

TOWARDS A VALUED LIFE-STYLE FOR NATIVE PEOPLE

**A NEEDS ASSESSMENT AND PLANNING
PAPER FOR NATIVE PEOPLE
IN SIMCOE COUNTY AND YORK REGION**

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February 15, 1991

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VISIONS

Ahneen, Sago, Hello, Boozhoo, Wachee.

The Barrie Area Native Advisory Committee was formed with the intention of improving the quality of life for Native people in Simcoe County and York Region. This report and its findings is a snapshot of the present situation facing Native people both on and off-reserve in the region. It is the sincere hope of BANAC that the ensuing report and the recommendations will form the basis of the future direction that we all must follow if we are to reach our vision of a better life for our children.

PLEASE READ ON

HISTORY OF THE PROJECT

This project was initiated by The Barrie Area Native Advisory Committee (**BANAC**). BANAC is made up of representatives of Native organizations and government agencies. Beginning with a one day strategic planning seminar in 1988, the Committee has met approximately three times a year, more often since the beginning of this project. From early representation of twenty Native organizations, BANAC now represents seven: Barrie Native Friendship Centre, Georgian Bay Native Friendship Centre, Rama and Area Native Women's Association, Rama First Nation, Beausoleil First Nation (Christian Island), Georgina Island First Nation, and Couchiching Association for Native Services.

Since its beginning, BANAC has functioned as a "think tank" for the six communities. In the future it will continue in this capacity, as well as offer consultation and support to community service development. It hopes to continue as an integral, rather than separate, part of the communities.

This project emerged from BANAC's recognition that service to Native people in the area had a number of gaps and inadequacies. What was needed was a systematic needs assessment in which community members, service providers, administrators and other key informants provided information for understanding the main issues, documenting existing resources, identifying service gaps and inadequacies, and if need be, participating in a process of change.

Also needed was research in which Native people controlled and participated in all stages of the research process. To this end, local Native people participated as research planners and data collectors. As well, they reviewed and discussed findings with their local communities and with a regional conference of all communities. Finally, they collaborated in a process of reviewing this report and its recommendations.

Two technical consultants, experienced in community action research, were hired to facilitate the project and provide various technical activities.

BANAC provided general direction to the project team. As well, a BANAC working group was closely involved with the various stages. It reviewed technical progress reports, and commented on research plans and questionnaires. Near the end of the project, the working group thoroughly reviewed and revised draft reports.

A BANAC staff provided valuable support to the project. The Project Co-ordinator, Secretary, and Book-keeper contributed essential liaison, advise, office technical skills, and organizational assistance.

Four Surveyors were instrumental in carrying out the field work for the project. As Native people familiar with the communities, their contributions were invaluable. Surveyors were responsible for interviews, questionnaire design assistance, organizing community meetings, and selected data analysis.

PROJECT OBJECTIVES AND METHODS

The report builds on information from five broad research questions:

- . What are some of the positive ideals and valued life-styles expressed by Native people in this area?
- . To what extent do they realize their ideals, and what obstacles stand in the way?
- . What are the various service resources in the area and how well are they meeting the needs of Native people?
- . What changes are recommended?
- . How can such changes be supported?

This study follows community action research principles, and assumes that changes can occur when ideas are stimulated, shared, and used as the basis for future planning.

This report is organized around the various answers to these questions.

Research Objectives

The main objectives of this project grew out of the Terms of Reference established by BANAC for the tendering process. Research objectives were as follows:

- . To determine the positive quality of life values desired by Native people within Simcoe County and York Region, with particular attention to: family life and parenting, culture, employment and income, housing, training and education, health and well-being, and recreation.
- . To determine the issues and circumstances faced by Native people which prevent the achievement of the above positive values, and to identify the perceived causes of these issues.
- . To identify the types of resources and other solutions which would improve the quality of life.

- . To describe the current resources (including services, programs resource people, volunteer initiatives, etc.) for addressing the issues, within the Native and non-Native communities.
- . To assess existing resources.
- . To recommend positive changes in the existing resources and resource networks to ensure a better quality of life.

In addition to the above objectives, efforts were made for developmental work **beyond** the completion of the Project. Specifically:

- . To create a locally-controlled, community-based research process which could be duplicated by other communities.
- . To develop a better understanding regarding the values, ideals and strengths, and to promote an atmosphere of trust and care among the service providers (Native and non-Native) and Native communities.
- . To develop a service inventory and a comprehensive list of service providers.
- . To provide research skills (eg. interviewing, note-taking, organizing) to the surveyors as a result of the collection and analysis of the data.

These objectives were pursued primarily through the involvement of Native people in all aspects of the research process, project organization and training.

Project Methods

A community action research approach was utilized. In this section, brief summaries of research principles and techniques are provided.

Action research aims to collect information for problem solving and social or organizational change. It usually involves close collaboration between researchers and community members, and frequently uses the data for educational purposes. As was the case in this project, community members are directly involved in the research process.

There were three sub-projects:

- a) Community Needs Study
- b) Resource Assessment Project
- c) Public Education Conference

To verify and provide immediate feed-back, opportunities were found for information-sharing throughout the process.

Each of these sub-projects are described in the following sections.

For more details on research methods, see the background paper entitled "Research Design".

POSITIVE IDEALS & VALUED LIFESTYLES: COMMUNITY NEEDS STUDY

The general approach was to speak personally to people, and begin by asking for their ideas for a positive quality of life. Participants were then asked about whether communities were falling short of these hopes and dreams, and what were the most serious kinds of obstacles. Finally, people were asked to speculate on possible steps to help realize their ideals.

This study aimed primarily to understand the quality of life ideals held by people, and the types of issues and circumstances that impeded achievement of these ideals. Those interviewed were selected for their knowledge and experience in eight quality of life categories:

1. Family Life & Children
2. Culture & Language
3. Alcohol & Substance Abuse
4. Employment & Income
5. Health & Well-being
6. Housing
7. Education
8. Recreation

Ninety-two interviews in total were completed.

Following the general "community action" approach the study stimulated people to think about specific steps that could be taken to improve their lives, and what support might be needed to assist these efforts. After the individual interviews, six community meetings were held to share information, and stimulate discussion towards specific action steps. For details, see background paper "Community Reports and Summaries of Discussions of Community Meetings".

The results of this phase of the project are summarized mainly in sections on "A Vision of Positive Ideals & Valued Lifestyles" and "Current Challenges in Meeting Ideals".

EXISTING SERVICES & PROGRAMS: RESOURCE ASSESSMENT STUDY

A Resource Assessment Study of sixty-eight Native and non-Native service providers, on and off-reserve, was the second major phase of the project. This study focused on describing existing programs and services, and assessing the quality of service delivery.

The interview questions addressed three broad concerns:

- . What services exist?
- . How well are they serving Native people?
- . What changes might help achieve positive ideals and valued lifestyles?

Other important purposes were to acquaint service providers with BANAC, begin a networking process, and create awareness in the Gathering of Three Fires Education Conference. For details on this study, see background paper entitled " Summary of the Three Fires Meeting at Geneva Park".

As part of the resource assessment study, government policy advisors and senior program staff were interviewed. These interviews focused on the current policy environment and strategies for accessing government resources. See the background paper entitled " Government Policy Environment for Native People".

GATHERING OF THREE FIRES CONFERENCE: POPULAR EDUCATION CONFERENCE

The name "Gathering of Three Fires" was selected as the theme for the Education Conference. Historically the area in and around Lake Simcoe & Huron were part of the territory inhabited by the people who belonged to the Three Fires Confederacy. Since this conference would be bringing people from this area together it was felt that the Gathering of Three Fires would be an appropriate theme for this get-together.

An important goal in BANAC's Terms of Reference is that sound, trusting relationships between communities, service providers and planners would be nourished by this project. To accomplish these and other objectives, a public education conference was held at the Geneva Park Conference Centre near Orillia.

In the spirit of the Native way of life the conference endeavoured:

- . To share the research findings with the communities and service agencies and stimulate discussion of common solutions
- . To create an atmosphere for positive changes in government policy, programs and services;
- . To provide a forum for community input.

The conference activities consisted of traditional Native ceremonies, feedback and discussion of selected key findings, cultural teachings, and proposals for future directions. Selected highlights from the conference were:

- .an opening pipe ceremony and handshake circle involving all participants
- .community group discussions of research findings, and feed-back concerning high priority action
- .a cultural teacher's talk on the clan system and its implications for community and organizational development
- .a traditional talking circle in which participants shared their personal thoughts on the conference, and possible future directions

The conference was an important and useful part of this project. First, it verified most of the main issues identified in community research. But more importantly, it brought people together. All Native communities were well represented and energized by the proceedings. Non-Native service and government people seemed genuinely moved and optimistic about future initiatives.

A VISION OF POSITIVE IDEALS & VALUED LIFESTYLES

"Those who are happy are the ones who hold good jobs, get involved with socials and family gatherings, people who are active and healthy, those who obtain good housing and have a loving family life. People who have recognition for each other are the ones who are caring and understanding." (Quotation from interview)

This section summarizes the general values and specific positive quality of life conditions identified in the community needs study.

Natives in Simcoe County and York Region aspire towards...

- . A strong family life based on healthy relationships, quality child-rearing, extended family ties, community participation, and access to child care.
- . Strong positive individual and community identities based on Native background and the revitalization of Native culture and language.
- . A sense of practical competence, based on work and life skills, parenting abilities, abilities to set and achieve life goals, and problem-solving.
- . Community strength, reflected in such qualities as a strong sense of community; mutual involvement and participation; recognition for good deeds; the ability to establish and maintain standards, rules and responsibilities; self-regulation and problem-solving; open, fair and consistent decision-making; and strong links with other communities.
- . Economic security, to meet basic and recreational needs, and to establish a foundation for family and community strength.
- . The value of learning, reflected in the achievement of good education for children, adult learning, life skills and literacy.
- . Physical health and well-being, through the absence of disease, freedom from alcohol and other substance abuse, happiness, positive self-esteem, self-respect, and the development of the person as a social being.
- . The acquisition of housing as a source of shelter, safety and health, family and personal well-being.

The above themes were heard again and again. For example: Asked to share their dreams for a strong family life, people spoke of the importance of inner harmony, balanced by extensive community involvement. At the core of so many comments is a return to strong Native identity, based on an awareness and respect for traditional Native values and traditions. The following quotations from interviews illustrate these themes:

" Most families want harmony and contentment in their homes.

Also, more families would like their children to learn and retain their Native language."

" More quality time with their children, i.e. sports, recreation... To be able to go out and see their children involved in the above. A lot better economic situation, higher wages, being able to keep up with bills, more spending money. To have somewhere to go related to Native traditions and cultural issues. The ability to communicate with the family better. A greater sense of self-esteem and pride in being Native."

(Quotations from Community Needs Study)

Others were quite specific about what it would take to build harmonious relationships within the family, especially between the generations. To quote:

" I feel parents should try to listen to their children and involve them in their family discussions. Problem-solving sessions would put aside a lot of the communication barriers now present"

(Quotation from Community Needs Study)

Throughout the research, people talked proudly of community accomplishments and current community activities building towards a better existence. Barrie respondents spoke of a strong group of volunteers and their first Barrie Pow Wow. Women's Circles are underway in the Orillia area and Rama, and are hoping to attract women in other areas. The Georgian Bay Native Friendship Centre has new cultural programs for children and youth, and is working hard to expand it's facilities and programs. The Georgina Island representative spoke of success with children and youth in alcohol abuse prevention work, and Christian Island workers spoke of their day camp and daycare services.

CURRENT CHALLENGES IN MEETING IDEALS

FAMILY LIFE: THE NUMBER ONE CONCERN

Historically, the role of the extended family played a very important part in Native society. Children called their maternal female relatives "mother" and paternal male relatives "father". The aged, whether related or not, were "grandmother" and "grandfather". Children had a strong sense of being welcome and belonging, for they had a wide variety of personalities to deal with. They knew that their well-being was a community, not just a family, responsibility.

"Native women are keepers of the culture. It was our grandmothers who held on to what they could of our identity as a People. It was they who persisted in their own way to ensure we would know who we are. Native women of today are breaking their silence to lobby for improved social conditions. They are women who share the same concerns as their mothers and grandmothers before them. They are engaged in the protection of the quality of life. Today there is a healing going on in the communities; women are important players since it is they who are the first teachers". (Quote from BANAC meeting)

Those interviewed in this project believe that most people have not realized their dreams for family life. Children are not receiving the best opportunities. For some, the opportunities for children are present, but are not used because of family problems or limited resources.

"People here do not have an ideal family life. Many families are broken due to alcohol abuse and child abuse. Parents are not working together to keep families together."

"All Native children have the opportunity to achieve higher education and obtain good jobs, but due to alcohol and drugs, laziness, poor examples to follow, they don't take advantage of the opportunities available to them."

" There are a lot of drug and alcohol problems in this community and I feel that most children suffer for the good things they deserve, i.e. good homes, good clothing, togetherness, happiness."

(Quotes from Community Needs Study)

What is missing for many people are solid economic foundations for healthy families and strong ties with the community at large. As well, cultural strength and parenting skills are limited. These missing ingredients are believed to weaken families and parenting.

Family violence is still very prevalent in the Native community. Alcohol is a major factor in most violent situations in aboriginal communities. Women are beginning to take a stand by making the community at large more aware of the seriousness of the issue.

However, there is still much work to be done.

Nearly all respondents feel that in many ways Native women face unique problems relating to family life and child-rearing. The following comments sum up many issues:

"We are treated as second-class citizens. Single mothers with a loss of income. I think its the traditional rearing and we are viewed as not good parents by the non-traditional. There is a lot of violence. It stems from low self-esteem and it comes from our socio-economic situation. We are trying to gain acceptance from our own people...the Bill C-31's. We want to educate our children, not through the white system, but with spirituality and nature, but we do not have the land to do that. We find that we have to work hard for our families, so we find it hard to work together as Native women."

"Alcohol abuse. There are a lot of Native/non-Native families who have specific problems, such as cultural differences in child-rearing. They have different experiences as children. The women are suffering from a lack of identity themselves. Childhood experiences and a lot of grief prevents women from giving their children a healthy home life." (Quotes from Community Needs Study)

In summary, the problems identified as facing Native women in this area are:

- . Single parent situations, with meagre incomes, limited outside support, and no male role models for children
- . Wife assault
- . Alcoholism within the family, resulting in poor mothering
- . Inadequate community resources, such as child care

As well, many women carry severe psychological burdens of low self-esteem, lack of a strong sense of who they are, and the pain of childhood abuse.

The need for healing resources is quite apparent for women and other members of these communities. Alcohol and other abusive situations have left their marks on many lives. Community and personal healing will be an early step in the pathway to change.

Issues affecting family life and children's opportunities in these communities are:

- . Alcohol and drug abuse.
- . Grief, as a result of death, loss, or broken relationships.
- . Economic: unemployment, lack of good jobs, inadequate income.
- . Strained or broken family relationships: communication difficulties, jealousy, violence, single parent situations.
- . Child-rearing difficulties: child abuse, limited parenting experience, alcohol abuse, and cultural differences between home and school.
- . Community dynamics: lack of involvement in community, faulty communications between major community groups, the struggles between those with special interests, lack of mutual support.
- . Inadequate community resources or resources not accessed: baby-sitting, incomplete programs, children not using new facilities, unawareness of resources, and few child care facilities for young infants.

Family life problems and children's opportunities concerned persons across all six communities. However, certain issues were given more emphasis by some. **MIDLAND**, for example, may have more serious mental health problems with youth than in other communities. **BARRIE** interviews suggested more concern with the quality of education received by Native children.

To summarize: Native people in Simcoe County and York region recognize the importance of a strong family unit as the foundation for a positive quality of life. Almost all people feel that their ideals are far from reached. Restoring strong family relationships, based on economic security, community involvement and culture, emerges as an important goal for the future.

REKINDLING OF ABORIGINAL CULTURE & NATIVE LANGUAGE

" The community wants their children to learn our own Native culture and the values of that culture. They feel that this could produce more independent and responsible children for the future of our reserve"

(Quote from Community Needs Study)

Aboriginal society has a long and honourable history. Aboriginal languages are precise and descriptive. Aboriginal culture and life ways are sensible, practical, sensitive and useful. These gifts have been with the Native people since they were given by the Creator. They have withstood the onslaught of 500 years of exposure to another culture, bent on dominating this way of life. Today, the flame of aboriginal culture and language continues to flicker in all Native communities across the land.

An overwhelming number of interviews addressed the loss of culture and language, and how it has impacted negatively on people's lives.

As many as twenty-six quality of life issues concerning culture were identified across the six communities (See background paper entitled "List of Quality of Life Issues"). The most frequent and noteworthy themes are...

- . The need for improving community comfort and attitudes towards living our culture and speaking our language.
- . The lack of culture and language activities for children.
- . The communities' limited capacity to develop and support cultural events and ongoing programs.

Those interviewed identified many ways in which a revitalization of Native culture could improve the quality of family life and child-rearing. For example, many believed that cultural revitalization and language could encourage:

- . An improvement in the quality of family togetherness and interaction through the members natural use of language, discussion of history, and recollection of the traditional roles of Elders.
- . An enhancement of family problem-solving through rekindling of traditional helping approaches (eg. use of extended family members, community elders).
- . Through children's interest and use, culture and Native language is supported at home, creating family togetherness, unity and an atmosphere of learning together.

Another important point is that cultural leaders are emerging as important role models. As role models they assume important responsibilities such as following exemplary lifestyles.

Exposure to the dominant society's materialistic values has affected Native cultural leadership, to many people's concern. For example, there is a concern that some spiritual leaders attach a dollar value to the spiritual needs of the people. More and more traditional people will only assist if they are going to be paid in cash. For some, the traditional custom of giving tobacco, sage, cedar or sweet-grass is no longer enough.

Attitudes and beliefs have changed due in part to the high cost of living in today's society. There is tremendous economic pressure on individuals to "keep their heads above water". Some traditional people are becoming dependent on the dollar.

This dependence is taking precedence over spiritual needs in some cases. Historically, the needs of the people were more important than material gains. There was a desire expressed to get back to the traditional values of our forefathers.

The rekindling of culture and Native language were expressed broadly; but certain matters were emphasized in different communities.

BARRIE

- . Identified the need for cultural programs and language teaching programs for children, youth and adults
- . To establish links with local Boards of Education regarding the development of cultural curriculum in the schools. They also mentioned the high interest on the part of the non-Native community for education about Native culture

CHRISTIAN ISLAND

- . Need for sustained, long-term efforts to promote culture and Native language.

GEORGINA ISLAND

- . Lack of knowledge of historical links with outside reserves
- . The costs of bringing in outside traditional resource people

ORILLIA

- . Limited use of cultural links to other Native communities
- . Need for culturally-oriented social support to school children and the problems of isolated women.

MIDLAND

- . Limited governmental funding for development of culture and language
- . Lack of information on funding for culture and Native language activities
- . Lack of educational opportunities to learn the traditions

RAMA

.Reported tensions between those of traditional culture and Christian religion.

In summary, the revitalization of Native culture and language was identified as an essential ingredient for community betterment in all communities. Cultural learning is seen as the core of learning for Native children. Common attitudes and participation in traditional culture will be the foundation of community stability and growth.

OVERCOMING ALCOHOL AND SUBSTANCE ABUSE

Alcohol was introduced to aboriginal people with the coming of the settlers to this country. Alcohol consumption is a non-traditional part of Native life. Since it has entered the lives of Native people, it has caused havoc and destruction of the integral elements of Native culture and values. Alcohol abuse is an evil that permeates all levels of society and all Nations and cultures.

**"Alcohol abuse is a destructive, compulsive behavior which destroys the person's emotional, physical and spiritual well-being, and those within the family circle."
(Quote from Community Needs Study)**

From this study, the essential points about alcohol and other substance abuses are that:

- . Alcohol and other substance abuses are viewed as problems in all communities.
- . Compared to the normal social use of alcohol, alcohol abuse is defined as drinking on a regular, daily basis. Substance abuse involves the use of marijuana, cocaine and hashish.
- . Alcohol abuse is generally viewed as prevalent among men, women and children, but is particularly true of the unemployed, young people thirty and under, and single people.
- . Substance abuses other than alcohol are more evident among young people, and are more likely to promote crime.

Why People Abuse Alcohol and Substances

From the perceptions of alcohol abuse in these communities, it is clear that in order to tackle the problem of alcohol and substance abuse people must approach the situation with a holistic view in mind. The removal of alcohol abuse as the enemy of the Native community will require cooperative efforts between those working in economic development, healing, family support and community education.

Alcohol and substance abuse is believed to emerge from a number of social/economic conditions and life experiences. Some of these lead to a state of stress, believed to be alleviated by alcohol. For some, alcohol abuse is a product of peer relations, or of family problems and crisis. Still others trace alcohol abuse to the constant depiction of alcohol use in the mass media.

Most comments from community members suggest that Native people turn to alcohol abuse for one or other of the following reasons:

- . Unemployment
- . Peer pressure
- . Depression, low self-esteem or hopelessness
- . Learning within one's childhood family, and other childhood experiences
- . Family problems or personal crisis
- . Boredom, resulting from insufficient or inadequate social/recreational opportunities
- . Society's acceptance and promotion of alcohol
- . Low level of tolerance in many Native people

How Alcohol and Substance Abuse Affects The Community

A vicious cycle links alcohol or other substance abuses, and many of the above factors. For example, unemployment may be considered both cause and consequence of abuse; those who have fallen into a substance abuse lifestyle find it difficult to find or hold a job.

Being unemployed leads to stress and loneliness, both of which can be relieved by alcohol.

Quotation after quotation highlight the theme that alcohol abuse is one of the most destructive forces in Native existence.

Without alcohol abuse...

" People would be more prosperous for the good things in life. People would feel more confident in themselves and the things they do. There would be less family problems leading to marriage breakup and neglected children. Life would be happier for everyone here."

Again:

" Without alcohol there would be no physical abuse between our people. Our children would not be abused mentally and physically. We would probably be employed. We would probably be more healthy. We would have better living conditions."
(Quotes from Community Needs Study)

All interviews note how alcohol seriously affects family life, children's well-being, women's lives, and community stability.

Summarizing the information on alcohol abuse...

- . **Parents abusing alcohol may unwittingly create an environment where children learn alcohol abuse habits.**
- . **Alcohol abuse contributes to family isolation from the community.**
- . **Alcohol abuse contributes directly to a breakdown in family relationships, resulting in physical abuse, arguing, and violence.**
- . **Alcohol abuse contributes to poor child-rearing and adult relationships with children, including neglect, adolescent rebellion, mental, physical and sexual abuse.**
- . **When alcohol abuse leads to unemployment, the family lacks an adequate financial base.**

These concerns were shared equally among the six communities in the study.

EMPLOYMENT AND INCOME: CHANGING ATTITUDES

Historically, Native people have always been self-employed and self-sustaining. The land and creation itself took care of the needs of the people. As recently as the 1940's, people lived a traditional lifestyle where sharing and looking after one another's needs was the norm. It was a holistic lifestyle where the well-being of mind, body and spirit was maintained.

" [People in my community do not have enough income to meet their needs]...because of isolation, transportation costs are high if you do not have your own vehicles...You need to get to the mainland to get groceries, pay bills, recreation, etc."

"...There are just not enough jobs to employ at least one member per household."

"Sole support parents [do not have enough income]. People need two incomes to live."

" 75-80% unemployment rate. Government programs do not address long term goals but are geared towards short-term job creation programs which is not the solution to this problem."

(Quotes from Community Needs Study)

Those with moderate or low incomes who seem happy and satisfied are described as having adjusted to a certain standard of living. They have non-materialistic values and have strong support from family and friends. Personal qualities, such as the ability to laugh and remain positive, high self-esteem, and abstain from drinking... all of these were mentioned. Finally, satisfied people have community ties, and money management skills.

Commenting on the current state of Native community life, one Elder made the following points:

**" We've lost Native culture. It's gone downhill since the 40's.
We've followed the non-Native type of living. The sharing is gone
in Native culture."**

" We are taking up greed as a lifestyle."

" Long ago we looked after those who were less fortunate."

**" We were so self-sufficient that the non-Native community came to
the reserve to trade."**

(Quotes from meeting)

The Situation Today

Issues:

- . Taking the average of all informants' answers, the estimated unemployment rate for all Simcoe County and York Region Native communities, according to the research, is 41%

- . On average, the household incomes in these communities is \$25,000 or under; many household incomes are estimated at under \$15,000.

- . The following groups are described as particularly hard hit by low incomes: single, teenage or sole support parents; those on fixed incomes; youth who left school early.

- . Most people interviewed reported a community concern about the quality of life of those with low incomes. Two-thirds of our interviewees believe that community members do not have enough income to meet their needs.

The Effects of Unemployment and Low Income

Unemployment robs many Native people in Simcoe County and York Region of their basic needs, and a secure material existence.

People talked constantly about how unemployment creates a lack of...

- . Adequate clothing
- . Nutritional or good quality food
- . Adequate recreational and social opportunities
- . Adequate housing

For Native people, as for others, the effects of unemployment disturbs more than the material foundation of life. To quote one writer on the subject: "Unemployment affects both body and soul. It chills the soul...It drowns the body...It dampens the spirit."

(Sharon Kirsh, Unemployment: Its Impact on Body and Soul)

Listen to the following comments from interviews:

" I feel a strong economic base would make people happier and display more optimism. Steady employment would be good for a lot of people"

" Things that make people feel most happy, optimistic and enthusiastic about life? If they are achieving or getting something they desired. A job that pays well and is highly motivating."

(Quotes from Community Needs Study)

Unemployment, although mortifying for all people, touches the lives of Native people in particularly devastating ways. For them, unemployment is one of the many products of oppression, and creates an experience described as "ethnostress". As the feeling side of oppression, ethnostress is the disruption of the joyful sensations of being Native. Mutual respect and trust are lost, and the capacity to reach out and help is weakened.

Factors Affecting Employment & Income

Low wages in off-reserve jobs, plus the accompanying costs for transportation, babysitting and clothing make it difficult for those who wish to get away from a General Welfare Assistance lifestyle.

The study asked people to compare successful and unsuccessful employment-seekers, and what factors seemed to make a difference. The following were highlighted as important influences:

- . The level of life skills and training for accessing, holding, and doing well in jobs.
- . Educational background.
- . Access to transportation.
- . Personal qualities such as motivation, assertiveness, confidence and self-esteem, having clear life goals and priorities, and a positive attitude.
- . Current and previous family support and positive experiences.
- . Employment opportunities.
- . Relevance, quality and use of existing employment programs.
- . Criteria for employment on reserve.

There is also a deep-rooted feeling that some peoples' attitudes toward employment and income is not one of a 9-5 lifestyle. Accumulating personal wealth at the expense of others is not a traditional Native lifestyle.

Although problems of unemployment and low incomes were evident in all six communities, some variations in the problems are noteworthy.

CHRISTIAN ISLAND and **GEORGINA ISLAND** First Nations both identified limited job opportunities on the islands, and accessibility to employment and training, as factors affecting employment rates.

ORILLIA and **MIDLAND** respondents identified negative stereotyping of Native employees as hampering job opportunities.

In summary, insufficient jobs, low incomes and difficulties in accessing jobs all seriously detract from a desired quality of style. Cultural attitudes toward the organization of work may require unique responses to Native unemployment.

HEALTH AND WELL-BEING

Good health is a gift from the Creator. It is a responsibility to take care of it. Good health is a balance of physical, mental, emotional and spiritual elements. All four interact together to form a strong, healthy person. If one of these elements is neglected, then health suffers in all areas. For example, a troubled mind or spirit may cause sickness in the body; a poorly nourished body may weaken a person's mental functions. Good health is ours when we live in a balanced relationship with Earth and the natural world.

Native people in Simcoe County/York Region spoke at length of their health. They were asked to describe good health and the signs of good health that most people value in their communities. As well they were asked to describe the prevailing illnesses, including both physical and mental problems.

When describing positive physical health, many people spoke of physical fitness, healthy and happy appearances. Others emphasized sound and balanced minds. Still others spoke of active life styles, sports and general participation in community life.

The holistic perspective that highlighted most peoples' comments is well illustrated in the following quotation from the community needs study:

"You can't just talk about physical health. You have to talk about the psychological, social, and spiritual health of the individual. You could have a good body, but something could be wrong with your mind."

(Quote from Community Needs Study)

Health issues affect the whole community. If individuals are in good health, then you have a healthy community. If there is illness, the community will also reflect this illness.

Person after person observed that few people in the community displayed the healthy signs and behavior described above. To quote:

" A very small group of people show any signs of ideal health. Only the young people seem to be physically fit."

" As far as I know, not everyone is health conscious all the time, only sometimes."

(Quotes from Community Needs Study)

A variety of specific physical health problems were identified as affecting Native people, but most frequently:

- . Diabetes
- . Stress and tension
- . Obesity
- . Alcoholism
- . Heart problems
- . High blood pressure

Among these, alcoholism, diabetes and high blood pressure were named as the most serious physical health problems. As well, alcohol abuse is viewed as a main contributor to other physical health problems by most informants. Other factors contributing to physical health problems were:

- . Stress, depression, worry
- . Poor eating habits
- . Other life-style factors: smoking, insufficient rest, and inadequate exercise
- . Socio-economic factors: unemployment, poor paying jobs, reserve/urban culture shock

Mental Health and Ethnostress

Discussions of general health always made reference to the emotional or mental side of one's existence. When asked to describe the signs of "good mental health", people's answers reflected different themes:

- .Some people emphasized the physical aspects of living, such as fitness, physical health, and appearance
- .Others stressed the importance of constructive emotions, such as positive attitudes, humour, laughter, happiness and love
- .Still others emphasized the value of supportive relationships such as reaching out to others, helping the community, and believing in people

.Others described the healthy self: helping oneself, mature problem solving, assertiveness, and self acceptance

.A few linked mental health with moderation or abstinence from drinking

When asked to identify life experiences contributing to mental health problems or disturbances in their lives, people again and again cited alcohol or drug abuse, economic difficulties, and family problems.

The following quotes are brief but powerful answers to the question " What factors have brought on mental health problems in some people?"

" Drug and alcohol abuse. Unemployment makes living hard. Death cause mourning and heartache for quite some time and this is not a healthy sign. Dealing with issues day to day causes stress and tension."

" What goes on in and around our lives, eg. past problems and unresolved issues. Not knowing who you are (background). Some people can't deal with self-esteem"

" Loss of heritage, broken homes. Parents who drink. Many deaths in the community. Feeling of not belonging."

(Quotes from Community Needs Study)

These words point to the importance of a concept like "ethnostress" for understanding the health of Native people. Although not used in everyday conversation, "ethnostress" sums up the daily experiences of life for many Native people.

Oppression experienced over the years has interfered with meeting the basic needs for full self-realization. Restricted opportunities and cultural loss has, for many Native people, created misery and confusion. For example, the Federal Government's forced assimilation policy resulting in separation of children, residential schooling, and abuse, is a well-publicized historical source of ethnostress.

Among the health and emotional well-being problems identified in this study, concerns related to depression and low self-esteem were given particular emphasis in **Midland, Christian Island, Rama and Georgina Island.**

HOUSING**"Mortgaging your future to obtain housing was not a traditional form of housing for Native people." (Quote from meeting)**

There are chronic housing problems faced by many Native people whether they live in urban, remote or rural communities. Their housing needs are not articulated, documented, and accepted as legitimate and high priority.

Virtually no one questions the need for more and better housing for Native people. Governments tend to respond to stated needs first by agreeing that the situation is terrible. Rather than responding by changing priorities or by additional funding, the claim is made that there are too few dollars to undertake what is necessary.

In the community needs study, many housing issues or concerns were identified, but the most common was a concern for the limited numbers of housing units due to limited funds. Suitability of housing was also troublesome to most.

More housing units and suitable types of housing will have enormous healthy consequences for family life, according to many respondents.

- . More housing units, and suitable housing for people's needs (eg. single parents, elderly) will result in less overcrowding, and more opportunities for quality relationships across the generations.
- . More quality experiences would occur, such as teaching by older persons, space for children to study, and space for "private time".

Several people were critical of housing which is not appropriate or supportive of Native culture. Native people want housing which accommodates and integrates the elderly into the life of the community. Because of the need for cultural revitalization, children must have daily opportunities to learn from Elders, and engage them directly in their lives. Appropriately designed housing should lend support to these special roles.

Similarly, other extended family members play an important supportive role in Native culture. Housing must reinforce these relationships, by allowing easy access between family members and by generally symbolizing the ties rather than isolation between family members.

What are the effects of insufficient and unsuitable housing?

In the needs study, community members were asked: "In your community, what happens in people's lives when they have poor housing?"

The answers clearly reveal how deeply and broadly housing affects daily living. The impact of poor housing includes:

- .depression...feeling closed in
- .poor morale
- .housing is poorly looked after
- .lifestyle...standards are lowered
- .lower quality of family life: overcrowding...doubling and tripling of families
- .poor sanitary conditions
- .people do not want to go home at night
- .lack of motivation for anything else
- .tendency to stay unemployed
- .tendency to stay isolated
- .lowering of community involvement

Appropriate housing, then, far exceeds the basic needs for shelter and safety. Further, housing is an area where Native people must get proactive, and attempt to shape the policies and decisions of Government authorities. Housing should be designed to reflect both personal needs and cultural priorities.

Again, the details of housing concerns tend to reflect community priorities. The following listing of community by community themes reflects these priorities:

BARRIE

- . Lack of assistance to persons with a middle-class income, who are not eligible for assistance, but whose income is still limited for housing purchase
- . Poor communication between housing staff, government contacts and users of housing
- . Property management difficulties

- . The average low income of Native people in Barrie
- . High cost of living in Barrie
- . Cutbacks in funding for housing

CHRISTIAN ISLAND

With the number of skilled trades people in the community, Christian Island has enormous potential for doing its own housing development. Nevertheless people are concerned about...

- .the long waiting lists for housing
- .the difficulties of bonding the trades people
- .the challenges of co-ordinating the various trades

GEORGINA ISLAND

- . Focused upon educating owners and tenants on housing upkeep
- . Education on available housing assistance and procedures
- . Consistent recruitment of volunteers for housing activities

ORILLIA

.Discouraged about the limited community-based planning process for housing.

MIDLAND

.Concern over the complex procedures in acquiring housing and the limited assistance to new owners.

RAMA

- . Lack of consistency in housing policy or policy application
- . Need for a comprehensive land-use planning process
- . Need for a culture-based approach to the design of housing, taking into account the desire for extended family connections

EDUCATION: REGAINING CONTROL

Historically, education in its purest form was taught by the parents and Elders. Culture and language were taught and a way of living was retained. Education was everyday living, not confined to a 9-3:30 classroom setting.

With the establishment of the residential school system, Native people were forced to hand over the teaching responsibility to others. We need to hand back the teaching responsibility to the parents and grandparents. Appropriate behavior and lifeskills need to be taught to the children through role-modelling. That is, they learn by observing, doing and participating.

The importance of education for Native people in Simcoe County and York Region was emphasized repeatedly. Consider the following quotes:

"People in the community want their children to have a good education so that their children can have good jobs and be self-reliant"

"Our children need a Native curriculum in the school. They also need more student employment here, year-round. We have to start training our children to become teachers and bring their skills back to the reserve to better benefit their people."

(Quotes from Community Needs Study)

Yet all is not well. As the following section will demonstrate, community members are looking for vast improvements in educational opportunities.

Issues

The six communities identified a total of twenty-four issues regarding children's and adult education.

Twelve issues were highlighted:

- . Need for total Native language immersion schools
- . Need more role models
- . High drop-out rate
- . Not enough use of the Elders in educating the young
- . Lack of parental support of children's schooling and education

- . Lack of skills for dealing with schools. Very few Natives on Boards of Education
- . Insufficient encouragement for school leavers, preparation for the outside school system, clarifying the links between school and career, etc.
- . Insufficient encouragement for graduates
- . More Native teachers are required
- . Parenting courses, to get parents involved in their children's education
- . Insufficient support for adult learners, such as childcare
- . Recognition for students, i.e. awards dinners, bursaries, etc.

Native youth need appropriate arrangements for making the transition from school to work. They need to know their career options, and feel optimistic about career opportunities. Too many are being guided along narrow roads, or are not finding appropriate jobs after graduation.

How The Quality of Family Life Affects Education

Interviews demonstrate the strong ties between family life and schooling, and how improving the quality and strengths of families would have important pay-offs for schooling. For example:

- .family problem situations often result in inappropriate parenting, thus weakening children's self-esteem
- .some families do not show enough interest in their children's schooling; nor do they have the skills (eg. arranging homework conditions) and knowledge for supporting their efforts in school
- .inadequate community resources, such as day-care, may prevent some adults from returning to school
- .family isolation from the school system (eg. not attending parents' nights) sometimes reduces the chance of school success

Community Educational Issues

Again, the six communities voiced somewhat different priorities.

BARRIE

Representatives were hopeful of increasing the use of Native teaching ways in the general school system.

CHRISTIAN ISLAND

Respondents were concerned about:

- . Children in trouble with the law within the school system, eg. vandalism
- . The stress and dangers of commuting by ferry to school
- . The need for a multi-use facility associated with the school

GEORGINA ISLAND

- . Greater access to off-reserve courses
- . Provision of more courses on the reserve
- . Improving parental skills for dealing with the broader school system, either on or off the reserve

ORILLIA

- . Alleviating the tensions between Native and non-Native students in the school system
- . Recruiting and supporting Native resource people to contribute to the broader school system and special educational events

MIDLAND

- . Increasing the number of Native professionals in the broader education system
- . Establishing regular links with the broader school system to address possible harmful dynamics such as "streaming" children or "pushing" students into higher grades before they are ready

RAMA

- . Improving parents' attitudes toward education
- . Increasing academic support to individual students for both remedial and enrichment purposes
- . The lack of a reserve school (or special urban Native school)
- . Consistent and effective methods for preparing reserve students for the school system in the city
- . Helping children and adults make clear practical links between educational efforts and career opportunities, both on and off the reserve

Many of these issues point to a strong need for learning opportunities for those in educational support roles. These include parents, specialists and other community members who, through their actions and encouragement, raise the likelihood of educational success. Whether this knowledge takes the form of parenting skills, school system knowledge, or remedial skills, those in supportive roles need help to provide the best.

Other issues are related to cultural awareness. Native children, youth, adults, and non-Native educators desperately need to know about Native culture. The general school system has failed in its response to Native students. Interaction with cultural teachers is a ready solution.

Whatever the focus of learning, these issues point to the need for a special kind of learning opportunity...a learning lodge. This opportunity would offer a broad range of skills and knowledge in support of Native success in schooling. Those supporting or working in society's educational institutions need help to do a better job. Native people must take the initiative to provide this help.

To respond to these needs, the concept of a Native "learning lodge" will be elaborated in a later section.

RECREATION: FOR THE BETTERMENT OF BODY, MIND AND SPIRIT

Recreation is vital to a person's well-being. It is a source of learning for many things and is good for the mind, body and spirit. It is a means of developing strong role models for the young people. Historically, among Native people, recreation was family activity that strengthened the bond between individuals, families and communities.

Many respondents see improvements in the quality of recreation as essential to strengthening communities and establishing a better quality of life. Interaction is the key.

Efforts are already well underway. For example: baseball, hockey, volleyball and bowling serve to bring the residents of all three reserve communities together several times a year. Recreational program staff are hopeful of more opportunities. Recreation is also seen as a valuable way to interact with the non-Native community.

As well as establishing internal and external community ties, recreational programming and facilities are regarded as important solutions to social problems, particularly alcohol abuse. What is needed are non-alcoholic forms of recreation, fitness and tension release. The consumption of alcohol among peers cannot continue as the ready-made alternative to boredom and loneliness.

Issues

Several recreational issues or concerns were identified among the six communities. **The one which interested most communities was the need to recruit and support volunteers working in recreational activities.** Other issues:

- . Lack of role models and recognition of these
- . Too little, or late, publicity about recreational events
- . People are limited by the lack of transportation available
- . There are few activities designed for the involvement of entire families
- . Non-alcoholic recreation activities need to be stressed

- . There is no one facility dedicated to recreation alone
- . Music and art should be acknowledged and supported as recreational activities

How Does Recreation Affect The Quality of Family Life?

Those interviewed identified a number of ways that recreational opportunities and programming affect the quality of family life.

- . Time demands and burn-out of volunteers affects the quality of family relationships
- . A lack of family-oriented recreational programming weakens total family involvement in community life
- . A lack of advance information about recreational events disorganizes family planning for recreation, and may minimize full family attendance
- . Inadequate transportation prevents some families from attending events, thus closing off outside experiences and links to other communities
- . Inflexible recreational program design removes opportunities for special groups like the elderly, the handicapped, and those people seeking contacts with other Native communities
- . Flexible program design encourages the tying together of various life activities, such as recreation and schooling, and inter-generational relationships

Recreational Issues Unique To Communities

Interviews and community meetings surfaced recreational issues which took priorities in the various communities. To summarize:

BARRIE

- . Many Native people do not have the fees and/or equipment for taking part in recreational activities
- . Little or no link with the broader school system for joint sharing or development of facilities or programs

CHRISTIAN ISLAND

- . The need to deal with social habits which compete with successful development of recreational programs (eg. regular weekend drinking)
- . Need to do consistent public education in the community about the benefits of recreation and fitness
- . Need for a facility/sports complex
- . Transportation is a problem

GEORGINA ISLAND

- . Limited access to, and limited facilities for recreation
- . Limited official support for non-sport recreational activities
- . Need for a recreation committee. Consistent needs assessments would be useful

ORILLIA

- . Few regular recreational links with other Native communities
- . Little organizational capacity to undertake consistent fund-raising

MIDLAND

- . Emphasized the need for links with the local Native Friendship Centre and determine its role in recreation
- . Better links with local non-Native recreational services

RAMA

- . High workload of the local recreational committee
- . Few "all-community" recreational events
- . Need to increase parents' interest and teach fitness benefits for themselves and children

In summary, recreation is very much recognized as an important means to a life of quality. Recreation provides fun, relaxation, and health. Creatively designed programs can build community togetherness and revitalize cultural awareness. As an alternative to peer group drinking, recreation is a promising way to reduce social problems.

EXISTING SERVICES AND IDEAS FOR CHANGE

The previous sections summarized desired quality of life themes and the various impediments. The aim of this section is first to examine the program solutions already in place, namely the existing range of human services and programs.

After a documentation of existing resources, the next section assesses how well these are working, and identifies their short-comings.

In the next general section, the solutions proposed by community participants and services providers are reviewed. All of these findings form the foundation for a set of recommendations for change.

The Availability of Services and Programs

The communities have many potential resources for achieving what they want. Ideally, at times of need, people should be able to turn to relatives, friends, neighbours, and other "natural" sources of support.

Other resources come from formalized helping agencies and programs, in which paid professional staff offer healing, advice or material assistance.

In this section, the formal resources are described. The first question is "what is available?"

Description of Resources

As part of the resource assessment study, the research team compiled a comprehensive list of the agencies and programs available to the Native people in York Region and Simcoe County. This list included Native and non-Native programs, off- and on-reserve.

As much as possible, efforts were made to gather detailed descriptions of what services were offered by each program. Such descriptions were obtained from community service directories and from interviews with service providers.

The descriptions of resources can be made into directories and distributed to Native communities. Also, the descriptions of Native programs and services would be a valuable resource for non-Native organizations, as an aid to the referral process.

An important resource assessment question in this project was "Are there any obvious gaps in available resources for Native people, given their identified needs?". The following observations emerge from the analysis of service and program titles in the resource listings:

.Culture and language learning was identified as a high priority need, yet almost no cultural or language programs exist on reserves or in urban areas to respond to this need.

.Many non-Native resources exist in the family life, health and employment areas.

.Orillia and Midland, because of Couchiching Native Services, and the Georgian Bay Native Friendship Centre are in the best position to service it's off-reserve Native people.

The Barrie Native Friendship Centre is at an early stage of development, and presently lacks paid service employees.

.Concern for the abuse of alcohol and other substances, has been identified as one of the most serious impediments to a good quality of life across reserve and urban centres. Yet only reserves have Native resource people. On the other hand non-Native resources are plentiful in urban centres.

Both Barrie and Orillia have several agencies and programs responding to family life and health needs. About one-third of the family agencies are day care or nursery programs. Ten are specialized home and school associations. Also, nearly four-fifths of the health agencies respond to special health needs, such as alzheimer's disease, developmental handicaps, and hearing problems.

Barrie also has several specialized sports, recreation and arts/crafts clubs which account for the high number in the recreational category.

With one exception, on the three reserves most of the high need categories are covered by at least one resource person or program.

The one exception is cultural awareness and language training.

Native Services and the Process of Self-Determination

Traditionally, Native communities provided their own helping and supports through the natural processes of family and community life. Extended family members helped each other with child-rearing; shared resources at times of need; and were available when crises threatened to disrupt family life and parenting. Elders and Chiefs were always available for guidance and teaching.

In the last hundred years or so, dominant society institutions intervened in the lives of Native people, resulting in the weakening or destruction of these natural community processes. In some cases, the State claimed to know what was best for Native people. Provincial child welfare legislation granted the legal authority to Children's Aid Societies to protect children; the result for Native families was a well-publicized disaster! External intervention became part of the problem.

In recent years, Native communities have gradually established their own service agencies. Many, like Ojibway Tribal Family Services (Northwestern Ontario) are committed to supporting the rejuvenation of natural community care. In the service sector, these developments reflect Native self-determination and represent a general pattern affecting Native communities across Canada.

The desire for self-determination in Native services is an idea which is widely shared in Simcoe County and York Region. Yet most existing services fit within Government policy guidelines, and therefor have not been developed by Native people. The following pages list all Native programs in the six communities under study.

Resource gaps in relation to needs: a closer look

An assessment of resource gaps requires a close inspection of what programs actually offer, in relation to needs. To accomplish this, the project obtained detailed program descriptions and compared these to findings from the community needs assessment.

The research found that in some instances agencies or programs do not quite respond to specific community needs. For example, a family agency may exist with several programs for families, but may not have any programs to assist young parents to be better parents.

The following are resource gaps which are common to all communities.

Alcohol

.Native alcohol treatment centre

Cultural

.capacity to provide cultural experiences

.resources to create positive community attitudes and involvement in culture

.opportunities/facilities for language learning

Education

.Native resource people in the educational system: guidance counsellors, teachers/teachers aids

.resource programs to promote the support of children's schooling by families and the community at large

.support for adult education: training information in relation to careers; day-care; information to link adult education and potential employment on reserves; study skills programs

Employment and Income

.resources to help change employer attitudes towards Natives

.resources to change attitudes towards work and welfare

Family and Children's Services

.family life and parenting skills education

.resources for building the cultural foundations of family life

Recreation

.adequate or more facilities for expanded recreational programming

.organizational support for recreation: staff, committees, volunteers, planning and publicity

.programming for special interests: all-family events, non-sports activities, women's interests, non-competitive children's events

Housing

.limited amount of available housing; slow rate of development

.support for potential and existing home-owners: advice on financing and building; up-to-date information; development of fair and consistent policies

.wider range of options on housing: renting or owning; single parent housing; single youth; large families; extended family housing

.gaps in appropriate housing program resources, including: organization, administration, full-time staff, housing specialists, committees

Health and Well-Being

.programs and facilities specializing in the stress and mental illnesses related to "ethnostress", i.e. the psychological problems associated with being a Native person.

Gaps in resources which are unique to particular communities

Whereas the above information summarizes service gaps common to all communities, the research identified resource gaps which were unique or high priority to each community. A summary follows:

Barrie

.lacks family life resources for establishing family ties with the Native community, building a cultural base for family life, and helping families support children's schooling.

.lacks resources for encouraging community support for cultural practice and language learning

Orillia

.lacks family life resources for the prevention and treatment of sexual abuse (Note: Couchiching Association for Native Services is planning such a program)

.lacks employment program resources to change employer attitudes towards Native employees

.lacks a program for making cultural links to other communities

.in the educational sphere, lacks: sufficient Native educational professionals and other resource people (eg. Native volunteers, traditional teachers); information, counselling and practical support to adult learners; and access to trades and technical training opportunities.

.lacks housing, either rented or owned; housing for special needs groups, such as single youth and the elderly, and community-wide planning for Native housing

Midland

.lacks family life resources for promoting cultural awareness and identity in family life as a whole (Note: The Georgian Bay Friendship Centre does have a Youth Worker who provides cultural activities for youth)

.lacks an employment program to educate employers about Native employees

Rama

- .lacks family life resources: a program for toddlers, up to age two and one-half
- .lacks local mental health programs for the prevention and treatment of low self-esteem

Georgina Island

- .lacks family life resources for parenting skills development
- .lacks employment program resources for changing people's attitudes towards work and welfare
- .lacks sufficient housing generally, specific needs housing (single youth, elderly), and well-organized housing programs which provide education on financial assistance for home-buying, housing availabilities, and up-to-date housing policies; also, volunteers for housing programs are needed.
- .lacks recreational facilities, and recreational programming using skilled staff and needs assessment information, one which advertises regularly, increases availability of non-sports recreation, encourages recreation for special age groups and whole families, and develops culture-based recreation.

Christian Island

- .Although Midland has several family life resources, the reserve itself cannot provide cultural awareness in family life and parenting skills training.
- .lacks employment program resources to facilitate better access to jobs and training
- .lacks health programs for diabetes education and support, as well as other health education issues; as well, some mental health expertise, and quicker access to health facilities, is also needed. (A proposal for a diabetes clinic has been submitted)
- .lacks educational program activities to: promote parental interest in children's schooling, assure safe commuting to mainland; support boarding students and their hosts; provide a comprehensive physical facility connected to the school; career-focused training opportunities for adults; practical support for adult learners; and access to technical training.

.in the housing area, there is a need for more affordable housing, and clarity of housing policies and procedures; housing for special needs groups, such as single youth, single parents, the elderly, and single families.

.in recreation, there is a lack of adequate recreational facilities, as well as recreational program planning for special needs groups (elderly, whole families, handicapped); traditional recreation; public education on fitness benefits.

In summary, the analysis thus far is beginning to point in the direction of certain resource requirements, which ultimately will be addressed later in more detail. These are:

.resources for healing and treatment related to such problems as alcohol abuse, stress and mental illness, sexual abuse

.cultural and language learning opportunities

.community development to help change attitudes and build community and organizational support for existing and new programs

.adult learning opportunities for parent skills training, career advancement, and support of schools

.resources to make non-Native institutions more responsive to Native people

.recreational facilities

.housing

In the following pages, these and other requirements will be elaborated as information is presented on the service delivery to Native people.

THE EFFECTIVENESS OF SERVICES

The previous section documents the availability of resources for Native people in the six research communities. However, resources may be available to client groups, but are either not used or are inappropriate. This section examines the actual delivery of services to Natives, addressing the question of their effectiveness in meeting needs. The section begins with an assessment of Native services.

The Effectiveness of Native Services

During the last ten years, Native planners and service providers have developed a set of clear principles for developing services for their own Native people. These principles reflect the general value of self-determination.

These principles are as follows:

- .Programs for Native people should reflect Native culture in organization and service delivery
- .Native people should have ownership of all services
- .Natives should be involved in the design of services at the policy level, and in the planning and delivery of programs
- .New programs should be designed with the Native community

A number of Native services already exist in Simcoe County and York Region; these were assessed for their effectiveness. The results are as follows.

Do Native people use existing resources?

Whether or not people use available services is an important question for service planners and program evaluators. The research strongly suggests that many Native people do not use services that could possibly meet their needs. This is true for both Native and non-Native programs.

Understanding why this is true is an important part of resource assessment. Key findings are as follows:

- .Comments made by Native service providers concerning Native use of Native programs, indicates that (i) in the area of alcohol abuse and employment, there are needy people who do not use the service, and (ii) in health and family services there are more people wanting services than can be accommodated.

.Lack of program awareness and not believing they need the service, loomed large as possible reasons for not using Native programs.

.The non-Native service providers expressed mixed opinions concerning Native agencies. In housing, education and recreation, non-Natives felt that Native organizations were doing a good job, but in other service areas they were far more critical.

.Across all services, Native service-providers find that certain community groups are difficult to reach, particularly:

.people aged 15-50, i.e. youth and middle-aged

.young parents

.Native service-providers were positive about their own program's ability to meet the immediate needs of troubled people, but were much less optimistic about making long-lasting improvements.

.All in all, the main unmet needs were identified as....

.mental health and spiritual healing

.family life education and parenting skills development

.family support and counselling

.treatment and after-care for alcoholics and adult children of alcoholics

.cultural awareness: history, understanding and use in everyday life

.education and training: job-related and life skills

.court advocacy and support

.career counselling and support

.housing and housing information

What challenges do programs face in their efforts to serve Native people? In an attempt to develop a deeper understanding of the quality of service delivery to Native people, a number of probing questions were asked of Native service providers.

Questions were asked concerning the sufficiency of resources, the level of community support for Native agencies, training needs, and the links between organizations and Native communities. Other questions delved into program accessibility and service appropriateness.

Do Native programs have enough resources?

Funding, staff, information - these important resources are the life blood of all service organizations. The history of human services is one of trying to meet many needs with few resources. Ontario's diversified clientele make this challenge even more evident.

Information from Native service-providers consistently points to insufficient resources to do the necessary work.

Asked about other challenges...

.not one of the Native service providers felt that their services were sufficient to meet the needs of their community

.asked why they were not able to respond to all community needs, Native service providers were most likely to identify the need for funding and staff

.a majority of Native service providers were dissatisfied with the amount of time they were able to give to their work

On this last point, Native agencies are known to suffer from high turnover, possibly due to staff stress and burnout. Inadequately resourced programs functioning in high need communities typically have highly committed workers who are constantly at risk. Weak community support may be another contributing factor. Whatever the reasons, opportunities should be provided for staff retreats, stress management and training opportunities.

Are Native Programs Supported By their Communities?

Service agencies and programs do not exist in isolation. To be effective, programs need to be accepted by the population at large. As well, they require support from client and non-client groups. In some cases, volunteer assistance is very helpful.

By and large, the Native service providers are unhappy with the level of support received in their own communities. To some extent, inadequate support is seen in terms of inadequate funding levels, but other local factors come into play as well:

- .an absence of sharing and caring attitudes within the community at large
- .short supply of volunteer support
- .abuse of program criteria
- .an absence of leadership support for human services
- .absence of employment opportunities

How well do Native service organizations co-operate, and co-ordinate their efforts?

The resource assessment study also focused on the working relationships between Native and non-Native organizations, and between Native agencies. Co-operation, co-ordination, referral, and follow-up... all of these are important dimensions of service networks.

The information is quite mixed. **Native organizations communicate a more positive picture than those in non-Native agencies.**

- .Native service providers generally report good working relationships with non-Native organizations; most of the difficulties in maintaining positive relationships are attributed to a lack of awareness, understanding and cultural sensitivity in non-Native organizations.
- .somewhat more critical assessment was made by Native agencies concerning relationships between their own Native organizations: poor relations with employment programs, lack of networking between Bands and Friendship Centres, jealousies, poor communication with Chiefs and Councils.
- .on the positive side, Native service providers spoke of good rapport, honesty, and trust between some Native organizations; critical comments tended to emphasize...
- .the lack of unity
- .strained communications
- .inadequate mutual understanding of programs
- .limited staff skills

The Effectiveness of Mainstream Generic Services

In this section the effectiveness of the generic services are examined. These are services which are established and provided to all people. Although not designed for any particular cultural or ethnic target group, government policy requires them to be responsive to all groups. As will be shown, these agencies experience many challenges in reaching and serving their Native clients.

Specific observations follow:

.The majority of non-Native service providers find nothing about their programs making it difficult for Natives to use their services. Even so, **as many as one-third do** identify some reasons. **Family and children services agencies seem to have the most difficulties serving Native people.**

.Most non-Native service providers are unable to say how many Native people use their services. Those that were able, identified about 5% of their case-load, on average. Most agencies do not have information on their Native clients.

.The main reasons why Native people may find it difficult to use services are: cultural and language differences from staff, lack of Native staff, accessibility, cost, complex Band procedures which inhibit collaboration between agencies, a Native lack of program awareness, staff unawareness of Native needs and issues, and a general discomfort in non-Native settings.

.With the exception of health services, most service providers claim that Native people need their services, but do not use them. Even in the area of health, one-half of the people interviewed expressed this opinion.

An interesting observation is that Native service providers claim that those in need are willingly to use non-Native services.

Do existing services make a difference?

Whether or not services actually make a difference in peoples lives is another important question for planning new services or fine-tuning the ones already in place. The best way to do this is thorough individual program evaluations. Such detailed analysis was not possible with this project's budget. However, the resource assessment interviews with service providers uncovered some definite patterns:

.Generally, the good news is that Native service-providers were quite positive in their assessment of how well non-Native service providers were meeting the needs of Native people.

.about one-half of all non-Native service providers feel that their agency had enough resources to serve Native people; health agencies seem most comfortable with their available resources.

.although Native service-providers were generally positive about non-Native service delivery, those falling short were criticized for long waiting lists, the need for trained staff, more staff and volunteers, and additional funding.

Information is an important resource in service agency functioning. Non-Native service providers overwhelmingly need more and better information to serve Native people. In particular, information is needed on ...

.needs

.descriptions of other programs and Band operations

.Native awareness training on Native life, culture and mobility trends

Assessing the co-ordination between their own and other agencies, non-Native staff were evenly divided between positive and critical comments. **Family service liaisons seem most in need of improvement.**

Asked to explain the difficulties, service providers pointed to differing funding arrangements, inadequate co-ordination procedures, insufficient time and staff, waiting lists, irrelevant mandates, and at times, faulty communications.

Most informants in housing, education, culture and recreation said that coordination was good; a few said that it needed improvements.

In summary, how well are existing agencies and programs serving Native people? The research suggests that many Native and non-Native services are not being used by those in need.

Native service providers also report that many community needs are unmet, largely the result of insufficient financial and human resources.

Most Native service providers believe that Native people would be willing to use mainstream service agencies. By and large, those that do use such services have their needs met. On the other hand, non-Native service providers believe that many needy people do not use available services.

Mainstream service agencies seem desperately in need of better information on Native agencies, culture and Native services. In short, they freely acknowledge many challenges in meeting the needs of Native people.

The implications of these findings are clear:

.Many Native service programs need help to expand their services and access the funds to support such expansion

.Native programs also need the kind of assistance which will help them reach out to clients and build the community support an organizational relationships to support their initiatives

.Native staff need strong personal supports as they struggle with challenging tasks in a tight financial situation. Regular training, self-awareness, and stress management opportunities will be recommended.

.Mainstream agencies either must receive help to be more responsive to Native clients and/or leave Native services to Native communities

Suggestions for supporting these implications will be offered later.

SUGGESTIONS FOR CHANGE: A SUMMARY

What changes might help achieve positive ideals and valued life-styles? As an action research project, this needs assessment took special pains to stimulate solutions and recommendations from community members, Native and generic service providers. Several thought-provoking questions were asked concerning how to make things better. Ideas were shared in interviews, community meetings, and in the public education conference.

Building ideas towards solutions requires much more than simply asking for how much more money is needed, although this is important. Questions were also asked about volunteer initiatives, and about better use of existing programs. Other questions asked for specific recommendations for new and innovative programs, possibly requiring additional funding.

Recommended Initiatives Using Existing Resources and Volunteers

The first set of recommendations require little or no additional monies or other outside resources. People were asked to suggest ideas or steps that communities could take on their own to solve various quality of life problems. They were prompted to consider initiatives using existing resources and volunteers, and not much outside help or funding.

Several specific and excellent ideas came forth. Many of these are quite distinctive to specialized fields, such as housing, health or education. All would require primarily a shift in current program emphases, organizational changes, new service philosophies, increased use of volunteers, and the like. These ideas in all of their detail are presented in the background paper entitled "Community Ideas For Local Solutions to Major Problems and Issues"

The following is a summary of all the changes. This summary identifies recommendations which are true for most quality of life areas. In general, then, people interviewed in the community needs assessment study believed that things could be improved by the following changes...

.existing programs encouraging better program participation, client comfort, and use

.a better match between program positions and the staff filling those positions

.existing programs having new types of service philosophies and services, such as...

- .. prevention
- .. parent skill training, including links with schools
- .. family-oriented activities
- .. healing
- .. cultural learning and cultural activities

.organizational changes , such as flexible hours, better information about programs, visibility, communications among resource people, and the like

.changes in community behaviors and opportunities, such as mutual self-help, inhibiting access to alcohol and drugs, healthy recreational alternatives

.community development changes through voluntarism, leadership support, building relationships within and across communities

.better transportation arrangements

.programs and whole communities linked up with institutions outside the community, such as schools, potential employees, and other service agencies

.the use of existing facilities in new innovative ways

.the use of volunteers in new and innovative ways (eg. elders, grand-parents, after-school tutors)

.the use of programs or activities in other Native communities
(eg. women's circles, A.A. groups, recreation, etc.)

.learning and use of Native culture and language in everyday life

.improved access to employment opportunities and programs

These general ideas and the detailed suggestions in the various quality of life areas, are enormously important for future development. Later recommendations will encourage BANAC to take a strong and active role in encouraging communities to the next stage.

Suggested Outside Funding And Other Resources

Community key informants were also asked to suggest larger kinds of solutions, those clearly requiring major funding or other kinds of outside help, such as training.

One interesting observation is that some respondents looked for major funding for changes or support which others believed could be accomplished without substantial funding. This is possibly because some communities are more optimistic about their capacity to change on their own. Or it could suggest that some may benefit from BANAC'S help in examining low cost initiatives for solving major problems.

Alcohol abuse

Nearly all respondents felt that funding or other kinds of outside support were needed to help do away with alcohol abuse and other substance abuses.

Such outside help would support the addition or development of...

.New and better programs, such as A.A., drop-in crisis centre, self-help programs.

.Prevention-oriented activities and facilities, such as recreational and sports activities, crafts, and other traditional activities.

.Resource people: staff, volunteers, ex-abusers, traditional teachers, counsellors.

.Training

.Techniques, such as: counselling, sweat lodges, women's and men's circles, and lectures.

Employment

An earlier section of this report emphasized the serious unemployment levels in these Native communities. Also documented were the concerns about low income levels and what this does to the quality of life of groups like single mothers.

Suggestions requiring outside funding and support for addressing these problems include the following:

.Training: life skills, trades, small business management.

.Economic development: reserve industry, tourism, business start-up, small businesses, worker co-operatives.

.Programming innovations and fine-tuning: CEIC program change, additional social programs, proper administration of existing programs, Futures, family unemployment counselling.

.Community development: economic needs assessment, enhanced communications about jobs, volunteer mobilization and training, liaison with outside training and employment institutions (eg. Board membership).

Family life

All people interviewed believed that steps involving outside funding and resources could be taken to respond to their many concerns about the quality of family life. These steps would involve...

.the funding of new programs providing: parenting skill training, family counselling, children's programs, life skills (budget management, first aid), family planning, Native Big Brothers/Sisters, Alcoholics Anonymous, women's circles, language classes.

.staff training

.new facilities: drop-in centre, recreational facilities, resource centre, place for elders to speak to community.

.housing

.economic development

Health

The concern for physical health problems such as diabetes, and the need to restore emotional well-being through healing, was emphasized repeatedly throughout the study.

What recommendations were made for new or additional resources for improving health? Suggestions in this area drew attention to specific human and technical resource needs, as well as the emerging use of traditional healing and practices for prevention and therapy:

- .better supplies: medical building, equipment for the handicapped

- .better island accessibility to mainland resources

- .a focus on prevention: water testing, well baby clinics, health clinics, information workshops, traditional teachings and role modelling

- .new or more appropriate resource people: Native nurses, improved sensitivity by health care providers, Native counsellors, qualified professionals, full or part-time nurses.

Generally, considerable support was voiced for sound preventative work in the health field. As one person said, "**Good health promotion will give individual life-style choices**". Another commented on the **possible prevention role of traditional teachings, and living a traditional life-style.**

New resources were also encouraged for responding to mental health needs. In particular, reference was made to ...

- .financial support

- .outside resource people to teach and inform about the traditional ways

- .mental health staff

- .facilities

Culture and Language

All respondents identified steps for promoting culture and language which would require help from outside of the community.

A wide range of cultural events and opportunities were mentioned, including: arts, language classes, starting a museum, and improved libraries.

Equally important however, are support services such as ...

- . better promotion of information on events
- . more resource people
- . more training of cultural program coordinators
- . daycare for program users
- . use of language in Band services
- . capacity to do surveys for needs assessments

Housing

Important recommendations requiring outside support were additional rental units and the need to strengthen organizational capacity in housing programs.

Increased organizational capacity included:

- . development of housing committees
- . improved methods to dispense information
- . increased interest and support from the Band office in terms of outside connections
- . better planning for existing needs and new land for housing

Local resource development involved developing: local work programs in housing; related trades training programs; bondable construction companies; ways to get up-to-date reading material from outside agencies; prearranged mortgages by the band; non-profit housing

Recreation

Most informants felt that new recreational facilities or programs were needed in their communities, requiring financial or other kinds of outside support.

The main improvement appears to be some sort of "recreational facility", e.g. drop-in centre; recreational complex, or community centre with sports capacity. Or, as one person said:

" A visible thriving Community Activity Place is what communities want somewhere on the reserves"

(Quote from meeting)

A number of quite specific recreational support activities or program design ideas were also shared:

- . more well-organized advertising for community events
- . more organizing
- . generally, more funds
- . support to volunteers
- . recreational programs to encourage family involvement in community life
- . adequate transportation to allow families to attend distant recreational events
- . community recreational facilities to allow flexible design of programs, (a) thereby protecting the right of the community to have access to recreation, fitness, and constructive skills, and (b) creating recreational opportunities for special interests groups (eg. elderly, handicapped, etc.)
- . flexible programming to promote the tying together of various life activities, such as recreation and schooling, and inter-generational relationships

Recall, from an earlier section, that recreational opportunities are valuable for their contributions to fun and relaxation, but also for bringing people together and promoting community spirit and strength.

Education

All respondents believed that steps involving outside funding and resources were needed to promote educational opportunities and keep Native children in school. Adult learning also needs strong support.

A number of specific ideas were suggested:

- . recovery program for school drop-outs
- . baby sitting services for adults who attend school
- . increased funding options
- . increased access to local-based trade training
- . night school for adult upgrading
- . elders visiting schools
- . classrooms and libraries at Native Friendship Centres
- . more reserve education officers
- . more mechanisms for pooling resources
- . broader-based setting of goals and objectives generally; more Native control and "ownership of our educational system"
- . parental encouragement to show interest in education, and to provide practical and personal advice to students who have left school or who are considering leaving
- . practical support, such as daycare or living allowances, for adults who are returning or want to return to school.
- . establish a strong family life in order that children value their own efforts as worthwhile, thus lowering drop-out rates and other difficulties.

Community healing and strength

The development or empowerment of communities is an important ideal for many people, one which will naturally lead to other changes. Further, **the most essential first step is a community healing process**, one in which all people have an opportunity to rid themselves of what has been called **ethnostress**.

Ethnostress occurs when the cultural beliefs or joyful identity of a people are disrupted. It is the negative experience they feel when interacting with members of different cultural groups and themselves. The stress within the individual centres around this self image and sense of place in the world.

(Robert Antone, Diane Miller, Brian Myers
The Power within People , Vision Press,
June, 1986.)

The research suggested other criteria for the development of community strength. These are:

- .a strong sense of community
- .mutual involvement and participation in **recreation** and other community events
- .recognition for good deeds
- .the ability to establish and maintain standards, rules and responsibilities
- .self-regulation and problem-solving
- .open, fair, and consistent decision-making
- .strong links with other communities.

Recommendations from Non-Native Service Providers

Non-Native service providers offered a series of recommendations for improving the quality of Native people's lives. Many of these were consistent with Native recommendations. The following quotations from resource assessment interviews illustrate the various points of view:

"The Federal Government should ensure that there is recognition of aboriginal people, and that they are unique. Employment opportunities should be provided. Create ways to support culture."

"Provincial Government should provide funding for increased services to Native people... development and training of Native service workers for Native people"

"Get more into prevention, rather than working on it after the fact"

"Continue dialoguing on the provision of services. I believe it's important for service delivery agents to be aware of the needs of Natives."

(Quotes from Community Needs Study)

To summarize, service providers recommended...

.additional funding

.education

.Native businesses

.emphasis on prevention activities and services, particularly in the family, alcohol and health fields: sports, community education, and information workshops

.more rental units and different types of housing

.improved access and referral to existing services

.recovery of traditional culture

.improvements in organization and networking in existing Native organizations

.staff training

.increase in the numbers of Native staff

Native treatment and counselling

new facilities: large Friendship Centre, drop-in centre, community centre, youth shelters.

steps to improve employment and employability: employment opportunities, job training, work-study programs.

other suggestions: self-government in health and social services, student housing, cultural training for non-Native service providers, free transportation to mainland, assertiveness without aggression, special needs capacity (eg. handicapped), paved roads.

TOWARDS A VALUED LIFESTYLE: COMMUNITY ACTION

This section contains several recommendations from the project consultants. Each one builds on the ideas presented in previous sections. The recommendations respond to the serious quality of life problems identified, and to the difficulties experienced in current service delivery.

The first set of recommendations will be presented within each of the quality of life categories used in this research. Following those, other recommendations will address the roles of BANAC and how BANAC can support future initiatives.

Three recommendations will be made which suggest long range developments: the establishment of a healing lodge, a learning lodge, and a family and children's services agency. Each recommendation, in its own way, will create conditions for stronger and more empowered communities. Each new initiative provides a context for Native people helping other Native people, thereby re-establishing the strong mutual supports of previous community life. In a very real sense, this process began at the Geneva Park conference.

Family Life**Recommendation #1**

This study noted how important families can be in the support of the educational efforts of children and adults. Such support can be practical, emotional, or social. Communities should be helped to develop parental skills for a) supporting children's school activities, and b) parental participation in the development of school programs. For these reasons ...

It is recommended that all communities make special efforts to strengthen "the family as a support system for the educational aspirations of both children and adults".

Recommendation #2

A number of family issues were identified in this study. As well, it was noted that several Native family programs were struggling in different communities with limited financial support to achieve their objectives. It is important that Native programs draw upon each other's resources as much as possible. Therefore ...

It is recommended that, using current information on community needs and possible future directions, all Native family programs collaborate in a planning process for identifying future priorities.

Recommendation # 3

To continue the process of helping each other access the most valuable and relevant family life resources...

It is recommended that all communities collaborate in developing a comprehensive list of resource people and resource materials for both professional and volunteer work in family life, giving special emphasis to women and women's groups as resources.

Recommendation #4

Despite the existence of many family-oriented programs, service providers report that needs are still unmet, and that more programs are needed. Staff training in existing programs is a must.

Preventative efforts, such as life and parenting skills training, family planning, economic development and housing are high priority.

Because of the many potential gains from co-operation and pooling resources across communities....

It is recommended that existing family and children's services should be consolidated into a new Native child and family service agency.

This consolidation should be undertaken without changing the programs and practices now underway. While providing central leadership and guidance, the new arrangement would encourage the freedom for local staff to respond to local needs and conditions.

The proposed agency is advised to adopt a prevention-oriented service philosophy, one which strengthens family life and child-rearing in the community, and in high risk groups. The agency could carry out and support the following services and functions.

- 1.Community, family and parent education
- 2.Direct family healing and referrals for healing
- 3.Child welfare and band representation
- 4.Family advocacy
- 5.Referrals

For more details on the benefits and suggested service philosophy, please refer to the background paper entitled "A Native Child and Family Services Agency"

Native Women**Recommendation #5**

This research found that Native women in Simcoe County and York Region have special needs. Also, women have important leadership and cultural roles in Ojibway culture. For these reasons, special arrangements should be made to assure changes in the quality of their lives.

It is recommended that all communities give special priority to improving the lives of Native women in their family and community leadership roles, through such activities as (i) supporting women's groups (ii) building relationships between such groups (iii) a research conference on the needs of Native women (iv) a family violence initiative for September 1991 funding (v) a Native women's resource centre in the Quality of Life Learning Lodge (see later recommendation)

Employment

Recommendation #6

To respond to the several concerns about community isolation, and difficult access to employment, training and recreation,

It is recommended that isolated communities consider the appropriateness of volunteer-based transportation models for rural areas and senior citizens.

The Canadian Red Cross Society and the Ministry of Transportation are both contact sources for these models.

Recommendation #7

Employment opportunities, training needs and utilization of appropriate employment programs were all raised as major needs in this study. Employment and Immigration Canada is proposing an innovative planning and service delivery policy in which Native people will be directly involved in Local Management Boards. (See Background Paper #12, page 20). It is important that social service work is recognized in any new employment and training initiatives. Therefore...

It is recommended that all six communities assure that social service training and employment needs are communicated to the Local Management Board attending to Simcoe County and York Region.

Cultural Awareness and Language Use**Recommendation #8**

The persons interviewed in this study, both Native and non-Native, believe that the continued development of cultural and language opportunities will provide numerous benefits for Native communities. To name a few benefits, cultural revitalization stimulates: a pride in being associated with cultural activities; opportunities to reflect upon one's past traditional experiences; and a shared sense of participating in a vibrant Native community.

It is recommended that all communities should collaborate in developing and realizing their goals for the promotion of culture and language, through such activities as cultural contacts between communities, involving Elders, promoting cultural awareness and language use in schools, and developing a cultural resource centre.

For another relevant recommendation, please see the recommendation pertaining to the development of a quality of life learning centre (Recommendation #11). Also, see the background paper entitled "Native Quality of Life Learning Centre".

Community Development

This report identified a number of community issues requiring community development initiatives. Such issues include: the limited community participation in some programs, difficulties in recruiting volunteers, insufficient co-operation between programs, and insufficient physical facilities.

Recommendation #9

It is recommended that communities seek community development assistance to strengthen their particular program development needs. Priority should be given to helping the recruitment and support of volunteers for family programs, and encouraging greater community participation in existing programs.

Recommendation # 10

It is recommended that each community take steps to discover the potential alternative use of existing facilities for family programs, women's activities, and other initiatives. Facilities other than those presently identified and developed as service facilities should be sought out.

Other needs related to community development initiatives will be addressed by the recommendation for the Quality of Life Learning Centre (See Recommendation #11).

Education**Recommendation #11**

Many of the issues identified by the research point to the need for learning opportunities for service staff and other community members. For some, the emphasis would be on life skills, parenting skills and cultural awareness. For others, training would be provided in the skills and knowledge for service work, organizational functioning, and community development. Also non-Native service providers have expressed a need for Native-way training.

To meet these needs...

It is recommended that all six communities collaborate on the planning and development of a Native Quality of Life Learning Lodge.

The Lodge would provide centralized learning opportunities for a broad range of community groups, including non-Native service providers. An important and unique function would be the provision of follow-up training, coaching, and consulting in local communities.

The identification of specific training needs for Native and non-Native service staff has already begun through this project. This information should be the beginning point for a regional inventory of existing learning needs and available resources. From this, a specific curriculum could be developed.

For more preliminary thoughts on the Learning Centre, see the background paper entitled: "A Native Quality of Life Learning Lodge For Simcoe County and York Region"

Health and Well-Being**Recommendation #12**

Many Native people throughout Simcoe County and York Region are suffering severe emotional pain. This pain is associated with most of the quality of life issues identified in this report. Many of these are symptomatic of what has been described in this report as "ethnostress".

A healthy quality of life is not possible without community healing. Healing creates a joyfulness in being a Native person and removes the feelings of powerlessness and hopelessness. Mutual respect must be restored, and the ability to reach out and help. Because these feelings and relationships are interwoven with cultural pride and belonging, cultural revitalization should be an important part of the healing process.

For these reasons ...

It is recommended that all Native communities in Simcoe County and York Region collaborate in the establishment of a comprehensive Native healing lodge.

The third and final new initiative proposed, then, is a healing lodge for the treatment of (i) alcohol and other substance abuses (ii) family violence (eg. physical assault, sexual abuse), and (iii) mental illness.

Additional suggestions for the philosophy and activities in the healing lodge are provided in Background Paper #13. Also, preventative health education could be provided by the learning lodge (Recommendation #11)

Recreation

Research found that recreational facilities on the reserve communities were either inadequate or non-existent. Off-reserve facilities were difficult to access. Also, there was a strongly voiced recognition that recreational activities can contribute to a life of quality in many different ways, including the over-all strengthening of communities through general interaction and the participation of entire families.

For these reasons...

Recommendation # 13

It is recommended that communities design and provide recreational programs which promote family togetherness and involvement in the life of the community by all people.

Recommendation #14

It is recommended that communities identify and share the various cultural aspects of recreation, such as Native sports figures, traditional games, and forms of leisure, recreation and fitness practised in early Native communities.

Recommendation #15

It is recommended that all communities collaborate in seeking government funding for recreational development, giving special emphasis to how recreation helps to develop communities and improve the over-all quality of life.

Housing

Recommendation #16

A number of concerns regarding insufficient, inadequate or inaccessible housing were shared in the research process. Much of the discussion addressed the simple lack of enough housing, poorly run programs, inadequate information, and perceived insensitive Government housing policies.

To respond to some of these issues...

It is recommended that all communities collaborate in establishing a housing working group for the purpose of promoting mutual education among Native communities and the appropriate housing organizations. Special attention should be given to (i) assuring that CMHC has appropriate information concerning housing needs (ii) culturally appropriate housing preferences (iii) lobbying methods for impacting policy, and (iv) alternative approaches and criteria for allocating houses to community members.

Recommendation #17

To further improve the quality and flow of housing information...

It is recommended that communities maintain up-to-date information on housing programming, particularly for the use and continuing education of housing specialists and committees within each community.

Friendship Centres**Recommendation #18**

The two Friendship Centres are important resources for Native people who chose to live in Midland, Barrie, and other near-by off-reserve locations. In our opinion, the Centres should continue to promote the development of strong Native communities, while encouraging positive mental health and cultural opportunities.

The Georgian Bay Native Friendship is currently helping people access and use existing local services. This is a valuable function which should continue in both Midland and Barrie. For these reasons ...

It is recommended that both Friendship Centres should foster (i) community development (ii) access to community resources, and (iii) community mental health. Depending on priorities, these could be fulfilled by the addition of a Community Development Officer, a Community Resources Officer (also responsible for cultural awareness), and a Community Mental Health Worker, specializing in prevention work.

How BANAC Can Support The Above Recommendations

Towards a Mission for BANAC

Recommendation #19

To fulfil the above recommendations, the communities need a strong representative support group. As an integral part of these communities, BANAC is in a good position to assist each community and build community networks. What is needed is an on-going forum for involving, and supporting communities in a process towards change.

It is recommended that BANAC, to fulfil its supportive roles, should immediately develop a clear mission statement. This vision-building process can start with the ideal quality of life images discussed earlier.

The Philosophy and Structure of BANAC

Recommendation #20

Attaining a satisfactory quality of life for Native people will require a strong co-ordinated effort supported by a group of people who represent the communities. At present, BANAC regards its true function as one of a "think tank", "consulting group", or "support group".

This central body should directly represent the six Native communities; indeed, BANAC should not be separable from them.

The successful implementation of recommended changes requires a perspective which takes in the whole system of communities and service providers. As well, it requires the knowledge and respect to monitor and support the change process.

It is strongly recommended that BANAC continue as a central supportive and advisory body.

The following supplementary recommendations outline (i) functions and emphases (ii) composition (iii) staff support (iv) location.

BANAC Functions

Recommendation #21

To carry out a support mission for the six communities ...

It is recommended that BANAC assume the following on-going and new functions: planning support, enhancing the flow of information, supporting change, and policy liaison.

Each of these will be described briefly.

Planning support

BANAC should continue as a central planning and advisory body for Native communities and services in Simcoe County and York Region. In this capacity it should work with other region-wide planners, and with local Native communities. As well, BANAC should support current efforts and initiatives, and within the limits of its resources, help promote the development of new initiatives.

Enhancing the flow of information

Because of the serious inadequacies in available information, and blocks in the flow of information to service planners and providers, it is suggested that BANAC assume immediate responsibility for acquiring and circulating needed information to all Native and non-Native service providers.

The proposed new learning lodge eventually could assume the information development function. Should this occur, **BANAC could continue to assume an important advisory function as regards service for Native people, supporting development, retrieval and circulation of service information.**

Supporting changes

Our experience with other Native social development initiatives is that things often go wrong because of unanticipated tensions, conflicts or misunderstandings.

Things may also go wrong in new initiatives because of faulty information, inadequate training for new responsibilities, weak organizational support, and the like.

It is absolutely essential for the success of any new initiatives in Simcoe County/York Region that early development and execution should be carefully monitored by BANAC. Also, in its support role, BANAC could identify problems and facilitate particular solutions.

To assist this particular BANAC function, the research team has gathered a wealth of information from several sources on the kinds of things that may block successful change efforts in the six communities. See Background Paper #8, "Impediments to Change".

Policy Liaison

In its policy liaison function, BANAC should keep in direct contact with major sources of policy information in Government and Native organizations.

In its policy liaison role, BANAC could...

- .keep abreast of current and recent policy developments
- .actively attempt to influence policy development
- .make local communities aware of the policy environment and funding opportunities, and help organizations and bands access funds

For policy information, see the background paper entitled "Government Policy Environment For Native People".

BANAC Composition

We believe that the current composition of BANAC should be changed in the following ways:

- .add representation from the Chiefs and Councils to assure political support
- .add a Cultural Trainer who would advise on the cultural components and cultural base of the developing service system
- .add representation from other significant aboriginal groups such as the Metis or other Native organizations.

BANAC Staff

If BANAC is to successfully support communities, a small staff is needed. The recommended BANAC functions could not adequately be fulfilled by volunteers.

Recommendation #22

It is recommended that an office be established for a transitional period, and that funding be obtained to hire three full-time staff.

Recommended full-time staff:

- .a BANAC Co-ordinator to implement the various functions, and particularly to help with the transition between the needs assessment and the next developmental stages
- .an Administrative Assistant who would attend to all administrative, secretarial and clerical duties; this person should become particularly knowledgeable about the various data collected for this study and be able to access the data
- .Book-keeper

With such limited numbers, BANAC staff members should exercise caution about the types and scope of their work. Their function should be one of assisting community efforts by acting as liaisons between groups, communities, and BANAC. They could also act as community advocates in the development of new initiatives, and conveyors of information. An important first task will likely involve providing feed-back to communities concerning this research, and stimulating further discussion and action. Other recommended priorities are presented in the following pages.

The need for a continuing BANAC office should be reviewed after three years. It may be that the above functions could be transferred to other organizations, such as the proposed learning lodge.

Location

It is most important that BANAC not be identified with the interests of particular communities. Every effort should be made to become knowledgeable about, and "part of" each community. To achieve this, it is conceivable that BANAC's physical location could change every year. There are, of course, practical and financial implications to this. At the very least, BANAC's staff should have strong "out-reach" involvements, working in the field to assure appropriate information dissemination, discussion of changes, and collection of other planning information.

Consultation with Elders and Communities

Also suggested is the establishment of a Council of Elders, representing all six communities. The Council would meet with BANAC regularly to provide guidance and advise. It could also be available to the new lodges.

Also, using organizational principles drawn from the traditional clan system (See background paper " Summary of the Three Fires Meeting At Geneva Park"), BANAC should be directly accountable to the communities. This could happen through regular open community meetings in which full attendance is vigorously encouraged.

Enhancing Responsiveness of Existing Services To Native People

Our strongest conviction from this study is that the quality of life of Native people in this area will be strengthened by improvements in the delivery of existing Native and non-Native services. Though certain new initiatives are necessary, there are advantages to allocating energy and resources into improving what is already in place.

Again and again, interviewees described services struggling to realize their goals because of insufficient or unsuitable resources, limited or inadequate information, untrained or culturally unaware staff, organizational limitations, and weak community support.

One statement should be made emphatically. The above observation should not be taken as a personal or organizational criticism of any service provider. Service providers displayed good will, commitment, and sincere efforts. Both Native and non-Native service providers honestly shared their frustrations in servicing Native clients.

The following recommendations are directed towards improving the effectiveness and efficiency of existing services.

Recommendation #23

One of BANAC's top priorities should be the task of facilitating the improvement in delivery of existing Native and generic services to Native people. To be specific, we recommend that BANAC work towards...

- .improving the utilization by Native people, of existing Native and non-Native services
- .assuring circulation of the best available information concerning programs, needs, Native culture and life-style to all service providers.
- .promoting networking, liaising and dialogue between service providers.
- .supporting arrangements for: training Native and non-Native service providers; organizational and community development for Native services; and cultural awareness.

Recommendation #24

To assist further the process of information sharing...

It is recommended that BANAC take immediate action in circulating important information to communities and service providers. Priority should be given to...

- ... a **demographic summary** of the Native people in Simcoe County and York Region
- ... **popular summaries of information** from this project, drawing upon the final report and all background documents in the project; particular attention should be given to (i) ideals and dreams (ii) issues and problems, and (iii) ideas for solutions
- ... **the development of a service directory** for Native service providers in the area, containing descriptions of Native services and all relevant generic services. Information for this is contained in the data booklets from the Resource Assessment.
- ... a **popular education document and audio tape on Ojibway culture** giving particular emphases to local history, family life, child-rearing, help-seeking and problem-solving.

Recommendation #25

BANAC's work to date, including the research and the Geneva Conference, represents the first few steps towards family and community well-being. The core of BANAC is in place, but will benefit enormously from other participants with unique view-points and expertise. For these reasons,

It is recommended that BANAC renew its efforts to attract additional members.

A LIST OF BACKGROUND PAPERS

1. Research Design
2. Training Materials For Surveyors
3. Summary of the Three Fires Meeting at Geneva Park
4. Quality of Life Issues
5. Selected Demographic Information on Native People in Simcoe County and York Region
6. Community Ideas for Local Solutions for Major Problems and Issues
7. A Native Quality of Life Learning Centre for Simcoe County and York Region
8. A Native Child and Family Services Centre
9. Impediments to Change
10. Community Reports and Summaries of Community Meetings
11. Government Policy Environment For Native People
12. Native Healing Lodge
13. Aboriginal Government (A Paper by James Dumont)

TRANSCRIPTIONS OF INTERVIEWS

In addition to the above background papers, word for word transcriptions are available on each interview completed for the Community Needs Study and Resource Assessment Study. This material is organized according to the quality of life content area, and according to each question.

