



“Learning the Dance of Partnerships”

A Northern Saskatchewan First Nations Approach

Northern Inter-Tribal Health Authority (NITHA) Addressing
Community Health Human Resource Needs

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“Learning the Dance of Partnerships”

“A case study of how to deal with the conflicting perspectives and world views of what constitutes ‘progress’ with the Aboriginal Health Human Resource Initiative”

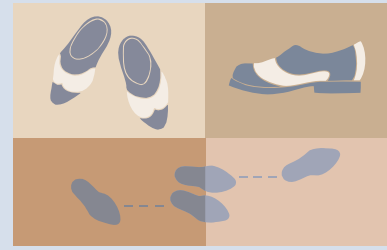


Overview/summary

- mainstream HHR activities and development activities by First Nation health organizations have largely been “two solitudes” with different, sometimes conflicting world views
- NITHA and its four partners have actively been working to break that pattern with career pathing and other initiatives undertaken in partnership with regional health authorities
- managing such complex partnerships in this and other AHHRI initiatives in Saskatchewan has been like strangers learning to dance



Overview (continued)



While “dance lessons” are taking place most intensely in the NITHA area, similar lessons are being learned from all the AHHRI initiatives with First Nations in Saskatchewan. This case study documents how these lessons have been learned in NITHA. But we suspect that evidence of the same lessons could be found in all other AHHRI initiatives in Saskatchewan Region FNIH



The five lessons learned (so far)

Lesson One:

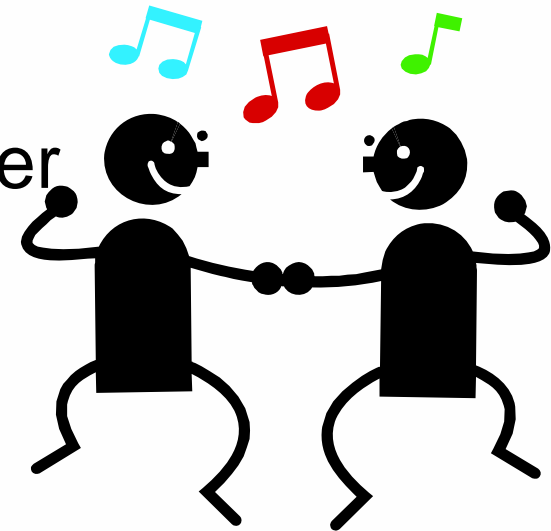
acknowledge the reality of your partner

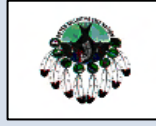
Lesson Two: respect differences

Lesson Three: build trust

Lesson Four: setbacks are learning experiences

Lesson Five: be prepared to change dance tunes





NITHA

A First Nations Partnership delivering 3rd level health services, being directed by the Partners to meet health needs, and comprised of:

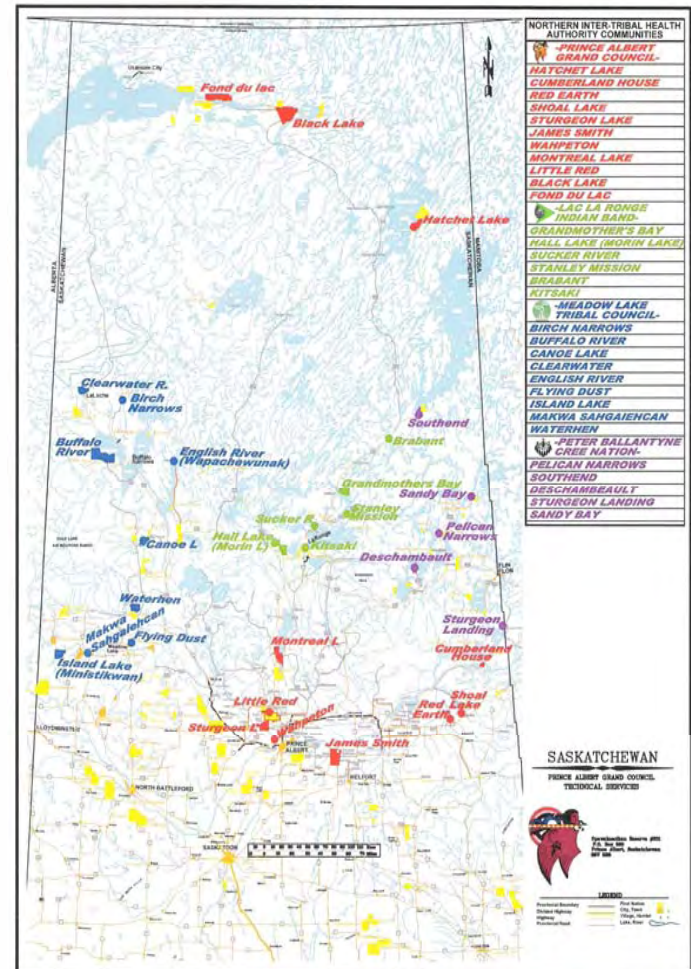
- Prince Albert Grand Council - 12 First Nations
- Meadow Lake Tribal Council - 9 First Nations
- Lac La Ronge Indian Band - 7 First Nations
- Peter Ballantyne Cree Nation - 7 First Nations

Partners deliver community based health services:

- Over a geographic area of 11,000 sq km
- For over 50% of the SK First Nations on-reserve population

NITHA Provides professional support, advice & guidance to the Partners that:

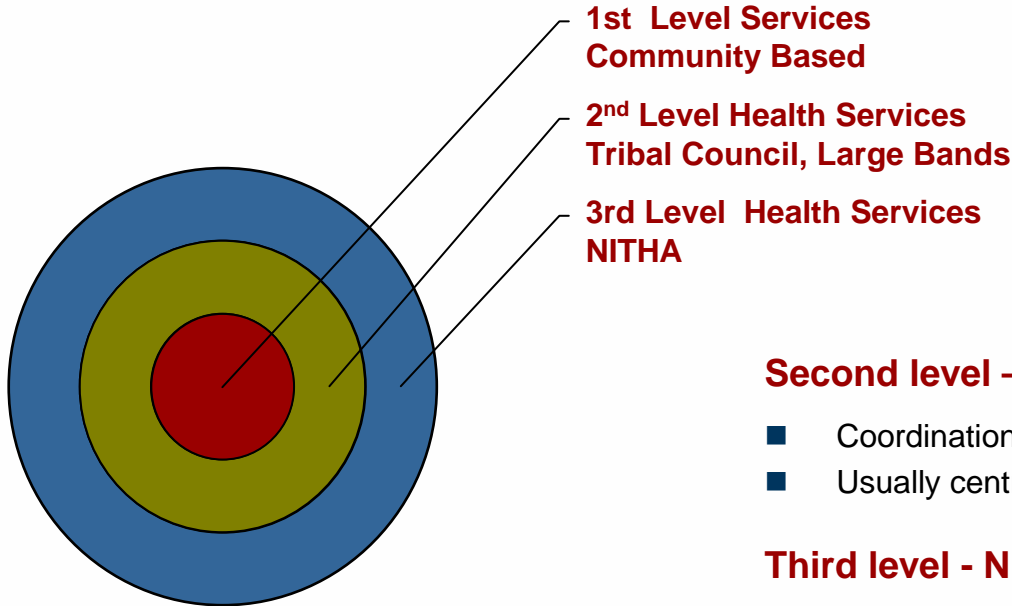
- Strengthens health service delivery
- Provides consultation & direction on public health issues
- Provides consultation for diverse program areas
- Promotes population & environmental health approaches
- Supports on-going capacity development
- Provides linkages for program support services





NITHA

NITHA Partnership Levels of Services



First level - Community

- Community-based, mandatory treatment & prevention-education
- Provided by medical & community health professionals in health clinics

Second level – Tribal Council/Large Band

- Coordination, management & supervisory support
- Usually centralized to band council or tribal council

Third level - NITHA

- Focused on planning & developing capacity to deliver health services in line with partners' priorities
- Specialized & technical support and consultative services
- Regionally based & provided to 2nd level service providers





Saskatchewan Career Pathing Project

- SAHO established co-partnership arrangement of various organizations, collaborating in “establishing Career Pathing for the health sector with a focus on development of a representative workforce!”
- NITHA is the only First Nation organization, 1 of 7 pilot sites in the provincial initiative
- Established a broad and comprehensive human resource model incorporating leading-edge initiatives such as:
 - The Recognition of Prior Learning (PLAR),
 - Career Portfolios based on a w/holistic career planning model,
 - Mentorship and other supports.
- Project goals:
 - Develop an innovative & flexible **sector-wide career pathing model**
 - Begin the process of **effective systemic change** in the labour force
 - Establish an “**inclusive**” approach to **sustainable human resource planning**
 - Priority focus on **Aboriginal employees** in entry level positions
 - Supporting **professional development & career planning** to match ‘skills with real opportunities’





NITHA Partnership “Career Pathing for Northern First Nations Health Employees”

The partnership process for supporting the project

- **Readiness development at Partnership 3rd & 2nd levels involving awareness building (commitment):**
 - At 3rd level with in partnership & with external partners (SAHO, AHHRI, FNIH, SK E & E, SK Health)
 - At 3rd and 2nd level and at 2nd and 1st level.
- **Development of project plans involving consultations (creating a vision, developing champions, developing capacity, respecting differences, & building trust):**
 - 2nd level consultations, reporting & planning by NITHA Career Pathing Steering Committee
 - Development of an implementation plan at 3rd level
 - 1st level consultations, reporting & planning by Partner Career Pathing Steering Committee
 - Development of an implementation plan at 2nd level with 1st level
- **Implement plans & ongoing assessment (learning form experiences, adjusting plans & communicating):**
 - 3rd level activities support readiness development, consultations & planning by 2nd level with 1st level
 - Develop capacity and resources to support 2nd level in implementing project plans
 - Connect external resources to support Partner 2nd and 1st levels for on going development for their project
- **Project evaluation**
 - 3rd working with external resources to support 2nd level developing & conducting an evaluation plan
- **Embedding project learnings to create sustainability of proven strategies for health employee retention, recruitment and succession planning.**
 - 3rd and 2nd level planning based on lessons learned



Learning to Dance: Lesson 1

Acknowledging the Reality of Your Partner

- Organizational partnerships are all about developing relationships between different groups of people to meet common interests.
- Like relationships, partners need to understand the dynamics that exist within each other's organization.
- Each partner comes to the floor with various levels of capacity in terms of resources, skills, experience, commitment and sense of purpose.
- As each partner develops an understanding of their partner/s they can begin to determine the depth and nature of the partnership relationship.



Learning to Dance: Lesson 2

Respect Differences

- Organizations chose to enter into partnership relationships because they recognize they can build on their pooled strengths to realize a common vision/interest.
- In order to achieve a common interest, partnering organizations recognize each brings something different to the floor which will contribute to creating a vision that individually they could not achieve
- In order to create the common vision, each partner knows they have to provide space for the other to contribute their expertise, talents, resources, etc in the way that they are best capable of doing so.
- In providing space to our partners to contribute in their own way to the creation process, each partner needs to respect those differences between each other, acknowledging and encouraging contributions to the partnership.
- The differences are the building blocks that provides the partnership with strengths to create the common vision.



Learning to Dance: Lesson 3

Build Trust

- The reflection process by each partner regarding their partnering organizations' abilities provides each partner with a sense of each other's limits in being able to participate in the dance of creating a common vision.
- In the relationship that the partners nurture for creating their common vision they create boundaries of understanding about how far, how fast, with what resources and with what level of commitment they can work together to achieve their goals.
- The reflection process, relationship building and development of reasonable working boundaries provides the partnership with an environment in which each begins to recognize their capacity to trust each other in supporting the development of a common vision / interest.
- As each partner demonstrates various levels of trust in the other partners abilities to participate in the creation process the partnership begins to assume an entity of its own which is grounded in the pooled capacity of the partners.



Learning to Dance: Lesson 4

Setbacks Are Learning Experiences

- The partnership relationship building process is a learning process and, like all learning processes, involves challenges.
- The growing pains in the partnership associated with the challenges provide opportunities to learn different ways of achieving common goals.
- In these difficult times the partnership needs those visionaries within each of the partners who provide the enthusiasm to continue and treat challenges as learning opportunities.
- These visionaries are the champions that provide the partnership with direction and continued sense of purpose. They exist at various levels within each partner.
- The partnership champions need to be supported and encouraged to continue to spark the partners on, by keeping the vision alive.



Learning to Dance: Lesson 5

Be Prepared to Change Dance Tunes

- Having a common vision does not mean that the partnership will have the processes and details of how to achieve a vision outlined at the beginning.
- As the partnership is a relationship building experience involving various learning opportunities, the partners will become aware of ways of approaching activities that they may have never imagined initially.
- The trust levels developed in the awareness building activities of the relationship provide the partnership with the creative know-how required to change directions and plans connected to their learning experiences.
- After each positive learning experience of creating what would seem like the ultimate “dance,” the partnership becomes aware of many more opportunities they have to create other just as effective “dances.”



NUNAVUT » INUIT MAKE UP 50 PER CENT
OF GOVERNMENT WORKERS

Employment milestone both good and bad, observers contend

Globe & Mail Monday Nov. 12/07 PG A6

BY SARA MINOGUE IQUALUIT

At 32, Aluki Rojas has a corner office overlooking a rocky tundra slope, a former frontier of quickly growing Iqaluit. She's well spoken, sharp and prone to laughter, but she also appears a little nervous. This is her third week as deputy minister of Human Resources in a government with a 20-per-cent vacancy rate.

Ms. Rojas is one of nearly 1,500 Inuit working in the Nunavut government, which recently issued a triumphant press release announcing that Inuit now hold half the jobs in the territory's public service.

That's a big deal - it's the highest number they've ever achieved, even though the land

cess stories. Ms. Redfern says she knows students who complete the program but, instead of going on to further education, come straight back to Nunavut for a job.

"When you've done NS and you can get a job immediately, with \$50,000 to \$75,000 a year with benefits, what's the point of going back to school?"

This is an example of a government that focuses on short-term gains at the expense of long-term strategies, she says. "I don't feel or see we've made education a priority."

As another example, she cites Thomas Berger's 2006 report calling for a bilingual education system, reflecting Nunavut values, paid for by the federal government as part of its responsibility to prepare In-

"There is a limit to how far you can push that without diminishing the effectiveness of the government," Mr. Bainbridge says. "Since most jobs in the public service require some type of postsecondary education, there is a limit to how far the rate will climb until GN [the government of Nunavut] fixes the school system."

Recent government statistics reveal an increasing reluctance to hire non-Inuit, even though one in five government jobs is vacant. Between March, 2005, and March, 2007, the Nunavut government has had a net gain of 260 Inuit and only 11 non-Inuit.

The numbers reflect the distinct shortage of skilled and educated Inuit in Nunavut, where in 2002-2003 - the last year from which statistics are avail-

In the meantime, the drive to improve the Inuit hiring statistics within government has created its own problems.

Mr. Berger noted the phenomenon of "poaching" staff, whereby government departments lure trained Inuit staff from other departments in order to boost their own numbers. In particular, trained Inuktitut-speaking teachers are hired into government departments, taking Inuktitut speakers away from the classrooms.

Yet not everybody sees doom and gloom.

Abe Tagalik worked with the Nunavut government for five years, most recently as the vice-president of the Nunavut Housing Corp. He says that reaching 50-per-cent Inuit employment is an achievement

Questions and insights are welcome

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