



Workforce Connex

Regional Report

**London Forum: Building Strong
Private Sector and Aboriginal Partnerships**

April 27, 2006
London, Ontario



Acknowledgement

The Aboriginal Human Resource Development Council of Canada would like to acknowledge and thank members of the Ontario regional planning committee who dedicated their time and talent to help make the London Workforce Connex forum a successful event.

London Workforce Connex Planning Committee

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- Caroline Jones, Ontario Federation of Indian Friendship Centres, Grand River Employment and Training
- Larry Bellerose, Ontario Métis Aboriginal Association
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- Keith Rogers, Aamjiwnaang First Nations
- Jean Marie Allard, Miikana Partnership
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ABORIGINAL HUMAN RESOURCE DEVELOPMENT COUNCIL OF CANADA
CONSEIL POUR LE DÉVELOPPEMENT DES RESSOURCES HUMAINES
AUTOCHTONES DU CANADA

Canada

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Message CEO/President

Aboriginal Human Resource Development Council of Canada

KELLY LENDSAY

June 2006

Dear Workforce Connex participant,

It is my pleasure to present the outcomes of the second forum in the national Workforce Connex series, which was held in London, Ontario on April 27, 2006.

The concept behind Workforce Connex came to life when the Honourable Claudette Bradshaw, former Minister of State (Human Resources Development), undertook a series of roundtables with stakeholders across the country in 2005. The principle purpose of the tour was to bring together Aboriginal Human Resource Development Agreement holders (AHRDAs), private sector and other key stakeholders to discuss better collaborations in Aboriginal labour force development.

Throughout this process the council emphasized the importance of collaboration, coordination and communication. And, to achieve results, the potential partners; government, the private sector, community groups and Aboriginal people, have to be committed to implement sustainable partnership strategies.

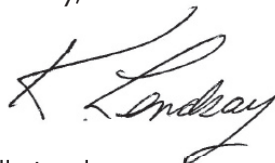
It was rewarding to see this vision unfold through active discussion among all participating stakeholder groups at the London forum. Participants were engaged in discussion and motivated to break down barriers and find solutions to resolve the current training, recruitment and retention issues of Aboriginal people.

It's now critical for the London Workforce Connex participants to continue dialogue and build strong and sustainable partnerships that will encourage and provide training and jobs for Aboriginal people in Southern Ontario and beyond.

The Aboriginal Human Resource Development Council of Canada (AHRDCC) will continue its work to facilitate discussion among trades and apprenticeship stakeholders to help build a skilled Aboriginal workforce that feeds the growing need of Canada's Aboriginal people and economy.

We would like to thank you, the participant, for your involvement in Workforce Connex London. The council looks forward to your continued involvement and added value in this multi-dimensional partnership initiative. Your role is critical!

Sincerely,



Kelly Lendsay
President/CEO
Aboriginal Human Resource Development Council of Canada

Executive Summary

Foreword

This report is a summary of findings from the London Workforce Connex forum. The findings outlined in this report are representative of the London participants and have not been altered or analyzed in any way.

This summary is focused on the input participants shared during interactive roundtable and plenary discussions. The findings will serve as a starting point for the development of new private sector/ Aboriginal employment centre partnerships in the London region, and for the development of the region's go-forward action plans.

The "AS SAID" reports from across the country will be analyzed for trends that will be captured in a comprehensive and integrated national report that will be used to shape initiatives in the Aboriginal Human Resource Development Council of Canada's (AHRDCC) national Aboriginal trades and apprenticeship strategy.

Synopsis

Workforce Connex is a national forum series that has been designed to increase Aboriginal participation in targeted trades employment and apprenticeship programs. The intent is for the forums to create, strengthen and leverage regional partnerships and collaborative networks that offer resolve to Aboriginal employment training, recruitment and retention issues.

On April 27, 2006, a group of committed stakeholders representing private sector employers, Aboriginal Human Resource Development Agreement holders (AHRDAs), government and educators convened at the London Workforce Connex forum to discuss ideas and commitments that will increase Aboriginal participation in trades and apprenticeship in the London region.

The discussion occurred in stages:

Part 1: Walk in my Shoes/Moccasins: In an effort to better understand each other's challenges, the conversation reversed roles whereby the AHRDAs were asked to walk in the shoes of business and the private sector were asked to walk in the moccasins of AHRDAs.

Part 2: Supply Side: Discussion here helped employers understand the foundation, role and employment challenges of the Aboriginal Human Resource Development Agreement holders (AHRDAs) and their clients in the London region.

Part 3: Demand Side: Discussion helped the AHRDA community get to know various employment trends and challenges that business and industry in the London area face.

Part 4: Connections: Supply Meets Demand: After both the supply and demand side of the labour market experience was revealed, the conversation focused on what works, what doesn't work and how to improve engagement between the supply side providers and the demand side employers in the future.

Part 5: Go Forward Commitments: Participants built a list of commitments to ensure the value of the day would be captured in ongoing dialogue that would help sustain long term partnerships.

Through the facilitation of local professionals, participants were able to share their ideas and help each other increase mutual understandings about the challenges and successes that need to be captured to increase Aboriginal participation in the London region labour market. There was a consensus in the room that there has to be increased momentum to drive the connections between the supply side (AHRDAs and Aboriginal organizations) and the demand side (employers).

It was recognized that the forum was a beginning; an opportunity to begin to actively and consciously propel the agenda forward in the London region. As a starting point, the following go-forward commitments were made at the forum:

- Site visit – 5th Wheel Training Institute
 - AHRDA to visit the training institute June 2, 2006.
- Send job posting to a single source.
- Exchange business cards now.
- Share success stories – 5th Wheel Training Institute.

- Next Ontario Federation of Indian Friendship Centres newsletter
 - announce Red Lake partnership.
- Organize a social gathering.
- Share information today to your board.
- Reach out to other AHRDAs (Suncor).
- AHRDCC: Ensure all contact information is correct and forwarded back to the participants.
- Follow-up meeting Kokee Kwe Occupational Skill Development Inc.
- Advance the creation of AHRDA *monster.com*
 - go to AHRDAs for a decision
 - Workopolis
 - combine/replace with AHRDA *monster.com*
 - increase marketing of the Inclusion Network.
- Share AHRDA best practices – May 31 meeting.
- Operating Engineerings Training Institute of Ontario host more employers information sessions.
- Develop a national Aboriginal employment award for both an employer and an employee.
- Business participants can be ambassadors in their company – Air Canada Jazz.
- Air Canada Jazz to get involved with job fairs.
- Shell Canada – examine hiring policy
 - contact Alberta.
- Shell Canada – needs cultural awareness.
- Blue Water Bridge 2007
 - hiring 20-25 students.
- Six Nations will organize a meeting for human resource practitioners in business & AHRDAs.
- The London organizing committee will convene to drive future action started by this forum.

The work done in London will be integrated into a single report that will be used to shape initiatives in the overarching Aboriginal Human Resource Development Council of Canada's national Aboriginal trades and apprenticeship strategy.

The Discussion

Participants discussed and shared ideas about how to increase Aboriginal participation in trades and apprenticeship in the London region. The dialogue and deliberations at the session are contained below.

PART 1: WALK IN MY SHOES

Purpose

Role reversal: Understanding both sides of the private sector/Aboriginal partnership equation.

Dialogue

Aboriginal Community in Business Shoes

What barriers exist that prevent connections with the Aboriginal community when it comes to attracting workers?

- Tim Horton's does not know much about the Aboriginal community:
 - do not know the contacts
 - spokespersons are difficult to reach
 - we want to hire people
 - do not want to sound discriminatory.
- From the employees perspective, there are:
 - communication and transportation barriers
 - lack of family/career roles
 - need to bring in experienced trainers, managers
 - engrained exclusions policy from 1867
 - social responsibility
 - "word or the government" what does this mean?.
- Attendance – do not have the needed skills and the Aboriginal worker does not show up.
- Stereotypical notions; where are they?
- Some may be intimidated.
- Thinking "diversity".
- First Nations are not on the list.
- Solutions are clinical.
- "Inherent racism" – need for diversity training.
- Need:
 - financial incentives for employers
 - programs like training "circle of trust"
 - physical engagement.
- Difficulty locating workers.
- Don't understand challenges of retention.
- Why do I care?
- Lack of experience of a worker.
- Trust factor as an employer may have preconceptions of stereotypes.
- Fear to approach an Aboriginal community.
- How do we get past union regulations to hire Aboriginal people?
- Who do we contact to get Aboriginal workers?
- Need programming dollars for small business.
- Lengthy interviewing process may be alienating to some Aboriginal people.
- Don't know cultural issues.
- Aboriginal workers have not been exposed to specialized jobs.
- Need to manage the perception of non-Aboriginal employers if targeting Aboriginal community for hiring new employees.

Business in Aboriginal Shoes

What barriers exist that prevent connections with the private sector when it pertains to creating employment opportunities for Aboriginal people?

- Who do I talk too?
- Where are the jobs?
- What are employers looking for?
- Need to get the AHRDA name out there – marketing.
- We are workforce ready but do employers know that?
- Need to increase industry's understanding of AHRDAs (who, where, what).
- What careers are available?
- Need to develop more solid relationships.
- Client relationship to goals.
- Need to break down stereotypes.
- Criminal records can be a barrier because more Aboriginal people have criminal records than non-aboriginal people.

What are some solutions to these barriers?

- Establish relationships and identify all jobs available.
- Establish relationships with colleges, universities and understand criteria – scholarship availability.
- Get the expectation of the career and job boundaries of positions better understood to improve client matching.
- Need to develop/share labour market research.
- Need to increase the understanding of the organization culture to help Aboriginal people transition into the workplace.

- Companies need to find out about AHRDAs and the Aboriginal community and people.
- Understand opportunities available in job placement (i.e., co-op, internships).
- Need to better market services AHRDAs deliver.
- Work with sector councils.

What are greatest challenges to making improvements?

- Opening communications.
- Not making the right contacts.
- Getting the businesses out of their comfort zone in hiring practices.

PART 2: SUPPLY SIDE

Barriers to Employment

What barriers exist for Aboriginal people wanting to secure employment with the private sector?

- Communication and focal points – who do we contact?
- We need to do things differently – top down approach.
- Attract: we can't do it.
- Need to accommodate the traditions and culture of the community with whom you are working.
- Need highly skilled trades people then link with colleges wish for nine per cent of Aboriginal students.
- Some clients have literacy deficiencies.
- Certification.
- No journey people in remote regions to indenture new journey people.

- Need clarity of roles.
- Some remote communities don't always support (have faith in) AHRDAs.
- Not all First Nations people are the same.
- Difficult to identify participants who want to work in financial (or any) industry.
- Representing government view to people.
- Networking:
 - need to get involved and enter Aboriginal communities
 - need to get out of our comfort zone.
- Afraid to do/say the wrong thing.
- Difficult to find the skills needed to fill positions.
- Difficult to get people to apply to the jobs.
- No role models/history within the business.
- Retention issues: need to develop strategies.
- Image issues.
- Issues with learning their communities to do the job required.
- Lack of educated and skilled applicants.
- Absenteeism from the job by Aboriginal workers.
- Aboriginal workers are not job-ready (i.e., no SIN, resume, etc.).
- Lack of marketing ability.
- Lack of communication skills.

Overcoming Barriers

What could be done differently to overcome these barriers? What advice do the AHRDAs have for business?

- Explain your processes to AHRDAs
- Need harassment policy.
- Get union involvement.

- Patience:
 - doesn't happen overnight
 - AHRDAs can work more closely with companies.
- Establish a relationship between AHRDAs and human resource specialty person.
- Provide on the job training.
- Treat Aboriginal candidates as you would your own staff.
- Make experience transferable.
- Have panel of business available to answer client's questions.
- Market their business to Aboriginal clients.
- Need buy-in from the top of the business (CEO/Board).
- Offer/market co-operative programs.
- Offer/market experiential programs.
- Need clearer language.
- Stop changing the rules.
- Hold meet/greet events – have employer recognition dinners and welcome them into the community.
- Contact potential employers and inform them of your workforce.
- Have employers talk to the youth about future opportunities.
- Market AHRDA successes.
- Work with Aboriginal organizations and universities/colleges to promote jobs and hiring students.
- Mentor businesses on cultural sensitivity issues.
- Provide cultural training to staff/co-workers/managers.
- Learn the cultural obligations of staff.

- Provide list of skills and which jobs are available three years in advance.
- Share knowledge on training institutions.
- Utilize our media sources to promote businesses and jobs.
- Ensure you are aware of who the Aboriginal people who work for you are and promote them (but do NOT make them feel / look like the "token Indian").
- Develop support programs.
- Provide peer group support.
- Create aboriginal sharing circle – BMO, RBC.
- Provide flexible time so that Aboriginal people can participate in their culture and customs.
- Hire/promote/retain summer students.
- Write/print newsletter articles on successes. Get them to industry.
- Address this issue from the beginning – identify problems, set up support systems, etc.
- Identify opportunities closer to home.
- Open communication
 - networking
 - information sharing.
- Business: making it a priority to recruit and retain Aboriginal workers.
- Leadership.
- Recognizing skilled workers – older workers, less education.
- Three mines & local college (Northwest Territories) contacted First Nation communities/bands with job opportunities.
- Establish a process.
- Train for job partnerships, colleges with apprenticeship programs should contact AHRDAs with promotional information.

Building Partnerships

What should be done first to build the partnership?

- Establishing trust.
- Eye contact.
- Recognize/respect cultural differences.
- Not all First Nations people are the same.
- Believe First Nations workers are committed, talented and capable.
- Adjust bereavement policy (cultural sensitivity).
- Recognize differences in values systems.
- Discuss economic concerns re: attendance.
- AHRDAs must remember that business exists to earn a profit.
- Employers reserve a right to enforce work policies.
- First Nations people have to understand employers' policies/values system.
- Toyota employment policy – a need to study, network and establish communication.
- Initiate collaborative relationship.
- Identify issues respective to both groups.
- Identify common goals.
- Identify working strategy.
- Appoint people "name names".
- Develop a strategic plan – A road plan: measure & evaluate.

Summary of Supply Issues

What should be done first to build the partnership?

- Identifying people – who do we talk to?
- Hiring criteria – looking for high skill adaptability.
- Need guidance on how to enter Aboriginal communities
 - requires improved information sharing.

- Need to better understand each other's culture.
- Afraid I may say the wrong thing when in the community.
- Find people with needed skills – not job ready.
- Need indentured journey people.
- Where do I send my job ads?
- No role models inside business
 - recognition of Aboriginal needs.
- Don't know about the AHRDA community.
- Retention – How to keep Aboriginal workers?
- Need to share best practices.
- Need policies for different work requirements.
- Wrong expectations by Aboriginal.
- Leaving the community for job is difficult.
- Culture differences – what are they?
- AHRDAs not getting job notices.

- Need to break a barrier of “social sciences” streaming toward more trades.
- Role models required.
- Support services for employees/trainees are needed.
- Build functional skills (particularly in remote communities).
- AHRDAs do have funding liability to provide support for a variety of certification programs.
- No follow-up – all talk (don't call us, we'll call you).
- Educational requirements – unrealistic expectations for positions.
- Business does not recognize Aboriginal employment groups.
- Dismissive attitude.
- Negative stereotypes.
- Underestimate our clients' abilities – do not recognize skills.
- Prejudice.
- Only willing to hire if they can get funding therefore creating unemployment due to lack of dollars to maintain.
- Dealing with misconceptions, lack/poor information.
- Educating the public repeatedly, seems like we are always doing.
- Labour pool is vast and employer does not have to hire our clients.
- Lack of genuine commitment.
- Effort to connect not recognized/acknowledged.

PART 3:

DEMAND SIDE

Barriers to Recruitment & Retention

What challenges and frustrations do companies face with regard to the recruitment and retention of an Aboriginal workforce?

- Making contacts by phone, email.
- Unions are barriers to Aboriginal participation.
- Students educated in First Nations schools
 - transition into public system somewhat difficult
 - lack of career guidance for First Nations students.
- More support for high school students is required.

Aboriginal Human Resource Development Agreement holders (AHRDAs) Role

How can AHRDAs help employers recruit and retain Aboriginal workers?

- How to dress for success.
- Communicate to employers about job/career opportunities.
- Clear directions by employees.
- Explain job requirements.
- Personal counseling of clients.
- Contact employers.
- Share best practices.
- Policy development.
- Knowledge about Employment Equity Act.
- Training, mentoring, coaching of individual employees.
- Research of business targets.
- Provide mobility assistance program (re-location).
- Provide support to bridge disabilities – more than literacy (work of learning centres).
- Good at pre-screening – time saver.
- Financial opportunities.
- Wage subsidies.
- Exploration program.
- Training purchases.
- Job creation.
- Screening, interviewing space.
- Career fairs.
- Cultural awareness communication.

Overcoming Barriers

What could be done differently to overcome these barriers?

- Networking with business organizations.
- Bridge awareness between AHRDAs and business community at large.
- Establish link (job postings)
 - AHRDC website.
- Employer to “visit” community.
- Need for marketing/information sharing on both sides.
- Need to pass on information on job forecasting.
- Identity champions in business community.
- Need senior management engagement
 - top-down commitment.
- Teaching expertise required.
- Need to use multiple methods of communication – email, phone, fax, etc.
- Get to know people/contacts.
- Share information to many AHRDAs – creates more applicants.
- Educate business that we’re not all the same.
- Set up structured network of communication with business.
- Communication and commitment.
- Relationships – two sided.
- Education needs to happen on both sides.
- Contact/engage the chamber of commerce.
- Economic development.
- Use capacity of Internet to the fullest.
- Attend job fairs.
- Develop contact list.

- Add clause to identify other recognized criteria (i.e., years of experience).
- Ensure AHRDA's are aware of job requirements to supply correct training.
- More workshops to get to know each other.
- Bring in more businesses who hire/maintain good relations with Aboriginal workers.
- Promoting successes.
- Stop focusing on negatives.
- Use sports heroes as promotional spokespersons.
- Not about getting funding; it's about getting qualified people.
- Must remember that programs do come to an end.
- Agree to permanently hire the person.
- We need to pick up the banner and promote our successes.
- Learn our employment equity policy.
- Connect with unions.
- Promote AHRDA services & Aboriginal people.
- Businesses have to "re-think" their approach to train and/or hire.
- Look at different routes to recruit (not only colleges).
- Change methods of interview (business).
- Provide cultural awareness training.
- Develop different testing tools and processes.
- Job pool a MUST for supply and demand.
- Develop employer service (more resources).

Current Business Opportunities

Current employment opportunities in the London area include:

- Food Services Industry.
 - Grocer
 - Apprenticeship
 - Meatcutters
 - Florists
 - Pharmacists
 - Deli
 - Cake Decorating
 - Bakers
- Alternative energy – skilled trades
- Mining industry
 - NWT (preferential agreements with First Nations construction communities) (Aboriginal people are not open to unionized environment)
 - No set quotas; commitment to a process
- Airline industry – pilots, engineers, flight attendants
- General labour
- Administration
- Construction
- Financial industry – mortgage, teller, insurance, branch managers, technical, computer and processing.

Summary

The facilitator summarized the discussion on the demand issue discussions as follows:

- No guidance counselors.
- Lack of guest teachers in guest communities.
- What is best form of communication?

- No follow-up after initial meeting.
- Don't know who to contact.
- No follow-up about unsuccessful candidates.
- Need an AHRDA *monster.com*.
- Education requirements don't match job requirements.
- Aboriginals not open to union environment.
- Commitment to engage?
- When is best time to contact them?
- Don't know AHRDA system.
- AHRDAs are competing with non-Aboriginal employers for skilled workers.
- Need a central posting process.
- Need recognition for leadership process.
- Negative stereotypes of Aboriginal candidates.
- Finding time to connect with business.
- Need cultural awareness – two way.
- Business will hire Aboriginal workers only if they get money from AHRDAs.
- Need a single job pool.
- Best practices – potential agreements.
- Employment counselors need to learn human resources.
- Need an expanded pool of job-ready candidates.
- For easy recruitment, business want a one-stop shop from AHRDAs.
- Need to continue today's dialogue.
- AHRDA community – not one size fits all.
- AHRDAs can do pre-screening but they need qualifications.
- AHRDAs have limited capacity.

PART 4:

CONNECTIONS: SUPPLY MEETS DEMAND

What are some possible strategies/ideas to increase better connections?

- Example – Toyota – learn their philosophy, work requirements, testing processes.
- Training and career awareness skills – identification of career awareness and what training might be available for those careers.
- Develop resource manuals – detailed job descriptions and skills knowledge required.
- Research on job market/trends to know job opportunities.
- Conduct assessment of individual clients.
- Employers to be partners with AHRDAs.
- Look at programs for “immigrants”.
- There is job growth in the service and food industries.
- Provide financial incentives for employers – wage subsidies, First Nations products and services.
- Employers are looking for “job-ready” individuals.
- Site visits by AHRDAs (i.e., training institute and business) – 5th wheel.
- Follow-up with contacts quickly (person-to-person).
- Send job posting to AHRDAs in region (until job pool is established).
- Spread “good news” of today's forum/discussion through business contacts and other AHRDAs.
- Everyone exchange business cards here – Now!
- Follow-up on this meeting.
- Increase dialogue with sector councils.

- Share success stories (5th wheel).
- Next Ontario Federation of Indian Friendship Centres – Grand River Employment and Training Initiative (O-GI) Newsletter to report on partnership in Red Lake (Sherman).
- Social connect – golf tournament, dinner.
- Exchange contact information.
- Establish a relationship as soon as possible with employment service providers.
- Develop a central pool of candidates for employers.
- Contact list with all information – expand the participants list, organizer of this event – Consilium.
- Update AHRDA / LDM contact list.
- Have a follow-up meeting September/October '06.
- Darlene Bellrose – organize a follow-up meeting.
- Make commitment to investigate the setting up of an “Aboriginal monster.com”.
- Look for new monies – Labour Market Partnership Agreement (LMPA) – Workplace Skills Initiative (WSI) – AHRDAs and Aboriginal Labour Unit (ALU).
- Distribute success case studies and best practices to business participants.
- May 31st diversity – AHRDAs have information.
- Food industry – sector council will ensure distribution of material to business.
- More meetings of front-line workers to discuss various issues and bring in businesses to disseminate information – bring to AHRDA table and identify funds/opportunities.
- Operating engineers (Tina Gasser) will commit to bring in more employers/industry to learn/share etc.
- Sector council (also invite?) could provide information.
- Continue distributing information. Do NOT give up.
- Collectively, be more vocal/proud of our successes – need everyone’s personal commitment – promote, utilize all media sources.
- Develop a national Aboriginal employment award for employer & employee.
- A National Aboriginal Achievement Foundation. Sheila Hill. Grand River Employment & Training will investigate if possible.
- Maintain contact with a “mail man” (Dwight Powless, Canada Post, HR conflict specialist).
- We are on a right track – good momentum started today – building strong relationship with AHRDA needs to continue.
- Shell looking to change hiring criteria (will contact Alberta office).
- Looking for cultural Canada awareness sessions.
- Examine programs and policies of different organizations.
- Recruit First Nations students to co-op student programs
 - Blue Water Bridge Authority needs 20-25 students.
- Will get in touch with Canada Post, network and examine job requirements at Canada Post.
- Set another date with another employer.
- Surprised that 3M are not here as well as Toyota – large companies should be at the table.
- Will organize meeting with human resource people in Six Nations (perhaps fall).
- Set up a training program for employment counselors (Aboriginal professional to be retired).
- Maintain contact – keep a database, try to match things up.
- Need for practical expertise by Aboriginal skilled professionals.
- As a front-line worker, we have a list of employers that we can contact.

- Realized how much work we have to do as Service Canada provider.
- Need to find out how to network/liaise with First Nations contacts and businesses.
- Need a list of local representatives from Canada; need to learn about best practices.
- Just found out what AHRDA is; will get proactive, need young capable people.
- Offering retail sales training for Aboriginal employees/businesses.
- Talking to key people about AHRDA (AMBASSADORS).
- Central database (i.e., Workopolis, Inclusion Networks, O.I. Leasing, monster.com/ca

Meaningful Partnership with Aboriginal Community

What elements make a good partnership?

- Share information – education needs to happen on both sides.
- Transparency.
- Communication.
- Establish a collaborative relationship.
- Demonstrate commitment.
- Aboriginal participation on boards and decision-making teams.
- Establish goals.
- Develop strategic goals.
- Develop strategic plan.
- Need to identify a leader.
- Take ownership, buy-in of process.
- Values – understanding, trust, respect, honesty, nurturing, equality and commitment.

Next Steps

What are the next steps toward building positive relationships/partnerships?

- Education – get to know one another.
- Exchange business cards.
- Communicate expectations to client.
- Have employers come to visit AHRDA – meet our clients.
- Come to career fairs.
- Develop a long-term commitment – establish continuing and ongoing contact.
- Establish networking system.
- Disperse career information to Aboriginal community.
- Design an Aboriginal labour pool.
- Communication.
- Commitment: Top-down (corporate culture).
- People talking to people.
- Establish TRUST.
- “First” step in door.
- Need of centralized job supply for larger employer.
- Business/city/etc. initiative to identify need and go directly to Aboriginal community.
- Exchange birthday cards.
- Use emails.
- Get partnership of AHRDA to organize more meetings like today.
- Maintain communication link at small (personal) level.
- Ensure follow-up to targeted decision-makers.

- Air Canada Jazz interested in building partnerships with AHRDAs, colleges.
- Colleges are hiring Aboriginal instructors (early childhood education, policing, drug/alcohol counseling) interested in building Aboriginal perspectives and cultural curriculum.
- Academic upgrading.
- Need to take the time to contact, establish relationship.
- Hold joint meetings.
- Establish an AHRDA network forum.
- Training = retention, revolving door using training dollars as labour subsidy (identify issues, stop funding it, establish commitment).

PART 5:

COMMITMENTS

The following 'go-forward' commitments were made at the session:

- Site visit – 5th Wheel Training Institute
 - AHRDAs visit training institute June 2.
- Send job posting to a single source.
- Exchange business cards now.
- Share success stories – 5th Wheel Training Institute.
- Next Ontario Federation of Indian Friendship Centres newsletter
 - announce Red Lake partnership.
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- Shell Canada – needs cultural awareness.
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 - hiring 20-25 students.
- Six Nations organizing meeting for human resource practitioners in business & AHRDAs.
- The London organizing committee will convene to drive future action started by this forum.

THE NATIONAL TRADES PROJECT

The Aboriginal Human Resource Development Council of Canada (AHRDCC) is responding to Canada's growing need for skilled trade and apprenticeship workers through a new national trades and apprenticeship project. This three-year initiative, designed to develop new partnerships and employment strategies, will give employers and trainers enhanced access to Canada's largely untapped and existing human capital of Aboriginal people who are eager to fill the employment gap.

This innovative initiative will create, strengthen and leverage partnerships with private-public sectors, Aboriginal employment organizations, learning institutions and government stakeholders in an effort to collaborate on methods to recruit and retain Aboriginal participation in trades and apprenticeship.

Members of the AHRDCC trades and apprenticeship team have been actively supporting the Aboriginal Human Resource Development Agreement holder (AHRDA) community with current projects and future initiatives that will successfully advance Aboriginal interests in trades and apprenticeship.

The forum series, *Workforce Connex*, is the first of many trades and apprenticeship initiatives to link national and regional employers with opportunities to connect to provincial Aboriginal employment training, recruitment agencies and associations. The work done in London will be integrated into a single report that will be used to shape initiatives in the overarching national trades and apprenticeship project.

Ultimately, the project is designed to link people and ideas. The project will provide regional and national links to groups involved in trades and apprenticeship across Canada. Initiatives will increase skills, learning and employment opportunities and open doors for stakeholders to work together on local and regional projects and initiatives.

The trades and apprenticeship project is administered by AHRDCC and funded through a \$2.9 million contribution from Human Resources and Social Development Canada (HRSDC). AHRDCC is a not-for-profit public-private organization with the mandate to increase Aboriginal participation in Canadian labour markets.

For further information on the national trades and apprenticeship project contact a team member as follows:

- Sandra Stevens, National Director
sandra.stevens@ahrdcc.com
- Peggy Berndt, Manager,
Communications & Marketing
peggy.berndt@ahrdcc.com
- Victoria LaBillois, Eastern Trades Liaison
victoria.labillois@ahrdcc.com
- David Lindley, Western Trades Liaison
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- Colleen Ostlund, Administrative Coordinator
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FORUM AGENDA

Appendix 1

Workforce Connex London Forum April 27, 2006

Agenda:

TIME	ACTIVITY
8:30 AM	Registration
9:00 AM	Introductions
9:05 AM	Opening Ceremony Opening Prayer Opening Remarks Opening Addresses From Dignitaries
9:25 AM	A Conversation About Connections Table Discussions Business-AHRDAs Debrief
10:00 AM	Business Case for Partnership: Connecting on all Levels Unique Requirements of Partnering With Aboriginal Communities What is my Readiness?
10:30 AM	Nutrition & Networking
11:00 AM	Supply Side Issues Roundtable Presentation Conversation Sharing the Conversation

TIME	ACTIVITY
12:00 PM	Lunch
1:00 PM	Demand Side Issues Roundtable Presentation Conversation Sharing the Conversation
2:00 PM	Conversation About Connection Strategies Supply Meets Demand: Path Forward Sharing the Conversation
3:00 PM	Nutrition & Networking
3:15 PM	Conversation About Connection Commitments Commitment: A Two-way Path Sharing the Conversation
3:45 PM	Sustaining Connections: Closing Statements Intention for Follow-up Sharing Contact Information
4:00 PM	Closing Prayer

Appendix 2

ATTENDANCE

PARTICIPANT	ORGANIZATION	LOCATION
1. ANDERSON, Roger	Grand River Employment & Training – Manager of Programs & Services	Ohsweken
2. BELLEROSE, Darlene	Kokee Kwe Occupational Skill Development Inc – Director, Aboriginal Employment Program	London
3. BELLEROSE, Larry	Ontario Métis Aboriginal Association	
4. BISHOP, Mary	Shell Canada/Sarnia Refinery – Human Resource Rep./Recruiter	Sarnia
5. BOUCHER-NIELSEN, Sandi	Aboriginal Labour Force Development Circle	Toronto
6. CAPTAIN, Pat		
7. CUNNINGHAM, Michael	De Beers Canada Inc	Toronto
8. DOOLITTLE, Brian	Grand River Employment & Training – Board Resource	Ohsweken
9. ENGLESON, David	Lambton College – Training Consultant	Sarnia
10. ENOSSE, Lawrence	Wkwemikong AHRDA – Apprenticeship Coordinator	Wkwemikong
11. GARLOW, Elvera	Grand River Employment & Training – Executive Director	Ohsweken
12. GASSER, Tina	Operating Engineers Training Institute of Ontario – Marketing Manager	Morrisburg
13. GERBER, Donna	Anishnabeg Outreach Employment and Training Inc.	Kitchener
14. GOULD, Jo-Anne	Kagita Mikam Aboriginal Employment and Training	Peterborough
15. GRAY, Mark	Fleming College – Student Services Manager	Peterborough
16. HILL, Carl		
17. HILL, Carol Justine	Fort Erie Native Friendship Centre – Program Service Officer/Employment Counselor	Fort Erie

PARTICIPANT	ORGANIZATION	LOCATION
18. HILL, Sheila	Grand River Employment & Training – Programs & Services Officer	Ohsweken
19. HILL, Wayne	Grand River Employment & Training – Board Director	Ohsweken
20. ISERHOFF, Ivan	De Beers Canada Inc	Toronto
21. JACKSIC, Nicole	Bank of Montreal – Senior Advisor Diversity & Workplace Equity	Toronto
22. JORDAN, Fiona	CORCAN – Regional Director Ontario Region	Kingston
23. KING, Cyndi	Métis Nation of Ontario	Midland
24. KNIGHT, Bruce	I.U.O.E. Local 793 Operating Engineers Training Institute of Ontario	Sarnia
25. LACASSE, Roseann	Oneida Nation – Employment Counsellor	Southwold
26. LANGAN, Michelle	EPPD – AAD / HRSD	Gatineau
27. LANNIGAN, Kathleen	Métis Nation of Ontario	Hamilton
28. LENUZZI, Jasmine	Learning Visions – Educator/Consultant	Sarnia
29. LEVY, Cheryl	Suncor Energy – Community & Aboriginal Affairs	Sarnia
30. LICKERS, Elaine	Grand River Employment & Training – Board Director	Ohsweken
31. LINKLATER, Alfred	EPPD – AAD / HRSD – Senior Policy Advisor	Gatineau
32. LOGAN, Rebecca	Grand River Employment & Training – Programs & Services Officer	Ohsweken
33. MAIR, Kathy	O.F.I.F.C. – Great Initiative – Field Support Worker	Toronto
34. MANATCH, Marc	Ogemawahj Tribal Council – Coordinator AHRDA	Rama
35. MANESS, Sherman	O.F.I.F.C. – Great Initiative – Field Support Worker	Toronto
36. MARACLE, Len	Grand River Employment & Training – Board Director	Ohsweken
37. MARTIN, M. Blair	Grand River Employment & Training – Program and Services Officer	Ohsweken

PARTICIPANT	ORGANIZATION	LOCATION
38. MARTIN, Nancy	Miziwebik	Miziwebiik
39. MAYER, Debbie	North Shore Tribal Council	Blind River
40. MCCORMACK, Julie	Bluewater Bridge Authority	Sarnia
41. MCNAUGHTON, Paul	Grand River Employment & Training – Labour Market Analyst	Ohsweken
42. MISKOKOMON, Dan	Walpole Island First Nation Employment and Training	
43. MITCHELL, Paul	Employment Sector Council	
44. NADJIWAN, Brenda	INAC – Regional Coordinator AWPI	Toronto
45. ORIET, Gerry	5th Wheel Training Institute – Program Coordinator	Warwick
46. PAGE, Al	Construction Sector Council	Victoria
47. PARADOWSKI, Cheryl	Canadian Food Industry Council – Executive Director	Toronto
48. PELLETIER, Brian	Human Resources and Social Development	
49. POWLESS, Dwight	Canada Post Corporation – Advisor for Aboriginal Relations	Ottawa
50. RESTOULE, Glenda	Aboriginal Liaison, Service Canada – Manager	Toronto
51. RILEY, Linda	Walpole Island First Nation Employment and Training	Wallaceburg
52. STEWART, Carol	Employment Sector Council	
53. TASKER-RILEY, Cherida	Air Canada Jazz – Human Resources Manager	London
54. TIMOTHY, Arnett	London District Chiefs Council/Southern First Nations Secretariat	Bothwell
55. TROTT, Judi	Métis Nation of Ontario	Hamilton
56. WILLIAMS, Faye	Six Nations Innovations – Innovations Coordinator	Ohsweken
57. WOLTZ, Renee	Aboriginal Liaison Unit, Service Canada – Program Consultant	Toronto

Appendix 3

EVALUATION SUMMARY

London, Ontario - RESULTS

Summary

The London Workforce Connex forum attracted delegates from Aboriginal Human Resource Development Agreement holders (AHRDA), private sector organizations and government. In total, 55 participants were in attendance. 29 evaluations were received; representing a participant return rate of 52 per cent. Response sector demographics are broken down as follows:

Private sector delegates	9
AHRDAs	16
Unknown	4

Questions and Responses

1. <i>Please forward me a copy of the forum report as follows:</i>	
Email	23
Canada Post	3
Email & Canada Post	2
No Indication	1
2. <i>Did the Workforce Connex forum meet your expectations?</i>	
Yes	23
No	3
No Indication	3

3. <i>Were the information materials you received at the forum valuable to you?</i>	
Yes	23
No	4
No Indication	2
4. <i>Did you visit the Workforce Connex (www.workforceconnex.com) website prior to the forum?</i>	
Yes	18
No	11
5. <i>Did you have sufficient advance notice about the forum?</i>	
Yes	23
No	6
6. <i>One thing I liked about the forum...</i>	
• The walk in your shoes exercise.	
• Good AHRDA representation.	
• Networking opportunities in such a beautiful hotel.	
• Meeting other AHRDAs, businesses and sector councils.	
• What a learning experience!! Not aware of the hurdles created inadvertently by business.	
• Great facilitation.	
• Timely-shortage of new workers.	
• Interaction; open discussion; good facilitation.	
• It provides opportunity to meet more people and contacts but...need to create better opportunity/time for networking at the forum.	

- Opportunity for AHRDA holders and employers to meet. The reverse role play at the beginning was good.
- The chance for one on one interaction with business.
- The contacts – AHRDAs, government & employers – excellent network. Great facilitators (i.e., Susan Jarvis was excellent as well as other table facilitators).
- Excellent lead facilitator (Susan). Keep on track, moving forward, good cross-section of people. Liked the final “commitment” session. Excellent support facilitator (Jasmine).
- The agenda moved quickly enough to keep participants engaged and active.
- The structure of the meeting and the sharing of ideas.
- Amount of participation.
- The facilitator.
- Everything but especially the networking.
- Meeting new people – interactive sessions & conversation.
- The networking and all the business people in attendance.
- Had employers at the meeting and more employers were better informed about AHRDAs.
- The interaction with everyone, group activities.
- Hearing from both sides – businesses & AHRDAs.
- Honesty in communication and informality.

7. *One thing I would change about the forum...*

- Change info on GREAT AHRDA page (changes submitted). The room was too crowded – felt claustrophobic. Format – too repetitious in afternoon. Not enough employers from other areas: Southern Ontario, Brantford, Hamilton, etc. not just South-Western.
- Venue not adequate for the activities occurring. Not many employers from southern Ontario hire a different coordinator familiar with the area that has ambition.
- Have a larger room for when the debriefing was done. Went over the time period specified.
- I think we should have switched around groups. Bigger room or more small rooms for breakouts as it was distracting and difficult to hear and work with so many in one room.
- Sandwiches – I could not eat anything as it had processed meat, egg or mayo on it (I went out for lunch.).
- All five groups working on same question. Feedback is repetitive. It would be more interesting if each group had a specific focus...five different questions that will have some overlap.
- More info before the meeting.

- Seems to be duplication of issues discussion; repetition. Would have like to have seen more industry representatives. Probably should have gone to London session to interact with Northern AHRDAs.
- Morning session was a good start. Afternoon session after lunch felt like a repeat of morning session. May try something along the same lines as “speed dating”. Permit AHRDAs & private sector structured time to network, ask questions, gather business cards, contacts, types of jobs, etc. Maybe call it “speed networking”.
- Less time on group work – the two main exercises were repetitious – more time for networking.
- More time to discuss. Would have been nice to have the chance to voice, in our words, what we needed business to know about AHRDAs.
- Further clarity about how the AHRDA networks work with Ontario government etc. A focus on best practices (internship programs, mentoring, retention).
- Too much discussion on AHRDA/employer challenges and barriers. More time on success stories, best practices commitments.
- I would clearly articulate one or two (only) objectives at the outset; evaluate at closing. Agenda was slightly ambiguous.
- Would have like to change up the groups- broader networking.
- Have more employers and bigger room.
- Some social component.
- More active breaks – icebreakers and other exercises especially after lunch – need to invite more employers.
- Too cluttered about breakout session, three in one room. Need more if the conversations were to be focussed and discussed.
- Brief explanation about the AHRDAs programs (i.e., training on the job, targeted wage subsidy, self employment assistant, etc.).
- Include more employers (businesses) and have this type of forum more often.
- More time or more employers.
- Too many groups in one room – more breakout rooms would work better.

8. Participants were asked to rate the following questions using the following scale:

5	4	3	2	1	0	1	2	3	4	5
STRONGLY AGREE						STRONGLY DISAGREE				

PRIVATE SECTOR

- a. Prior to attending this Workforce Connex forum I had a high level of awareness about the Aboriginal Human Resource Development Agreement holders (AHRDAs).
 Strongly agree 4
 Strongly disagree 7
- b. As a result of this forum I am coming away with a better understanding of the constraints and impediments that Aboriginal people face in their efforts to work with companies and secure employment.
 Strongly agree 10
 Strongly disagree 0
- c. I intend to develop a plan to increase my organization’s recruitment and retention of Aboriginal people.
 Strongly agree 8
 Strongly disagree 0

ABORIGINAL HUMAN RESOURCE DEVELOPMENT AGREEMENT HOLDERS (AHRDA)

- a. Prior to attending this forum my AHRDA has experienced many challenges developing relationships with businesses.
 Strongly agree 15
 Strongly disagree 3
- b. This Workforce Connex forum has helped me to better understand the issues and constraints that businesses face in their efforts to recruit and retain Aboriginal people.
 Strongly agree 13
 Strongly disagree 0

Glossary Of Terms

ACRONYM	DEFINITION
AHRDS	Aboriginal Human Resources Development Strategy
AHRDCC	Aboriginal Human Resource Development Council of Canada
AHRDAs	Aboriginal Human Resources Development Agreements holders
HR	Human Resource
HRSDC	Human Resources & Social Development Council
LDM	Local Delivery Mechanism
MNO	Métis Nation of Ontario
O-GI	Ontario Federation of Indian Friendship Centres – Grand River Employment and Training Initiative (O-GI)
OMAA	Ontario Métis Aboriginal Association



ABORIGINAL HUMAN RESOURCE DEVELOPMENT COUNCIL OF CANADA
CONSEIL POUR LE DÉVELOPPEMENT DES RESSOURCES HUMAINES
AUTOCHTONES DU CANADA

Canada

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