance abuse, and involvement with gang, prostitution, crime, violence and dependency on social assistance were observed in many Aboriginal communities (Culhane 2003).

**Urban Aboriginal Governance:** Aboriginal people have been part of the urban landscape and their numbers continue to increase over the years. As discussed above, they are faced with many challenges integrating into urban economies, interacting with diverse people from many origins, and finding appropriate services and opportunities (Senesa, 2011). Since the 1950s, the federal government has operated under the policy that their responsibility for Aboriginal peoples is largely restricted to status First Nations living on-reserve (Peters, 2006; Graham and Peters, 2001; Hanselmann, 2001;). The rights and services include exemption from federal and provincial tax on real and personal property; funding for housing, education (post-secondary and accessible to some living off-reserve); programs to assist with community economic development, health services and some youth services (Peters, 2006). Non-status FN, Metis and Inuit peoples do not have access to these rights, though some federal funding and services has been available for Inuit and Métis peoples (ibid.)

Jurisdictional dispute and limited role of federal government towards urban Aboriginal people has off-loaded much of the responsibilities on provincial and municipal departments together with non-profit, private, faith-based and Aboriginal organizations. Noteworthy, is the development of the Friendship Centre movement, which is a network of specialized Aboriginal organizations that emerged in 1960s to offer a broad array of services concerning counselling, employment and job training, cultural activities, youth and elders' programs, health care, education, housing, child protection and transitional adapting to the urban environment, among others (NAFC, 2014; Morse, 2010; UATF, 2007). According to UATF survey for 2011/2012, there are about 119 Friendship Centres delivering over 1,490 programs to approximately 700,000 urban Aboriginal people, regardless of the status or Band affiliation of Aboriginal people (UATF, 2007).

Initially, the funding for Aboriginal programs and services was raised through faith-based support; churches and other related small grants. However, from the mid-1970s, the government not only formally begin to recognize the viability of Friendship Centres role in Aboriginal service delivery but also provide financial support through various federal departments (NAFC, 2014). The growing financial and feasibility issues also led to the

incorporation of the National Association of Friendship Centres (NAFC) to monitor activities of Aboriginal Organizations (ibid.)

Alongside, the Friendship Centres, there have been a number of informal organizations and non-profit societies created by Aboriginal people in urban areas. These entities have deep roots in roots in the earlier period of Aboriginal migration and are out the efforts of the Friendship Centres movement to provide both spaces for Aboriginal cultures as well developed culturally appropriate ways of delivering services (Newhouse and Peters, 2003). The Association of Friendship Centre, various government departments, large charitable foundations, Church organizations and more recently the private sector is responsible to provide funding and project-based grants to these organizations, which are limited on both financial and technical resources (ibid.).

On a number of occasions, the provincial governments have also directed non-Aboriginal organizations including non-profit, charities, and faith-based organizations and agencies to fulfil the functions and responsibilities for the government. From local school divisions, churches and faith-based charities together with Regional Health Authorities, child and family welfare, justice, and human resources offer alternative services similar to government-operated institutions (Morse, 2010; Hanselmann, 2001; Newhouse and Petets, 2003). From the federal government side, there have been initiatives which have been directed at urban Aboriginal peoples. One of the major policy responses have been through the Migrating Native Peoples Program in the 1970s, which changed into the Aboriginal Friendship Centre Program since the 1980s (Hanselmann, 2001; Newhouse and Peters, 2003). Moreover, during this period, the Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation (CMHC) provided support in the 1980s for urban Aboriginal housing primarily through an off-reserve housing program, since discontinued. Employment and Immigration Canada, now Human Resources Development Canada, provided support for training and education of Aboriginal individuals residing in urban areas and seeking employment. Many First Nation communities provide support for members to attend urban colleges and universities (Hanselmann, 2001).

Another component in urban Aboriginal governance are the Aboriginal political organization. Most of these organizations have offices in the cities at the regional and provincial levels with

only few have the institutional capacity for economic planning and development, backed up with financial resources (Newhouse and Peters, 2003). Like the government, their role and responsibility for urban Aboriginal population is conflicting because there is rarely a unified urban Aboriginal political voices (Hanselmann 2001). For example, the Assembly of First Nations (AFN) claims to represent all First Nations people (including those living off-reserve), the Metis National Council speaks for all Metis people (including those living in urban centres), and the Inuit Kanatami asserts that it is the voice of the Inuit (regardless of residential location). Meanwhile, all at the same time that the Congress of Aboriginal Peoples claims to represent the interests of all off-reserve Aboriginal people alongside, the National Association of Friendship Centres making similar claims (ibid.).

**Urban Aboriginal Service Delivery:** As mentioned earlier, the approach to urban Aboriginal service delivery in Canada has often been downloaded to provincial and local governments together with Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal organizations including government agencies and non-profit sector (Synder et al., 2015).

In the last three decades, there has been a shift in the public policy from government-controlled financial support to market-oriented delivery of services often through partnership with private and non-profit sector (Evans and Shields, 2006). The key feature has been the arrival of multi-level stakeholder partnerships between public-private and non-profits aiming to generate finances from other sources facilitate in building technical capacity of organizations and workers ensuring improved and effective network of support and services (ibid). More specifically, in 1998, the federal government directed Urban Aboriginal Strategy (UAS) initiative towards urban Aboriginal people (Synder et al., 2015). The main feature is for the government to fund in thirteen cities to address key priority areas for urban Aboriginal peoples, including family, health, job and skill training, and support of youth initiatives through coordination between government departments, Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal organizations (ibid.). At present, through the improved Urban Aboriginal Strategy, the government partners with Aboriginal communities and local organizations, municipal and provincial governments, and the private sector to support projects that respond to local priorities and activities such as job training, skills (AANDC, 2014).

This being said, past and present urban policy does not consider Indigenous rights to self-determination and self-government, and may not represent the needs and interests of all urban Aboriginal communities (Tomiak 2013). In addition, when government services shrunk and were replaced by private and non-profit sector contracting, significant challenges at workplace for service providers occurred. Most organizations and agencies were downsized and forced to work in collaboration often due to cutbacks in social welfare sector financing. This move re-shaped the policies and programmes into status-blind and standardized and with short-term and narrow vision (Baines, 2004). Downsizing and budget cutbacks also impacted the work-place environment for service providers with an increased caseload and a shift from paid to unpaid and volunteer work (Smith, 2011).

In the context of other gaps and challenges in the urban Aboriginal service delivery, there are some noteworthy observations. For urban Aboriginal people, the presence of organizations is a key ingredient to the improvement of the quality of life and uphold of urban Aboriginal people's rights (Newhouse and Peters, 2003). These organizations have come to be seen as legitimate both in the eyes of community members and the larger community. Moreover, in terms of service delivery, according to the UAPS final report (2010), regardless of how much interaction Aboriginal people have with non-Aboriginal services, there is broad agreement among Aboriginal peoples particularly in cities like Winnipeg that it is very important to also have Aboriginal services. Nonetheless, they are less convinced than other urban Aboriginal peoples of the importance of Aboriginal primary/secondary schools and child care services. The UAPS final report (2010) indicates that the Métis are also less convinced of the value of Aboriginal universities and colleges.

On the trend of government-non-government and private organizational partnerships there some in the favour and believe that such engagements have benefited Aboriginal people access better services and programme in the cities. Spence and White (2009) have argued in the favour of Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal (mainstream) collaboration for improved and efficient delivery of services for Aboriginal population in the cities. According to these authors, Aboriginal organizations understand cultural needs of the communities and serve them better. However, as Calgary and Winnipeg have shown Aboriginal-universal provider partnerships could ensure effective delivery of services particularly when limited resources are directed to



urban Aboriginal affairs. Similarly, the Urban Aboriginal Task Force (UATF) Study (2007) also echoed the concern for comprehensive and coordinated policy and programmes developed through partnership with Aboriginal organizations and designed for Aboriginal people in the cities.

Others have been less sceptical on this topic. DeVerteuila and Wilson (2010), while interviewing service providers at the addiction facilities in Winnipeg found out that partnerships initiatives generally fail due to lack of culturally-appropriate services for Aboriginal clients in many of the facilities. According to their findings, there is an overrepresentation of urban Aboriginal people including women in drug treatment facilities in Winnipeg. Yet, most services providers are non-Aboriginal and often cultural teaching and healing traditions are not included or generally overlooked. On the other hand, Aboriginal organizations remain under-financed and under-staff and therefore overburdened and so the concerns are not included in the structure of treatment and healing particularly of urban Aboriginal children, youth and women. The authors have recommended non-Aboriginal services take concrete steps to awareness building and learning to include traditions, culture and involvement of elders into treatment facilities. Otherwise, urban Aboriginal communities will continue to suffer in the hands of structural discrimination and state prejudice.

## 2. Methods

**Research Design and Strategies:** The research design was qualitative. For this study, a qualitative design ensured a descriptive analysis of the infrastructure of urban Aboriginal organizations through the responses of selected service delivery providers in Manitoba.

**Research Method:** A checklist of semi-structured/open-ended to conduct individual interviews was adopted as appropriate method for this research. Adopting in-depth interviews provided a comprehensive analysis in terms of: organizational and participant background; the programs and services of the organizations; some of the best practices adopted and lessons learned; the various stakeholders engaged in service delivery and finally the gaps/barriers in services and threats to organizational sustainability.

To examine the data, thematic analysis was used. This one of the most common form of analysis in qualitative research. It emphasizes pinpointing, examining, and recording patterns

(or "themes") within data. Themes are patterns across data sets that are important to the description of a phenomenon and are associated to a specific research question.

**Research Site, Organizational Criteria and Participants:** The focus of this study was to interview Aboriginal service providers in the province of Manitoba; in Winnipeg, Brandon and Thompson. All interviews have been conducted in-person in Winnipeg and over the telephone.

**Organizational Criteria:** Using an inventory provided by Aboriginal and Northern Affairs of Manitoba, the researchers divided the types of service providers into five sectors:

1. Support services (seniors, family, youth, women and justice)
2. Housing (emergency shelters; special housing for Aboriginal dialysis patients)
3. Education/Employment/Economic Development
4. Health, Healing and Addiction
5. Culture, Arts, Communication, Religious Organizations

Initially, the project team suggested some 35-40 interviews with Executive Directors. Using the health authorities as our regions, the research group selected organizations which included:

1. Winnipeg Region: 15 interviews, 3 interviews per sector
2. Interlake Region: 5 interview
3. Northern Region: 5 interviews
4. Southern Region: 5 interview
5. Prairie Mountain Region: 5 interviews

The research team thoroughly scanned the provided organizational inventory list in order to make contact with the organization. It is at this stage, a number of discrepancies (or inaccuracies) were found in the inventory. These included: a number of organizations listed are neither "Aboriginal" nor "urban"; the contact information was not updated or inaccurate; organizations were either no longer active in operation or the programs and services are no longer offered due to end of the project cycle.

Next, the research team, made a careful selection, creating a revised list of 40 urban-Aboriginal organizations. The selection process was based on a number of criteria including: the organizations must be both "urban" as well as "Aboriginal" (this point is related to definitional issues and is discussed in detail in "preliminary finding" section in detail); organizations must have an active status: meaning they are at present operating and providing programs and

services to the community in Winnipeg and other urban centers i.e. Brandon and Thompson. To determine the status, the research team made a number of phone calls, sent email and walked-in to organizations. The contact information of the selected organizations and accurate information about Executive Directors were also made at this point. Moreover, the researchers also contacted other project partners and conducted an internet search for Aboriginal organizations and Executive Directors.

Once accurate information started to arrive, the research team compiled, a third and final list of 38 Urban-Aboriginal Organizations and start sending recruitment emails (with follow-up calls) to selected Executive Directors. For the convenience of the participants and to avoid overlapping of interview timing, a calendar link was sent to each of the 38 participant to select available time and date for the interview.

Some 25 Executive Directors representing various Aboriginal Organizations responded with selected date/time for the interview. However, 6 of them either cancelled or rescheduled interviews several time. In the end only 19 successful interview have been conducted.

The interview process began in the 3<sup>rd</sup> week of July, 2015 and was expected to end by 30<sup>th</sup> of August. However, given some reasons stated above and also due to summer time, the initial response from the participants was very slow.

**Data Collection:** The tentative plan to collection primary data was July to August 2015. However, due to various reasons such as holiday period many participants were unavailable and multiple re-scheduling of interviews resulted in all interviews completion of interviews into November 2015.

All interviews were tape-recorded and planned from 45 minutes to 1 hour. However, due to the depth of participants' experience, all interviews were from 1 to hour and half long.

**Ethical Protocols:** Research ethics were completed at the University of Winnipeg, and were approved in May, and contact was made with Organizations. A student at the Manitoba Association of Friendship Centres worked directly with the graduate student to contact organizations, schedule interviews, attend and assist in interviews and participate in preliminary analysis.

In addition, throughout the interview process with the participants, the research team:

- 1) Developed initial contacts with urban Aboriginal service providers through networking. Initial contacts also ensured respect and sharing of knowledge between and the community.
- 2) Followed consent and confidentiality protocols by means of written consent/permission with participant before conducting the interview process. In addition, the research team informed participants about the data collection procedure i.e. using tape-recorder.
- 3) Before the start of each interview the researcher offered tobacco to all the participants to ensure respecting Indigenous culture and values. In addition, participants were also offered a gift card to a local Indigenous grocery store and restaurant (Neechi Commons) at the end of successfully completing interview as a token of appreciation.

**Data Analysis and Validity:** The research team examined and interpreted the data on the basis of transcribed text. In the first step, each interview is transcribed from talk into text. Secondly, the raw data was sent to participant for view/sharing of information. The purpose is build trustworthiness with the community and the final right to share information would rest with the participants. Thirdly, very few participants responded upon receiving their interview copies (on-going process). Once the reasonable deadline was passed, the research team cleaned the data on the basis of the finding for the final report.

### 3. Findings

The goal of this project was to understand the infrastructure of urban Aboriginal service delivery in terms of the needs of the community, the availability of funding from government sources and the capacity for development of organizations development. In addition, this project sought to identify gaps or areas that need more attention of development. To meet the project aims and objectives, participants selected in the interview were asked to share their experiences in terms of:

1. Participant Background: Reasons for involvement in Aboriginal service delivery and/or the present organization;
2. Organizational Background: Criteria for defining urban Aboriginal organization detailing of organization's purpose/ mandate and goals together with selection process of board members/directors and staff and whether the services are exclusively targeted to Aboriginal people (exclusive or inclusive to certain nations/groups etc.)
3. Programs and Services: Detail on the programs offered and services delivered; the target population (age/gender/social groups); other stakeholders providing similar services;

some of the gaps in services and target population; programs that enhance economic participation Aboriginal people and service delivery priority areas

4. Service Delivery Stakeholder Engagements: The best practice lessons learned; the factors facilitating and threats to organization sustainability and the description on multi-level stakeholder engagements aiming improve urban Aboriginal delivery of services

5. Service Delivery Partnerships: Some of the emerging partnerships in the last decade; how these are maintained; valued/evaluated; future areas for service delivery and example where engagement have not been useful fit.

**Key Themes:** The research findings under each section above have been examined using thematic analysis. This is based on identifying and selecting subjects within the data (specific questions asked or experience shared by respondents). The following sections describe major themes presented in the interviews.

**A. Participant Background:** In this project, nineteen participants representing urban Aboriginal organizations in Manitoba were selected for interview. Sixteen of these respondents are at present working as Executive Directors; two as Managers while one of the respondent is the co-Founder and Director of the organization. The time length of current organizational position held by these respondents varied from 4 months to 30 years. This section outlines what motivated or inspired participants to devote their lives to urban Aboriginal service delivery and or more specifically the organizations they are involved with at present.

**Reasons for the participants to become involved in the current organization and or in the field of Aboriginal Service Delivery:** The overarching factor direct individuals to the path of service delivery is to improve the quality and well-being of their community members to over barriers and challenges. Following is the thematic breakdown of some of the influences that motivated participants in this study to work for urban Aboriginal organizations:

**Activism & Aboriginal Rights:** One of the most cited factor for becoming involved in an urban Aboriginal service delivery has been the recognition of Indigenous people rights and needs. As one participant working for a health and wellness center noted: "I am Aboriginal and I always wanted to work with my people instead of looking in from the outside. This organization has a diverse setup and I wanted be part of it to move us forward as people and community." Another respondent belonging to a support service organization describes these inspirations

from an early age: “being a youth Activist, I was motivated towards anti-racism work and rights based work. This organization is a voice for marginalized people and so I got involved. I really like we advocate for Indigenous people”. For one respondent self-governance and self-determination was a reason to associate with an Aboriginal organization. “Our inherent right is to govern ourselves, be our own models and our own saviors. In White Canada, it is a common belief that Indigenous people needs to be saved and assimilated. Our organization is an antidote to belief and works fundamentally for the right of self-determination of Aboriginal people”.

**Inspiration from Community:** For some of the participants, their inspiration came from the community members already engaged in Aboriginal service delivery and they decided to continue on their path and become involved in organization: “I was inspired by a lady in my community. She was a nurse at a local hospital in Winnipeg for 30 years and ran a boarding school for the First Nations. Affordable and accessible housing for diabetes patients was her dream that I am going with”.

One responded recalled attending a workshop in an Aboriginal organization as a participant seeking group therapy and the motivation and encouragement from the mentors persuaded her to join this path:

I have been in a healing and reconciliation workshop and met with trainers from this organization. Attending their sessions and listening to their stories changed my life outlook. The helped me adjust to overcome my struggles and motivated me so much. I decided to make a difference in the lives of other people...my role-models are my peers now.

**Previous involvement with the Organization/familiarity with services:** Another reason identified by some respondents has been an early involvement with Aboriginal Organizations and familiarity with the programs and services offered. As one respondent described: “I first came [Friendship Centre] as a 4 years old to attend nursery. I then moved away but while growing up joined the Centre in a youth program and became their coordinator. Once moving back here, I was first the Assist Director and now the Executive Director”. Another respondent knew about the organization’s past contribution in promoting Aboriginal education and decided to begin working at this organization:

I always wanted with work with Aboriginal students and knew about the history and contribution of this place. I was initially hired as a tutor. After, which I became coordinator, then an Admin Assistant, a post-secondary counsellor and now the Executive Director. I like the way I feel here...like I am home and that is why I stayed.

**Aboriginal Organization working ethics:** For another respondent, only after working in a non-Aboriginal organization made them realize how special an Aboriginal organization is:

...so when I left to work in a non-Aboriginal Organization for the four years, it was a struggle, a major cultural shock. I now understand how special working here always was. We get lots of flexibility to decide our priorities and value our time talking to the community. I feel valued and came back.

**Lack of Indigenous Cultural competent programs and Services:** Some respondents pointed out the lack of Indigenous cultural-competent programming and services for Aboriginal people been the driving factor to setup an Aboriginal organization. As one participant noted:

What happened was everything was a little off and wasn't for us. The focus [non-Aboriginal Organizations] was always others and so to make it work, we had to translate it into how we lived and what was important for us. What we needed was completely different from any of the other program or service offered.

For others, experiencing discrepancies and challenges as Aboriginal worker in a non-Aboriginal organization motivated them to find their route: "I wanted to help people specially children and families. After graduation, I work as a Social Worker and saw how the system discriminates my people. Most fail to integrate cultural understanding within the policy, so I left. Here we try and combine Aboriginal culture into the urban universal framework and it works". Meanwhile, for some, creating an exclusive space for Aboriginal people based on pure Indigenous teaching and values has been motivational factor to found an organization:

When we started, we didn't understand and did everything western [clinical] and it didn't work. So we went back to our elders and learned to trust. We always had our own teaching and ways and now this the model we work with. It is authentic and helping our people...we have been stripped [of Knowledge] and we want to bring it back.

**Socio-economic background:** For many participants, identification of being Aboriginal and growing up facing several socio-economic and political barriers inspired them to become the voice of their people. One respondent shared her experience motivated her to come the voice of her community:

It is cliché...but I grew up in the North End, in family addictions, domestic violence and was poor. At fifteen, I had a child, become heavily involved [CFS] and nothing to fall back on to... taken me years to beat it out and went to school and find work. Now I am working here helping Aboriginal families in violence. I know the cracks [in system].

Another participant noted:

I was on unemployment insurance. I came [Friendship Centre] to work. This is 31 years ago and realized my true calling. My first job was a janitor, then I become the youth worker, after that a coordinator and then moved to the administrative side to become the Assistant Director and now Executive director. It is full circle.

**Special Programs motivating Aboriginal people:** For some participants, working as Executive Directors in the areas of education and employment, namely special education and career development programs for Aboriginal students as motivating factors them to become involved with Aboriginal Services.

I wasn't expected to do anything. All I ever heard was you are Aboriginal so you are limited. But I went to school and finished grade 12. Later on, my uncle told me about Access in Brandon so I went there and got my MA. They guided me through to success and inspired me work Aboriginal Human Development.

Another participant, an educator, also acknowledged the university Access Program for her achievements:

As an Aboriginal student at the university, I went through a lot of struggle and crisis to the point of leaving education. It was with a lot of help and support from the Access Program offered at the University of Manitoba that pushed me to complete my studies and help me choose my path in life.

**Conflicting Aboriginal identities:** For some participants, struggles with their own Aboriginal identities growing up as children inspired them to embark on their journey:

My mother was Aboriginal and father was European Christian. So I grew up as an Ojibway traditional woman with Presbyterian teachings. This is a challenge for me to come to understand what the church did was wrong and as minister, my focus is to heal the wounds of Aboriginal people and through reconciliation. For one respondent, the need for Indigenous people working for the Indigenous people as a way to fostering change: "growing up as an Indigenous person in Winnipeg and working in a predominant non-Aboriginal



set-up made me realized the need for Indigenous people to work for the Indigenous people because there are lot Organizations do not fit to deliver our community.

**B. Organizational Background:** In this project, nineteen Urban Aboriginal organizations have been selected. These are categorized into 6 sections; Support Services for Children, Youth and Families; Housing & Shelter; Education & Employment; Health & Healing and Culture and Religion and Reconciliation. Fifteen of the Organizations are non-profit and four are the Friendship Centres. Some are charitable while others are not. In terms of geographical location, fourteen out of nineteen of Organizations are situated in the city of Winnipeg and one each in Headingly, Selkirk, Brandon and Thomson.

In this section, participants discussed the definition of Urban Aboriginal organization using the criteria based on the working definition (as mentioned in the method section) criteria. This means, outlining organization's purpose/mandate, goals together with the governing structure; the board-member/directors and staff selection ratio and the specification for target population on the basis of nation/community is explored.

**Urban Aboriginal organizations:** One of the themes that emerged from the beginning of the project (and also during the interviews) is a guiding "definition" of an Indigenous/Aboriginal organization. Initially, there was not a set criterion for identifying these Organizations. As mentioned in the method section above, were provided with booklet (inventory) by the Manitoba Northern Affairs, which had number discrepancies. One of the challenges was surrounding the definition of "Aboriginal" or more specifically "Urban-Aboriginal" Organizations. With no prior deification, the research team created own criteria for the purpose of organization selection. The identification points that were identified included whether the:

- Organizational name/mandate/purpose and goals have to be in-line with Aboriginal teaching and values;
- Jurisdiction is urban (but some programmes and services may include rural population and communities in transition)
- Executive director and most of the staff as well as Board of Director has to be Aboriginal (50% or more);

- Programmes and services (i.e. cultural/healing/ educational/employment programmes) must have focus on the needs and development of Aboriginal population living cities mainly (however, target population maybe non-Aboriginal as well).

All participants interviewed identified representing Urban-Aboriginal Organizations. More or

**Purpose and Mandate:** Urban-Aboriginal Organizations mandates have been broad based. At times, the purposes are clearly focused in statement to uphold Indigenous spiritual teachings and values. Other times, they emphasize on addressing specific communities needs and development. Following are some of the key themes identified:

**To Uphold spiritual teachings and culture:** Participants across support services, health & healing, housing; culture and religion led Organizations indicated the purpose and mandate of their Organizations as deeply aligned to spiritual teachings and values and clearly reflected in their mandates. One participant belonging to the health services organization illustrated this: Our purpose is continuum of holistic and temporary healing resources within Aboriginal community of Winnipeg. We are founded on the concept of the medicine wheel, which emphasizing provision of resources that enable individuals to attain a balance in their lifestyle necessary for health.

According to a respondent representing a language & culture center in Winnipeg, the organization's purpose is to promote Aboriginal philosophies and culture: "our mandate is to promote awareness and understanding of First Nation and Metis culture to anybody interested in learning about it through developing resources especially in the area of Aboriginal languages; Ojibway and Cree".

**Prevention of Violence and Reconciliation:** Participants reported organizational purposes to tie with specific Aboriginal community needs and concern. As one respondent from an organization committed to provide reconciliation between, Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal people through church and traditional teaching, explained, "we are mandated to heal communities and improve quality of lives using the Christian knowledge and seven sacred teachings." Another, participant belonging to an organization working on similar objectives of healing through resolution and justice also highlighted the purpose of their organization to "improve relations" between the Church-Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal communities in the backdrop of residential schools. Meanwhile, one respondent recognizing the higher incidence of violence within Aboriginal communities links it their organization's mandate, which is to "provide domestic violence prevention, intervention and education to children and families in

the community”. Similarly, for another participant, lack of facilities for Aboriginal diabetes patients translated into setting up housing units with a purpose to provide “affordable and accessible living for Aboriginal dialysis patients and families” in Winnipeg.

**Employment and Training:** Participants also informed connecting organizational purposes to the need of Aboriginal people in areas of education, employment and skill development. As one of the respondent noted, her organization’s main purpose is to “provide families with opportunities to build communities, learn about Indigenous culture, develop positive life skills, and experience healing”. Another organization, aims for the Aboriginal people in Winnipeg to have a future of increased economic prosperity and self-determination. According to the respondent, the mandate is to:

Assist Aboriginal people prepare for, acquire and maintain successful employment by providing quality literacy, education, training and employment opportunities, and the required supports, through partnerships with community, educational institutions, business/industry and government.

**Organization names reflecting purpose:** Another trend observed is the both the mandate and the meaning of Organizations names reflect each other and project the Indigenous spirit of collective community care model. As one responded from [Ma Mawi Chi Itata] pointed out: “our organization’s name translates from Ojibway as ‘*we all work together to help on another*’, so our purpose is to collectively strengthen and build the lives of children, families, communities and neighbourhoods”.

Similarly, for another respondent, administering a youth-led organization, the purpose and mandate mirroring in the organization’s name. “The full name of our organization is Ndinawemaaganag Endaawaad, meaning ‘*Relatives Home*’. We are determined to provide a safe, secure and culturally responsive space to kids on the streets to call home”.

**Organization’s Goals:** Urban Aboriginal organizations goals have been closed tied to the purpose and mandates. As participants’ noted, the main objective of these goals is reduce existing gaps and barriers for the target population. In addition, while some Organizations set strategic aims to achieve organizational purpose, others focus on their mission statement in overseeing bigger objectives. Following are some of the themes identified discussing the goals Organizations are trying to achieve:

**Reclaiming Culture:** One common observation found is the replication Indigenous teaching and philosophy as organization's goals. For one participant representing one of the support service organization defines goals in broad sense of suggesting of reclamation of Aboriginal culture:

To awaken and heal the spirit of Aboriginal people that will guide us to our goodness, our strength, our beliefs, values, teachings, identity and our history, and to reclaim our rightful place within our families, our communities, and our Nations.

**Community Involvement Lead Strong Societies:** Another common goal that urban Aboriginal organizations are trying to achieve is strong communities incorporating different groups engaged in service delivery. One of the participant aims to achieve, "strong, healthy and connected families through supporting them at every stage of their development." While, according to another respondent working for an integrated support service organization, "strengthening families is a worthy investment and goal is accomplishing this via involvement and cooperation with family services and other agencies in Manitoba".

**Breaking the cycle of violence through cultural programming:** The issue of family violence is rampant in Aboriginal communities and so the aim of one of the respondent, running a child and families center is to their organization's goal to, "make communities look at domestic violence and its intergeneration impacts on their lives and having to break the cycle of violence therapeutic and cultural healing".

**Positive Programming through sports and recreation:** Not many urban Aboriginal organizations use sports and recreation to achieve programming. However, according to one of the participant, a head of an Aboriginal youth sport center: "the goal is to develop Aboriginal youth leaders in the community using positive programming in fun things, such as sports and recreational activities. We want children to be part of something healthy and positive".

**Integrated services/combined goals:** Urban Aboriginal organizations providing integrated services often have multiple goals that are strategically set-out. For example, the Executive Director of a Human Resource organization stated number of goals for variety of services and programs that have been offered. "our goal is to provide quality adult education, post-secondary education, trades training, day-care facilities, and student transitional housing as needed." This participant further noted that the organization provides employment and education services to approximately 2,400 people per annum with an aim to place an average of 1,200 people yearly in successful employment; to train 500 people per annum. "Our aim is

to and to continue to meet or to exceed our vision, our mandate and our goals on a yearly basis.”

**Bridging Educational Barriers:** One Urban Aboriginal organization is working as a bridge between communities and the University of Winnipeg aiming to ease the process of access to education for vulnerable and marginalized groups. According to the institute’s manager: Our goal is to work with the University of Winnipeg and create variety of health, wellness, educational and recreational opportunities and activities for the communities and facilitate peer support and mentorship to bridge educational barriers.

**Organizations Governing Structure:** While discussing the criteria to define urban Aboriginal organisation, participants also outlined the governing or administrative structures of Organizations'. Despite, identifying themselves as Aboriginal, few Organizations have a full board or staff complement that identifies as Aboriginal. In addition, according to respondents, the aim is to deliver services to Aboriginal people primarily, most Organizations are status-blind and include other communities. Some, participants, however, have clear mandates to provide services to Aboriginal people or specific nations (Status-Indians only).

**Exclusively Aboriginal & nation-blind:** For some of the organization governing structure and mandate aim serve not only Aboriginal people but also specific nation. As one participant noted: "We are mandated by the Assembly of Manitoba Chiefs to promote the advancement of Aboriginal education...to take control of education for Indians and to be run by Indians". This respondent added, "we do have some funds for Inuit population but once they leave reserves". Another respondent belonging to a health and wellness centre added:

Our board of director as well as the target population is 100% Aboriginal. Within, we are non-status, which means we serve all Indigenous communities and nations; First Nation, Inuit, Metis, Status and non-Status. Also, if any Aboriginal Person accessing services has a non-Aboriginal partner, we will also look after them here. We will also serve their children.

**Partially inclusive:** Some participants reported the organizational having 100% Aboriginal board of directors and staff but the mandate is inclusive to all population in need. As one participant running a support services organization, "We are 100% Aboriginal in hiring and all our board members are Aboriginal but we celebrate all communities and won't turn away in anybody is need of help". Yet, some participant reported that non-Aboriginal community does get excluded unintentionally due to the nature of programming. As one of the participant representing an Indigenous healing Centre argues, "our board is 100% Indigenous but we don't discriminate non-Aboriginal people...but our services are designed on pure ancestral knowledge and practices...so mostly Aboriginal people come and access them" Another responded informed: "our board-members and staff our 100% Aboriginal and we are aim to provide medical assisting housing to FN people but we are only one of a kind of Aboriginal organization in Canada so we accept all nations".

**Largely inclusive:** Most participants, however, pointed out that despite being an Aboriginal organization, their constitution is status-blind in hiring staff-members and in some cases allow 50% board-members/directors to be non-Aboriginal. According to one participant representing one of the Friendship Centre informed, “our constitution says 50% plus 1 governing control must be Aboriginal...but we are status blind and hire anybody in need regardless of their any race, gender, socio-economic status”. While, another respondent belonging to another Friendship Center added, “eight of our board-members have to be Indigenous and 3 could be any and although we don’t have any quota, we prefer to hire Aboriginal staff”.

Some participants informed shift in the organization’s policies from being Aboriginal exclusive to integrate non-Aboriginal members. According to one respondent representing a reconciliation and justice organization, “in the past, our board of directors were predominately Aboriginal but now the ratio is 50-50 50%. The staff and are trainers mostly belong to Aboriginal communities”.

**C. Programs and Services:** Urban Aboriginal organizations are aimed to improve the life and wellbeing of Indigenous people. To achieve this aim, there are a number programs and goals designed and targeted for but not limited to Aboriginal people. Participants noted that most urban Aboriginal organizations are providing integrated programs to the community but some have specific services. Where Organizations are unable to provide services, they direct target population to other places in the neighbourhood. The government; the provincial and city is mostly responsible to fund these program but some are funded by federal. Respondents have illustrated other sources of funding as well. Participants have discussed various priorities in determine services and shared ways to meet them. Most in not all programs and services do enhance the economic participation of the Aboriginal people; some directly and most indirectly. Finally, participants addressed number of gaps in urban Aboriginal service delivery from both the organizations and the population side.

In this section, a description on key programs and services is identified. These are categorized under various themes including: integrated services; support services; specific children, youth and families’ programs; housing and shelter; education, employment and economic development; health and healing; culture and religion and justice and reconciliation. Following the discussion, a sketch on target population by age/gender/group is also provided together with other key players in the area providing services. A description of how urban Aboriginal

organization generate funding to administer service delivery is provided in addition to how organizations determine services priorities and which of the services and programs enhancing the economic participation of the people. Finally, the section outlines some of the key gaps and barriers in programs and services.

Following is the breakdown of key programs and services:

**Housing and Shelter:** One of the areas where programs and services are directed is housing and shelter. Participants described the Aboriginal communities need for housing and emergency shelter are met through various programs and services. As one participant shared his Organizations' example, which is providing special housing for diabetes Aboriginal population.

We have 36 town houses and 16 of those town houses are wheel chair accessible and we have a new building with 24 with wheel chair accessible. There are over 200 people placed in these units (the waiting list of 150 or more families in waiting list). There is a church service here that we promote, which is every Sunday that run by the tenants. A lot of times, they have a feast in here. For future, the plan is to have some kids and elder's programmes here.

Another participant providing emergency shelter services for at-risk youth shared how services are designed at their Organizations for youth accessing a safe place to live. There are four core site. First is the Emergency Shelter for 11-17 year olds with a sixteen bed facility for male, female and transgendered. The Second Stage House, is another facility which is for 16 and 17 years' olds and has 12 units where the youth learn living skills and progressive learning to help them transition at 18 or into adulthood. Third is a Resource Centre, which is a 24 drop-in facility (but close on weekends and school holidays). The age group is 13-14. It provides a wider range of programming, resources, kids can come after school or in the evening to watch TV or play at the pool table or access the art room. The fourth is the transitional school on the 2<sup>nd</sup> floor for kids out of school.

**Health, Healing and wellbeing:** There are a number of programs aim for health care and healing. These are provided by various Organizations. Some of the services are focused on more primary care while others follow a more holistic approach to health and wellbeing. According to one participant representing services organization:



We have both primary health care programs targeting children and families. We also have programs for newborn babies and mothers. We run clinic and facilitate community with doctors, nurses and community health workers at no charge to us.

Also, we are holistic in approach, which means in all our program there is a culture component, where we offer day sweats, teaching and sharing circles and we smudge

Some of the health centres provide integrated health and wellbeing programs for the community. With 10-16 programs and services covering from homelessness in youth, children education and healing and support, men and women healthy living, Aboriginal youth programs, employment and mentoring and program focusing on residential school system.

**Education & employment:** A lot of programs and services are focused on promoting Aboriginal people education, employment and enhance economic development. One participant belonging to an educational association deliberated, “we provide support services in the capacity of academic, social and financial counselling; tutorial service, recreation, student orientation and IT services to our students” Another, respondent provided example of some of the program provided at her education & cultural centre: “we have a lot of facilities at our centre for communities. They may access computer facilities, financial training, Indigenous language and culture programs, youth education and Indigenous Math camp”.

Some Organizations working for youth and families focus on providing programs like the child and youth care program. This program is for adults that have been exploited as youth and are in a good place and want to give back to the community and so they get a first year of the certificate program through Red River.

Employment training is another area where wide range of programs are directed. One participant belonging to a sport & recreation centre shared how the organization is providing programs from job skills promotion to sports skills clinics. They stated: “we provide training to the youth. Like this summer we had about 100 employers here and they ranged from being camp counsellors to the ones that have been part of our training programmes”.

The participant further informed the strength of the organization is to have “over a 1,000 Aboriginal Youth Leaders that have come here and work through us and gone on to do different things”.

**Culture and programs:** A large number of Aboriginal Organizations have cultural focus to uphold Indigenous culture and teaching. One organization describes the program that supports cultural learning:

In the fall we have the Powwow clubs that is for all ages and all families and just to tell you everything here is free of charge. We also bring Secret Seven, so this is two sort of groups for kids; one is mixed with boys and girls and the other one is girls only. This is the healthy relationship programme so kids come and learn about their culture and sports and fundamentals of healthy relationships and the needs for violence prevention program.

One organization focusing on culture and language centre provided detail on some of the cultural programs offered. Some of these program are delivered through activities, lectures, workshops, presentations, tours and displays on history, childrearing practices, livelihood, residential schools, and language.

**Justice & Recreation:** Aboriginal Organizations have also been providing programs and services related to reconciliation and justice. Participants mentioned these services usually through workshops between Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal communities to build strong and positive relationships. As one of the participant belonging to a reconciliation organization described: “We conduct series of workshops. We have a 5-day personal empowerment workshop. We also have a 5-days reconciliation process. We also conduct seminars series made up of 12 seminars as a follow-up. We also design workshops and work based on communities’ request and demand.”

In addition, the respondent added,

We have been primarily working for reconciliation between Churches and Aboriginal people and communities but over the years we are working for reconciliation between Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal people and communities. We also are doing a lot of youth work but keeping in mind our purpose, mandate, philosophies and goal, which is reconciliation between Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal youth.

Participants have stressed the aim of these programs and services to incorporate both Indigenous and non-Indigenous philosophies and teaching depending upon the need of the community. According to one participant, religion or spiritualism is not promoted through any of their programs and the focus remain on creating opportunities for better relations between Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal communities. She describes this as: “we don’t push [religion] but integrate wisdom of Indigenous seven teaching and combine them to Christian values.

There are similarities between all religious knowledge and teaching of forgiveness and moving forward as a part of reconciliation is our goal.”

**Target Population:** As discussed in the previous section, most urban Aboriginal organizations are mandated or prefer to target Aboriginal people. However, due to their inclusive nature, in many cases, non-Aboriginal population is also welcome to access these services. In addition, most of the services aimed families; including children and youth but there are age and gender restrictions due to the nature of a particular program or service. Participant also indicated limiting people to access service and program in the backdrop of addiction and mental health issues. This is either to minimize property damage and conflict and also due to lack of resource availability at site to manage behaviour. Following are some of the key findings shared:

**Age-group Specific:** Depending upon the program or service, Urban Aboriginal organizations One participant provided a detailed breakdown on the population accessing services. Some of the services and programs are age specific. According to one participant,

We have education and mentoring programs for kids age 1 to 5; age 6 to 10 and age 11 to 14. However, we also target the caretaker/parent especially in the 1-5 age-group. We infact have an adult literacy program together with the children program. We believe that programs should target not just the child but the family.

**Non-Aboriginal & Newcomers population:** Most urban Aboriginal organizations are inclusive in service delivery and include non-Aboriginal communities. Recently, the target population includes newcomers to Canada as well. According to one of the organizations:

About 80% are Aboriginal and the rest are those living in the neighbourhood. Actually, it is a good mix in the building we have European descendants, we have Latin Americans, somebody emigrated from Ecuador. Together with First Nation, Metis, and Mulatto blacks. They learn to how to respect each other and the property.

**Special Needs:** Some urban Aboriginal organizations provide services for populations with special need so the target population, they serve is restricted. One such example is shared by a participant representing an organization targeting diabetes/dialysis patients:

About 90% of our target population is Aboriginal we don't discriminate amongst any nations and community. However, are services being strictly for dialysis patients and their families. Our induction process and from their social workers send the applications here and they are put on a waiting list.

Another organization providing healing services also has needs based criteria for target population. “We provide intensive healing and care for mental trauma and our target population is restricted to 24 years and above. We don’t discriminate but due to the nature of our program, most people come here are Aboriginal”.

**Special intake-policy:** Most Organizations are strict for intake policy. Some of the community members are also referred from various services such as the Child and Family Services. As one participant noted:

They come through an intake process where people are refereed to us so that we know if they have mental health issues so there is a mental health worker in the community, if they have addiction are connected to support services for addition in the community because those things we don’t provide.

The idea behind this policy is to have safe and secure delivery of services inside building, to minimize physical conflict and because not Organizations have capacity to cater destabilized community members.

### **Government Funding**

Funding has flowed to the Organizations interviewed through federal, provincial and municipal funds. Most participants describe getting grants and donations from public, private and non-profit foundations and faith-based organizations to administer programs and services as their main source of income. The main purpose for government funding is to create opportunities for urban Aboriginal people to improve well-being. The following themes emerged from the interviews.

### **Funding for Friendship Centres**

Participants representing the Friendship Centre have receiving funded through the government. This funding is either direct or through the Manitoba Association of Friendship Centre. The government also fund MAC to administrative purposes. According to one participant: “we get funding from federal government...whether it is through the MAC operations and project-funding under the Urban Partnership. We also get core-like funding under the Community Capacity Supports”. The MAC provides core provincial funds for basic administrative support like accountants, management and physical maintenance. In addition, there is funding for “Partnership Careers” which is essentially is an employment program. There is also a Parent Child Program as well as the Capital Renovations fund for building

maintenance and repair. From the federal government, Friendship Centres receive funds through the Community Capacity Support which is not specific to Friendship Centres. There is also funds for youth, innovation and social enterprise as well as student grants.

**Program- tied funding with the Government:** For most Aboriginal organizations, government funding is linked with a specific or series of programs or services in various categories ranging from social services for children, youth, families to housing, sports, health, education, culture and employment. According to one respondent representing social, education and employment sector: “our funding comes through the City of Winnipeg to set-up the computer lab and to provide one or more services to those looking for housing, employment opportunities and accessing other community services.” Another participant belonging to Aboriginal medical-assisted housing discussed receiving government funding for meet the needs of the community: “Manitoba Housing fund us so we are able to build affordable and accessible housing and maintain it properly for our target group...dialysis patients and their families. Had the funding is cut-off, they will be forced to pay the market rent...double and triple for what they are paying now.” Similarly, another participant operating subsidize housing for low-income residents under one of their Adult mentoring program pointed out:

The only government funding we were able to access is through the Housing and Homelessness Initiatives. The purpose it is to use that for subsidizing housing for our residents. So our rent is low like it is \$309 and if you are on EIA you are allowed \$285 and the Manitoba Housing would give us an extra \$104 so the rent here is covered. This helps our residents to save up, especially, if they are working.

In some cases, respondents argued that government funding allows them to reach out to vulnerable people that are impacted by adversities. According to one participant running an Aboriginal Sport’s organization: “we work with communities where suicide rate is high engaging youth in sports and recreational activities. Our main funder in the project is the government. We both hope to lower suicide through positive programming and to motivate the youth into healthy activities.”

One other participant representing social services sector informed receiving core-funding from government on specific project: “we have two core funders; Family Violence and Prevention Program is one of them and the other is the Public Health Agency of Canada funds the children’s programming.” For small piolet projects, this organization receives funding from the Canadian Women’s Foundation and from the United Way for Aboriginal capacity.

**In-direct government funding:** Some organizations do not directly receive government funding but partner with communities in providing programs and services, which are funded by the government. As one of the participant representing an Aboriginal reconciliation organization observes: “we work in partnership with communities that receive funding hire us to conduct workshops and other activities. Communities have incorporated us into their work-plan for Building Healthy Communities, Pre-natal and Justice programs, which are funded directly.” Some of the government funding to provide support education, employment and other opportunities for the communities. Some are directed by federal or provincial while other through special government departments. As one respondent added:

We get five million dollars a year from the federal government for the Employment Development Program. But close to half of the five million dollars, we also provide for the community programs like the Urban Circle, the boys’ and girls’ club and a lot of other programs in Winnipeg. We give them funding to do as long as it sits under our mandate.

**Government funding through specialized departments:** Participants also described receiving funding through specialized department for Aboriginal people. As one participant from an Aboriginal education organization mentioned: “we now get funding from the Aboriginal Affairs and Northern Development Canada (AANDC) to create education and employment opportunities our students.” Another respondent also informed receiving funding through: “The AANDC under the Culture and Education Centres Program out of Ottawa for language, art and culture programs. Also, the Winnipeg Foundation is also one of our good funders”

**Funding from Government and Other Sources:** A number of participants representing Aboriginal non-profits have informed receiving funding from both the government and other sources. One respondent, receiving a large amount from the province and some federal money towards programming mentioned other source to fund their projects: “we get 65% of the money comes from the province and a small percentage, let’s say about 5% comes from the federal. The rest is through Winnipeg Foundation, United Way and private donors.” Another participant running emergency shelter and resource centre for children and youth stressed: “we get funding from everyone. We have purchase of service agreement with the Province of Manitoba for the residential programs. We also have some project based funding through the resource centre. Our residential sites are core-funded and the resource centre is project funded.” This participant also added “we also get funded from Winnipeg Foundation and all

sort of community grants. Not so much from private businesses and that is part of our plan for future.” Some participants pointed out receiving very few funds from the government and most from other sources to operate. According to respondents representing an organization in social service sector:

We get very little funding comes from the government.... planning a renovation and I got some funding from the City government for that. We get some summer student grants so one from federal and two from provincial for part-time student salaries but by and large we don't get a lot from the government.

The rest of the programs for this organization through community grants from the North End Community Renewal Corporation and similar organizations.

**Other sources of funding:** Few participants have specifically stressed on receiving funding from outside source. One participant representing Aboriginal-Christian religious organization noted: “we are limited in receiving government funding...we are religious so the National Church is responsible to funds three full time positions; the Executive Director and the two social workers. For everything else I have to look for church groups and individual donations”. Another respondent running a spiritual healing centre shared similar: “we are members of the United Way Winnipeg and they are our main funding body. We also get some funds the Winnipeg Foundation and Health Canada, Winnipeg but hardly money from the government.” Another participant representing a reconciliation and justice organization discussed major donations and funders that were not government: “our major funders are the private foundations...the biggest are the Counselling Foundation. We are supported by the Winnipeg Foundation and also the National Association of Friendship Centre.” She also stressed the dependence on private donations and corporate donations and more recently from church groups: “At one point one of our major funder was CCEPIRSS, which is 50 Catholic entities trust towards reconciliations and residential schools.” At times, the Friendship Centres also receive funding from other resources too. As one of their participant noted: “we get donations from Food Bank, building donations and clothing and all that. Also, the trust stuff, somebody passes, they could leave estate donations to us, it has happened in the past a few times.”

**Other Organizations providing services:** There have been many organizations providing service delivery to Aboriginal as well as non-Aboriginal people. These in government, non-government, Aboriginal; non-Aboriginal and private organizations. Participants have noted that some of the

services are duplicated while others are not. In addition, most organizations, particularly Aboriginal ones' have integrated services, however, in case of programs and services not available, they refer them to other Aboriginal services in the neighborhood or elsewhere in the city.

**Health care and Healing:** Most of the health services are provided by government and or non-Aboriginal set-up. As one participant noted, "Regional authorities, clinics and hospitals provide health care to most of the community members. They have large and effective clinical set-up". In addition, the RHA, also facilitate Aboriginal organizations and as of the participant belonging to Friendship Centre pointed out:

We have programs for children and family health are both funded and facilitated by Health Authority. We also refer people to places like Mount Carmel clinic and Canadian Mental Health Association. For Aboriginal specific services, there is the Health and Wellness Centre. We also send people to Native Addiction Council of Manitoba for addiction rehab.

**Culture, Recreation and Religious Services:** Participants have pointed out a number of urban Aboriginal organizations providing culture and recreation programming. These services are particularly targeted youth. According to one participant, "most Aboriginal Organizations, culture programming is integral mandated. Most also target children and youth population; some are focus on recreational, sports, language, after-school activities" This participant further added, in some cases, there is duplication of services but organizations try to work out together. He provided an example:

If you look at the boys' and girls' club, they run summer camps but so would Organizations like the WASAC. Both target the kids but are not in completion and try to have different group of kids. For WASAC, the target is Aboriginal youth so there is less duplication.

Another participant providing culture and educational programming elaborated on the question of avoiding duplication of services that there are a lot of organizations in the city and it is difficult not to replicate services but "we are a part of the West Central Connect Group and closely work with the West Central Women Resource to share how to integrate services.

In terms of religious services, participants have pointed out there are Siloam Mission, there is Gospel Mission and all of the Salvation Army and not very far from each other.

**Aboriginal Organizations:** Urban Aboriginal organizations are closely linked and share collaboration within the city. Participants have informed that if there are unable to provide a service, they will guide the community to other Aboriginal service providers. As one respondent:



We are connected to several organizations in Winnipeg. Our specialty and or niche is in trauma treatment so if anybody need any other support services, will guide them to Ma Mawi or if you need education related support services, we will send them to Ka Ni Kanichik. Or if family violence is then we point them to Wahabung. We also refer people to non-Aboriginal services too, especially if they needed to be stabilized due to addictions or violent behavior.

Some of the programs and services offered are one of the kind and there is very little duplication of services. For example, one participant is providing medically-assisted housing to Aboriginal people in Winnipeg and noted:

There is no facility targeting Aboriginal dialysis patients in all of Canada with safe, affordable and accessible housing like us [Dial-A-Life-Housing]. However, there are medical boarding and hotels facilities available, which are funded by the federal government to fulfil the shortage of space and long-waiting list of patients we have at our housing units.

Another respondent added, that for mental health and trauma, participants, Eyaa-Keen healing Centre is providing Indigenous based treatment: "there are non-Aboriginal people providing healing but at the Eyaa-Keen the programs and services reflect Indigenous philosophies and values as opposed to western methods."

Another service worth mentioning is the Winnipeg Inner City Mission, which is a merger between the Anishinabe Fellowship Centre (AFC) and Flora House (FH), although identifies itself committed to serving Aboriginal individuals and families in the inner city is a mission of the Presbyterian Church in Canada.

**Integrated approach to service delivery:** Most participants are in support of providing integrated services through their Organizations as much as possible.

As one participant argues,

The system is setup that if you have addiction, housing need, health concern, you go to a specific place for it. We are not like that, we are one person that will figure out what to do and how to bring in or will walk with them and guide them through the process of access the service or program that would help them.

**Programs and Services Offer Enhanced Economic Participation:** The overall purpose of most urban Aboriginal organizations is overcome the barrier and challenges for Aboriginal people and ensure quality of life and welling. Another purpose is reclaiming and promotion Indigenous culture and values cultural programming. In recent years many urban Aboriginal organizations,

under the government Urban Aboriginal Strategy, UAS to enhance Aboriginal people's economic participation have shifted priorities from cultural programming to income and employment generating services.

Following are some examples shared:

**Health & Healing:** Some of the services provided by organizations under the health and healing services enhance the economic participation of Aboriginal youth. One participant belonging to a health and wellness Centre noted: "we have a program, Stepping Forward, where the life skills coach work with individuals on pre-employment. This means they are provided training through workshop on portfolio development, volunteer opportunities, day employment".

This participant further added that the main objective is to help community achieve the goals be it getting employment, education, mental and physical health and getting their families back together. "Our programs come from cultural lens but have not moved to employment and education so the people are contributing members of society." Another respondent from an Indigenous healing service Centre also pointed out how their organization also directly and indirectly aim to increase the economic participation of community accessing services.

One of the program we offer is aim towards the employment assistance of Aboriginal people. Though we are a victim service, a lot of the people coming here have some education and sort of a job. Due to trauma they may not be in school, or at work and take care of their families right now and withdrawn. So we help them through the program to get back life and continue their education and employment and taking care of their children. They are able to fulfil their vision for what they want to do in their lives.

**Education and Employment:** Most commonly, urban Aboriginal organizations have been offering programs under the education and employment category. Participants noted the youth employability programs in particular as enhancing the economic participation as they prepare them for future. According to respondent from an educational association:

We provide Employability Skills Workshops and these are a success. People want to attend it and take everything we offer them. The purpose of the training is to know the income levels of the participants and what you can do at these income levels and achieve. We made this visual for our participants. We have done a survey on them and found out all those students have either got part-time jobs, some have keep going n finish high school and some starting secondary school. All because we taught them the process of income earning power.

Other respondents have focused the services that are aim for economic enhancement.

According to one of the participant from an educational & culture centre:

In a way the program and services mentioned does enhance economic participation. What we really do is to increase people's familiarity with the universities and assist them in a way they feel comfortable. People come here and access programs on language, culture and business that help them gain education and employment opportunities for themselves.

**Sport and Recreation:** Urban Aboriginal organizations providing sports and recreation activities have been focusing on youth and there are a number of programs offered to enhance the economic participation. As one of the youth sports organizational representative illustrated:

We have lots of kids and youth camps each year, where we provide many leaning and leadership opportunities through mentoring. One of our popular program the "Mentoring Program" that works as a ladder where you come into the camp as a 7 year-old through 12-13 years of age after which at 14 you join our "Youth Training Program". This program is in partnership with the University of Manitoba and Red River College.

**Religion and Reconciliation:** Participant from urban Aboriginal organizations focusing on reconciliation and religion also shared example on how their services are aiming to enhance the economic participation of youth. As one of the participants noted:

We have one youth mentoring program and another is for adult. Our population is with low education, under-employed or unemployed. Both of these programs are to guide people towards a good life with opportunities to good education, employment and wellbeing. We provide education assessment, train, mentor and discipline them to transition back into school and job market through connecting them to right people.

According to another of the respondent: "the youth employment and training meet we are conducting does lead communities towards the economic enhancement. Other than that we talk about reconciliation and address with communities on positive change in life and impact their wellbeing. This eventually led to enhancing their life goals."

**Culture and Support Services:** Some of the Urban Aboriginal culture support services also enhance the economic participation of their population. There are programs offered teaching community members handicrafts, artwork and beading. One of the participant shared an example from her organization:

Our goal is to facilitate community to create traditional handicrafts and to be able to market their crafts through a small "social enterprise" business we

are developing. Partnering with the artisans, we will be selling handmade traditional moccasins, mukluks, quill earrings, and other unique handcrafts.

**Service Delivery Priority Areas:** Urban Aboriginal organization priorities cut across areas of services for health, healing/counselling, housing/shelters as well as education, employment & training, sports & recreation, language & culture and reconciliation to children, youth and families' programs.

Participants indicated the following priority areas and explain how these are determined and met.

**Positive Programing for Youth:** One of the organization's main priority is providing positive programming to children and youth through sports and recreation activities. According to the participant:

A lot of what we do is youth related so our priority is youth and anything that includes them (team-work), is fun, leadership development, enhance their confidence, role and responsibility. Pretty much anything that is not dangerous to them or even over bearing is and will be our priority.

**Affordable and Accessible Housing:** Housing is the area, which is priority to one of the organization aim to provide medically-assisted housing. According to the organization's Manager:

Our priority is to have housing for the dialysis patient and their families in a most subsidize way and in good condition. We pay special care to maintenance because our population is of special needs and mostly requiring accessibility services at the site. We also make sure there is no overcrowding by housing 15, 20, 30 people in the suites.

**Community Development:** For one of the organizations working in the area of education and training, the first priority has been to ensure access to technology through providing access to computer lab. The second one is related to youth development and so most of the programs are related to youth.

**Reconciliation:** One of the organization's priority is reconciliation between Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal communities. According to the participant belonging to a religious organization: First and foremost is Aboriginal people, particularly the youth and create leadership in terms of reconciliation and healing. The other part of it is reconciliation within Canada and thirdly, because we are an Aboriginal organization so our efforts are for the Aboriginal people. In term of the determination of priorities, the respondent added:

Sometimes it is community and also our board of directors both decided the priorities for us but also there are also determined by our trainers. So we have trainers all across Canada that represent both Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal communities and nations and strategically we gather once a year to decide what has shifted and a lot of it depends what happens in the society and needed

**Education attainment and employment:** Some of the organizations have priorities towards the attainment of education and employment. According to one participant, both of these goals are integrated together to achieve a good balance in life for the community:

First, the age 1-14 and the priority for them & families to them a good grounding and a good start in school earlier in life so they have a chance of success in later in life. The next age group is 30 to 50 years; single, under-employed or unemployed and low levels of education and other issues such as mental health and addiction to get them back and integrate them into society. The in-between 14-30 years are referred to other services because there are already many available for them in the community. The social workers help them find services.

Another organization pointed out having, community outreach being the priority because this is the first contact level with people. According to the participant, "People come to us because they need services not just related to education and employment but also food, housing, training, clothing and most of all they need respect in life, so community outreach in a sense is our top priority."

**Holistic Health and wellbeing:** Another priority organization have reported related to health. As an Aboriginal organization, the focus is on holistic approach to health and wellbeing. According to one respondent belonging to a health and wellness organization:

Our priority is health and auxiliary programs related to housing, leadership, employment generation etc. This all constitute health and wellbeing. All of these services are from Indigenous holistic perspective, where the focus is on medicine wheel model and the seven sacred teachings.

**From Child to Community Care:** for one organization, the priorities have been shifted based on a variety of factors. As one respondent describes:

In the past, we would go with kind of like government set priorities. So earlier, our focus was children and how to keep them in care so we had group-homes and foster-care. Now, our

priority different. We want to now keep the children not in care but place them with family so now it is no longer children care piece but family/community.

**Youth Empowerment:** One of the priority area for at risk-youth focused organization is to empower them:

We are youth focused organization and our main priority is to create opportunities making sure the youth have balance in life. All of our programming is based on the concept of medicine wheel philosophy that says all sections of life to intercept each other and must be in balance.

Moreover, in terms of empowerment, the priority is to engage youth into meaningful roles i.e. elect them into Organizations' Youth Council and do strategic planning using PATH (Planning Alternatives Tomorrow with Hope). It is a visual planning tool that and utilize a lot with our programming with the youth.

**Community Outreach:** For one organization, the priority is community outreach. The reason being that it is the first level of contact with people. They would come to the organization because they need programs and services related food, education, employment, housing, training, clothing and most of all they need respect in life, so community outreach in a sense is our top priority. The fourth and final is our Church and Aboriginal tradition and spiritual piece”

**Long term goals:** One of the organization's priority is to have long-term goals in order for the communities change view change life. As the represent noted:

We needed long term goal as it takes about 25 years for a person to change their lives or build one...whereas the funding ends in 3 years. It is from my experience with the people, I am working with that it takes them more than 7 years to educate, training and provide employment so they get back into life and longer to sustain this before they go back into the cycle. So now that we have been doing this for a little while, over 7 years, our next goal is to market it and communicate with others not just to get to funding but to maintain our out- reach within in the community and that would also improve our chances to maybe get more funding.

**Employment, upgrading and Literacy:** One of the organization working in the area of human resource describes the priority areas as education, training and employment: “This is our mandate with the province to get people education and find employment. We have found out that despite \$60,000 in literacy program, the demand is more than 75% people need to start it” The participant further added, the govt. need to direct money training money towards literacy because with without literacy no employment if people not pass literacy stage how will they get into employment

**Gaps in Service Delivery:** There have been a number of gaps reported in Urban Aboriginal organizations programs and services. Some of these barriers are from the organization's side while others have been from the community's side. Lack of funding, limited technical and administrative resources, lack of human resource, restricted organizational policies and mandates limiting access to services certain communities, lack of government will and discrimination within the system are some of the key gaps in the services.

Following are some of the key finding divided into gaps from the organization's side followed by barriers faced by communities accessing services.

**Limited and Stagnant Funding:** Funding remains one of the biggest gaps in the designing and delivery of programs and services. According to the participants, even when funding is available, it has not been increased while the population continue to grow and so does the waitlist for target population to access services. According to one of the participant representing health services:

There are some of the programs that we have funded in 2001 but still no increases in funding. Everything else over the years including the number of people trying to access these services but not funding. We could try looking for other sources of funding to meet the needs but you have to be careful ensuring that the funding is not for a year only so that when you hire someone for 6 months or less because donations are not long-term.

According to another respondent, limited funding has also let to lay-off staff at her organization so to meet up other target. She further added:

The situation has put a lot of pressure on me as an Executive Director. There are times when I have to stay up late at work either writing proposals so doing administrative tasks that I don't have to make workers stay and over and pay them overtime. Because of lack of resources, I have delegated work to volunteers too them. This also takes away a lot of focus from other priorities and affect service delivery.

Another respondent added, there is also an increase wait-list of people and with some programs there funding has not increased over the years or remain the same and it creates hic-ups

So just under 25, 000 people is 31% of the Indigenous population in Winnipeg. We are expected to grow by 2020 to a 100,000 so if we are to stay at the same pace, then our funding has to be increased by 25% to meet the needs of our community. 40% of the population is Aboriginal youth is under 18 years.

**The cost of to deliver services:** One other gap pointed out by participants related to funding is the cost money to deliver service. There is this administrative piece that the funders don't understand; the involvement of the Executive Director, the finance, paying for organization's audit, the use of the equipment. According to a participant, "this is because most of the funders don't want to pay the admin cost so we get the money for the program but the cost of the organization that is delivering it is not always paid". The respondent further added:

For smaller organizations, this is a huge challenge or barrier. If they hire one-staff with a limited amount of money, there is nothing going in and then who is running the checks and ready to report. So it is the infrastructure cost of running an organization with multiple funders.

This participant said to learn about while working away for four years in a non-Aboriginal organization that it cost money to raise money "so we hire a fund-developer full time that write grants and raise money. She started in April 2015 and by now [Oct-Nov '15], we have \$500,000 since then and we have \$ 4.8 million of proposals that are out."

**a. Fundraising and marketing:** Another barrier pointed out by participants is urban Aboriginal organizations lack the tools of marketing their organizations and fundraising. This is another huge gap within non-profits and especially Aboriginal organization, is that it is all about brand and profiling and getting your stories out there, you have to look good to be credible and that costs money.

**b. Lack of services for men and young adults:** There are not many services for young adults between the ages of 20s and early 30s. As one respondent describes:

If they are involved in justice system, addiction and child and family, there are temporary services for them. There is need for long-term services and programs and we could provide but we are not recognised and again there are funding issues. This across board. For example, they get treatment at the treatment services and they do come out and get stabilised but there is a lot to be done for the next level.

In addition, another gap in the services pointed out by participants that most of the services and program overlook at men and male issues within the context of Aboriginal service delivery. According to one respondent, there are very few services particularly related to healing and family supports that include men. This respondent stated:

Our community pointed out to have men-focused programs because there is a general of services directed towards them. It was not an easy initiative to



do but we have one sharing circle for men, where we have a person come in and does the drumming and does one-on-one talking. It is not regular.

**Lack of culturally-responsive Health and healing services:** One of the gaps reported lack of health care services which are culturally responsive. According to participants, at time, people come to Aboriginal organizations and are already distressed due to previous unfavourable or negative experiences with health or other services. As one respondent noted, “in a non-Aboriginal setting, the values and traditions of an Aboriginal person are poorly understood and their ways of knowing wellness is not valued. This is what most people have told us over the years”. According to another respondent, one of the issue faced by the community is how health care especially, mental health is perceived in the non-Aboriginal system. He further added that an Indigenous approach to health is circular and need to be continuous even in interval if needed due to generation impacts of trauma and colonial abuse people go through in life and should be allowed to come and go without restrictions. This participant describes this further:

In my 26 years of service, I have seen a lot of people, probably in the hundreds that have been referred to us for treatment and they came here for a year or two and then I haven't seen them for another 7 or 10 years and then they come again and gone again five years. Some are very steady and we see them regularly.

**Communities in transition and access to services:** Transition within the cities; between neighbourhood is a barrier for communities to access service. According to one respondent, “when people go and move away and relocate...how you access service, which are out of where you live. Unless there are services provided to their location with the help of the local community and it is difficult for people to come into organizations.”

**Long waiting list to accommodate target population:** According to one respondent representing a specialized housing service for Aboriginal people on dialysis informed long-waiting list to accommodate people is one of the gaps the organizations confronts with. He further added:

Ideally, I want to place all those asking to be here but I don't get to decide and only get referrals from the hospital. We are one the only Aboriginal service in Canada for dialysis patient housing so the demand is very high...some wait for 2 years and don't get space and get frustrated. We only have 60 units so that's frustrating.

Another respondent added an experience from her organization:

Providing support for youth and children on waitlist, so just in our three community care centres, last year alone there were just under 25,000 people that accessed our services. So already we are busy 5 days a week and now looking at extending hours either into evenings or on weekends.

**Organization's mandate:** One participant belonging to an educational association pointed out that how the organizational mandate restricted them to provide programs and services to particular communities:

As an Aboriginal service delivery organization, we want to help all but can't. Our mandate is strictly for the First Nation people. We have few funds aside from AANDC for Inuit students but only if they are off-reserve. The amount only covers 6-10 students. So if a Metis person comes here I will direct them to MMF even though I want to assist them. Sometimes, people that couldn't get sponsors from their bands and they are hoping that we provide them with extra funding, which we don't.

**Retaining target population:** One of the gaps reported by the participants is retention of target population and keep them into programs. According to one respondent belonging to Human Resource Organizations:

Each year we get 15,000 new clients every year. Most of them are looking for employment but for that we need to train them first and assist their education levels. Once they are accepted into program, a lot of them will drop out and unable to finish. Sometimes, we have kicked them out. We lose them and we are unable to help them.

The participant pointed out the reasons for dropping out that clients have other issues such as homelessness, underpaid jobs, unemployment, health that makes it hard for them to stay in programs:

The organization has strict policy against drug and alcohol and often students have to be kicked out of programs. Sadly, there is no good process for them to get assistance and we can only direct them to go to places like the Alcohol foundation Manitoba but the wait list is long, so you have to let them go hoping that they will return after recovery.

**Minimum Life skills:** Another huge gap from the population side is due to their life situation, they have minimum life-skills and so you have to walk them into the program. According to a respondent managing adult residents in a housing:

This is a huge gap so let's say in our housing and housing support program, we have grown-ups who have not never used stove or know how to keep the place. If not guided, they would burn down the apartment and injured

themselves They don't know what they need in a house or apartment or where to get most out of the dollars and budget because they have been homeless for long period of time. It is a hard job to teach them become good tenants.

#### **D. Service Delivery Stakeholder Engagements**

In this section, Urban Aboriginal organization best practices in service design and delivery has been discussed. The factor facilitating and the threats organization's sustainability are also explored. Following this is a description on how Urban Aboriginal organization engage with various stakeholders; the government, non-government; Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal; other nations and private & industry sector to improve service delivery.

**Best Practices/ Lessons learned in Service design and delivery:** Participants have reported best practice & lessons learned in how services are designed and delivered. Following are the key themes:

**Listening to the community:** For a number of participants, listening to the community and incorporating their concerns into designing and delivery of programs and services is the best lesson they have learned over the years. In their experience, one of participants, listening to the community has enabled them to evolve the service delivery process: "no one size fits all. You have to expect people to come in and go out multiple times...you are trying to change lives and a lot of the time they fail. You cannot judge or become impatient for people to sign-up for a program and disappear." This same participant describes how the service delivery approach has evolved to be more responsive to the needs of communities: "so people in our circles have a voice and a choice on how to accessing services. Our communities pretty much tell us what they want from us instead of us dictating it to them. We help them achieve what they need to do to make those changes." Another respondent shared similar experience emphasizing the importance of paying attention to the community needs and design programs: "we have adult computer classes. This came out of direct feedback from people...wanted more than simply coming to the centre and using resources". Relying on community feedback directed another participant to improve service delivery: "we have board meetings three times a year. We tell them what we are doing and they give us advice on the programs. We also have people coming from the communities telling us what they like and what areas we can work.... we take a lot of feedback".

The other responded representing an organization assisting community members to enter university successfully added: “Our members admitted to us feeling intimidated accessing university. They see it as a barrier and we help them make smooth transition”.

**Family group decision-making:** For one participant, representing a social service organization, one of the best practice lessons learned on how services and designed delivered is “family group decision-making”. This approach is adopted from the Maori Model in New Zealand, it empowers families to make decisions when the child is in need of protection instead of social workers making these judgments for them. As the participant describes: “it is like empowering the families...they know their own capacity and want the best for the children so it makes sense if they make decisions. As an organization, we are there to facilitate families properly so can’t make some unrealistic decisions” The outcomes of FGDM have been so far promising and according to the respondent: “In 2014 alone we had 62 admission of children coming into care out of which 49 of them within 3 months went back to family. We have saved Child Family Services (CFS) \$ 1.1 million.” For future, the participant has proposed: “we want to create family conferencing department and make it a core value of our service and in 5 years we do a 1,000 family conferences and will save \$26 million. The respondent further added:

It is a good and positive practice because the child is going back to the family within 3 months...not necessarily mum and dad but to some family member and we have a good support network to sustain this. The child is not coming, is in care of family and it saves money.

**Community trust Building:** One participant belonging to a sport and recreation organization, pointed out trust-building with the target community is one of the key lessons learned by his organization: “having to develop trust with the school division and the community because this where the kids come from. We have 70 more schools from 4 different school divisions where we are invited by the principals to talk to kids.” The respondent provided an example from one the after-school program running in the north on how they develop trust-worthy relationships with the schools:

We started in Shamattawa, Duck Bay, Pauingassi, and Lac Brochet area. We went and met with the Chief and Council there...and they took us to the schools. We brought in the teachers on-board first because they know the kids...the ones who will thrive given the opportunity or ones in need motivation.

According to this participant, the organization, to be able to gain the faith from the teachers and school has let to positive situations for the kids and youth.

**Integrating Indigenous and Western Teachings:** One participant confirmed incorporating Indigenous teachings within the western therapeutic framework has benefited communities. Sharing experience in the last decade, she noted: “earlier, families went through the healing process a lot slower because not everybody was interested in the Indigenous cultural piece of it. Now families are healing process way faster...we offer them to do Western or do both” She further on provided an example on how it works:

At intake, we ask what they are interested in. If don't want spiritual therapy, we introduce them to therapeutic groups and one-on-one counselling ...don't have to do cultural activities but we welcome them to all cultural ceremonies. What usually happens they are in therapeutic groups but also participate in ceremonies.

**Including communities and tie them together with programs:** For one participant, one of the best practice lessons learned is to include specific sectors of the community when designing and delivery programs:

This would minimize the rate of duplication of services and make community feel valued and integrated. Our Head Start project, which focuses on Aboriginal children education is one example...it is community driven project and where we strong relationship within our community with parents, teachers, school districts.

**Providing community education & employment skills:** According to one participant, heading an Aboriginal educational institute, the usefulness of engaging students from academic institutions through work-placement program into Aboriginal Service Delivery landscape is a one of the best lessons learned. Such an approach not only enable university students enhance their skills learned in class-room and provide them with employment opportunities. The participant describes this approach:

We collaborate with the University of Manitoba Social Work department. Each year we go the field-day and try to recruit social workers and students and invite them for placement at our organization. We need human resource and the university knows our usefulness and send them to gain experience. It is mutual.

She further informed the selected workers assist students in various activities:

This year we have two coming to our office to help us with some of the high school students needing extra support in learning and after-school activities. In past, we had Aboriginal social work student from the U of M and turned out to be a role model our students.

**Fostering Indigenous Identity:** One of the best practice lessons learned by a participant was how the organization is able to develop Indigenous identity and sense of belonging and appreciation of culture and teachings in the community: “we take value in our knowledge and teachings; from governance structure, mandate and programming and how we engage with people. We give the sense of belonging and acceptance of their Indigeneity in meaningful way.” This respondent informed the organization, “incorporate a lot of cultural programming and bring in the elders to impart knowledge from traditional medicine, food to justice and self-governance.” The initiative has helped communities to identify with their identity has boost their wellbeing, confidence and self-esteem. It has allowed them connect with other people and make them part of something bigger.

**Indigenous/Holistic approach to service delivery:** One of the respondents belonging to an Aboriginal healing and trauma centre, pointed out best practice lesson learned for is realizing how significant Indigenous holistic teachings are for their work and be able to implement them into the program design successfully. The participant stated: “our model is circular and modified to present times and need. We prepare our people accept the concept of health and wellness as holistic as opposed to clinical care.”

For this respondent, approach to include Indigenous teaching into organizational framework enabled to evolve the nature of program delivery to meet the community’s needs and to question ethics around mental health service. “You cannot just see someone for a short while and let them go, it will be breaking the code of ethics in mental health area. What we do is devise a plan so it doesn’t matter what stage there or the number of times they want to leave and return.”

**Wrap around services:** For one of the participant, the best practice lesson learned is the ability to bring wrap around services to the community: “while focusing on employment we have brought in support services so people may acquire education and training needed to participate in the workforce. We have developed housing, childcare and support services for our students and trainees.”

**Community capacity-building:** Another participant, pointed out capacity-building of the community is one of the best practices she learned over the years. She describes one of her earlier clients:

I hired a person who grew-up in the North-end. Her dad was a gang member and mother was addicted to marijuana. At age 9 she dropped out of school to keep her mother's addiction supply and to keep younger siblings at school. Later on, she got pregnant and decided turn life around. Today, she is a registered social worker.

The participant further added how this woman after dropping out of school having a child and with no resources become a professional community worker was motivation to hire her: "she is a role-model and I to provide her chance to share her experience with community."

**Facilitating factors and Threats to Urban Aboriginal Organization Sustainability:** There are a number of factors that both facilitate and pose threat to the sustainability of Urban Aboriginal organizations.

**Community-based partnerships and funding:** Participant noted mostly engaging with multi-level stakeholders; public-private, government and non-government Organizations. These engagements contribute to Organizations in accessing to funding and build-in the technical and administrative capacity. Often, these partnerships foster strong and lasting relationships necessary for long-term organizational sustainability. According to one participant: "our experience is that partnerships and collaboration are very useful...they are the reason why we still here. We represent with in many coalitions with the government and other community Organizations; women groups, youth groups and to talk about making each other's jobs easier."

Another responded from an organization focusing on cultural programs added: "We are a small organization with limited funding and staff to run services...we had to end classes teaching beading-work, art traditional food cooking... afford to pay. Now we have small project fund set-up from one of the coalitions we are part of."

For one participant the reason why partnerships are important facilitating factors it has enhanced the capacity of their organization be able to apply for funding effectively: "running office administration and program delivery is heavily dependent on smooth funding. I was finding difficulties because I have no background in fund-raising or even how to brand

ourselves. From the partnerships we have in the city, I am now working with a consultant and learn so much.”

The same participant is very hopeful that with now equipped with skills they are headed to right direction. “The next step is to present my organization to the larger community; profit and non-profit organizations but especially to the govt. community...have gathered over the last 7 years of organization’s statistics and hoping to get funds”.

**Smooth flow of funds:** By far funding remains the crucial facilitating factor in organizational sustainability. According to the participants, funding is used for many purposes like administer the office, paying salaries, running logistics or is tied up with a particular project. As one participant noted: “The funding we get covers the administrative side. Our funders know our capabilities but we have to report to them justifying the spending of our funds”.

Most participants have emphasized on long-term government funding as a facilitating factor for organizational sustainability. According to one participant: “multi-year government funding gives us the ability to do better long term planning. I believe our most stable program has been the 5-year program with the Federal government with Aboriginal Skills Employment and Training Strategy (ASETS).”

**Strong Relationship with Funders:** According to one respondent heading an organization for reconciliation and justice, strong and credible relationships with funding agencies allow organizations also facilitate in sustainability.

We are partners with the Counselling Foundation for nine years have a unique relationship. So 5 years ago, they approved funding for one of our projects but we were short of resources. We discussed the situation and [CF] and gave us a flexible timeline to deliver...they know our work and still fund us today.

According to this participant, in these kinds of situation are unique only when relationships created are strong and mutual trust. Another participant pointed out in agreement the importance of good relations with funders a factor for sustainability: “I intensely liaise with our funders because they are mostly our partnering Organizations and involve in running our programs and services. They know what we do and never complain because so far we have offered the highest outcomes.”

**Human Resource:** Participants also highlighted another facilitating factor for organization’s sustainability is human resource specially volunteers. Because funding is a big issue, many



organizations have community members assisting without cost in order to keep the programs up and going. As one participant from a families support services noted, “We face limitation due to fund in hiring people and run program. A lot of the times our community step up and provides us with assistance.... with no cost”. She further elaborated the areas volunteer most suitable to assist:

People just come here to help kids with homework weekly. They teach in kids’ cultural activities like on how to make drums, do dancing and traditional cooking. We have a lot of help in summer camps too. Some of our programs are only in place because the volunteers are running them.

Another respondent belong to another family support service organization agrees to above and adds her organizations’ experience:

We have 550 youth volunteers...it is incredible for an organization even our size. They are the backbone of our Organizations and we train them through one of our youth programs. Keeping in mind the special circumstance they might have and as a token of appreciation for the services, we give them gift cards so at least they are able to cover for child-care or transportation. We won’t be where we are today without our volunteers.

**Reconciliation through Church and Aboriginal Teaching:** One factor remains controversial in terms of whether it is facilitating factor or a threat is the role of church in Aboriginal service delivery and particularly in reconciliation efforts between Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal communities. One of the participant representing an organization that aims to build strong communication and relationship between communities through Christian and Indigenous teaching believes it a facilitating to justice, healing and reconciliation process:

There are two streams of people. There are those interested in reconciliation, how we learn to work together with govt. church and Aboriginal people in the society with respect and there is a big move towards reconciliation to come together and work together and to move forward and there within the Aboriginal community there is a group looking reclamation i.e. they are reclaiming who they are as traditional people and they don’t want to do anything with the Church and the govt. and they want to be self-governing and self-sustaining.

This participant further added that for the organization, the given fact that it is both Church and traditional and that a lot of people asking them to move away from combining the two is facilitating factor for their survival and not going to change....”that’s not who we are and so we look for those Organizations that are willing to work with the Church.”

**Self-sufficient communities:** There has been a consensus among participants that the empowering Aboriginal people and building strong communities is the “key to the organization and the community’s survival.” There needs to be reliance on non-Aboriginal organizations to build capacity in “communication, marketing and financial areas” as an important element of developing relationships that are sustainable. According to one respondent: “only when the government and political leadership show political will and support community-based organizations and groups that many of these coalitions and partnership are continued.” Another participant stated “we need to continue to include Indigenous people and groups into our partnerships and coalitions on issues surrounding Aboriginal children, women and youth because this particular group is most exploited where Aboriginal organizations will benefit”.

**Organization “Indigenous” Identity:** One of the key factor pointed out by participants is being an “Indigenous” organization is a facilitating factor to organization’s sustainability. As one responded noted, “our story is made up of our vision, mandate and values...it tells why we exist”. Another participant in agreement added that Aboriginal Organizations play vital role in articulating the rights and concerns of Aboriginal people based on the uniqueness of their philosophies and teaching. “We cherish the knowledge, wisdom and honour our creator and forefathers and this reflect in our Organizations’ culture and the relationship we have in the community”. One respondent argued that the “indigeneity” feature set urban Aboriginal organization apart from others and direct them to become authentic and credible in service provision. The respondent describes this in more detail: “the way we talk to our people, our Aboriginal people...is spiritual thing and so we are here to help our people become leaders in their own lives, their families leading and their communities leading. We can get them back on to their path.”

One participant shared, the fact that the holistic approach in Indigenous teachings has directed to family-based programming for the community: “We focus on family units. Let’s if when we assist children in literacy program, we include the care-givers...our approach is holistic, for the kid to stay in school you have to assist the parents cope with system”. Another participant added that the colonial treatment of Indigenous people in Canada and continued discrimination and violence in present times has set a part Aboriginal organizations: “When our people are exploited on streets, in home and in system, the Indigenous organization have to be leaders and fight. I say, our practices and values...the ceremonies and sun-dances are powerful, they save lives and bring families together and we heal”.

Some respondents have explored the notion of Aboriginal organization's Indigeneity as a facilitating to their survival from the perspective of service delivery. According to one of the participant: "most of our people want services based on Indigenous practices and culture. There is big need for our work in the community...we are internationally accredited and the only internationally accredited Indigenous trauma treatment organization in the country".

**Threats to sustainability:** Participants also reported a number of threats to organization's sustainability. Following is the breakdown of some themes:

**Funding:** The most crucial threat to organizational sustainability is the funding process. As discussed before, smooth flow of funding not only enable organizations to administer office, pay staff-members but also crucial factors behind designing and delivery of programs and services. Participants have listed a number of factors within funding issue that pose threats.

**Underfunded and Over-reporting:** Participant reported where Aboriginal organizations are pitted against non-Aboriginal organization is when applying for fund and reporting. As one of the participant belonging to a supports services organization noted, "we face discrimination from the point to all the time whether is getting the funding or acknowledgement of the quality of our programming". She provided two examples where urban Aboriginal organizations have faced with partiality against non-Aboriginal Organizations:

We did a research report 10 years ago with a community organization called CEDA (Community Education Development Association) on 7 Organizations; both Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal that do similar service and calculate their combine budget. We found our budget was \$41 million and only 10% of that went to Indigenous organizations despite 80% and over of the services these organizations are meant to provide was for Aboriginal people. Ten years later, we repeat the survey again with same organizations. There is not much has change except maybe more Aboriginal staff at junior or entry level but still not enough Aboriginal people in the board and combine budget is now \$160 million and still 10% goes into Aboriginal organizations. So that is the challenge for us to having to prove more.

This participant provided another example where they finished a report with some of the Aboriginal organizations getting a list every quarter on how much a province pays to group homes (residential care facilities) and they are level 2, 3, 4 and 5 (this means the highest needs) and they took level 4 facilities and found out:

There were only 3 organizations that deliver residential care services and we were the bottom 3. So we get paid on Average about \$44 less a day per child than a non-Aboriginal doing the exact same service. In fact, I would say that

our level 4 facilities like the Macdonald Youth Services and they kick out their kids and they come and we are the ones stabilizing the kids yet the Macdonald Youth get way more money than we do. Further they report once a year only while we report 4 times a year (every quarter). The bottom line is that Aboriginal organizations remain underfunded and over reported.

**Funding is project-based and short-term:** Most Urban Aboriginal organizations receive project-based funding instead of core-funding. This means once the project cycle is complete so would be the flow of fund. In addition, most project funding is short-term and therefore the threat to organizational survival remains. According to one of the participant: “we have no core funding and everything is program based, which means the organization is not sustainable. Also, we have two multi-year agreements so this means after which all of our programming could cease to exist if we don’t receive further funding...it is extremely vulnerable situation.”

Another participant noted short funding cycle and change in mandate also impact negatively on organizations: “funding cycle is usually very short...and once is over, you are likely to lose workers. Several years ago we lost federal funding because they change the mandate. Often the funding is very tight and there are a lot of conditions attached to it.”

One participant further explained the above statement and reported going through red-tape process for their organization:

Let’s say if we bring in an elder to be part of a program, there are a lot of rules and regulation imposed by our funders as they want to know how do you define an elder, how much are you going to pay them and what will be their role. We feel ourselves placed in boxes.

Another responded added that because funding is project based the danger is “you get into the danger of creating proposals to what is available when you might not need those programs at all”.

**Downsizing of staff:** Limited resource and lack of funding also impact organizations to retain staff members and other human resource. According to participants, there he threat is mostly related to money. As one respondent noted,

The staff wants increase in their salaries and you have to look to continue to operate this place as things keep getting expensive. You develop resources and you have people working to develop these resources like the language resources we have here but the purchasing and printing cost is so high and if you cannot continue this way, you have to make cut-backs.

To overcome the storage, the organization gets assistance from the community to come and work here as volunteers and conduct workshops and run programs for people.

Another participant belonging to one of the Friendship Centres explored the issue from her organizations' experience and argued how funding issues impact downzoning of staff:

You want to make sure you can give your staff an increase but you can't. In one our locations [Portage] We are working with \$215,000 to run the same program we run in Brandon with almost \$320,000 You have to adapt to so we had to lay off the staff for the summer saying we will give you an increase but you don't work for 10 weeks. So we are trying to find ways to keep staff all year long and still give them bit of increase each year but it is difficult to retain.

As a solution, the organization in Portage went from 6 staff to 5 staff and the ones working, they leave in June and come back in September and the work-load has increased on the remaining staff. Whereas in Brandon out of 8 staff and 3 of them stay for summer but the rest get laid off.

**Aboriginal Religious Organizations' sustainability:** Participants have reported difficulties for religious organizations involved in Aboriginal service delivery. There are a number of political factors contributed to the phenomena. According to one participant providing reconciliation services to Aboriginal people based on Christian and Indigenous teaching combined:

We are mandated is to promote Christian teaching and Indigenous culture...there is strong lobby especially in Winnipeg against funding for religious Organizations. I am not angry and know we operated residential school that caused generational damage but trying to change. We include cultural teachings in all our programs and community know and respect us...others should too.

**Discrimination against Non-Aboriginal Organizations:** Another source of threat reported by organizations is the how governments or funders discriminate against Aboriginal organizations questioning their credibility and value against non-Aboriginal organizations. As one respondent stated: "the value we bring is not often recognized by our funders. We have to try hard and work on building relationships and with the government but there is always the threat shifting funding priorities...we have lost programs due to this in past."

Another participant providing healing against trauma and other related services further added to this problem argued: "Indigenous Organizations have to fight hard. We are very highly accredited for 10 years both here and internationally but face discrimination against non-

Indigenous organization, where they get funding. This is so frustrating for us". Another participant, running an Aboriginal health services organization added the inability of funding agencies to understand culture discourages organizations and pose threat to their survival. She stated: "funding agencies do not necessarily want to know about Indigenous ways of healing. They don't understand when we tell them about ceremonies or sweats or fasting...think health is clinical. Someone said to us to get psychologist [clinical] and they will fund you."

This respondent pointed out there is so much Aboriginal organizations could offer to communities based on Indigenous knowledge, "the western world is now realizing the importance of smudging and other ceremonies". He further added:

There are people that want us to come and train them, share knowledge. There aren't many enough people qualified to do the work and those who do are in high demand. It gets hard for us to keep these people because we can't guarantee them with security and so they have family and look somewhere else.

**Racism within system:** Most Indigenous organizations feel that one of the biggest challenges and threats to organization's sustainability is dealing with discrimination and racism in the society, by individuals and within the institutions and the system. As one participant from her experience in assisting communities navigate through various government system noted:

It very interesting to see how racism plays when trying to get assistance at hospitals, with the police, with Child and Family Welfare. Sadly, it doesn't matter if the worker is Aboriginal or non-Aboriginal, a large number of them has a very authoritative attitude towards the people they are serving, I mean not all them and I know some really good ones but I find that if people from our center need to deal with people in authority, there so many small and large incidences of racism that it is terrible.

**Stakeholder Engagement:** Urban Aboriginal service delivery infrastructure has evolved in the last few decades. Participant reported multi-level stakeholder engagement with Aboriginal, non-Aboriginal, government, industry/business together with Aboriginal communities and nations to improve service delivery process. Participants have informed receiving funding or financial assistance as a result of these partnerships particularly by the government departments to assist them develop and deliver programs and services for the community and also administer the organization. Another outcome of these partnership is delegating governing power to non-profits and private sector to assist government to help improve service delivery. The third is resource sharing and building technical capacity of urban

Aboriginal organizations. Participants argued, more recently that the private sector has also been involved in stakeholder engagement. Having business and corporate partnership would mean alternate funding for urban Aboriginal organization and better relations and increased outreach resulting in better employment opportunities for Aboriginal people.

Following are some of the key stakeholder engagement identified at various levels:

**With Government/Aboriginal/Non-Aboriginal:** The common-most trend found in the Urban Aboriginal service delivery partnerships is engagements with the government; other Aboriginal and non-government Organizations including educational institutions faith-based Organizations and charitable foundations.

**Government:** Participant shared experience on how they have engaged with the government for the years aiming to improve the process of service delivery. According to one respondent representing a youth organization, the partnership has been related to youth mentoring and employment:

We have an Apprenticeship project, where we are trying to build job skills in the youth. Just kind of introduced them to trades and with the federal government we have similar purpose to get the youth ready for employment and getting them ready for their first jobs.

Some of the partnerships are built to raise awareness between Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal communities. As one respondent from a cultural and langue center describes:

We also do cultural awareness sessions with government departments is probably the only working relationship we have. Say if they [INAC, ANA and different federal govt. departments] hire Aboriginal people but don't understand their needs and culture so they call us in to do workshops on Aboriginal culture awareness with their staff to educate them on how to understand and build a working relationship with them.

This participant also informed getting funding from the Aboriginal Northern Affairs. They help us develop some of our resources or buy resources or in some cases hire a person part time to help us do a certain project. Another organization working for support services has engagement with work Province of Manitoba Victim Services. According to the respondent:

They make referrals to us and we prepare people for courts. The health centres throughout the Province, also make referral when they can. We collaborate with the Child and Family Services too. We also work with the Justice department's services unit together for about nine years now.

Another respondent working for an organization to promote Aboriginal education shared her experience on their partnership with government department on enhancing employment skills of the community, “we have various levels of governments and in one case, we partner with the Child and Family Services agencies and for the past few years once we started the Employability Skills, their wards, who were 18 and send them to us to get that training”.

**Multilevel Community-based Coalitions:** Government and urban Aboriginal organizations also collaborate through various community based coalitions. According to participants, the aim is to include Aboriginal and other communities in to decision-making process on issues impacting their lives. One participant running a family services center mentioned being part of advisory group, “the Thunder Wing Advisory Council with all levels of government and community based Organizations involved to try to resolve issues facing by our communities”. Another participant shared her experience on being part of one such coalition:

We are associated with Block by Block, a project that is funded through the government and looking at all levels of the government working together with the grass-roots community based organizations. I also belong as board-member on the Centre of Responsibility Committee and look at policies and how to change them and so we have a representative from each level or sector of the government and then we have representation from community organizations to propose changes to make them better for families and communities.

Another participant from a support services organization shared example from another coalition, based on government and non-government representation to engage various communities on needs based issue:

Now the hub is another organization, which look for solution in the system. So for example, we have people in need of housing but are unable to qualify because they are owing money and so we look for ways to remove this barrier so the family qualifies for housing. So the individual brings information to us and we sit and discuss it in the committee as to how the policy may be changed and there is another committee, calls the steering committee, and at that level there are ministers and the minister are the ones that are responsible for making changes in the policy.

The respondent adds that this partnership is a huge networking opportunity because “we all know what each of us are doing in our departments, the process and barriers are everyone is facing in terms of our roles with other government sectors”.



**Aboriginal & non-Aboriginal:** A large number of partnerships have been with various community-based organizations; both Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal organizations. The focus is to build strong relationships, better understanding between communities and sharing of resources to improve service delivery.

Many times these partnerships are collaboration and across various sectors to provide integrated services to the community. As one participant explained: “we have a three -sister organization; the Native Women's Transition Centre, North End Women's Centre and Ikwe Widjittiwini. We also have an alliance with 9 community based organizations in the North-End that we meet every month.” According to this participant the purpose is to ensure integrated services to the community and making sure there are no duplication. Another, respondent belonging to organization for children and youth programming through sports & recreation added similar experience:

We collaborate with the other Organizations around town, like the Boys and Girls clubs and we both have our camps and programs for kids but we never try compete with other in terms of who gets most kids but work in collaborations. Other organizations working to promote Aboriginal culture, associates with non-Aboriginal organizations.

One respondent stated: “we partner with Organizations like the Spence Neighbourhood, which is not Aboriginal but they serve in location where a lot of Aboriginal people live and they specific programming and staff so we work with them to deliver culture programming.”

Participants also shared partnerships experience with organizations and groups in the neighbourhood with similar philosophies and objectives and assistance. According to one respondent:

So every Friday night the Aboriginal Youth Opportunities (AYO), a youth organization uses our building. They started in 2014 when there was terrible amount of murders 6 blocks away and they [AYO] started something call ‘Meet me at the Bell tower’ where you ring a bell and walk for peace and justice and it was really cold outside and I said to them don’t you need some place warm to meet afterwards and not stand outside in the cold for long. Now we are partners.

One participant from Brandon Friendship Centre added multi-level partnership with across all sectors of non-profit and government institutions depending upon the aim and objectives of their programs and services.

We work with the Prairie Mountain Health Authority, we work with them very closely, then there are Youth for Christ, Canadian Mental Health Association, John Howard, the City of Manitoba because we are on the Brandon Urban-Aboriginal People's Council, the Brandon Neighbourhood Renewal Corporation, the Manitoba Metis Federation (MMF) and so on. Right now, we are working with some of the Child and Family Services agencies also.

**Educational Institutions:** Urban Aboriginal organizations have also establish partnerships with educational institutions. One of the purpose is to bridge relationships between the university and Aboriginal communities and enable people to smooth transition into getting higher education and to engage university students through placement interested in Aboriginal issues. One participant belonging to an Aboriginal education and culture center pointed out:

We have association with the University of Winnipeg where from the Department of Geography, the teacher brings students every year. Also, we have students from both Department of Social work at the University of Manitoba and from the Canadian Mennonite University to come to our centre for placements.

Other participants shared examples where the universities assist Urban Aboriginal organizations in delivering programming for the community youth to familiarize to the future education prospects. According to respondent from an organization that works as a bridge between the University of Winnipeg and downtown neighbourhood:

Our goal together is to introduce the inner-city youth to the University of Winnipeg. We have program call the Eco-Kids on campus so we sent grade 5 kids from schools in inner-city to take classes there. What this does to the kids was to get them used to the building and get familiar with it as a place they could go and pursue post-secondary studies.

According to the respondent, this has been going on for years and years and "we have with this partnership youth camps to help them familiarize them the University of Winnipeg if they chose to study there".

**Charitable Foundations:** Another area where Urban Aboriginal service delivery partnership is observed is with charitable and or private organizations. Most participants have identified engaging with the United Way, a good experience, "we are very satisfied with our collaboration with the United Way. I think they understand our work and they talk to us. Others have pointed out engagement is sporadic and only "during Christmas break and Easter, when we get tons of food from the food bank for people".

**Church Organizations/faith-based groups:** Finally, participants have shared engagement experience with faith-based groups. These engagements have been to build reconciliation and healing in the backdrop of colonial and church treatment of Aboriginal people and residential schools. One participant stated: “we are supported by various churches. They come to us to learn about the Aboriginal culture and we do something call the blanket exercise, which teaches the history of North America from an Indigenous perspective and it has open a lot of people’s eyes”. According to this respondent, the collaboration with the churches is by and large is very positive:

We started some 40 years ago and that time we were funded entirely by the churches call the Christian Reformed Church (CRC) of North America and the person that started the initiative said they are not going to repeat the mistakes of the past or assume that all Indigenous culture and spirituality is rooted in paganism.

**With other Aboriginal Nations/political groups:** Participants reported engaging with other Aboriginal nations or political organizations. According to a respondent belonging to a supports services organization:

We have good relationship with the Assembly of Manitoba Chiefs on the issue of Missing and Murder of Aboriginal women. We actually sponsor their foundation and do joint events on this. With the MMF, we put our full support on any of their events that are happening as well. We also have strong relationship the National Association of Friendship Centres (NAFC) and part of a campaign on violence against women and girls.

Another participant representing an Aboriginal culture and education centre shared his experience of partnership with communities to improve service delivery:

We work with MFNERC, which is the Manitoba Federation of First Nations Education Resource Centre and sell them a lot of our resources and they sell us theirs and we meet together for workshops on languages. If needed, we get support from the Manitoba Assembly of Chiefs. We sit together and discuss how to develop Plan of Action to run our classes here and the programs.

**Private/Business industry:** More recently, urban Aboriginal organizations have begun to engage with the private sector. One participant belonging to a sports and recreation centre noted:

We receive support from private Organizations in terms of our programming so there is MTS, Royal Bank of Canada (RBC), the North West Company so we

have corporate support definitely. These organizations work with us because they see value of our Centre and how we work with communities in the neighbourhood. I can say that through our partnerships with the community based organizations and the corporate sector is gradually impacting the delivery of our services in the community accessing this Centre.

Another respondent added having business on board of directors and partnering with private sector as the organization's policy:

This year we partnered with Volunteer Manitoba because we have in our bi-laws to appoint a non-Aboriginal person for a fiscal year so we brought in another business person who is non-Aboriginal as a way in which to improve our relationship with business but also to widen our circle and reach around partnerships with business.

Some participants, however, are cautious when engaging with the private sector and want the partnerships to be on equal footing. As one respondent argues:

We are trying to go to collaborate with the corporations and other industries not just for funding but also for project based things. Also, we are careful of such partnerships too because we don't want to be dominated by them and their agenda but want to work with equal terms.

**Engagements with other Aboriginal Organizations outside the region:** Few of the urban Aboriginal organizations selected in the project have been working with outside the region. According to participants engaged with communities in the Northern regions, the lack of services for Aboriginal people in those communities directed them to resource sharing. For other respondents, the community members from outside regions are welcome to and often use their facilities for various purposes when in Winnipeg.

**Active and direct engagement:** Some urban Aboriginal organizations have been working with communities outside the city/region in a number of partnerships. One of the participant informed despite located in Winnipeg his organization routinely engage with school divisions in Northern Manitoba: "we have partnership in Northern communities with school divisions in Shamattawa and Duck Bay. In Pine Creek we engage with the recreational department, where they hire our staff who are based in area. They also use our model for running programs."

This respondent shared another case of partnering with the South East region where the organization has accommodated the community in programs in Winnipeg:

We engage with the South East Tribal Council in an after-school program for kids thrice a week. They don't have high school in some of their communities

and wanted to be part of our project and send some children to Winnipeg. Now, because of these collaboration communities want us to deliver programs there.

Another responded representing a culture and language center shared his organization's case of partnering with communities outside the region:

We work with the University College in the North and sell them resources. If we need some assistance here, we also ask them come and conduct some workshops or come and teach us on a certain topic. We also have a cultural center in Peguis and because they get funding from the regional office, they keep their programs and services separate. We also work on resource and expertise sharing and develop programs with Norway House, Cross Lake because we get funding from similar sources.

Another respondent belonging to one of the Indian education centers informed how her organization engages with communities not just outside the region but across Canada: "we connect with different bands and even across Canada. Sometimes we get a student to get sponsored. I also get calls from Saskatchewan University and as far as University of British Columbia and also in the East."

According to this participant, due to strict mandate to serve First Nation communities (and some of the off-reserve Inuit population), when students contact her for assistance and funding, the first thing she ask them is what band they are with, "if I don't recognize the band I ask which province and we go from there in order for them to apply for sponsorship".

One of the participant belonging to an organization that provides medically assisted housing for Aboriginal people in Winnipeg have strong connections with outside being the only service for Aboriginal communities in Canada: "I have connection with some patient liaisons in some of the tribal councils, with some patient navigators we have sub-contact with them but most of our contact comes from the social renal workers that works with the patients at different hospitals." One organization working with assisting youth and families have funding to engage with communities outside. According to the respondent, "we engage with some of the shelters in the North. We have some funding from the Canadian Women Foundation, which is a national foundation"

**Facilitating outside communities in Winnipeg:** Participants informed despite having the desire to provide access to services Aboriginal people, limited sources pose a huge barrier to reach out to communities in need. However, individuals and groups are welcome to share office space and resources at any time. According to one participant: "they come in here and we host

meetings and sometimes, First Nations communities use our meeting space and band members access our resources”. Another respondent from a cultural and language centre noted, “they would phone us and because funding is a big issue, they cannot come here but want to use our resources like books, we send them up to them.”

Another respondent aim to provide reconciliation between the Church-Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal communities added, “some of the churches that support us are from outside and would send their youth to come here to learn about Indigenous culture”. One other participant added: “we engage with a lot of communities in the North, mostly through social media, with other partners”.

**Reasons necessitated these engagements:** Participants provided a number of reasons that necessitated in engaging with Organizations and communities outside the region.

**Organization’s credibility:** Participants noted that usually it is the organization’s track-record of successful delivery of programs and services that led communities outside their jurisdiction or region to come forward for engagement. According to one participant involved with a number of communities in the North and providing afterschool sports and recreation activities, added that a good record to deliver program necessitates the need for partnerships: “we are fantastic and people hear our success. Communities with work with now, wanted to implement similar programs for their youth but fall short of resources...so we partner together.” This respondent further added that at times when organization is unable to facilitate communities outside their jurisdiction or send them workers but try in personal capacity to meet people and attend meeting and share their service delivery model. “We get a lot of calls from these communities and even if it is not possible to provide help at least on the part my organization, I try and share our experiences and listen to theirs.” Another participant belong to support services organization shared her experience of engaging with communities outside the region and what compelled this engagement:

We are a 31-year old organization and people know what we do and so when they need our services they can call us and get access. This not just in Manitoba but we get call from Saskatchewan too, the first week I was here, a woman from Saskatchewan called and said hey! You are an Aboriginal organization; can we use one of your rooms?

For one particular organization aim to provide medically-assisting housing for Aboriginal communities in Winnipeg, being one of its kind project in Canada has directed people to

collaboration and assistance: “we are the only organization in Canada providing safe, affordable and accessible housing for Aboriginal dialysis patients and families. There is a huge waiting list and we get referral from all over the province.”

**Mandate:** Some of the Organizations have mandates to engage with communities outside their cities. As one participant belonging to one of the Friendship Centers pointed out, “mostly due to national partnerships we are bound to engage with our brothers and sisters across Canada.

**Spiritual Calling:** One participant cited that as an Aboriginal organization are to support their communities no matter where are,

This is a spiritual work and our people need it and we are following and it comes from the people for what we do and how we do it and our people, our workers and community they ask us to do and we will go

**Challenges these Engagements:** Despite good intention, stakeholder partnerships and Collaboration have posed a number challenges for urban Aboriginal organizations. Participants. They have also discussed mostly engaging with partners in the city, however, some have associations with external organizations. Complex forms of collaborations between organizations; while creating opportunities for Urban Aboriginal organizations, have posed challenges.

Some of the key challenges are stated as:

**Organization’s Capacity:** One of the challenges that participants discussed was having limited organizational capacity to uphold partnerships and collaboration. One such barrier is managing or juggling with time and priorities: “time is a huge challenge when you are running the organization; managing the office ensuring the daily admiration and other issues are running smoothly while, writing proposals for funding and grants and also attend regular meeting with community Organizations and the government. Another respondent added: “not saying that we shouldn’t involve in networking opportunities to meet the needs of the organization and deliver effective service delivery to the people but there is so much we can do and time commitments do get compromise.” This participant addresses this issue by getting “each of my staff get involve with the communities and networking so that they stay involve and I do my best to sit on as many different committees relevant to the mandate and work of the organization.”

One responded admitted that sometimes, the pressure is so much they have to switch off:

Yeah, we have been in partnerships that later on we pulled out from because there were really taking up a lot of our time and wouldn't benefit our community as we moved to different priorities so we had to make some tough decisions. We can't be everywhere and this is one of the challenges of partnership.

**Acceptance in Community:** Participants noted cases where communities' lack of understanding on projects. This respondent from one of the Friendship Centers noted:

We work in Portage on children's project and went to meet with the City to get the tax break to get the License for the Head Start [program] and when we first moved there everyone that lived around the project site was like what do you mean there will be children here [in the building]. When we told them about the programs but the community thought there will be problems for residents and their parking space will be taken away and so on.

According to this respondent, taking on the City Council and involving parents resolved this concern. "we went and explained our position and the importance to the community".

**Organization Mandates/policies:** Sometimes organizations have best interest but are limited due to the conditions imposed. According to one participant belonging to MAC, organizational governance structures may hinder a process of engagement between organizations:

We once tried to have collaboration with the Manitoba Assembly of Chiefs and it was more structural and we saw that MoU. We already have similar MoU with the Metis so we went for one with the First Nations but because of their structure, they vote as chiefs, their governing structure is chiefs, where they have to vote to pass the MoU and one chief voted against it and so we never got it.

The respondent said to be sure why it happened but creates impediments for Organizations and should have been discussed earlier on. Another participant added:

We had a federal youth fund that they gave us a lot of funds for the young people to bead as it involves culture and show them powwow and put up a Tipi and learn their medicines and the teaching from elders. The federal govt. cut the funding and the program was closed down. Their justification was not to support any spiritual thing, whether it is Aboriginal or church thing but we said that we will do it anyway so we do it without any government funding.

**Non-Aboriginal Organization working culture:** One of the stakeholder engagement challenges participants reported has been the disagreements, power struggle and the organization's culture clash and pose barriers. For example, according to a respondent belonging to a support



service organization: “community organizations really work together because they have similar working culture ...we work together with people, share and see things holistically and not in peace. Non-Aboriginal and government departments don’t get it. They want to fix.”

This participant added to resolve this situation we try and make them aware “problems are link to one another and fixing is something do in ourselves and not to others. If we fix ourselves, others will know and follow.”

Other participants pointed out non-Aboriginal style to approach community and doubting the credibility of non-Aboriginal Organizations is a greater challenge partnership. According to one respondent working with youth support, “there are times we want to work together with another organization or government but their policies and even attitude from the workers would place barriers on us to collaborate. How do we address this?” This participant shared an example and added:

So when I am trying to support a youth who is in Care, the school won’t let me have information but only provide information to a Child and Family service worker. We get children here in Safe house and we can’t get them even registered in schools because of this....so the kids end up sitting here for a month.

Another respondent added her organization’s experience: “here when a family comes for assistance they require assistance on multiple areas from health to housing to employment but all these departments don’t sit, share and talk to find solutions together. They want to do things in isolation...in pieces.”

Both the participants mentioned that the process to get everyone on board is very time consuming and there are many hurdles in finding out information and dealing with attitudes. “The police officer, the EIA officer and the CFS workers don’t see eye to eye and look at us [Aboriginal organization] and doubt”. To address is issue, these participants have pointed out how the government led coalition the Thunder Wing, which looks into different ways and models to collaborate to break down these barriers has many community organization working in partnership but think such initiative would work government is willing to reform the policies and trust Aboriginal organization’s credibility.

**Attitudes from the Private or Corporate Sector:** Another challenges participant noted in partnership is the stereotypical attitude from the private sector towards Aboriginal people and the issues they are faced with. As one participant stated:

There is a lot of lack of knowledge in knowing who we are. For example, the sense that 9-year-old girls selling their bodies for sex is not a choice but what has led them to this place and those are the pieces that people have hard time understanding. A lot of victim blaming is present on Aboriginal people when you have to step back and analyze and see the context of it instead of reacting in anger.

Another respondent added:

Private sector support is useful for funding projects and so there is a lot of education needs to go in the direction. Many people are still at defensive and uncomfortable and there is whole bunch of misconception about treaty rights and what Indigenous teachings are and what the true Aboriginal history is. They are not ready to change their perspectives.

To address it, this respondent added “we meet up with the business and corporate community and talk to some prominent non-Indigenous leaders and businessmen creating dialogues and conversations; creating a safe environment where they can ask questions openly these threats maybe minimize.”

**Attitude of Government towards Aboriginal culture:** Participants have informed not been satisfied with the partnerships with government agencies due to biased attitude towards Aboriginal cultural practices. As one respondent in-charge of providing traditional healing alternatives such an attitude has posed barriers for them to engage with government in meaningful way and apply for project funding.

In engagement with the federal government they just want to dictate us and it has happened a lot. So we have stopped applying for those funding and the ones we have now we have people that are skilled enough to deal with them and to buffer, when it comes to program delivery but if it is too much for our board to deal with, we just focus on finishing the project and don't engage in future.

He further added, “It is very political and they don't want to see us getting stronger or don't trust our knowledge. We are seen threat to western practitioners, having traditional knowledge and traditional medicine and practices.” He addresses the issue by inviting them to attend ceremonies and sessions and hope Indigenous practices are considered “authentic” to be considered worth investing for.

**Partnering with Church Organizations:** Another stakeholder engagement challenge identified by respondents is collaboration with church with Aboriginal service delivery. Again, there is existing animosity and the viewpoint towards the role of the Church and other faith-based

service delivery for Aboriginal people. One respondent providing Church and Indigenous teachings based services argued: “We are funded and supported Church Organizations and our philosophy is to integrate both Christian and Indigenous teaching through our programs. Many Aboriginal people find it hard to accept this. They felt they could no longer do smudge or do sweat lodge”.

This participant pointed out open dialogue with the community members and other Aboriginal organizations has changed this viewpoint, “we tell them those are good things and will connect you to the creator and is part of your culture so don’t stop doing those things”.

**Partnerships just never work!** One participant has not been very optimistic on the model of community partnerships and never have engaged in the past. According to this respondent, Maybe, if I had engaged actively with other organizations I would know the challenges...maybe it improves the service delivery but in the past I have attempted to engage but there has not been much success. The fact is that in our case, collaboration and engagement with other organizations most likely not to resolve anything I don’t see the benefit of discussing things in workshops for two days that have been discussed two years ago.

**E. Service Delivery Partnership:** Respondents have shared key partnerships experiences with various stakeholders; government, non-government; Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal; faith-based and private/business industry sector organizations.

The rationale behind these collaborations has been for the government to engage the non-profit and the private sector in providing alternate to meet the community needs. Participants acknowledged the value of multi-level stakeholder engagements and how the process has directed urban Aboriginal organizations to generate finances from different sources, build organizational capacity and technical expertise, increased involvement at various levels of decision-making to improve delivery of services.

Most respondent identified areas for future collaboration where partnerships would best fit with organizations philosophy and mandates given continued flow of funding and the government’s political will to recognize the significance and contribution of urban Aboriginal organizations. Some also pointed out areas where partnerships have failed or not useful for the organization.

**Service Delivery Partnerships in the last decade:** One of the most common trends observed in urban Aboriginal organizations partnerships is a large number of collaborations involving government, non-government; Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal, faith-based and other

community originations. More recently, a new development between Aboriginal organizations engaging with private/industry sector is emerging. Participants have identified in detail some of the key service delivery partnerships in the last decade and how they have been sustained. Following is the thematic breakdown of some of the key engagements between urban Aboriginal organizations and other stakeholders.

**Resource Sharing & Capacity Building:** One of the common trends observed in Urban Aboriginal service delivery partnerships is sharing of resource capacity building. Participants have reported technical assistance and sharing of expertise and resources have enhanced the capacities of individuals and Organizations to perform and deliver better. One respondent belonging to a health sector organization in Brandon deliberated on partnering with Reginal Health Authority (RHA) develop capacity to one of their community projects for new-mothers and babies:

RHA not only support us financially but they also facilitate the prenatal/ post-natal health and nutrition program. The public health nurses and nutritionist pay monthly visit to our clinics briefing pregnant and new mothers with health related information. RHA also invite us to bring pregnant mothers to show birthing rooms at their Centre.

According to the participant the relationship with RHA is valuable and useful the partnership for the organization and community as it, “improves the quality of health and wellbeing of community by providing technical expertise and sharing of their resources with”

Respondents also shared other examples where service delivery partnerships have enhanced organizational capacity to meet the growing community needs on skill development. According to one participant representing an Education and Training institution: “We work with Supporting Employment and Economic Development (SEED). They assist us in delivering programs on financial literacy that feeds into SEED Saving Program. So when members attend program here, they are automatically eligible to attend their program as well.”

According to this participant, “combining and sharing resources with another non-profit institution enhance organization’s knowledge and skill and minimize duplication of services both organizations and help community members experiencing financial instability to learn how to manage finances and budgeting”.

Service delivery particularly those between Urban Aboriginal organizations with limited resources and large and well-established establishments develop in expanding their technical

horizons to become influential players in their field of work. One participant running a religious and cultural organization noted benefits from collaborating with World Vision Canada to learn successful tools for funding grants: “my skills are limited and need capacity to successfully apply for large project funds. World Vision is determined to help us achieve...they are not funding but developing skills”.

Another respondent belonging to a small community based-organization working for children and families shared example where an eminent Aboriginal organization assisted in the development of one of their programs. This opportunity is an outcome of being part of a one of Winnipeg’s community-based multilevel collaborations aim to improve the lives of urban Aboriginal people. “This was one of the most conclusive partnership and initiated one our children and family program”. She further added:

The partnership is very close and useful. We learn how other organization design programs and deliver services and evaluate results to improve. It helped us develop networking in the community, sharing of information and expertise, avoiding duplication of services and bring small project grants.

**Increase Communication and Decision-making on Aboriginal specific issues:** Another finding emerged in Urban Aboriginal service delivery partnerships is inclusion of Aboriginal organizations and groups in decision-making process on issues pertaining to Indigenous communities in the cities. One participant from a children and families’ services organization described crime and youth delinquency is rampant in Aboriginal communities and one of the most effective strategy to help tackle its root causes is to work in partnership with government and community-based organizations. This respondent shared an example where the organization become involved engaging under collaboration on community safety against crime initiative:

The Block by Block Project, a provincial government initiative on better communication between community groups, social and health agencies, schools and police to attain community safety and wellbeing. It helped us develop networking in the community, sharing of information and to become involved in decision-making process with the province on a concern that impacts the lives of our children and families.

Another participant shared similar point of view on how multi-level engagements direct urban Aboriginal organizations to effectively communication in addressing problems. Her organization has been working in partnership with the province and other groups to end sexual

exploitation and human trafficking in sporting events. According to this respondent, “it is a sad reality that sexual exploitation is often increase in the days leading up to major sporting events, while anyone can fall victim to it, Aboriginal women and girls remain over-represented in sex trafficking in Manitoba”. She further added:

We became part of the campaign “Buying Sex is not a Sport” to help victims of Human Trafficking in Manitoba with the Province in the backdrop of the Grey Cup in 2015. Our role is to build communication and help public education and awareness on human trafficking together with several feminist, Aboriginal, sports, civic and health Organizations and to and setup victim services in collaboration with Winnipeg police and the City of Winnipeg

**Meeting organization’s financial needs to service delivery:** Urban Aboriginal service delivery partnerships have also been useful in accessing resources and funding needs to support for at-risk communities. One participant representing an Aboriginal organization that provides a wide range of integrated programs and services aimed at addressing youth homelessness explained partnerships with government facilitated funds to advanced need-based projects:

Our Drop-in Centre in the North-End is for at-risk youth. It was our vision to have the facility open for 24/7 to ensure a safe haven for kids away from the streets but came short of funds. In 2013, through different government, health, child & family, police, women and youth partnerships we have achieved. The Province and City have approved \$300,000 and we are open on weekends, school in-service days and summer breaks.

Although this respondent argues that the combine budget from two government department is drop in the ocean but thinks a baby-step in right direction and wouldn’t be possible without government and community-based partnerships.

Another similar participant belonging to an Aboriginal human resource development organizations illustrated her experience with the government:

We are one of the first Aboriginal Organizations in Canada to run the Aboriginal Skills Employment and Training Strategy (ASETS). Previous it was offered by the federal govt. government and now the purpose is to deliver human resource a broad range of training and employment opportunities to Aboriginal people in Winnipeg. This is one of our effective partnerships and we are doing for last five years.

**Building strong relationships with Non-Aboriginal Organizations:** Another area where urban Aboriginal partnerships have emerged is between Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal organizations.

The desire is need build positive understanding and improved opportunities and healthier relations. One participant heading a justice and reconciliation organization, mentioned her efforts in engaging with the church-non Aboriginal and Aboriginal communities to form constructive relations:

One of our oldest relationships is with the Diocese of Prince George. Initially, the Catholic entities funded to reconciliation with church in the wake of the divisions caused by Indian Residential Schools. Now our conversations are between Aboriginals and non-Aboriginals communities moving from blame and resentment to hope and opportunity. We are successful for 10 years now.

Another participant added on the usefulness of improve relations between Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal communities and group but draw a different example. According to this respondent, Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal private sector partnership is an emerging area, which intends to enrich economic participation of Aboriginal communities: “we partner with [Vale Inco] up at Thompson. Actually, they had hiring quota for 35 Aboriginal people but only got 2 positions filled and wanted to know understand better and got us intermediary.”

The responded further added:

The point was to make the employment process improved employment Aboriginal people. Vale Inco needed to know why a person they hire would respond a certain way due to lived experience...maybe they are single parent, abusive childhood or went through system. On employee side, we help them understand the employer’s needs related to time management and negotiate.

**Engaging communities to connect with culture:** One of the aims and purposes of Urban Aboriginal organizations is to safe-guard and promote the Indigenous culture and languages for future generations. One participant belonging to an education and culture institution described how service delivery partnerships and collaborations with community based organizations and academic institutions advanced possibilities to achieve this objective.

The adult Ojibwe immersion program through partnership between the University of Manitoba, the Spence Neighborhood Association and the University of Winnipeg. This is a very significant program and is intended to bring Indigenous languages and culture together through class-room learning combine with other recreational activities.

This respondent also pointed out that this was probably one of the first programs offered in an urban setting with any cost that draw attention from people across Manitoba and the United States.

**Sustaining partnerships and collaborations:** Urban Aboriginal organizations have taken steps taken following steps to sustain some of the partnerships and engagements.

**Networking and Reporting:** One of the most important actions to maintain positive relationships with the partnering organizations is networking and reporting. As one participant noted, most of the partners are financially responsible towards organizations administrative together with project management. As one participant noted, “urban Aboriginal organizations heavily rely upon partnerships with funding agencies to operate and maintain office, pay administrative salaries and run programs” Another participant added, government as the chief partner in most of the engagement so the process of sustaining relationship is crucial yet complex: “a lot of programs are carried out by collaborating with the government departments.... this is where the money comes. They may not necessary give you those funds because they don’t know you well.”

This respondent noted, having good administrative capacity and regular reporting to partners and funding agencies have been the strategy, “they need us for outreach and we need them to fund to deliver know how we spend our funds...they know we are capable. It is fantastic”

Another respondent further argued whether partners are government Organizations or non-government community-based groups, lasting partnerships are based on good networking and communication: “we sit with various a coalitions and have been part of various multi-level engagements with them. A lot of time the technical capacity and project grant comes from these collaboration...open and honest communication is how we do it.”

Another participant added, “sharing successes and struggle with our partner help building credibility with them. They give us money and should know”.

**Involving Communities:** Participants have also touched upon the need to integrate Urban Aboriginal communities as a step to sustain service delivery. The real objective for partnerships is to improve the quality of life of the people and to empower communities, key element is to build and enhance their contributions both financially and in form of human resource. One respondent belonging to Friendship Center supported this argument added, “people are always willing to support and give their efforts whatever way they can. If funds are limited and



no expert to deliver...why shut-down the program, why not involve people". This participant shared her experience on how community member generate funds to run programs at the Centre. "We have an elder's project for our communities where we support them to self-generate money...we buy them stuff, they make the product, we sell it for them at trade shows and other avenues and the money goes back to the program."

Another respondent belonging to an organization aiming at Aboriginal reconciliation and justice shared her experience of how community members contributed helped in sustaining partnership:

In the past, we had funding and so we would send our trainers in the communities to conduct workshops but realize can't keep doing because soon we will be out of money and the idea was not to just run programs but to empower people so they lead their own communities and build their own relationships. Now communities generate funds from bake-sales and donation and partnering with other nations and groups.

**Partnership Appreciation:** Respondents have agreed one of the crucial steps to sustain partnerships and collaborations is to recognize and appreciate those engagements. Though very few organizations have formal mechanisms in place to acknowledgement, one of the participant shared how they built relationships and secure funding, "we invite board-members, office staff, volunteer, the business groups, foundations, project partners and other community partners for appreciation dinners." Another respondent added to conduct annually host recognition meeting with partners, "it is important they know the time and energy, they provide to organization is valued and recognized."

**Partnership Evaluation:** Participants believe in the value of relationships and collaboration with other stakeholders strongly. Most organizations have some kind of an evaluation mechanism in placed; formal, in-formal and mixed depending upon the type of engagement and the requirements laid-out by funders/partnering organizations. The following is a description on how organizations evaluated results.

**Formal-Evaluation Strategies:** For most of the participants, when engaging with government, the evaluation process is somewhat formal in nature. As one respondent belonging to one of the Friendship Centres describes the formula used by the funder:

For one particular project, the government wanted to see 40% of the total of the investments in partnership are at the mature levels in next 5 years,

greater than 75% of the priorities of each plan are implemented in those 5 years and that we have increase employment rate relative to participation.

**Mixed-evaluation mechanisms:** Evaluation also takes place on an informal, community based level. In describing this type of evaluation of their partnerships the participant described a mixed approach: “with the coalition, we don’t do formal evaluation. But with our Resource Centre extended hour initiative, the evaluation is very formal, where we report back to our funders of what is happening on the ground.” In other cases, evaluation is done through quantitative surveys to measure progress and plan for future development: “there is a survey...goes out quarterly to document the process of the partnerships created, the funds received and the progress made. This evaluates where the organization was before, what is learned and what can be done better next time.”

**Informal Evaluation:** For a large number of participants, evaluation of their partnerships and collaboration remain informal and based on building years of relationship and networking with the communities and other people, organizations and groups involved in Aboriginal service delivery having similar objectives. According to one respondent the value of partnership is based on equality: “we value our partnerships as they bring change to the lives of people but it is very informal for us, I would say. The strength of it is simply there is no hierarchy in relationships in our organization and that is how we deal with our other partners” Another participant describes the mutually responsive and respectful informal evaluation model:

We have solid relationship with partners and when needed, we go to them and let them know how valuable and useful the collaboration is for the community and if they should increase more visits and devote more time to our program. We also let them know if something isn’t working and how to improve. They know what we do.

One participant stressed that while formal mechanism is crucial, the real value in partnership is going back the ancestral teachings:

We do focus-group and discussions with our partners and community members but typically prefer to go back to the concept of “Bimaadiziwin” when sustaining relationships. We celebrate our communities, our environment to feel respected, we feel safe. The benefits of these partnership is that we can validate that and reinforce and teach it to our relatives.

**Mutual respect and goals:** For one of the respondent having mutual respect is the key to value partnership:

We value our collaborations and feel this has to be mutual because we both need to see the value of our programs and services. There is no obligation for anybody but they do help us and we help them and the community gets benefit from such collaborations. It is about sharing with us and when there is nothing to share the person will go somewhere else.

Another respondent describes how respect requires intentional nurturing to maintain and develop the relationships. The evaluation process is informal in that the organization sits on coalitions with funders to feed into their strategy development, which in turn feeds into funding opportunities. This symbiotic relationship provides some degree of sustainability because funders and Organizations are at the table together.

**Networking and social media:** Some of the participants evaluate partnerships through networking and through assessing the impact on the lives of the people we are serving i.e. through the voices of our people. For example:

We use social media to reach out the community and partners and built network with other prominent foundations and groups. Through communication on Facebook, we know what is going on with people lives and in politics. We do get compliments for our efforts and also know what is needed to improve.

**Through the success of those we serve:** Evaluation is also done simply through the participants of the programs. The value of the partnership is measured when community members who participate in the programs are meeting their own personal goals and achieving personal success. This approach also requires stepping back and understanding the complex journeys of participants and the long term success. An example of indicating success was described by one participant:

There is a lot of value in partnerships and it an on-going process and takes a lot of time to see the results. We are slowly trying to bring change into the lives but I want to mention in 1994, nine of our members we mentored for 7-years through are Adult Service Program have successfully integrated into the community and have stayed in the community.

### **Service areas where partnerships are needed**

Participants have pointed out a number of key areas where partnerships and collaborations might come useful in future.

**Business Mentorship and Enterprise Development:** Respondents have emphasized the importance of engaging business mentoring for Aboriginal people arguing it will build their capacity, develop their skills and uplift their socio-economic status. One participant stated: “we

need to find innovative means to engage partners specially the private industry and develop business mentorship programs for students and other community members.” Another respondent agreed to this model and further suggested:

Business development partnerships. We want to venture in the direction that leads to Aboriginal youth in career building and leadership and the enterprise development. I am hoping collaboration with the business industry is able to train properly to incubate a business and market their crafts for profit.

**Technical and finances collaboration to build organizational capacity:** Many participants mentioned that their organizations are already engage in multi-level collaboration that enhance their technical and administrative capacity but some respondents stress for more. According to one of the participants: “I have this idea of running breakfast club for kids during summer at our facility but again who is going to run it? I still have to sit down and think of means to get money and staff because right now we don’t have the capacity for it.” Another respondent mentioned:

We do get finding but my job becomes hard because really what do I know...I am a pastor and so I have little capacity to do the kinds of things we need to do here for our people. Now, I am asking the Winnipeg Foundation to help fund us for three years so that I can hire to build a formal system to get successful in future in networking and applying for getting grants and raise funds.

**Strengthen partnerships with other Organizations with similar purpose:** Participants expressed concern that despite coalitions there are still areas where more focus is needed and one of the ways is to reinforce effort is through partnerships Organizations having similar purpose/mandate and goals. According to one of the respondents:

In 2014, the Community Task Force to End Homelessness established a ten year plan to end homelessness. The step was positive but failed to address youth homelessness. As a youth organization, we want to partner with experts and develop a strategy and align it with the 10-year Plan to End Homelessness because when I see Home First Model, it is an adult model and hasn’t impact youth.

One of the participants wish greater partnership with other Aboriginal Organizations with similar mandate or purpose:

I am from Hollow Water First Nations, which is a cutting edge of restorative justice. This is the area where I want to build-up future partnerships and to

work with organization like the Community Holistic Circle Healing. Right now they partner with probation and justice and do sentencing circles and I want to link it with our work.

**Engaging with private-sector philanthropy:** Some participants plan to step in the direction to private sector philanthropy deliberating there is more scope for Aboriginal organizations to grow and gain momentum. According to one respondent:

I like ties with the private philanthropy...we are still kind of seen as a charity model and people feel sorry for us but what we are finding out is a segment of people in private philanthropy wanting to know when the money is going and the specific outcomes. They can help Aboriginal organizations in need so we want to tap into”

Another respondent in agreement added:

[Friendship Centre] service delivery goes back into the 60s and 70s and we mostly collaborated with government, non-profits Aboriginal political Organizations. Now, we want to engage with the private business, the profitable sector or more directly with their charitable arms...especially when govt. funding is not stable.

**Funder and Agency Fits Not Working:** Most of the participants informed giving a lot of forethought before going into to partnerships and collaborations and so they are not faces with a situation where to pull back and end an engagement. One respondent describes why it is essential to being strategic and thoughtful so community members are not losing out on cancelled programs and services: “We don’t want to put our community members in a situation where we are force to pull rugs under their feet because we didn’t do our homework.” Similarly, another respondent stated: “when we look at partnerships and programming, we always think so what we can learn from it not just for ourselves but for our people and whether there is enough political will on both sides.” Some participants have pointed out partnerships and engagements in the past, which began with enthusiasm and common interest but over the time no-longer fit or useful for a number of reasons.

**Lack of capacity to handle large level partnerships:** Participants have informed how at times, they are unable to hold on to partnerships and collaborations due to lack of organizational capacity. According to one of the respondents:

One partnership that has not been carried on the way it started is with the Manitoba Jets. I think they become bigger and bigger over the years and even though had lot of funds, we couldn’t handle the huge scale of work

required to continue. The relationship is still there but we are not working with them anymore.

**Loss of respect and understanding of organizational mandate and objectives:** For others, mutual respect is crucial to maintain partnerships and sometimes in the absence of an understanding, partnerships have been lost. As one participant shared an unsuccessful experience with Indian and Northern Affairs Canada:

We once partnered with the INAC on Aboriginal people and reconciliation...was a disappointment. My sense is they have little compassion for Aboriginal people's needs and I am not sure why that is. In the guidelines, they are Aboriginal but had absolute no respect for what we do.

**Funding but no direction:** One participant discussed experience in partnerships where funding was not the issue but lack of political will to effectively impact the lives of the people was the demoting factor. One participant describes events being organized externally for a community has having no impact because of the lack of community buy-in: "Many Organizations got involved and I could see a lot of money spent organizing events but the people in the neighbourhood were not included at any stage. I am reluctant to be part of such partnership now."

**4. Discussion & Conclusion:** Urban Aboriginal organizations have played a significant role in providing most of the assistance to Aboriginal population residing in the cities across Canada. The most common reasons for Aboriginal people to move to cities is to pursue employment and educational opportunities (Patrick, 2014; UAPS, 2010). This followed by better amenities, such as better access to health care and housing (UAPS, 2010). For a large number of people, particularly, Aboriginal women and those without Indian Status, a chance to escape a bad family situation, violence and legal discrimination on-reserve due to colonial injustice that stripped them from the right to marry, divorce and ownership of property (Yanes, 2007). Some people moved to cities to become closer to friends or because they thought cities would be a better place in which to raise their children (UAPS, 2010).

Once in the cities, federal government jurisdictional complexities and a failure to create appropriate and effective services to support urban Aboriginal people led to the growth of Friendship Centres from 1950s onwards (Newhouse and Peters, 2003). Over the years, the

Urban Aboriginal service delivery landscape has been transformed under these centres and through the emergence of Aboriginal organizations alongside a large number of non-profit, charitable, faith-based and private sector designed to meet the many needs of a growing urban population (Evans and Shields, 2006; Newhouse and Peters, 2003). Many of these organizations offer a variety of programs and services based on upholding indigenous teachings with an aim to protect and promote the socio-economic, cultural, political and legal rights of Urban Aboriginal people.

In this project, the goal was to understand the infrastructure of urban Aboriginal service delivery in terms of the needs of the community, the availability of funding from government sources and the capacity for development of organizations development. In addition, this project sought to identify gaps or areas that need more attention of development. In this project, amongst the nineteen Urban Aboriginal organizations have been selected, sixteen Executive Directors, two are Manager were interviewed while one respondent was a co-founder and Director. The organizations are categorized into those providing support services to children, youth and families in the areas of housing & emergency shelter; education & employment; health & healing and culture, language, religion and reconciliation. Fifteen of the organizations are non-profit organizations while the remaining four are the Friendship Centres. Some of the organizations are well-established and operating for the last three decades providing integrated services, while others are only recently emerged in the Aboriginal service delivery landscape with limited administration and technical capacity.

The participants identified the reasons for motivation for joining their current organization and the overall reasons to become involved in the field of Aboriginal service delivery. According to some, the self-identity of being indigenous; the socio-economic background and the number of challenges and barriers faced while growing up as Aboriginal person in urban Manitoba; their earlier involvement with the rights-based activism together with the current organizations mandate to promote Aboriginal rights of self-determination and self-governance inspired them to become join the current organization. Another motivational factor noted by respondents has been the presence of role-model in the community already engaged in Urban Aboriginal service delivery with a focused to overcome existing socio-economic and political challenges faced by the people. Some participants have been motivated due to the provision

of special programming and training offered to enhance the educational and skill building capacities of Aboriginal people and guided them to move forward in life and gain success and eventually inspired them change the lives of the community. Meanwhile, for some of the respondents, the lack of Indigenous cultural competent programs and services particularly in the areas of health, healing, education and reconciliation provoked them to deliver Aboriginal specific services for the people. Another motivational factor that inspired participants to become part of the current organization was familiarity with the services and programs specially offered by the Friendship Centres in the past.

Participants were asked questions on how they define their organization as “urban Aboriginal”. A definitional criterion was provided to the respondents to measure against the geographical location of the organization, having an Indigenous-cultural focused purpose/mandate and goals together with majority of the selected board members/directors and staff identified as Aboriginal. This followed by programs and services mostly targeting Aboriginal people. According to the replies, all of the 19 organizations are located in the urban centres of Manitoba; fourteen in the city of Winnipeg and one each in Headingly, Selkirk, Brandon and Thompson. Most of the organizations have clearly mandate, purpose and goals that reflect Indigenous teaching and culture and spiritual practices and tied with specific issues that are pertaining to the lives of urban Aboriginal people in Manitoba and Canada. Within the organizations, the governing structures in place also promote the rights of self-determination of Aboriginal people based on more than 50% board of governors/board of directors belonging to various Aboriginal nations and groups. Although, the underlying aim of the majority of the organizations is to protect the Indigenous culture, teaching and language, to build educational, employment capabilities and skill development and to provide health, healing and housing needs of the population, the programs and services are not entirely exclusive to Aboriginal people but include other communities such as the newcomer population. Similarly, the staff-member are preferably Aboriginal but organizations particularly the Friendship Centres are mandated to hire those in need irrespective of the nation and religion. There are however, cases where the organizations are limited to provide services for either status population or Aboriginal people and their families only based on the organizations’ mandate and funding criteria.



The organizations selected in this project have been providing support services for Aboriginal children, youth and families. The programs and services are mostly in the areas of education, employment, training, leadership/mentoring and capacity building, sports and recreation, emergency shelters and housing for specific Aboriginal population based on their health needs; health and services; culture, religion and language and reconciliation between Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal people. Each organization is unique in terms of its mandate, priorities, designing and delivery of programs and services. Some are focused on preventing violence against children and families in household; creating opportunities for justice and reconciliation between Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal people; promoting of Indigenous culture and languages to all community members irrespective of nation, community and religion; providing affordable and accessible housing to medically-assisted Aboriginal patients and families in Winnipeg; employability, mentoring, leadership and life-skills training; positive programming through sports and recreation; health care and healing based on Indigenous teachings; bridging gaps between community and the academic institutions and emergency shelters for at-risk youth throughout the city.

According to the participants, although some of the organizations are providing specific programming for a particular target group based on their needs and requirements, a large number of organizations aim to deliver integrated services to the population having a holistic approach based on improving the overall well-being of the community. For example, there is an argument highlighted by the participants' service delivery should not be in pieces but integrated such as in order to meet the needs of Aboriginal population growing homelessness, the focus should also be directed towards upgrading of education status, development or enhancing of skill training for better employment opportunities and access to better health services through integrated programming within an organization and through collaboration of various government and non-government organizations collaboration. Where services and programs are not available, many organizations refer people to other places; mostly Aboriginal but also non-Aboriginal organisations in the area engage in Aboriginal service delivery. There is a strong networking and partnership particularly between well-established and relatively newer Aboriginal organizations in terms of resource sharing, which helps target population to access services at various location around Winnipeg depending upon their needs.

Another factor identified within programs and services for Aboriginal people, is that over the years more focused has been on development of economic participation of Aboriginal people compared to the past where culture programming was the dominating aim of many organizations. There is at least one program in each of the Urban Aboriginal organization selected (except one) that focuses on enhancing economic participation. Some of these programs are directly designed and delivered to build and train people to improve their employment skills and upgrade education levels while others are indirect and focus on shaping leadership abilities and teaching life-skills and mentoring. For most participants this aspect is positive and would meet the growing need of unemployment and enhance Aboriginal people particularly youth participation into to employment; build better and positive relations with non-Aboriginal communities and improve the socio-economic status of the people confronting poverty and hopelessness. However, some of the respondents argue that despite the need of increase services to enhance the Aboriginal people economic participation, the focus of Aboriginal organizations should continue to preserve the culture and teaching because this aspect is directly related to their self-determination and self-governance. Aboriginal people have suffered systematic colonial discrimination and the need to reclaim language and culture is considered an inherent right. Organizations are reticent that government should continue to support Aboriginal organizations that are providing indigenous teaching and values through culture and language provision.

Funding and technical resource sharing to develop the urban Aboriginal organization's administrative and service delivery capacity have been identified. Most of the organizations particularly the Friendship Centres are core-funded by the government with funding flowing through the Association of Manitoba Friendship Centres (MAC). The government also funds non-profit Aboriginal organizations as well, however, this is largely through project-based grants. Urban Aboriginal organizations are also funded through other sources such as community based foundations, charities and through faith-based (Church) organizations. More recently, there is a growing private sector and business community interest in providing donations and supporting projects of mutual interest.

Having said that, there have been a number of gaps identified within Urban Aboriginal service delivery from the side of the organizations as well as from the target population trying to access

these services. These barriers are of fiscal, technical and socio-economic and political nature. One of the biggest gaps has been related to provision of funds assigned for Urban Aboriginal organizations. It has been reported that over the years, there has been little or no increase in amount of funding from the government to organizations, while the target population accessing these services continue to grow. For non-profit organizations, the funding is mostly project-based, which means it is tied to delivery of a particular program within in specific timeline between 1-3 years. Often such strict factors are counterproductive, according to participants because Aboriginal people and communities have been severely disadvantaged economically, socially and politically and required continued support and assistance.

Moreover, there is a higher cost of delivery of services. According to respondents, particularly those from newer Aboriginal organizations, it is a huge challenge to run an organization knowing the funds are insufficient to cover the administrative salaries and related tasks. Even for well-established organizations, including the Friendship Centres, covering the cost of service delivery means constantly shuffling and down-sizing employees and relying upon human resources that are willing to work for short-term and volunteer basis. Because Urban Aboriginal organizations have limited technical capacity, limited or lack of funding also impact the quality of programming often forcing Aboriginal organization to direct target population to places (non-Aboriginal), which do target Aboriginal people but are not mandated to provide culturally competent services. Another related issue related to Urban Aboriginal organizations capacity to develop effective networking and technical expertise on fund-raising. Over the years, as government begin to step-back in financially supporting many of Aboriginal services, there is a growing need to learn the ways of marketing and fundraising to generate grants and money particularly from the private sector in future. So far, many urban Aboriginal organizations lack development capacity to properly network to access project grants and this is one of the gaps that has been identified.

In terms of services, there has been less focus on programming for men particularly, including them into family health-care, healing against trauma and violence alongside women. Some organizations have identified the lack of political will and therefore, funding to support such programs within the government system and so organizations have to design their own

disintegrated programs such as healing circles for men and youth boys to meet need of the community.

From the community's side, one of the biggest challenge is the general socio-economic and political condition of Urban Aboriginal people in Manitoba. According to most of the participants, the target population accessing these services and programs are generally poor; face with issues of physical and mental health; live in inadequate housing and shelters if not homeless; are under-qualified, unemployed or have low quality jobs with little no life skills. A large number of the population is also in transient (mobile). Living under such deplorable conditions means that in most cases, the population is unable to access services due to continually moving from neighbourhood to neighbourhood; city to city and so on. Secondly, even if they are inducted/registered in a program such as employability and skill development to improve their chances for better job provision, the lack of life-skills, their socio-economic status of being single-parent, faced with possible housing eviction, addictions to drugs and alcohol, health and other issues forced them to quit these programs half-way through. Many participants have admitted that strict induction policies against drugs/alcohol/mental illness together with having no resource or capacity to counter these issues within the organizations have force them to kick out people at various stages with only some of them coming back. Retention of population within the program or service also becomes a huge problem because most of the services and programs are located in specific areas and out of reach for population due to lack physical mobility and economic constraints.

Despite, the above mentioned gaps and barriers, there have been a number of best practices or lessons learned that the organizations have adopted over the years. Listening to the community and knowing their barriers and challenges and then design and deliver programs and set success criteria is one of the best practices incorporated by a lot of organizations. The main idea is that urban Aboriginal people are faced with challenges unique to their condition and so the programs and services are designed to maximize the retention of the people in a best possible way. Some of the ways through which organizations providing services to adult Aboriginal population aiming to enhance employment and education opportunities is integrated services for their clients. So for example, single mothers or middle-age men, inducted employability skill training or for upgrading educational level are given longer time-

line complete the program (3-7 years) whilst, child-care facility and temporary housing option provided at the building with ceremonial gatherings and other cultural programs available intended to keep them on a positive track during their stay. Other best practices have been in the areas of Child and Family services, a topic that impacts the lives of many Aboriginal people in Manitoba and in Canada. One organization has adopted the Maori Model in New Zealand. This model empowers families to make decisions when the child is in need of protection instead of social workers making these judgments for them. Another best practice or lesson learned is to integrate both Indigenous and the mainstream/western model into the program designed and service delivery. The intention of one of the organization is to provide both counselling based on Indigenous teachings and integrating them to clinical psychology as a comprehensive strategy for community wellbeing. A large number of organizations have noted community participation and organizational collaboration with an objective to sharing resource, enhance capacity building, inclusion of community into decision-making and avoidance of duplication of programs and services as the best practice lesson learned over the years.

Participants were asked to discuss some of the facilitating factors and threats to the organizational sustainability. Provision of smooth flow of funds based on a strong and positive relationship of organizations and funders as well as partnerships and collaboration between communities and the organizations to deliver services to the community has been the top facilitating factor that sustain organization. In particular, the smaller organizations have benefited and learned from large institutions through assistance of technical knowledge to run organization, apply for funding and techniques for acquiring small project grants. Community participation is another facilitating factor to organizational sustainability where organizations engage people i.e. volunteers to continue on-going programs and services in particularly where there is a crisis of shutting/terminating services due to scarcity of funds. But perhaps, one of the biggest facilitating factor pointed-out by the participants is the “Indigeneity” factor of an Urban Aboriginal organization. The fact that Aboriginal organizations are unique in characteristics and how they approach an issue, often differently from other organizations when providing service delivery itself is a facilitating factor to their survival and subsequent success. The mandate/purpose, goals, the designing and implementing of programs and expected outcomes for an Aboriginal organization is based on

the Indigenous teaching and holistic approach, which calls to cherish the knowledge, wisdom and honour creator and ancestors and aim for collective and holistic approach to well-being. This factor translates into how urban Aboriginal organizations perceive community welfare and support based on alternate all-inclusive systems and mechanism of service delivery.

From facilitating factors to some of the threats in organizations sustainability. Lack of funding has been highlighted once again as a threats to organizations sustainability, particularly the idea of short-term project-based funds that leads to the uncertainty for the organizations to hire staff members for longer duration. Many organizations have reported downsizing employees, hire staff seasonally in order to survive and hence are over loaded with work-load. Another threat mentioned by participants is the existing biases present within the government/funding agencies system. In fact, some of the urban Aboriginal organizations have conducted their own research in support of this argument exploring how Aboriginal organizations are usually under-funded and over-reported compared to non-Aboriginal organizations providing similar programs and services. According to some, the discrimination is a reflection of embedded colonial practices within the system of government and funding agency's approach towards Aboriginal organization credibility particularly if they intent to provide services and programs based on indigenous practices. The government or funding agencies under-value the indigenous knowledge compared to the western/mainstream methods out of ignorance or lack of understanding despite growing acknowledgment over the years on the importance of traditional wisdom. In order to improve service delivery, participants describe engaging non-Aboriginal organizations and communities through building awareness and understanding through dialogue. Discrimination and racism also prevalent within the system and pose a threat to urban Aboriginal organizations sustainability. Of particular note was child and family services which are particularly challenging in Manitoba and employment assistance. From communication and acquiring information on a client, to filling out documentation and dealing directly with official, the general attitude towards Aboriginal organizations is negative. As a result, urban Aboriginal organizations are constantly having to "prove themselves" to non-Aboriginal organizations and be explicit about intentions and organizational objectives. Another threat identified is related to the role of faith-based organization in Aboriginal service delivery. Throughout the project it has been mentioned how Church organizations have funded projects and set-up

organizations incorporated with both Christian and Indigenous teaching and values to promote reconciliation and justice between Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal people, however, there is a divide between people and community members whether to engage religious organizations in the process of Aboriginal service delivery. For some religious Aboriginal organizations, such a view has threatened their existence and possibility to access funding to operate and deliver services.

Perhaps, one of the most profound aspect of Urban Aboriginal service delivery has been the stakeholder engagement and the multi-level partnerships to improve service delivery. As mentioned earlier, in the last three decades, non-profit and private sector have increasingly become an agent of the state in providing services to the people through collaboration and partnership. There have been two objectives, first is to generate alternative financial resources and to build capacity and technical expertise to ensure improved and effective network of support and services for communities. In terms of urban Aboriginal organizations, the federal government Urban Aboriginal Strategy (UAS) is one of the prominent features to improve socio-economic conditions through improved coordination between government, the non-profit and private sector. For most organizations, the multi-level stakeholder engagement has been useful and improved the mechanism and nature of urban Aboriginal service delivery. There are key features that have emerged in the backdrop of these engagement that need mentioning. First, because the objective of the UAS specially the recent years to improve the economic participation of Aboriginal people, the objective of most partnerships with the government is to fund projects that are directed to enhance the job or employment skills and as a result, more Aboriginal organizations are designing programs in that path. Partnerships with government also allows urban Aboriginal organizations to engage in cultural awareness building exercise that benefits the non-Aboriginal organizations like the various government departments. This is an opportunity for non-Aboriginal organizations to recognize the importance and value of Aboriginal culture thus helping them in better working relationship and to serve the community better and effectively in future. Engaging with government also enable Aboriginal organizations to get government on board to provide facilitation of projects such as in case of primary health care program, the Regional Health Authority is responsible to assist the FCs with physician and nurses to overcome the shortage. With engagement with non-government sectors, the

partnerships are usually in forms of community based coalitions where a large number of Aboriginal, non-Aboriginal non-profit and charitable organizations are join together in a decision-making process on issues pertaining to Aboriginal people. For example, there are successful coalitions in place for at-risk youth exposed to sexual exploitation in Winnipeg; missing and murdered Indigenous women, prevention of human trafficking in sports together with the Block by Block project, the Hub and Thunder-Wing Advisory Council. Some of the organizations and groups engage in coalition and other partnership includes many community- based youth and women groups, non-profit, charitable, Aboriginal, non-Aboriginal organizations working in consultation of various government departments; child family services, health, employment, justice and corrections, medical clinics, sports organizations, school divisions and even religious groups.

Some of the above partnerships and coalitions have resulted generation of funds often through alternate sources to established projects that are useful for the community; for smaller organizations to enhance their capacity building and to access small project grants; combining knowledge, techniques to design programs and deliver services, human resources sharing; often improve relations between Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal groups.

Other partnerships have been with Aboriginal political organizations and groups such as the National Association of Friendship Centres, Assembly of Manitoba Chiefs and the Manitoba Metis Federation. Again the purpose is to unite and support various nations and communities in their programming and service delivery and share resources where needed to enhance capacity building. In recent years, there has been an increase engagement between Urban Aboriginal and private/business sector organizations. In particular, for more established Aboriginal organizations, engaging with the private sector widen their circle of network, extend the scope and outreach and access to different funding venues such as private sector philanthropy through services. Some organizations have expressed concerns with the stakeholder engagements and partnerships and are determined to engage with private sector on equal footing.

Although, urban Aboriginal organizations in this project have largely been engaged in multi-level partnership within the urban centres, some have also been collaborated with



organizations outside their jurisdiction. Again, the lack of services for Aboriginal people in those communities and having established positive credibility for themselves, have directed some of the organizations for such expansion. In other cases, where organization are unable to reach to communities, the members from outside regions have been welcomed to and often use the facilities for various purposes when in the city. There are cases, where a few organizations have also been mandated to provide services for outside communities too.

Despite good intentions, stakeholder partnerships and collaborations have posed a number challenges for urban Aboriginal organizations. One of the common most identified challenge has been prioritizing of the time while engaged in these partnerships as a result of organization's limited capacity to accommodate meetings and consultation while administrating the daily tasks, networking and outreaching communities. While most try to do it at all cost, some participants have eventually reduced participation and at times have pulled away from certain coalitions. Another challenge identified is how the limited organizational mandate and or the governing structure and working culture of an organization often is a constraint to forge effective partnership between two or more organizations in effort to improve service delivery. Another challenge observed when engaging in various multi-level partnerships was the lack of effective communication and respect between government, non-profit and Aboriginal organizations on how to approach an issue. This is often the case where despite having similar objectives and intention, the approach to "fix the problem" and not "working with the people" pose a challenge to the partnership. Similarly, within the non-Aboriginal community including the private sector, the misconception on what constitutes Aboriginal rights and the history and treatment of Aboriginal people in the hands of the state and exiting prejudice and racism in the society; in media, in the judicial system and on the streets has posed challenges for effective engagement and a safe space for both communities to openly ask questions to minimize confrontation and to move forward.

Despite facing with challenges, there has been an immense value in developing partnerships and most organizations have evaluated the results of these engagement in a number of formal and informal ways. In most cases, the government and funding agencies require urban Aboriginal organizations to use formal mechanisms such as communication and reporting with the funding agencies to ensure the funds have been utilized properly. Organizations have also

developed their own evaluation methods based on community surveys, publication of project outcomes and sharing of success stories with partners and community members through media and social network; conducting focus group discussion within communities and with partners involved; and through community appreciation meetings/dinner. Though funding and resource provision is crucial aspect of sustaining positive partnership specially with the funders, one of the most important purpose of sustaining these engagements is to build strong networking and engage communities to bring change in the lives of the people.

Finally, respondents also discussed services areas where future partnerships might be useful. For most, inclusion of the private sector and business and development is a key area. Since economic development is where most of the urban Aboriginal organizations are heading, the idea is to have initiatives which leads to the creation of opportunities in terms of training and skill development of Aboriginal people, particularly youth. Another important area for future partnership is to build private sector philanthropy.

The results have indicated that colonial-rooted policy and legislation together with federal downloading to services through public-private and non-profit partnership including both Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal organizations have impacted how services and programs for urban Aboriginal population are designed and implemented. For the future, the need is for policies to continue to work in multi-level partnership ensuring urban Aboriginal organizations having the right to self-determination and right to deliver culturally-appropriate services for the community. Public policy should not only focus on individuals but on communities with an approach of integrated and holistic model where government departments and non-Aboriginal agencies collaborate and acknowledge the credibility of Aboriginal organizations and support them financially and technically.

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MAPPING THE URBAN ABORIGINAL SERVICE DELIVERY TERRAIN:  
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