

**D R A F T**

**National Metis Youth Strategy**

**Metis National Council**

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# DRAFT NATIONAL MÉTIS YOUTH STRATEGY

## MÉTIS NATIONAL COUNCIL

### **Introduction:**

The Honourable Ethel Blondin-Andrew, Secretary of State for Training and Youth, Human Resources Development Canada (HRDC) has, gratefully, provided assistance and support to the Metis National Council (MNC) for a National Youth Intervenor position which has made this draft National Metis Youth Strategy possible.

The Métis National Council (MNC) believes that we must make every effort to provide our young people the opportunities and tools to become more self-sufficient by developing skills and acquiring experience that will assist our young people and communities. This, we believe, is in keeping with HRDC's and MNC's goals and objectives to address the challenges, problems and obstacles and to provide Métis youth with the skills training and tools necessary to becoming self-sufficient and self-governing. We believe that we have this government's support in taking steps to assist Metis youth and provide our young people with the knowledge, education, skills training and experiences to ensure they will be in a position to lead our communities. The key component will be culturally sensitive appropriate programming.

The MNC has received assistance from Human Resources Development Canada's Youth programming for a pilot youth project from which we have learned much about the needs of our young people and requirements for running successful Youth Projects.

As part of this National Metis Youth Strategy the MNC has submitted a Proposal to establish a partnership with Madam Secretary Ethel Blondin-Andrew, Minister Lloyd Axworthy and Youth Services Canada for culturally sensitive Metis-specific youth programming to be administered by Metis. Due in large part to the assistance provided for a National Youth Intervenor and the establishment of Metis Youth Representatives by each Regional Affiliate to the MNC, we are now prepared to enter into a partnership with HRDC on Youth Programming for Metis and are prepared to assume the responsibility for providing programming and guidance to our young people with their input as part of our National Metis Youth Strategy.

Our National Metis Youth Strategy begins with the recognition of our unique Métis culture, language and circumstances Métis youth find themselves in today. Our Métis youth have unique and special needs that are not being met. Although the situation of Métis youth as compared to other Aboriginal people differ very little, Métis youth are often in a worse situation as they do not benefit from special education and other programs available only to



status or registered Indians by virtue of the *Indian Act*.

The MNC, as part of its Youth Strategy has submitted a proposal, to establish a partnership between HRDC and MNC for Métis Youth, pursuant to the governments' programs and commitments. The MNC sees this proposed partnership as a first step in empowering Metis who are committed to our young people, to deliver Métis-specific Youth programming through various projects to teach our young people in our own way and provide them with worthwhile training and experience which will be beneficial to their development and identity as well as increasing their chances of furthering their education or training and, ultimately, assist them in finding appropriate employment.

We are well aware that many of our young people face lives on unemployment, social assistance and in institutions if measures are not taken to provide the needed training and other opportunities to assist them in furthering their education or training and finding employment.

Fewer Métis youth, as compared to the general population, are completing high school, attending university or college and obtaining employment as shown by the data and statistics based on MNC's Special Runs of Statistics Canada's Aboriginal Peoples Survey and Census below.

We believe that our people, governing and educational institutions are in the best position to assist our young people in providing them with a strong sense of identity as Métis and assisting them with difficulties and problems they experience. We believe that we are better positioned to run programs for our young people and provide them the specialized training and experiential opportunities that will increase their chances of succeeding and progressing.

Métis leaders have agreed that our intervention is necessary to providing our young people with access to opportunities within a culturally sensitive encouraging environment respectful of Métis people, conditions, culture, institutions and governing structures. the MNC sees HRDC's Youth Programs and Services as key to supporting a major Metis Youth Strategy and initiatives.

Assisting our young people through Métis-specific programs and community projects will enable our young people to gain job skills and life skills through a Métis community service experience. Our young people require assistance in obtaining relevant life and work skills experience through community service projects designed by Métis people to provide them with maximum learning and growth opportunities. In this way we will be building better and stronger communities by enabling our young people to be involved and address issues of local concern.

Precedent has been set for the transfer of responsibility for federal programming and is a commitment of the government. The Métis have established a draft National Framework

Agreement in preparation for the devolution of labour market training programming to Metis that we anticipate will assist Metis youth.

The MNC, made up of Regional Affiliates, proposes to work closely with both the Office of the Secretary of State for Youth and Training and YSC to provide Métis Youth access to programs and services with the assistance of the Youth Intervenor and a National Coordinator.

## **BACKGROUND:**

We provide the following background on the Metis Nation in Canada to assist in providing a full and proper understanding of who we are as a people, our governing organizations and institutions and our goals and objectives which Metis youth will inherit.

Established in 1983, following the recognition of the Metis as a distinct people with Aboriginal rights in the *Constitution Act of Canada, 1982*, the Metis National Council continues as the national voice of the Metis Nation in Canada. The Metis are one of the Indigenous people recognized in the *Constitution Act of Canada* as one of the three Aboriginal peoples in Canada.

The Metis comprise the second largest population of Aboriginal peoples in Canada numbering more than 360,000. The Metis Nation has organized itself into five (5) regions, and are represented by five (5) Regional governing organizations affiliated to the national governing body, the Metis National Council.

The Metis Nation emerged as a distinct Aboriginal or Indigenous people from the clash of Indian people commensurate with the arrival of Europeans. Metis people were born from the union of Cree, Ojibwa and Saulteaux women, and the French and Scottish fur traders, beginning in the mid-1600's. Scandinavian, Irish and English were added to the mix as western Canada was explored. The word Metis comes from the Latin "miscere", to mix, and was used originally to describe the children of Aboriginal women and French men. Other terms for these children were Country-born, Black Scots, and Halfbreeds.

The Metis were intermediaries between European and Indian cultures, working as guides, interpreters and provisioners to the new forts and trading companies. Their villages sprang up from the Great Lakes to the Mackenzie Delta. The Metis Homeland encompasses parts of present day Ontario, British Columbia, Alberta, Saskatchewan, Manitoba and Northwest Territories.

Metis culture is distinct with roots in a fusion of French, English and Indian influences that flourished into the late 1800's resulting in the development of a unique Metis culture, Metis language called Michif, clothing, Red River cart and music developed by Metis fiddlers combining jigs and reels.

Metis also developed a unique political and legal structure, with strong democratic traditions. The Metis elected provisional governments and held organized buffalo hunts under laws developed for this purpose. By 1816, the Metis had challenged the Hudson Bay Company's monopoly in the fur trade and began to develop a national consciousness and identity.

The Metis formed the majority of the population at the Red River Colony, now the province of Manitoba. Louis Riel's provisional government negotiated the entry of Manitoba into Canadian Confederation in 1870. However, federal promises of land to Metis entrenched in the *Manitoba Act* were not fulfilled. After ten (10) years of delay, the Canadian government introduced the notorious scrip system. Certificates were issued and provided for land or money to replace direct land grants. These were easily snapped from impoverished Metis by speculators who followed the Scrip Commissions. Records show that 96% of Metis land scrip notes were reassigned. Documents corroborate that governments and courts facilitated the taking of the land of Metis and their children and now form the basis of a number of land claims court cases.

The *Royal Proclamation of 1763* held the Crown responsible for the well-being of Aboriginal peoples and forbid the dismembering of their lands. However, the federal government refused to acknowledge its responsibilities for Metis and their rights as an Aboriginal people were not recognized. Impoverished and frustrated, the Metis appealed to Louis Riel once again and in 1885, Riel led a resistance which was crushed by the British troops despite the support of farmers, Blackfoot and Cree peoples. Riel and his provisional government were arrested, tried and hung on November 16, 1885. It took 107 years for the Canadian government to finally recognize Louis Riel as one of the founders of Confederation in 1992.

In 1983, the MNC was formed to sit at the constitutional table and has continued to represent Metis in negotiations with the federal, provincial and territorial governments. In 1993, the MNC was restructured in preparation for self-government, with assignment of areas of responsibility for culture, health/housing, hunting/fishing, the environment and justice to the members of the Board.

The Metis Nation has faced many challenges in past years especially Constitutional recognition and protection of the rights of Metis people. The Metis have always had to struggle for the recognition of our rights. This included political, military and court actions. Our last armed conflict with the Canadian state was in 1885, when our people sought constitutional protection of their rights to land and self-government. Since then, different Metis political movements have sought the recognition of those rights, along with basic social, civil and economic rights. For many years our people lived as squatters, on road allowances and other lands not wanted or required by others. The exception to this were existing Metis communities in the northern parts of the provinces which encompass the Metis homeland. With the political developments beginning in the 1960s, our people have made great strides forward in achieving our objectives, especially our own internal political developments. Through land rights research in the 1970s and constitutional renewal of the Canadian state in the 1980s, we at least now have constitutional recognition of our existence



as an Aboriginal nation and people.

Our young people need to receive a positive education on their history, identity and culture from our own people. This will assist in enhancing a strong identity for our young people and go a long way in preserving our culture and heritage.

### **The Metis National Council (MNC):**

The Metis National Council is a non-profit organization, made up of regional affiliates, dedicated to the needs and aspirations of the Metis Nation's population, estimated to be over a quarter of a million, living in rural and urban communities within Canada's provinces of British Columbia, Alberta, Saskatchewan, Manitoba and Ontario. The MNC is the national representative body and voice of the Metis Nation in Canada and is mandated to address all issues confronting Metis people and most importantly to preserve and promote Metis culture, identity, language and way of life. The MNC's organizational objectives include:

- To act as advocates and negotiators for the Metis People with the Government of Canada, as well as at national conferences and forums, First Ministers Conferences, and international Indigenous forums, and to liaise with other national Aboriginal organizations on behalf of the Metis;
- To negotiate constitutional reform on behalf of Metis people;
- To formulate policies and programs, and to conduct research into the conditions of the Metis in Canada;
- To pursue self-government to allow the Metis to meet our own needs in areas including education, housing, medical care, employment and economic development;
- To promote the democratic participation of Metis people at all levels of the organization, and to assist in leadership development;
- To assist member organizations with information and lobbying, and to coordinate collective action to promote common interests;
- To promote the customs, culture and beliefs of the Metis people, in Canada and around the world.

The central goals and aspirations of the Metis Nation are:

- To represent and promote the interests of the Metis Nation;
- To restore Metis lands and resources for future generations;
- To achieve the full recognition of the Metis Nation and its jurisdiction within the Canadian federal system;
- To seek cooperative and productive relations with other Canadian governments and peoples based on mutual respect, sharing and tolerance;
- To promote progress and prosperity among Metis people in all cultural, social, economic and political fields;
- To achieve self-sufficiency for the Metis people and the institutions of the Metis Nation;

- To maintain and promote respect for the individual rights and freedoms of the Metis people and the equal protection and advancement of Metis women, men and youth; and
- To maintain the independence and integrity of the Metis Nation, safeguard its stability and protect its existence and people.

We the MNYAC Support these goals and aspirations and they are in-line with our Council's mission statement and directive.

### **Structure of MNC:**

The MNC is an independent, non-profit organization which has a local, regional and national structure. The local structures vary according to local needs and relationships to the provincial structures. The main condition is that all Metis in the community have a right to participate in local organizations and must be allowed to participate in local meetings, votes and elections, regardless of their level of activity.

Currently the MNC is composed of five (5) regional Metis organizations, one in each of five provinces. The MNC is governed by a Board of Governors made up of the Presidents of the five (5) regional affiliates to the MNC: Manitoba Metis Federation (MMF), Metis Nation of Alberta (MNA), Metis Nation of Saskatchewan (MNS), Metis Nation of Ontario (MNO) and Metis Nation in British Columbia (MNBC).

The five (5) regional member associations are the most important component of the structure and the focus of most attention. While the structure varies from region to region, all associations affiliated to the MNC represent all Metis. The Presidents and executive are elected in general and direct province-wide elections with every Metis, over the age of 18 years, having the right to vote. The elections are held by secret ballot, at regular intervals, in all Metis communities.

The national structure of the MNC is composed of the Presidents of the regional affiliates and a newly elected full-time national President, elected for a term of four years at an annual assembly, who is also the Chief Executive Officer for the MNC Board of Governors.

The MNYAC put forward a resolution to the MNC Assembly on November 25, 1995, resolving that there be a voting seat on the MNC Board of Governors that will be held by an elected representative of the MNYAC.

### **Regional Affiliates of the MNC:**

National affiliates to the MNC, such as the Metis Nation Development Corporation, are located in Ottawa with affiliates to regional organizations located in the respective regions or provinces.

Many Regional Affiliates to the MNC have established affiliated organizations to address education through the Gabriel Dumont Institute, Dumont Technical Institute, and Louis Riel Institute. They are addressing family and child welfare through the Metis Child & Family Services organizations and program delivery structures. Several Regions have established a Metis-specific structure of boards to make decisions on employment and training programs and services for Metis in these provinces which also addresses training for Metis youth, an area to be transferred to Metis jurisdictions. Many have established housing organizations and are continuing to work on an economic development through economic development institutes, tripartite negotiations and co-management agreements with federal and provincial governments as well as other matters. All affiliates cooperate on issues affecting the Metis Nation in Canada.

The MNYAC put forward a resolution to the MNC Assembly on November 25, 1995, resolving that there be a voting seat on the respective Provincial Boards, that will be held by an elected representative of the Provincial youth membership. The process for the provincial vote has yet to be determined.

#### **MNC's Self-Government Objectives:**

The MNC seeks self-governance within Canada for the national and regional affiliated governing bodies, specifically the establishment of democratic governing bodies at the local, regional and national levels. The self-government priority goals and objectives of the Metis Nation within the existing federal policy on the implementation of the Inherent Right to Self-government include:

**National Framework Agreement:** The MNC will work with federal and provincial governments in establishing a National Framework Agreement for Metis which will serve as a guide for the negotiation and implementation processes. The Agreement will be ratified by the Metis people and will provide a mechanism to move forward on the priority areas and address necessary financial arrangements.

**Metis Nation Constitution:** The MNC will work within its own processes to build a Metis Nation Constitution and will involve the federal and provincial governments as needed given that it will serve as the basis of self-government agreements.

**Metis Nation Enumeration and Registry:** The MNC will work with federal and provincial governments on an Agreement providing of the enumeration of the Metis Nation and establishment of a Metis Nation Registry to pave the way for greater developments in meeting the needs of the Metis Nation.

**Transfer Federal & Provincial Programs & Services to Metis:** Consistent with the federal policy on implementation of self-government, the MNC will work on the continued devolution of federal and provincial programs and services to the Metis Nation.

**Metis Land Process:** The MNC will work with federal and provincial governments in the development of a national Metis tailored land process for the clear expression of Metis rights to land and settlement.

**Revised Fiscal & Financial Arrangements for Metis:** The negotiation of new fiscal and financial arrangements with Metis are necessary to address the short and long term needs of Metis.

The MNC will also begin work on Metis participation in the next Constitutional Conference. Our ultimate goal is to exercise our rights as protected in the *Constitution Act of Canada*. It is our position that Metis must be part of any Constitutional discussions to ensure positive constitutional changes for the Metis Nation in Canada.

#### **MNC's Programs and Activities:**

**Metis-Specific Land Process:** The MNC and its member organizations have promoted the rights of the Metis to land through the political route. However, with the denial of Metis access to the federal government's land claims processes, the MNC and/or its member organizations have decided to press the issue in court. The Manitoba Metis Federation has initiated court action based on constitutional guarantees in the *Manitoba Act, 1870*. In Saskatchewan, MNC and the Metis Nation of Saskatchewan have initiated court action based on unextinguished Aboriginal title to land. The MNC has expressed its willingness to work with federal and provincial governments in the development of a national Metis tailored land process for the clear expression of Metis rights to land and settlement.

**Protection of Metis Hunting, Fishing, Trapping & Gathering Rights:** There are also a number of court actions challenging federal and provincial fishing and game laws where our people have been charged with violations. In the past, most of our people would just plead guilty, now we are not. There are several cases now before the courts.

The MNC and its member organizations are also challenging the system by going ahead and implementing the right of self-government through internal constitutions. In one case, the Metis Legislative Assembly has passed a *Metis Wildlife and Conservation Act* and Regulations. While the provincial government involved does not recognize our Act, the province nevertheless has agreed to come to the table to discuss the contents and is agreeable to negotiating a partnership agreement which will see Metis access to hunting and fishing under a potential joint jurisdiction of enforcement and management, and licensing. The MNC continues to promote the exercise and protection of the environment as well as the right to hunt, trap and fish. Similar co-management agreements with other provincial governments will continue to be sought in other regions.

**Reform of the Justice System:** The MNC has conducted consultations and done research in the development of justice policies which will enable Metis people to participate fully and effectively in the reform of justice systems in Canada as it affects Aboriginal peoples. The



Metis Nation is working on alternatives such as Sentencing Circles and has submitted an interim report to the Department of Justice on its initiatives.

The above areas clearly demonstrate the need for Metis lawyers and researchers, an area of study previously not open to Metis students. There is a clear need to provide opportunities for young Metis to become lawyers.

**Health:** The MNC is addressing health issues of concern to Metis through the exercise and development of an Aboriginal health policy based on consultations with Metis.. The MNC has promoted Metis-specific health projects organized with a specific curriculum and solid understanding of Metis development, psychology and education in order to proceed positively with the development of health and identify areas where further research is needed. The MNC has begun work with regional affiliates in the areas of mental health, Head Start, smoking cessation and substance abuse to educate and train Metis. The MNC has submitted a proposal to HRDC's Youth Internship Program to train Metis youth as workers for Metis within the Head Start Program and there are opportunities for Metis Youth to be involved.

**Human Resources Development for Metis:** The Metis Nation sees increased literacy and human resources development as essential elements in self-determination and the essence of our mission to overcome barriers to development. In view of this, the MNC has determined literacy training and human resource development, especially for our young people, are vital to the economic well being of the Metis Nation. The MNC has established a national and regional Human Resources Plans for the Metis Nation. The MNC is presently working with regional affiliates and the Canadian government on the transfer of employment and training programs and services to the Metis Nation.

**Devolution of Programs & Services:** The Metis see the reassertion of control over our lives and destiny as communities and individuals through the establishment of our own governing institutions and initiatives and the devolution of federal and provincial programs and services in the priority areas of employment and training, housing, justice, health, economic development and child and family services. The MNC including Regional Affiliates, with the assistance of the Federal Interlocutor, are actively seeking the devolution of programs and services from both the federal and provincial governments. Through such an initiative it is hoped that the Metis will be in a position to successfully embark on the road to self-sufficiency and economic stability.

**Implementation of Self-Governance for Metis:** Through the newly announced federal policy on the implementation of the Inherent Right to Self-government, a small window of opportunity exists to move the Metis agenda forward. However, unless the political will is there by both the federal and provincial governments, the Metis will be left on the sidelines, once again marginalized.

The MNC is in the process of establishing a Metis Nation Constitution to serve as a basis of self-government agreements and a national framework agreement to serve as a guide for the

negotiation and implementation processes. The MNC will negotiate new fiscal and financial arrangements with Metis necessary for the short and long term needs of Metis self-governance. The MNC, as the national voice of the Metis Nation in Canada, makes representations and written and oral submissions to Canadian Parliamentary and legislative bodies and assemblies in Canada. The MNC negotiates on behalf of Metis in constitutional reform fora in Canada and in other national and international fora. The MNC and its leaders regularly consult on a wide range as well as specific issues in most major Metis communities.

The MNC has been active with our youth in a number of areas related to their education and training for jobs and further education. The Honourable Ethel Blondin-Andrew, Secretary of State for Training and Youth has provided assistance to the Metis National Council for a Youth Intervenor position to develop a demographic profile of Metis youth, a National Metis Youth Strategy, and to develop an inventory of youth programs and initiatives to increase awareness.

This Strategy is prepared, as part of the duties of the Youth Intervenor in fulfilment of the commitment to develop a National Metis Youth Strategy.

The following provides an overview of the Metis Youth Population.

## **OVERVIEW OF METIS YOUTH POPULATION**

Metis Youth have a similar demographic profile as other Aboriginal peoples (Indian, Inuit), a profile which is very different from the general Canadian population. Like other Aboriginal people, Metis people have a disproportionately younger population with over half (57.7%) of the population under 25 years of age. The following are some relevant facts and figures.

### **Self-identification of Metis Youth:**

The Metis population is also the second largest Aboriginal population making up 21% of the total Aboriginal population in Canada. Of note is the overall effective rate of non-identification of 36.39% and an effective rate of self-identification of 63.61%. About one in every three persons with Metis ancestry did not identify as Metis. For various reasons many Metis youth are not aware that they may identify as Metis where others choose not to identify or hold themselves out as Metis.

We as the MNYAC suggest racism, lack of cultural awareness and support, ignorance, stigmas attached to being Metis as factors contributing to this lack of self-identification. This problem will be addressed under the proposed intervention strategies.

### **Population of Metis Youth:**

Metis youth aged 15 to 24 represent almost 20% of Canada's self-identifying Metis population of 212,650 (according to the 1991 Census), 135,265 (according

to the APS), a population we estimate to be much higher, and at minimum, at least over 250,000 and likely higher. Only an enumeration of the Metis population will begin to confirm the estimates.

The MNYAC advocates for full enumeration of Metis population, especially the Metis Youth population, where specialized data should be collected.

#### **Metis Children:**

There are an estimated 51,105 Metis children aged 0 to 14 representing 37.8% of the Metis population. Children make up 36.8% of off-reserve Indians, 38.5% of on reserve Indians and 42.6% of the Inuit population compared to 20.9% of the general Canadian population. The largest segment of the Metis population being children points to future increases in the needs of the Metis Youth population.

Metis youth representatives will review the participation of youth in participating in the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child.

#### **Rate of Increase of Metis Youth Population:**

The Metis population is increasing at a rate (1.4) almost twice as high as the general Canadian population (0.8).

#### **Metis Female Youth Population:**

About 54% of the Metis youth population is female. The Metis Female population faces unique problems and challenges which will be addressed in the Proposed Intervention Strategies.

#### **Location of Metis Youth:**

The Metis population is concentrated largely in the three prairie provinces where 73% of Metis reside, with 9% of the Metis in Ontario, 7% in B.C., 3% in the Northwest Territories and 2% in the eastern provinces.

#### **Urban-Rural Metis Youth:**

Metis people reside predominantly in urban centres (65% urban, 35% rural). The largest urban Metis populations reside in Winnipeg (9,680), Edmonton (8,260), Saskatoon (3,080), Vancouver (2,890), Calgary (2,850), Regina (2,230), Toronto (1,090) and Ottawa-Hull (1,035).

#### **Involvement of Metis Youth in the Justice System:**

Many Metis youth continue to risk involvement in the criminal justice system. There is a high proportion of Aboriginal youth, including Metis, involved with the criminal justice system. Many of today's Aboriginal inmates started out as young offenders and remained caught in a system with no way out. The current judicial and welfare systems only serve to worsen the conditions and risks. There are many factors, such as socio-economic factors, that contribute to the over representation of Aboriginal youth in the justice



system when one examines the situation of Metis youth.

The MNYAC feel that this issue must be addressed due to the large percentage of the Metis population in the penal system who have no support or intervention programs. We feel that there should be a review of the Young Offenders Act by the MNYAC to ensure that the problems of our youth are being properly addressed. We will address the involvement of our Metis Youth in the Justice System in our Proposed Initiative Strategies.

### **Metis Youth Completing High School:**

About 26% of the total Metis population age 15 and over had less than grade 9 education, compared to 17.3% of the total population in 1986. In 1991, 17% of the total Metis population compared with 13.9% of the total Canadian population had less than a grade 9 education.

About 35.4% of the total Metis Youth population aged 15 to 24 never completed high school and are not attending high school. This rate rises to 38.4% of Metis youth in Manitoba. The rate of non-completion of high school for Metis youth in Saskatchewan is 34.3%, Alberta is 35.7%, British Columbia is 42.2% and 24.6 in Ontario.

About 56% of Metis Youth ages 15 to 24 are reported as having some high school while 12% have completed high school or secondary schooling (Table #MNC-3, Special Run, APS, 1991).

About 49.9% of the total Metis population aged 25 to 34 never completed high school, a much higher rate of non-completion of high school than today's youth. There has been a steady decline, from the older generations to the Metis youth of today, in the non-completion of high school rates. This is the trend nationally and for most provinces.

Despite the improvement in Metis youth completing high school, the gap between Metis and the general Canadian population has not been reduced and may in fact be widening. The difference in the proportions of Metis and Canadian populations with less than a high school diploma has not declined appreciably in the last 50 years. More Metis may be completing high school today, but so too are more Canadians generally. Improvements in Metis educational levels have not been sufficient to reduce the gap between Canadian and Metis populations.

Metis young people, like Aboriginal youth generally, have extremely high drop-out rates from high school. Nationally, one in three Metis youths who enter high school end up leaving before graduation. Exact comparisons are not possible on the basis of published data but indications are that the drop-out rate for Metis is much higher than the Canadian average.

The Metis drop-out rate is about the same for both male and female high school students across all provinces. The drop-out rate for Metis youth aged 15 to 24 is 34% nationally, 23.4% in Ontario, 35.4% in Manitoba, 23.7% in Saskatchewan, 35.9% in Alberta, 59.7% in British Columbia and 36.5% in the



Northwest Territories according to Statistics Canada's Aboriginal Peoples Survey (APS).

The principal reason given by 41% of Metis males (aged 15-49) for leaving high school is that they "went to work", more by older generations than today's youth. Only 20% of today's young Metis men (aged 15 to 24) cite "going to work" as the principal reason for leaving high school whereas a larger percentage (43%) of males aged 25-34 cite this as the reason. The principal reason cited by 30% of Metis males aged 15-24 is "lost interest, peer pressure or too hard" with the second highest reason (20%) is "went to work", the third (15%) is "expelled, failed, quit or personal reasons" and the fourth (14%) is "family related problems".

The principal reason given by 32% of all Metis females for leaving high school is "family related problems". "Family problems" is the reason cited by 23% of Metis women aged 15-24, 33% for ages 25-34 and 38% for ages 35-49. The next principal reason cited is, "loss of interest, peer pressure and too hard" for 27% of all Metis women, 24% for young Metis women aged 15-24, 29% for ages 25-34 and 27% for ages 35-49. The third most often cited reason by young Metis women ages 15-24 for leaving high school is "expelled, failed, quit or personal reasons" with the fourth most cited (10%) being "went to work". For Metis women aged 25-34 the third most often cited reason is "went to work" with the fourth being "expelled, failed, quit or personal reasons".

Financial and health problems are often cited as reasons for leaving school but, a growing number of young Metis women aged 15 to 24 cite "financial problems" as a reason for leaving school.

A growing number of Metis youth cite that "discrimination" is a significant factor in the decision to drop out. The MNYAC supports this statement with reports from our communities across the provinces.

Additionally, a high a number of Metis youth cite that a lack of awareness of Metis traditions and history in the present curriculum contributes to the frustration against the institutional educational systems.

High drop-out rates from high school are a major concern as they indicate that many Metis youth are not acquiring the basic educational qualifications needed for training, jobs or further education. Although some universities conditionally accept adult or mature students without a high school diploma, most will always face the disadvantage of limited or no access to higher education. The result is that they face a lifetime of low-paying jobs, increased unemployment, dependence on social assistance and costs/losses accompanied with further education.

A major goal of the Metis National Council's Human Resources Development Strategy and Plan will be to reduce the high school drop-out rate of Metis youth to what was the average for young people in the general population of each region in 1991. Those who complete high school have been shown to be more likely to pursue post-secondary studies or further training than those who do not complete high school. Completion of high school would have

positive benefits in improving the skill levels of Metis youth which would be accompanied by increased education, training and employment opportunities.

### **Metis Youth and Literacy:**

The only study of Metis and literacy was conducted by the Gabriel Dumont Institute in Saskatchewan in 1993 for the Royal Commission on Aboriginal Peoples. The survey found that 65% of Metis had Level 4 reading skills or no difficulty reading and understanding printed materials used in everyday life with some having no problems with very difficult reading tasks. It was also found that 74% had Level 3 numeracy skills or better which indicates that Metis have skill levels equal to those of the general Canadian population. The survey and its figures are suspect as the results are so unusual that one is forced to conclude that methodological differences in the way data was collected and classified, and differences in sampling techniques make it impossible to compare with the only other national study, "The Survey of Literacy Skills in Daily Activities (LSUDA) conducted by Statistics Canada in 1989.

Due to the lack of any precise figures, the MNC's HRD Plan, 1995, generates estimates of the literacy and numeracy skills of the Metis based on the conclusion of the LSUDA survey that the "level of reading proficiency has a strong and positive relationship with level of schooling". (Statistics Canada Catalogue 89-525E, p.9). It was also found that "... numeracy skills are closely related to the level of schooling of respondents", (ibid., p. 11). The level of schooling became the logical choice for the development of a relational database between the Aboriginal Peoples Survey and the LSUDA. An examination of the educational attainment levels for Metis will provide an indication of literacy skill levels based on a best case scenario as Metis generally perform more poorly than the general Canadian population in most categories.

The result is that Metis have significantly lower literacy and numeracy skill levels than the general Canadian population. Only 56% of the adult Metis population has Level 4 reading skills compared to 62% of the general population. Approximately 7% of the Metis population have Level 1 skills or no reading skills and cannot read any printed material, although most could identify common products in advertisements. Level one proficiency is more widespread among Metis than the general population in Canada. Close to 40% of adult Metis have Level 2 or Level 3 reading skills and so have difficulty reading and understanding printed materials.

Metis generally have even poorer numeracy skills compared to the general population. Only 55% function at Level 3 numeracy compared to 62% of the general population. A much greater proportion (20%) of the Metis population functions only at Level 1 numeracy which indicates numbers can be read with difficulty with simple arithmetic. About 27% functions at Level 2 numeracy indicating that they can do little more than add and subtract.

It is impossible at present to provide differences by age group of literacy and numeracy rates. Preliminary calculations suggest that there is cause for concern since close to 50% of the Metis population appears to have less than



adequate reading and numeracy skills to function well.

Another area of increasing importance in education and the labour market involves computer literacy for which no research, study or survey has been undertaken regarding Metis or other Aboriginal peoples. Computer literacy skills are becoming increasingly important and essential in the labour market. Work needs to be done for Aboriginal peoples to reach levels comparable to the general population.

A report, "Literacy for Metis People, A National Strategy", by Gabriel Dumont Institute and the Metis National Council calls for a national literacy needs assessment of Metis people and recommends a Literacy Campaign designed to meet the needs of Metis communities and individuals. The Report calls for a Metis Peoples' Education Act including the federal government adopting the concept of Metis control of Metis education as a framework for the provision of educational services to Metis people including support structures. The Report calls for research, programs and a national literacy coalition and council to manage a literacy campaign for Metis.

The scope of Metis literacy issues covers more literacy issues than there are in main stream Canadian society including: lack of knowledge of Metis people by government officials and literacy organizations; little direct communication between Metis organizations and education authorities; no jurisdiction in Canada has a policy regarding literacy programs and Metis people; no funding structures in place to address the long term literacy needs of Metis; few Metis are involved in evaluating proposals, monitoring programs, suggesting appropriate materials or providing feedback on the outcomes of projects; autonomous institutions (community colleges) deliver literacy programs with little or no contact with Metis organizations; Metis have limited involvement with Literacy Councils which form the literacy network; unclear if Literacy Councils are the best way to address problems of literacy for Metis; little research, evaluation or data is available to guide Metis literacy programs; lack of Metis specific literacy materials and curricula; no agreement on what is meant by "literacy" in meeting the needs of Metis.

The Metis National Council has completed Phase I of its Literacy Initiative with a background paper in support of a National Metis Forum on Literacy. The MNC's paper confirms that literacy is essential to the building of the Metis Nation, its communities, and especially the Metis youth population.

A National Metis Forum on Literacy on November 23-24, 1995 in Calgary, Alberta occurred with the assistance of the National Literacy Secretariat, Human Resources Development Canada and Senator Joyce Fairbairn, Minister with Special Responsibility for Literacy and Leader of the Government in the Senate.

One of the major goals of the Metis National Council's Human Resources Development Plan is to raise the literacy and numeracy skills of the Metis population to the Canadian average for 1989 as measured by the LSUDA study.

Difficulties with reading, writing and basic numeracy skills impedes the pursuit of further studies and upgrading, especially on the part of those who

have not completed high school, which is a large part of the Metis population. This is an area where a little effort could pay large dividends in terms of improving the skill levels of the population. There is a need to stimulate the development of literacy programs developed by Metis that really work for Metis.

The above goal will require intervention strategies directed at Metis youth still in high school and at those who have left high school.

Four main problems that should be dealt with are

- 1) the propensity of high school teachers and administrators to stream Aboriginal youth into non-matriculation programs from an early age;
- 2) the alienation of Metis youth from the school system;
- 3) the need to adapt to a non-Aboriginal learning culture; and
- 4) the special needs of young mothers.

#### **Metis Youth Attending University:**

About 72% of the total Metis population had not received any post-secondary education compared to 57% of the general population in 1986 and, only 7.7% of Metis had university education which was less than half of the national average of 18.4% for the general Canadian population. In 1991, 64% of the Metis population had not received any post-secondary education compared with 52.9% of the total Canadian population. In 1991, 3.7% of the Metis population had a university degree compared with 11.4% of the total Canadian population.

Although the numbers of Metis youth obtaining a university education appear to be increasing, the figures may be deceiving as university education usually occurs a little later in life. Comparisons with the middle age groups are more reliable in that they show a modest increase in the disparity between the Canadian and Metis populations with a university degree.

One of the major goals of the Metis National Council's Human Resources Development Strategy and Plan is to double the proportion of the Metis population with a university degree. This goal deals with the second fundamental problem of Metis education or the propensity of those who do pursue post-secondary education not to complete their studies.

There is a need to raise the skill levels to match those of new jobs between 1995 and the year 2000. At least 16% of these new jobs will require a university degree. Given that university studies take years to complete and that it takes time to implement new programs the target is modestly set at increasing the proportion of Metis with a university degree from 3% to 6% of the adult population (which will still be far behind the Canadian average of 11.4%). There is a need to force the development of strategies that will encourage Metis to go to university and complete their studies or a degree.

The federal government committed to removing the cap on post-secondary education funding to provide adequate funding for Aboriginal students at colleges, universities, vocational institutes, adult education programs and professional degree programs and provide \$20 million to address backlog as



well as review the Program with Aboriginal peoples to determine fair criteria for eligibility and special needs including child care. We the MNYAC strongly support and urge the further development and accessibility of educational scholarship programs, support, counselling, and educational planning for Metis Youth.

#### **LABOUR FORCE ACTIVITY of METIS YOUTH:**

About 23% of the total Metis population were unemployed, more than twice the national rate in 1986. In 1991, 19% of the Metis population were unemployed compared to 10.3% of the national rate. About 66.4% of the Metis population were in the labour force while the national participation rate was 68%.

The unemployment rate for Metis youth from 15 to 24 years of age averages close to 30% across Canada. This is depression level.

Only 36% of Metis youth had a job in 1991 compared to the Canadian average of 56.5% for the same age group.

Metis between 15 and 24 account for 40% of the Metis population outside the workforce and for 30.9% of the adult population on welfare.

Indications are that Metis youth can expect to follow the occupation pattern of the older generation, when that pattern is becoming increasingly redundant.

#### **Training of Metis Youth:**

Even worse is the evidence of a growing gap in the proportion of Metis who take training beyond high school. The difference in the proportion of the respective populations that have a high school diploma or better but less than a university degree has increased dramatically for the 15-24 age group. This indicates that Metis youth are not keeping pace with the general population in educational attainment.

The Metis National Council's goal to reduce the proportion of the Metis population that is not in the workforce by 20% in each region relative to 1991 is of special relevance to Metis youth who form a large part of the Metis "not in the workforce population".

The situation of Metis youth points to the need to adjust priorities so that Metis youth become the top priority. Interventions are needed.

#### **YOUTH PROGRAMMING:**

Although youth may have access to most programs intended for all Canadians generally, specific Youth Programming has been created, largely by Human Resources Development Canada under the newly created Youth Services Canada (YSC). Regional offices of HRDC administers Youth programming for their respective province. Many federal departments and agencies have summer employment programs in place.

### **Metis Labour Market Training for Youth:**

Meeting the employment and training needs of Metis youth has been discussed in the Metis National Council's Human Resources Development Plan. Goals of a Metis human resource development strategy and plan will include the need to provide training to certain segments of the youth population.

The training needs of Metis Youth will be a consideration in the development of a new Metis-specific employment and training initiative through the efforts of a National Metis Working Group on the restructuring of Pathways.

### **Youth Services Canada (YSC) Programs:**

Youth Service Canada (YSC) has established Street Youth programming which has been allocated approximately \$1.2 million, Community Safety and Crime Prevention programming has been allocated approximately \$2.25 million and approximately twenty-two (22) new projects totalling \$2.25 million have been funded including Katimivik.

There is no Aboriginal allocation but the Assembly of First Nations (AFN) has received \$2.3 million for the 1995/96 fiscal year for First Nations Youth on reserve projects to be administered by the AFN. HRDC-YSC is not dealing with First Nations proposals, in principle, but will continue to receive those project proposals First Nations groups wish to submit to HRDC/YSC and compete with others.

The MNC has submitted a similar proposal calling for the establishment of a partnership for Metis Youth where MNC and its regional affiliates would receive and administer culturally sensitive youth projects to address the unique needs of Metis youth.

An Aboriginal allocation has not been set aside under the Internship Program which has been established to provide internship opportunities for youth within various industries. Youth Internship, where accessed by Aboriginal peoples, could be utilized by and counted against Pathways funds which are normally allocated to HRDC Regions for distribution to Aboriginal boards.

Funding has been set aside for projects within Industry Sector Councils such as the Manufacturing Industry or Forestry Sectors. Funding has also been set aside for projects for post-secondary students and youth entrepreneurship pilot projects involving youth access to self-employment. There are school or community based projects.

Of the few National projects being funded, there is one with the Aboriginal Business Council which involves streaming Aboriginal youth with Aboriginal businesses.

### **Programs for Persons with Disabilities:**

There are no specific initiatives geared to youth with disabilities. Assistance may be available from HRDC to obtain fair access to programs and

there are special cost categories to provide funds for wheel chairs and special office equipment.

#### **SUMMER JOBS FOR STUDENTS:**

Summer jobs are often a student's first major exposure to the world of work. Through summer jobs they gain work experience, personal skills, new contracts and a sense of accomplishment. The Student Summer Job Action Program features six components to help students find those all-important summer jobs or get experience through community service.

#### **HRDC's Native Internship Program:**

The \$2.55 million HRDC Native Internship Program creates summer jobs for Aboriginal students in the offices of Human Resources Development Canada across the country. The positions may be anywhere from support to assisting on projects or as a project officer which term lasts usually four months. Many of these positions are provided to Aboriginal students who are enrolled in University. In 1994, 468 students found jobs with the Department with the same number expected to be hired in 1995. The application deadline for the 1995 program has passed, but students interested can contact the Local Public Service Commission office, Canada Employment Centre or Campus placement office.

#### **Summer Career Placements**

This \$59.5 million wage subsidy component is targeted at not-for-profit organizations (including those in the public sector) and for-profit employers to create employment opportunities that will enable post-secondary and senior high school students to get career-related summer jobs. These jobs of 8 to 16 weeks provide students work experience and prepare them to pursue careers in their chosen fields.

Summer Career Placements is expected to help create 30,700 jobs. The application deadline was April 21, 1995 last year and there will likely be a similar date for 1996 should the Program continue into the next fiscal year. Forms are available at local Canada Employment Centres .

#### **Summer Youth Service Canada**

Summer Youth Service Canada provides \$15 million to enable young Canadians to obtain work experience and develop personal skills through community service projects. A "summer edition" of the existing Youth Service Canada, it will employ as many as 10,000 secondary and post-secondary students through projects that contribute to the betterment of the community.

Projects will be in a variety of areas such as: community development and learning; and sustainable development and the environment. Community development and learning projects will focus on providing service to the community and increasing public awareness of issues. Sustainable development and environment projects target environmental protection and conservation. Although priority will be given to proposals from municipalities and band councils, not-for-profit

organizations and educational institutions are also eligible to sponsor Summer Youth Service Canada projects.

Projects can be 8 to 10 weeks in duration. They start no earlier than June 5 and end no later than September 1, 1995. Students participating in Summer YSC projects receive a weekly stipend and a completion bonus. The application deadline for project sponsors is April 28, 1995. Forms are available at Canada Employment Centres.

### **Student Business Loans:**

Student Business Loans program provides \$1.7 million to assist students in obtaining business loans. Students may be eligible to obtain interest-free loans of up to \$3,000 to start their own businesses, administered through the Federal Business Development Bank. In 1994, 1,288 loans were provided, generating 2,747 jobs. In 1995, approximately 1,500 loans are expected to be distributed, for a total of 3,300 jobs.

Student Business Loans are available to students in Newfoundland, Quebec, Manitoba, Saskatchewan, Alberta, British Columbia, the Northwest Territories and the Yukon Territory. The Student Business Loans programs does not operate in Ontario, New Brunswick, Prince Edward Island or Nova Scotia since similar provincial programs are already offered in those provinces.

The deadline for application is June 16th. Loans are interest-free until the due date of October 6th, and students who repay their loan by September 8 are given a \$100 rebate. Applications are available from the Federal Business Development Bank of Canada and the National Bank of Canada.

### **Partners in Promoting Summer Employment:**

Partners in Promoting Summer Employment is a \$9.5 million joint effort between Human Resources Development Canada and private-sector associations to encourage businesses to create jobs for students in their communities. Formally known as the Business Drive for Jobs, this program is run in partnership with the Canadian Manufacturers' Association, the Canadian Chamber of Commerce, le Conseil du patronat du Quebec, and the Retail Council of Canada. The summer jobs that are created give students a look at career possibilities in their communities and introduce local businesses to potential employees. For further information contact Human Resources Development Canada.

### **Canada Employment Centres for Students (CEC-S):**

The CEC-S provides \$10.4 million for a network of Canada Employment Centres for Students which will be in operation across the country from early May to August. Students looking for work will be able to find out which employers have jobs available and contact them directly. Through group information sessions, students learn tips on resume-writing, handling an interview and job-hunting generally. Employers may list job openings with the CEC-S at no charge.

Last year, close to 200,000 job vacancies were filled through Canada Employment Centres for Students and over 141,000 students participated in group information



sessions with that number expected to increase this summer. Centres also offer information on labour laws, wage levels, and federal and provincial programs. The location of Canada Employment Centres for Students are advertised in communities across the country. These centres are called Hire A Student offices in Alberta and Student/Youth Employment Centres in Manitoba.

### **Student Summer Job Action:**

Student Summer Job is part of the federal government's overall commitment to youth. Student Summer Job Action, a package of six job creation elements for secondary and post-secondary students will result in 44,500 summer jobs. Federal funding for all youth programs has increased to \$236 million in 1995-96 from \$193 million in 1994-95. These programs include Youth Internship and Youth Service Canada. Youth Internship with its sector council, education and community partners currently involves 10,000 young people. Program funding for 1995-96 will rise to \$118 million from the current level of \$25 million. Youth Service Canada, with its emphasis on job skill acquisition through community service for out-of-school, out-of-work Canadians ages 18 to 24, currently has 1,500 participants engaged in more than 100 projects, with funding in 1995-96 set at \$28 million.

The six part Student Summer Job Action includes:

- **Summer Career Placements**, a wage subsidy program for career-related summer employment;
- **Summer Youth Service Canada**, a "summer edition" of the existing Youth Service Canada;
- **Student Business Loans**, interest-free loans for student entrepreneurs;
- **Native Internship Program**, a program to hire Aboriginal students in HRDC offices;
- **Partners in Promoting Summer Employment**, a partnership between government and business to encourage student hiring;
- **Canada Employment Centres for Students**.

Federal funding for Student Summer Job Action totals \$90.1 million. This funding was provided for in February 1995 and is built into the existing fiscal framework.

### **National Defence Headstart Program:**

Headstart is sponsored by the federal Department of National Defence to create summer employment opportunities for Aboriginal secondary and post-secondary students who intend to return to school in the fall of the following academic year. The program operates each year from April 1 to September 15. To apply you must send a Federal Summer Student Employment Program (FSSEP) application to the nearest Public Service Commission office. Contact your local student career office on campus or the nearest CEC or Public Service Commission offices. The Application must be received at the Public Service Commission's office after November 1, 1995. Once your application is submitted it can be accessed by all federal departments and agencies that provide summer student employment.

## **Open House Canada:**

The mission of Open House Canada is to develop a greater sense of identity and unity among Canadian school-age youth. Their objective is to provide learning opportunities to increase the knowledge, appreciation and respect for the diversity of Canadian society and its institutions and to encourage active citizen participation so as to contribute towards national harmony. Financial assistance is provided to non-profit organizations that administer reciprocal group exchange programs and national for a for youth between the ages of 14 and 19. The funds allocated are to be used exclusively to cover the transportation costs of the eligible participants.

Non-profit organizations funded by Open House Canada which organize reciprocal youth group exchanges must give priority to the following three types of exchanges: bilingual exchanges; multicultural exchanges; and rural/isolated community exchanges. Special consideration is also given to the following target groups: Aboriginal youth; youth with disabilities; visible minorities; and economically disadvantaged youth.

The program activities of a reciprocal group exchange are educational experiences focused on learning (not on tourism and recreation) promoting the objectives set. Activities should reflect the type of exchange involved. The participants must take an active part in organizing the exchange, do some research on their own community and their host community, and participate in fundraising activities and activity planning. Once twinned, the participants are encouraged to correspond with each other before the exchange takes place.

A national forum can be in the form of a conference, mock sessions of Parliament, workshops, debates, and so on. The forum program includes activities that increase the participants' leadership and speaking skills and develop an awareness of their present and future roles in Canadian society. It also provides young Canadians with an opportunity to gain a greater awareness of Canada by researching, studying and discussing a wide range of national issues and institutions. Forum organizers must also encourage target group members to take part in program activities. Contact Canadian Heritage, Open House Canada, Youth Participation Program, Ottawa.

## **INTERCHANGE ON CANADIAN STUDIES:**

Students in Canada take part in an annual conference on Canadian studies to learn from each other, reflect upon heritage and consider their future. The 1994 conference was held in May in Corner Brook, Newfoundland. The 1995 conference will be held in Stony Plain, Alberta during the same time period. Participants are billeted in private homes. CONTACT: Mr. Alan Skeoch, President, c/o Parkdale Collegiate Institute, 209 Jameson Avenue, Toronto M6K 2Y3 PH: (416) 393-9000.

## **CANADIAN STUDENT DEBATING FEDERATION:**

The Canadian Student Debating Federation holds a National Seminar each year at the end of April a national debating seminar to which students from across Canada participate. These debates focus on issues common to all Canadians in order to develop young people's appreciation of the Parliamentary procedures for debate.

familiarize themselves with national issues and increase their understanding of each other. In 1994, the seminar will be held in Montreal. All participants are billeted in private homes. Contact Mr. Fred Horne, President at PH: (905) 372-3407.

#### **ROYAL COMMONWEALTH SOCIETY OF CANADA:**

The Society sponsors an annual five day national forum, the Student Commonwealth Conference, for secondary students to discuss issues common to all Canadians as well as Canada's role in the Commonwealth and international cooperation and development. All participants are billeted in private homes in Ottawa. Contact Ms. Shirley Webb, President PH: (613) 596-4333.

#### **FOUNDATION FOR THE STUDY OF GOVERNMENT PROCESSES IN CANADA:**

The Foundation provides a Forum for Young Canadians, a bilingual educational program provides four intensive one week sessions, held annually in Ottawa, on the dynamics of government for 16 and 19 year old high school and CEGEP students from across Canada. Contact Ms. Clare Baxter, Executive Director PH: (613) 233-4086.

#### **COUNCIL FOR CANADIAN UNITY:**

The Encounters with Canada Program at the Terry Fox Centre gives young Canadians from across Canada, aged 15 to 17, an opportunity to meet and get to know one another, to enhance their knowledge of Canada and gain a greater awareness of the country by participating in a series of six one week workshops offered over a 24 week period. Contact Mr. Francis Dumont PH: (613) 744-1290.

#### **CANADIAN 4-H COUNCIL:**

4-H Connections Canada Summer Exchange Program organizes reciprocal group exchanges among 4-H members (aged 14-18) across Canada. The National 4-H Citizenship Seminar provides a week-long seminar held annually in Ottawa to provide an opportunity for young 4-H members to increase their understanding and awareness of the structure and functions of the Canadian governmental system, and their rights and responsibilities as Canadian citizens. Contact Mr. Mike Nowosad, Executive Director PH: (613) 723-4444.

#### **SOCIETY FOR EDUCATIONAL VISITS AND EXCHANGES IN CANADA (SEVEC):**

SEVEC's programs give Canadian anglophone and francophone elementary and secondary students a chance to learn the others language and culture by combining a total immersion situation in each other's homes with a program that is both linguistically and culturally oriented. Contact Mr. Alexander Mackay, Executive Director PH: (613) 998-3760 or 1-800-387-3832.

#### **YMCA OF GREATER TORONTO:**

The YMCA of Greater Toronto coordinates the YMCA Visions Youth Exchange Program. Visions provides an educational opportunity for Canadian youth between the ages of 14 and 19 to experience first-hand the lifestyles of youth in other parts of



the country and promotes the understanding and appreciation of Canada's diversity. There are bilingual exchanges to develop appreciation for one or both of Canada's official languages. There are intercultural exchanges to highlight each group's cultural beliefs and traditions. There are North-south exchanges to compare and contrast a northern Aboriginal culture and southern culture. There are rural or isolated community exchanges to look at Canada's geographic and social differences.

Special consideration goes to applications involving youth with disabilities, Aboriginal youth, economically disadvantaged youth, or visible minorities. Application deadlines are: October 1 for travel between January 1 and June 30; April 30 for travel between July 1 and September 30; July 31 for travel between October 1 and December 31. Contact Ms. Linda Turu, Director, YMCA Visions Exchange Program PH: (416) 324-4180.

#### **LEGAL STUDIES FOR ABORIGINAL PEOPLE (Non-Status and Metis):**

The Program is administered by Department of Justice and provides grants and scholarships to Aboriginal students entering law. Legal training makes it possible for Aboriginal people to participate in resolving legal and constitutional issues, to ensure that the justice system is fair and effective in defending their interests. To promote equitable representation of Aboriginal people in the legal profession, the Department of Justice offers financial assistance to Metis and Non-Status Indians who wish to attend law school. Status Indians and Inuit can receive similar assistance from DIAND.

Through the Legal Studies for Aboriginal People (LSAP) Program, the Department of Justice awards a number of three-year scholarships each year. The Department also provides scholarships for pre-law orientation programs and some support for graduate studies in law.

To qualify for financial assistance under the program, an applicant must be a non-status Indian or Metis of Canadian citizenship, living in Canada, who has received a conditional or unconditional acceptance from a law school.

The Program has been suspended in 1995 and students have been informed that they need not apply. For information and application forms for scholarships, contact the Program Administrator, Legal Studies for Aboriginal People Program, Department of Justice Canada, Ottawa PH: (613)957-9383, (613)941-0388, or (613)957-9643.

#### **SUMMER PRE-LAW ORIENTATION PROGRAM:**

The programs at the University of Saskatchewan (English) and the University of Ottawa (French) introduce students to the study of law and the requirements of law school. Students study introductory-level law subjects and learn legal writing and research skills. They are assisted throughout the program by law professors and by student tutors. Their potential to succeed in law school is assessed on their language skills, their ability to reason and analyze, their motivation to succeed in law studies, and their work habits, diligence, attendance and promptness in completing assignments. For more information, contact the Director, Native Law Centre, University of Saskatchewan, Saskatoon.

Saskatchewan PH: (306) 966-6190 or the Director, Pre-Law Program for Aboriginal People, Law Faculty, University of Ottawa PH: (613) 364-7059.

#### **CN NATIVE EDUCATIONAL AWARDS:**

The CN Native Educational Awards are for Aboriginal students who wish to pursue post-secondary studies in Canadian educational institutions. Five awards of \$1,500 each are awarded annually. Students are eligible if you are: Aboriginal (Inuit, Status Indian, Non-Status Indian or Metis); need financial assistance; are seriously interested in preparing for a career in the transportation industry; are a full-time student enrolled in a program leading to a recognized degree, certificate or diploma; and, have a good academic record.

Your application will be considered if your study program prepares you for one of the many careers available in the transportation industry. This includes a wide range of occupations from nurses to engineers, from computer programmers to market analysts. All applications must be received by Canadian national by June 30 of each year. A selection committee reviews all eligible applications and selects five award winners. Contact Employment Equity, Canadian National 935, de la Gauchetiere St. W., Floor 7, Montreal, Quebec H3B 2M9.

#### **NORTHERN SCIENTIFIC TRAINING PROGRAM:**

The government established the Northern Scientific training Grants program to encourage Canadian Universities to participate in training northern specialists to meet national goals. Today, the program is known as the Northern Scientific Training Program (NSTP) and is managed by the Department of Indian and Northern Affairs. It is helping to create a significant number of polar experts by funding approximately 300 students annually at over 30 universities across Canada. Contact the Secretary, Northern Scientific Training Program Committee, Sectoral Policy Division, Indian Affairs and Northern Development, PH: (819) 997-0660.

#### **BURSARY GUIDELINES: INDIAN AND INUIT HEALTH CAREERS PROGRAM**

The purpose of the Program is to assist students of Indian or Inuit ancestry who wish to pursue educational opportunities leading to careers in the health professions. You are eligible if you are a Canadian citizen of Indian or Inuit ancestry who have resided in Canada for the last 12 months, excluding time spent in foreign academic institutions. Proof of Aboriginal ancestry may be provided in the form of written confirmation from Indian and northern Affairs Canada; a copy of a valid status card, or a letter from an official of an accredited Aboriginal organization. Individuals should have a level of education acceptable for enrollment in a professional health careers program. A professional health careers program is a post-secondary program in a federally recognized college or university that provides a degree or diploma qualifying graduates for employment in accredited health care professions, such as medicine, nursing, dentistry, hospital administration, pharmacy, radiology, nutrition, lab technology, psychiatry or psychology. Students should not be receiving financial assistance for their education from any other source.

All documentation should be completed and enclosed with the typed application prior to being sent to the national office in Ottawa. For academic sessions beginning in September, applications must be post-marked by May 15th at the latest. For academic sessions beginning in January, applications must be post-marked by October 15 at the latest. Contact the National Coordinator, Indian and Inuit Health Careers Program, Medical Services Branch, Health Canada, Ottawa, K1A 0L3.

#### **Status Of Women Canada:**

Project Funding is provided to voluntary organizations to defray the costs necessary to carry out activities related to the funding areas of the Women's Program. The majority of the Women's Program budget is allocated to over 600 projects supported in 1988-89. Of these projects, more than two thirds were funded for amounts of less than \$15,000. Women's voluntary organizations whose objective is to promote the equality of women in Canadian society is eligible to receive project funding.

Contact your local office of the Department of State (Status of Women Canada), and in Ottawa, contact the Status of Women Canada, PH: (613) 992-7784, or the National Office, Secretary of State, Women's Program PH: 1-819-953-2734

Activities to address such issues as: racism or discrimination faced by the group and how to deal with it; the role of women in Canada; youth and youth alienation; the preservation of an identity while participating fully in a rapidly; evolving multicultural Canada; family and family violence; participation in and service from Canadian institutions; specific requirements of seniors or other disadvantaged segments of the community. Contact Programs Branch, Multiculturalism and Citizenship Canada

#### **PROPOSED INTERVENTION STRATEGIES:**

The following are some proposed intervention strategies for consideration:

##### **Metis National Youth Advisory Council:**

An Advisory Council of 2 Metis youth representatives has been appointed, established and will continue to provide insight into the issues facing Metis youth as well as input into this evolving National Metis Youth Strategy.

The Metis National Youth Advisory Council met to provide input into this Strategy and participated in the National Metis Literacy Conference, November 23 and 24, 1995, and the Metis National Council Assembly November 25-26, 1995, in Calgary, Alberta.

The development and implementation of this National Métis Youth Strategy and initiatives will address Regional needs and objectives of Metis youth as provided by Metis youth representatives in consultation with leaders and training and educational representatives of Regional Affiliates.



## **METIS YOUTH PROGRAMMING AND PROJECTS:**

A key element to the National Metis Youth Strategy will be Metis-specific youth programming to provide for regional and local level Metis youth projects to be developed and implemented by MNC Regional Affiliates in Ontario, Manitoba, Saskatchewan, Alberta and British Columbia with the input and assistance of respective Metis Youth representatives, the National Youth Intervenor and National Coordinator.

Metis Youth Projects will be culturally sensitive to Metis youth, and will be developed to address the very different and unique needs of Metis youth, people and communities, needs which we believe may not be addressed through regular mainstream programming channels. Métis Youth projects will offer unique experiences which focus from a Métis perspective on the planning, organization, management, promotion and delivery of Métis-specific community services by Métis people. These projects will focus on providing Métis-specific community-based service in support of Métis community needs in a variety of areas including: education; literacy; science and technology; Métis arts and culture; health care; child care; community safety and crime prevention; sports and recreation; and urban and social services.

### **Communications Development for Metis Youth:**

To enable Metis youth to develop the organizational and communications ability it will be necessary to train and provide them with the tools required to communicate with other Metis youth. Communications among Metis Youth is essential in informing Metis youth of Metis-specific and general youth programming and services available to them. Metis youth find themselves uninformed and so unable to access opportunities available only to those who have been informed. Metis Youth will need to be informed of community activities if they are to become involved.

Métis youth programming and some youth projects could be developed to address the needs of Métis Youth and communities to improve economic, human resource and social development by providing Métis youth and communities with better and more affordable access to the Information Highway and to raise awareness about its potential for creating jobs and growth. Communications projects would stimulate the development and use of new electronic learning tools and services by and for Métis communities to promote and improve the exchange of information and ideas. Communications projects could provide access to Internet training for Métis Youth wanting to improve their information, management and networking skills as well as stimulating the electronic delivery of information on the Métis Nation, provincial and federal governments and other services and programs.

### **Metis Youth Participation in Sustainable Development and the Environment:**

Metis Youth believe that they should be permitted the opportunity to acquire experience in the planning, organization, management, promotion and program and service delivery in the field of environmental protection and conservation.

Metis people possess Aboriginal rights to hunt, fish, trap and gather. Metis people maintain a special interdependent relationship with the environment and

animal life. Metis have unique rights, relationships and traditions to be passed onto our young people in this regard. MNC Regional affiliates have begun to sign co-management agreements with provincial governments in this regard.

Metis youth need to be provided the opportunity to receive culturally sensitive training for positions and become involved in this field should they wish to do so.

#### **Metis Youth Involvement in Community Economic Development:**

Metis Youth Projects may demonstrate that business skills, job skills and community service are complementary activities. Through a business established and run by a non-profit community-based organization, participants will learn that business is often an effective way of promoting a Metis community's shared values or solving community problems.

#### **Metis Cultural Initiatives for Youth:**

Metis Youth projects could focus from a Metis perspective on the development or enhancement of personal and life skills within the Metis culture, and on the acquisition of practical knowledge related to the labour market through providing a service to the community. Elements of youth projects could include: the development of communications skills, problem-solving skills, conflict resolution, team building, attitudinal and workplace skills, personal and life skills.

- "I am Metis" Campaign (Posters, Lecturers, National Competitions Achievement Awards)
- National Cultural workshops on Metis Culture (jigging, Metis sash, red river cart, infinity symbol, traditional food, elders conference)
- lobby for a reassessment of the educational curriculum with regards to Metis culture. (Metis unit plans, submit a report to the President of MNC to be put forward to the Canadian Council Ministers of Education, revamping of text books)
- Repatriation of Metis Culture (lobby to repossess our artifacts, Metis Archaeologists involved in all aboriginal digs, Metis artists exposure - evolution, National Metis Arts Council - tours)
- Awareness of Traditional Healing
- Continuing & documenting the Elder's storytelling

#### **Metis Post Secondary Education:**

- Scholarship directory (national/provincial)
- Support Groups (Metis Counsellors)
- Metis Trust Fund
- Advocating University input

#### **Youth Involvement in Justice, Community Safety & Crime Prevention:**

Metis Youth Projects could address the need to improve safety and crime prevention measures in the community. Projects may include Metis youth working with policing authorities and address the community's concerns regarding



policing. Metis youth could act as educators in crime prevention, bicycle safety, personal safety awareness for children, women and elderly and youth development. Youth drop in centres could be established under such an initiative.

#### **Metis Youth in Urban Centres & on the Street:**

Metis Youth Projects could address the community's needs while assisting Metis street youth through the development of businesses in areas such as recycling, urban gardens, drop-in centres, and holding of environmental workshops.

#### **Mentoring and Career Planning for Metis Youth:**

Essential to obtaining appropriate jobs and employment for Metis youth is the much needed opportunity of gaining experience in the fields of interest to determine if an individual wishes to continue

Although all Metis youth projects will involve Metis mentoring and career planning activities such as one to two day career development or self development workshops, there are many other Metis youth who will not have the opportunity to benefit from such activities.

We propose that a program for Metis mentoring and career planning could be established at a low cost in schools where numbers of students warrant. Metis persons in various professions could be contacted and asked to act as mentors and then matched with Metis students who are interested in learning more about that particular occupation.

#### **Metis Educational Trust Fund:**

Establishment of a Metis Educational Trust Fund is critical to the implementation of these strategies. Metis youth propose that the federal government assist the Metis National Council to establish a Metis Education Trust Fund which would among other things provide grants to Metis students who successfully complete high school. The Trust Fund would, among other things, provide bursaries and loans to Metis students entering university and administer scholarship programs. It could be established through a combination of public and private donations which, if sufficiently large initially, could be profitably invested and the revenues thereby generated to provide assistance to Metis students. The fund would be self-sustaining over the longer term.

The following intervention strategies have been put forward for discussion and others have been committed to on the part of government.

#### **Metis Health Initiatives:**

Metis are involved in the establishment of Head Start Programming for Metis children as a result of the federal government's commitment to initiating an Aboriginal Head Start Program for preschool children and parents to be designed and run by Aboriginal peoples.

The MNC has submitted a proposal to train Metis youth as Head Start workers.



- videos, posters, counselling, lectures
- Teenage pregnancy, AIDS, STD, Suicide
- Mental Health Initiative/spiritual health
- Awareness of Traditional Healing
- Health Plan
- Substance Abuse (local treatment centres, support for Metis addictions programs & prevention programs)
- Nation-wide Health & Wellness Initiative
- Substance abuse prevention awareness program
- Physical, emotional, sexual abuse (family counselling, education, sexual harassment awareness)

#### **Sports & Recreation Initiatives:**

- promote Metis organizations/initiatives
- Community Rec Centres
- Metis Coaching

#### **Aboriginal Educational Institute:**

The federal government committed to establishing, with the participation of Aboriginal peoples which includes Metis, an Aboriginal Educational Institute that would specialize in curriculum development for Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal schools, teacher orientation, distance education, standards development, Aboriginal languages, literacy, and the development of cultural survival programs for youth.

#### **Metis Youth Counsellors:**

Metis youth counsellors empowered to defend the interests of Metis students before school authorities and to assist parents with administration and possible efforts to discourage children from considering advanced education, university or college. Special workshops on Metis and the school system organized by Metis Youth Counsellors with invitations to parents and students would benefit Metis youth and communities.

#### **Metis Tutors:**

Provision of financial assistance to Metis parents and students to defer the costs of hiring tutors to help students with problem subjects, or with the cost of special or remedial classes.

#### **Metis Role Models:**

Metis role models to visit schools in Metis communities or communities with a significant Metis enrollment to discuss the importance of completing secondary studies, potential careers and educational requirements.

#### **Metis Stay in School Program:**

- peer support, ambassadors (speakers, professionals, artists, entertainers, success stories), tutors

- role model programs
- cross cultural training
- Metis culture/history education
- advocate for maintenance of "Stay in School" initiative
- posters, videos for school
- extracurricular activities
- National Metis Curriculum Development

There is a need to inform our Metis youth of the importance and benefits of staying in school. Existing Stay-in-School Programs should be maintained and the federal government should be requested to provide funding for a Metis drop-out prevention program to be made available to local Metis Youth Coordinators to implement programs best adapted to their particular community.

Establish Metis secondary schools where numbers warrant under the direct control and administration of a Metis school board.

Provide incentive grants to Metis youth who complete high school and plan to continue their education. (For example B.C. has the Passport to Education Initiative.)

#### **Summer Camps for Metis Youth:**

Establish summer camps for Metis youth where positive life-long learning habits and basic life and job skills could be introduced with Metis history, culture, traditions and identity.

#### **Communications Initiative for Metis Youth:**

Produce videos on learning, education, training, careers, health and other issues of importance to Metis youth.

#### **Distance Learning Channels:**

Establish distance learning channels to enable Metis youth in rural and remote communities to access non-institutional learning programs which could include Metis-specific components.

#### **Upgrading for Metis Youth:**

Access Skill Development funds to enable Metis youth have left high school to upgrade to a grade 12 equivalency.

#### **Literacy for Metis Youth:**

The MNC has obtained funding to do developmental work and hold a National Metis Literacy Forum and will be working towards implementing a national literacy, numeracy and computer skills upgrading campaign for Metis which could include:

- 1) a publicity campaign;
- 2) research on the extent and source of the problem;
- 3) development of culturally specific curriculum for varied needs of Metis;

4) offering short remedial education classes to Metis on a no-charge basis in communities with significant Metis populations over a five-year period.

Where appropriate, teaching techniques that do not rely on written materials should be used to train Metis persons having poor literacy and numeracy skills.

#### **Skills Development Assistance:**

Skills Development funding should be accessed and provided to enable Metis youth to take remedial education, without jeopardizing the chances of taking further job training under the Skills Development program at the conclusion of the remedial classes, where local job counsellors and Metis applicants for Skills Development training agree that remedial education to improve basic literacy, numeracy and computer skills is required before any other training can be offered.

Metis youth also propose that Skill Development funds be utilized to enable Metis youth to upgrade their educational qualifications to enable them to enter university.

#### **Metis Youth Coordinators:**

Metis Youth Coordinators should be appointed in all communities with significant Metis populations. Metis Youth Coordinators would be responsible for interfacing with local school authorities, for assisting parents and teachers deal with school administrators and for designing and implementing programs designed to encourage Metis youth to complete high school.

#### **Metis & Other Scholarship Programs:**

Metis youth propose that special scholarship programs be established for Metis in disciplines where significant numbers of Metis wish to enter and disciplines where Metis are currently under-represented.

#### **Aboriginal Veterans Memorial Scholarship Fund:**

Minister Irwin and McLellan jointly announced November 11, 1995, that the Government of Canada will create a Scholarship Fund to pay tribute to Aboriginal veterans with the intent to provide an incentive to students to engage in fields of study that support and contribute to Aboriginal self-governance and economic self-reliance. An Aboriginal organization will manage the Fund with details and eligibility criteria yet to be determined and announced.

#### **Metis Apprenticeship Program:**

The federal government's commitment to support a National Apprenticeship Program and National Youth Service and to promote training programs with a focus on environmental technologies, resource management, community development, survival skills, computers and traditional trades and services supports the transfer of an equitable portion of the resources allocated for these commitments to Metis.



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