ABORIGINAL COMMUNITY ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT:

OVERCOMING BARRIERS TO ABORIGINAL

ENTREPRENEURSHIP

by

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ABSTRACT

Aboriginal entrepreneurs are key to building a healthy economy on-reserve, providing jobs, and slowing the outflow of money and young people who are leaving to look for economic opportunities. This study explores the question: how can Aboriginal communities foster a supportive climate for Aboriginal entrepreneurs and business start-up?

The literature review finds a high degree of compatibility between the characteristics and strategies of community economic development and Aboriginal economic development. The unique aspects of Aboriginal economic development are further examined, including the history of Aboriginal communities, challenges faced, the importance of long-term approaches, cultural issues that impact Aboriginal economic development, and critical success factors.

The review then addresses the question, "Do these differences affect the role the entrepreneur plays in Aboriginal economic development?" It makes the case that the prominence of the family and the overriding importance of cultural preservation require a different entrepreneurial behaviour.

From this analysis, a series of research questions are developed and answered, using data from three First Nations communities: 1. What are the barriers experienced by Aboriginal people who attempt to start-up businesses in Aboriginal communities?; 2. What has been done in Aboriginal communities to overcome these barriers?; 3. How can Aboriginal communities assess their capacity to support Aboriginal businesses?

Following the assessment process, the study examines the actions three B.C. First Nations would consider to support their community's capacity and readiness to include Aboriginal entrepreneurs in business start-up and growth.

The findings reveal that the most pressing barriers in Aboriginal communities are: the lack of information and support on business start-up, a lack of infrastructure in the community (including the absence of an economic development strategy, a business

approval process, and a commercial code), difficulty in securing financing, and the lack of support in the community for business start-ups.

The thesis concludes by comparing the identified barriers in three B.C. Aboriginal communities to those reported in the literature, reviewing strategies for assessing the barriers, and outlining an approach to develop an action plan appropriate for each of the communities.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

TABLE OF CONTENTS

LIST OF TABLES

1. INTRODUCTION

The thesis addresses the question, "How can Aboriginal communities best foster a supportive climate for Aboriginal entrepreneurs and business start-up on First Nations reserves in British Columbia?

The rationale for addressing this question is that the social development of Aboriginal communities is dependent upon the economic development that can be stimulated in them. Much of the current economies of Aboriginal communities, both in Canada and the United States, is based on government transfers to pay for programs and local government. But these transfers do not generate funds or "grow" the economy in itself. It is the economic development of the Aboriginal communities that provides jobs, produces important products and pays for the services that keep the money in the community longer, and can pay for the expanding needs of social programs. Without the economic development of Aboriginal communities the young people who have choices will leave to find jobs or get training. If the best and the brightest leave the communities, there is little hope for the future. If the exodus from the communities continues as it has, the culture is threatened.

A. Subsidiary research questions

Related to the primary research question above, the thesis also examines a set of subsidiary questions:

1. **How do traditional Aboriginal values impact the role of the entrepreneur in Aboriginal communities?**

2. **Is there an important role to be played by Aboriginal entrepreneurs in the economic development of their communities, and if so, what is that role?**

3. What are the barriers to business start up that commonly face Aboriginal entrepreneurs in their own communities?

4. What factors determine whether an Aboriginal community has the capacity and readiness to support Aboriginal entrepreneurs in business start-up and growth?

5. What actions have been taken in some Aboriginal communities to improve community capacity and readiness to support Aboriginal entrepreneurs in business start-up and growth?

6. How can First Nations communities assess their capacity to support Aboriginal entrepreneurs?

7. What actions would three B.C. First Nations choose to take to support community capacity and readiness to include Aboriginal entrepreneurs in business start-up and growth?

B. Thesis outline

In Chapter 2 of the thesis I review the meaning of community economic development, how it is similar to and differs from Aboriginal economic development, and how Aboriginal culture enhances rather than hinders the prospects for economic development. In Chapter 3 I examine what research methods were available to me to survey the community. I discuss the case study approach, its strengths and weaknesses, and explain why I choose to use grounded theory as my methodology.

In Chapter 4 I describe the actions taken by Aboriginal communities to support their entrepreneurs. I also report on the survey findings from three study communities and identify four factors for success. These results are corroborated by the findings of surveys that were administered to entrepreneurs off-reserve. At the end of Chapter 4 I answer the seven subsidiary questions above.

In Chapter 5 I develop a framework for examination, on the basis of the major factors identified as important for success of entrepreneurs. I also compare the findings from this study with other literature.

C. Scope and limitations

There are two comments about the scope and limitations of the study. First, for the purposes of this study, the terms Native, First Nations, and Aboriginal have been used interchangeably. I do use the term Native American when referring to American Aboriginal people or communities. I recognize that in different contexts these words can take on slightly different meanings.

Secondly, I recognize the larger debate around socialist and capitalist economies, and the context within which Aboriginal entrepreneurship must operate; however that debate is beyond the scope of this thesis.

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

A. CED and Aboriginal CED

1. Purpose

This literature review examines the characteristics of CED and compares them with the characteristics of Aboriginal economic development, asking to what extent the fundamental principles y most CED theorists are relevant to Aboriginal economic development. The question arises because the role of the entrepreneur in CED has not been adequately described in the CED literature, yet that role is becoming an important part of Aboriginal economic development. To what extent does that difference separate Aboriginal economic development from CED in non-Aboriginal communities?

First, I review the literature on the definition, context, and success factors of CED and Aboriginal economic development. I then identify the unique aspects of Aboriginal economic development. Next, I compare strategies common to both, exploring similarities and differences between Aboriginal economic development and CED.

2. Community economic development

a. Descriptions/characteristics

CED has been defined in a number of ways, but many of these definitions share common characteristics. McRobie and Ross in a 1987 report, offer a definition they distilled from a variety of definitions offered by others. "Community Economic Development is a process by which communities can initiate and generate their own

solutions to their common economic problems and thereby build long-term community capacity and foster the integration of economic, social and environmental objectives" (McRobie and Ross, 1987;1). This definition identifies the following characteristics:

- locally initiated and controlled
- locally made solutions
- concerned with capacity building
- long-term and integrated approach.

McRobie points out that his definition is purposely broad, taking into account the full range of local initiatives and practices that may be defined by communities themselves as CED. "It is not up to the theoreticians to define CED; it is up to the local communities which are struggling with new ways to create employment" (McRobie in Ross, 1986).

Other authors (Schultz, 1995; Lauer, 1993; Dauncey, 1988, Wismer & Pell, 1981) when describing CED have included in their definitions:

- self-reliance and community control
- equality among community members, collective benefits
- broad-based public involvement in planning and decision-making
- capacity building, community-building
- long-term planning
- integration of social and economic goals

These descriptions and characteristics of CED are echoed by two other authors, Peter Boothroyd and Stewart Perry. Peter Boothroyd says CED's general objective is to take some measure of control of the local economy back from the markets and the state (Boothroyd in Roseland, 1998).

Perry, a writer and practitioner, incorporates most of the above CED

characteristics and outlines the following characteristics of most successful CED practice

(Perry 1999).

- **a comprehensive strategy** - A multi-functional, comprehensive strategy or development system, in contrast to any individual economic development project or other isolated attempts at community betterment

- **integrating economic and social goals** - An integration or merging of economic and social goals to make a more powerful impact for community revitalization

- **empower residents** - A set of activities that empower the broad range of community residents for the governance both of their development organizations and their community as a whole

- **a strategic approach** - A process guided by strategic planning and analysis, in contrast to opportunistic and unsystematic tactics

- **building assets** - A business-like financial management approach that builds ownership of assets and a wide range of financial partners and supporters

- **a non-profit structure** - An organizational format that is non-profit, independent, and non-governmental, even though for-profit or governmental entities are linked to its work

Perry's description of CED includes a long-term and strategic approach to

building assets in and empowerment through the whole community. Perry also refers in

his description of CED to fostering institutions that will fairly (i.e., equitably) serve the

population. Both Perry and Boothroyd identify the local control of the economy through

empowerment, building assets, and democratic institutions.

There are additional descriptions and characteristics identified by other authors

that have a direct bearing on an Aboriginal perspective on economic development.

Boothroyd's "communalization" refers to the capacity of the community to think and act

as a community. Fontan, a Quebec writer, describes this as notions of "social solidarity."

Author Marcia Nozick (1992) identifies among her five major principles, "building a

community culture," which she describes further as "getting to know who we are." Other authors when describing CED have included:

- primacy of the household and community organisms
- connection to place and the people where we live
- preservation of bio-diversity
- retention of culture

These above-mentioned characteristics, which appear less often in the CED literature, are important to a discussion which will be taken up later comparing CED with Aboriginal economic development.

CED practice differs according to the differences one finds in communities and outside the communities. Communities have different histories, ecosystems, and demographics that dictate different approaches. Also, there are factors external to the community that may affect how CED is practiced. They include: the global economy, technological change, government policies, and environmental conditions. The accommodation of a community's CED practice to external factors, and to the diversity within the community, may be more important to recognize than the examination of the principles of CED (Schultz, 1996).

b.   Context

Local Economic Development (LED) is the process by which local governments or community based organizations engage to stimulate or maintain business activity and/or employment (Blakely 1993) Business development is seen as an end in itself instead of a tool. Enterprise training programs, in this context, are seen as serving government's goal of generating business, and benefits trickling down, rather than training for the individual benefit and the benefit of the community.

There is a continuum from Local Economic Development (LED) to Community Economic Development (CED). CED moves beyond the LED concept of economic development that is aimed at generating local entrepreneurship and some economic growth. The objectives of LED are purely economic (Blakely 1989), are less participatory and more dominated by local elites (Boothroyd and Davis 1991) CED is also distinct from conventional economic development because it places more importance on communities as opposed to the interests of shareholders and consumers. Community Economic Development encompasses a more progressive approach to economic development that stresses community empowerment and institution building (Fontan 1993). Fontan says, "CED is where notions of social solidarity, individual and collective empowerment and actual control over local resources and their development, are at the heart of desired change" (in Broadhead, 1993).

Within the common objective of taking some measure of control of the local economy back from the markets and the state, CED practice is variously oriented to (Boothroyd and Davis 1991):

- controlling the local economy for narrow ends (increasing the capacity of a community to make money)
- increasing economic stability and control of resources, or
- serving fundamental goals of economic justice.

CED approaches vary according to whether "economic", "development," or "community" is emphasized. Boothroyd and Davis label these three approaches "growth promotion," "structural change", and "communalization."

c. Success factors

What makes CED successful has been extensively examined by economic development practitioners and researchers. Table 1 identifies the success factors for CED, compiled by Vodden (1999).

Table 1: Success factors for CED

1. A sense of community identity, history and culture.
2. A dynamic leader or "sparkplug" (often an elected public official, e.g. the mayor) and/or a core group of committed individuals who, together, have the necessary skills, know-how and community acceptance.
3. A crisis or major concern motivating local leaders to act (a felt need).
4. A realization that if things are going to happen they (community members and leaders) have to do it themselves.
5. The ability of local leaders and the community to work together and mobilize broad-based support.
6. Available local resources such as a specialized yet flexible, young and/or educated labour force, information and trade networks, infrastructure, healthy, productive renewable natural resources or other features, such as a tourist attraction, offering a competitive advantage.
7. Existing education, training programs and learning opportunities (includes adult education, conventional educational institutions, and informal learning options).
8. Senior governments that are willing and flexible enough to follow the community's lead, to provide advice and cost-share development initiatives.
9. Investor confidence (where lacking, community seeks to rebuild).
10. Entrepreneurial spirit as indicated by (number of new enterprises, participation in business development programs and services, business success rates, local ownership of local firms and resources).
11. Willingness and ability to collaborate. May involve a regional approach among neighbouring communities (e.g. cooperative marketing, shared services).
12. Existing range of related businesses, community organizations and, in resource communities, of community resource management and planning initiatives (CED experience).
13. Supply and demand networks among local enterprises (e.g. equipment suppliers, harvesters, value-added manufacturers) - existing and potential.
14. Social and cultural amenities.
15. Health and well-being (current levels and related services).
16. A long-term approach (willingness and ability to sustain development efforts over the long-term).
17. Availability of internal and external funding/financing mechanisms.
18. A base of informal economic activity.
19. Availability of professional support and technical services for local organizations and entrepreneurs, marketing expertise.
20. Willingness and ability to utilize a strategic planning and evaluation process in CED efforts.
21. Ability to adapt to changing circumstances.
22. An innovative idea, plan or solution.

3.   Aboriginal economic development

Canadian writings on Aboriginal economic development with a community orientation appear regularly in the late 70's – early 80's. The report of the Royal Commission on Aboriginal Peoples, 1996, confirmed the importance of a CED on Aboriginal economic development. Among the important authors since 1990 who have focussed on an integrated social, cultural, political and economic approach are: Peter Elias (Northern Aboriginal Communities: Economies and Development 1995), Claudia Notzke (Aboriginal Peoples and Natural Resources in Canada 1994), and Robert Anderson (Economic Development among the Aboriginal Peoples in Canada 1999).

In the United States, although writings on culture and the impact on economic development go back to Kluckhohn and Stodtbeck (1961), it has been the research of the Harvard Project on American Indian economic development beginning in the mid 1980s that has changed the approach to Aboriginal CED. Authors Stephen Cornell and Joseph Kalt identified the success factors that accounted for some American Indian tribes being successful, while others were not. The Harvard research has had a definite impact on Canadian Aboriginal development. Cornell made an influential presentation to the Royal Commission which found its way into their proceedings. The Harvard Project findings have had a dramatic impact on Aboriginal economic strategies in both the United States and Canada.

a.   An integrated Aboriginal economic development approach

Aboriginal economic development is centered on the need to find solutions that will enable Aboriginal communities to break the cycle of poverty and dependence and re-build self-sufficient and self-governing nations. Fred Wein, Dalhousie University and Royal Commission on Aboriginal People researcher argues that, "while the focus of the

research is on economic questions, they need to be seen as part of a larger whole; thus, issues pertaining to governance, and to socio-cultural aspects such as education and social organization, are also relevant" (RCAP 1996).

Going further, the Canadian Council for Aboriginal Business, in its 1993 submission brief to RCAP says that:

> The answer to self-sufficiency is not all locked up in economics and wealth creation. Development is an interactive process that must necessarily incorporate the unique culture and history of the First Nations. However, some aspects of the heritage of First Nations stand at odds with many non-native Canadians' way of life: their bond to the land, their cherishment of elders, and their drive for consensus within diversity. We have to find a way to preserve these differences while also addressing the immediate needs of job creation and community infrastructure (CCAB 1993, p. v).

It is interesting to note above that the Council identifies the First Nation's "bond to the land, their cherishment of elders, and their drive for consensus within diversity," as at odds with "many non-native Canadians' way of life." I would suggest these differences are compatible with a CED approach.

Norgaard's comments shed some light on this issue. He states (cited in Smith 2000, 21), "The superiority of the economic subsystem over other subsystems needs to be reassessed. The various subsystems cannot be separated, nor can they be ranked in importance. Within the mainstream society this way of thinking may be new, but it is actually a very ancient way of thinking among Native Americans." The less commonly found characteristics of CED cited above, namely the

- primacy of the household and community organisms
- connection to place and the people where we live
- preservation of bio-diversity
- retention of culture

speak more directly to what Norgaard is saying about subsystems. The first one, "primacy of the household..." suggests the fundamental importance of the family as an institution of governance, while the others are self-explanatory.

This concern for not only the economic but the social elements of development aligns Aboriginal economic development with Perry's second characteristic of CED, integrated social and economic goals. The "empowerment of residents" is referred to by Wein as "re-building self-governing nations." Later in this review I will compare the other aspects of Perry's characteristics of CED: a strategic approach, a focus on building assets and linking with partners, and a non-profit structure that is non-governmental and independent.

b.   The context of Aboriginal development

Economic development in Aboriginal communities must take into consideration a host of conditions that, for the most part, are uncommon to non-native communities engaged in CED. The conditions that make Aboriginal economic development different are: the unique history (including in Canada, existence of reserves, land claims and various constitutional rights), the type of challenges faced, the long-term approach required, and Aboriginal culture.

i. Unique history

There has been a horrific, common history that has created conditions that make Aboriginal economic development more challenging than the task that non-native communities face. Historically, the federal governments in both Canada and the United States, at one time or another, followed assimilation policies. This meant the struggle of First Nations people was largely for basic cultural and physical survival. The language was threatened, the populations were decimated through disease, communities were

fragmented through political restructuring, the land base was diminished and the residential schools left behind a legacy of alienation and parental dysfunction. This turmoil has left many disabled individuals and many communities in which intense conflict rages over community decisions. These conditions make economic development in Aboriginal communities a major challenge.

ii. Types of challenges faced

The following challenges of development facing First Nations are complex and demanding:

- How can the culture be re-built so First Nations can gain strength from it?
- How can First Nations continue to re-build individual and collective self-esteem from the onslaught on their character?
- How can the non-native governance structures be made more representative and legitimate?
- How can First Nations rekindle their spirituality and thereby contribute to the creation of healthy and contributing individuals?

There is also the task of meeting the immediate needs for: physical and mental health, housing, education, leadership, administration for self-government, building bridges to a society that doesn't understand the culture, and creating a style and form of business that works on the reserve.

iii. Long-term approach

Researching these complex issues requires a long-term approach in search of long-term solutions. Re-building culture and spirituality and boosting self-esteem are long-term projects. Re-designing governance structures to make them culturally appropriate and more legitimate is also a long-term effort. As the Harvard Project

research (Cornell and Kalt 1995) has established, without legitimate institutions there is little hope for successful economic development.

The major task undertaken by Aboriginal communities in B.C., settling land claims is a task that has taken up considerable time and resources. There are many communities that have invested millions of dollars and great many years in the treaty making process, with little to show for it. Besides land claims, many First Nations are involved in drawn-out litigation over fishing and hunting rights. Establishing rights through the courts is a lengthy and risky process. Aboriginal economic development, unlike CED in most other communities, must contend as well with an exhaustive existing Aboriginal agenda.

c. Aboriginal culture and its implications for economic development

Traditional Aboriginal culture has many characteristics that don't match the Western economic model. As the Canadian Council on Aboriginal Development stated in their 1993 submission to the Royal Commission on Aboriginal People, how some aspects of the heritage of First Nations stand at odds with many non-native Canadians' way of life, Mander (1991) and Smith (2000) describe below, (in exaggerated terms in the view of the author) the differences between traditional culture and the Western economy.

i. Holistic approach

"For tribal people, who see the world as a whole, the essence of our work is in its entirety. In a society where all are related, where everybody is someone else's mother, father, brother, sister, aunt or cousin, and where you cannot leave without eventually coming home, simple decisions require the approval of nearly everyone in that society. It is a society as a whole, not merely a part of it that must survive. This is Indian

understanding. It is understanding in a global sense" (cited in Smith 2000, First Nations Financial Project P 62).

ii. Communal ownership

As Mander (1991, p 215) points out, there is little private ownership of resources such as land, water, minerals, or plant life. There is commonly no concept of selling land. In most cases, no single individual has clear and proper title to any parcel of land. These communal conditions are more restrictive than zoning ordinances passed by city governments. Also, sharing and giving are core values. They are opposed to the technological society goals of saving and acquiring. Native communities can see saving as hoarding.

iii. Tribe vs. individual

In the White Mountain Apache Tribe, the central meaning of tribal membership is the cultural value and understanding of the tribe being more important than the individual. All business development must be approached with this cultural value in the forefront. This does not mean, according to Marilyn Enfield, Apache member, that individual success is neither important nor impossible on reservations (Smith 2000, p 63). Nor should it be interpreted to mean that land and other resources are not allocated for personal use. But, individual behaviours are tempered by responsibilities to the tribe. By entrepreneurs being fluent in the language and being involved in religious activities, indications of cultural understanding, the Tribe trusts that they will behave appropriately.

iv. Goods produced for use value

Goods are produced for use value. There is little surplus production, and no profit motive. Resources in nature are viewed as "beings" that are equal to humans. The harvesting of nature is a mild alteration, in direct relationship to the "need" to survive. No

permanent damage should be done. In a highly technological society, sales techniques frequently create "need," so advertising is necessary.

v. No growth

In traditional Aboriginal economies there is no concept of economic growth. This can be described as "steady-state economics." In technological society economic growth is required. In capitalist societies it is especially required, hence the need for increased production, increased use of resources, expansion of production and market territories.

vi. Consensus decision-making and leadership

In many cultures decision-making is non-hierarchical; usually based on a consensual process involving members. Direct participatory democracy is the expectation. Power resides mainly in the community, among the people. Leadership is delegated as long as the leader reflects the community's point-of-view.

vii.   Protection of the sacred

Another cultural difference that impacts Aboriginal CED is the protection of the sacred. Cultural activities like songs, dances, stories, totems, and ceremonies, are not generally intended for commercial consumption. The determination of what sacred or spiritual practices can be used in the growing industry of Aboriginal tourism is usually a decision of the Elders or the family heads. They, and not the chiefs, carry the authority to decide. Permission for the use of specific songs and totems rests with the spokesperson for the clan or family to which they belong.

viii.   Implications of Aboriginal culture for economic development

There are many potential clashes between traditional culture and Western economic ways. The last decade has been a unique time in Aboriginal economic

development in North America since it is the first time in a very long time that Native communities have had the opportunity to make independent decisions about how they want to develop. It is interesting to see what compromises will be made to accommodate "western economic ways".

Some traditional cultures have little difficulty in assuming the practices and standards of the Western economy, while others require considerable adjustment. There are sensitive discussions taking place within the Skeena Native Development Society – Terrace B.C., (Masters in Our Own House - 2003) on the need to scrap communal ownership in favour of fee simple land title to allow entrepreneurs to use land as collateral for business start up. Similarly, the Lac La Ronge Band's Kitsaki Development Corporation, marketing wild rice into European centres, say they have no difficulty providing a chief to sing a song, give a dance, or whatever it will take to sell the rice (personal conversation with Kitsaki CEO Ray McKay, 2000). There are as many different responses to the cultural challenges of Aboriginal economic development as there are Aboriginal communities. In the bigger picture, all cultures are changing, and Aboriginal cultures are no exception. Some of those changes include adoption of Western economic ways.

ix. Summary

The unique context of Aboriginal economic development, discussed above, means the Aboriginal approach to economic development is different than that in non-native community. The difference is essentially cultural. Aboriginal communities are necessarily focused on cultural survival; cultural issues need to be addressed when considering economic development. A long-term approach is required to deal with

rebuilding culture. The discussed adaptation to Western economic ways is, as will be illustrated in this thesis, fairly superficial.

As I will establish later in the thesis, Aboriginal communities expect the process of doing business - planning, making decisions, and managing the resources - is to be done in a culturally appropriate way. The Elders need to be heard, the families need to be consulted, and the leadership style needs to reflect Aboriginal traditions and the resources need to be mustered in traditionally sensitive ways. The strength of the culture, rather than being an obstacle, is the biggest ally to economic development.

d.   Success factors:

What makes Aboriginal economic development work?

We now know from the Harvard Project research (Cornell and Kalt 1995) that the factors that make Aboriginal communities successful in their economic development are not the usual economic factors of access to markets, trained workforce, amount of capital, and access to resources. The examination of successful economic development in American Aboriginal communities by the Harvard Project (Cornell and Kalt 1995) on American Indian Economic Development has identified the three most important factors. They are:

- possessing the sovereignty to make one's own decisions about economic development,
- having the institutions that will be effective, and
- development strategies that will be appropriate for the circumstances.

I utilize these three factors to compare CED with Aboriginal economic development. Following is a brief explanation of each factor.

i. Sovereignty

Sovereignty is the extent to which a Native band or tribal council (rather than a federal government agencies) has genuine control over on-reserve decision-making, the use of reserve resources, and relations with the outside world. While formal or legally established Native sovereignty increases through First Nation's court decisions and greater program delegation, it is still the case that in North America, assertive leadership and capable administration can take primary control of many economic decisions away from the Canadian and American federal government agencies involved.

Sovereignty alone is hardly sufficient for overcoming the immense challenges bands and tribal councils face today. Harvard Project research indicates that, in the development arena, the single factor that most clearly differentiates "successful" tribes from "unsuccessful" ones is their ability to effectively exercise their sovereignty, to turn it from a legal right they may have, or a rhetorical claim, into a practical vehicle for realizing self-government. As sovereignty expands, whether it is formal or assumed, so do the chances of successful development (Cornell and Kalt 1995). The exercise of sovereignty is accomplished through adequate and appropriate institutions.

ii. Adequacy and appropriateness of institutions

Effective institutions are key to the exercise of sovereignty, which is the establishment of governance. "Governance is the process through which...institutions, businesses and citizen's groups articulate their interests, exercise their rights and obligations and mediate their differences." (Freschette, 1999)

The transition from dependent entity to sovereignty is difficult. It requires, in the cases where there are no effective institutions, institutional innovation. It requires the development of governing institutions that can pass two tests.

The first test of an effective institution is *adequacy* (Cornell and Kalt 1995). The institution itself has to be effective at solving the problems of sovereign societies. Can the institution function in a timely, efficient, effective manner and are its actions based on a fair and transparent basis? A major factor in adequacy of institutions is leadership. Is there legitimate and recognized leadership that is consulting and involving the community and making decisions in the interests of all?

The second test of an institution is *appropriateness*. In order to be effective, the new band or tribal institutions have to culturally fit the informal institutions, or the traditional way of doing things. The Harvard Project research shows that there can be a variety of institutional forms that work when those institutions are consistent with traditional institutional forms. For example, in some communities it is appropriate for one person to be making major decisions, while other traditions dictates that everyone, through the extended family structure, be consulted and that consultation determines the decision made.

The role of culture in economic development is complex and differs for each cultural group. For each culture there is a proper way of doing things and an appropriate way of relating to people, and each has significant implications for economic development strategies. In any case, cultural traditions change. Significant changes have taken place in the last 400 years and what was appropriate then may not be culturally appropriate now.

iii. Strategic orientation

According to the Harvard Project research, it is important to have a development strategy. This means taking a long-range view, consulting with members, and creating a plan. It also involves making choices about economic policies and deciding within those

policies which projects to pursue. The question that needs to be asked is, "is the strategy adequate for and appropriate to the community?" It is important that development strategies deal with the realities of the market place and of the available human, natural, capital resources of the band or tribal council. But also the economic policies and the development projects pursued have to be reconciled with the culturally derived norms and preferences of the community.

iv. Summary

In summary, the Aboriginal economic development literature points to these factors as central to the success of Aboriginal communities:

- sovereignty is generally recognized as being central to Aboriginal economic development,
- institutions that are competent to a) meet the challenges of organizing and administrating, and b) are culturally appropriate to the community involved, and
- strategies that are adequate and appropriate to the circumstances and to the community involved.

These three factors are basic to an Aboriginal community moving forward together and pursuing self-government. Next, I make the case that they are also compatible with both the characteristics and success factors of CED.

4. Comparing Aboriginal economic development with CED

I believe it is important for those of us that are CED practionners and work with Aboriginal communities, to ask the question "to what extent are Aboriginal economic development and CED similar or different?" To make this comparison I first compare Aboriginal economic development success factors to the key characteristics of CED identified in the literature, and secondly to the success factors of CED.

a.   **The compatibility of CED characteristics and Aboriginal economic development success factors**

In Table 2, Aboriginal economic development success factors are examined against each of the characteristics of CED identified by Perry. The examination demonstrates a high degree of compatibility between key CED characteristics and AED success factors.

There are some important but subtle differences between CED characteristics and Aboriginal economic development success factors. I review each of the six CED characteristics and discuss the subtle but important differences to Aboriginal economic development below.

i. Integrated approach

As argued above, it is widely regarded as essential that Aboriginal communities look at the social, spiritual, and political, as well as the economic aspects of development. The Aboriginal perspective could be said to be holistic, a more inclusive view that would mean personal, spiritual, mental and physical development. Aboriginal CED would seem to exceed the characteristic of "integrated approach" offered by Perry.

ii. Empowerment of residents

Empowerment has a slightly different focus when applied to Aboriginal CED. First and foremost, Native CED is about gaining sovereignty – the ability of the community to make its own decisions. Sovereignty refers to the jurisdiction of the band or tribal council, and not to Perry's "empowering residents." In the common Aboriginal tradition of leadership, the leader remains only as long as he/she reflects the opinion of the members. This opinion is usually a part of a consensus decision-making process which means community members are empowered. Where these traditions do not exist or

have not survived, it is the empowerment of the Aboriginal government that is

considered important.

Table 2:   Compatibility of CED characteristics with successful Aboriginal economic development factors

Perry's six characteris- tics of CED	Characteristics of successful Aboriginal economic development		
	Sovereignty	Culturally appropriate institutions	Strategic approach
Integrated approach	To achieve sovereignty, the First Nation must be able to address political, spiritual, economic and social issues	Important to include capacity building of institutions in the economic development strategy	First Nations must address economic, social, spiritual and political issues to be strategic
Empower- ment of residents	To achieve sovereignty individuals must be empowered, but collective empowerment of First Nations is more important.	Empowerment occurs through the functioning of the appropriate institutions.	Involvement of the First Nation members is a key strategy. Empowerment comes with involvement.
A strategic approach	Sovereignty is a long-term proposition that depends upon the independence of each member.	Since the main goal is the survival of the culture, all strategies must deal with the viability of institutions.	
Focus on building assets	Ultimately, unless ownership of means and resources is in the community, there is not much sovereignty.	Culturally appropriate institutions are the most valuable asset.	One key strategy is to create equity to facilitate borrowing of money for business development.
Linking with partners	Creating independence from government requires economic development, which requires expertise and capital the band often lacks.	Appropriate institutions are legitimate and functioning institutions, required to form partnerships.	Partnerships are a key strategy for achieving economic development since First Nations often lack capital and expertise.
Non-profit structure	Sovereignty means control over economic institutions whether it is a band-owned or owned by a community development corporation.	It is more important that the institutions be effective, efficient and legitimate, than non-governmental and non-profit.	A strategic approach may require a band-owned structure. If a key role is to be played by independent business it must be sanctioned by band government.

iii. Strategic approach

The approaches taken by Aboriginal communities have varied from smoke- stack chasing to long-term strategies such as building the culture as a foundation for any and all development. However, the traditional Aboriginal view is to look out, or plan over the span of seven generations. The types of strategies and how they vary from non-native CED, are discussed in section 3 below.

iv. Focus on building assets

In Aboriginal CED there is an emphasis on building assets since reserve or reservation land is not available to use as collateral. Land, under the Indian Act, is not a commodity that can be transferred out of the ownership of the Crown. Some bands and tribal councils in Canada have entered into partnerships for the distinct purpose of building assets.

v. Linking with partners

"Best practice" in B.C. has been to link up with partners to provide technical and management expertise and development capital. The B.C. Court of Appeal ruling of February 27, 2002, the Weyerhauser - Haida Gwaii, (McBride 2002) required resource companies to "meaningfully consult" with First Nations when dealing with tenured land within a land settlement claim. The partnerships that have been most successful have been with those large resource companies like Alcan (McBride 2002), who are taking resources from traditional lands. These companies have had little choice but to deal with the Native communities. The task of linking with partners is an art that is being developed by both the corporations and First Nations. The differences between the two cultures, the history of conflict and a climate of distrust in the communities, means

progress takes time. Because of these conditions, linking with partners is a greater priority for Aboriginal communities than for non-Aboriginal communities.

vi. Non-profit structure that is non-governmental and independent

Aboriginal focus is on culturally appropriate institutions. These institutions may be governmental and for-profit. Many of the most successful Native economic ventures that have been undertaken, for example the Osoyoos Indian Band (McBride 2001), have been through community development corporations (CDC's). These are, to varying degrees, arms length from band or tribal government. But since First Nations communities are small in B.C. and often dominated by one or two families, it is almost impossible to separate CDC's from band politics. In the larger American tribes CDC's can be considered non-governmental.

There has also been a significant role played in Northern Canada by co-operatives which are non-governmental institutions. But outside of the Innuit and Dene cultures in the North it seems there is little interest in Aboriginal communities pursuing co-op development. The characteristics of institutions that are most important for Aboriginal economic development are: effective, efficient and legitimate. Whether the Institution is governmental or for-profit is not as important.

In general, Aboriginal economic development:

- tends to be more integrated than non-native CED.
- focuses more on empowering the community as a whole rather than the individual residents.
- Needs to build assets to create collateral.
- finds linking with partners more important than non-native CED.
- Could benefit from non-governmental institutions, but they are more difficult to achieve.
- is less concerned with non-profit institutions.

b.   CED success factors and Aboriginal economic development success factors

Next, I have included a comparison of CED success factors (as compiled by Vodden), and the success factors of Aboriginal economic development that have been identified by the Harvard Project. In Chapter 4, I offer a more in-depth analysis of the differences between Aboriginal economic development and CED in general.

Table 3 compares the three Aboriginal economic development success factors (sovereignty, culturally appropriate institutions and a strategic approach) with the CED success factors compiled by Vodden. The following table indicates a strong similarity between CED and Aboriginal economic development success factors. The ability of the community to decide (sovereignty), the capacity to work together through legitimate institutions (culturally appropriate institutions), and the forethought to organize strategically are cornerstones to not only CED, but Aboriginal economic development. Given the similarity between the characteristics and success factors of CED, and the success factors of Aboriginal economic development, I believe there is a strong enough argument to use the term "Aboriginal CED."

5.   The uniqueness of Aboriginal CED

Three key characteristics that are identified in the literature associated with Aboriginal CED distinguish it from CED in general: the role of the family, the connection to place and the role of the culture in economic development. The distinct character of each of these in AED is discussed below.

The Aboriginal entrepreneur is commonly connected to and dependent upon his/her family for encouragement, information, and financial support. Some Aboriginal businesses have deeper family connections and employ relatives or include family

members as partners. The involvement of the family has been found to be a central and

consistent characteristic of Aboriginal business. In the WD/SFU entrepreneurial study

(Vodden, Miller and McBride 2001, 34) focus groups of Aboriginal entrepreneurs

identified family members as the most important support they received in business start-

up.

Table 3: **Comparing CED and Aboriginal CED success factors**

Vodden's CED success factors	Corresponding Aboriginal economic development success factors
1. A community identity, history and culture	sovereignty and culturally approp. institutions
2. A dynamic leader	sovereignty
3. A crisis motivating action	culturally appropriate institutions
4. A-do-it-ourselves realization	culturally appropriate institutions
5. The ability to mobilize broad support	sovereignty
6. Available local resources	strategic approach
7. Education and training opportunities	strategic approach
8. governments that are willing and flexible	sovereignty
9. Investor confidence	culturally appropriate institutions
10. Entrepreneurial spirit	sovereignty
11. Willingness and ability to collaborate	strategic approach
12. CED organizations and initiatives	culturally appropriate institutions
13. opportunities for development	strategic approach
14. Social and cultural amenities	culturally appropriate institutions
15. Health and well-being	culturally appropriate institutions
16. A long-term approach	strategic approach
17. Availability of financing mechanisms	strategic approach
18. A base of informal economic activity	strategic approach
19. Availability of support for entrepreneurs	strategic approach
20. use of a strategic planning process	strategic approach
21. Ability to adapt to change	strategic approach
22. Innovative ideas, plans or solutions	culturally appropriate institutions

I refer to this arrangement as a family-based business. Where that business involves the extended family or clan members, it is not all that individualistic in nature. If we assume for the sake of argument that a business in question is an entirely clan-owned, clan-operated business, it becomes a public enterprise, not a private enterprise. The clan is a public institution just as the community is.

As an Aboriginal family business employs extended family members and responds to extended family concerns, it begins to be less in the private sector and more in the public sector. In the cases in which there is significant extended family involvement, I contend it is accurate to say that the business is more of a public institution than a private one. I make this argument to say that the extended family business or clan-based business is, therefore, a culturally appropriate economic unit of Aboriginal economic development. Rather than the entrepreneur being an imported concept, the entrepreneur is a culturally appropriate role when he/she employs extended family members and operates in the best interests of that extended family.

When we examine the structure and purpose of the institution of the family (including all families, Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal), we see that the family is (Goldsmith, 1978):

- the primary economic unit,
- the fundamental human system that fosters the relationships we have to everything else,
- the unit that interprets the traditions and customary laws of the tribe,
- the kinship system that extends to embrace most or all members of the community, and
- oriented to the stability and the survival of the family organism.

The family unit, universal among stable societies, must meet the needs of the individual as a means to its own survival.

The family is the fundamental human system that fosters the relationships we have to everything else. Goldsmith (1978, 14) says, "Social behaviour seems to be derived from family behaviour. The set of asymmetrical bonds that link together the different members of the family are the only ones that are available to link together the members of a community." Families are the socialization unit that mold and condition the individual for group living; a style of living Goldsmith says is not instinctual to humans. Secondly, families are universal among stable societies (Murdock, cited in Goldsmith 1978, 14). Essentially, there are no societies that don't contain families.

Families and their kinship systems extend to embrace most or all members of the community (Goldsmith 1978). Whether or not the person is related by blood, marriage, or is simply called cousin, uncle, sister or brother, the nature of the relationship to the relative, or those who are regarded as relatives, is reflected in the name given to each. There are certain obligations and relational characteristics that go with each name, the number of relationships is extensive, and the effect is to be related to essentially everyone in the community. "For example, the closest word for family in Cree is 'Wahkuma Kanak,' which means all my relatives" (Napoleon 1990).

A variety of other factors extend the structure of the family to influence other institutions. "Basic social structure is reflected in its [the community's] very well defined laws of residence and land tenure. These will largely determine where people live in the village and the nature of the bonds linking one person to another and, thereby, the character of the community." Social position often determines economic position. "Whatever be these rules, the members of the community will be related to each other, or at least, and this is more important, they will regard themselves as related to each other" (Napoleon 1990).

Healthy social systems are most often built on extended families that are oriented to the stability and the survival of the organism (Goldsmith 1978). Individualistic behaviour only addresses individual ends that are not oriented to organism survival. Families are the socialization units for group living and therefore essential to holding together society. It is through the families that we are able to extend to embrace all community members.

Built upon the structure of the family are several secondary groupings or institutions. These institutions of exchange, defence, or food procurement, sanction the public will, and because of this, little or no cohesion is necessary to uphold their actions. Institutions of governance are similarly not challenged since they reflect the public will, maintain the teachings of the ancestors, and come directly out of the family unit.

Durkheim describes the secondary groupings in a society, as built upon the foundation of the family (Goldsmith 1978, 24). Commonly, societies are held together by being organized hierarchically into groups and sub-groups. These bonds that are established have to satisfy the "special requirements of their individual members." Durkheim continues, "A nation can be maintained only if, between the State and the individual, there is intercalated [meaning inserted among] a whole series of secondary groups near enough to the individuals to attract them strongly in their sphere of action and drag them, in this way into the general torrent of social life." In the Aboriginal example, where these bonds are intact through the traditional family structure, it is a great boon to the start up and growth of local businesses.

Tribal societies reflect an absence of formal institutions such as those associated with the executive, judicial and legislative functions in Western society. The internal or systemic controls, which maintain social stability, are tested over time and therefore are

strong, appropriate and enduring. Lowie (in Goldsmith 1978, 3) writes that, "the legislative function in most primitive countries seems strangely curtailed when compared with that exercised in the more complex civilizations. All the exigencies of normal social intercourse are covered by customary law, and the business of such governmental machinery as exists is rather to exact obedience to traditional usage than to create new precedents." This customary law, not obvious to the non-community member, may instruct the entrepreneur on appropriate steps to take in business start-up.

In many traditional societies decision-making or governance is most closely identified by a council of elders. This council gathers as needed, as Lowie (Goldsmith 1978, 4) says, "...to interpret the traditions and customary laws of the tribe, which embody the experience and practices of previous generations." In most cases the authority of the elders would come from the formal power of hereditary chiefs or referent power accorded to them by their families or clans. In any case their authority came out of the family and was as much a part of the natural and human systems as was the family.

In the cases of governance systems that administered to a larger population, the social structure of the family was again the model. Linton (Goldsmith 1978, 21) writes of the Iroquois, "(they) had a single basic pattern of formal control which extended from the household through clan, village and tribe to the League itself. They themselves recognized this continuity, referring to the League as the Long House and emphasizing its similarity to a household." Linton goes on to describe the parallel patterns between the tribal governments and the confederate governments. But the point here is that the family is the fundamental building block of governance.

The evaluation of the cultural appropriateness of the role of the Aboriginal entrepreneur, raises the following factors (Goldsmith, 1978):

- families are universal among stable societies
- extended families are oriented to the stability and the survival of the organism of the family
- the family is an institution of exchange, defence, and food procurement.
- families and their kinship systems extend to embrace all members of the community, and
- exigencies of normal social intercourse are covered by customary law, not formal legislation as we know it.

I suggest, with the above information, that family businesses are not individualistic in nature. To the extent that families in Aboriginal communities continue to be oriented to the stability and survival of the family, and serve to be the institutions of exchange, defence, and food procurement, they are the culturally appropriate and legitimate institution to pursue economic well-being. Without the network of support in the Aboriginal community, business would almost always falter. The family business is an important factor in Aboriginal economic development.

a.   Connection to place

One of the greatest distinctions of Aboriginal CED is the connection Aboriginal communities have to place. Our Western cultural orientation to place, described by Descarte's philosophy of solitude (Hanson 1977), is very different from the Aboriginal connection to the land. Neil Evernden describes Descartes' representation of humans in the world: "...Not only are we not a part of an environment, we are not even part of a body. We, the real we, is concentrated in some disputed recess of the body, a precious cocoon separated from the world of vulgar matter" (Evernden 1985, 44). In B.C.'s resource-based economy workers travel to jobs in remote areas, and often take up

residence in company towns. They commonly move again when the resource is depleted and the enterprise closes.

In comparison, many Aboriginal communities have inhabited the same sites for thousands of years. Localizing the economy has a deep meaning to Aboriginals. Bioregionalism, or the local control of resources by local people, included by some authors as a characteristic of CED, is certainly a characteristic of Aboriginal CED.

b.   Culture: The glue and the goal

Some sets of (non-native) CED characteristics identify the retention of culture as an important goal. CED practionner and writer Marcia Nozick says culture is "...the glue... the soul and life force of a community - the collective expression of values, perceptions, language, technology, history, spirituality, art and social organization in a community" (Nozick 1992, 181). It is the culture of the community that is the strong internal engine. Its basic instinct is to survive. Since community development is founded on a commitment to the continuance of communities, (Nozick 1992, 184) community culture, more than wealth or power, is the logical goal of CED. Because First Nations are in a struggle for cultural survival, that struggle makes the goal of cultural survival more pertinent to Aboriginal communities than non-Aboriginal communities.

Psychologist Michael Chandler's research into adolescent suicide among B.C. Aboriginal communities (Chandler and Lalonde, 2000) offers an interesting aside on the role of culture and economic development. He reports that in Aboriginal communities in B.C. where there has been a preservation or rehabilitation of the cultural past, where leaders have pursued Aboriginal title to traditional lands, where there is a measure of control over health, education, child protection and jural systems, the suicide rate is zero. Ninety percent of the suicide occurs in 10% of the communities. He suggests that if

there is a sense of where we have come from and who we are, reflected by a lively interest in our cultural pasts, and a sense of where we are going, in which youth can see a role for themselves, there is hope and life is deemed worth living. In those communities where there is not that apparent continuum of past and future, Aboriginal or not, life is less meaningful and suicide rates are higher.

In summary, the unique culture and history of First Nations means Aboriginal CED is significantly different from non-native CED. The family as the basic institution of society, the connection to place, and the current vulnerability of Aboriginal culture make Aboriginal CED unique.

6.   The Aboriginal entrepreneur

Quebec professor J. M. Toulouse (in Bherer et al 1990) uses the definition, "the entrepreneur is the person who carries out the act of creating a new enterprise." Based on Gasse's, very broad review of the literature (Gasse, 1985 in Bherer et al 1990), he proposes six characteristics specific to entrepreneurs:

- the need for personal realization (Maslow's "fulfilment")
- creativity and initiative
- risk-taking and defining of goals
- self-confidence, daring (internal locus of control)
- the need for independence and autonomy, and
- motivation, energy and commitment.

This definition of the "entrepreneur" describes a very individualistic role. In this commonly held North American mainstream-culture view, the entrepreneur is out for him/herself.

However, entrepreneurship in a different cultural context, can reflect the characteristics of that culture, and not necessarily follow the Western definition of entrepreneurship. Li Choy Chong (in Bherer 1990), who writes from an Asian perspective and focuses on the social nature of the entrepreneur, offers the following observation.

- first of all, the entrepreneur is perceived as the product of predetermined social and cultural conditions,
- second, he manifests himself through socially related motives and activities,
- finally, the social role of the entrepreneur exceeds the strictly economic dimension.

In the Aboriginal context the community may expect the entrepreneur, as Chong outlines, to start up and operate a business in a culturally appropriate way. This social entrepreneur role described below is not the individualistic role described by Gasse. It is more of a community service function.

The question raised by CED thinkers on whether CED in Aboriginal communities ought to be public, private or mixed ownership is complicated by the Western mainstream culture's stereotypical entrepreneur. Typically, the entrepreneur is seen as one who comes with his/her set of business skills and individualistic values, takes as much and leaves as little as possible. This is not what Aboriginal communities need or can afford.

Vibrant economies rely on the entrepreneur to seize opportunity, take chances, and find a way to make an enterprise work. These are not the characteristics of band-owned business start-ups. Band decisions take time and discourage business gambles. Salaried band employees commonly lack the passion for the business that will keep them grinding away on their own time to make a business work. If we believe the

entrepreneur potentially plays an important role in the Aboriginal community, the relationship to the community needs to be redefined.

I see Native communities defining for themselves an appropriate role for the entrepreneur. Chief Nathan Matthew of the North Thompson Band in B.C., has defined the type of entrepreneur he thinks his community needs. He describes a community-minded or social entrepreneur as having the following characteristics (Matthew June 2002):

1. Recognizes and works toward supporting community social, physical, mental and spiritual health, as opposed to strictly minding the dollar bottom line.

2. Donates to and attends community social, educational and cultural functions.

3. Uses his/her economic strength for community facilities, equipment, staff.

4. Is willing to take less profit in order to accommodate community needs.

5. Is willing to be a role model for community.

6. Is willing to use experience to help other entrepreneurs.

7. Has a "community first" hiring policy.

8. Is willing to train community members to work in the business, or to

9. take on-the -job trainees.

10. Identifies their business with the community logos or letterhead.

A number of authorities have agreed that an entrepreneur who behaves in this manner is an asset to the community, and someone the community would want to support in business start-up. Likewise, those entrepreneurs who have been raised in the community, by the community, and have received community support for their education and training, would be inclined to be that sort of entrepreneur. This relationship, this

unwritten contract, represents a different way: one based on mutual respect and support. In the Cherokee Housing Authority example, this entrepreneur is granted a preferential contract if their price is within 10% of the lowest bid.

Nancy Warneke, Director of the Salish Kootenai College Tribal Business Assistance Centre in Pablo, Montana, says in the introduction to her M.A. thesis that the preparation of the entrepreneur for business start up should incorporate a traditional approach.

> We basically came from a "Buffalo Hunt" society (Stewart & Herman, 1999) and were "gatherers and traders". This is a phenomena where the young were prepared to be hunters and had mentors and teachers. In the past, adult people were not given a bow and arrow for the first time and told to go find some buffalo, there was a very elaborate educational process that all children went through to prepare them to participate in the economy of the tribe. When the time came to hunt, trade, or raid, each person was well prepared and had a strong support system within their community. In contrast economic development today takes the approach of giving the adult the equipment without either the skills or any social support system to help ensure success. (Warneke 2001)

Michele Landsdowne, a colleague of Nancy Warneke, has published the stories of entrepreneurs from the Flathead Reservation in Montana (Landsdowne 1999). Each of the success stories has associated with it a value passed from the Elder of the entrepreneur's tribal heritage, three strengths which have helped entrepreneurs succeed, and three obstacles the entrepreneur has had to overcome. The values listed are: courage, vision, respect, trust, honesty, cooperation and commitment. The strengths listed are: risk, decisiveness, support, change, leadership, persistence, consistency, balance, and pride. The obstacles include: discouragement, anger, low self-esteem, chaos, mistrust, selfishness, racial bias, and confusion. The book is used in their entrepreneurial and business training department to help their students use their cultural tradition as a source of strength rather than an obstacle in establishing a business.

These perspectives - the definition offered by Chief Nathan Matthews, the traditional preparation approach offered by Nancy Warneke, and using cultural strengths to support new businesses recorded by Michele Landsdowne - signal an entrepreneurial role that is culturally integrated, that enhances the culture, and that supports the entrepreneur by drawing on traditional strengths.

7.   Key economic development strategies

This section explains the similarities and differences between some of the key strategies that are identified in the literature as useful for CED and specifically Aboriginal CED.

a.   Shared CED and AED strategies

CED strategies revolve around the core issue of planning. In both native and non-native communities taking a strategic approach ideally begins with the participation of the community and the creation of a vision of where the community wants to be in some future, often 10 to 20 years. A first step identifies the values common to the community. The second step is to conduct an environmental scan: the strengths, weaknesses, the opportunities and the threats that the community faces internally and externally. The next step is to craft a mission and vision: short statements of highest community priorities and aspirations for the future. This is usually followed by strategic goals and operational plans. In the case of small communities, it is possible that everyone can be involved in strategic plan development. In larger communities people representing various groupings may be involved. The important factors are that there is a plan and it reflects community values and aspirations.

At a more specific level, many strategies employed in either Native or non-native communities are much the same. Table 4 identifies thirteen common CED strategies (Vodden 1999), and assesses their prevalence in B.C. Aboriginal communities. They may be adopted in combination with others and adapted to the particular circumstances to meet the needs of the community using them (Blakely 1989).

Table 4: ***Comparing CED and Aboriginal strategies***

common CED strategies	Aboriginal strategies (personal knowledge)
Plug the leaks	not yet common in B.C. Aboriginal communities
Initiate new enterprises	widespread Aboriginal strategy
Support existing business	not as widespread a strategy but increasing
Develop human resources	overdependence on this training approach
Work sharing	not a widespread strategy
Strengthen informal economy	beginning to focus on this valuable approach
Recruit compatible new business	not a popular strategy in B.C.
Increase local ownership	has been a focus with many communities
Develop physical infrastructure	From establishing business guidelines to servicing lots
Community resource management	a strong emphasis on this strategy
Improve local environment	a common approach in Aboriginal communities
Undertake quality of life improvements	very strong on social, health & recreation
Celebrate local identity and culture	the strongest and most common strategy

Most of Vodden's inventory of CED strategies are as common in Native communities as they are in non-native communities (Table 4). However, the current focus in Aboriginal CED is around organizational capacity building. This is not explicitly included in Vodden's list of strategies. In non-native situations it may be taken for granted that there are organizational vehicles that can steward CED. In Aboriginal communities the capacity building around legitimate institutions is critical (Lewis 1990).

b. **Specific Aboriginal economic development strategies**

Strategies that are more specific to AED are sovereignty and institutional

capacity building, with a specific emphasis on social and cultural capital. As previously

listed, an Aboriginal CED priority is to pursue the strategies that yield the most

sovereignty. That means building strong institutions and building organizational capacity.

In British Columbia this approach has been articulated as the "Development Wheel"

(Westcoast Development Group, 1990). It places "organizational capacity building" as its

focus, at the centre of the wheel. The spokes of the wheel are steps to be taken to

develop organizational capacity. They are:

- organizational prerequisites – getting your organization ready to get serious about CED?

- Pre-planning – deciding what do you need to know to plan for CED?

- Organizational development – building an organization which can advance CED

- Venture development – building promising opportunities into sound businesses

- Community participation and strategic networking – casting the net for key CED supporters

- Technical assistance – using the know-how of outsiders to strengthen local self-reliance

Westcoast Development Group concludes:

The six components of the Development Wheel each contribute to the
ability and willingness of community members to initiate projects,
programs, and businesses, to organize these ventures, and to keep them
running. Over time, the community accumulates an ever greater pool of
leaders and followers with organizational talent, as well as hard skills.
...This body of talent, skills, and experience is known as a community's
organizational capacity. It is at once the key product, and the driving force
behind the community's economic development. (Westcoast
Development Group, p11)

In a similar American reference, Smith (2000, 86) proposes an Aboriginal CED strategy that formulates a positive atmosphere for growth. His strategy includes:

- supporting and maintaining a stable tribal government.
- actively recruiting outside investors and partners in the development process.
- encouraging partnerships between members and outside investors
- aiding tribal members in their individual entrepreneurial activities:
  1. streamlining the red tape
  2. providing technical assistance
  3. reducing restrictions on site leases
  4. comprehensive plan of action

Both the Westcoast Development Group and the Smith strategies reflect the importance of building organizational capacity, and each points, as does Vodden, to the importance of partnerships and the development of businesses. In pursuing this strategy of building organizational capacity, there are resources that can be drawn upon by Aboriginal communities that highlight some differences between CED and Aboriginal CED.

i. Resources that support strategies

In considering what resources can best be utilized in the pursuit of this strategy of building organizational capacity, it may be useful to look at the forms of capital - "wealth used to produce more wealth" (Collins English Dictionary, 1998) that may be available for the community to develop. The various categories of wealth described by Roseland (in Pierce and Dale 1999, 190) are listed below:

- natural capital, the wealth contained in natural resources,
- human capital, more often referred to as human resources
- technological capital, or the "know-how" that allows us to produce wealth eg. sawmill

- financial capital, dollars in the bank that can be invested to make more money

- social capital, or the bonds to one another, bridges to other groups and the linkages we have to governments that facilitate CED, and

- cultural capital, the wealth that is represented in the traditional knowledge and institutions that are important to guide Aboriginal CED.

Developing any of these categories of wealth has value, but in the Aboriginal context, as I will describe, social and cultural capital are more important than in the non-Aboriginal context. Building social capital means making an investment in re-establishing the connections that have been broken through years of conflict and racism, a product of colonialism. Building cultural capital means drawing on and developing traditional knowledge and traditional institutions as the foundation on which to develop. Each one presents a strategic approach that is relevant to Aboriginal communities.

Social capital

The idea of social capital and investing in its growth may be a strategy that minimizes the conflict in Aboriginal communities around the issues of economic development. The following few pages attempt to define social capital, list some of its characteristics, look at its relationship to the economy, how to measure and how to generate social capital, and how to invest social capital in organizations.

Definitions of social capital

Robert Putnum (1995, 65-78), in "Bowling Alone: The Collapse and Revival of American Community," documents a decline in the habits of association among Americans and a parallel loss in community awareness, mutuality, and trust. Putnum argues that Americans have become increasingly disconnected with one another over the past quarter decade. Putnum outlines the benefits of social capital for economic

prosperity, education, safe neighbourhoods, happiness and democracy. Putnam says "social capital refers to features of social organizations such as networks, norms and social trust that facilitate coordination and cooperation or mutual benefit (Putnum 1995)."

Other observers detail a diminishing civility, a word that suggests not just politeness but behaviours based on recognition of commonality, a common stake in society. Community 'civicness' is key to maximizing the potential of communities as agents of sustainable development. Putnam suggests that civicness in a community will lubricate social life, enhance productivity, and facilitate action; in practice, it will then become a proxy for successful policy implementation.

Social capital is the shared knowledge, understandings, and patterns of interacting that a group of people bring to any productive activity (Coleman 1988; Putnam et al. 1993, 193-4). Social capital refers to the organizations, structures, and social relations that people build up independently of the state or large corporations. It contributes to a stronger community fabric and often as a by-product of other activities, builds bonds of information, trust, and interpersonal solidarity.

Social capital is defined by B.C.CED Net as "a community's level of co-operation, trust, optimism, diverse leadership, and the action taken to foster local organizational capacity and collaboration" (Downing 2000). The World Bank's definition is: "the norms and social relations embedded in social structures that enable people to coordinate action to achieve desired goals." Prusak and Cohen's (2001) definition is: "Social capital consists of the stock of active connections among people: the trust, mutual understanding, and shared values and behaviours that bind the members of human networks and communities and make cooperative action possible. Donna Fisher and Sandy Vilas say, "... networking consists of creating links from people we know to

people they know in an organized way, for a specific purpose, while remaining committed to doing our part and expecting nothing in return" (Fisher and Vilas 1996, 27-28). Given the preceding discussion on organizational capacity building, it is apparent how important it is to foster social capital in Aboriginal communities.

There is, of course, the trap of talking about networks and communities almost entirely in positive terms. The very cohesion of mutual commitment to a community can be a problem if that makes it clannish, insular, excessively idiosyncratic, or, in extreme cases, corrupt or destructive. The same kind of social connections that give people purpose, satisfaction, and a sense of identity are responsible for feuds and a sad history of violence against outsiders.

Cohen and Prusak (2001) say social capital's characteristic elements and indicators include: high levels of trust, robust personal networks and vibrant communities, shared understandings and a sense of equitable participation in a joint enterprise - all things that draw people together into a group. "This kind of connection supports collaboration, commitment, ready access to knowledge and talent, and coherent organizational behaviour. This description of social capital suggests appropriate organizational investments - namely, giving people space and time to connect, demonstrating trust, effectively communicating aims and beliefs, and offering the equitable opportunities and rewards that invite genuine participation, not mere presence." (Cohen and Prusak 2001, 4)

Roseland notes that "the critical resource for enhancing social capital is not money - rather, the critical resources are trust, imagination, the relations between individuals and groups, and time, the literal currency of life. Many of the social issues that people relate to most intimately - family, neighbourhood, community, decompression

from work, recreation, culture - depend on these resources at least as much as on money" (Roseland 1999).

When the concept of social capital is applied to Aboriginal communities it includes achieving a sense of political transparency. The actions that commonly need to be taken are to:

- include individuals from each of the families,
- distribute rewards,
- support everyone evenly and openly,
- have an appeal mechanism (community dispute resolution) that allows decisions around the allocation of resources to be challenged.

These are the actions that generate the social capital needed to do the planning that involves a wide base of community members, and they are also the actions that organizations need to take to establish the trust-based connections between people that foster cooperative action. One way of achieving this in the work place is to promote work groups of various kinds. This allows greater participation, the delegation of authority, and allows for credits and rewards to be distributed more evenly.

From this perspective, social capital is an important resource to help address the potential conflict over economic development within Aboriginal communities. In every Aboriginal community there are those who espouse more traditional values, and those who do not. What is important is the capacity to address and resolve these differences. The ability to do so depends in part, on the good relations – the social capital – available to the community. Social capital is an important resource to support CED in any community. But the legacy of conflict in First Nations communities from dislocated governance, residential schools, substance abuse and fetal alcohol syndrome - the

context in which Aboriginal development takes place - requires particular attention to the accumulation of social capital.

Besides accumulating social capital to address the conflict that impairs CED, developing institutions and protocols that address development is essential for that development to happen. That brings us to the next resource; cultural capital.

Cultural capital

As documented in section 3 and described by Mander, there are many "economic" value differences between Aboriginal and Western societies. However, it would be a mistake to think that traditional culture stands in the way of economic development. The overall goal of Aboriginal CED is an exercise in preserving and developing the culture: it is the culture that provides the guidance and the answers to the question, "how should the community proceed with economic development"?

It was once thought that traditional culture was an obstacle to development. The Harvard Project data indicates that culturally appropriate institutions are a key element in successful economic development (Cornell and Kalt 1995a). But the findings of the Harvard Project indicate those Aboriginal communities with institutions similar to those they traditionally had have been successful. One outstanding example is the Hopi Tribe's economically successful Cochiti Pueblo which is still ruled by a group of religious leaders; a theocracy. Every December 30th, the spiritual leader chooses a leader for the next year from the community members assembled. This is an unpaid position. Many CED practionners would consider this random approach a recipe for economic disaster, but the governance system is accepted by the community and legitimately makes decisions, and this process has not been an obstacle to economic development success.

If a society was traditionally decentralized it has little chance to succeed economically if its present structure is centralized. B.C. West Coast First Nations traditionally had a clan structure. The Indian Act prescribed a more centralized chief and council system which elects leaders from two or more clans. In this instance, where one clan has a majority and it is perceived they make decisions in the interests of their own clan members and not of the whole, the system is considered to be illegitimate. Without legitimate governance, economic planning and decision-making is questioned and economic development is seldom successful. To address this the Tsleil-Waututh Nation (Burrard Indian Band), near Vancouver, B.C. is introducing a model that modifies the chief and council system with a veto by a council of family speakers. Similarly, the Meadow Lake Tribal Council in Saskachewan has an Elders council that offers guidance to the tribal council on matters of economic development.

Times have changed and what might have been appropriate long ago may not be so today. Marie Smallface Marule (n.d.), President of Red Crow College of the Blood Tribe in southern Alberta, says we must take our *inspiration* for our new institutions from our old institutions. Examples are: the aforementioned council of family speakers, building Elders into a central role in the education system and medicine people in the wellness system, councils of Elders as economic development advisors, and the recognition of kinship patterns in decision-making.

Rosalee Tizya (n.d.), consultant and researcher with the Royal Commission says, "Our philosophy is the basis from which our governing systems flowed in terms of how we are related to one another as Nations, or how we related to one another within a Nation as Clans, Families and Individuals and continue to today." Traditional ways and

relationships are an invaluable cultural resource in the effort to build institutions that accommodate a market economy.

Legitimate institutions, those that the society recognizes, are the building blocks of sovereignty. They are what gives the community the capacity for independence. The wealth of tradition, or the cultural capital that Aboriginal communities have available, may be the most important resource they have to foster economic development.

The Harvard Project leaders have recently focussed on the term "nation building" activities (Cornell and Begay conference presentation Jan. 2003). These are the behaviours and actions that must be taken to build or re-build viable First Nations. They refer to all-inclusive planning processes, fostering leadership that sets a climate that supports business, and reviving cultural ceremonies and practices that bring people together. This approach reinforces the importance of social and cultural capital to community economic development.

8.   Summary of CED and Aboriginal CED

The characteristics of CED generally apply to the Aboriginal economic development context. The basic elements of building equity, community capacity, leadership and viable institutions are the same. However, in Aboriginal CED there are some important differences. The prominence of the family, the overriding importance of cultural preservation, the sense of place and the central importance of institutions in Aboriginal CED, may cause us to look at CED differently. It may also dictate a specific role for entrepreneurs in Aboriginal communities.

9.   A framework for Aboriginal CED

Does the role of the Aboriginal entrepreneur fit with the three success factors (sovereignty, adequate and appropriate institutions and strategic orientation) of Aboriginal economic development? The sovereignty of the First Nation, where it relates to the ability to act in the economy and make timely business decisions, is extended by using entrepreneurs. Where the entrepreneur is embedded in the community, through the family, this role is culturally appropriate. Where the role of the entrepreneur has been built into the community's CED strategy, it is consistent with a strategic orientation.

The role of the Aboriginal entrepreneur is compatible with successful Aboriginal CED strategies. The Westcoast Development Group's "Development Wheel" (page 50), and Smith's strategies for economic development (page 51) both underline the important role of business development in Aboriginal CED. In this chapter I first examine what I found other Aboriginal communities have done to create a climate of support for Aboriginal entrepreneurs. The information came from reviewing the literature, web searches, and telephone interviews. I have grouped these actions in the four categories that are most applicable to the B.C. First Nations involved in this project.

B.   Experience from elsewhere

I have included a brief description of actions other First Nations have taken to create a supportive environment to foster their own entrepreneurs. Some have been successful; others are still in the proving stage. They are presented here as a banquet of ideas that may, or may not, be appropriate for a particular community. I have grouped them into four factors required for to support entrepreneurs.

- Business start-up support
- Infrastructure the community can provide
- Financing
- Community endorsement

1. Factor 1: Business start-up support

Action identified by a number of communities is providing the information and services the entrepreneur commonly needs to start up a business. This begins with creating interest and skills at home, in school, and in workshops. In many cases the tradition of enterprise has been lost over the last few generations and it needs to be rekindled. It takes time to re-establish business traditions and habits. Also included here is the one-on-one relationship with a business counsellor, business skills courses, entrepreneurial training and job experience, and the importance of role models and mentors.

a. Youth business education

Young people who learn about small business at an early age can include it as a career option when they are older. Children are natural traders (cards, candies and toys) and this ability can be built upon. It starts at school.

"By introducing a business curriculum in the primary grades," says Cliff Fregan, "you will help overcome the recent lack of entrepreneurial tradition among Aboriginal people." Cliff, a Haida First Nation member, is working with the University of Victoria, B.C., to develop a Kindergarten to Grade Three curriculum for his community. The program will enable primary students to learn to think entrepreneurially (McBride et al 2001).

b.   Assistance with budgeting and finance

"Building Native Communities: Financial Skills for Families," is a workbook that can be introduced into homes so people build or re-build budgeting skills. Besides family budgeting skills the booklet outlines the Native tradition of budgeting resources through the year, and explains the importance of understanding the local economy. Readers are asked questions about which businesses are owned by community members, tribal organizations, and non-community members. They are then asked to comment on their community's level of economic self-reliance. The workbook is produced by the First Nations Development Institute and Fannie Mae Foundation(no author, no date U.S.A.).

c.   Develop support groups and business education programs

For people who think they might want to go into business but don't know what it is all about and are unsure what to ask, joining a group of peers or cohorts, can be their best course of action. In the focus groups conducted as part of the SFU/WD Gap Study, entrepreneurs told us how much they appreciated the support of learning with their peers. The group creates a network of people who can be useful to one another after the business start-up period.

The San Carlos Apaches (Cecil 1998) have developed a cohort business counselling support group and a workshop where they learn how much privately-owned businesses contribute to the economy by employing members, providing services, and stopping the flow of money out of the community. The workshop also includes business education from ideas to business plans, and familiarizes participants with band or tribal regulations on taxation, licensing, leasing and business approvals.

The tribe reports (Cecil 1998) that these workshops work when they are informal. Strong bonds form between students who are the potential entrepreneurs. It is also

important to have firm community support and the involvement of key community members, mentors, and institutions. Greater progress is realized if the program includes a concrete series of sessions, a well-organized outreach program and when real businesses are examined.

Another example of education and training comes from California. Bishop Reservation Indian Entrepreneurship Program (Sheldon 1988), California, provides an extensive program in business and managerial skills. It gives the prospective entrepreneur the skills he/she requires to run a successful business. As a result of a high initial drop-out rate, more emphasis is now placed on the use of active, cooperative learning in the classroom. The plan calls for students to run a real business during the program so that they can acquire real management experience.

The Bishop program uses the following questions about business development support and training, to help determine community needs (Sheldon 1988).

- Does the interest in business exist in your community?
- Do members know about business realities?
- Are people motivated to learn about business?
- Are there people who have ideas for businesses?
- Are there people ready for business start up support?
- Do they have access to someone who has useful business information and will support the entrepreneur until the business is well established?
- Do they know various sources of financing?
- Are there people who need a course on how to start a business where they produce a business plan?
- Are there people already in business who need "aftercare"?
- Are there prospective entrepreneurs in your community who need job experience to strengthen work habits?
- Are there others who need business training and job experience?

d.   One-on-one business development support

For one-on-one business development support, the model provided by the

Aboriginal Business Development Centre in Prince George is excellent. It has been

successful with its singular mission to provide a service to Aboriginal entrepreneurs

(McBride et al 2001). The Centre's measure of success is "the complete satisfaction of

the client." The core of their operation is the one-on-one relationship the Small Business

Advisor has with each client. They provide business counselling and connect their clients

with key resource people and agencies dealing with issues from financing to licensing.

Well-qualified and highly motivated staff put the emphasis on empowering their

clients and celebrating their successes. They will not do a business plan for the client.

They will help in any other way but they believe the ownership of the business plan must

be claimed by the client.

e.   Business training, entrepreneurial training and job experience

Job experience in an important local industry like mining, tourism or

administration, can be a motivator for unemployed people to return to work and re-

establish good work habits and develop new skills. A workplace that provides social

guidance and problem-solving helps people to develop good work habits and skills.

The Athabasca Innovations Program is a three-year project offering academic

upgrading and life-skills training plus mining work experience to adults in the Athabasca

region of northern Saskatchewan (Cameco Corporation 1996). The program is jointly

funded by The Canada Employment and Immigration Centre, Saskatchewan Education,

Prince Albert Tribal Council, Indian and Northern Affairs Canada, Saskatchewan Indian

and Metis Affairs Secretariat, Cigar Lake Mining Corporation and Cameco Corporation.

The program has the following goals:

1. increasing the participation of people from the Athabasca region in the mining industry

2. increasing labour force participation among young adults in the region

3. increasing the overall education level of the labour pool in the Athabasca region.

A key component of the program is an instructor who provides the academic training. The instructor is an indigenous Dene-speaking program co-coordinator who has experience in treating substance abuse, offers life skills training and provides the students with continuity between the community, classroom, and the work experience. The program co-coordinator also maintains the linkages between the college and mine personnel, and the communities.

Another innovative example of addressing the basic building block of job and life skills is a non-native business that has dedicated itself to providing jobs to anyone who shows up to apply. It has anticipated the various difficulties of the people it hires by providing them with support staff. Despite the staffing policy the bakery has maintained a reputation of being one of the best in its business.

Greyston Bakery (Fortune Magazine 2001) in Yonkers, New York, is a non-Native but outstanding example of the creation of a workplace that gives everyone an opportunity to hold a job. Founded in 1982, Greyston was the brainchild of Zen Buddhist and entrepreneur Bernard Glassman. Of the fifty-five Greyston employees, many are working for the first time. They are former substance abusers or convicted criminals. The company maintains a three-person department, overseen by a social worker, to help employees with problems ranging from landlord-tenant disputes to marital discord.

"There is an open hiring policy. Everyone deserves an opportunity for a job. Period," says Julius Walls, CEO. First come, first hired. Workers then must prove themselves during a twelve to sixteen week tryout. Everyone is responsible for their actions," Walls says, "The welfare system has created a class of people who have been taught to depend on others." Bakery profits last year were $200,000, all of which go to the Greyston Foundation which helps the needy. Greyston was recently named the second best bakery in New York!

Apprenticeship opportunities is a priority of the Warm Springs Small Business Development Centre (Smith 2001), Oregon, provides opportunities for members to work towards an apprenticeship. This Native American Centre arranges for a member in an apprenticeship program to complete the hours required at work sites on the reservation.

Delivering courses in bookkeeping, marketing, business incorporation, taxation, administration and financing can be assisted via a Native-friendly college near the community or on the Internet. The Choctaw Nation of Oklahoma has made a priority of access to education as a result of difficulty with the supply of trained labour and a failure to graduate rate in the non-Native colleges of 85%. Charles Cayton, Director of Economic Development, says, "We are going to build a tribally-controlled college. Every Choctaw person in the state of Oklahoma who wants to go to college can go to school." Cayton says Choctaw people are also shy and reticent to approach business-assistance people unless they are Choctaw. They can now get assistance through their one-stop business information centre (Willox 1999).

Linking a business development centre within a college business program is the approach of the Salish/Kootenai College Tribal Business Assistance Centre (Warneke 2002). Students can develop a business as one of the courses that leads to a diploma in

business administration. Students have constant access to the faculty for advice. A Native mentor breakfast club meets every two weeks to discuss current business opportunities. The college serves a student population of about 1,500, half of whom are non-Native.

f.   The importance of the business plan

Entrepreneurial training that takes people through the business plan and prepares them for business start-up can be very beneficial. HETADI Entrepreneur Training Model is a program designed by the Hawaii Entrepreneur Training and Development Institute and used by the Meadow Lake Tribal Council (HETADI n.d.), and the Department of Maori Affairs. It identifies and trains entrepreneurs, supports them while they develop a business plan, and provides aftercare for the business. HETADI tests applicants for specific expectations. Motivation and commitment are the highest ranked characteristics of the test. In their pre-business or business plan workshops, held on two consecutive days in a weekend, HETADI wants to select people who:

- can achieve business start-up within three to twelve months
- have a solid entrepreneurial character
- have a reasonably good business idea that has some known demand in the market
- have some money that is reasonably commensurate with their capital needs
- know their timing is right and are ready

Their training format is a four-week residential workshop, held every day for twenty-eight days, or a Friday night and Saturday for two to three months. The central focus of the workshop is the completion of a business plan, but individual counselling with participants is an important part of the workshop. "Aftercare" is individually designed

to fit the needs of the specific types of businesses. HETADI suggest contact once every two weeks with clients. This may go on for as long as eight months, and informally up to three years. The support provided may include the following:

- brokering the business plan to banks
- negotiating leases with landlords
- lining up suppliers and best prices for clients
- introducing clients to key business leaders
- establishing record/bookkeeping systems
- monitoring sales, management styles and decisions
- updating and changing business plans

g.   Aftercare

When a person has started up a business it is important that they receive aftercare to enable them to be successful.

In 1969 the Province of B.C. established a $25 million perpetual fund, First Citizen's Fund (web site www.mcaws.gov.bc.ca/fcfund June 2002), with the interest earned set aside to be used for various purposes. The program has evolved over the years to where it is today - a loan program with a 40% grant portion administered by Aboriginal Capital Corporations.

What makes this program unique is the built-in aftercare provision. Clients pay a 2% fee on top of their initial loan amount and this fee goes into a communal pot that is available to all clients for aftercare services. By making this service available for the life of the loan, at no further cost to the borrower, the program ensures that resources are made available to the entrepreneur to support the viability of the business.

2. Factor 2: Infrastructure the community can provide

A number of communities have made a priority of smoothing the way for entrepreneurs who wish to start a business. There are stories of how communities have developed clear visions and plans of where their economy is going, and what role they expect their members' private businesses to play. There are examples of how bands and tribal councils have developed policies and guidelines that clearly outline the process of business start-up.

Some First Nations have started businesses for training purposes, and others that have created band or tribal council-owned "anchor" businesses that create opportunities for private spin-off businesses. Some communities start businesses and then "privatize" them to create member-owned business.

a. Business incubators and "anchor" businesses

Business incubators take different forms, but the idea is to support the business through its start-up development to a point where it can survive on its own. Examples are bands or tribal councils that establish "anchor" businesses that foster others and then sell them off.

Meadow Lake Tribal Council, composed of nine member First Nations, has established an "anchor" business strategy around which smaller enterprises can flourish (Ratfoot 2001). The main "anchor" industry/business for MLTC is forestry. The forestry operations of trucking, harvesting, loading, road building and maintenance, milling and reforestation are open to private individuals who are band members. Who gets the work depends on which band's territory they are working in. A second "anchor" business is mining, which has associated catering, cleaning and clothing businesses, which are owned and operated by members.

The strategy at St. Eugene's Mission resort, casino and golf course owned by the Ktunaxa/Kinbasket Tribal Council in South Eastern British Columbia is to encourage members to start businesses that will provide services to the new development (Helder Ponte 2001). Two examples of support business options are laundry and security.

"If the members don't come forward there is the option of the resort starting up the business, employing members and later selling the business to members," says Helder Ponte, the Project Manager (Ponte 2001). There are also other opportunities to provide direct services to guests - for example, trail rides, canoeing, kayaking, fly-fishing guiding, and taking visitors to archaeological sites. The members are being encouraged by the leaders to prepare themselves for these challenges.

A current attitude at Warm Springs, Oregon, is that the tribe should privatize the janitorial work in their 150 buildings, as well as sell their tribal garage, waste management, and print shop operations. "If we start privatizing these functions, in five, ten years from now you'll find a lot of Indian people in business, a lot of retail outlets on the reservation, and a much healthier community. To help them do it we have to create an environment in which smaller businesses will thrive," says Ken Smith, Tribal Administrator (Smith 2001).

b.   Networking

Networking (forming cooperative relationships) broadens and strengthens the business and organizational networks to create new job and business opportunities.

Inter-Community Conferences are an important form of networking. For example, a day-and-a-half workshop, sponsored by Indian and Northern Affairs Canada (B.C.) and hosted by The Aboriginal Business Development Centre in Prince George, was held on the theme of building relationships with non-Aboriginal neighbours. The strategy was to

build understanding by showcasing the richness of Aboriginal culture and the inherent

spiritual, creative and nurturing capacity of Aboriginal people.

The workshop focused on the barriers to business start-ups experienced by

Aboriginal entrepreneurs. Topics included "The Dynamics of a Joint Venture," "Taxation"

and "Separating Roles within Business and Politics." This workshop received much

praise from the participants, and even two years later the ABDC is still reaping the

benefits (Gerow 2001). In a similar, but on-going program, the Wet'suwet'en Hereditary

Chiefs Office is planning to hold scheduled meetings with the nearby town council of

Smithers, B.C. (Gerow 2001).

The Choctaw First Nation has formed partnerships which assist both Choctaw

and non-Native people in the Oklahoma communities they work in. The Director of

Economic Development, Charles Cayton, says (Willox 1999), "There is very little

reservation land and most of the 35 - 40,000 Choctaws live off reservation. We look for

ways to use our assets to benefit the whole community, not just Choctaw. It's Choctaw

first, but we want to help the whole community so that everybody's life is better." They

also work with the counties and state to improve roads and deliver economic

development assistance to Natives and non-Natives.

Although non-native, the Nova Scotia Department of Community Service

provides a valuable model of networking. It puts up the capital, in partnership with the

Regional Co-operative Development Centre (made up of the Maritime Credit Union

Central and Co-op Atlantic), to move community service clients into an employment

stream by forming worker co-ops that are attached to established co-ops. Fifty

established co-ops that were recognized for their financial strengths and management

expertise were approached. Thirty-five joined the program. It was their job to identify

opportunities and propose a concept for a subsidiary business of their own. They then became a "parent co-op" providing management expertise, financial management, and business smarts to the new business. In return, the "parent" received a fee for service (capped at 10% of sales) as well as a percentage of the profits. Workers own 50 - 100% of the new business, depending on who put up the equity. The management contract remains in place until the equity is paid back.

c. Partnerships with educational institutions

Creating a partnership with an educational institution is more than sending your students off to enroll in existing courses. Tim McTiernan, President of Canadore College, North Bay, Ontario, says that educational institutions provide more than basic foundation skills and skills that allow people to acquire jobs in local and regional economies (McTiernan 2000).

College clients are not only the students; they are also the communities around them. Colleges need to work to align themselves with the local community's economic development strategy, and ensure they are not taking over ownership of initiatives that belong at the community level. Building a partnership between the community, the college, and key businesses in the region is a long-term strategy but one that integrates training, job placements and community goals (McTiernan 2000).

d. Mentors and role models

Mentors and role models offer guidance and support based on their experience and expertise. They give encouragement to people who lack confidence and experience. As one leader has said, "One good role model can provide more encouragement than ten inspirational speeches (Sheldon 1988)." One First Nation community with only one

experienced business person left in the community, as old as he was, kept bringing him to group after group to make his "how I got started" speech. They were worried they would "use him up," but recognized the importance of this example of success.

When mentors are involved in a loose association with one another, they offer more effective help to those they mentor. This association can take the form of a once-a-month meeting, or a group connected through e-mail, that can exchange contacts and discuss how to better mentor the less experienced.

American Indian Business Leaders (AIBL) have several chapters in the U.S. and are dedicated to encouraging the development of Aboriginal students' leadership and business skills. They serve as role models and mentors, and provide internship and job placement opportunities for student members. They also introduce students/members to business networks. As well as providing training and conferencing opportunities, AIBL programs consistently address the cultural issues related to academic and professional life. Programs significantly increase the ability of students to succeed in, and essentially live within, two unique worlds.

e. Planning processes

Clear plans, development policies, procedures, and principles help members know how their business idea may "fit" with the band's vision. They need to know what process they will have to go through to start a business, and what supports may be available to them.

Meadow Lake Tribal Council's (MLTC) twenty-year plan outlines how the Nation made up of five Cree and four Dene Nations, totalling 8,500 people, has brought two cultures together(MLTC 20 Year Plan). This has required patience and leadership. The plan, titled "From Vision to Reality," outlines capacity-building goals and specific

employment targets broken down into employment sectors. The overall goal is parity with the province's employment rate. When targets are not met, all key people are called together to troubleshoot the shortfall (Willox 1999).

The MLTC has utilized the medicine wheel as the basis of their perception of the development strategy. There is an elders' council to guide the development, and the goals are traditional and cultural.

Warm Springs Economic Development Corporation's plan is to have a business community on the reservation where a variety of tribal member businesses provide food and services to the reservation communities and visitors. This is an economic development plan that uses business start-up to stop the "leakage" of money outside the community (Smith 2001). A majority of the employees are required to be local tribal members. The businesses must have an image that reflects the Native character. The Native-owned businesses already in the tribal-owned shopping plaza include restaurants, an automotive shop, sports clothing, a fly-fishing shop, business services, a grocery market, rafting, and a thrift store.

f.   Produce an economic development support strategy

A support for entrepreneurs that is often overlooked by First Nation administrations is an economic development strategy that not encourages the entrepreneur but prescribes their role in community development. The other important aspect of a strategy is to specify the "rules of the game."

The Oglala Nation, Sioux tribe of North Dakota, developed an economic development strategy (Aoki 1997) that included two major themes:

- encourage family/individual entrepreneurship, and
- build a better business climate by: becoming a source of information and technical assistance, reallocating resources toward the

development of infrastructure and setting the "rules of the game" for businesses

The Cheyenne River Sioux, wanting to clarify the "rules of the game," adopted a sixty-four page Uniform Commercial Code that deals with contract law, repossession of goods from reserve, and the enforcement of the code by the tribal court (Plume 2001). Without the encouragement of entrepreneurs and building a better business climate, it is unreasonable to expect that the individual and family businesses will thrive.

g. Assist and support the approval process

When a role for entrepreneurs has been identified in the community's development, and the supports outlined above have been established, the next step is to train band employees to enthusiastically assist entrepreneurs and coordinate the approval process. Warm Springs Small Business Development Centre, Oregon, assists business people with the approval process by gathering people from each tribal department involved to consider requests and to alert the person to what will and what will not be accepted by the committee (Smith 2001).

3. Factor 3: Financing

There are many sources of financing including Aboriginal Capital Corporations, Community Futures, Credit Unions and Banks, Aboriginal lenders like All Nations Trust, and Aboriginal Business Canada. There are other government programs; some come and go quickly. Some have money; others don't. Entrepreneurs waste time chasing programs that have no money or no longer exist. They are baffled by the tangle of programs and the difficulty in accessing them. Information about funding should be at the fingertips of the capable business counsellor.

Under the Financing factor, I have limited the examples to what bands or tribal councils can do about financing. There are some bands that have equity funds they use to take part ownership in a member's business, making them eligible for funding through the banks. There are also examples of lending circles or peer lending programs that involve groups of people taking joint responsibility for loaning money to one another. I describe how some bands have assisted members to develop equity and eventually achieve ownership.

a. Loan funds

The Lakota Fund First Nations Financial Project (Aoki 1997), is a result of the Oglala Sioux tribe in the U.S. having seen numerous federal economic development programs come and go, leaving little or no positive impact on the reservation. It is doubtful, they claim, that even large increases in federal loan programs could successfully promote economic growth. Why? Government business development and lending programs fail to provide a way of strengthening local managerial and technical capacities. If a viable small business sector is to be created and sustained, access to capital and technical assistance is essential.

The Lakota Fund is capitalized by contributions from a variety of private sector sources; no government monies will be used to capitalize the fund. Grants, gifts, and loans are sought from a variety of institutions including: banks, insurance companies, corporations, utilities, foundations, and individuals.

The fund provides financing at below-market interest rates as many lenders do not expect the fund to return a profit on their investment. The fund helps business people prepare realistic and viable business plans and implement the plan once financing is obtained.

The plan has the following guiding principles (Aoki 1997):

- Technical assistance and training must be linked to financing by an enforceable contract between The Lakota Fund and the business.

- A full-time staff person is responsible for overseeing the technical assistance function.

- Services such as book-keeping and accounting on a fee-for-service basis will be available.

The Lakota Fund was projected to have an annual operating budget of roughly $270,000 (Aoki 1997) and support five staff members who oversee the circle lending and small business programs. The Oglala Sioux say it is the lending vehicle that is essential if a healthy economy is to become a reality on the Pine Ridge Reservation.

The Lakota Fund is accompanied by the tribe's understanding of how the informal sector works and how that sector has become an significant element in approaching economic development. The "informal sector" is a network of self-owned micro economic enterprises.

The "informal sector" has never been taken seriously. It is a sector operating within the overall economic scheme and can best be described as a network of self-owned micro economic enterprises or small-scale informal businesses. It is a dynamic system that operates whether the unemployment rate is high or low. It is a network of self-employed individuals who produce goods and services for the benefit of all the community.

These micro enterprises are all interrelated. The system contains horizontally and vertically integrated linkages that form the backbone of reservation economy. Each link in the system affects every other link and in a larger sense, the entire reservation. For example, a deer hunter may sell or trade the tanned hide to a person who produces it as a handcrafted item. The crafter may then sell or consign the finished product to a

craft shop that caters to the tourist. This goal of funding small business is to grow the local economy through "linkages" within the system.

b.   Stock purchase by band

Entrepreneurs often come up short when attempting to qualify for a business loan. By creating a tribal or band stock purchase plan the community can help the individual overcome the First Nation's great obstacle of little or no equity.

Bishop Reservation Equity Injection Program (Sheldon 1988) assists entrepreneurs to come up with the necessary capital through the following formula: commercial bank loans are 60 – 80% of capital, the entrepreneur contributes as little as 5 – 10% of equity, the tribe purchases stock for remaining equity, but is not liable for debt. The stock is bought back by the owner in five to seven years. In the meantime, the Development Corporation provides ongoing counselling and support. The profits are reinvested in future entrepreneurship programs.

c.   Circle or peer lending

If there is a group of people with little experience who have ideas for businesses that require modest capital to get started, then a lending circle may be appropriate. Lending circles lend money, out of a pool of $5000 to $10,000, to one member at a time. When that is repaid they loan to the next member. They create group support for the entrepreneur, foster responsibility of the entrepreneur to the group, and teach financial and management skills to those involved. By the time a member's loan comes through that person has gained valuable experience watching the members before them.

Community Futures Development Corporation of the Central Interior First Nations (CFDC-CIFN) (Collins 2001) has spawned thirty-two lending circles. Each circle must

have five or more people and preferably include an elder. The circle must raise $1,000 on its own, determine who they expect to loan to, determine the purpose, and decide the interest rate before they can receive a $4,000 loan from Central Interior. Each circle comes up with its own development policies and guidelines. In the first twelve-month period, there is no interest paid on the $4,000. In the second twelve-month period, they pay 25% of the prime rate (Bank of Canada lending rate), and in each of the twelve-month periods following, an additional 25% of prime rate is added on.

The character of each lending circle is different, says Gerri Collins of CFDC - CIFN. Some are family-based and loan only within their family. Others stipulate their members be fully employed, over twenty-five years of age, while others only lend to those under twenty-five years. One circle has lent over $300,000 and has reserves of $58,000. It has become the chief lender in its small community (Collins 2001).

d.   Funding partnerships

Securing long-term partnerships with funding bodies who understand tribal vision and plans can make the business loan process much more efficient. The following development corporation has included lenders within its structure.

Nuu Chah Nulth Economic Development Corporation (NEDC), on Vancouver Island, B.C., incorporates several formal funding partners within its organization. Included are The Community Futures Development Corporation funded through Western Diversification, Aboriginal Business Canada sponsored by Industry Canada, the federal Department of Fisheries and Oceans, Province of British Columbia's First Citizen's Fund, and a National Aboriginal Capital Corporation.

Along with its own source of business funds, the NEDC is able to steer entrepreneurs towards the best fund or combination of funds to serve their unique

business needs. By doing so, they can provide the necessary capital and minimize the amount that needs to be repaid (McBride et al 2001).

e.   Building equity

The lack of equity is a challenge that some have overcome by developing equity-generating schemes.

Ray Gerow, while employed with the Burns Lake Native Development Corporation, B.C., and currently with the Aboriginal Business Development Centre, developed a financing model for an Aboriginal-owned trucking company that gives company drivers an opportunity to build up personal equity so that they can ultimately buy out the truck they are driving and become an owner-operator. The company provides business training to ensure that the individual is familiar with all aspects of managing his/her own business. This company continues to act as an administrative overseer of the owner-operator and uses their band's political and industry connections to find on-going work for the truckers (Gerow 2001).

Kitsaki Development Corporation is a company owned by the Lac La Ronge Indian band; it grosses $50 million a year and employs 450 people, most of whom are Aboriginal (Decter 1989). Kitsaki offers their truck drivers an opportunity to buy their own rigs through a wage holdback system, piggybacked with a business grant or loan. Business service officers who work out of the various holding companies of Kitsaki assist band members with business plans. Kitsaki companies direct some or all of their business to tribe members who already have a business.

4. Factor 4: Community endorsement

In the final section I have included ways of building support for businesses in the community. A good place to start is by creating the idea among community members that it takes everyone to "plug" all the holes where the money leaks out of the community. There are examples of how First Nations have supported their entrepreneurs and I detail some of the ways successful entrepreneurs help their communities. Finally, I look at how different communities celebrate their entrepreneurs.

It is vital to business success to create loyalty. But community loyalty doesn't come easily. People want to know what is in it for them. Will jobs be available? Will the business support the culture and the community when they are successful? Will the product or service they provide be of a high quality and attract both Native and non-Native patronage? Will the service be courteous and friendly?

a. First Nation supports business, business supports First Nation

The 'Namgis First Nation are pursing eco-tourism as a main part of their economic development strategy. They have supported member businesses to help grow the community's cultural and environmental tourism sector. Waas Eco-Cultural Adventures, a culturally, ecologically-based kayak and canoe tour company operates in the First Nation's traditional territory. It is currently anticipating the band's permission to build a "big house" style accommodation at an old village site and use the big house for tour events. The decision is awaiting specific information on the site location.

The band has provided a strong letter of recommendation to the funders, underlining their wholehearted support for the business. In conjunction with other agencies the band has also sponsored outdoor leadership training and training in the identification and recording of culturally modified trees (CMTs) for the business owner.

The CMT training, and further archaeological training planned for the future, will enable the tour operator to inventory, document and interpret culturally significant markings found on tours and research trips, a contribution to the quality of the tourism product offered and to the 'Namgis' ongoing cultural research.

The nation has provided significant support but it is a two way street. In return, Waas Eco-Cultural Adventures hires locally and pays more than the going rate for outdoor guides in recognition of the value of their cultural knowledge. The tour company provides clients with an alternative to companies owned and operated from outside the community who leave their impact but provide few local benefits. They also provide equipment free to Native and non-Native youth camps that are held in the off-season.

The arrangement with the community also includes paying honoraria for using community facilities like the big house and fish hatchery. Owner Jackson Warren has sought direction and support throughout the business development process from hereditary chiefs, band and council.

During the start-up there were many questions that the elders needed to have answered. They wanted to know what steps would be taken to protect the environment and whether the culture would be presented in an authentic way. Once they were satisfied that the tour operator was committed to the community and to the culture, the whole community has been strongly supportive (Warren 2001).

b.   Entrepreneurs seek community support

Warm Springs General Manager of Business and Economic Development Michael Clements says , "Our dream is to have a business community on the reservation where a variety of tribal member businesses provide goods and services to the reservation communities and visitors. We want to stop the outflow of money. The

businesses must employ a majority of the local tribal workforce and have an appearance that reflects our peoples' character" (telephone conversation with Michael Clement, May 2001).

Entrepreneurs have been told that business success in the community relies on family support. They go door to door and ask for the member's support. They are commonly asked, "What are you going to do for me or the community?" They have to be ready with their community support plan.

This dream is yet to be fulfilled. Despite building a small business plaza where rents are subsidized by the tribe, only a restaurant has been able to make a go of it. Drive-by highway traffic has not stopped, nor have the reservation locals patronized the businesses. Efforts have been made with "Buy Native" campaigns but it hasn't been enough to pull locals away from the more competitively priced products and fancier outlets (telephone conversation with Michael Clement, May 2001).

c.   Business follows traditional groupings

Another aspect of gaining support in the community is to structure business in a culturally appropriate way. If the traditional approach to economic activity was conducted in extended family units (decentralized) then success may require that business be organized in this manner. This was the experience of the Oglala Sioux where there was a vital role to be played by entrepreneurs.

The Oglala Sioux found that the centralized tribal council business initiatives failed at a very high rate. When they revisited their traditional political structure, which differed from the tribal council structure dictated to them by the Bureau of Indian Affairs, they decided to go back to a family-based business structure. They sold off the tribally-

owned businesses to smaller groups. This has turned business failure into business success (Aoki 1997).

Mingan, an Aboriginal community in Quebec, features family-based businesses which have the main purpose of cultural survival (Bherer et al 1990). Businesses are owned by extended families, and when another family member joins and brings their expertise, the business expands and adds another item for sale or offers a new or different service. The family environment motivates, inspires, and provides solidarity when faced with adversity. It also assists in the start-up of new businesses. Profit-sharing is a common feature.

An identification with the community is considered essential to the creation of community enterprises. There must be a desire to participate in the community's development and to preserve its Native character, while modernizing it. The collective enterprise becomes a vehicle for fighting against assimilation into white culture.

In other cases businesses development lacks community support because developers have not listened to the cultural leaders. In the following example, the tribe has created an elders' council to advise on economic development problems.

d.   Recognizing the culture

Meadow Lake Tribal Council has initiated an elders' council, made up of twenty-four elders. Each of the nine First Nations chiefs and councils appoint two elders, one Cree and one Dene, to an advisory council that meets four times each year. In addition, six spiritual elders sit on the council. William Ratfoot, the elder liaison person, says, "The council deals with any problems that come up, including economic development issues. They make recommendations to the tribal council. So far their recommendations have been accepted (Ratfoot 2001)."

The Osoyoos Indian Band (McBride et al 2001) is located in the Okanagan Valley in southern B.C. The band chose the route of developing its own businesses instead of relying on non-band owned businesses to employ and develop its people.

The Osoyoos Indian Band developed a comprehensive plan and implemented the specific pieces as they could. They chose to go with industries that have proven successful in their region: tourism, agriculture, retirement housing, and construction. The band is involved in a campground, a golf course, a convenience store, silviculture, and all aspects of construction from sand and gravel trucking, ready-mix and milling, to retirement housing construction.

Recently, they have gone from leasing land for a vineyard, to growing their own grapes. They have formed a partnership with a large wine producer and built their own winery. There is also a plan for a $25 million resort, complete with golf course, hotel, marina, and desert heritage and interpretive centre. These businesses, which are now amalgamated under the umbrella of the Osoyoos Indian Band Development Corporation, have an annual budget that exceeds $10 million. Profits from the businesses go to support social and educational programs.

Chief Clarence Louie, who has received much recognition for his leadership, states that if you are doing economic development for money, you make a big mistake. He says everything we do is to support the preservation of our culture. As a part of their tourism development, they have built a Dessert Interpretative Centre that has a strong Okanagan cultural component. They now offer language classes to all their members. All the band-owned businesses are identified with "Inkameep," meaning people of the valley. Although the band's business successes are extraordinary, preserving the culture is the underlying purpose of their economic development.

The band encourages their own entrepreneurs by offering deferments of rent, assistance with business plans, engineer's studies, applications to funding agencies, and outlets to market their arts and crafts. In return, the businesses offer preferential employment opportunities to band members, and for those in the artistic businesses, they ensure that the culture is well represented (McBride 2001).

e. Celebrating the entrepreneur

One of the ways to generate support in the community is to point out the benefits that entrepreneurs provide. Their creativity, insight, hard work and drive make businesses happen. These are qualities worth celebrating. Most of all, such a process of recognition provides a reward for the entrepreneur and encouragement for others. Here are some programs that, suitably, put more emphasis on recognition than on monetary reward.

Student Venture Incentive Program, of the Burns Lake Native Development Corporation, provides ten awards of up to $200 each, to five Aboriginal and five non-Aboriginal students for the best business plans. This program, which has been running for ten years, encourages grades seven to twelve students to implement a business idea and report back at the end of the summer. The most successful business is then awarded an additional $100. The program has encouraged the high school students to get some real business experience (Gerow 2001).

All Nations Trust, of Kamloops, B.C., has initiated a series of awards to recognize outstanding achievement in business and in the community. Award categories include Aboriginal Youth and Aboriginal Leadership; there is also an elders award, one to the best community-based business, and to the most successful entrepreneur. A press release is issued to publicize the award. The award of a plaque or a picture serves as

recognition of the individual's contribution to the community. The awards also serve as motivators for young Aboriginal people (Gerow 2001).

The Aboriginal Business Development Centre in Prince George, B.C., and the Prince George - Nechako Aboriginal Employment and Training Association offer a three-step award for the best business plans for Aboriginal youth (15 - 29). Keith Henry, Program Coordinator, says when the market research on the business plan is complete, participants receive $150. When the plan is finished $250 is awarded, and when, and if, the business opens, $1,500 is given for a total of $1,900. Students can use the money for their business or they can use $1,500 for tuition for a post-secondary program. Last year eight students participated and one started a business (Henry 2001).

3. RESEARCH DESIGN AND METHODS

In this chapter I describe why the research was undertaken, the research methods considered, conducting research in Aboriginal communities, the origins of the project, the approach taken to the communities and the instrument used.

The 2001 SFU/WD Study "Assessing the Business Information needs of Aboriginal Entrepreneurs in B.C.," concluded there were many barriers standing in the way of Aboriginal people starting-up businesses. The report also identified regions of B.C. that were underserved by business supports. Three First Nations, one in each of the three underserved regions, wanted to find a role for entrepreneurs in their community's economic development. They were interested in creating a more supportive climate for their Aboriginal entrepreneurs in their communities. The three First Nations were:

- The Tahltan, centered in the communities of Dease Lake, Telegraph Creek and Iskut, in North Western B.C.
- The Ktunaxa Kinbasket, centered on Cranbrook, in South Eastern B.C.
- The Fort Nelson First Nation, around Fort Nelson, North Eastern B.C.

A. The research context

The profile of Aboriginal entrepreneurs in Canada and B.C. is significant. The Goss Gilroy's study (1996) reported the following:

- The numbers of Aboriginal entrepreneurs is growing two and a half times faster than Canadian entrepreneurs at-large.
- Nearly one quarter of all of Canada's Aboriginal entrepreneurs operate their businesses within B.C.
- The numbers of young entrepreneurs is also growing: in the rapidly expanding Aboriginal population segment under 25 years of age,

twice as many Aboriginals as Canadians in general are going into their own businesses.

- Of the younger entrepreneur age groups, most are motivated more by financial security than "helping the community", as was the case with previous entrepreneurs.

The Royal Commission on Aboriginal Peoples (1996) has highlighted the value to the community of creating a private sector to complement band or tribally-owned businesses, citing that encouraging a private sector is important to increase the standard of living and to preserve the culture. This strategy also runs through many of the publications of the Harvard Project on North American Indian Economic Development, but is specifically described in the paper "An Economic Development Policy for the Oglala Nation" (Cornell and Kalt 1997). Aboriginal entrepreneurs could play an important role in developing First Nations economies but there is evidence of a need for greater supports if they are to be attracted to and successful with business start up in their own communities.

The SFU/WD Gap Study (Vodden et al 2001) documented information and service barriers for Aboriginal entrepreneurs, mainly off-reserve. Focus groups of Aboriginal entrepreneurs conducted on Vancouver Island, in the Greater Vancouver area, Kamloops, Prince George, and Terrace in 2000, commented that a number of obstacles of business start-up on-reserve were even greater than off-reserve. The barriers most often cited were: lack of encouragement, little or no guidance in the start-up process, few role models and mentors, excessive red tape, a lack of an overall economic development plan and a specific role for entrepreneurs, and the lack of community support for their businesses. The need for further study of obstacles on

reserve was identified. Creating a climate of support on reserve for Aboriginal entrepreneurs is essential for the start-up and growth of small business.

B. **Research focus**

Given the growth rates of Aboriginal entrepreneurs, the barriers reported in the WD/SFU Gap Study, and the importance of creating a supportive climate on reserve for entrepreneurs, this study focuses on what might be done to create such a climate. The off-reserve barriers were identified through Vodden et al 2001, and I wanted to further investigate the comments that they were barriers on-reserve as well. Specifically, I investigated the "red tape" of business start up on reserve, the difficulty obtaining financing without using property for equity, and the difficulty in winning the support of the community for the new business.

For the red tape issue, I looked at the barriers Aboriginal entrepreneurs report facing, and explored how those barriers could be overcome. For the difficulty obtaining financing I investigated what the entrepreneur's experience had been and how bands or tribal councils attempted to address those barriers. In order to determine what could be done to win the community's support, through the local interviewers, I investigated what community members understood about building a local economy and becoming more economically self-reliant, and asked them under what circumstances would they lend their encouragement and support to new businesses. Through the careful design of a process for approaching the community and asking the right questions to community members, I was confident I could develop an assessment tool that would be used by other First Nations to assess their community and take action to create a supportive climate for Aboriginal entrepreneurs.

C. Research design: A discussion of research methods

In this section I look at the methods that were available to me to employ on this project, evaluate the strengths and weaknesses of each and identify why case study approaches were employed and the grounded theory method was adopted as the most appropriate for this study. I also reference Participation Action Research as a philosophical frame of reference from which I aim to operate. In the last part, I review the concerns outlined for doing research in Aboriginal communities, and I evaluate the approach taken in this study to the issues raised by author Linda Tuhiwai Smith (1999).

1. Potential research methods

I wanted to find out what factors contributed to creating a climate of support for Aboriginal entrepreneurs in the communities I was working with. I chose a qualitative research methodology since I wanted to work in the natural setting, use descriptive data, concern myself with the process of my work, and conduct an inductive analysis of the data. These characteristics were consistent with a qualitative research method.

The grounded theory method is grouped among other descriptive research methods that include: field observation, systematic observation, survey research, case study, and archival research (Cozby 1993). In this section I examine each of these methods and point out what aspects would work for our project, and ultimately, why a grounded theory method was chosen.

In field observation, or "field work," the researcher makes observations in the natural setting over an extended period of time. This approach could have been used but would have been excessively time consuming (and therefore costly), and would not have necessarily revealed the psychological barriers the entrepreneur may be experiencing.

The presence of an observer would likely have affected the behaviours of the band employee serving the entrepreneur. This method does not assist the community in making changes, but it is suitable for investigating complex social settings. Systematic observation would be more appropriate because it focuses on a few specific behaviours, of particular interest in this study, but it otherwise has the same shortcomings associated with field observation.

Survey research could have been effective in gathering the opinions of more community members, but would not accommodate the need to probe cultural issues. Furthermore, I was unable to take a survey approach given the "over-surveyed community" factor. The community simply would not have tolerated a survey approach. Also, a strict survey approach would not have allowed my community-based teams to have appropriately omitted or altered questions to meet specific circumstances.

Using a sampling technique, by selecting a proper sample from the "population of interest," it is possible to determine characteristics of the population as a whole. Quota sampling, or choosing a sample that reflects the numerical composition of various subgroups, would have suited aspects of our study. In selecting people to interview, we did make choices consistent with quota sampling. Our focus was on gathering representative information to understand the relationships between groups within the community, rather than accurately describing a population. The sampling approach could not be used unless it was so broad it included all subgroups within the community.

Survey research may use questionnaires or interviews to gather data. With questionnaires, the questions are presented in a written format and the respondents record their answers in writing. The questionnaire approach would have presented several difficulties. The questions we were asking were not straight-forward: some

community members would have had difficulty understanding the question without an interviewer re-phrasing. In the questionnaire method there is no rapport developed. Good rapport was necessary in order to develop a level of trust that would elicit the complex information concerning community support of entrepreneurs, barriers encountered at the band or tribal council offices, and issue of private business fitting into cultural norms. In addition, when constructing a questionnaire it is important to know what information is necessary to gather. I was not sure what I needed to know and using a grounded theory approach allowed me that flexibility. Interviews allow a rapport to be established, the questions to be explained if not understood, and an interesting conversation to take place. This conversation can motivate the interviewee to impart valuable information.

Archival research was not a methodological option. The barriers faced by entrepreneurs were to a large extent not documented. In particular, the incidents in which the entrepreneur chose not to go ahead with a business before contacting the band office, or being discouraged by the lack of support, would usually not be documented.

Studying variables across time involves surveying at two or more points in time and measuring the changes. This method would be a useful approach to track increased business starts, community support, and band assistance; all appropriate indicators of a supportive climate. However, this method would require a larger sample than the one I took, a longer study time which I did not have. It would focus on measuring the change rather than understanding the relationships. This method would not, in itself, assist with the creation of a supportive climate for entrepreneurs.

2.   The case study approach

The case study approach provides the flexibility needed to gain a good understanding of the communities. As my understanding of the community members' opinions would grow through the key respondent interviews, I would be able to reframe my questions and better focus on the issues. The case study method would also allow me to be sensitive to the complexities of First Nations communities. By conducting in-depth interviews I would be less obtrusive, which was important in a community that had been over-surveyed. I would also be able to more evenly represent various subgroups of the community which would ease some of the existing community tensions. The interviews would be a more respectful approach than questionnaires.

The case study method could be adapted to accommodate the unique circumstances of each First Nation. The case study method allows the flexibility to utilize a variety of background documents as well as use interviews with key informants. I would be able to de-select some "topical" questions from my initial list, add others, and extensively use "follow up questions" to prompt the interviewee to explore their thoughts on the area under investigation.

The case study method would be an unobtrusive research style. It is important to not disturb the dynamics of how various groups within the community interact. If there were existing conflicts I would be able to avoid them by interviewing key respondents, making sure we spoke to representatives from each "family" group, avoiding being identified with the leadership. In addition, Aboriginal communities feel studied to death. There are lots of studies and little action. They warned against "another survey." An interview format with key informants was considered more acceptable and likely to be more effective.

With a case study approach I could begin with "topical" questions that were generated for this "collective case study," to facilitate cross-site analysis. These questions would be subordinate to the issue questions. This would be a way of making my approach to the communities consistent. I expected I would be able to see, despite the differences in the communities, if there were similar barriers cited by entrepreneurs and community members. In addition, as I asked questions I could began "categorical aggregation" (Stake 1995), to re-focus my questions and to identify the issues.

The approach of asking our "topical" questions to key community members would be to not only collect data but to create an environment in which follow up action would be more likely to succeed. The case study approach would be an "instrumental case study" (Stake 1995), because the intent was to help generate information on the supportive conditions needed for business start-up. I wanted to ask the questions that I thought would be important for the community to consider in order to build mutual support between the entrepreneur and the community. I wanted my data gathering process to raise awareness of what it takes to build an economy, and understand the role of the entrepreneur in achieving it.

The case study approach parallels First Nations stories, which can be viewed as case studies themselves. These stories are told and retold for the lessons they hold. The stories are the familiar form through which generations of people learn the important cultural lessons. The case study methodology, in summary, not only accommodated differences among First Nations, but was unobtrusive as a methodology, and could generate the supportive conditions and raise awareness in the community as the study proceeded. It was an approach that aligned with an Aboriginal form of gathering and holding knowledge.

3. Benefiting from a grounded theory perspective

a. Origins of grounded theory

Strauss defines grounded theory as a qualitative research method that uses a systematic set of procedures to develop an inductively derived grounded theory about a phenomenon. The purpose of grounded theory method is to build theory that is faithful to and illuminates the area under study.

Goulding (2002) reports that grounded theory was first articulated as a research design by Glaser and Strauss (1978) in the 1970's. They set out to develop a more defined and systematic procedure for collecting and analyzing qualitative data. Goulding identifies it is a product of the discipline of sociology, with its main proponents educated in the Chicago School and at Princeton. Researchers from the Chicago School were encouraged to get out in the field and observe social process in action. In the Princeton approach, researchers were meant to emulate the natural sciences and search for rigorous methodologies (Goulding 2002).

Goulding says Glaser and Strauss shared a belief in the following (Glaser 1992):

- The need to get out in the field if one wants to understand what is going on
- The importance of theory grounded in reality,
- The nature of experience in the field as continually evolving, for both the subjects and researcher The active role of persons in shaping the worlds they live in through the process of symbolic interaction,
- An emphasis on change and process and the variability and complexity of life, and
- The interrelationship between meaning in the perception of subjects and their action.

Grounded theory approach fit the character of the research I undertook. It emphasizes getting into the field and observing social process in action, it places

importance on theory that was grounded in reality, and it recognizes and honours the complexity of life in First Nations communities.

b.   Some key characteristics of grounded theory

I quote McGregor (2000) who makes the following observations regarding the key characteristics of grounded theory:

- Grounded theory differs from other methods of analysis in that ... grounded theory ... stresses discovery and theory development rather than logical deductive reasoning which relies on prior theoretical frameworks...Grounded theory is allowed to emerge from the data and is defined by the actors in the study... Grounded theory does not depend on the literature to shape ideas. Instead, the literature is used to explain the theory.

- The presentation of grounded theory findings to practitioners have shown that interpretation is not needed. It is easily understood and easily applied to those who are most likely to be interested in applying the research findings.

Glaser (1992) adds the following grounded theory characteristics to McGregor's list:
- ... grounded theory is not bound by either discipline or data collection...

- ...grounded theory does not require a literature review be undertaken prior to embarking on research...

The more I could see the exploratory nature of the research I was about to undertake, the more appropriate the grounded theory approach appeared. The research idea had originated with the SFU/WD Gap Study (Vodden et al 2001) and the barriers experienced by Aboriginal entrepreneurs. Many of these barriers, such as accessing services, information and financing, were in part attributed to racial prejudice and discrimination. It was reasonable to assume the barriers encountered by Aboriginal entrepreneurs in their own communities were not attributed to racism. If, as Aboriginal entrepreneurs reported in the Gap Study, business start up on-reserve was harder than

off-reserve, there must be other factors at work. The appropriate research design would need to accommodate a possible investigation into the cultural factors that may be affecting entrepreneurism.

It was also essential that the results of the study would be easily understood by the communities involved, enhancing their understanding of how to create a supportive environment for entrepreneurs was the whole purpose of my research. It was apparent that I needed to adopt an approach that took into account the community members' ease-of- understanding of the project outcome, and the administrator's and economic development officer's ease of implementation. Mullen and Reynolds (1994) report that, "Presentations of grounded theorists to practitioners have shown that they do not require an interpreter to translate the research. The practitioner can hear it, relate it to his or her experience, and apply it." Easily understood results were imperative.

c.   Is grounded theory perspective compatible with an Aboriginal worldview?

An Aboriginal worldview needed to be examined to see if there was a fit with a grounded theory approach. McGregor (2000), utilizes the following key characteristics of Aboriginal knowledge in her introduction to the methodology she used to investigate Aboriginal participation in Ontario forest management planning. She explains how each of these characteristics are compatible with the grounded theory research environment. I quote.

- Inclusiveness(Deloria 1999): all information is somehow important or relevant. Nothing is excluded. All data must be considered. Grounded theory is primarily concerned with data; none are excluded from the analysis.

- Holism/wholeness: all aspects of an entity are considered to be important. "All things are interrelated. Everything in the universe is part of a single whole...." (Bopp et al. 1988) Grounded theory analysis concerns itself with understanding and explaining relationships and connections, a key component of wholeness.

- Focus on experiential learning: experience is valued as well as formal training and education. Grounded theory prides itself on its attention to the experiences of the subject, but just as important are the experiences of the researcher. Under this methodology, the researcher matters, as is the case in Aboriginal systems.

- Applicability and Relevance: Everything is connected and related in some way to everything else. Nothing is irrelevant; we just have to wait for the pattern or meaning to reveal itself. Because the use of grounded theory requires that conclusions be drawn from the available data without discarding data which do not "fit" some previous theory, grounded theory ensures that findings will have relevance to the "real life" situation being studied.

- The need for patience: Conclusions are not drawn by rushing into them immediately, but by waiting for them to reveal themselves. Revelation was a key method of becoming informed (Brant-Castellano)

- Valuing change: Change is expressed in a number of ways, including transformation, growth, development, and paradigm shifts. Bopp et al write, "All of Creation is in a state of constant change. Nothing stays the same except the cycle upon cycle of change." As circumstances change, the findings of grounded theory can be modified to incorporate the new information.

- Inquiry without theory or prejudgment: The defining characteristic of grounded theory is that it is not reliant on previous theories for analyzing data. It is consistent with the Aboriginal pursuit of knowledge in which judgment is withheld until patterns begin to emerge.

d.   A grounded theory perspective

Grounded theory offered a valuable perspective on the research methodology because it was an approach that was oriented to yielding useful results to the communities studied. Lincoln and Guba (1985) say grounded theory is one that will "...fit the situation being researched, and work when put into use. By fit we mean that the categories must be readily (not forcibly) applicable to and indicated by the data under study; by "work" we mean that they must be meaningfully relevant to and be able to explain the behaviour under study."

Strauss and Corbin claim grounded theory is an appropriate approach to use if there is little in the way of prior theoretical understanding in this area of research. They quote Stern in this regard.

> ...the strongest case for the use of grounded theory is in investigations of relatively uncharted waters, or to gain a fresh perspective in a familiar situation. In the first instance, it can easily be understood that where no theory regarding a situation exists, it is impossible to test theory. It is especially helpful – even necessary – in attempting to study complex areas of behavioural problems where salient variables have not been identified. In the second instance, it becomes clear that the value of a fresh perspective in a familiar situation is in its applicability to practical problems.

Stern's quote reinforces the appropriateness of the grounded theory perspective on this research.

Another reason for including the grounded theory perspective where there is a limited amount of research completed is to be guided by an approach that could easily accommodate further research. Strauss and Corbin (1990) also state, "Grounded theory is capable of and requires continuous expansion and refinement; when the possibility for such expansion ceases the possibility for further study also ceases."

4.   Participatory action research (PAR)

PAR combines community will for change with an educational process that immediately engages local people in research. Budd Hall, along with others who have brought sustainable community development to the Canadian North, have gained considerable expertise in dealing with small Indigenous communities. Their contribution was the empowerment of adults in small communities to undertake their own research. They maintain that the problem originates in the community itself and the problem is

defined, analyzed, and solved by the community. I tried to follow the basic elements of

PAR as outlined by Hall, (in McGreal 1992).

- The ultimate goal of research is the radical transformation of social reality and the improvement of the lives of the people involved. The beneficiaries of the research are members of the community itself.

- participatory research involves the full and active participation of the community in the entire research process.

- participatory research involves a whole range of powerless groups of people: the exploited, the poor, the oppressed, the marginal, etc.

- The process of PAR can create a greater awareness in the people of their own resources and mobilize them for self-reliant development.

- It is a more scientific method of research in that the participation of the community in the research process facilitates a more accurate and authentic analysis of social reality.

- The researcher is a committed participant and learner in the process of research, which leads to militancy on his/her part, rather than detachment.

A number of elements of my project were consistent with a PAR approach.

Specifically, I did approach this project with the idea that the problem originates in the

community, and the goal of the research is the radical transformation of the social reality.

However, we did not achieve the PAR objective of "full and active participation" of the

community through the methodology. That was not possible primarily due to concerns

about "over surveying." PAR's objective of creating a greater awareness of the problem

was limited to the opinion leaders and formal leaders who we engaged. We were,

however, committed participants in the efforts to create a supportive climate for

Aboriginal entrepreneurs, which is a key component of the PAR approach.

5.   Research in Aboriginal communities

Research is inextricably linked to European imperialism and colonialism, says

Linda Tuhiwai Smith in *Decolonizing Methodologies(1999)*. This argument is aligned with

PAR and its critique of traditional research approaches. Without an analysis of imperialism, says Smith, it is difficult to discuss research methodology and indigenous peoples together. Indigenous academics and researchers have begun to address social issues within the wider framework of self-determination, decolonization and social justice. Within this imperialist context, Smith argues several points that challenge non-Indigenous researchers. I recount these arguments and then attempt to evaluate our project approach in light of her argument.

Research is still a "a site of struggle," and has a significance to Indigenous peoples that is a part of the history. Smith says Indigenous communities are still "under the gaze of Western imperialism and Western science (Smith 1999)." This is the context of being examined through the lens of Western culture and desperately wanting to "escape the penetration and surveillance of the gaze". At the same time they are trying to escape this objectifying "gaze" they are trying to re-establish themselves as indigenous human beings. Research has been and for the most part continues to be a process of dehumanization.

"White research", "academic research", "outsider research", or "Western research", says Smith, "...is research which brings to bear on any study of indigenous peoples, a cultural orientation, a set of values, a different conceptualization of such things as time, space and subjectivity, different and competing theories of knowledge, highly specialized forms of language, and structures of power (Smith 1999)." Explaining further the research lens of Western culture, Hall (1992) suggests, in his article, "The West and the Rest: Discourse and Power", that the West can function in ways which: allow us to categorize and classify societies into categories, condense complex images of other societies through a system of representation, provide a standard model of

comparison, and provide criteria of evaluation against which other societies can be ranked (Hall 1992).

What makes ideas "real", says Smith, "is the system of knowledge, the formations of culture, and the relations of power in which these concepts are located (Smith 1999)." For example, the Western disciplines of philosophy, psychology, and religion, identify the individual as the central concept upon which other social organizations and social relations form. Some indigenous languages make little or no distinction between time and space: the Maori word for time and space is the same. Smith continues, "Other indigenous languages have no related word for either space or time, having instead a series of very precise terms for parts of these ideas, or for relationships between the idea and something else in the environment (Smith 1999)."

Smith says that the research perception of those being studied "...conveys a sense of innate superiority and an overabundance of desire to bring progress into the lives of indigenous peoples - spiritually, intellectually, socially and economically (Smith 1999)." From the point of view of indigenous people, this research "steals" the indigenous knowledge and uses it for personal gain. It is an action that assumes a certain ownership over cultures and control over what is considered legitimate research.

In addressing specific issues and questions for the researcher, Smith reframes the role of researcher from objective third party to one working alongside and for communities. She prefers to describe the people who do this work as project workers, community activists or consultants; anything but researchers. In her view they can still call the processes they use methodologies and the tools they use called methods. But she says Indigenous research is a "humble and humbling" activity. It requires understanding and analysis of the role of research in the indigenous world. This

approach parallels the PAR literature of the researcher being an active and committed participant.

Smith asks, who does the research? All communities are complex but Aboriginal communities, to non-Aboriginal people, have a greater complexity. Smith refers to "insider" dynamics, and how it takes considerable sensitivity, skill, maturity, experience and knowledge to work these factors through. She questions whether, with this level of complexity, an outsider can accurately conduct the research. To address this problem, non-indigenous researchers have adopted formats such as bi-cultural research, partnership research and multi-disciplinary research. Each of these have the advantage of adding to the team people who have a greater or total familiarity with the culture so there is a greater sensitivity to the community. These are more effective and ethical ways of carrying out research with indigenous peoples than the traditionally historical practice of retaining the autonomy or isolation of the third-party researcher.

There are "Many levels of entry (Smith 1999)" to an Aboriginal community. How one approaches the community, who introduces you, how you obtain permission, and how you go about developing a relationship, are all important. The approach minimally requires a personal humility and the understanding and appreciation of the colonial experience.

Smith tells us that Indigenous methodologies tend to assume cultural protocols, values and behaviours as an integral part of methodology. For example, reporting back the data and sharing the knowledge recognized the traditional cultural principle of reciprocity and feedback. The communication is on-going and being shared so it permits many community members access. "The challenge always is to demystify, to decolonize (Smith 1999)."

In societies that have been culturally dominated or subjected to devastating cultural disruption by disease, relocation, or residential schools, it is important to recover the stories that have not been lost. Smith says, "Part of the exercise is about recovering our own stories of the past. This is inextricably bound to a recovery of our language and epistemological foundations (Smith 1999)." Every project in Indigenous communities must regard the documentation of the past as a main objective.

For those of us involved in project work in Aboriginal communities and who are not Aboriginal, the questions that need to be addressed are complex and many. How can we work along side and how can we partner with community members? How do we enter the community, how do we honour Indigenous protocols, and how do we support Indigenous methodologies? How can we assist to recover the stories and preserve the culture? How do we avoid the dehumanizing "gaze" of research, check our Western bias, and acknowledge but not appropriate, Indigenous systems of knowledge?

The key questions raised about doing research in Aboriginal communities are discussed in detail in the section below.

D. Identifying a supportive environment for entrepreneurs

The following section describes how and why the research project got started, who was involved, and what steps were taken. In the second part of this section I offer an overview of the project, the work plan and the approach I took. In the final part of this section I discuss this case study and grounded theory perspective in light of the conceptual overview described in section 2.

1.   Project origins

The SFU/WD Gap Study (Vodden et al 2001) recommended that follow-up work needed to be done to determine how Aboriginal entrepreneurs could be better supported in their own communities. The idea to investigate this question was presented to the B.C. Native Economic Development Advisory Board (NEDAB) that is made up of representatives from First Nations throughout the Province, who are concerned about economic development issues, and are brought together regularly to guide Indian and Northern Affairs Canada. Three communities expressed interest. We formed a partnership between the Ktunaxa/Kinbasket Tribal Council (KKTC), the Fort Nelson First Nation (FNFN), The Tahltan Joint Council (Tahltan), and the CED Centre at Simon Fraser University. A funding proposal was submitted December 2000, to the Community Capacity Building Program of the Community Enterprise division of the B.C. Ministry of Community Development, Co-ops, and Volunteers, and funding was confirmed March 2001.

The management structure of our project was a Steering Committee made up of one representative from each of the partners, a project consultant who was and is manager of the Aboriginal Business Development Centre, and myself as project manager. The legal contract with the Provincial Ministry was with the KKTC. All the project funding and reporting flowed through the KKTC.

2.   Communities profiles

The Ktunaxa Kinbasket Tribal Council is made up of 5 bands, located in the Eastern Kootenays, with the Tribal Council located near Cranbrook. Four of the bands are Ktunaxa. The fifth has been accepted into the Ktunaxa territory although it is a part

of the Shushap culture. It plays a somewhat independent role but doesn't have a big impact on the Tribal Council decisions. The Ktunaxa are a very old culture who's language is unrelated to all those around them. According to KKTC Employment Coordinator Rosemary Nicholas, the closest language to the Ktunaxa is in Kamchatka, Siberia. The Ktunaxa seem to have a strong connection to the land and to one another.

Sophie Pierre, Chief of the St. Mary's band and Administrator of the Tribal Council, has been a leader for decades. In order to undertake a large resort and casino development she has welded the bands together through a series of "kitchen meetings" that have included almost every band member. Her leadership and the governance of the KKTC appear to be strong. The results indicate that.

The Tahltan Joint Council is made up of two originally unrelated bands, the Iskut who migrated north into the territory of the Tahltan, who are now centered in Telegraph Creek. A third off-reserve community has been established in Dease Lake. The Tahltan and the Iskut co-operate on larger projects but each one remains separate from the other.

Since this area is remote and opportunities limited, many of the members have relocated to urban centres. With the Corbin decision of the Supreme Court that permits off-reserve members to vote, these urban-based populations are large enough and organized enough to win the most recent election and take control of the band. This de-stabilizing governance situation has resulted in no action being taken to create a stronger climate for entrepreneurs in the Tahltan and Iskut communities.

The Fort Nelson First Nation was an amalgamation of three cultures that were brought together near Fort Nelson by Indian agents for ease of administration. This is a difficult basis on which to forge a "first nation." The leadership has been successful by

going back to basics – defining the basic unit in the Nation as the extended family. Recognizing, consulting with, and insisting on the participation of each extended family, the leadership has been successful in establishing education and social programs.

3.   Project overview

The plan we made was to train a community-based team of 3 to 4 people in each of the communities. These people would be chosen on the basis of some post secondary training, minimum 2-years work experience in the community in a role where they interacted with others, and represent various subgroups in the community so that they would have easy access to conduct interviews on the barriers to and role of entrepreneurs. The expectation was that these people would gain enough experience with the interviews that they would be able to respond to other communities' requests to assess the climate for their entrepreneurs.

The two days of training would include an overview of Aboriginal economic development, the role that was played by entrepreneurs in other First Nations communities, an overview of how money flows impact community wealth, how to conduct interviews, and how to record the information. The teams would, with the guidance of the project manager, identify representative sub-groups or families of the community to interview. These interviewees would be drawn from Elders, entrepreneurs, leaders/administrators and community members that lived in various reserve communities and belonged to various families. One senior member of the community-based team would be designated the trouble shooter/liaison person for the team. The project manager would return to review progress and de-brief team members.

The data from the interviews would be turned over to the project manager, analyzed, and presented to the community. Included in this presentation would be a review of what other First Nations communities had done to create a supportive climate for their entrepreneurs. This would present several ideas to the leaders and administrators. Following that presentation, the community-based team members, with the community leadership and administration, and led by the project manager, would proceed with action planning. The leaders and administrators would identify the priorities, the specifics would be added, and the project manager would write it up and return it to the community. This would be the end of the project except for the publishing of a "how to" booklet that would include a catalogue of ideas form other First Nations and a tool that could be self-used to assess the climate for Aboriginal entrepreneurs in your community. For Project Timeline, see Appendix A.

Conducting research in Aboriginal communities is sensitive because of the Aboriginals' resentment over the number of studies and the objectification of the people and culture. In addition to that sensitivity, the focus of our research touched upon political legitimacy (who makes decisions about the values and traditions that govern economic development), family divisions (it takes the whole community supporting one another to succeed), and the individualizing of communal property (creating a "private sector" inevitably individualizes wealth). We wanted to maintain a natural setting. At the same time, since some of the questions we asked were reflective in nature, we wanted to allow the answers to be descriptive.

4. Data interpretation

Since the data needed to be easily understood by the community I wanted to preserve the community members' expression of the barriers to business start up and reflect the way the community viewed the issues. I needed to know if the categories of actions that support entrepreneurs in the community, that I identified for the literature review, in the also wanted to By preserving the way community members viewed the issues it made it easier for leaders and administrators to act on those issues.

Many entrepreneurs stated they did not want the business information and support function to be housed at the band or tribal council office. This was consistent with the results of the SFU/WD Gap Study and reinforced the purpose of separating from band administration the category "support for business start up". Secondly, there were infrastructure issues that were within the band and tribal council control that were best concentrated in the category "infrastructure the community can provide". Third, the "access to finances," the biggest barrier reported in both the SFU/WD Gap Study and also identified as the major barrier in each of the study communities, was a useful category for each of the communities to focus upon. The last category, "community endorsement and support," was a concern that all community members needed to share.

In summary, the four categories I created were:

- Support for business start up – This included the provision of business information and services, such as business planning
- Infrastructure the community can provide – These were things the band or tribal council could do to support entrepreneurs
- Financing – These dealt only with what bands or tribal councils could do to create greater access to start-up capital
- Community endorsement and support – This section describes what can be done to elicit community support

5.   Assessment tool

An assessment tool was developed for First Nations communities to identify the supports and barriers facing a community's entrepreneurs and to find ways the band or tribal council, and the community can more actively support the development of individuals or family-owned businesses (see Appendix B). The tool consists of a series of questions for Elders, community members, leaders, administrators and entrepreneurs. The answers provide a picture of the support available in the community for people who want to start businesses.

6.   Action plans

After the data gathering and analysis was complete we presented the findings to leaders, administrators and others interested in economic development. The group then determined priorities and assessed their resources to see what was "do-able". Together we built an action plan that identified the priority, the person responsible for driving the action, the resources required, a timeline for completion and the critical success criteria (see Appendix C).

4. FINDINGS

Next I present the findings from the questionnaire and interviews that were completed in each of the three communities. These are followed by the action plans that each of the communities developed.

A. Survey results

The three First Nations communities who partnered with S.F.U. on this project, were surveyed to determine the barriers that might be in the way of Aboriginal business start-up. The survey assessment tool consists of two groups of questions. The first group explores the community's experience with and interest in small business. The second group of questions assess the infrastructure for and capacity to support small business. The entire assessment tool is included in Appendix B.

The aim of the community consultation process was to determine what entrepreneurs, members in general, leaders, elders and administrators regard as current supports and barriers, and determine what they think can be done to improve the climate for entrepreneurs. In the Ktunaxa/Kinbasket communities the following interviews took place: two Elders, three leaders and administrators, nine community members, and six entrepreneurs. In the Fort Nelson First Nation 28 interviews were conducted: three were Elders, nine were leaders and administrators, 14 were business owners and another two were prospective entrepreneurs. In the Tahltan communities 15 were surveyed. One was an Elder, eight were business people and six were leaders/administrators.

This consultation process was also to serve to introduce issues for community discussion, including:

- the benefits of building a stronger economy,
- the importance of community support for Aboriginal business,
- the need to separate business services from band council responsibilities, and
- the ways business can support the community's culture.

Aboriginal entrepreneurs told surveyors that the obstacles they encountered when trying to start up a business on reserve were often impossible to overcome. I interviewed both successful and unsuccessful entrepreneurs. I heard the same stories in each of the communities visited. Not only the entrepreneurs, but the leaders, administrators and members at large shared the same perception. Results were obtained in each of the four areas required for support of Aboriginal entrepreneurs.

The Aboriginal entrepreneurs reported there was often a lack of business start-up information and support. They could not find information on business incorporation and organization, building a business plan, or financing their business. They said there was no one to guide them through the process, and if they were assisted with the start-up process, there was no continuing support or long-term "aftercare."

Entrepreneurs also said they felt left out of "the loop" and disconnected from business networks and people who would have inside information. They identified a lack of encouragement from the band office. They said how hard it was to know what the band administration would support and what business start-up processes they were expected to follow and approvals they were expected to get.

Financing was still identified as the major hurdle although there is reason to disagree. Not knowing what financial programs are available, and not having an appropriate business plan were more likely the source of the frustration, rather than the

availability of money itself. Despite various programs it is difficult to finance a business when the usual sources of equity are not available.

Aboriginal entrepreneurs also despaired at the unwillingness of community members to endorse or support Native businesses. If they did achieve business success it was not uncommon to be resented by other members. Also entrepreneurs were confused about the appropriateness of the business and its receptivity by cultural leaders. In a context where there is little community support expressed for business success, it isn't difficult to understand why entrepreneurs would not initiate a discussion of support of the culture and giving back to the community.

Small business is risky at the best of times, but trying to start up a business on reserve can be next to impossible. The Skeena Native Development Society has documented that starting a business on reserve is over three times as complex as off reserve. The reason for the slow business start-up on-reserve in Canada is because the business approvals need to involve the band as well as Indian and Northern Affairs Canada.

The results are summarized in Table 5.

B.   Summary of findings

Using the major factors identified (in Chapter 2) of my framework for supporting Aboriginal entrepreneurs, I review the findings of this study and compare and contrast them with the literature more broadly.

Table 5:   Is there a climate of support for Aboriginal business in the community?

	Tahltan	Ktunaxa / Kinbasket	Fort Nelson

Are there business start-up supports:
    one-on-one counselling?
    financial supports?
	
	- - -
	- - -
		
		+ +
		-
			
			- -
			- -

Infrastructure the community can provide:			
Is there an understanding of what it means to foster a local economy?	+	+	+ +
Does the band have a clear economic development direction and plan?	-	+	-
Financial supports:	- - -	-	- -
Community endorsement:			

Have networks been built that include:
    Elder's advice?
    seek partnerships?
    build on informal economy?
	
	- -
	+ +
	- -
		
		- -
		+ +
		-
			
			- -
			- -
			-

Legend: -   indicates deficiency and
            +   indicates positive capacity.

1.   Business start-up support

Easy access to business information and support was highlighted as a gap for many B.C. Aboriginal communities by the SFU/WD Study and this was confirmed by this project in the three study communities.

An additional issue not previously identified by the SFU/WD Study, I found that the band administration not only didn't have information themselves on business start up, they didn't know about the service agencies that did have it nor did they know about the various funding programs available.

This may be due to the transient nature of the band's economic development officer position (Environics 2002).

In the American literature review a lack of information on financing programs was not as apparent. This may be due to a different funding arrangement in Canada for

economic development officers. It most certainly is affected by the larger average tribal size in the U.S. which would support more permanent economic development officers who, in turn, would be more knowledgeable of financial program information.

2. Infrastructure the community can provide

Reported in the SFU/WD Study and confirmed in the study communities were:

- the on-reserve "red tape" barrier that entrepreneurs had described
- the entrepreneurs' distrust of band leadership and administration
- that entrepreneurs attempting business start-up in towns and cities were "out of the loop"

A number of additional issues were not previously identified by the SFU/WD Study. They were:

- that rather than too many forms to fill out and too many people to seek approvals from, more often there were no forms to fill out and it was unclear who, if anyone, would issue approval for a business on reserve. The absence of band polices on land use zoning, business taxes, leases, licenses, and required environmental impact studies, made the business start-up process unclear. Band support for a business' use of band land, facilities and resources was unpredictable.

- that the study communities had not made clear to their entrepreneurs what role they expected them to play in the community's development

- that entrepreneurs on-reserve were not only not "in-the-loop" there was no loop. There was no connection between the band and the town-based businesses.

- that in one study community there wasn't a recent tradition of starting up a business. There was no "culture of commerce." People were not looking for business opportunities, and for the few that were, the mentors and role models were not there to support them. In the traditional society model, young Aboriginal people were carefully trained to succeed in the traditional economy, whether it was hunting, fishing, or processing foods. There isn't a similar preparation of young people for commerce in the community that was without the "culture of commerce."

In the literature reviewed there appeared to be specific steps required for business start up on American Indian reservations. Since United States reservations are larger and there are many more businesses operating from U.S. reservations, the procedures for establishing a business are likely better established. The American literature did identify the importance of including Aboriginal entrepreneurs in the circle of business.

There is extensive reference in the literature to the need to rebuild entrepreneurial traditions. Some First Nations communities have started-up businesses that they are prepared to sell off to individual employees, once they are ready to be owners, while others have built large enterprises designed to "spin off" opportunities for new, privately owned businesses.

3. Financing

One of the biggest barriers reported in the SFU/WD Study and confirmed with on-reserve entrepreneurs, was the difficulty in financing for business start up.

In addition to already reported findings, I found that on-reserve entrepreneurs had even less access to funding information. They also had to show perspective financiers band approval for business before financing was secured.

The difficulty of accessing funding information can be attributed to the transient nature of the band's economic development officer position (Environics 2002). An additional encumbrance to securing funding of business is the difficulty funders have in repossessing goods on-reserve.

The literature reflects a common difficulty of lack of collateral and a corresponding obstacle to borrowing money.

4. Community endorsement

The Gap Study reported that entrepreneurs faced resentment from community members and experienced conflict between cultural traditions and the requirements of operating a business. These were confirmed in the study communities.

In addition, my community-based research showed that community members considered it important to listen to what the Elders said about business start-up. My data reported that if the Elders thought the business activity was wrong on some account, it was unlikely the community would support the business. In the study communities most entrepreneurs reported that there was a lack of clear guidance from the Elders on business start-up.

The role Elders traditionally played - providing moral guidance - has been greatly diminished in many communities. Where a renewed role has been prescribed, as in Elder Councils, Elders are more inclined to provide that guidance again

The literature does identify many of the efforts that have been taken to enlist community support for local business. In some cases entrepreneurs are expected to go door to door on the reserve to solicit support for their business. In return they are expected to indicate how they are going to return benefits to the community, either through local hiring or supporting cultural events. In some communities there is an expectation that the entrepreneurs are going to find a way to reassure their Elders that the culture comes before business.

C. Project findings and actions taken by the communities

1. Ktunaxa/Kinbasket Tribal Council (KKTC) findings

Following is a summary of the data that was collected in the Ktunaxa/Kinbasket communities. It includes:

- the many strengths that were found in the community's ability to create a supportive environment for entrepreneurs,
- areas that could be strengthened,
- the themes that might be the basis of an action plan, and
- the actual actions that were built into an action plan

In the Spring of 2001, three community members undertook key informant interviews with elders, administrators and leaders, entrepreneurs, and ordinary community members. Different questions were asked of the different groups. The K/KTC project workers selected a total of 25 members to interview. The intent of our sampling of the K/KTC communities was to verify the issues and obstacles other communities had identified, to raise the awareness of the issues among key members of the community, and to sample their opinions and priorities.

Secondly, there was additional data available form the Western Diversification/SFU Gap Study (2001). This study's findings reinforced previous study findings on barriers to Aboriginal entrepreneurs. There was no reason to expect that the barriers to entrepreneurs in the K/KTC communities, were different. The K/KTC interview data has been collated and summarized by me. Following are the findings that come from the data collected.

a.   **KKTC entrepreneurs and community members report obstacles to business development**

- Although there are some talented and successful business people in the community, there is not a strong recent tradition of entrepreneurship that naturally generates interest among community members and offers encouragement and guidance (mentoring) for business start-up

- More training and education are generally needed to equip members with business skills and develop expertise in their particular field of interest.

- Financing is difficult to secure, given the lack of collateral available to First Nations

- One-on-one assistance to support the business planning process and encourage individuals to proceed to the next step is important, but not available.

- Many of those surveyed saw their band administrations as not having a clear community economic development vision or plan for the future.

- Many were uncertain of how their business ideas might "fit in" with the future economic direction of the band or tribal council.

- while there appears to be a climate of support for private businesses among leaders and administrators working at the KKTC, most did not describe their local band leadership and administration as encouraging business development

- Community members surveyed were not aware of any Band guidelines and policies on: leasing on-reserve buildings or land, non-member and non-Native business partners, environmental impact etc.

b.   **KKTC entrepreneurs' and community members' perspectives on community support**

- Securing family and community support for entrepreneurs and their businesses is very important.

- There is a stated willingness to support community members to start new business ventures

- Most agreed, everyone in this community would be better off economically if members spent their money at businesses owned by other community members.

- It is important to find ways to support individual businesses to build a better economy

- Leaders and administrators interviewed were consistent in encouraging individuals to step forward to take advantage of the spin-off opportunities associated with the Tribal Council's golf, casino, and hotel development. Community members surveyed didn't mention these business opportunities

- Leaders and administrators may make a clear distinction between the business activities to be undertaken by the KKTC, and those opportunities to be left for member's private enterprise. This distinction was not apparent in discussions with community members.

c. **Entrepreneurs and community members on responsibilities to the community**

- it is important for community businesses to: hire community people, buy their supplies and services from other businesses in the community, and pay their taxes or rents to the band or tribal council

- community businesses should support efforts to promote the culture by supporting cultural events and allowing employees time off to attend events.

d. **Elders', community members', and leaders'/administrators' perspectives on culture**

- most said the culture is a real and important strength to entrepreneurs. Some said knowing who you are and where you come from will help you know where you are going.

e. **Apparent KKTC strengths**

i. Supportive community opinion

- there was a stated agreement among "opinion leaders" on the importance of building a community economy, supporting local entrepreneurs, and recognizing the central place of the culture in an economic development strategy.

- members polled recognize the importance to entrepreneurs of: a) the provision of business support services and b) the support of the Band office to encourage and support business.

ii. Infrastructure and programs

- impressive progress has already been made by the establishment of:
- key organizations such as Employment and Investment, KKTC Development Corporation, and St. Eugene Mission Resort, and
- the implementation of important programs such as the determinants of health, and the work skills data being collected
- strong and positive connections have already been forged with the adjacent towns that will assist in the success of Native-owned businesses on or off reserves.

These organizations and programs provide the necessary infrastructure to carry out the important employment training and the economic initiatives that will provide job experience and spin off economic opportunities for entrepreneurs. These, and other organizations like them, are fundamental building blocks in building a diverse economy.

iii. Social organizations

Significant economic development progress will only be made through a healthy population. The important programs that are being carried out by Population Health and Community Development, Child and Family Services, Ktunaxa Independent School Society and its partnership with NVIT, are instrumental to economic development success. Also important are the demographics/statistics that are being gathered on the work force. With these statistics that are being gathered and the programs that have been implemented, it appears the KKTC have accomplished some of the goals necessary to prepare their membership for Employment and business start up.

iv. Governance

The single most important factor to building a successful economy is effective and efficient governance. The KKTC Administration appears to be successfully coordinating and facilitating the other organizations. It is apparent from interviews there is a high regard for the leadership and the vision they consistently pursue.

v. Economic development opportunity sectors

The KKTC have pursued industry sectors that seem appropriate for the region and suit the community members. The initiatives taken in forestry and tourism, as well as the related training provided, have created a solid foundation on which to build related businesses.

f.   Areas that could be strengthened

The following section includes 4 major themes that are potential areas for action planning. Each theme follows up from the data collected and the strengths identified. In section five, each of these four themes includes examples of the kind of actions that other First Nations have taken and actions the KKTC could choose to take.

2.   Fort Nelson First Nation (FNFN) findings

In the Fall of 2001, three community members under the my direction undertook to survey elders, administrators and leaders, entrepreneurs, and ordinary community members. The intent of our sampling of FNFN members was to verify the issues and obstacles reported by other communities (SFU/WED Gap Study), to raise the awareness of the issues among key members of the community, and to sample their opinions and priorities. The survey data has been collated and summarized by me. Following are the findings that come from the data collected.

a. **Obstacles to business development reported by FNFN entrepreneurs and community members**

- Entrepreneurs were not aware of a FNFN economic vision or plan for the future, and also uncertain of how their business ideas might "fit in" with the future economic direction of the Band

- Most entrepreneurs were unaware of connections to organizations that might assist with mentoring, training or business start-up.

- Entrepreneurs indicated an obstacle to business start up was the lack of confidence in themselves, and the motivation to get started.

- Many identified as obstacles the lack of: financial resources, business information, assistance with business planning and the start-up process, training, and support at the Band office.

- Many did not know how to proceed with a business idea, or what approvals might be necessary from the Band office.

b. **Perspectives on community support**

- Band members indicated there was generally a lack of encouragement from the community to start up businesses.

- Band members indicated there were many ways the community could support business including encouragement, role models, buying member products or services, and assisting with business connections.

- Many FNFN members said they would be willing to support new businesses by: offering expertise to the business where able, buy the business product or service, or introduce the business person to a friend who could help them.

- The community also thought there were many ways the FNFN office could support entrepreneurs including: helping with business plans, providing some facility, land or raw materials, and facilitating a clear community economic vision or plan.

- Members stated that community and Band administration's support for business was very important for business success.

c. **Perspectives on culture**

- There was wide spread agreement that traditional ways and teachings influence the way economic activities are viewed.

- The tradition of "giving back to the land", "respecting the land", was a common comment.

- Most felt it was important for people who want to start businesses (depending on the business) to work within these traditions.

- There was enthusiasm for and wide agreement on business support for the culture. People felt business could help fund cultural teachings, and help restore the land. Business could also support elders, hire people who know the culture, and incorporate the traditional values, including caring for everyone: the land, animals, plants, and the people.

d.   Importance of entrepreneurs to the local economy

- It was widely recognized that starting up business was important to the community's economy.

- It was thought that education of the community was needed on the role of business in building a better economy.

e.   Perspectives on community responsibility

- There was wide agreement on the community being more important than the individual

- Entrepreneurs identified many ways that their businesses could benefit the community. Among those, most cited providing jobs and lending expertise to other businesses and to community projects.

- Community members felt it was important for community businesses to: hire community members, support cultural events, pay some sort of business tax to the Band office, and buy their supplies and services from other businesses in the community.

- There was wide agreement on the need to support individual businesses to build a better economy, and the importance of reducing the amount of money that is spent outside the Fort Nelson F.N. community.

f.   Apparent FNFN strengths

i. Community opinion

- There appears to be agreement on the importance of looking after the land, finding alternative methods of forestry and resource exploration to accommodate trapping and hunting. There also appears to be agreement on using business development to support and enhance the culture.

- Members and entrepreneurs share the view that businesses have responsibilities to support the community's economy and culture

where able, and members are prepared to assist entrepreneurs in business start up.

- Members recognize the importance to entrepreneurs of: a) the provision of business support services and b) the support of the Band office to encourage and enable business.

- There is a history of business sustainability and an apparent readiness to start-up new ventures.

ii. Infrastructure and programs/governance

- The community has undertaken an economic development planning process that is inclusive and extensive, which should serve to establish an economic development vision and strategy.

- The Nation's administration is a well-functioning unit, committed to quality communication with membership, efficient governance, and with strong financial systems.

- The long-term survival and success of the Eh Cho Dene Development Corporation means a valuable vehicle for economic development is in place and operating.

iii. Social organization

- The strength of the community - the families, community gatherings, the Native traditions, the elders and the elementary school - are a solid foundation upon which to build a healthy economy and healthy community.

- The Nation's commitment to the values of generosity, trustworthiness, and honesty allow people in business and people in governance to work well together.

- The Nation's demographics are favourable, with a large number of members in the high productivity stage.

- The social indicators of rate of social assistance and the crime rates among FNFN members are dropping.

g.   **FNFN stated priorities, policies and guidelines**

- There is a commitment that all Fort Nelson First Nation initiatives will be built upon community strengths, cultural revival, renewed communications strategies, capacity-building, and self-governance. (Adin 2001)

- Among the community's top twelve priorities for action are:

    - to revitalize the Nation's traditional languages and cultures

- to promote meaningful employment opportunities

- to support community support networks and volunteerism

- to improve the community's physical infrastructure

h. Areas that could be strengthened

i. Business information

- develop a one-on-one business support for entrepreneurs that provides: business information , sources of financing, business planning assistance, and training programs available.

- train and develop band level employees to enthusiastically assist and support local entrepreneurs

- Clarify and consolidate the Nation's policies, procedures and guidelines for business start-up and support.

ii. Training and job experience

- develop more training in business start-up and business administration skills

- encourage community members to take courses and develop more competencies related to local industries such as forestry, resource extraction, and tourism.

iii. Mentors and role models

- create a network of experienced business people to encourage and counsel business-minded individuals

iv. Financing

- explore and develop options for both small and medium scale financing

v. Band infrastructure

- develop or clarify with the membership, FNFN expectations for areas open to private business start-up and identify the infrastructure that will support it.

- clarify to the membership within the comprehensive community plan, a role for local entrepreneurs and private enterprise.

- complete a FNFN development policy that would include standard guidelines to member entrepreneurs, and their partners, on development approvals, taxes, land use, leases, environmental

impact requirements, cultural supports and preferential hiring policies.

vi. Community networking

- broaden and strengthen the business and organizational networks with Fort Nelson, to create new job and business opportunities.

vii. Community endorsement and support

- raise the awareness in the whole community of the importance of building an economy, to achieving self-reliance.

3. Tahltan Joint Council findings

Following is a record of what people told us about the barriers experienced by Aboriginal entrepreneurs, the existing economic development strengths we identified, and the options for action that we have put forward for consideration.

This report summarizes what we heard, our understanding of existing strengths, and suggested principles and options for action.

a. What people said

Summarized below are highlights of the opinions, experience and ideas of the survey participants. Each theme captures a number of topics, each demonstrating a range of viewpoints on current gaps and weaknesses and potential opportunities. At the end of this section there are summaries of the specific input of representatives of the Iskut Band Administration and the Tahltan Native Development Corporation (TNDC).

i. Theme: Business supports for entrepreneurs

The following comments reflect a lack of support from outside organizations (for example the Aboriginal Capital Corporation TRICORP, 1637Community Futures Development Corporation and Skeena Native Development Society).

All I got from 16-37 was a stack of forms to fill out and told to come back in two weeks. I didn't go any further.

Organizations do not like to come and tour the area – they need to spend time up here to get an understanding of our conditions.

Biggest barrier is accessing financing.

I have applied to several organizations – some do not even reply.

Hard to get through the bureaucratic bullshit. By the time you get through everything, the opportunity is lost.

Comments following reflect on the lack of a separate and professional business counselling support centre.

People have good ideas, but do not know how to get the ball rolling.

We need local tourism marketing information.

We need to bring people in to assist our people with business ideas; this keeps politics out of it. There is an element of distrust with bringing ideas into a band office.

I am a bit worried about approaching the band: some fear of someone stealing the idea.

Band should assist by having information available - provide some expertise to assist us.

ii. Mentoring and peer support

There are many people with business experience but no one has organized access so we can take advantage of that experience.

I would be prepared to mentor those without experience.

I find it is difficult to give advice and direction to Nation members. It is better if it comes from an outside person.

We need to work together to take advantage of tourism opportunities – different ideas could work together.

Regular meetings of entrepreneurs are a good idea.

I think there is a need for an economic development course. I took a 6 week small business course and it taught me a lot.

Many of us need bookkeeping and business management training.

I have no knowledge of financing or business planning.

I could use more information on business planning, bookkeeping etc.

We need basic business start-up types of workshops.

iii. Theme: Band economic development direction

The following comments provide guidance on the kinds of encouragement for

people to undertake business start-up.

Community announcements from the Band on the community T.V.
channel advertise to encourage entrepreneurs.

Band office is in total support of small business, but it is only verbal; no
financial. There is limited information provided. They will write support
letters.

Band is willing to allow free use of existing buildings for arts and crafts
outlet.

No clear economic development plan but various opportunities seen.

Now there is uncertainty around new political directions.

Need more direction and assistance from the band.

Need a tourism strategy for the area.

Tahltan Native Development Corporation has a great potential for
partnerships.

Band said they wanted to get into that business so I dropped the idea.
Ten years later they have not done anything.

What if I invest in an addition to my house for my business, will I be
supported or reimbursed?

I need a bigger house to accommodate a home-based business. I have
told the housing person that but I don't know whether my business needs
will make any difference to what size a house I get.

No problem with basing business on reserve.

No worries about what you can do with home based businesses: there are no regulations in place.

Informal is nice, but would be nicer to have things in writing: bylaws, policies etc.

Need to keep politics out of it.

We could benefit from a tourism co-operative type organization to bring tourism related ideas together.

iv. Theme: Community support for member businesses

Importance of community support for businesses:

I think everyone in the community would consider my business to be a positive service.

I don't think there would be very many who wouldn't buy my products because of community politics.

We already buy products from one another.

I am sure that if more businesses started up each one would sell and buy from one another.

When families are bickering, you cannot be sure that it won't affect your business.

Having an entrepreneurial minded community would help people get over the bickering and realize the need to support local business no matter what.

b.   Ownership and wealth – issues and opportunities

The Tahltan nation appears to have no difficulty with individual ownership of businesses. Those that rely upon a land base, as hunting and guiding do, are able to utilize the traditional territory identified with their families. Others, who would need to ask permission to use another's territory, anticipate no problem in obtaining that approval.

Wealth generation in the community is acceptable.

Although there is some recognition that creating a more diversified economy would result in retaining wealth and providing more goods and services in the community, this idea does not appear to be wide spread.

When asked if the entrepreneur would use their business to support the community through local hire and donated services, most respond positively as if it was a given.

c. Specific input: Iskut and Telegraph Creek bands administration and TNDC

Interviews with representatives from the Iskut Band Administration and TNDC provide a picture of directions and opportunities as seen by these key agencies. Highlights are summarized below.

i. Iskut Band administration: Interview with Chief Louis Louie

- Priority economic development sectors are: tourism, mining, mushroom picking and forestry.
- The community is looking for some positive examples of private business to encourage others.
- It is best if the Band stays out of business, or plays only a business start-up role, and then sells the operating business to members.

ii. Telegraph Creek Band administration: Interviews with manager Norm Day and councillor Gordon Frank

- Regular meetings of entrepreneurs with one another, and with outside agencies that can assist business start-up and development, is a good idea.
- Individuals, with their different ideas, need to work together to take advantage of tourism opportunities.
- The adventure tourism opportunities are tremendous. We are going to be flooded in the next couple of years. We need to access tourism training for those interested.
- There is a great potential for business partnerships with TNDC.
- The Band does not need to be involved beyond the approval stage.

d.   Role of the Tahltan Native Development Corporation (TNDC): Interview with president and C.E.O. John Pijl

In this interview we discussed how the business success of the TNDC could be utilized to support the start-up and growth of community-based businesses. As a starting point, we outlined how development corporations in other jurisdictions have contributed to a climate of support for business by:

- looking for business "spin-off" or partnership opportunities for individual band members,

- providing "incubator" type assistance with business supports like bookkeeping, marketing and business planning,

- assisting employees to build equity and acquire ownership, or starting up businesses that are sold off to band members, and

- linking band entrepreneurs to a local development corporation will help to foster a solid business approach and strengthen a local business "culture".

In our discussion with John Pijl, we were able to explore the possibility of the topics outlined above, and the possibility of such actions being taken by TNDC. The highlights of that discussion are summarized below.

- It is TNDC's mandate to selectively look at opportunities requiring larger investments and some sophistication. The Corporation would endeavour not to compete with the start-up of small business.

- TNDC could administer an economic development trust fund for small business start-up, but it is not part of the present mandate.

- TNDC could hire a business analyst to assist entrepreneurs if the funding were made available. It would be very important for TNDC to maintain a strictly business context and culture for any activity it would undertake in support of small business start-up.

e.   Apparent community strengths for fostering entrepreneurs

Based on our interviews and review of background information, we see four key strengths among Tahltan communities that can provide an important base for fostering entrepreneurs. Each is discussed briefly below.

i. Identity

The Tahltan Nation members appear to have a strong sense of identity, a pride in being who they are, and a strong desire for self-reliance. This is a solid foundation upon which to create a community economic development plan.

ii. Cultural compatibility

Unlike some other First Nations, there doesn't appear to be any significant cultural issues associated with independent business development.

iii. Partnerships

The Tahltan Joint Council has been very successful in securing a partnership position in the key areas of mining and forestry. They have based these partnerships on clearly stated principles that offer guidelines on how development should take place.

iv. Financial stability

Band and Development Corporation leaders and administrators have made great progress in achieving Band and Tahltan Nation Development Corporation financial accountability. s. Without this stability there is little chance leaders would be able to turn their attention to other economic initiatives. This has been a major preoccupation of recent administrations, and they should be congratulated for their success.

f.   Guiding principles for action on supports for entrepreneurs

The following principles are proposed as a guide to deliberations on what action to take in support of entrepreneurs. Each is discussed in some detail below:

- Giving responsibility to the entrepreneurs
- Creating a Band-based strategy
- Building community support for community-based business

They reflect our experience and study of activity in other jurisdictions, as well as our assessment of the current Tahltan environment. They underlie our approach to the development of specific recommendations presented in the next section.

If these principles are reviewed and endorsed by the Joint Council, they can assist in evaluating our recommendations or others which might come forward, and support overall direction setting and strategy development.

i. Giving responsibility to the entrepreneurs

The prospects of entrepreneurs will not be furthered by people doing things for them. Entrepreneurs must take the initiative to work together to learn about and develop their businesses. The principle of helping others to help themselves must be behind any efforts to spur on the local entrepreneurship base.

The networks that are created and strengthened through their own organizing efforts will be vitally important to the survival of their businesses. It is our opinion that a practical and productive approach to the current community climate is to adopt a strategy that:

- gives more responsibility for business support and assistance to those individuals who are interested in business start up, and
- makes good use of the extensive business experience that already exists in the communities.

ii. Creating a band-based strategy

We believe that the more effective operational unit for providing support for entrepreneurs are the communities of Iskut, Telegraph Creek and Dease Lake, rather than the Tahltan Joint Council. There are important initiatives suitable for the TJC to undertake, and those have been identified. But each separate community, in our opinion,

would be a more effective organizing base for grass roots action. A Band-based strategy would include:

- leaders and administrators encouraging entrepreneurs to pursue business start-up.

- from what we have seen, both Bands have offered generous encouragement of their entrepreneurs; this is an important and vital first step.

- providing an overview of the economic "path" the community is on.

A vital step is to provide entrepreneurs with an overview of the economic "path" the specific communities are planning to take. It seems apparent that the Band Councils, the Tahltan Joint Council, and the Tahltan Nation Development Corporation have a well thought-out economic strategy and direction. But if a private economy is going to be encouraged, the members of the bands need to be part of the information sharing, strategizing, and decision making. This process is needed to provide the "buy-in" the community members don't appear to have at present.

Once an economic development plan and strategy is articulated and communicated, prospective business people will be able to judge whether or not to invest their time and money in a community-based business. Just as outside investors/partners need to understand the Band's direction before they are comfortable committing themselves, inside investor/partners require the same reassurance.

After the data was collected and analysed, a workshop was held in each of the communities. In the workshop the study results were presented and the actions taken by other First Nations, in response to similar challenges, were described. Using a small group format the participants, representing entrepreneurs, administrators and leaders, Elders and community members, identified potential actions for their own community. The group then prioritized actions which had consensus support. The actions developed

in each community to improve the community's capacity and readiness to support

Aboriginal entrepreneurs in business start-up and growth, are reported in Appendix C.

Using the major factors in supporting entrepreneurs as a framework the activities

undertaken by the study communities following the project are briefly described.

g.   Business start-up support

Two communities have completed the process of setting up an Aboriginal

business support centre. These centres employ two business counsellors and a half-

time receptionist, and are located off-reserve. Reports inform me that they are serving

anticipated numbers of on and off-reserve Aboriginal entrepreneurs.

h.   Infrastructure the community can provide

The Fort Nelson First Nation has completed a community economic plan that is

based upon entrepreneurs providing the major economic activity. The Ktunaxa

Kinbasket have established a resort/casino anchor businesses, provided employment

training, and are following a strategy to "spin-off" businesses to their members.

i.   Financing

With the establishment of the business support centres in two of the study

communities, there is now thorough businesses funding program information available to

two of the study communities.

j.   Community endorsement

The Ktunaxa Kinbasket have plans to offer cash prizes for the best business plan

submitted by the local high school students. They are also looking for a local celebrity

who would be a "champion" for young entrepreneurs.

D. Varying community results indicate key issues

In the literature review I identified the following key Aboriginal economic development success factors: sovereignty, adequacy and appropriateness of institutions, and strategic orientation. In the communities that achieved results from this project, there was a sense of sovereignty, adequate and appropriate institutions, and a strategic orientation.

The Ktunaxa Kinbasket benefit from exceptional and long-term leadership of Sophie Pierre, Chief of the St. Mary's Band and Administrator of the Tribal Council. She has been a strong leader for decades. Her determined and soft-spoken approach has forged a consensus on an economic development direction.

In contrast the Tahltan are made up of two originally unrelated bands, the Iskut who migrated north, and the Tahltan. Recently, the two separate bands have cooperated on community economic development projects under the Joint Council of Chiefs, a recent governance structure and with little legitimacy (McBride et al 2002). During this project the Tahltan administration was voted out of office by the large numbers of off-reserve members who have recently been given the right to vote. About the same time the Iskut Chief had a major heart attack and had to step down from his position. The earlier alliance of the two chiefs was no longer in place and the Joint Council has broken down. This turmoil has sidelined Iskut and Tahltan attempts to adopt this project's action plan, for which both communities were very enthusiastic.

The Fort Nelson First Nation, a very old amalgamation of three cultures by Indian Affairs to facilitate the administration of health, education and social services, has adapted a strategy that utilizes their common strength (Adin 2001). The have recognized the fundamental role that was traditionally played by extended family heads in all three

cultures, and utilized that structure to build a multi-cultural approach to a promising future. The strategy is embedded in their elementary school program that reinforces the three cultures, recognizes the families, and honours the Elders from each of the three cultures. Fort Nelson First Nation has created a legitimate governance system by employing a traditional governance form (McBride et al 2002). This community's follow up action based on priorities identified through the study to establish an entrepreneur-centred economic development strategy. The strong leadership and legitimate governance of both the Ktunaxa Kinbasket and the Fort Nelson First Nations have resulted in significant progress from this project.

Following, Table 6 summarizes the answers found in the study communities to the subsidiary questions to the main thesis question.

Table 6: **Summary of subsidiary questions and the three communities surveyed**

Communities	Impact of traditional values	Role to be played by entrepreneur	Major barrier found in community	Most important factors for development	Actions taken by communities
Ktunaxa / Kinbasket Tribal Council	Traditional values support entrepreneurs	Business to follow and complement community economic direction	Little or no business traditions or business skills	Complete an economic plan, and pursue community support for business	Clarify dev. vision; stimulate interest in business, and est. business info. centre
Tahltan Joint Council	Traditional values support entrepreneurs	Business to determine economic direction	No business counselling or financing available	Make business information available	Est. business support centre and development guidelines; Strategy for community support for business
Fort Nelson First Nation	Traditional values in conflict with entrepreneurs	Depend on business to plug the leakage of $	Conflict over economic direction & lack of confidence to succeed	Make economic vision & role of business clear and write up guidelines	Establish business support centre and encourage entrepreneurs

5. CONCLUSIONS AND DISCUSSION

A. Introduction

The thesis addresses the question, "How can Aboriginal communities foster a supportive climate for Aboriginal entrepreneurs and business start-up?" In answering that question I have examined the cultural factors affecting the role entrepreneurs might play in the economic development of their communities. I have also identified the barriers to business start-up faced by entrepreneurs and what can be done by administrations in overcoming those barriers. In addition, I have documented actions taken by other Aboriginal communities to improve the community's capacity and readiness to support Aboriginal entrepreneurs in business start-up and growth. Finally, I have looked at how an assessment of the community's capacity to support entrepreneurs can be made and what actions were taken by communities once that assessment was complete.

The subsidiary questions I asked are:

1. How do traditional Aboriginal values impact upon the role of the entrepreneur in Aboriginal communities?

Traditional values offer considerable support to entrepreneurs. Economic development depends upon a value system that is clearly understood and accepted, and upon role that has been identified for the entrepreneur that is consistent with the values and traditions of the Aboriginal community. Strong traditional values, just like any code of behaviour, are an asset to doing business. Aboriginal values help the entrepreneur to understand themselves, where they come from and where they are going. The self-confidence this gives the entrepreneur is a significant support.

2. **Is there an important role to be played by Aboriginal entrepreneurs in the economic development of their communities, and if so, what is that role?**

Given the growth of the Aboriginal populations and the flood of the young and most capable from Aboriginal communities, there is a dire need for the entrepreneur that will start up businesses, create opportunities for themselves and others in the communities, and thereby stem the outflow of the most capable members of the community.

3. **What are the barriers to business start up that commonly face Aboriginal entrepreneurs in their own communities?**

The barriers faced by Aboriginal entrepreneurs on reserve are: lack of information on business start-up, lack of infrastructure in the community, the difficulty in securing finance, and the lack of support in the community for business start-up.

4. **What factors determine whether an Aboriginal community has the capacity and readiness to support their Aboriginal entrepreneurs in business start-up and growth?**

The most important factor, corroborated by the research of the Harvard Project on North American Economic Development (Cornell 1995), is the governance structure of the First Nation community. Without a recognized structure for governance there are few decisions that are considered legitimate. Business requires certainty to encourage the entrepreneur's investment of skills, time, and money in the community.

Secondly, also corroborated by the Harvard Project (Cornell 1995), the institutions of the community need to be culturally appropriate. Often this means that the band or tribal council have utilized an institution form and structure that matches the traditional cultural form. Additionally, the band administration needs to be functional. The administration and its various departments need to be arms-length from business, and need to be able to get the day-to-day work done in a professional manner. This involves

the processing of land leases, the determination of zoning, the requirements for environmental impact studies, licensing if necessary and the approval of other provincial or federal authorities.

Third, the band or tribal council needs to have a strategic approach. If the community has been involved in the evolution of a community plan then it is apparent to everyone the direction the community plans to take. The entrepreneur knows the role that can be played by private businesses and is assured the investment of time and money is not wasted.

Perhaps more than non-Native entrepreneurs, Aboriginal entrepreneurs need the encouragement of their families, community leaders, role models and mentors. The continuing pursuit of small business requires perseverance, and without the encouragement from these sectors entrepreneurs are likely to give up.

An additional factor is the support of the community. Without the community patronizing the business, particularly a retail business that relies on local markets, there is little chance of success. There may be rivalries between families, conflict between the business activity and the culture, or jealously of another's success, that keep the community from supporting business start-up. The readiness to support entrepreneurs is related to the extent that both the cultural issues and the role of entrepreneurs in the community's development have been addressed and resolved.

5. **What actions have been taken in other Aboriginal communities to improve the community's capacity and readiness to support Aboriginal entrepreneurs in business start-up and growth?**

There are many Aboriginal communities in North America who have successfully pursued economic development through the private sector, utilizing their own entrepreneurs. The kinds of actions taken fall into four broad categories. The first

category is support for business start-up and includes: fostering an interest in business in the home, school programs that take up the entrepreneurial mind set, providing business information such as marketing and incorporation, making available one-on-one business counselling, provision of entrepreneurial training, job experience, and mentoring.

The second category is the provision by the band of infrastructure. Many bands have developed a clear plan for economic development and found a role within that plan for the entrepreneur to play. They have also outlined the policies and guidelines that clarify the process of business start-up. Some bands have even created "anchor" businesses that create opportunities for private spin-off businesses. Some communities start businesses and then "privatize" them to create member-owned business.

The third category is finding better ways to access financing. Some bands have established equity funds that enable them to take part ownership in a member's business. This additional equity makes them eligible for funding through the banks. Others have set up lending circles or peer lending programs that involve groups of people taking joint responsibility for loaning money to one another. A few well-organized communities have gathered a number of specialty loan funds under one roof with expert staff that can assist clients to access those funds. Some funds are specific to youth, others to business start up in the forest sector or fishing sector, others promote "green" business, and of course many are specific to Aboriginals.

The final category is building community support for the business. Some communities have promoted "buy local" campaigns and others have encouraged small business people to go door-to-door and talk/bargain with fellow members about patronizing their business. One of the biggest issues is the question, "what is the

business going to return to the community?" Some of the answers have been the provision of jobs, the support for and honouring of cultural events, and the use of the business facilities by the community. Some Aboriginal communities have given awards or other recognitions to businesses that have contributed.

6. How can First Nations' communities assess their capacity to support Aboriginal entrepreneurs?

First, the barriers to business start-up and growth need to be identified and strategies to address those barriers need to be undertaken. Support for local business is a decision that all community groups must consider. It is imperative that Elders, community members, entrepreneurs and the band administration begin the dialogue on support for local business. I have developed guidelines for approaching the community and a questionnaire that can be administered by community members to prompt those discussions and support the development of a consensus on priority actions (see Appendix B).

7. What actions would three B.C. First Nations choose to take to support the community's capacity and readiness to include Aboriginal entrepreneurs in business start-up and growth?

The field data from three B.C. Aboriginal communities: the Tahltan, Fort Nelson and Ktunaxa/Kinbasket, demonstrate different situations across the communities. The barriers to business start-up and success that were reported in previous research were also reported in the communities I surveyed. However, each of the communities I surveyed had different histories, different current circumstances and prioritized capacity building action differently.

The Ktunaxa/Kinbasket, who had lost most of their entrepreneurial traditions, decided to promote the idea of business among their members by creating interest in business and opportunities for training and business ventures. They utilized one of their

few entrepreneurs to motivate young people by speaking about how he got started, and how his business grew.

The Fort Nelson First Nation, with an entrepreneurial tradition intact and many members with businesses or ready to start businesses, took actions to make it easier to establish on-reserve business. They decided their economic development plan should be based on fostering independent business. They already had an active economic development corporation owned by the First Nation, but for additional growth they decided to look to the private sector.

The Tahltan, who have a tradition of decentralization and independence, choose to encourage independent businesses. They have pursued as a Joint Council major contracts with mining companies, a hydro development and a forestry license. Because their territory includes a large wilderness area, they identified their future opportunity as the adventure and cultural tourism industry. This would include such activities as wildlife photography and hunting. This economic activity lends itself to individual private businesses. The Tahltan are committed to fostering family businesses as a main part of their economic development strategy. However, the Tahltan dropped the initiative when an election resulted in a change in band administration.

Both the Ktunaxa/Kinbasket and the Fort Nelson First Nation pursued funding for an Aboriginal business support centre. They were successful in receiving about $220,000/year/project, for two years from the Provincial Government. The centres provide business counselling and planning, and access for the entrepreneur to business professionals like accountants and lawyers. The centres also serve as a networking hub to put entrepreneurs in contact with others in the business community. The centres are located in Cranbrook, Fort St. John, and Fort Nelson.

B. Research convergence

The two major sources of information that guided me in this research were the literature on characteristics of CED and Aboriginal economic development. As outlined on page 34 there is an overall compatibility between the two bodies of knowledge and agreement on how to proceed for the best community results. Each of these points of view champions: decisions made by the community, developing equity, empowering local people, developing a strategy, taking an integrated approach and linking with partners.

The one point of difference is the role to be played by individual business. CED outlines a role for a non-profit structure to take the lead in economic development. It does not yet address the role that business can play in the development of communities.

The literature on Aboriginal economic development identifies an important role for Aboriginal entrepreneurs. This finding is documented in the work of the Harvard Project, the best practices I inventoried from other Aboriginal communities and organizations across North America, the SFU/WD Gap Study in B.C. and my own research in the three First Nations. They all point to an important role is to be played by Aboriginal entrepreneurs in the economic development of their communities.

There is no substitute for individual businesses and their role in "thickening" the economy, and those businesses need business supports for effective start up. Not only do they need the business start-up supports and business training, in many cases they need to re-establish an entrepreneurial tradition.

All the literature emphasizes the importance of community infrastructure, of having a strategy, and determining a role for the entrepreneur within the larger band or tribal council economy. Included in this infrastructure are the emotional supports that can

be provided by mentors and role models and the bridges that can connect the
entrepreneurs into the larger business community.

Considerable concern is focused on the barrier of financing. To create a climate
of support in the community for the entrepreneur there needs to be a variety of financial
options available that include: small loans for business research, loan programs that
target, youth, women, priority industries, and ways of building the equity required for loan
qualification. I see it as only one part of the process. If there isn't a sophisticated
business plan, if there is no community economic strategy that the perspective business
can fit into, if there isn't the supportive community to patronize the business, than the
financing will be difficult to secure.

The most complex of all the factors required to foster a climate of business
support in the community, is the support of the community itself for the prospective
business. There needs to be some reckoning between the entrepreneur, the Elders, and
the community members on what the prospective business is going to contribute. In
some communities this is resolved if the entrepreneur is a regular participant in
traditional ceremonies. That involvement is often enough to reassure the community that
the business person is going to act in an appropriate way. In other communities it is
resolved by establishing an Elder's Council to comment on or veto development.

C.   Community support for a private economy

Culture and business can be compatible. When you incorporate a small business
strategy into your economic plan it does not mean the community gives up its values and
traditions. Businesses should be expected to comply with the cultural values shared by
the community. It is expected in most societies that successful business makes a real

contribution to the community. They commonly support and sponsor cultural events, raise funds for public facilities like hospitals, and provide leadership for organizations like the United Way that raise social program dollars.

1. Established cultural values are a support to business

A good business climate can be built on predictable values such as honesty, generosity, and trustworthiness. It is difficult to imagine how one would conduct business without a common value system. For young entrepreneurs a cultural grounding helps them know where they came from and who they are. This knowledge can be an important source of strength for anyone who starts a business.

2. The values or principles of CED

The benchmarks or the measurements that are the common targets of community economic development are not adversely affected by incorporating a private business strategy. The band or tribal council can continue to build organizational capacity. Some of the work of human resource capacity building could be taken on by individual businesses which train employees. A more effective model, many would say. Private business helps achieve self-determination, builds networks and thereby increases social capital, and plugs the leakage of money out of the community.

D. Envisioning a supportive climate

From this study, I can characterize an ideal supportive climate for entrepreneurs as one in which the community, band or tribal council would have the following:

- an economic vision and a plan that offers direction

- an identified role for entrepreneurs in building the economy

- a development policy that: identifies licences needed, lease conditions, zoning information, environmental impact assessments required, and other approval issues and processes

- access to a qualified business counselling service

- ongoing mentoring systems

- economic development projects that provide member training and spin-off business opportunities

- outreach to the larger community to cultivate the networks that support a healthy economy

- a strategy for strengthening the bonds within the community to provide the encouragement and business patronage needed for long-term success

- recognition that a common culture and a value system that people abide by and business can rely upon is a strength

Above all, business requires certainty. If entrepreneurs are going to invest their skills, time and money in the community, they want to be sure it isn't going to be undermined by ad hoc political decisions. Certainty requires decisions on economic development to be made by competent administrators who are arms length from politics.

E. Reflections on the process

1. Project origins

There are areas that I believe we have made a good effort to avoid the mistakes of research by non-Indigenous people in Indigenous communities. I consider the strengths of the project to be the following points:

- The project evolved from a follow up question from the SFU/WD Gap Study. That question, how to foster Aboriginal business in Aboriginal communities, was one that was repeatedly brought up by Aboriginal entrepreneurs in surveys and focus groups.

- I was responding to a need stated by part of the Aboriginal community.
- I was conforming to the following principles of CED:

  1. the concept of creating a supportive climate was wealth creation,

  2. it was a partnership between three First Nations and the university,

  3. the partnership terms gave the First Nations control.

  4. I was building capacity in the community to self-assess.

  5. I came alongside the community, responding to what the community wanted out of the process,

- all interviews were conducted by community members so I did avoid the "gaze" of outside researchers.
- By involving the community members, and asking them to preview the preliminary findings before writing the report I was consistent with PAR guidelines "...the full and active participation of the community in the research process," and facilitating "...a more accurate and authentic analysis of social reality."

I expected to enter the three communities, conduct the training of the community-based teams, set them off on their data gathering, return to debrief and return again to work with the leaders, the team and administrators to build an action plan. Before going ahead with the training, the communities needed us to make an introductory trip so they could determine who I was and whether they wanted to work with me. I did that and with the introduction of our project by the community representative, each of whom appeared to be a well-regarded person in the community, and with the back up of our well-regarded Aboriginal project consultant, I began my work.

2.   Gathering the data

Following SFU ethics approval, some training was conducted. Then the community-based teams began to gather data by interviewing a variety of people they identified, and using questions they selected as appropriate from the list of questions I

supplied. I believe the appropriate protocols were used in conducting the data gathering. I employed competent interviewers, they retrieved important data, and I heard no complaints.

I designed the work in such a way that the data gathering process itself would raise awareness of what it takes to build an economy. I also wanted community members to think about an appropriate role for entrepreneurs in building a local economy. I asked questions about building a local economy and the role of entrepreneurs to prompt the interviewee to think about them and thereby ready the community for the actions that would be required in order to create a climate of support for entrepreneurs.

3.   Reporting back and taking action

I offered a "research in-process" workshop in two communities on "how to build a community economy". This anticipated my data and I began to work with members on possible solutions.

I also built into the project a report-back function to the leaders and administrators. I reported the data, and I worked with leaders, administrators, and economic development workers to create priorities and build an action plan that could be followed by the community.

4.   Respecting indigenous systems of knowledge

Entrepreneurial or private business approach to economic development is considered to be a Western notion, a colonial construct, but it has been adopted as an economic strategy by many Aboriginal communities. It is recognized in the literature that locally owned businesses that depend on local markets can only survive with community

support, and that most Aboriginal communities can only survive by building strong economies that support people with jobs and services. The literature also recognizes that in Aboriginal communities private business development is an important strategy in building a healthy economy. One aspect of building a supportive climate for entrepreneurs in Aboriginal communities is to assist the community in finding a culturally appropriate role for entrepreneurs so the culture is strengthened and the community feels free to support the local business

Part of the work of Aboriginal communities determining an appropriate role for entrepreneurs in their society is to ask Elders to look at the cultural expectations and values around how entrepreneurs might conduct themselves. Elders shared with us many stories that reflected rich and strong entrepreneurial traditions, both before and after contact. Some focused on Aboriginal (and entrepreneurial) qualities like self-reliance and empowerment. Others dealt with the extended family organizational structure, the division of work and wealth, the central importance of the culture, and the caring for people. These cultural expectations and values, when made explicit, offer guidance to new entrepreneurs and begin to address the relationship the entrepreneurs need to build with the community.

The simplistic definition of entrepreneur, as only interested by profit, has been challenged by those who are trying to find an appropriate role for private business in Aboriginal communities. A more appropriate definition for an entrepreneur in an Aboriginal context is someone who is involved in and concerned for the community. Nathan Mathew, Chief of the North Thompson Band, has redefined "entrepreneur" to make it more appropriate for Aboriginal communities. He calls it social entrepreneur, and attributes to this role many interests in and concerns for the community. Among them

are: supporting cultural events and practicing the culture, mentoring youth, hiring locally,

and supporting land claims. Helping to identify a culturally appropriate role for

entrepreneurs is contributing to the reconstruction of Aboriginal knowledge.

The manner in which this research has been conducted and reported reflects an

ethic of respect for the culture and for the ownership of traditional knowledge. The

literature search included published work, web-site information and personal interviews

conducted with Aboriginal leaders and practitioners. The data from interviews conducted

in the three participating communities was collected by community members. This

information has been published, without any copyright restriction, and distributed free to

Aboriginal organizations and communities in Western Canada and many American

States. The use of the data in my thesis was known and approved of by the Steering

Committee to this project, before the project began. The project direction was in the

hands of the Steering Committee, and was not influenced by what I may need for my

thesis.

5.   Failing in some areas

In some areas I was not successful. Following, I comment on some of the

difficulties with regard to training, reporting back to the community, and recording of

Elders' stories.

a.   Training

One area where we were not successful was in the training of the community-

based teams. Many of them lack the ability, as was intended, to be able to administer

this assessment tool in other First Nations communities. If there is another opportunity to

do further training with the community-based team I may be able to complete the
training.

b.   Reporting to the community

I also built into the project a report-back function to the leaders and
administrators. What I consider to be a shortfall in this process was the lack of reporting
back to the community. I intended the data to be reported back to the community but I
had not made specific plans to do so. Because I built a good working relationship with
the administrators and leaders that I did not want to compromise, I ended up, after
considerable debate, leaving further reporting to the community up to the local
leadership. There were practical as well as political considerations to this decision.

c.   Recording the stories

When I considered the question, how can I assist to recover the stories and
preserve the culture, I thought video-taping the Elders and leaders would leave a record
of what guidance the Elders/the culture would give to business start-up and growth. On
the advice of one of the communities, I built into the budget honoraria for Elder
interviews. This worked in one community and I did leave an archive of video interviews.
It didn't work in the other two communities because video equipment was not easily
available locally and/or the interviewers were not confident of their ability to both tape
and interview. Video recording added a level of complexity to the task that affected the
focus of the interviewers.

6.   Elements of PAR in the supportive environment case study

Each of these basic elements of PAR were relevant to the communities I was
working with. Creating a more supportive climate was going to challenge the members,

the leadership and the administration to: put aside old grievances, support new business, turn the band office into a positive organization of support, and set up an infrastructure outside the direct control of the band or tribal council that will facilitate business start-up and growth. The project was also asking the community to establish the cultural needs and determine what support and contribution they expected from successful and established businesses. Each of these challenges would require an extensive effort on behalf of the community and its leadership.

In order to structure our research to reflect PAR basic elements, I formed a partnership between the 3 communities and SFU CED Centre. Each community was willing to put a key person on an advisory committee, which assumed direction for the project, and became the liaison person for their community. The committee communicated through phone and e-mail during the project. The steering committee was used directly to make practical decisions about or improvements in the project.

In my initial visit to each of the communities I held a workshop on how the economy can work. I asked the participants to identify the flow of money in and out of the community, propose businesses that could help "plug" the leaks, and calculate the impact on community wealth of "re-cycling" the money through the community. This was done to begin to change the way community members thought and made decisions about their economic behaviours.

The process followed in conducting this research in the three Aboriginal communities was sound. The partnership between the First Nations and the university, giving the former the authority to direct the project through the Steering Committee, was an important structural arrangement. The connection to and introduction by a prominent community representative helped me establish the credibility to do the research. Since

the community representative was also working on behalf of the First Nation leadership, there was enough understanding of the necessary division between community politics and economic development, that no one made it an issue. I was guiding the administration towards the idea of a separate, even off-reserve, office for a business support person. This could have been seen as a loss of control issue, but wasn't.

7.   Project results

The results of my research was gratifying. The SFU/WD Gap Study (2001) recommended setting up business support offices in underserved regions. My subsequent research verified the need for on-reserve entrepreneurs, and outlined that in the action plans that were completed (included as Appendix C). Successful applications for funding were made for business support offices by two of the First Nations involved. Two offices are not established and funding of approximately $220,000/year for two years has been committed by the Province of B.C. The Fort Nelson First Nation has made the support of Aboriginal entrepreneurs the spine of their economic development strategy. The process followed, and the able guidance of an Aboriginal expert in this field, accounts for the success of the research completed.

To date, 800 copies of the published research results, under the title "Minding Our Own Businesses: how to create support in First Nations communities for Aboriginal business," have been distributed. The book is posted on the SFU, CED Centre web site. The data has been presented at four conferences in three Western Provinces.

I believe the contribution of my research has been to:

- describe the important factors in creating a climate of support for Aboriginal entrepreneurs in Aboriginal communities
- describe a more culturally appropriate role for the entrepreneur, and

- outline a strategy for building a relationship between the entrepreneur and the community so that role can be developed.

8. Follow up research

Document a variety of successful relationships and processes that have developed between entrepreneurs and their communities. One example would be an Elder's Council that advises the tribal council on economic development and the role played by entrepreneurs.

- Investigate how different member-owned business could be used to train band or tribal council employees and build capacity.
- Investigate if there is an appropriate and productive role for entrepreneurs in (non-native) CED.
- Strategies for strengthening community support and patronage of Aboriginal businesses. E.g. Introducing a local currency.
- Research a culturally appropriate role of the entrepreneur in West Coast clan structures.

It has been my hope that this thesis project would contribute to the economic, social and cultural development of Aboriginal communities in B.C. These results indicate that it has done so.

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APPENDIX A: PROJECT TIMELINE

Step	Proposed Time	Lead Roles
Step 1. Literature review, training and first draft of the measurement tool	Mar.1 – Apr. 30/01	Project Man. Project Consultant
Step 2. Community field work	Apr. 30 – Jul. 31/01	Steering Committee, C-B Team, the community as a whole, Project Manager & Project Consultant
Step 3. Reporting to the community and developing an action plan	Aug 31 – Sep 30/01	C-B Team Steering Committee Project Manager
Step 4. Final Draft of Assessment Tool, Report and dissemination plan	Oct. 31/01	Project Manager

APPENDIX B: THE APPROACH TO THE COMMUNITIES AND

THE INSTRUMENT USED

A tool for assessing the climate of support for
Aboriginal business in First Nations communities

Purpose of the assessment tool

The purpose of this tool is for First Nations communities, to identify the supports and barriers facing a community's entrepreneurs and to find ways the band or tribal council, and the community can more actively support the development of individual or family-owned businesses. The tool consists of a series of questions for Elders, community members, leaders, administrators and entrepreneurs. The answers will provide a picture of the support available in the community for people who want to start businesses. This information package also identifies actions that other First Nations have taken to create a more supportive climate for business start-up.

Working towards a "mixed" economy model

For the last two years we have followed up on the broadly held opinion of researchers and many Aboriginal leaders that a mixed economic development approach, one that included both public and private ownership, is key to strengthening the economies of First Nations. The Royal Commission on Aboriginal People and the research of the Harvard Project on American Indian Economic Development have both emphasized that economic development must go beyond band or tribal council sponsored economic development, and foster the growth of Aboriginal small business in the communities. Like the mainstream economy, it is the privately-owned small businesses, that will account for a significant portion of the economic growth on reserves. It is important therefore, that we find ways to create a supportive climate for Aboriginal small business.

Overcoming barriers to create a supportive climate

Research shows that a business start-up on reserve has many more barriers to overcome than off-reserve business (McBride 2001). Entrepreneurs report (Vodden et al 2001 that on-reserve business is complicated by additional approval authorities, lack of collateral, less access to business information and services, some cultural traditions and considerations, and a lack of infrastructure. In 2001, three B.C. First Nations (Tahltan Joint Council, The Ktunaxa/Kinbasket Tribal Counsel, and the Fort Nelson First Nation) decided to investigate the nature of supports and barriers to business development in their communities. The Community Economic Development Centre at Simon Fraser University partnered with them to carry out an assessment and to provide recommendations to address barriers and strengthen supports.

We asked Elders, community members, leaders, administrators and entrepreneurs:
> In your experience what are the barriers to business start-up, and what
> can be done to overcome those barriers?

Based on the responses we received and the findings of other research (Vodden et al 2001), we identified the common supports and barriers most often found in communities. We also investigated what other First Nations had done to create a climate of support in the community for Aboriginal entrepreneurs. After reporting this back to the community, we assisted leaders and administrators to build an action plan. Elements of these action plans have been implemented and the communities involved have already succeeded in creating a more supportive climate for Aboriginal business.

Using the tool to assess the climate for business in your community

In order to create a more supportive environment for business start-up, we recommend undertaking a community consultation process. The aim is to find out what different groups regard as current supports and barriers and determine what they think can be done to improve the climate for entrepreneurs. This consultation process will also serve to introduce issues for community discussion such as:

- the benefits of building a stronger economy,
- the importance of community support for business,
- the need to separate business services from band council responsibilities, and
- the ways business can support the community's culture.

One goal of the consultation process is to promote community discussion of the potential of small business. Because strengthening the local economy requires the active support of community members, a common understanding of the role of the community and its entrepreneurs.

The questions and potential follow-up actions

The assessment tool consists of two groups of questions:

- Exploring the community's experience with and interest in small business
- Assessing the infrastructure for small business.

Each set of questions is listed below, and each set is followed by examples of actions taken by First Nations to strengthen this component of community support for entrepreneurs.

Community attitudes and experience with small business

These questions assist in determining:

- if there is interest and encouragement for small business,
- if people think private business is culturally appropriate, and
- if the idea of building a local economy is understood and supported.

Enthusiasm for small business

	low 1	2	3	4	high 5

a. Is there a recent tradition of people starting up businesses? ____

b. Is there interest in business start-up among community members? ____

c. Do leaders encourage members to start up businesses? ____

d. Are entrepreneurs encouraged by band office staff? ____

e. Is the community inclined to support new businesses? ____

enthusiasm for business score _____

Cultural acceptance

	low 1	2	3	4	high 5

a. To what extent have the community members decided what business development is acceptable? ____

b. Do Elders offer guidance on business development issues? ____

c. Does the community accept the role of the entrepreneur in building the community economy? ____

d. Is it commonly perceived that the interests of business and culture clash? ____

e. Is there an expectation that businesses will support the culture? ____

cultural acceptance score _____

Understanding local economy

	low 1	2	3	4	high 5

1. Does the community have an understanding of the benefits of building a local economy? ____

2. Do they know how to build a local economy? ____

3. Has the band placed a priority on building a sense of cooperation and mutual aid [bridges and strengthening bonds] inside the community to improve the business climate? ____

local economy score _____

Community infrastructure to support local entrepreneurs

The second set of questions ask about building infrastructure to support local entrepreneurs. They will help determine:

- if there is a plan that makes clear the band's development direction
- if business supports are in place to help the businesses through start-up
- if the band has found ways to help finance the business
- if the band has built networks that are important to business growth and success.

Clear economic development direction and plan

low high
1 2 3 4 5

a. Is there a clear economic development plan in place? ____

b. Is there a prescribed role for entrepreneurs to play in that plan? ____

c. Are there clear guidelines and conditions on lease of band land, zoning, environmental safeguards, licences, or taxes? ____

clear direction score _____

Business start-up supports

low high
1 2 3 4 5

a. Do prospective entrepreneurs have access to information on business start-up? ____

b. Is a one-on-one business planning counsellor available to assist entrepreneurs? ____

c. Has the band fostered a network of mentors to assist and encourage new entrepreneurs? ____

d. Do members need work experiences before they are prepared to start up their own businesses? ____

business start-up support score _____

Financing support

low high
1 2 3 4 5

a. Have members found it difficult to secure funding for their business plan? ____

b. Do entrepreneurs require experience with borrowing and repaying loans? ____

c. Are lending problems related to difficulty of securing collateral? ____

d. Has the band endorsed or supported in other ways, business proposals that have been submitted to conventional lenders? ____

financing support score _____

Networking support	low 1	2	3	4	high 5

a. Are theremal mechanisms for receiving Elder input on economic development? ___

b. Are there connections and relationships that have been forged with industry and businesses in the nearby towns? ___

c. Have efforts been made to support/foster/encourage the in-formal economy of barter that exists in the community? ___

networking support score _____

Before you start, take an inventory of your community strengths

If you can answer yes to many of these questions, then you have a strong foundation on which to build a more supportive climate for Aboriginal business.

- Community members with experience in business
- Networks with other First nations
- Connections to government and agencies that can help you leverage resources
- Partnerships with educational institutions to assist with education and training
- A strong culture that is a source of pride and strength to members?
- Common bonds among the members, shared activities, clubs, recreation?
- Participatory community decision-making?
- A conviction among membership that you have to "do it" yourself?
- A willingness to invest in the future?
- An emphasis on quality in business and community life?

APPENDIX C: ACTION PLANS

Ktunaxa/Kinbasket Tribal Council action plan

Action # 1:

Develop or clarify an ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT VISION and communicate to members. Then draft business development policies and guidelines and seek approval of bands and tribal council.

Steps		Time Line
1.	Seek agreement from Band Councils and Tribal Council to proceed	2 months
2.	Strike a steering committee composed of reps from councils, interest groups, entrepreneurs and business.	1 month
3.1	Broadly outline what type of business development is encouraged, and discouraged.	
3.2	Hold a think tank session for community members.	
3.3	Receive feedback from community groups.	4 months
4.	Make recommendations to governing bodies	2 months
5.	Write development policy(s) and guidelines and submit for refinement and approval.	3 months

Resources required

1. Funding for a full-time staff person with good facilitation skills, community knowledge and business background.
2. Budget for coffee, travel and steering committee travel.
3. Meeting facilities.
4. Background information: including business development policies and guidelines from other jurisdictions.
5. A work plan that details the consultation required.

Responsibility

Don Ross to coordinate project.

Staff person.

Critical success criteria

1. The economic development vision will take into account the mandate and the always changing role of the Development Corporation, St. Eugene's, the KKTC Tribal Council and the member bands.

2. The basic policies and guidelines developed, will serve as a good working draft document for Tribal Council and the member Bands.

3. policies and guidelines will be written clearly enough that they don't require interpretation to members. (user-friendly)

4. The policies and guidelines for business development will include a suggested appeal process.

Action # 2.

Create Business Interest among KKTC members
AND CELEBRATE ENTREPRENEURS

Steps	Time Line
1. Advertise the importance to the community and the lifestyle desirability of business, to members who are perspective business people. Do this by using testimonials and case studies	Apr-02
2. Continue with relevant training of community members including: Industry specific training and business training including: Entrepreneurial, Marketing and Accounting training	Ongoing
3. Find a high profile person to "champion" the cause of entrepreneurism, in conjunction with a business plan competition in the high school(s)	Mar-03
4. Organize and host "Building the community's Economic Potential – And how to stop the leakage" workshop(s)	

Resources required

1. Advertising budget.
2. "Champion" and prizes for business plan competition.
3. Funding for workshops on building an economy.
4. Workshop facilities and client profile.

Responsibility

Employment and Investment Department.

Critical success criteria

1. Insure the networking opportunities are maximized in the process of finding a business start-up "champion" and establishing a business plan competition.

2. Maximize exposure for department and Tribal Council in any publicity generated.

3. Identify the educational opportunities in the business plan competition for the students involved. Examples are: seminar on business opportunities with St. Eugene's project manager, public presentation by students of their ideas, tour of high tech incubator project.

4. Three business start-ups will be realized within two years of the business plan awards.

Action # 3. *Continue to work towards and participate in the establishment of the Kootenay Aboriginal Business Support Society.*

Fort Nelson First Nation action plan

Resulting actions from action plan workshop

Action #1. *Pursue the establishment of a business advisory and support service separate from the FNFN Band office.*

Steps

1. Budget for creating and staffing a position of "Economic Development Officer" and support staff.

2. Research and develop policies and guidelines that will assist the "the Economic Development Officer" to carry out his/her duties.

3. Research and write a job description for the Economic Development Officer and support staff.

4. Find an appropriate location for an office, and equip it.

Resources required

1. Budget for: office space, equipment, supplies, services and staff.

2. Advertising budget for positions, phone calls and copying costs.

Critical success factors

1. Identify the qualifications, skills, personal characteristics, and experience required for both positions.

2. Describe the duties, responsibilities, and reporting structure of the position.

3. Identify an experienced manager, advisory board or board of directors who will guide the direction of the project.

4. Set up a search or hiring committee and advertise widely.

5. With an interviewing committee, determine the relative importance of skills, experience, qualifications and personal characteristics.

6. Set up interviews, and hire for positions, and negotiate start dates.

7. Compare the above to similar job descriptions in other organizations.
8. Determine a location that will give the project an independence that will encourage all nation members to use it.
9. Purchase the necessary office furniture and equipment.
10. Purchase the necessary office supplies.
11. Set up services or accounts for the telephone, mailbox, internet service, and suppliers.
12. Design a communications strategy that will present services available in a positive context.
13. Identify an opening date and invite people from various networks who can be supportive of the project, and take advantage of the services offered.
14. Complete budget that accurately outlines the total costs that will be incurred, in each expense category, for setting up and staffing the position for one year.

The policies and guidelines will:
- identify project objectives
- outline a process for regular measurement
- describe services that will be provided
- outline service standards and a process for regular measurement
- identify who is eligible for receiving those services
- evaluate the above against the policies and guidelines of 3 other organizations who carry out this type of work

Action # 2. *To create an on-going representative group of mentors to coach entrepreneurs.*

Steps
1. Identify 8 to 10 people
2. Develop a mandate
3. Identify a meeting space and facilitator
4. Develop a contact system

Resources required
1. Representation from various community groups
2. A coordinator or liaison person

Responsibility
Kathie Dickie and Bill Moore

Critical success factors

1. Minimum of six people with business experience representing various community groups that:
   - share a similar vision
   - have business connections
   - can work together and
   - benefit from association
2. Develop a mandate that:
   - reflects abilities
   - responds to community needs

Tahltan Joint Council recommendations for action

Action 1. We recommend action be taken to negotiate a relationship with outside economic development agencies to provide business supports for entrepreneurs.

Action 2. We recommend action be taken to support the growth and development of an adventure/cultural tourism industry by:

Action 3. We recommend action be taken to delegate a band employee (4 hours/week) in each of the 3 communities to identify mentors, organize those interested in business start-up, set up a peer lending circle, coordinate the visits of outside agencies, gather business support information and make it accessible to members, and document training needs and identify training opportunities.

Action 4. We recommend action be taken to develop economic development plans for each of the three communities.

Action 5. We recommend guidelines be developed on what types of businesses are suitable for home-based businesses.

Action 6. We recommend that a commercial code be developed to help determine:
   - the relationship between commercial businesses on reserve and the communities themselves, the access to community infrastructure, the lease conditions and length, and
   - the business licenses requirements, if necessary.

Action 7. We recommend the TJC change the mandate of the Tahltan Native Development Corporation to:

- function as an "anchor business" that will look for opportunities to "spin-off" private businesses,

- consider developing a process to assist employees to be able to slowly build their own skills and equity to allow them to become owner operators,

- look for opportunities for private partnerships with Nation members,

- identify training opportunities for those interested in private businesses, and

- maintain a liaison with the monthly business breakfast clubs, and provide information on the changing opportunities in the territory.

Action 8. We recommend community support for member businesses be raised through offering a workshop on growing a healthy, local economy.

Action 9. We recommend that actions be taken to access training, initiate a skill transfer strategy, and generally build capacity of individuals/entrepreneurs to take advantage of the Tahltan Forest Licence. We recognize this forest license is in the position to be an "anchor industry" that can support individuals in related business activities and at the same time ensure there is communal benefit realized from the Forest licence Joint Venture.