



Canada-Aboriginal Peoples Roundtable

Métis National Council Life Long Learning Policy Paper



**November 13th & 14th, 2004
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1. Who are the Métis?

The Métis Nation emerged as a distinct Aboriginal people in west central North America prior to Canada's crystallization as a nation-state. The Métis Nation's Homeland consists of the three Prairie provinces and includes parts of Ontario, British Columbia, the Northwest Territories and the northern United States.

Today, the citizens of the Métis Nation are represented through democratically elected, province-wide Métis governments from Ontario westward. These Métis governments include the Métis Nation of Ontario, Manitoba Métis Federation, Métis Nation – Saskatchewan and Métis Provincial Council of British Columbia. Since 1983, these five bodies, acting as Governing Members, have come together to form the Métis National Council (MNC). Based on this mandate, the MNC represents the Métis Nation in Canada at the national and international level.

In September 2002, the Métis Nation adopted a national definition for citizenship where "Métis means a person who self-identifies as Métis, is distinct from other Aboriginal peoples, is of Historic Métis Nation ancestry, and it accepted by the Métis Nation." Based on this definition, the MNC estimates there are approximately 350,000 to 400,000 Métis Nation citizens in Canada.

2. What is meant by "Life Long Learning"?

Conceptually, the stages of the Life Long Learning continuum involves:

1. **Early childhood development** (including prenatal) to ensure that Aboriginal children entering school are ready and able to learn;
2. **K-12 schooling** with support for Aboriginal children to stay in and succeed in primary and secondary school so that they can proceed to post-secondary or trades education if they so choose;
3. **Post Secondary Education** including (university, colleges, technical & apprenticeship training) to ensure that Aboriginal people can access professions and vocations of their choosing; and
4. **Ongoing education and skills development** to ensure that Aboriginal people can access learning supports to compete in the Canadian labour market (including work-based learning and active measures under social assistance).

This paper examines each of those four areas from a Métis perspective particularly the implications affecting: Jurisdiction and Control; Improving Access and Integration; and Sustainability and Capacity Building.



3. What are the rights of the Métis?

Over the years a body of legal instruments have been developed to address basic human rights, including protection of the right of all peoples to self-determination. This right includes the rights of the child, which have been guaranteed through international, national and provincial laws, policies and practices, including but not limited to the following:

International Law: *International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights, 1966 (Article 1.1)*. All peoples have the right of self-determination. By virtue of that right, they freely determine their political status and freely pursue their economic, social and cultural development. They have the right to determine who the individual members of their society are, and how their children are raised. The Métis Nation has this right based on the customs, traditions and practices of Métis people themselves.

National Law: *Government of Canada's Policy Approach to Implementation of the Inherent Right and Negotiation of Aboriginal Self-Government*. The Government of Canada recognizes the inherent right of self-government as an existing right within section 35 of the *Constitution Act, 1982*. Recognition of the inherent right is based on the view that the Aboriginal peoples in Canada have the right to govern themselves in relation to matters that are internal to their communities, integral to their unique cultures, identities, traditions, languages and institutions, and with respect to their special relationship to the land and their resources.

4. Who has jurisdiction and responsibility for Métis?

Before examining each of these areas, it is important to address the larger issue of who has jurisdiction and responsibility for Métis. The jurisdiction issue has been the single greatest impediment to progress in developing a modern set of institutions, programs and services to meet the needs of the Métis. Coming to an understanding of this issue will enable all parties to set in place the appropriate planning and developmental initiatives so that we can achieve transformative positive change in the lives of Métis people.

It has been and remains the longstanding position of the MNC that the federal government has jurisdiction and responsibility with respect to the Métis Nation by virtue of section 91(24) of the *Constitution Act, 1867*. With this jurisdiction comes an obligation to act.

The federal government maintains a legal position that Métis are not included within s. 91(24) of the *Constitution Act, 1867* and that provinces have primary jurisdiction and responsibility for Métis. At the federal level four major departments deliver programming in the life long learning area through 34 programs or initiatives. The majority of these programs are directed at First Nations and Inuit. Although the federal government does provide some modest programming to Métis it has done so under status blind pan-Aboriginal program authorities, the results of which remain unaccounted for. Therefore, the current range of programs and



services directed to Métis and off-reserve Aboriginal people is driven by existing federal policy considerations rather than from any specific legal obligations to the Métis as an Aboriginal people. As a result of this approach, the federal government provides a limited number of programs and services to Métis and off-reserve Aboriginal people, scattered across several areas of the life long learning continuum primarily on the basis of their status as economically disadvantaged Canadians.

Provincial governments take an opposing position with respect to responsibility for off-reserve Aboriginal peoples. By and large, all provinces maintain the position that the federal government continues to have full jurisdiction for all Aboriginal peoples, while maintaining education as a provincial authority.

Flowing from this interpretation, there has been ever-increasing pressure from among the provinces for the federal government to assume financial responsibility for off-reserve Aboriginal peoples, including program and service delivery. The *Report to Premiers by the Ministerial Council on Social Policy Reform and Renewal* reiterated the traditional provincial position that the federal government assume “...full responsibility for all programming for Aboriginal people, both on- and off-reserve”.

Canada claims that it provides indirect support to Métis through fiscal transfers to the provinces under the Canadian Social and Health Transfer (CHST). The CHST is the largest federal transfer program to the provinces and territories. Payments are made under the authority of the *Fiscal Arrangements Act* and target specific areas: health care, post-secondary education, early childhood development, social assistance and social services. The CHST is a block fund that the provinces and territories are free to spend in these areas largely as they see fit. In some areas like ECD, the federal government has imposed reporting requirements to ensure these resources are spent in agreed upon areas.

Unfortunately, few if any provinces use these CHST resources for programming targeted at the Métis. Moreover, Métis governments from Ontario westward are currently disregarded as possible partners in delivery to improve the lives of their people and are relegated to the status of possible “organizations” that may be eligible to apply for or to act as an agent for provincially designed initiatives.

While provincial and federal leaders often say they want to “move past jurisdictional wrangling” there is currently no forum to multilaterally address Métis jurisdictional issues. Further, over the past decade, many well-intentioned initiatives have quickly deteriorated into posturing exercises leading to the status quo.



5. Recognition of Métis jurisdiction and responsibility

Over the years, Métis have made it clear that any further expansion of programs and services must be undertaken directly with the representative and accountable Métis governments and their respective institutions rather than on a pan-Aboriginal off-reserve basis. That is not to deny support for other Aboriginal people off-reserve, only that Métis believe they have the jurisdiction and responsibility to address the social and economic development needs of their people.

The Métis take this position not because they wish to build their own institutions for the sake of building them but rather because they believe that it is the most efficient and accountable way to make meaningful changes in the life chances of Métis people. Accordingly, Métis believe that the best way to proceed on the issue of jurisdiction and responsibility is to proceed on the basis that Métis have the jurisdiction and responsibility for the provision of life long learning services to Métis people.

6. The need for cooperation and financial support of all jurisdictions

Métis also recognize however, that the federal, provincial (including their municipal orders of government) play a meaningful role in improving the lives of Métis people. Métis believe that the federal and provincial governments can use their spending power authorities to assist Métis meet the social and economic needs of their people. The MNC is prepared to proceed, on a cooperative basis, to ensure that the needs of the Métis people are met through modern and efficient delivery structures that are respectful of the rights and interests of the Métis people and its governing institutions. Métis believe that the current array of programs and services must be adjusted, strengthened and as necessary expanded or augmented to address Métis needs. Métis do not seek handouts from either level of government. They do as Canadian taxpayers however, call upon other levels of government to make key strategic investments in the Métis people.

7. The importance of early childhood development and day care

There is now an overwhelming consensus that early childhood development is considered the most important stage in building a learning foundation for all later learning. Studies indicate that early intervention is a much better investment than remedial or compensatory interventions in human capital later in life. The federal government acknowledged in 2001 that early childhood learning supports and services were uneven in quality and availability in its consultations on the Innovation Agenda.

Métis Aboriginal Human Resources Development Agreements (AHRDA) voiced similar concerns in the Aboriginal Human Resource Development Strategy (AHRDS) renewal



process and unanimously called on the federal government to address Métis childcare needs. Even the federal government's life long learning policy paper acknowledged that:

Parental and community supports are equally important factors in ensuring the developmental foundation needed in early childhood. There is abundant evidence that children who have experienced high quality early childhood development programs learn better in school. Early childhood development programs, such as prenatal health programs, Head Start programs and quality childcare programs (among others) are highly effective means of ensuring children get the best possible start in life, and ensuring school readiness, by addressing developmental and cultural needs in the early years, if administered in culturally sensitive and targeted ways.

The research and statistical evidence available suggest that the overall regime of federal, provincial, territorial and Aboriginal services and programs currently supporting Aboriginal learners is not producing acceptable results. While significant progress has been made in improving life chances for Aboriginal children and youth and Aboriginal educational attainments in general, it is not occurring at a pace comparable to that of non-Aboriginal Canadians nor in a way that meets the cultural and other learning needs of Aboriginal peoples. This suggests that a concerted coordinated effort by all partners is required to ensure consistent access to culturally relevant quality programs and services and improved learning outcomes throughout the continuum.

The Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) has also joined the chorus of voices suggesting that Canada's future competitiveness was threatened by its inability to address the learning needs of Canada's children. The OECD called early childhood initiatives as "seriously under-funded patchwork quilt of money wasting programs that provide little more than glorified babysitting". This stinging rebuke has created greater urgency to discussions being held by the Honourable Ken Dryden, the Minister for Social Development in his efforts to establish a new \$5 billion child care initiative.

8. Métis early childhood development and day care services

The lack of a consensus on jurisdiction for off-reserve Aboriginal people has to some extent restricted the federal government's willingness to address the needs of Métis children and families. This is reflected in the AHRDS where federal childcare resources and early childhood development resources are devoted exclusively for First Nations and Inuit.

The federal government takes the position that provinces are responsible for off-reserve children and that the joint implementation of the National Children's Benefit with provinces has freed up savings which provinces should invest in off-reserve childcare. The federal government also takes the position that off-reserve Aboriginal children have access to the 2.2 billion already allocated to provinces under the Federal-Provincial-Territorial Early Childhood Development Agreement. Although the federal government has placed reporting



conditions on the provinces to account for this money (moved through the CHST), no one at the federal level monitors whether Aboriginal people off-reserve, or specifically the Métis, are obtaining an equitable allocation. Nor has there been any indication from the federal government that the new \$5 billion earmarked for the provinces to establish day care spaces will have an Aboriginal leg, and within this, a Métis-specific set-aside.

However, in spite of the federal government's narrow view on its jurisdictional responsibilities, Health Canada does provide some \$25 million to support Off-Reserve Aboriginal Head Start initiatives. This early development initiative was lauded by Métis on its introduction, but its reliance on a pan-Aboriginal implementation approaches has restricted its effectiveness and introduction into the Métis community. Moreover, the modest size of the program has limited its availability to Métis who make up over a third of the total off-reserve Aboriginal population (and in excess of 50% in the prairie provinces). Even by its own admission, Health Canada has indicated that the current off-reserve program only addresses 7.6% of 3-5 year old off-reserve Aboriginal children (114 preschool centres servicing some 3,500 children).

It is not known the extent to which Métis participate in the existing programs. Statistics Canada has indicated however, that “increasingly Aboriginal children living in non-reserve areas are attending preschool programs specifically designed for Aboriginal children. Among those 6 year old at the time of the 2001 Aboriginal peoples Survey, 16% had attended a preschool program specifically designed for Aboriginal children, which is four times the proportion of the 14 year olds. However, even among the six year olds, it is still only a small minority who attended a preschool program specifically designed for Aboriginal children”.

9. Kindergarten to grade 12

Métis children are not succeeding in the K-12 system to the same extent as other Canadians. While Métis educational attainment is better than for First Nations on reserve and Inuit, Statistics Canada has indicated that in 2001, 48% of Off-Reserve Aboriginal people aged 20-24 did not finish high school compared to 26% of non-Aboriginal youth. There can be no question that the drop out rates of Métis children can be traced back to:

- The failure to recognize the unique experience and cultural knowledge of the Métis people and the contribution of the Métis Nation to the Canadian state;
- The absence of Métis-specific curriculum and pedagogy which promotes and enhances general learning through the inclusion of Métis knowledge and tradition;
- The absence of adequate learning supports in the pre-school years (early childhood development education and dedicated supports);
- The preponderance of poverty that many Métis people find themselves in (there is a positive correlation between low educational attainment and poverty with Statistics



Canada showing that children of persons living below the low income cut off are more likely to repeat a grade than those above the cut off);

- A lack of a learning culture and parental attachment to the school system (this includes the lack of parental achievement within the school system and the attendant lack of emphasis parents put on reading and instilling the value of education in their children); and
- The absence of community supports to facilitate the transitions for children moving from elementary to secondary school environments (Statistics Canada has identified that the majority of Off-Reserve Aboriginal students are dropping out in grades 9 and 10).

Internal Métis consultations revealed the importance of Métis involvement in the area. The following consensus statement, adopted by the MNC life long learning planning committee, reflects the importance of the nation, community and family in this area:

We don't want to just exist; we want to flourish. The community must be involved in every aspect of children's learning; that means the Nation as a political entity, the grassroots people, everybody. We want to have that control. We want to have our own say. We want to deliver our own programs. We want to perpetuate Métis culture and Métis being.

The federal background paper produced for the roundtable underscores the importance of family and community. It notes:

The roles of family and the community are known to be important factors influencing learning outcomes for children. In many Aboriginal societies, the involvement of parents and community are considered essential in the development of intellectual and cognitive abilities, the transmission of Aboriginal languages and cultures, the full emotional and spiritual development of the child and for the child to learn how to behave socially.

It is clear that not enough is being done to address the educational supports of Métis children. Métis are not by and large seeking to replace the existing K-12 school systems, although the creation of alternative systems may be required to make substantive movement on this matter. Increased accountability to the Métis community may reduce the need for creation of alternative systems, although a system of accountability to the Métis community must be implemented as part of any policy direction. They do however; want to see existing systems achieve positive results. Métis are seeking to increase their capacity in facilitating the educational needs of Métis children. Métis seek to do this in concert with existing provincial educational authorities. Encouraging parental and community involvement in pursuing greater results is an important objective. The MNC believes a good starting point would be the establishment of province wide Métis education bodies, accountable to and formed by the



Métis Nation's government, that are charged with the responsibility of pursuing better quality of education for Métis children.

In existing systems, Métis also seek greater participation both by way of greater input into the work of school boards but also with a capacity to facilitate best practice approaches for keeping kids in school and improving the quality of education that Métis kids have access to. To facilitate leading edge educational initiatives, Métis are seeking a Métis Nation-specific Education Active Measures Program, overseen by the MNC, that can be used to support innovative measures to improve the quality of Métis education and to achieve better educational outcomes. The fund would enable the Métis Nation to develop and implement strategies to address Aboriginal elementary and secondary education concerns and to monitor and evaluate their effectiveness over time. It would also enhance the relationship between existing institutions and increase accountability of those institutions to the Métis community.

In terms of future systems development, the MNC seeks a national strategy to address the current crisis caused by the specific failures of provincial educational authorities through the establishment of pilot K-3 schools in specific Métis communities, under the control of Métis community educational authorities. These pilot schools should be built upon demonstrated success and need, and in conjunction with existing Métis teacher education programs, such as the Gabriel Dumont Institute Saskatchewan Urban Native Teacher Education Program.

At the federal/provincial/territorial level, the MNC seeks to engage in an ongoing dialogue with Federal/Provincial/Territorial Ministers of Education to seek collaborative measures and strategies to address Métis educational issues and solutions through a national Métis-specific multilateral process.

10. Métis post-secondary education institutions

Métis do not have access to the post-secondary education support services provided to First Nations and Inuit. The combination of rising tuition and the fact that majority of Métis income levels are lower than other Canadians, has created severe impediments to Métis participation in post-secondary institutions. The implementation of the AHRDS has done little to address this issue as these resources are not targeted to support the post-secondary needs of Métis people. Métis seek to expand access by way of direct student support in the form of bursaries and through the expansion of current Métis post-secondary institutions.

The Métis Nation is currently involved in post-secondary education through the existence of Métis-specific institutional development, through the Gabriel Dumont Institute of Métis Studies and Applied Research in Saskatchewan (GDI) and through the Louis Riel Institute (LRI) in Manitoba. These two institutional models set the stage for future involvement of the Métis Nation in addressing the issues set out by the Prime Minister in the Speech from the Throne. "to ensure that a lack of financial resources will not be allowed to deny, to those with



the motivation and capacity, the opportunity to learn and aspire to excellence in pursuing a skilled trade, a community college diploma, or university degree.” The success of these two institutions cannot be matched by any other institution in Canada, in terms of addressing Métis specific issues.

The limitations of programming options available to Métis students through these successful models, is part of the on-going issues facing the Métis Nation. The Gabriel Dumont Institute needs to expand, through the Gabriel Dumont College, into Arts Education programming, setting the stage for Métis students to enter specific professional colleges, having secured a basic Arts Education in a highly supportive and culturally appropriate curriculum and environment.

There are a number of significant factors influencing the lack of involvement of Métis people in university education and those levels of skill development set out in Canada’s Knowledge and Skills Agenda. Lack of access to post-secondary funding, and conflicting or lack of funding arrangements and underlying assumptions of the Canada Students Loans program are two core issues.

11. Expansion of Métis student bursaries and scholarship

With respect to bursaries and scholarships, each MNC Governing Member has established scholarship & bursary trusts at varying levels from Ontario westward. These include:

- **Ontario** - Métis Nation of Ontario Trust: \$4.2M in trust and provides bursaries annually to Métis student at 32 different colleges and universities in Ontario;
- **Manitoba** - Manitoba Métis Federation Trust: The MMF, in partnership with Brandon University, Collège universitaire de Saint-Boniface, University of Manitoba and University of Winnipeg now has over \$4M in the trust. Over the past four years, over 200 Métis students have been awarded with scholarships and bursaries from this trust;
- **Saskatchewan** - Gabriel Dumont Institute: As a part of the Gabriel Dumont Institute, a single scholarship program exists, namely the Napoleon Lafontaine Scholarship Fund, to help Métis students in various programs to cover their educational costs. There would be a need to establish a post-secondary fund within GDI specifically for undergraduate and graduate levels to ensure Métis participation in university programming, with scholarship amounts in keeping with tuition and living costs;
- **Alberta** - Belcourt-Brousseau Trust: A trust in the amount of approximately \$8M has been established which Métis students can apply to for attending educational institution in Alberta. The trust has a good relationship with the Métis Nation of Alberta; and
- **British Columbia**: No existing trust at this time.



The MNC is requesting that Canada enhance these trusts as well as provide resources for the creation of a trust in British Columbia by way of an endowment to generate increased Métis access to post secondary institutions.

12. The need for flexibility in the AHRDS to address post-secondary needs

Currently, the AHRDS provides opportunity in some provinces to provide support for students in their last year of studies or partial financial support in their final year of studies, having set a policy of funding only those programs of 52 weeks or less. Further, funding obtained under the AHRDS conflicts with the criteria of the Canada Students Loan program, instituting a dollar for dollar reduction in allowable loans. The Canada Student Loans program is designed as a supplementary loans program, which at its core is fundamentally wrong, as it relates to access by Métis students. Most Métis students do not have other financial support to contribute to their education. Canada Student Loan becomes the primary financing for Métis students. Further, Métis students who begin their studies from a position of poverty, end up with student loans in excess of \$40,000, impeding the transition to employment and breaking the poverty cycle. Métis students with a university degree in education become working class poor. Canada Student Loan program needs to be redesigned to reflect the financial reality of Métis students and to become complementary to and supportive of the new policy and program directions, such as the AHRDS. The Métis Nation wants to expand the AHRDS model to include university education funding.

13. Ongoing Métis education and skills development

The federal government has recognized that individual Canadians need to be equipped with the tools necessary to participate in an ever-changing workforce and to develop a culture of lifelong learning. The economy of the future will, by all projections, require an ever increasing and changing level of skills from the workforce. Workers must be given the opportunity to adapt to changing technology and skill requirements, through adult learning. As the federal government's Innovations Strategy acknowledged in 2002, Canada currently ranks very poorly in the resources devoted by both the public and private sector to adult workforce learning.

The federal government has also recognized that Canada's demographic profile is that of an aging population. The post-war baby boom came to an end in the early 1960's, and the baby boom generation is now approaching retirement age. Without immigration, Canadian population growth is not sufficient to even replace the existing generation. Indications are therefore that labour shortages will develop as the baby boom generation retires from the labour force.

Métis and other Aboriginal peoples have pressed the federal government to work with Aboriginal peoples to meet these emerging labour market needs through additional labour



market assistance directed at Aboriginal people. Although the AHRDA program provides financial assistance to assist Métis to obtain the necessary training to enter in the labour market, the program has not kept pace with the growth of the Métis population nor with the inflationary factors that have over time eroded the financial base for the program. Moreover the AHRDA program was never designed to assist working Métis populations to make life long or career adjustments to keep pace with the ever changing Canadian economy. Nor was it designed to assist Métis obtain post-secondary assistance. Consequently, any new focus on ongoing education and skills adjustments must take place in the context of new program elements. For Métis, these additional program elements should be built on the existing Métis Nation AHRDA platforms.

However, Métis need not only be streamed into training sectors. Métis people should have access to a full range of educational options, including support for people with disabilities, and those who seek high technology education and long term professional colleges and professions, such as those set out in Canada's Innovation Strategy – Knowledge for the Future. The skills agenda is now reaching into K-12 to promote the transition from high school to skills training. It also must be ensured that Métis students are counseled into a full range of options, including university education. Funding must be in place to ensure that this option is attainable, not just a poster and a promise.

Literacy initiatives are also very important in furthering the education of Métis people. Although Métis have limited access to resources provided by the National Literacy Secretariat, these resources are not sufficient nor is the secretariat equipped to deal with the deep seated literacy problems that are present with the Métis community.



Life Long Learning Policy Sessions Recommendations

Métis people believe that the needs of their children and families are as equally as important as other Aboriginal peoples. They are convinced in the utility and value of addressing the early child-hood development needs of Métis children and they believe that the establishment of day care services for Métis will improve labour market outcomes and lead to better earned incomes for Métis people. Métis believe that the Life Long Learning planning approach can result in better quality of life outcomes for Métis. The MNC also underscores the need to take a cooperative and participatory approach with other orders of government in developing a comprehensive system of supports to sustain life long learning for Métis people.

Jurisdiction and Control

The establishment of new federally funded early childhood development and day care program and related initiatives should be undertaken on the basis that Métis gain full access to existing and new initiatives and that Métis governing institutions have jurisdiction and responsibility to delivery these programs and services, regardless of residency (urban, northern, rural).

Métis believe that other orders of government and their institutions have a role to play particularly in the area of K-12 schooling systems. In many of these areas, Métis seek to address the special needs requirements of Métis children and youth through clearly defined program and service initiatives undertaken by Métis institutions. Métis seek to engage provinces and territories through a Métis-specific dialogue into the needs of the Métis students and engaging Métis Nation institutions in conducting research into the specific challenges and solutions available to existing and new institutions.

Métis believe that there is a need to address the issues of post secondary education through the expansion of funding support for students delivered through current Métis education institutions (such as the Gabriel Dumont Institute of Métis Studies and Applied Research and Louis Riel Institute) and Métis scholarship and bursary foundations.

The MNC believes that additional resources should be identified to support the work of Métis AHRDA's and in particular to work with the large number of Métis youth. In the area of ongoing educational and skills upgrading (including literacy initiatives) the MNC believes that it is important to build upon the established Métis education and labour market training institutions by profiling targeted funding assistance to these areas. This should be over and above the existing allocations.



Improving Access and Integration

The Métis National Council believes it is important to participate in ongoing discussions relating to matters affecting Métis throughout the life long learning continuum. In particular, the Métis National Council is seeking to participate in federal/provincial/territorial discussions relating to the social union framework in Canada through the establishment of a Métis-specific multilateral table on Life Long Learning.

Métis should be provided with an equitable allocation of federal/provincial childcare resources whether through access to a new federally funded program for Métis or through a dedicated Métis carve out of increased CHST transfers to provinces. Métis are seeking the establishment of an integrated Métis early childhood development and childcare initiative using the Aboriginal Human Resource Development Agreement platform as the basis for its program and service infrastructure. Building upon the successful Métis AHRDA program will provide the necessary aggregation of administrative capacity and maximize benefits for Métis children and families, promoting Métis culture, language, values and responsibility.

Métis are seeking greater participation in the K-12 school system to develop capacity to support the needs of Métis children at the elementary and secondary levels of the educational system. Métis believe that this can be accomplished in part through the establishment of specific Métis curriculum, development of Métis authorities, valuing Métis Nation knowledge, values and skills, pedagogical environments that respect this authority and developing the capacity of the Métis community to engage in long term strategies and visions. Métis provincial education commissions should be established would work with provincial education authorities and public and private school boards to meet the needs of Métis children.

To facilitate leading edge educational initiatives, Métis are seeking an education active measures program that can be used to support innovative measures to improve the quality of Métis education and to achieve better educational outcomes. This will enable Métis to generate best practice models that can be applied more broadly where proven effective.

Sustainability and Capacity Building

Métis believe that Canada and the provinces need to make a substantial investment in building a workable and practical set of developmental institutions serving the interests of the Métis peoples. This will require investments in infrastructure (particularly in the ECD area) as well as investments in human capital. The investment in human capital is necessary to build or strengthen the network of institutions and personnel that operate within the lifelong learning area.



It is clear from all that we know about life long learning that specifically targeted investments are needed along the life long continuum and that these investments can help Canada meet its emerging labour market requirements. In building these institutions, resources and human capacity will be required to ensure that the programs and services effectively meet the needs of Métis people. Métis believe the recent approach taken in the health care area to promote health careers should be extended to early childhood development workers including measures designed to expand capacity within current day cares to create developmental programs within the day care sector.