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EMPOWERING FIRST NATIONS AND METIS LEADERSHIP

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INTRODUCTION

A leader is supposed to love his people. A leader is supposed to love his family. A leader is supposed to care about his people. A leader is supposed to care about his family. (Speaker, Black Lake Community Dialogue)

Without capable and committed First Nations, Metis and non-Aboriginal leaders to put our proposed reforms into practice, the plan could easily fail. If these important reforms are to go ahead, and if we are going to build a fairer Saskatchewan society, we will have to pay attention to the question of leadership. We must look at ways to support today's leaders, and we must find ways to create a new generation of leaders.

... youth councillors and youth Chief councils, which is building leadership for tomorrow and giving those young people an opportunity to be heard, to have hope that they can contribute to the communities in the future. (Speaker, Prince Albert Grand Council Justice Commission presentation)

In this chapter, we discuss what we mean by leadership, as well as the unique and important qualities of leadership found in First Nations and Metis culture. We discuss where we believe leadership must come from to handle the changes we recommend. We also outline the steps that need to be taken to support current leaders, and to create the leaders of tomorrow.

THE IMPORTANCE OF LEADERSHIP

Our grandfathers talked about this justice. They talk about self-government. They talk about Treaties. What are Treaties? The old people talked about these things. You know, one of the most important elements we got to believe in is this, that at one time we were the sole owners of this land. And there's a reason for that. We had our own way of doing things. We had our own justice system. We had our own laws. We had our own leadership. We made laws and they were keepers of our laws. They were a group of people, people who sat out here who knew their laws, who knew the laws of the tribe and of the Nation, compiled from the families who had family laws, that came from their belief, from a Creator that instituted all of their truths.

And then from there, the Creator gave us dreams and ways to interpret the things and ideas that he gave us. They call that the Grandfather's, Creator's law. (Elder, Treaty Four Community Dialogue)



Youth from the Community Vitality Workshop held at Rabbit Lake in 2002 indicated that Leadership cannot be judged by age, sex, employment, gender, race or stature in the community. Good leadership can be judged by the way one wants to create a positive change in the community as a whole.

Youth from the Community Vitality Workshop held at Rabbit Lake in 2002 indicated that a good community leader:

- Is responsible for his or her actions
- Is a positive role model
- Is respectful of and respected by the community
- Encourages participation, involvement and team building throughout the entire community

A leader acts as a guide. A leader shows the way. Leaders may direct, or even command, but, more often, leaders persuade or stimulate because they have the opportunity to go first or come before others. Leaders may get their authority from the positions they occupy, for example, Chief or deputy minister. However, many leaders have no formal authority. They are leaders because they are respected for their wisdom, their understanding of what can be done, their honesty and their commitment to others. Leaders have insight into important issues, problems and opportunities. They also can speak about a better way – a vision that inspires others to take action. Leadership, quite simply, is what leaders do!

Economics, education, there's a lot of other factors that we know that come forth, and holistically we have to look at all spectrum of, and I truly believe that leadership, community leaders, everybody that's involved that want change, all of us has to be a part of that change. (Speaker, Prince Albert Grand Council Justice Commission presentation)

Research and discussions have shown what the qualities of successful leaders are and how leadership skills are developed. This is not the place for the Commission to discuss these issues, but we do wish to make the point that leaders are not born. They are nurtured and developed. This Commission believes that leadership requires a complex interplay of skills (such as discipline, flexibility, self-awareness, self-management, ability to learn, drive, purpose and honesty). It also requires the knowledge and skills to work with others and within organizations. Such work calls for the ability to manage effective work groups, the ability to build and maintain relationships, the ability to communicate, the ability to develop others, the ability to inspire, the ability to manage change, the ability to solve problems and make decisions, the ability to influence, the ability to take risks, and the ability to set and obtain goals and make plans. Some may come by these skills naturally, but for most they are learned. In the right settings, they can be taught, practised and cultivated.

Families have responsibility. Who has influence over children but families? That's where it all starts. We as leaders have also got to support that. (Speaker, Black Lake Community Dialogue)

The history of First Nations and the Metis people has many examples of outstanding leadership. Leadership in a First Nations and Metis culture addresses different needs; both from the standpoint of what leaders try to achieve, as well as how they go about their work – their style of leadership. For example:

- For First Nations and Metis leaders, their goal is the independence, recognition and well-being of individuals, families, communities and Nations. Leaders work to achieve equality, health and prosperity for their peoples by seeking support for the right of self-determination.



- First Nations and Metis leaders take a historical view of problems and opportunities. The history of relations with the settlers is important. Historical agreements, understandings and Treaties are important. The continuity of relationships through agreements between First Nations and Metis and other Nations is important.
- First Nations and Metis leaders take a holistic view of problems and opportunities. They believe concerns and issues have physical, emotional, mental and spiritual elements. For communities and Nations these problems and opportunities have social, economic and political features that are connected. Problems and solutions arise from the relationships of people, families and communities – and from Mother Earth and Father Sky.
- First Nations and Metis leadership is rooted in culture. This leadership accepts First Nations and Metis culture and identity. A high value is given to the involvement of Elders and medicine people. High importance is attached to traditional knowledge and traditional ways, and the wishes of the Creator are at the centre of all that is important.
- First Nations and Metis leaders encourage policies that recognize the importance of cooperation and partnerships. They see cooperation and partnerships as a basis for successful collective action.
- First Nations and Metis leaders understand that one of their most important responsibilities is to help give their communities voice. Their leadership reflects the main concerns of the community, and leaders feel they must answer to their communities. Policies and government developed by First Nations and Metis leaders assure community involvement and community voice.

Leadership must be knowledgeable about tradition and cultural teachings. They will work to develop future leaders who are trained to utilize methods and techniques taught through traditional and ancient teachings, as well as contemporary governance. (Submission by Federation of Saskatchewan Indian Nations)

We believe that First Nations and Metis leadership is necessary for going ahead with the recommendations we have made for several reasons:

- First, First Nations and Metis communities have unique cultures, histories and traditions. They face different circumstances when it comes to justice, health, social and economic conditions, getting services from the rest of society, their attachment to their traditions and other factors. One type of program or service will not work for every individual or for all communities. In fact, thinking about community and individual needs in a simplistic way will, we believe, result in simplistic solutions. We believe First Nations and Metis leaders must identify and respond to the needs and hopes of their communities.



- Second, we believe First Nations and Metis leaders have an important role representing their communities. Sometimes they work with provincial, regional or national governments. At other times they work with organizations that deal with problems of women, the elderly, children and youth. They also work with organizations to deal with such things as economic development or education. Leaders must also represent the interests of their communities in these situations.
- A third role for First Nations and Metis leaders is to obtain funding and services for their communities. Often this involves interest based negotiating with governments and people from the broader society. However, leadership must also make sure their communities build up their own resources, and that these resources are used to deal with community priorities.
- A fourth role is to build partnerships with people who work in justice, health, education and many other areas. We heard throughout our dialogues that attempts to make these people aware of the needs and hopes of First Nations and Metis people often failed. However, we believe true partnerships between First Nations and Metis communities and non-Aboriginal bureaucrats are both possible and important.
- Perhaps the most important thing First Nations and Metis leaders can do is provide a positive vision of the future, a vision that gives hope to dispirited individuals and communities, and inspires members of the community to work together for the common good.

In these and other areas, First Nations and Metis leaders can make a long lasting contribution to the well-being of their communities and Nations.

With the healing lodge, hopefully the people that do come there do heal and take something home with them. And the same – ask the Creator for the same thing in our justice system because we as leaders of our Nation, each First Nation has to set a good example to our youth so that they will have something to fall back on when they want to change their lifestyle. (Elder, Beardy's and Okemasis Community Dialogue)

Members of First Nations and Metis communities also have important roles to play in their leadership. We encourage community members to participate in choosing their leaders. Without this involvement, leaders are not legitimate. It is also important that leaders receive the support of the members of their communities. Leaders cannot deal with important community concerns on their own. Effective community action not only requires leadership, it also requires community support for that leadership.



And if you want changes, well think about who you vote for in our community when it comes to leadership. Don't look at, hey, that's my sister, I'm going to vote for her; or this is my auntie, I'm going to vote for her. Think about the qualities of that person. What kind of a job is that person going to do? (Speaker, Sandy Bay Community Dialogue)

LEADERSHIP AND COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT

I think that we agreed completely around the idea that governance and community development cannot be separated, the one from the other, for the reason that community development is not possible, community development in any kind of positive way is not possible without governance. (Speaker, Governance & Community Development Roundtable)

In the next chapter, we talk about the importance of the community development approach to the problems many First Nations and Metis communities face. Another way to think about leadership is to ask who will lead the community development process, especially when times are difficult.

... I think in relation to the communities themselves what I hear from them is a common vision, you know, we all want to work towards building healthy families, healthy family structures. So any way that we can support communities to work towards developing and building happy and good family structures and good family inter-community relationships. (Speaker, Meadow Lake Community Dialogue)

We believe that health and social concerns that lead to justice problems in First Nations and Metis communities cannot be solved without the help of their families, communities and Nations. These communities need safe, secure opportunities to deal with social and health issues. This view on preventing justice problems by promoting health and healing is supported by the experiences of First Nations and Metis communities, and also by the latest thinking and research.

Education is only part of the justice system, the justice system is only a part of health, health is only a part of ... they are integrated in such a way that they support and help each other. You can't just target education; all the others [sectors/programs] have to be also resourced in such a way that they are supporting that whole wheel, so the wheel moves in balance as part of the community development or community awareness. (Speaker, Meadow Lake Community Dialogue)



While all communities can use help when it comes to social development, no two communities are alike. A social development plan for a community must be designed by that particular community. Also, not all First Nations and Metis communities have serious justice problems. And even in those that have, the nature, extent and character of the problems will be different from those in other communities. So will the range of possible solutions. A uniform approach is not possible. While there may be many common concerns and hopes, each community must figure out its own needs and, in the end, find its own way.

... because to my understanding every reserve, every community is unique in its own characteristics, and we need to establish our own policies in regards to funding, in regards to the jobs available here. I don't think that, you know, with the funding that there should be a set policy set in place that's going to work across the country because it's not going to happen. Every community is unique, their cultures are unique, and therefore, we should formulate our own policies as to how to mandate the funding. (Speaker, Onion Lake Community Dialogue)

Communities know what they have to do when dealing with justice issues. They must have the assistance to research and plan solutions, and put the solutions in place. This may require creating local organizations, which should include a small group of community leaders and Elders. Such organizations are already in place in some communities. Some communities may require advice, funding or other support. Building on these strengths will be helpful.

I strongly believe that is where it starts. If we can raise our families with strong values and beliefs, our families can go on to live up to, like, those values and move on into the community and so on into the rest of society and the world. That's where ownership starts, whether people realize it or not. (Speaker, La Loche Community Dialogue)

First Nations and Metis communities themselves have developed the most promising responses to justice problems using their own community development methods. One leading example of community responses to justice issues is Hollow Water.

Well, the Hollow Water example keeps coming up over and over again, where the community just took charge of a slice of the criminal system and produced spectacular results, and I know they went through valleys and that sort of thing, but it is and remains a powerful example of what can be done. (Speaker, Governance & Community Development Roundtable)

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Like the well-known Alkali Lake experience, each followed a similar pattern of development:

- Some members of the community decided that there was a pressing community problem and that something should be done about it. In different communities, different problems have inspired community action – suicide, drug or alcohol abuse, violence, crime.
- A few community leaders, not necessarily holding office, began to communicate, raise awareness and consult with the community.
- Over time, there was a feeling in the community that something needed to be done.
- The community researched its needs, attitudes and ideas, as well as possible solutions.
- Possible solutions were discussed with other groups in the community and with people outside the community, such as those in the justice system, and potential funding sources.
- People outside the community at first did not favour the community's proposed solutions. However, through ongoing discussion, the community was eventually able to gain their support.
- Agreement was reached on what to do, and guidelines and designs for programs were developed. After some adjustment these programs were put into practice.
- While these programs were being put into practice, the community was sounded out to make sure the will of the community was being respected.
- Reviews and improvements of the programs were made with the input of those from outside the community and from the community as well.

While each community is unique, there are ways to help all communities to undertake self-assessment and development. For example, once a community has discovered a pressing issue, it could be given the funding to try a solution that has worked elsewhere. Advice and help from others who have been through the same thing could be valuable. Tools that deal with specific issues, such as guides to assess what should be done and how to work on community development could be written. Resource centres could be created to house these materials and to identify people who could provide help.

I agree that communities have to take that responsibility, but if you are going to download that responsibility, you have to ensure that proper funding and resources are put in place. (Speaker, Implementation Roundtable)

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Community justice forums, healing ceremonies and getting community representatives and leaders involved in planning and decision-making will help to restore communities and to take back justice.

There has to be training for the people that are going to take on this task. It is not easy, it's very, very, hard. (Speaker, Beauval Community Dialogue)

Experience shows that successful programs grow from action based on community development values. First Nations and Metis communities are leaders in this area, and they have shown that even the best programs will do little good unless communities have had a chance to find the problems and come up with the solutions themselves. There will be few results if solutions are imposed from outside the community.

There needs to be some inter-agency approaches to addressing issues, a holistic approach, which is all-inclusive. That's what it is right now, the same policy that is implemented in Southern Saskatchewan is being implemented in Northern Saskatchewan and quite often it does not fit because of the differences. There needs to be that flexibility at the regional level and local levels for these departments, so that they provide local solutions for local problems. (Speaker, Beauval Community Dialogue)

We believe that this is the most important role for their leaders, and that every effort must be made to support these leaders to take on this role so that justice can be returned to the communities.

CHALLENGE AND RESPONSIBILITY OF LEADERSHIP

For thousands of years, the ancestors of Saskatchewan's First Nations and Metis people lived on the Prairies in tightly knit communities that were able to adapt to any conditions. Many different forms of societies developed, but each looked after all the members of the community – elderly, children and women. While conditions were harsh, the communities that developed looked after the health, and the social, economic and spiritual wellness of everyone. Historical accounts show that the members of these First Nations and Metis societies were remarkably healthy, prosperous and well adjusted to their surroundings.

These early societies produced what were, by any standards, outstanding political and spiritual leaders. As is the case today, many of these leaders played important roles within their Nations, within Canada and internationally.

In our reports, and in the reports of other Commissions that have come before ours, many social and community problems in First Nations and Metis communities have been brought up. These problems are serious and cannot be ignored. At the same time, repeating such a list of problems can create negative attitudes toward First Nations and Metis people. Problems are often blamed on



the individuals who are suffering. Questions are asked about the ability of leaders to do something about the problems. Of course, all of this fails to look at the long history that has led to the present situation.

... the Elders say in order for us to return back to justice, we must return back to our grassroots and to find ourselves. Yes, we can go around blaming other people, but it begins with us, as the Elders say. But our children, we must teach them the walk of our ancestors. These laws that they followed for many centuries. We must re-educate them back to that, and it begins here within the school, within the families. (Speaker, Pelican Narrows Community Dialogue)

As has been discussed elsewhere (Royal Commission on Aboriginal Peoples, 1996), First Nations and Metis communities have been undermined during much of the last 150 years. Traditional societies were disrupted. First Nations and Metis leaders were weakened, replaced or worse. New leaders and governing systems were forced on the communities by the state. Ceremonies and spiritual practices were outlawed. Reserves were created. Residential schools were established. These changes ripped up families, communities and Nations, and forced First Nations and Metis people to depend on the state. This was something that was previously unknown to them. The results of this history can be found in the problems we are seeking to solve today.

People have to take responsibility and that's tied to authority. In order to address authority, you have to know why you don't have it now. It is because we've lived under a state of learned helplessness for so long in a government system that has not recognized us as First Nations people with authority. We need to go back as First Nations people and assume that authority and that responsibility because it is ours. And then, I believe, we can heal. (Speaker, Meadow Lake Community Dialogue)

What has not been widely understood is the impact of this history on First Nations and Metis leadership. Leaders were ridiculed, undermined, exiled, jailed and executed. Whole generations were the victims of poor health and social conditions. New governing systems were imposed. New leaders were imposed. Sacred and traditional systems for assuring the continuity of leadership that bound families, communities and Nations together were undermined or outlawed. It is only in the last 40 years that First Nations and Metis communities have begun to emerge from a century of state policies designed to wipe out First Nations and Metis peoples as distinct peoples.

The government has made us so dependent ... so dependent that things won't happen unless the government says yes or no ... so dependent on government they can't do anything for themselves. That's a major concern. (Speaker from Ile-a-la-Crosse at Beauval Community Dialogue)

Youth from the Community Vitality Workshop held at Rabbit Lake in 2002 indicated that community leaders should not:

- Have a negative outlook and negative opinions.
- Have dictatorial tendencies.
- Abuse drugs or alcohol
- Foster racism or have racial bias.
- (forget) that we [youth] are part of the community or that we have ideas and a role to play in the positive development of our communities.



First Nations and Metis leaders today face major challenges. Often they operate within government-imposed systems that work too slowly when it comes to dealing with community needs. Too often community leadership and the needs of families are not respected. Communities are large and complex. The resources available to meet community needs are often inadequate. To develop the community to the point where it can effectively deal with these problems takes strong determination over decades and even generations. Some communities are discouraged or fearful, or they are in danger of losing hope for the future. Moreover, leadership carries few rewards, but major risks.

... [what] we've got to work towards is First Nations, Metis, if we're addressing a social situation that's going to face our family, it has to be directed to both, and you just can't say, well, Indian Affairs is responsible for this, the Province is responsible for that, and that's where you end up with gaps.
(Speaker, Governance & Community Development Roundtable)

Despite the many obstacles, leadership at the community level, as well as within First Nations and Metis political organizations, survived, and continues to thrive. This is proof of the ability and commitment of First Nations and Metis leaders in Saskatchewan.

LEADERSHIP AND GOVERNANCE

There is a subtle difference in terminology that must be clarified ... the term "governance" is not synonymous with "government." Confusing these terms can have unfortunate consequences. Policy issues that may have a problem of governance become defined implicitly as a problem of "government." Governance is about how governments and other social organizations interact, how they relate to citizens, and how decisions are taken in a complex world. Thus, governance is a process whereby societies or organizations make their important decisions; determine whom they involve in the process and how they render account. That is through agreements, procedures, conventions or policies that define who gets power, how decisions are taken and how accountability is rendered.
(Submission by Metis Family & Community Justice Services Inc.)

The support of current leaders and the encouragement of the next generation of leaders requires adopting governance structures that meet the needs of communities and Nations. We do not believe that there is any one structure or approach that will fit all circumstances. What this Commission believes is that First Nations and Metis people must have an opportunity to establish the governance structures that suit their values, culture and needs.



If you're going to run for politics, if you're going to run as a leader, you do have to look at today and the future, we cannot continue living in the past, and we cannot continue blaming the justice system, that Indian Affairs. Sure they did a lot of damage, but we have to move from there, and in my business, my line of work that I'm doing, I empower First Nations people, there is nothing stopping [us] from moving forward ... (Speaker, Battleford Community Dialogue)

Without governance structures that are accepted and supported by the community, leadership cannot grow. Without such structures, there is too much uncertainty about leadership roles and responsibilities. There is too much possibility for conflict among competing interests. In such an environment, leadership cannot operate. The role of governance is fundamental in improving the lives of First Nations and Metis people.

Governance is an important foundation for addressing and improving these social issues. Not only does good governance support effective administration of social programs, it also promotes the overall health and stability of a community. It empowers people and provides hope. (Roy Bird, Co-chair Joint Ministerial Advisory Committee)

- Good government requires authority and resources.
- Good governance is about the ability of people to shape decisions that influence their lives.
- Good governance needs these basics: enough human and financial resources to do the job, open procedures for decision making (including selection of leaders), community commitment to good governance, accountability of governments and leaders, and necessary management structures, rules of law and management ability.
- Good governance enables communities and their leaders to take effective action.

The reason why the government powers hang on to control is because they don't have respect for the place of others in the community and they don't believe that others can come up with some answers that are as good as the ones they can come up with. So the relinquishing of control is to allow communities to find their own way, and that will involve potentially making mistakes, but the mistakes that communities make are probably no worse than the mistakes the governments make ... the power of letting go of paternalism. (Speaker, Governance and Community Development Roundtable).



We support the findings of the Royal Commission on Aboriginal Peoples (1996) that First Nations, Metis and Inuit rights to self-determination and self-government are existing rights that are protected by Section 35 of the Constitution. Furthermore, this Commission believes the recognition and protection of these rights in Canada's Constitution is an opportunity to establish a variety of different governance systems. In our view, this is not only allowed within the Constitution, but it is to be encouraged so that the values, traditions and preferences of different peoples and Nations can be fully respected.

Canada has made some 67 Treaties with First Nations people, in most cases to gain access to their land. By the late 1960s, however, these Treaties were being ignored by the government. This was corrected in 1982 when the *Constitution Act* gave the Treaties recognition and protection. In the last quarter century Canada's government and its courts have come to acknowledge that the Treaties are agreements between nations, that they are different from contracts and that they belong in a special category.

When Canada purchased Rupert's Land in 1870, the territory presented a challenge to a government anxious to settle some of it with Europeans and build a transcontinental railway to assert its sovereignty and prevent the region's annexation by the United States.

To avoid costly "Indian Wars" that the U.S. had faced, Canada chose to make Treaties with its First Nations. By the time negotiations began, the buffalo had disappeared and the fur trade was in decline.

First Nations people realized they had to work with the newcomers to develop new economic vehicles. In exchange for access to their country, First Nations were promised, among other things, a land base for agriculture and education in farming skills. They were also allowed to continue with their former economic activities – hunting, fishing and trapping.

They saw the Treaties as a means to protect their own interests and their way of life and as a bridge to future relations with the newcomers.

Although there was an agreement, between nations, to share the land for the benefit of all, the First Nations never signed away their right to govern themselves. And as for the "spirit and intent" of these Treaties, First Nations people feel that they have been shortchanged.

The Commission is encouraged by the positive discussions about Treaty-based self-government that are taking place at the Office of the Treaty Commissioner (OTC). The OTC mandate is to facilitate exploratory Treaty discussions and common understandings between the Federation of Saskatchewan Indian Nations and the Government of Canada on the nature of new Treaty relationships and Treaty issues. The OTC uses the Exploratory Treaty Table (ETT) as a forum to discuss Treaty related issues like justice, consult with Elders and conduct research. We believe these discussions can and should lead to the establishment of Treaty-based governance in Saskatchewan. We realize, however, that these discussions have been complex and time consuming. We encourage all involved to achieve results as soon as possible.



Recommendation 1.1

This Commission recommends that the Office of the Treaty Commissioner's mandate be continued beyond 2005 and that the Government of Canada, the Federation of Saskatchewan Indian Nations, and Office of the Treaty Commissioner, with an expanded mandate, accelerate their discussions concerning Treaty-based governance and take into account recommendations of this Commission in concluding agreements as quickly as possible.

The Metis Nation – Saskatchewan supports Nation-to-Nation discussions between the Metis Nation and the Government of Canada aimed at recognizing their rights to self-determination and self-government. The Commission supports this direction and urges the parties to accelerate the discussions so that governance systems can be put in place for the Metis peoples.

Metis Act Part III

3(1) The Government of Saskatchewan and the Metis Nation – Saskatchewan will work together through a bilateral process to address issues that are important to the Metis people, including the following: capacity building; land; harvesting; and governance.

Recommendation 1.2

This Commission recommends that the Government of Canada and the Metis Nation – Saskatchewan establish a Nation-to-Nation dialogue aimed at establishing appropriate governance structures for the Metis people that will address justice issues, as well as other aspirations and needs of the Metis people.

Recommendation 1.3

This Commission recommends that the Government of Saskatchewan also participate in these discussions as an observer.

We believe the time has come to recognize First Nations and Metis self-government through an Act of Parliament. The Implementation Commissioner should monitor developments of such an approach.

AN ACTION PLAN FOR EMPOWERING FIRST NATIONS AND METIS LEADERSHIP

While it is necessary to create governance structures to deal with the concerns we have raised in our report, it is also necessary to have a plan for empowering First Nations and Metis leadership. This is needed to bring about the new approaches to justice and community development we are recommending. Without this leadership it will not be possible to make the desperately needed improvements in justice services and community conditions.



And so when you work with the community, you need to respect that they'll have their own processes, they'll make their own mistakes, they'll have their own ways to do things.
(Speaker, Governance & Community Development Roundtable)

The ability of First Nations and Metis communities to provide needed services must be improved through substantial and ongoing support of their leadership development. Moreover, we believe this development must be an important part of all relationships between Canadian governments, service agencies, and First Nations and Metis organizations.

We believe a number of approaches are required to help develop First Nations and Metis leadership. These include:

1. Increasing the size and number of leadership training programs in First Nations and Metis institutions.
2. Improving the leadership content in mainstream education and training programs.
3. Improving First Nations and Metis students' ability to take more training by providing financial and other support.
4. Improving the cultural content of leadership training programs so that they meet the needs of First Nations and Metis leaders and communities.

This Commission believes advances in developing leadership is important for the well-being of First Nations and Metis peoples and we are concerned about the present shortage of leadership resources. We do not believe enough is being done to solve this problem. Although many reports have called for action to build leadership, we believe there has been little progress to date.

Preparing people for leadership in justice and community services should not be left entirely to those who have formal training. However, there are many tasks involving governance and programs that should be done by people with specialized skills. Improving leadership must consider how these needs can be met. Those who appeared before our Commission all agreed that better recruitment, training and retention of First Nations and Metis people in all professions are needed to meet current and future needs.

Employment equity has been generally limited to the front-line staff. This practice of indigenization does not appear to have changed the fundamental value base, nor has it eliminated systemic barriers, nor has it improved the attitude base, nor has it shifted the power and control base in any significant fashion. Most importantly, it has not delivered better outcomes. (Speaker, FSIN Health & Social Development and Indian Child & Family Services presentation)

Youth from the Community Vitality Workshop held at Rabbit Lake in 2002 indicated they believe there is a need for youth leadership training programs, and that our communities should allow youth representation on boards, committees, and clubs in order to help us [youth] build the leadership skills they will need in the future.



While significant efforts have been made and noted, our own observations and the presentations we received lead us to believe there are a limited number of First Nations and Metis administrators, officials, police officers, court staff or justice researchers.

Because of this critical shortage of First Nations and Metis professional staff and the serious justice issues that must be faced, we believe there must be an increase in professional training for First Nations and Metis people.

Recommendation 1.4

This Commission recommends that:

- 1.4.1 The governments of Canada and Saskatchewan establish First Nations and Metis Leadership Development Funds to promote leadership training for First Nations and Metis people.**
 - 1.4.2 That an Institute on Traditional Law and Governance be established by 2007 to provide training to First Nations and Metis professionals and leaders in Saskatchewan.**
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From what we saw, we believe that First Nations and Metis professionals are often found in the lower ranks of organizations. We estimate that the number of First Nations and Metis policy and senior staff in justice and community services in Saskatchewan is low. This means that First Nations and Metis people do not have the opportunity to influence program design and program delivery.

The Metis Family & Community Justice Services Inc. is concerned about long-term plans for developing leadership that will allow justice to be returned to the communities. The concern is Metis communities do not now have the resources to govern their own institutions. They see a need to have functioning institutions to strengthen the fabric of their communities. They also want to be in a position to restore community based healing and justice.

Initiatives should be based on successful programs for increasing the numbers of First Nations and Metis people in court worker, Justice of the Peace and police programs. These programs have overcome many challenges and positive lessons can be learned from them.

Education is really important. Our kids need to go to school and get educated, and education is so important, but we don't recognize that there is more than just institutional education. There's education in the Aboriginal communities that's traditional that needs to be respected as well. (Speaker, Governance & Community Development Roundtable)

As of September 2002, 11.4 per cent of employees in the Departments of Justice and Corrections and Public Safety were self-declared as being of Aboriginal ancestry. Although this proportion is similar to the proportion of Aboriginal people in the provincial population, the departments will work to recruit more Aboriginal employees – particularly at the supervisory, managerial, professional and executive levels. (Presentation by Saskatchewan Justice and Corrections & Public Safety, January 2004)



Participating in professional education often depends on financial, academic and family support. There has to be a commitment from the educational institutions and from governments. There are many examples of this type of support being provided, but it must be increased to assist more First Nations and Metis students in professional and leadership studies.

I'm saying we should all have opportunities to have choices in our lives, that's why education is so important for young people, and if that's the focus of getting people independent, whether it's in the North or whether it's in the cities, but everything should be done now to support those communities, the people living in those communities, to be able to have a quality sort of life so that their kids can learn and when they grow up they can be independent because they have their own education, and if they have a rise in income, then presumably they can look after their own housing and they're not dependent on governments any more. (Speaker, Governance & Community Development Roundtable)

This Commission believes it is important to retain quality First Nations and Metis teaching staff. It is also important to look at what is being taught in professional education with an eye to making it more culturally appropriate. We believe the success of First Nations and Metis students in mainstream education is improved when there are enough of them to support each other. Where this happens, there are also benefits for non-Aboriginal students. An exchange of knowledge, experience and practice between First Nations, Metis and non-Aboriginal students enriches the experience for all.

This has led to creative approaches that have improved educational opportunities for First Nations and Metis people. Some of the results were: creating admission and retention targets, developing more appropriate entry requirements, creating preparation programs, organizing financial, academic and family support, increasing financial commitment, creating support for professionals after graduation, using mentorship and exchanges, and coming up with different ways to deliver professional education to increase its effectiveness.

Recommendation 1.5

This Commission recommends that post-secondary institutions and professional associations work together to develop plans that will ensure that professionals already in the field have access to programs of continuing professional education that emphasize cultural issues associated with the provision of justice services.

As their educational and professional institutions develop and as self-government proceeds, First Nations and Metis people will take a larger role in recognizing and certifying professionals based on their standards. However, mainstream professional organizations must also look at how they can recognize the value of what First Nations and Metis people have learned through traditional teachings, formal education and life experience.



Developing First Nations and Metis leadership must look beyond programs of study. We believe these programs are useful, particularly if they are developed with input from First Nations and Metis people. However, by themselves they will not be enough to meet the needs for leadership that we have identified.

We believe community-based training is an important follow-up to formal education. Our opinion is based on the following realities:

1. A realistic plan for developing First Nations and Metis leadership must provide for community involvement and recognize traditional practices. The plan for First Nations and Metis leadership must look at ways to increase the quantity and quality of this indigenous leadership, and support leaders now struggling to improve justice conditions in their communities.
2. First Nations and Metis communities and Nations must be able to share their ideas, to learn from one another and to develop shared approaches to dealing with training needs. While post-secondary institutions may have something to offer, First Nations and Metis communities and Nations must also be able to decide what their needs are and seek their own solutions.
3. Full-time study over several years far from First Nations and Metis communities does not work for many potential leaders. While many solutions, such as distance education, are being offered, it will be some time before all professional training is available in most First Nations and Metis communities across Saskatchewan. Even in urban areas, where an increasing number of First Nations and Metis people reside, there are many social and economic obstacles to accessing mainstream programs. Until the barriers are removed, community-based training cannot address community needs and create a climate that prepares First Nations and Metis leaders to pursue professional training.
4. First Nations and Metis professionals can contribute to human resources development in their communities. Having them train others in their own communities should be part of a leadership development plan.
5. First Nations and Metis people are redefining professionalism, so that it is more holistic, more grounded in their experience and more relevant to their circumstances. Much of their knowledge and experience cannot be learned in formal education, although, as noted earlier, some progress is being made in this area. To preserve and increase their knowledge and practice, they must take part in developing and transmitting knowledge.
6. Centralized education cannot take into account the many needs and opportunities at the community level. In fact, the quality of First Nations and Metis education will depend significantly on using knowledge and expertise from the community level. Enabling communities to help design education programs will improve those programs.



The education that First Nations and Metis people control can contribute in a big way to meeting the needs of their communities. Over the coming years, we foresee their education institutions evolving alongside other self-government structures. However, we feel more must be done now to respond to these needs. The communities can best decide how to deal with the situation.

I think that who knows better what's happening in the community and what might be some solutions to fixing the community than community members themselves. (Speaker, Governance & Community Development Roundtable)

This Commission believes in a flexible approach to meeting the training needs identified by First Nations and Metis communities. The approach should also reward co-operation among their organizations and governments, and between First Nations, Metis, and non-Aboriginal institutions. If First Nations and Metis communities in a region find benefits in collaboration, then their approaches should be flexible enough to take advantage of collaboration.

Agencies in the same field should be encouraged toward partnering and not competing for the same resources, so the youth will feel that these resources are actually about them instead of just government resources and dollars. (Speaker, Crime Prevention Roundtable)

Finally, traditional knowledge should be preserved and, where possible, applied to today's justice problems. There are many issues that will have to be resolved. These are mainly the responsibility of First Nations and Metis healers and communities. As First Nations and the Metis Nation take on the planning and delivery of justice services, it will fall to them to decide the place of traditional practices. There is a role for governments. In the short-term, governments should fund the preservation of traditional knowledge. In the long-term, governments must create the financing and decision-making for First Nations and Metis justice services that incorporate traditional practices.

Recommendation 1.6

This Commission recommends that the governments of Canada and Saskatchewan, justice and health authorities, and traditional practitioners co-operate to protect and extend traditional justice and healing practices, and explore their application to contemporary First Nations and Metis community concerns.

There have been some important developments in these areas in recent years. But we believe more effort is needed to increase understanding and respect, and to safeguard the traditional knowledge and practices that are so vital to the well-being of First Nations and Metis people.



CONCLUSION

So you definitely need a champion [for change] or a leader in the community to push the vision. (Speaker, Governance & Community Development Roundtable)

Improving First Nations and Metis leadership is necessary for changing services in ways we have outlined in our report. Leadership development is one of the most important ways to increase the ability of First Nations and Metis communities and Nations to deal with pressing community needs. It is clear to us that more services imposed by outside agencies will not bring the desired outcomes.

There is little information about First Nations and Metis leadership, but what is available shows dangerous shortages and major differences with mainstream society. While such information should be collected and while a complete plan to develop First Nations and Metis leadership should be created, these activities should not get in the way of immediately increasing the number of First Nations and Metis people involved in designing and providing justice services.

Education institutions must train more First Nations and Metis students and they must make this training more relevant. Students must also be helped to take advantage of new opportunities. Mainstream institutions must provide support. There is also a more important role for First Nations and Metis organizations. Formal courses of study are needed. More friendly community-based ways of training are also required. Programs that have already proved their value must be expanded and copied. Other institutions must also expand opportunities for First Nations and Metis students. First Nations and Metis people must have the opportunity to pursue professional studies. It is also important that traditional knowledge and practices be preserved and increased.

The justice conditions faced by First Nations and Metis people in Saskatchewan today are both a crisis and a tragedy. Yet, no amount of intervention, however well intentioned, will return First Nations and Metis people to the well-being they once enjoyed. What external forces cannot bring about, however, First Nations and Metis people can achieve for themselves. Developing First Nations and Metis leadership is essential in bringing about the major improvements that are required.

