

SECTION 10:

A PROFILE OF ABORIGINAL  
CHILDREN IN REGINA:  
PROSPECTS AND CHALLENGES

SASKATCHEWAN INSTITUTE OF PUBLIC POLICY  
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## INTRODUCTION

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*“These kids they’re gonna be okay  
When they’re ready, they gonna take us places we never dreamed of  
Man, the universe is coming at them  
A million miles an hour  
Incredible dreams they must have  
The worlds they have travelled already  
These young travellers they’ll be okay  
And when they’re ready  
The stories they’ll tell us  
The worlds they’ll take us  
I can hardly wait”<sup>1</sup>*

Even though Aboriginal peoples have made considerable progress in the past few decades, many Aboriginal children and youth in Regina continue to be marginalized and socially excluded. The aspirations and dreams of many of these children are unfulfilled, mainly because they live in poverty, a situation complicated by racism and a history of cultural oppression. This report attempts to shed light on some of the lingering problems and challenges that continue to face Aboriginal children in Regina in their everyday lives, while, at the same time, highlighting some of the accomplishments achieved by those children and their families. This paper also aims to identify some of the important issues that emerge from an analysis of available data on Aboriginal children and youth obtained from previously published research. In some ways, this paper provides a useful starting point for further, and more directed, research. Admittedly, this report focuses on a number of economic, physical (health indicators), social, and cultural indicators for a small segment of the Aboriginal population in a single urban area, and even though it makes comparisons where possible with outcomes from similar indicators for the non-Aboriginal/total population, this report should be seen as descriptive rather than prescriptive.

This study clearly recognizes the impact of the family environment on the lives and future prospects of children. The family has a profound influence on a child’s physical, social, and cognitive development. Families that struggle with low incomes and insecurity, and are vulnerable to external forces, such as ill health, usually have difficulty providing adequately for their children. There are some positive signs in the Aboriginal communities in Regina, however, including the emergence and growth of a small Aboriginal middle class, which has the potential to influence the lives of the whole community. Rarely does a society prosper without a viable middle class. Moreover, many young Aboriginal people possess the tremendous resolve necessary to overcome their difficult socio-economic circumstances, an observation that was made in the 2003 Report of the Standing Senate Committee on Aboriginal Peoples:

*“When we first began our examination into issues affecting urban Aboriginal youth, we could not have imagined the unshakeable resilience displayed by many of these young people in the face of so many daunting challenges. We were impressed by their strength, their quiet determination, their honesty in talking frankly about their lives, and their sincere desire to overcome their circumstances, however difficult it may seem at times.”<sup>2</sup>*

The Aboriginal population in Saskatchewan, as in other parts of Canada, has historically experienced enormous economic and social hardships. Poverty, family instability, high rates of mobility, and social exclusion from much of Canadian society has been the reality of the 20th and early 21st century for many Aboriginal people. Life, both on and off the reserve, has been full of obstacles and challenges, including barriers to education and employment. The obstacles Aboriginal peoples have experienced are well-documented, and extensive research

<sup>1</sup> Duncan Mercredi (1995) in The Standing Senate Committee on Aboriginal Peoples, *Urban Aboriginal Youth: An Action Plan for Change*, Final Report (October 2003).

<sup>2</sup> The Standing Senate Committee on Aboriginal Peoples, *Urban Aboriginal Youth: An Action Plan for Change*, Final Report, October 2003.

has been undertaken elsewhere to identify the roots of those problems, analyze their impact on Aboriginal as well as non-Aboriginal people, and find policy solutions. However, much of this work has been directed at the Aboriginal population as a whole or in individual provinces on an aggregate basis. Less attention has been focused on separate and smaller segments of the Aboriginal population, such as people living in the urban areas of a particular province or even individual population groups within a specific urban area.

Many of the challenges that face Aboriginal peoples in urban areas are sometimes specific to an area or region, and differ from the problems and challenges that their counterparts on-reserve or in other parts of the country experience. Recent trends show that a substantial portion of the Aboriginal population in Saskatchewan has migrated into urban areas, mainly Regina, Saskatoon, and Prince Albert, which has presented new challenges to them as they struggle to become part of the economic and social fabric of these cities. Despite the difficulties, however, there have been some encouraging signs recently. More Aboriginal people, for instance, are now graduating from high school and obtaining post-secondary degrees than in the past. While some Aboriginal people might return to the reserves upon graduation, many of them remain in the city and become an integral part of the urban lifestyle.

## DEMOGRAPHIC CHARACTERISTICS OF REGINA

### - TOTAL AND ABORIGINAL POPULATION OVERVIEW

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Regina has experienced a significant demographic change in the last two decades. Between 1996 and 2001 the Regina Census Metropolitan Area (CMA) experienced a 0.4 per cent decrease in population.<sup>3</sup> Even so, there was an increase of 15 per cent in the Aboriginal population, bringing the Aboriginal population to 8.3 per cent of the Regina CMA population in 2001.<sup>4</sup> At close to 16,000 residents, Regina's Aboriginal population is large compared to that of other urban centres in Canada. Despite its smaller total population size, compared to other CMAs in the country, the Regina CMA ranks seventh in the nation in terms of the number of residents reporting Aboriginal identity. When the measure of percentage of total CMA population is used, the Aboriginal population in Regina ranks as the third largest in Canada.<sup>5</sup> Regina is also a young city relative to other CMAs due primarily to a young Aboriginal population.<sup>6</sup> The Aboriginal population in Regina is also much younger than the total Regina population, with the 0-19 age group comprising nearly 50 per cent (7,645 people) of the Aboriginal population, a figure that is close to double the non-Aboriginal share of the under 20 age group<sup>7</sup> (Figure 1). Regina also has a young median age (age at which half of the population is older and half is younger) compared to other CMAs, ranking seventh with a median age of 35.9.<sup>8</sup> However, with a median age of 20.7, the Aboriginal population is much younger relative to the total CMA population.<sup>9</sup>

<sup>3</sup> Statistics Canada, "Highlights for Regina (CMA), Saskatchewan," *2001 Census, 2001 Community Profiles*.

<sup>4</sup> Statistics Canada, "Population reporting Aboriginal identity in selected census metropolitan areas (CMA) and census agglomerations (CA) with an Aboriginal population of 5000 or more, 1996 and 2001," *2001 Census, Aboriginal Population Profile*.

<sup>5</sup> *Ibid.*

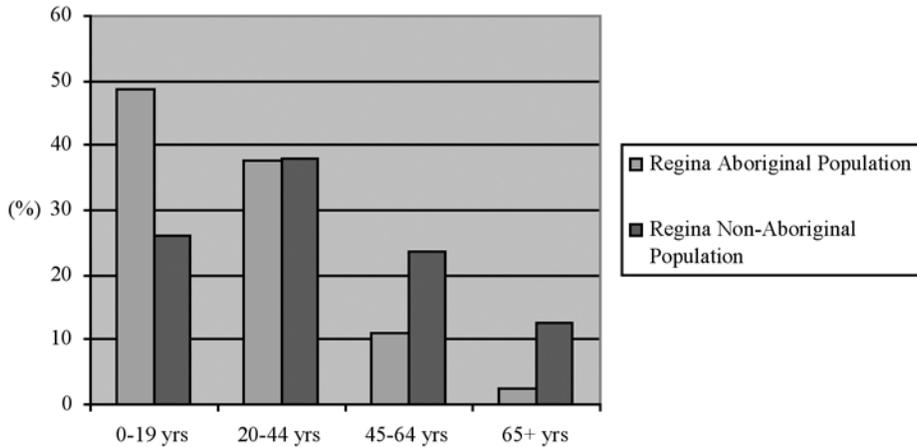
<sup>6</sup> Statistics Canada, "Age and Sex, Percentage Distribution for Both Sexes, for Census Metropolitan Areas and Census Agglomerations – 100% Data," *2001 Census, Profile of the Canadian population by age and sex: Canada Ages*.

<sup>7</sup> Statistics Canada, "Aboriginal Identity (8), Age Groups (11B) and Sex (3) for Population, for Canada, Provinces, Territories, Census Metropolitan Areas and Census Agglomerations, 2001 Census – 20% Sample Data," *2001 Census, Aboriginal Peoples of Canada*.

<sup>8</sup> Statistics Canada, "Age and Sex, Median Age for Both Sexes, for Census Metropolitan Areas and Census Agglomerations – 100% Data," *2001 Census, Profile of the Canadian population by age and sex: Canada Ages*.

<sup>9</sup> Statistics Canada, "Population Statistics for: Regina (CMA), Saskatchewan," *2001 Census, Aboriginal Population Profile*.

FIGURE 1: REGINA CMA ABORIGINAL AND NON-ABORIGINAL POPULATIONS AS A PERCENTAGE OF IDENTITY POPULATION AND BY AGE GROUP, 2001



Source: Statistics Canada, "Aboriginal Identity (8), Age Groups (11B) and Sex (3) for Population, for Canada, Provinces, Territories, Census Metropolitan Areas and Census Agglomerations, 2001 Census – 20% Sample Data, 2001 Census, *Aboriginal Peoples of Canada*.

Despite the increase in the proportion of young Aboriginal people in Regina, there are serious quality of life differences between the Aboriginal and the non-Aboriginal population. Labour force indicators reveal clear differences in the experience of the Aboriginal and total population. The labour force participation rate of the Aboriginal population in Regina was 12 per cent below total CMA population figures in 2001. The 2001 Census also showed unemployment among the Aboriginal population as being more than three times as high as that of the overall Regina population.<sup>10</sup> And, at \$12,996 per annum, the median total income<sup>11</sup> of Aboriginal persons in Regina over age 15 was approximately half that of the total population.<sup>12</sup> These factors clearly have an impact on children in those families.

This report attempts to look at those children and youth in the Aboriginal population in Regina, a group that is increasing and will have a major impact on the social and economic life of the city in years to come. The intention here is to examine some of the challenges these children face in school and in their family. An attempt is also made to describe the broad characteristics of Aboriginal families, which exert enormous influence on the lives of children. However, it should be noted at the outset that there are problems with the available data. There is simply not enough data readily available, and much of what is presented, lacks any consistency with age.

## ECONOMIC ISSUES

The Aboriginal population in Regina faces a number of problems and challenges, but poverty is, by and large, the most serious problem for Aboriginal families and their children. Economic conditions are usually at the core of many problems for most families as they affect not only the economic but also the social and physical well-being of children and youth. Regina is no exception to this phenomenon. The Council on Social Development Regina, Inc. released a report in October 2002, in which it stated that:

*"Poverty is a reality for many people in Regina and it affects every area of a child or youth's life. Poverty is an issue for many families in Regina and as such is a recurring theme in the literature and in the comments*

<sup>10</sup> Statistics Canada, "Work Statistics for Regina (CMA), Saskatchewan," and "Labour Force Indicators for the Aboriginal Identity Population," 2001 Census, 2001 *Aboriginal Population Profile*.

<sup>11</sup> Refers to the total money income received during calendar year 2000.

<sup>12</sup> Statistics Canada, "Income Statistics for Regina (CMA), Saskatchewan," 2001 Census, 2001 *Community Profiles*.

*of key informants. Poverty has been linked to unemployment, low minimum wage, low levels of literacy, inadequate educational opportunities and racism. Without adequate resources, basic needs such as food, shelter, clothing, emotional and social support, safety and health are difficult to meet.”<sup>13</sup>*

Much of the data collected and analyzed in this report describe the economic situation of Aboriginal adults with regards to a variety of factors, including educational attainment levels and employment opportunities, but the data do not reveal any specific and directly identifiable results and trends among children. However, we must not detach children from their families in our analysis of the factors that affect children’s well-being. The family environment is a powerful influence in a child’s life. Family dynamics will determine to a large extent a child’s physical and emotional development, particularly in the first several years of life, and also have an impact on the child’s future prospects in terms of education, employment, and social status.

Researchers and policy analysts have described poverty as the greatest obstacle preventing Aboriginal people to become more involved in the economic and social life in Regina. Using Canada’s unofficial definition of poverty is based on Statistic Canada’s Low Income Cut-offs (LICOs)<sup>14</sup>, the poverty rate is too high for Aboriginal peoples. In 2001, the estimated child poverty rate in Canada was 15.6 per cent while that of Saskatchewan was 17.6 per cent.<sup>15</sup> Yet, the poverty rate among First Nations children ages 0-14 living off-reserve in Saskatchewan in 2000 was 55.9 per cent, while the corresponding number for Regina was 61.3 per cent. The incidence of poverty among Métis children ages 0-14 living off-reserve in Saskatchewan in 2000 was 36 per cent, while the corresponding number for Regina was 45.7 per cent.<sup>16</sup> These are staggering statistics that will have long-term negative economic consequences not only for the Aboriginal child but for the whole non-Aboriginal population too. The poverty rate of the Regina Aboriginal population in 1995 was 55 per cent, more than double the total population figure of 23.9 per cent.<sup>17</sup>

However, poverty should not be examined in isolation, because it is not only associated with low incomes or high dependency on the welfare system. Poverty has deeper roots and encompasses several aspects of today’s economic and social environment, including unemployment, inadequate education and training, large number of single-parent families, and high cost of living. All these factors contribute to financial dependency and, consequently, poverty. In this regard, it is important to recognize the fact that child poverty is directly linked to adult or parent poverty. Examining children and parents separately would simply be ignoring many of the causes of child poverty. The poverty rates of the Aboriginal youth population have long been linked to historically low educational attainment levels and continue to have important long-term implications for both the Regina and Saskatchewan economies.

*“{I}n 1996, Aboriginal youth without a high school certificate reported an unemployment rate of 40 per cent. In contrast, unemployment rates were only half as high for those with secondary (23%) or college (20%) completion. Young Aboriginal people with a university degree recorded the lowest rate, at 9 per cent. Thus, an increasing important mitigating factor offsetting poor employment outcomes for Aboriginal youth is education.”<sup>18</sup>*

An examination of 2001 Census data reveals serious (though similar) discrepancies between income, earnings, and labour force characteristics for Regina’s total population and its Aboriginal population. At just under \$13,000 per year, the 15+ Regina Aboriginal population median income figure is about half that of the total population median income of \$24,000. Average earnings of the Regina CMA’s 15+ Aboriginal labour force were \$20,000, or two-thirds that of the total population average. Income and earnings are largely reflective of labour force participation rates, but the labour force participation rate of Aboriginal peoples in Regina (58.4 per cent) is about 12 per cent below total population rates. And, at close to 21 per cent, the unemployment rate of the

<sup>13</sup> The Council on Social Development Regina, Inc., *A Focus on Regina’s Children and Youth* (The Centre for Excellence for Child and Youth Centred Prairie Communities – Regina Site: 2002, p. 14).

<sup>14</sup> Lee, K., *Urban Poverty in Canada: A Statistical Profile* (Canadian Council on Social Development: April 2000).

<sup>15</sup> Statistics Canada’s, *Income Trends in Canada 2001*, 13F0022XCB in Campaign 2000, *Honouring Our Promises. Meeting the Challenges to End Child and Family Poverty*, 2003 Report Card on Child Poverty in Canada.

<sup>16</sup> Hunter, G. and Douglas, F., *Saskatchewan Child Poverty Report*, Social Policy Research Unit, Faculty of Social Work, University of Regina, November 2003.

<sup>17</sup> Lee, K., *Urban Poverty in Canada: A Statistical Profile* (Canadian Council on Social Development: April 2000).

<sup>18</sup> Senate of Canada, *Urban Aboriginal Youth: An Action Plan for Change*, Final Report of the Standing Committee on Aboriginal Peoples, October 2003, p. 32.

Aboriginal population is about 15 per cent higher than total population figures.<sup>19</sup> Since the disparities between total and Aboriginal population figures and the economic conditions of Aboriginal peoples do not vary significantly between Regina, Saskatoon, and Prince Albert,<sup>20</sup> it might be expected that the issues, challenges and successes of Aboriginal children in Saskatoon and Prince Albert are similar to those of Aboriginal children in Regina.

The lower labour force participation rate of the 15+ Aboriginal population is also evident in national statistics on youth employment. The Final Report of the Standing Senate Committee on Aboriginal Peoples noted that only 42 per cent of Aboriginal youth have jobs compared to 68 per cent for non-Aboriginal youth.<sup>21</sup> The Council on Social Development Regina has noted the relationship between the low educational attainment of Aboriginal youth and long-term economic consequences for the province:

*“Unemployment is a significant concern for youth because of their lack of specific skills and experience... With low or little education, there is virtually no hope that these youth will be able to secure anything more than a minimum wage job, if that, in the growing information economy. This will cause a greater employment gap in the future, particularly as the growth of the Aboriginal population far exceeds the rate of job creation. The need for higher-level skills and specialized knowledge has never been more acute as the projected labour shortages in Regina are primarily in the information technologies and health-care, biotechnology and agribusiness sectors.”<sup>22</sup>*

The far-reaching consequences of low educational attainment levels and low rates of labour force participation among the Saskatchewan Aboriginal population were also examined in a recent Saskatchewan Institute of Public Policy study of 2001 Census statistics. Coupled with the largest percentage of seniors and the oldest workforce of the provinces, the low educational attainment and workforce participation currently exhibited in the Aboriginal population has serious implications for the provincial labour supply and socio-economic sustainability in the province, including the sustainability of the health care system. However, the study notes that if educational and labour force figures are increased to be closer to non-Aboriginal figures, when labour force shortages are predicted to become acute in about a decade, Saskatchewan could well be better-placed than other provinces, and many parts of the industrialized world, due to its very young Aboriginal population.<sup>23</sup>

Employment and income factors have a strong relationship to housing affordability and, consequently, the quality of housing. Housing conditions are tied to the well-being of children and affect the quality of health of a population, in general. A large portion of the Aboriginal population in Regina lives in substandard housing. The available data indicate that one-fifth of the Aboriginal population occupied dwellings in Regina that required major repairs in 2001.<sup>24</sup> Mobility rates are also high among this population. Remaining in the same residence brings stability to the family and the community, and might influence the ability of children to do well in school. Statistics from the 2001 Census reveal that about 70 per cent of the Regina Aboriginal population experienced a change in residence over the preceding 5-year period.<sup>25</sup> In addition, only 32 per cent of Aboriginal people own their homes compared to 68 per cent of non-Aboriginal people.<sup>26</sup>

<sup>19</sup> Statistics Canada, “Population Statistics for: Regina (CMA), Saskatchewan,” *2001 Census, 2001 Aboriginal Population Profile*.

<sup>20</sup> Statistics Canada, “Population Statistics for: Saskatoon (CMA), Saskatchewan and Prince Albert (CA), Saskatchewan,” *2001 Census, 2001 Community Profile and 2001 Aboriginal Population Profile*. The 2001 Census recorded the median total income of the 15+ total population in the Saskatoon CMA as \$21,605, whereas the corresponding figure for the Aboriginal population was \$12,437. In the Prince Albert CA, total median income was \$20,678 and \$14,044 for the total and Aboriginal populations, respectively. The unemployment rate in 2001 was 6.7% for the Saskatoon total population and 22.3% for the Aboriginal population. Discrepancies in the unemployment rate between the Prince Albert CA total population (8.8%) and Aboriginal population (16.2%) were similarly evident in the latest census statistics.

<sup>21</sup> Statistics Canada defines ‘youth’ as those persons aged 15 to 24 years.

<sup>22</sup> The Council on Social Development Regina, Inc., *A Focus on Regina’s Children and Youth* (The Centre for Excellence for Child and Youth Centred Prairie Communities – Regina Site: 2002, pp. 16-17).

<sup>23</sup> Janice Stokes, “Demographic Trends and Socio-Economic Sustainability in Saskatchewan: Some Policy Considerations,” *Saskatchewan Institute of Public Policy*, Policy Paper 19 (October 2003).

<sup>24</sup> Statistics Canada, “Family Dwelling Statistics for Regina (CMA), Saskatchewan,” *2001 Census, 2001 Aboriginal Population Profile*.

<sup>25</sup> Statistics Canada, “Population Statistics for: Regina (CMA), Saskatchewan,” *2001 Census, 2001 Aboriginal Population Profile*.

<sup>26</sup> *Ibid.*

The situation, however, is not bleak in all communities. There is hope coming from a number of community-based organizations involved in housing projects and initiatives directed at providing adequate and affordable housing to Aboriginal people. Moreover, some Aboriginal people already live in above-average houses and apartments in more affluent neighbourhoods in the city, and have achieved a reasonably high social and economic status in their communities, a part of the new Aboriginal middle class.

Because the demographic profile of the young Aboriginal population in Regina shows an increasing number of Aboriginal children relative to the overall Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal population, this has some important implications for government priorities in the short and medium term. So far, there has not been a consistent government policy to deal with Aboriginal economic issues pertaining to employment. Over the last few decades, the government policy on Aboriginal peoples has been shaped, for the most part, by the federal Department of Indian Affairs. Although a great deal of attention has been given to Aboriginal issues, there has been little success in developing a stable and coherent framework for the analysis of the issues, let alone a clear policy on how to address them. There has also been very little in the way of addressing urban and community-specific issues and challenges that Aboriginal peoples face. The exception might very well be a number of locally based non-profit organizations that deal with small segments of the Aboriginal population. These organizations have done a commendable job in providing counseling and support to Aboriginal people in need.

## SOCIAL ISSUES AND EDUCATION

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There are many factors that affect the social development of all children. It is not, however, the purpose of this project to explore all of these aspects, as they relate to Aboriginal children, in great detail, but simply to identify some of the most serious ones. It is important for those who are attempting to address the social difficulties to understand the strong identity that Aboriginal persons have to their traditional environment. Their home reserve is a major social/emotional foundation and a necessary support for Aboriginal families in Regina. Even though it may have been years since they last visited their home, it remains an essential point of identity and recognition among Aboriginal people. The tradition of relying on the extended family for all kinds of support is inherent in Aboriginal culture and it is the first place they look for help. With many families in disarray — or just the fact that their family now lives hundreds of kilometres away from their extended family — this vital support is lost. The connectedness to culture and family is often maintained by regular visits, sometimes for extended periods of time. Although disruptive to the children's education, and relationships in the city, the family sees little choice. The family is driven back and forth, seeking help to alleviate the social difficulties that derive from a city life. Then, while living in the city, other members of the family come and "visit", disrupting routines and commitments. The extended family is both a blessing and a curse.<sup>27</sup>

The Mobile Crisis Unit is a 24-hour response team of social workers who respond to any request for help. Nothing is considered too small not to be addressed as soon as possible. It is interesting, because this unit also responds to complaints of child protection and neglect. Why would these mothers call the agency that is known to "take away children"? It is a complicated and surprising finding, but these mothers know that if they call the Mobile Crisis Unit, they will not be put "on hold". They will speak directly to a "real" person whose job is to help them night or day. The mothers trust these social workers in ways that they do not trust other professional "helpers". Even if the worker cannot deliver the help or service, these mothers know that the worker will find and call the appropriate agency and that agency will take their needs seriously. They see these workers as knowledgeable and skilful but more importantly, powerful.<sup>28</sup>

The prevalence of violence in Aboriginal communities is another social issues that impacts on Aboriginal families and children. Aboriginal children in Regina are overrepresented in transition-house usage. Nearly three quarters (73.9%) of children that resided with their caregivers in the city's 3 transition houses for women

<sup>27</sup> Interview with Doug Durst, Faculty of Social Work, University of Regina, December 2003.

<sup>28</sup> Interview with Doug Durst, Faculty of Social Work, University of Regina, December 2003.

leaving abusive relationships in 2002-03 were Aboriginal.<sup>29</sup> Sofia House (second-stage housing) in Regina reports that half of the children that pass through this agency are Aboriginal (slightly more than half of the women reporting their status as Aboriginal).<sup>30</sup> Many Aboriginal children do not have or do not live with their families, which is another problematic factor in their development. The Child Welfare League of Canada, in a recent report, states that there are 2,710 children in foster care in Saskatchewan, of whom, 67 per cent are of Aboriginal identity.<sup>31</sup>

The United Way of Regina in cooperation with the Regina Regional Intersectoral Committee (RIC) engages in the provision of various social support programs and services targeting Aboriginal persons. Twenty-two per cent of the total services provided are in the area of community social supports. These include direct or indirect involvement in financing, administration, technical, and educational support in the delivery of social services where limitations or gaps exist.<sup>32</sup>

Another organization that plays an important role in providing support services to parents and children in Regina is the North Central Family Centre. Over the last four and a half years it has been working towards alleviating many social, health and economic problems, including poor housing conditions, family instability, crime, poverty, substance abuse, and underemployment, faced by residents of North Central Regina, particularly Aboriginal persons. The primary focus, however, is on children at risk living in the neighbourhood. North Central is one of the areas in the city with a large Aboriginal population.<sup>33</sup> According to the 2001 Saskatchewan Hospital Services Plan, there are 3,886 Registered Indians living in North Central, or 31.9 per cent of the total Registered Indian population in Regina. Forty-eight per cent of all children and youth under the age of 15 in the North Central area are Aboriginal. According to the Report on the Community Vision and Action Plan, prepared for the North Central Community Partnership, 35 per cent of the families living in North Central Regina are also one-parent families.<sup>34</sup> Approximately 70 per cent of people who use the services of the North Central Family Centre are Aboriginal children between 0 and 14 years of age and approximately 20 per cent are 15-19 year-olds.<sup>35</sup> The SCEP Centre (Socialization, Communication, and Education Program) provides programming to children aged 2 to 7 years who exhibit significant to severe social, emotional and behavioural difficulties. SCEP reports that its Aboriginal client base is growing, and that between September 2002 and June 2003, 59 per cent of the children enrolled were Aboriginal.<sup>36</sup>

Education is also important for the cognitive and social development of a child. A high level of education can make a big difference in a child's life in terms of economic stability and social inclusion in the future. Conversely, the lack of education contributes to a detachment from the labour force and, usually, dependency on the welfare system. One of the main challenges for Regina is to work with the Aboriginal communities to improve the educational level of Aboriginal children. This will not be an easy task as the Council on Social Development Regina, Inc. recently described some of the most serious impediments to improving school outcomes for the Aboriginal population:

“There is an increasing Aboriginal population in the education system, and some studies suggest that these students encounter more barriers in staying in school. The majority of at-risk students come from families with a low level of education, no necessary support mechanisms, and negative school experiences. Youth that drop out of school have a higher risk of difficulty with the law, becoming parents at very young ages, becoming injured, committing suicide or abusing drugs and alcohol.”<sup>37</sup>

<sup>29</sup> Information provided by the provincial Department of Community Resources and Employment, January 2004.

<sup>30</sup> Information provided by Sofia House, January 2004.

<sup>31</sup> Farris-Manning, S. and Zandstra, M., *Children in Care in Canada: A summary of current issues and trends with recommendations for future research* (Foster LIFE Inc.: 2003)

<sup>32</sup> McGovern, K., *Building on Our Strengths*, Final Report Prepared for United Way of Regina and the Regina Regional Intersectoral Committee, December 6, 2002.

<sup>33</sup> Information provided by the North Central Family Centre, January 2004.

<sup>34</sup> Parnes, J., *Report on the Community Vision and Action Plan*, North Central Community Partnership, May 2003.

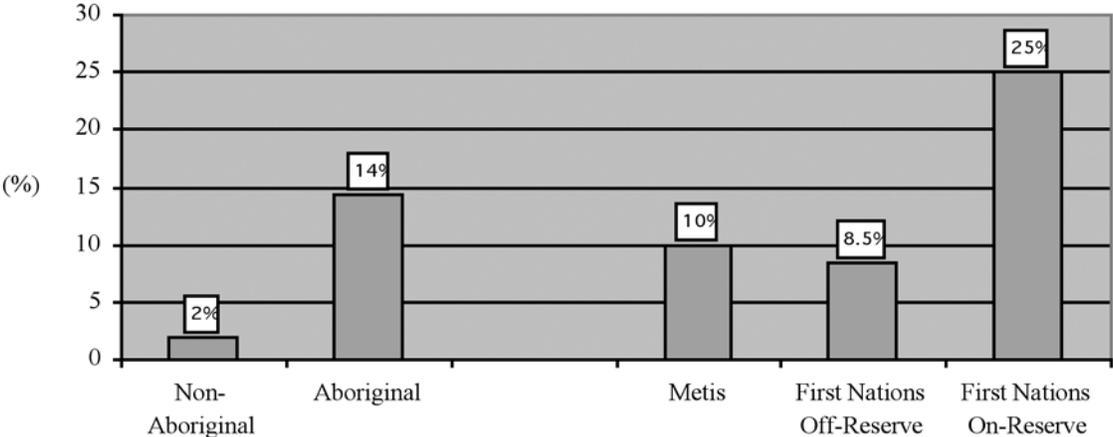
<sup>35</sup> Information provided by the North Central Family Centre, January 2004.

<sup>36</sup> Information provided by the SCEP Centre, January 2004.

<sup>37</sup> The Council on Social Development Regina, Inc., *A Focus on Regina's Children and Youth* (The Centre for Excellence for Child and Youth Centred Prairie Communities – Regina Site: 2002, p. 24).

Of course, the socio-economic factors also influence a child’s attachment to the education system and, consequently, their whole life experience. Many Aboriginal children have encountered incidences of poverty and violence, for instance, which impact negatively on school outcomes. According to Statistics Canada, the main reasons given for Aboriginal students not completing elementary or high school in 2001 were: “pregnancy/taking care of children” (22.2%), “bored with school” (15.3%), “wanted to work” (14.2%), “had to work” (9.9%).<sup>38</sup> Despite those impediments, there is hope that Aboriginal children can have a brighter future. Already, there is an increasing number of Aboriginal youth graduating from high school, as we noted above, and finding employment. Some of these young people continue their education at the college and university level, and obtain knowledge and skills that allow them to work more specialized and technology-based jobs.

FIGURE 2: PERCENTAGE OF SASKATCHEWAN RESIDENTS AGED 15 TO 24 WITHOUT GRADE 9



Source: Saskatchewan Education, *Saskatchewan Education Indicators 2000*, p. 69

Yet, we know that Aboriginal children do not currently succeed at the rate for non-Aboriginal children. As Figure 2 illustrates, the number of residents aged 15 to 24 that have not completed Grade 9 is significantly higher for the Aboriginal population than for the non-Aboriginal population. Additionally, data for this age group shows that First Nations students are more likely to drop out of high school and post-secondary education than their non-Aboriginal counterparts. Whereas 60 per cent of non-Aboriginal students between 15 and 24 years of age are still in school, the corresponding percentage for First Nations students is 49 per cent.<sup>39</sup> It is worthy to note from Figure 2 that First Nations children perform better off the reserve than on.

The data in Figure 3 shows mixed results in terms of the amount of time that Aboriginal students are taking to graduate from high school after entering grade 10. The overall trend indicates general improvement over time, but the percentage of students taking three or more years to graduate is still fairly high.

<sup>38</sup> Statistics Canada, “Commonly reported reasons for not completing elementary/high school by sex, Aboriginal identity non-reserve population aged 15 to 34, Saskatchewan, 2001, *Aboriginal Peoples Survey*, 2001.

<sup>39</sup> Saskatchewan Education, *Saskatchewan Education Indicators 2000*, p. 69 and Federation of Saskatchewan Indian Nations, *A Research Report on The Schooling, Workforce and Income Status of First Nations Persons in Saskatchewan*, January 2002.

FIGURE 3: PERCENTAGE OF SASKATCHEWAN ABORIGINAL STUDENTS GRADUATING GRADES 10-12 AFTER ENTRY IN GRADE 10, 1992-93 TO 1998-99 GRADE 10 COHORTS

Grade 10 Year	Years from Start of Grade 10 to High School Completion						Still Registered <sup>40</sup>
	3	4	5	6	7	8	
1992-93	30.0%	41.4%	46.3%	47.6%	48.0%	51.1%	1.3%
1993-94	24.8%	34.3%	37.4%	40.9%	42.0%	44.4%	2.1%
1994-95	37.4%	43.4%	46.4%	49.2%	52.2%		3.7%
1995-96	31.5%	37.3%	41.6%	44.6%			4.8%
1996-97	35.3%	44.8%	47.7%				9.5%
1997-98	43.3%	49.3%					16.5%
1998-99	41.9%						37.0%

Source: Saskatchewan Learning, *Saskatchewan Education Indicators: Kindergarten to Grade 12, 2002*.

Many Aboriginal students enrolled in community schools have high rates of mobility in and out of schools and between schools, which surely disrupts their academic performance. New enrolments during the 1999-00 school year were 50.4 per cent of the enrolment at the beginning of the year and dropouts were 43.6 per cent. These numbers, however, hide the fact that Aboriginal student mobility decreased and more students stayed in school compared to the 1996-97 school year when new enrollments were 53.5 per cent and dropouts were 51.7 per cent of the enrolment at the beginning of that school year. Furthermore, we need to treat the above statistics with caution, as there might be double counting. Some Aboriginal students who dropped out might have enrolled again in the same or different community school in the same year.<sup>41</sup> The Standing Committee on Aboriginal Peoples in the Senate of Canada also recognizes that there has been improvement in educational outcomes for Aboriginal students:

*“However, it should be recognized that not every urban Aboriginal youth faces the worst: there are some areas of hope. Urban Aboriginals have a higher level of education than those on-reserve. Some urban centers – notably Thunder Bay, Montreal, Victoria, Toronto and Regina – manage to retain Aboriginal youth in school at rates nearing 80%, which is close to the 83% average attained by non-Aboriginal youth. But as for other socio-demographic factors, it is the large prairie cities of Edmonton, Calgary, Regina, and Saskatoon and Winnipeg which, statistically, seem to present the greatest challenge to young Aboriginal people.”<sup>42</sup>*

All children need role models, and Aboriginal children need to see Aboriginal teachers in the education system. According to the Saskatchewan Human Rights Commission, school divisions with Education Equity Programs employed more Aboriginal teachers by the late 1990’s than they did in the late 1980’s. However, the student-to-Aboriginal-teacher ratio moved in the opposite direction, because the number of Aboriginal students increased during the period. There were 152 (4.2% of all teachers) Aboriginal teachers in 1989-90, and 266 (6.5%) in 1998-99. Aboriginal student enrolment grew from 10,624 (16.1% of all students) in 1989-90 to 14,085 (20.4%) in 1998-99. There were 435 students per Aboriginal teacher in 1989-90 and only 260 in 1998-99.<sup>43</sup> Clearly, the ratio must be lowered.

Saskatchewan has implemented a number of programs and initiatives to help Aboriginal students receive the best possible education without compromising their social and cultural values and beliefs. The Core Curricula in schools now provides for the inclusion of Aboriginal content and cultural perspectives, which allows for a smoother integration of Aboriginal students in the school system by encouraging them to retain their connection to Aboriginal traditions and education methods. *The Evergreen Curriculum*, for example, is an on-line program that will enable teachers to become familiar with new developments and trends in Aboriginal

<sup>40</sup> The percentages in this column refer to students that were still taking classes at some stage during the 2000-01 school year, which does not necessarily mean these students were still registered at the end of the school year.

<sup>41</sup> Saskatchewan Education, *Saskatchewan Education Indicators: Kindergarten to Grade 12, 2000*.

<sup>42</sup> Senate of Canada, *Urban Aboriginal Youth: An Action Plan for Change*, Final Report of the Standing Committee on Aboriginal Peoples, October 2003.

<sup>43</sup> Saskatchewan Education, *Saskatchewan Education Indicators: Kindergarten to Grade 12, 2000*.

education, and, hopefully, build them into the curriculum. Several Native Studies courses have already been developed, enhancing the Aboriginal content in the school curriculum and providing the opportunity to hire more Aboriginal teachers who might incorporate their values and perspectives on education.<sup>44</sup> It is hoped that these measures will attract Aboriginal students to attend school on a regular basis. In addition, the existing collaborative partnerships between the provincial education system and Aboriginal communities, which aims to increase family involvement in the schools, have been expanded to more directly involve Aboriginal peoples in the planning and decision-making process. Such partnerships include increased cooperation and shared management and governance in the provincial education system.<sup>45</sup>

In terms of institutional reform of the education system, there have been attempts to encourage Aboriginal involvement and introduce a set of indicators to track the progress. A report by Saskatchewan Education (now Saskatchewan Learning), released in 1999, presents a list of such indicators: demographic information on the Saskatchewan and Canadian Aboriginal population; social factors; economic factors; Aboriginal students and teachers in Saskatchewan; post-secondary education.<sup>46</sup> Saskatchewan Education states that: "*Along with the Saskatchewan Education Indicators program, the Aboriginal Education Indicators program is a means of monitoring the school system's performance, identifying its successes and shortcomings in Aboriginal education, and acquiring information for decision-making.*"<sup>47</sup> However, it is too early to assess the impact of these innovations.

A project developed to encourage at-risk students focuses on Regina's 'hidden youth', or children who live on the street or in unstable family environments, many of whom are Aboriginal. In its first stage, the project's objectives were to

1. Determine the prevalence of youth on the streets and not attending school
2. Explore the physical, social, educational, and family needs of these young people
3. Identify issues/problems related to effective and coordinated service provision."<sup>48</sup>

The project involved the use of various data collection techniques (both quantitative and qualitative), including interviews with the representatives of the target population, focus groups with stakeholders, dialogue groups with street youth, surveys to government and non-profit organizations, and a seminar, in an attempt to analyze the situation of children living on the street. A report on the project concluded that there were a number of risk factors contributing to the phenomenon of children living on the street, and the perilous and destructive lifestyles these children lead. The factors include: lack of opportunities because of limited access to education and employment; inadequate policies to support these young people; limited access to social programs and services, and others. The report recommends how to improve the lives of street children and gradually have them leave their current environment. The recommendations focus on establishing long-term strategies for preventing and rehabilitating street children, increasing support to organizations involved in the provision of services to these children, and setting up drug and alcohol treatment programs and facilities. The report's recommendations also include the establishment of specific initiatives to deal with the problem and the provision of appropriate training to people who work with street children.<sup>49</sup> The United Way of Regina and RIC developed programs directed at helping Aboriginal peoples in Regina in the area of education. In fact, 20 per cent of the services for Aboriginal peoples provided by United Way of Regina and the Regina Regional Intersectoral Committee include employment/education and learning support.<sup>50</sup>

<sup>44</sup> Saskatchewan Education, *Aboriginal Education Initiatives in Saskatchewan Education*, March 2000.

<sup>45</sup> Saskatchewan Learning, *Building Partnerships: First Nations and Métis Peoples and the Provincial Education System* (Fall 2003).

<sup>46</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>47</sup> Saskatchewan Education, *Aboriginal Education Initiatives in Saskatchewan Education* (March 2000, p. 15).

<sup>48</sup> Saskatchewan Instructional Development and Research Unit, *Regina's Hidden Youth: Final Report* (University of Regina: 1999, i).

<sup>49</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>50</sup> McGovern, K., *Building on Our Strengths*, Final Report Prepared for United Way of Regina and the Regina Regional Intersectoral Committee, December 6, 2002.

## HEALTH ISSUES

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Health is an important indicator of well-being and provides several key elements with which to evaluate a child's prospects of physical and mental development. Such health indicators, as the level of pre-natal care, early childhood growth, puberty, sexuality, pregnancy, and disease susceptibility can tell us much about a child's well-being.<sup>51</sup> To a large extent, such factors determine the life expectancy of a child, and its chances of being a healthy member of society. Regina is regarded as one of the healthier cities in Canada to raise a family, but it, nonetheless, experiences problems with nutrition and the provision of safe and healthy environments for children. This problem is particularly acute for Aboriginal and First Nations children. The Council on Social Development Regina, Inc. has outlined a number of issues that need to be urgently addressed if we are to sustain and grow healthy and prosperous communities:

*"Concern was raised about lifestyle choices of the young that are causing health problems such as drugs, alcohol, sexually transmitted diseases, obesity, sedentary lives and malnutrition. Some community workers and professionals felt there was a lack of treatment centers to support youth addictions to drugs and alcohol. Many expressed concern over the lack of early childhood prevention programs in Regina. Some community workers, parents and professionals expressed concern over the lack of health services and equipment support for disabled children."*<sup>52</sup>

The available data suggest that the physical and mental health of Regina's Aboriginal population and Aboriginal children is poor compared to that of the city's total population. For example, hospital admissions for Aboriginal children in the Regina Qu'Appelle Health Region are higher, especially for respiratory and gastrointestinal cases, than for the general population. Suicide rates among Aboriginal youth are estimated to be 4 to 6 times higher than for the non-Aboriginal population. Research in the Regina Health District (now part of the Regina-Qu'Appelle Health Region) revealed that Aboriginal people have twice the rate of diabetes and higher rates of parasitic and infectious diseases, including tuberculosis. Aboriginal people participate less in screening and prevention programs. Health conditions clearly have life-limiting consequences, and statistics show that life expectancy for Registered Indians at birth is 7 to 8 years less than for Canadians generally.<sup>53</sup>

One health (and social) issue with life-long consequences is the incidence of teenage pregnancy. Teenage pregnancy rates among Aboriginal youth in Regina are estimated to be 4 times higher than for the non-Aboriginal population. In the Regina Health District, research showed that there were 30 live births per 1,000 women in the 15 to 19 age group (general population) compared to 115 live births per 1,000 Aboriginal young women in the same age group. The Regina Qu'Appelle Health Region estimates that 65 per cent of babies served by the Mother Baby Unit are Aboriginal.<sup>54</sup>

One of the biggest problems is the lack of adequate food and clothing for many Aboriginal children in Regina. Malnutrition is reported as a leading cause of premature birth, low birth weight, and increased infant mortality. Malnutrition is a result of poverty and is especially prevalent in poor communities with substandard housing, high unemployment, and high number of single-parent families. Another indicator of poverty is the high percentage of infants born to Aboriginal teenage women, many of whom without sufficient means to support a family. These factors, in turn, contribute to a higher incidence of diseases and long-term health problems for the newly born.<sup>55</sup>

Malnutrition and subsequent health problems are usually caused by poverty. The lower incomes associated with Aboriginal peoples (discussed above) create an unhealthy environment for a child's development. Malnutrition leads to a whole group of other problems associated with early childhood development. It causes children to have low academic performance in school, thus increasing the risk of dropping out and, subsequently, these

<sup>51</sup> The Council on Social Development Regina, Inc., *A Focus on Regina's Children and Youth* (The Centre for Excellence for Child and Youth Centred Prairie Communities – Regina Site: 2002).

<sup>52</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 42.

<sup>53</sup> Regina Qu'Appelle Health Region, *Improving First Nations and Métis Health Outcomes: A Call to Collaborative Action*, 2003.

<sup>54</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>55</sup> Confidential interview, January 2004.

children have limited access to the labour market, especially jobs that require specialized knowledge and skills. Lower incomes are often the result. Furthermore, many of these children become dependent on the social welfare system later in life. Some poor children end up on the street begging and often the victims of sexual exploitation. The abuse of alcohol and drugs, and a very low attachment to the broader society, as well as living dangerous and damaging lives, are not uncommon outcomes of poor living conditions.

A number of non-profit and community-based organizations in Regina have tried to alleviate the problem of malnutrition by serving meals, and giving food hampers to Aboriginal children who are not fed regularly at home. One such organization is Chili for Children. It was originally launched with the intention of providing hot lunches to schoolchildren, but later expanded its services to include adults. Lisa Pratt, manager of Regina's hot lunch program, says: *"We don't turn anyone away if we have enough food."*<sup>56</sup> The main objective of the program is to create a safe environment for children, where they can eat and get together with other children. After lunch, the children are ready to return to school, and numerous studies have shown that well-fed and nourished children perform better in school. Nowadays, Chili for Children caters to people of various ages who are in need. On average, they provided for between 150-200 schoolchildren on a given day, most of whom are Aboriginal, who come for lunch to three locations in the city. In 1999, 27,000 meals were served. There are some encouraging results emerging from the work done at Chili for Children. Some teenagers, who have previously taken advantage of the program as kids, are now employed and providing for themselves and their families. Clearly, these youth saw an opportunity and benefited and went on to create stable and financially secure families. The positive influence that Chili for Children has had on the community is illustrated in the words of a teenager, who benefited from the program: *"Most of these kids don't have anything to eat at home... That's the way it is, the way it always was. Things have changed for me. I grew up to be responsible and respectable and now I'm raising my daughter."*<sup>57</sup> The Regina and district food bank also provides food to Aboriginal children in need. Between 1983<sup>58</sup> and 2002 the monthly average number of Aboriginal children who received food items grew from 246 to 4,433. In 2003 (excluding December), this number increased further, to 4,480 Aboriginal children.<sup>59</sup>

Some Aboriginal children in Regina suffer from developmental problems that have necessitated the attention and care of professional health care, social, and community workers. Such problems impact the physical and emotional growth of children, and have a negative long-term impact on their lives as adults. In addition, the high rates of sexually transmitted diseases and pregnancy among Aboriginal youth, the low level of education and high incidence of alcohol and drug abuse contribute to an unhealthy environment for a child's physical and intellectual development. United Way of Regina and the Regina Regional Intersectoral Committee have tried to address some of the health issues and now provide a range of programs and services for Aboriginal peoples (including children). The services available to Aboriginal peoples represent 37 per cent (the highest share) of all services provided by United Way of Regina and the Regina Regional Intersectoral Committee.<sup>60</sup>

Although there has been some improvement in the situation of Aboriginal children with regards to health issues, much work still needs to be done. Some areas that require immediate attention are: assistance to single parents in the area of health care, counseling and job opportunities; promotion of family planning as an instrument of long-term family economic stability; and education on matters of sexuality. Furthermore, financial support is needed for alcohol and drug treatment facilities and shelters for homeless children.

<sup>56</sup> Ungar, L., *Chili for Children serves 27,000 meals a year*, Saskatchewan Sage, June 2000.

<sup>57</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>58</sup> 1983 – May to December

<sup>59</sup> Information provided by the Regina and District Food Bank Inc., January 2004.

<sup>60</sup> McGovern, K., *Building on Our Strengths*, Final Report Prepared for United Way of Regina and the Regina Regional Intersectoral Committee, December 6, 2002.

## CULTURAL ISSUES

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Cultural values and norms are very important for the survival and prosperity of any communities, and Aboriginal communities are no exception. Traditions and customs passed down from generation to generation enhance the intellectual and mental capacity of Aboriginal people and keep them strongly attached to their indigenous environment. There are, however, a number of issues related to culture, which represent a challenge to both Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal people in Regina. Racism and discrimination are among the negative aspects of culture still persisting in our society. At the same time, there are some positive aspects of culture, including diversity, cultural awareness, and the building of a multicultural society.

It is a worrying fact, however, that racism and discrimination are still prevalent in Regina. This affects Aboriginal adults as well as children in their schools. The Council on Social Development Regina, Inc. recognized some of the consequences of racism:

*“Community literature reports indicate that racism can contribute to low self-esteem, high drop out rates, chronic unemployment, substance abuse and violence. In Regina, there are two primary groups bearing the brunt of discrimination and segregation: Aboriginal people and the poor communities.”<sup>61</sup>*

Public awareness of racism needs to be heightened, and more public officials must be involved in the implementation of effective policies to deal with racism everywhere it exists. Unfortunately, people tend to become complacent and unconcerned about racism and discrimination if they are not directly affected, so more proactive initiatives are needed to eradicate the problem. One possible solution is through the promotion of cultural diversity and understanding and appreciation of Aboriginal culture and traditions. Racism is usually a product of ignorance or unawareness of different cultures, so more public education is needed in order to seriously address and overcome this problem in order to facilitate the fostering a stable, productive, and diverse society.

Despite the negative facts, some successful efforts have already been made in the direction of increased cultural awareness and diversity. This process, however, has taken place largely on a city or provincial level. To be effective, its roots must be firmly established in the local communities and neighbourhoods. The United Way of Regina is one of the organizations directly involved in providing cultural programs and services targeting Aboriginal peoples. Fifteen per cent of all services provided by United Way in cooperation with the Regina Regional Intersectoral Committee are for community and cultural development and social enrichment.<sup>62</sup>

## CONCLUSION

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Aboriginal children in Regina continue to face a number of challenges on the way to becoming full participants in the future development of the city as is demonstrated in Appendix A. In a report of this nature that attempts to take a snapshot of the Aboriginal children and youth in a Canadian city, it is easy to focus on the negative aspects of the lives of Aboriginal children. Perhaps, this report is guilty of that as well, though we have tried to show that the lives for many Aboriginal children have improved considerably in the last decade. One clear indication of that improvement has been in the area of education in Saskatchewan, where there has been an increase in the level of education attainment for Aboriginal youth and a dramatic increase in the number of Aboriginal teachers in Saskatchewan schools. There are, of course, many others indicators of improvement.

However, the improvements in education, for instance, cannot be allowed to obscure the tremendous challenges

<sup>61</sup> The Council on Social Development Regina, Inc., *A Focus on Regina's Children and Youth* (The Centre for Excellence for Child and Youth Centred Prairie Communities Regina Site: 2002, p. 48).

<sup>62</sup> McGovern, K., *Building on Our Strengths*, Final Report Prepared for United Way of Regina and the Regina Regional Intersectoral Committee, December 6, 2002.

that Aboriginal children and youth continue to encounter in Regina. Although the data on Aboriginal children is scattered, always a few years old, and not always disaggregated for each urban area, the snapshot of Aboriginal children in Regina is a disturbing one, and one that clearly calls for aggressive action. Although Aboriginal citizens constitute 8.3 percent of the Regina Census Metropolitan Area, they are clearly over-represented in many of the measures that we examined in this report: teenage pregnancy rates are four times that for the Non-Aboriginal youth, 67 percent of all children in care in Saskatchewan are Aboriginal, the incidence of poverty of First Nations children in Regina is 67 per cent, the percent of Aboriginal citizens without Grade 9, and the low median income for Aboriginal families. Each of these measures, in and of themselves, is disturbing, but collectively, they paint a picture of a community that must be either searching for answers to explain their position in a relatively prosperous city like Regina, or else be so disillusioned that they see little reason to participate in the wider community of Regina to which they belong. Although this report does not attempt to delve deeply into the reasons for the snapshot that has emerged from this report, the snapshot itself should be sufficient – not to mention the countless other measures of the plight of Aboriginal citizens living in Canada’s cities – to underline the need for the development and implementation of more, and effective, policies and initiatives aimed at helping Aboriginal children and their families to enjoy a way of life that has become the Canadian norm.

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## APPENDIX A

### INDICATORS OF ABORIGINAL CHILDREN AND YOUTH WELL-BEING

Indicator	Baseline	Year
<b>Aboriginal children as a percentage of all children in foster care in Saskatchewan</b>	<b>67%</b>	<b>March 1999</b>
<b>Incidence of poverty among First Nations children ages 0-14 in Regina</b>	<b>61.3%</b>	<b>2000</b>
<b>Incidence of poverty among Métis children ages 0-14 in Regina</b>	<b>45.7%</b>	<b>2000</b>
<b>Aboriginal children as a percentage of all children residing with their caregivers in Regina's 3 transition houses</b>	<b>73.9%</b>	<b>2002-03</b>
<b>Aboriginal children as a percentage of all children passing through Sofia House in Regina</b>	<b>50%</b>	<b>2002-03</b>
<b>Aboriginal children as a percentage of all children being treated by Regina's SCEP Centre for significant to severe social, emotional and behavioural difficulties</b>	<b>59%</b>	<b>September 2002 – June 2003</b>
<b>Percentage of Aboriginal students in Saskatchewan graduating grades 10-12 after entry in Grade 10 in 1998-99 completing high school in a 3-year period</b>	<b>41.9%</b>	<b>2001-02</b>
<b>New enrolment of Aboriginal students in community schools in Saskatchewan as a percentage of all Aboriginal students enrolled at the beginning of the school year</b>	<b>50.4%</b>	<b>1999-00</b>
<b>Percentage of Aboriginal students dropping out of community schools in Saskatchewan as a percentage of all Aboriginal students enrolled at the beginning of the school year</b>	<b>43.6%</b>	<b>1999-00</b>
<b>Aboriginal teachers in Saskatchewan</b>	<b>266</b>	<b>1998-99</b>
<b>Aboriginal teachers in Saskatchewan as a percentage of:</b>		<b>1998-99</b>
<b>1. all teachers</b>	<b>6.5%</b>	
<b>2. all students</b>	<b>0.4%</b>	
<b>3. all Aboriginal students</b>	<b>1.9%</b>	
<b>Aboriginal student enrolment in Saskatchewan</b>	<b>14.085</b>	<b>1998-99</b>
<b>Aboriginal students enrolled in Saskatchewan as a percentage of all students</b>	<b>20.4%</b>	<b>1998-99</b>