

“Nez Keh bulh nus ts’edulh”

“We are walking into the future with our children”



Off-Reserve Aboriginal Action Plan

Better
services
that do not
re-invent
the wheel

What is your vision for
urban aboriginal people?

To have a real
community that has a
healthy relationship between
the Indigenous + Non-Indigenous
worlds.

More
Pot Luck's
in Urban
Areas

I feel most of
Canada's way of
thinking and treating
our Native /metis
peoples goes back
to John A. MacDonald

Utilizing Elders
to teach youth.



"Nez Keh bulh nus ts'edulh"

**"We are walking into the
future with our children"**

Off-Reserve Aboriginal Action Plan

**Prayer by Edie Frederick, L'heidli T'enneh Nation
Language Keeper**

Thank you Creator,
For our ancestors for they left words to live by.
Thank you Creator,
For our Grandparents for they gave us life.
Thank you Creator,
For our Daughters & Sons for they give us hope.
Thank you Creator,
For our grandchildren for they give us joy.
Thank you Creator,
For the unborn for they give us survival.

Awet zeh



question 2

Collaborating allows us to share our ideas w/other thinkers - this can provide the opportunity to learn from one another & to have our ideas grow ~~from~~ by learning from others, who can help expand & better articulate our thoughts & ideas. To know we're not alone.

high school
so they learn
they can
contribute
positively

2) How will
collaboration
improve the outcomes
u need to realize
your vision.
The city of PG.
local territory nations
and every aboriginal
ppl (children, elders)

more homes

Question 2:

Without a mutual
respect + understanding
of one another, the
healing process becomes
difficult + stagnant.
We must come together
in order to move forward.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The Prince George Native Friendship Centre (PGNFC) facilitated the development of an **Off-Reserve Aboriginal Action Plan (ORAAP)** as part of our ongoing commitment to urban Aboriginal people in the Prince George area; this process included First Nations, Métis and Inuit participants. Partnership with the provincial Ministry of Aboriginal Relations and Reconciliation, Aboriginal Affairs and Northern Development Canada, Métis Nation of BC, BC Association of Aboriginal Friendship Centres, and local government was key to undertaking this work.

The PGNFC has long recognized that more collaboration is necessary to develop an effective plan that will endure and have the commitment of key players in our community. To do this, urban Aboriginal people need to take the lead without waiting for government to tackle issues like streamlining services, reducing redundancy and competitiveness, increasing cooperation and support, and reducing polarization, to name a few. The PGNFC engaged with community members with no predetermined outcomes. We facilitated an engagement process that set the stage to explore our collective community potential by tapping into the vast wisdom and history of urban Aboriginal people and the organizations that care for their interests and well being.



Working in collaboration with community, we identified ways that we can work together to improve the lives of urban Aboriginal people residing in Prince George. From these efforts a framework for a plan for action was developed. The action plan will be used to promote collaborative strategies to funders. Also, we hope this work will create a legacy of strong relationships and understanding amongst community partners – shared values that will assist everyone and extends beyond the implementation of this action plan.

To begin with and prior to any implementation, the PGNFC's working protocol with the Lheidli T'enneh Nation was followed up with in meetings between their leadership and the Métis Nation of BC. From there, we consulted with local language keeper, Edith Frederick, who shared her gift of traditional language and collectively, we conceived our vision statement of: **"Nez Key bulh nus ts'edulh"** – translated as **"We are walking into the future with our children"**.



Throughout the process the focus was kept on knowledge sharing, friendship, kinship, inclusiveness, and traditional teachings. All five of the engagement sessions followed cultural protocols, storytelling, cultural teachings, sharing and gift giving, eating together, drumming and singing. This proved to be a recipe for success with full to overflow turnouts at each event. Our four **8th Fire Cultural Nights** had **240** participants in total, which included children, youth, Elders, and community members. The "**Circle of Leadership Community Engagement Gathering**" had over **60** participants representing a cross section of the community and leadership.

The "**Nez Key bulh nus ts'edulh**" process consisted of four **8th Fire Cultural Nights** that invited the grassroots urban Aboriginal community of Prince George to come together for knowledge sharing, friendship, and kinship. In order to reach a broad cross section of leaders/decision makers, and managers of agencies, governments, and industry, a "**Circle of Leadership Community Engagement Gathering**" was held. The purpose was, first and foremost, to approach all activities through a cultural lens in order to receive information needed to achieve results.

From the outset the main values of the "**Nez Key bulh nus ts'edulh**" process were about inclusiveness, cultural teachings, friendship and kinship; the process was about relationship building and understanding of agencies, nations, and governments in Prince George. It was designed for those who wanted change and action.

The process outcomes and questions were designed to share the experiences of the participants by asking challenging questions and recording the outcomes. Many of the questions used were based on the ORID model (objective, reflective, interpretive, and decisional). Using this method assists in making connections to who, what, where, when, and why, while identifying the purpose and resources to carry out these activities. The major areas identified in the workshop were, including but not limited to, the following elements:

1. Vision
2. Collaboration
3. Cultural Practices
4. Capacity Building & Education
5. Communication & Outreach
6. Unity
7. Elders
8. Youth



Next Steps

From the knowledge shared by those who attended "**Nez Key bulh nus ts'edulh**", some of the main themes that rose to the top were:

- 1) **Strategic Communications Plan** – the "**Nez Key bulh nus ts'edulh**" must have an effective communications strategy in order to maintain success especially when difficult decisions have to be made and resources become fewer. To this end it is recommended that a protocol be developed for reporting back to the stakeholders. Also, the plan must address the need to interface with the

Urban Aboriginal pop
→ vision:
• coming together in spirit - protecting, advocating and supporting each other - regardless of nation -

more acceptance
look past my skin color

Where are the white people?
I think if they will not come to us we must come to them.

The gov't are railroading our children through the school system.
→ Catch the kids who fall through that crack

grassroots community members, local First Nations, and community agencies with a stake in the process.

2) **Traditional Cultural Engagements** – “**Nez Key bulh nus ts’edulh**” should consider continuing with an **8th Fire Cultural Night** model of engagement. This was a defining moment in the process; the focus on knowledge sharing, friendship, and kinship was extremely powerful. Also the cultural aspects of respecting local protocols, eating together, drumming and singing are very powerful tools for building bridges. These facilitated discussions proved to be valuable and informative to the engagement process.

3) **Strengthening collaborative relationships** – A timely follow-up of “**Circle of Leadership Community Engagement Gathering**” to bring the leadership back together is essential to keep the momentum moving forward. The leadership forum idea should consider meeting at least four times per year to demonstrate commitment and to measure success.

4) **Capacity development** – When dealing with such serious Aboriginal issues, which literally touch on nearly every aspect of urban life, from health and welfare, justice and housing, to training and jobs, it is important to recognize that the capacity gap is enormous and can be overwhelming. It is essential to conduct a complete gap analysis and priority setting exercise. The exercise must be mindful not to build an extensive wish list but to reflect the various aspirations of the “**Nez Key bulh nus ts’edulh**.” A series of engagements with a single purpose (i.e. capacity assessment, housing, justice, etc.) may be an option.

5) **Unity** – Almost all of the participants spoke to the need for unity in the community. There are long standing conflicts within the community’s service providers; these conflicts will not go away unless resolved in a meaningful fashion. Many participants wanted to see a unity protocol developed to ensure transparency and accountability.

6) **Youth & Elders** – Presently there are a number of youth and Elder organizations functioning in the Prince George region; these groups are vital to the success of “**Nez Key bulh nus ts’edulh**” in moving forward. Additional resources will be required to keep these groups functioning while allowing them to recruit new members. Also coordination amongst the groups is necessary and can easily be accomplished through the continuation of this “**Nez Key bulh nus ts’edulh**” model of engagement.



In closing, we would like to acknowledge all of the people who showed their trust and support for the ORAAP initiative by their participation in the community engagement gatherings. The focus of our engagement was on knowledge sharing, friendship and kinship; this way of bringing people together proved to be a success as evidenced by the turnout at each of the five events we hosted. You showed your **friendship** by sharing your stories, your laughter and in some cases your tears; you shared your **teachings** (knowledge) to us through your language, your songs and your personal voice; you shared your **kinship** by taking the time to come out and speak about the things that really matter to you and about the issues that impact you and your family as urban Aboriginal people living in Prince George.



Thank you to everyone, for your respectful engagement and for honouring this process as we all worked toward the collective goal of improving the lives of urban Aboriginal people in our community. This process was not without its' challenges, however we were able to come together in the spirit of friendship, knowledge sharing and kinship in hopes of making a difference as we walk into the future with our children. In friendship.

I believe an urban
aboriginal vision is
like the medicine
wheel we need all
people / color / ideology
to speak with one

Question 1

- To see the full potential reached through understanding their identity by means of learning their culture + language. To share their culture with one another + to live a clean life.
- To not only know their own ways, but to also learn contemporary ways + to be prevalent in both aspects of life. This is how we will protect ourselves while being true to who we are.
- To return to the two-row wampum belt

Be able to
walk into a
store without
feeling like I
am being
watched

To be known
Acknowledged
Accepted
Identified
To Have a Voice



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Off-Reserve Aboriginal Action Plan

To review the full report, please visit
the Prince George Native Friendship
Centre’s website at:

www.pgnfc.com

Report released May 2013

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