



THE SCHOOL OF PUBLIC POLICY

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CAPSTONE PROJECT

The Path Forward: A Road Map to Increasing Skills Development for Aboriginal Peoples in Canada

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

Executive Summary	v
Introduction: The Need to Improve Aboriginal Skills Training	1
Educational Barriers Faced by Aboriginal Peoples	9
“Change It Up”: A New Pilot Program for Aboriginal Skills Training	12
Challenges and Opportunities of Scaling Up the Change It Up Pilot Project	20
Policy Implications	29
Conclusions	36
References	37

LIST OF FIGURES

Figure 1: Change It Up Training Model	13
Figure 2: Re-Modeled Change It Up Training Program	18
Figure 3: Five Stages of Program Implementation	21
Figure 4: Census 2006, Statistics Canada Map	31

Capstone Executive Summary

There is a projected decline in labour participation and productivity within Canada, this could be partially offset by increasing the participation rate and productivity of Aboriginal peoples in Canada. Aboriginal peoples in Canada face multiple barriers to education and employment; resulting in lower educational attainment and higher unemployment rates. Change It Up Trades (CIU) is a program designed to address these barriers and provide the support necessary for Aboriginal peoples to succeed at attaining an apprentice trade ticket. Change It Up is an eleven-month competency-based training program that uses in-community programming, alternative college entrance requirements, and a guaranteed industry apprenticeship.

Through building partnerships with communities, businesses, and educational institutions CIU is able to address barriers to employment while also ensuring that the skills gained by participants are aligned with the labour market demands within their region. The program will need to complete a community assessment, economic analysis of regions, and secure funding from government bodies as well as private corporations in order to begin implementation. Change It Up will be implemented as a social enterprise, ensuring that after the first three years of funding the business purchased by CIU will generate enough profits to cover the costs of the training program, eliminating the need for further funding. Change It Up is a cost effective way to successfully addresses barriers to education and increase employment outcomes for Aboriginal peoples in Canada.

Introduction: The Need to Improve Aboriginal Skills Training

In Canada, more than twice as many Aboriginal peoples live in poverty than non-Aboriginal peoples.¹ Increasing the employment rate of Aboriginal peoples in Canada could increase both the standard of living for Aboriginal peoples as well as add to economic output for the country as a whole. Increasing Aboriginal Educational attainment will increase the labour participation of Aboriginal peoples and partially offset the projected decline in labour force growth within the Canadian economy.² In Alberta, Classroom Connections, a not-for-profit that has focused on the educational barriers faced by Aboriginal people since 2008, and has implemented a trades training program called Change it Up Trades (CIU) in order to address the low education attainment rate and high unemployment rate of Samson Cree First Nation.³ This Capstone will describe and analyze the core competencies of the program; assess how it is working, and if the results are positive it will then evaluate how it could be scaled up to meet the needs and employment realities of other First Nations in the Prairie Provinces.

The attainment of post-secondary education is a factor that is known to reduce poverty, and approximately 70 percent of First Nations Youth aspire to complete some form post-secondary education.⁴ However, currently the education system is not meeting the personal needs or desires of First Nations learners or their community.⁵ It may not support their identity

¹Aboriginal Affairs and Northern Development Canada, *Federal Framework for Aboriginal Economic Development*. (Ottawa, 2009): 6.

² Andrew Sharpe, "The Effect of Increasing Aboriginal Education Attainment on the Labour Force, Output and the Fiscal Balance." *Centre for the Study of Living Standards*, (Ottawa, ON 2009), 3
<http://site.ebrary.com/id/10325546>.

³ Classroom Connections. Change It Up Trades. <http://www.changeitup.ca/ciu-trades.html> Accessed August 20, 2015.

⁴.Assembly of First Nations, *Fact Sheet: First Nations Post-Secondary Education*, 2011, 2.
http://www.afn.ca/uploads/files/education/22._2011_afn_pse_fact_sheet.pdf.

⁵ Scott Haldane, "Nurturing the Learning Spirit of First Nation Students The Report of the National Panel on First Nation Elementary and Secondary Education for Students on Reserve," *National Panel on First Nation Elementary and Secondary Education for Students on Reserve* (Ottawa, ON, 2012), 1,
<http://site.ebrary.com/id/10534818>.

as First Nation people and it is difficult to present traditional knowledge through western curriculum.⁶ First Nations people have multiple barriers to education including distrust of education institutions, lack of financial resources, family background and responsibilities, geography, and a lower rate of high school attainment.⁷ There are also social barriers to success in a learning environment, such as psychological impairment, fear, neglect, instability, hunger and negative parental and peer influence.⁸ In 2005, Ekos conducted a survey of Aboriginal peoples living on-reserve and found that 27 percent of First Nation people who did not attend post-secondary education listed lack of money as their primary reason for not attending, 14 percent listed problems with drugs, alcohol, or pregnancy, 14 percent said they felt it was not encouraged, 16 percent said they would not want to leave their community or it was too far away, and eight percent said it was a lack of academic qualifications.⁹ Some factors have been identified as being able to address the many barriers to educational attainment including, community delivery of courses and programs, hiring of Aboriginal faculty and staff, flexible admissions policies, culturally relevant support services, Aboriginal input into program development, bridging programs, life-skills training, basic numeracy and literacy training, building long term partnerships with communities, tutors, essential skills workshops, and mentoring and support relationships.¹⁰ The ways in which Change It Up uses many of these factors in their program will be discussed later in this capstone.

Aboriginal populations have a lower labour participation rate, lower employment rate, and a higher unemployment rate than non-Aboriginal peoples, this implementation strategy will

⁶ Ibid. 1.

⁷ College Student Alliance, *Breaking Barriers: A Strategy for Equal Access to Higher Education*, (2011), 15, <http://www.ousa.ca/dev/wp-content/uploads/2011/03/Breaking-Barriers.pdf>

⁸ Haldane, *Nurturing the Learning Spirit of First Nation Students*, 1.

⁹ Assembly of First Nations, *Fact Sheet: First Nations Post-Secondary Education*, 2.

¹⁰ Assembly of First Nations, *Education, Jurisdiction and Governance: Supporting First Nations Learners Transitioning to Post-Secondary: Final Report*. 2012, 47, <http://www.afn.ca/uploads/files/education2/postsecondarytransitionsreport.pdf>

focus on increasing skills training for Aboriginal peoples with the goal of increasing employment outcomes.¹¹ First Nations people are the largest Aboriginal heritage group, making up 50 percent of the Aboriginal population in Canada, and they also have the lowest employment and education rates of all Aboriginal heritage groups.¹² First Nations living on reserve have the lowest labour market outcomes of any Aboriginal heritage group with only 52.2 percent of the working age population participating in the labour market, compared to 63 percent for non-Aboriginal peoples.¹³ Off-reserve First Nation peoples are roughly 40 percent more likely to obtain a certificate, degree, or diploma than First Nation peoples living on a reserve.¹⁴ This strategy will also have a geographic focus, specifically addressing the labour market conditions and Aboriginal needs within the provinces of Alberta, Saskatchewan, and Manitoba.

Classroom Connections is a not-for-profit that has developed innovative educational programming for almost twenty years and has run multi-year projects in First Nations communities funded through various government departments as well as private sector partners.¹⁵ In 2008, Classroom Connections started a pilot project called Change it Up Trades (CIU), which is designed to address barriers to employment for Aboriginal participants and create an environment that would support these participants while they work towards the attainment of their welding ticket. Welding is a skill that can be used both on and off the reserve, has a high median income, and has been assessed as an occupation where there are employment options in the region. Change It Up has resulted in increased employability and pro-social behavior for program participants, as shown by their movement from unemployment

¹¹ Sharpe, *The Effect of Increasing Aboriginal Education Attainment*, 19.

¹² Statistics Canada. *Fact Sheet – 2011 National Household Survey Aboriginal Demographics, Educational Attainment and Labour Market Outcomes*, (Ottawa, 2011) <https://www.aadnc-aandc.gc.ca/eng/1376329205785/1376329233875>

¹³ Ibid.

¹⁴ Sharpe, *The Effect of Increasing Aboriginal Education Attainment*, 10.

¹⁵ Classroom Connections. *Change It Up Fab Shop Overview*. 2014, Corporate Brochure in author's possession.

to employment as a result of the program.¹⁶ The pilot project identifies barriers to success faced by Aboriginal people and creates unique models for entrepreneurship and skills training.¹⁷ The program includes specialized in-community programming, alternative college entrance requirements, and a guaranteed industry apprenticeship.¹⁸ With the goal of responding to a chronic skilled labour shortage in Western Canada, the pilot project was initiated on Samson Cree Nation, a First Nation reserve situated between Red Deer and Edmonton, Alberta, and provided participants with the skills necessary to complete a welding ticket.¹⁹ This pilot was deemed successful at addressing barriers to employment faced by First Nations people, this is demonstrated by their results of 90 percent of participants gaining entry into college and securing an apprenticeship.²⁰ Following the results of the pilot project, CIU is proposing to create a permanent First Nations trades training centre that will be income-generating and provide apprentice-track work experience.²¹ Increasing the number of First Nations ready to enter the labour market is important for the Canadian economy because of the changing demographics of the Canadian population.

The Canadian population is expected to age more rapidly than most other Group of Seven (G-7) Countries, this demographic shift will cause a labour shortage, hindering economic growth.²² Combining productivity growth, the increase in real output per hour worked, and labour force growth, the growth in the work-age population, for a given market, determines economic Growth.²³ Canada may see a decrease in both of these indicators, leading to a

¹⁶ Ibid.

¹⁷ Ibid.

¹⁸ Ibid.

¹⁹ Ibid.

²⁰ Classroom Connections. *Change It Up Fab Shop Overview*.

²¹ Ibid.

²² Government of Canada, *Update of Economic and Fiscal Projections – 2014: Part 4 of 4* (Ottawa, 2014), <http://www.budget.gc.ca/efp-peb/2014/pub/anx01-eng.html>

²³ Ibid.

slowing in economic growth over the next few decades.²⁴ With the aging population in Canada and around 200,000 baby boomers set to exit the workforce within the next 15 years, there could be a future shortage of labour.²⁵ This will mean that a smaller proportion of the population will be employed and able to support the non-employed population through taxes.²⁶ Due to lower birth rates and higher life expectancies the ratio of working age people to seniors will decrease from 4.9:1 in 2011 to 2.7:1 in 2030.²⁷ This changing demographic will create a shortage of labour that could be partially offset through the employment of Aboriginal peoples.

In order for Aboriginal peoples to offset the labour shortage, their participation must be meaningful and productive. Canada currently has poor productivity rates compared to other Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) countries, ranking 28th of the 34 member countries.²⁸ In order to improve productivity, investments must be made into human capital.²⁹ The labour force participation rate, *the rate at which working-age people participate in the labour market*, is directly related to the level of educational attainment of the population; people who have higher levels of educational attainment and skills training have higher levels of labour force participation as well as productivity.³⁰ Only 40 percent of the Canadian population without any educational certificate, such as a high school diploma, participated in the labour force, while 75 percent of people with a certificate participated.³¹ Today a high-school diploma is often the minimum requirement for many entry-level jobs,

²⁴ Ibid.

²⁵ Canadian Parliament, *House of Commons Standing Committee on Human Resources, Skills and Social Development and the Status of persons with disabilities*. '41st Parliament, First Session. (Ottawa: Labour and Skills Shortage in Canada: Addressing Current and Future Challenges. 2012), 2

²⁶ Department of Finance, *Economic and Fiscal Implications of Canada's Aging Population* (Ottawa, 2012) <http://www.fin.gc.ca/pub/eficap-rebvpc/report-rapport-eng.asp>

²⁷ Department of Finance, *Economic and Fiscal Implications of Canada's Aging Population*.

²⁸ Ibid.

²⁹ Ibid.

³⁰ Ibid.

³¹ Sharpe, *The Effect of Increasing Aboriginal Education Attainment*, 21.

creating a barrier to employment for individuals who do not have this accreditation.³² An increase in the educational outcomes for Aboriginal people will increase both their labour force participation and productivity.³³

Aboriginal peoples are the fastest growing population group in Canada and they also have a rate of unemployment twice as high as the Canadian Average.³⁴ According to the latest National Household Survey conducted in 2011, those who identify as Aboriginal make up four percent of the population, and between 2001 and 2011, the Aboriginal population grew four times faster than the non-Aboriginal population and is projected to make up 4.6 percent of the population by 2026.³⁵ The Aboriginal population is much younger than the non-Aboriginal Canadian population, with 46 percent of its population under the age of 25 and a median age of 28, 13 years younger than the rest of the Canadian population.³⁶ The First Nations population is even younger with 42 percent of the population under 20.³⁷ Individuals between the ages of 35 and 49 made up the largest proportion of the non-Aboriginal population in 2001 while the largest Aboriginal age group was between 0 and 14 years of age.³⁸ This means that by 2021 the largest group within the non-Aboriginal population will be over the age of 55 while for the Aboriginal population the largest age group will be between 20 and 34.³⁹ Approximately 400,000 Aboriginal Youth will be of an age to enter the labour market between 2011 and 2021⁴⁰ meaning that a

³² Jane P Preston, "The Urgency of Post Secondary Education for Aboriginal People," *Canadian Journal of Educational Administration and Policy*, 86 (2015), https://www.umanitoba.ca/publications/cjeap/pdf_files/preston.pdf, 1-14.

³³ Sharpe, *The Effect of Increasing Aboriginal Education Attainment*, 21.

³⁴ Statistics Canada. *Fact Sheet – 2011 National Household Survey Aboriginal Demographics*.

³⁵ Ibid.

³⁶ Preston. *The Urgency of Post Secondary Education for Aboriginal People*, 7.

³⁷ Sharpe, *The Effect of Increasing Aboriginal Education Attainment*, 12.

³⁸ Jeremy Hull, "Aboriginal Youth, Education and Labour Market Outcomes," *Aboriginal Education: Current Crisis and Future Alternatives*, (2013): 309-310.

³⁹ Ibid. 309-310

⁴⁰ National Aboriginal Economic Development Board: *Recommendations for the Renovation of Aboriginal Economic Development Programs.*, (Gatineau, QC, 2011), 19 <http://www.naedb-cndea.com/reports/recommendations-for-the-renovation-of-aboriginal-economic-development-programs.pdf>.

higher proportion of the working age population in Canada will be Aboriginal, making it essential that they are equal participants in the economy. The estimated cumulative effect of increasing Aboriginal education and labour market outcomes on GDP to the non-Aboriginal level is \$401 billion from 2009 to 2026.⁴¹

Currently, many of the education and training programs available to Aboriginal youth do not correspond with the economic opportunities within their regions, this leads to local businesses hiring non-Aboriginal peoples while Aboriginal peoples must leave their communities to find employment.⁴² Saskatchewan, Manitoba, and Alberta on-reserve First Nations have the lowest employment rate of all Aboriginal Heritage groups at 30.8 percent, 31.3 percent, and 38.6 percent respectively.⁴³ In Manitoba and Saskatchewan, the labour participation rates for on-reserve First Nations people are the lowest at 43.9 percent and 43.4 percent respectively.⁴⁴ Within both Manitoba and Saskatchewan approximately 15 percent of the total population is Aboriginal while 5.8 percent of Alberta's population is Aboriginal.⁴⁵ The high proportion of Aboriginal peoples living within these provinces is projected to increase, by 2026, it is projected that approximately 40 percent of all school-aged youth in the province of Saskatchewan will be Aboriginal.⁴⁶ Therefore, increasing the labour participation rates and education level of Aboriginal peoples within these provinces will significantly impact their economies. The unemployment rate for the Aboriginal working age population is more than 50 percent higher

⁴¹ Aboriginal Affairs and Northern Development Canada, *Federal Framework for Aboriginal Economic Development*, 2.

⁴¹ Sharpe, *The Effect of Increasing Aboriginal Education Attainment*, 353-388.

⁴² National Aboriginal Economic Development Board, *Recommendations for the Renovation of Aboriginal Economic Development Programs*, 20.

⁴³ National Aboriginal Economic Development Board, *Economic Benchmarking Report: Core Indicator 1: Employment*, (Gatineau, QC, 2013), 6 <http://www.naedb-cndea.com/reports/benchmarking-cor-indicator-1-employment.pdf>.

⁴⁴ Ibid. 12.

⁴⁵ Sharpe, *The Effect of Increasing Aboriginal Education Attainment*, 10.

⁴⁶ Preston. *The Urgency of Post Secondary Education for Aboriginal People*, 3.

than the National average at 13 percent compared to 6 percent.⁴⁷ The unemployment rate for First Nations peoples living on-reserve was higher than for the Aboriginal population at 22 percent.⁴⁸ Aboriginal peoples earn 29 percent less than non-Aboriginal peoples when the difference in work patterns are controlled for and 41 percent less when they are not.⁴⁹ Roughly 30 percent of this gap can be attributed to differences in the level of educational attainment.⁵⁰

Aboriginal peoples have lower high school completion rates with only 71 percent of Aboriginal peoples completing high school and only 65 percent amongst First Nations; this is compared to 88 percent for non-Aboriginal peoples.⁵¹ Only 43 percent of First Nations hold some form of post-secondary education compared to 65 percent for the non-Aboriginal population.⁵² Educational attainment reduces the employment gap between Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal peoples.⁵³ Aboriginal people without a High School education had an employment rate of 30.3 percent while those with a High School education had an employment rate of 58.7 percent and those with a trade certification had an employment rate of 62.8 percent.⁵⁴ By increasing the educational attainment of Aboriginal peoples, the economy will benefit from reduced labour shortages and also from an increased availability of skilled labour.⁵⁵ In order to increase educational outcomes for Aboriginal people is important to understand the barriers to education that Aboriginal people face.

⁴⁷ Statistics Canada. *Fact Sheet – 2011 National Household Survey Aboriginal Demographics*.

⁴⁸ Ibid.

⁴⁹ Sharpe, *The Effect of Increasing Aboriginal Education Attainment*, 20.

⁵⁰ Ibid. vii-viii

⁵¹ Statistics Canada. *Fact Sheet – 2011 National Household Survey Aboriginal Demographics*.

⁵² Ibid.

⁵³ Hull. *Aboriginal Youth, Education and Labour Market Outcomes*, 314.

⁵⁴ Sharpe, *The Effect of Increasing Aboriginal Education Attainment*, 22.

⁵⁵ Hull. *Aboriginal Youth, Education and Labour Market Outcomes*, 319.

Educational Barriers Faced by Aboriginal Peoples

The lack of high school attainment is a significant barrier to post-secondary education.⁵⁶ Students may self-select out of post-secondary pathways after experiencing academic challenges, lack of confidence, or regular absences from school.⁵⁷ Reserve schools often do not have the same academic standards as their provincial counterparts and this puts students at a disadvantage when they have to move into the provincial school system for high school or post-secondary education.⁵⁸ There is limited help for students looking to transition between levels of schooling and between schooling within the community and outside of the community.⁵⁹ When Change It Up staff conducts community assessments they should also try to gain an awareness of the educational institutions that potential participants would have attended, and work to anticipate the potential problems for transitioning into the CIU program. The initial assessment and personalized learning plans of the CIU program will allow for gaps in education to be identified and addressed through basic skills training and tailored lesson plans. This will help ensure that participants get the help they need to feel confident and be successful throughout the program. The competency-based entrance requirements into Portage College will also help individuals without a high school equivalency to gain entry into a post-secondary program.

There is a legacy of distrust of the western school system due to the experience that many Aboriginal peoples had in residential schools.⁶⁰ There are also institutional barriers, where the cultural or structural aspects of post-secondary institutions make Aboriginal students feel

⁵⁶ College Student Alliance, *Breaking Barriers: A Strategy for Equal Access to Higher Education*, 22.

⁵⁷ Ibid. 22.

⁵⁸ EKOS Research Associates Inc., *Fall 2003 Survey of First Nations People Living On-reserve: Integrated Final Report. Submitted to: Indian and Northern Affairs*. (Ottawa, ON, 2009), 29-30, http://epub.sub.uni-hamburg.de/epub/volltexte/2009/1055/pdf/srv04_e.pdf
Assembly of First Nations, *Education, Jurisdiction and Governance: Supporting First Nations Learners*, 27.

⁵⁹ Haldane, *Nurturing the Learning Spirit of First Nation Students*, 12.

⁶⁰ Haldane, *Nurturing the Learning Spirit of First Nation Students*, 7.

unwelcome and Aboriginal people may face real or perceived discrimination within these organizations.⁶¹ One way to limit the cultural barriers is to promote tolerance and education about the history and culture of First Nation people.⁶² Through the community assessments, CIU staff members will be able to invest the time to get to know the individual community. They will be able to address some of these barriers through discussions with community elders to learn about their culture and traditional beliefs. Each individual working for the program should have cultural awareness training and wherever possible staff members should be selected from the surrounding community.

As previously discussed, Aboriginal people typically have lower incomes compared to the average Canadian and this is also a barrier to educational attainment. People from low-income families are more likely to attend poorer quality schools and are less likely to have expectations of attending post-secondary education.⁶³ They often cannot pay for the extracurricular activities that influence the educational success of their children, such as purchasing books, computers, or additional tutoring.⁶⁴ Low-income families have lower post-secondary participation rates than higher income families.⁶⁵ They are often financially constrained and typically have higher anxiety about their ability to pay back student loans.⁶⁶ The price of tuition relative to the average household income has increased in recent years.⁶⁷ The individual scholarships and living allowances for the participants of CIU will help to address some of the financial barriers of attending the program. The cost of the training will be covered through start-up funding and then later by the business revenues of Alberta Box Company

⁶¹ College Student Alliance, *Breaking Barriers: A Strategy for Equal Access to Higher Education*, 22.

⁶² Haldane, *Nurturing the Learning Spirit of First Nation Students*, 6.

⁶³ Ibid. 10.

⁶⁴ Ibid. 10.

⁶⁵ College Student Alliance, *Breaking Barriers: A Strategy for Equal Access to Higher Education*, 7.

⁶⁶ Ibid. 10.

⁶⁷ Ibid. 12.

(ABC), a steal grain and gravel-box manufacturing business willing to work with CIU and transition to a social enterprise.

Parental and environmental influences are equally as important as financial factors in influencing a person's decision to pursue a post-secondary education.⁶⁸ Aboriginal people are more likely to be first-generation students than non-Aboriginal people, first generation students are those students whose parents did not attend college or university.⁶⁹ Parental education level is one of the most important determinants of whether a child will attend post-secondary education.⁷⁰ Children who believe their parents are indifference to their education are twice as likely to abandon their studies.⁷¹ Students with dependents are also less likely to attend post-secondary education, as the time and money that must be allocated to care will create an increased strain on financial and personal resources; individuals who reported having a child before 26 are less than half as likely to attend school as those with no children.⁷² By reducing other barriers to education, CIU may be the necessary factor to stop the cycle of low educational outcomes among First Nation people. By increasing the educational attainment now, it could have a multigenerational effect on the motivation to attend post-secondary education.

Geographic remoteness is also a significant barrier to educational attainment as students from northern and rural communities are less likely to enroll in post-secondary education than students located close to or in an urban centre.⁷³ There is a high concentration of the Aboriginal population in rural or remote areas across Canada, with 26.3 percent of the

⁶⁸ Ibid. 10.

⁶⁹ Ibid. 7.

⁷⁰ Ibid. 11.

⁷¹ Ibid. 21.

⁷² College Student Alliance, *Breaking Barriers: A Strategy for Equal Access to Higher Education*, 15.

⁷³ Ibid. 14.

Aboriginal population living on reserves, of which 97.5 percent are First Nations peoples.⁷⁴ When students must relocate in order to attend school, they have to pay living expenses in addition to tuition and may feel isolated from their families and communities back home.⁷⁵ By relocating businesses and training centres to locations on or near reserves CIU will address the geographic barriers to educational attainment.

“Change It Up”: A New Pilot Program for Aboriginal Skills Training

Change It Up Trades is an eleven-month competency-based trades program that uses in-community programming, alternative college entrance requirements, and a guaranteed industry apprenticeship to complete the hours necessary to receive a trade certification.⁷⁶ Competency-based learning is an individualized education model where students work towards mastery of an explicit, measurable, learning objective.⁷⁷ Learning objectives can include the application and creation of knowledge, or the development of specific skills.⁷⁸ Each student's skills and knowledge must be assessed then a specialized plan will be created to facilitate their achievement of the competency requirements.⁷⁹ Individualized learning plans can be re-evaluated and adjusted in order to continue to meet the changing needs of the participant.⁸⁰ Students must demonstrate that they are proficient at all required skills in order to move on to the next phase of their education, ensuring that they are prepared to be successful at each

⁷⁴ Sharpe, *The Effect of Increasing Aboriginal Education Attainment*, 8-9.

⁷⁵ Ibid. 14.

⁷⁶ Change It Up Trades. <http://www.changeitup.ca/ciu-trades.html>

⁷⁷ Lillian Pace and Maria Worthen, “Laying The Foundation for Competency Education: A Policy Guide for the Next Generation Educator Workforce,” *The International Association for K-12 Online Learning*, (2014)

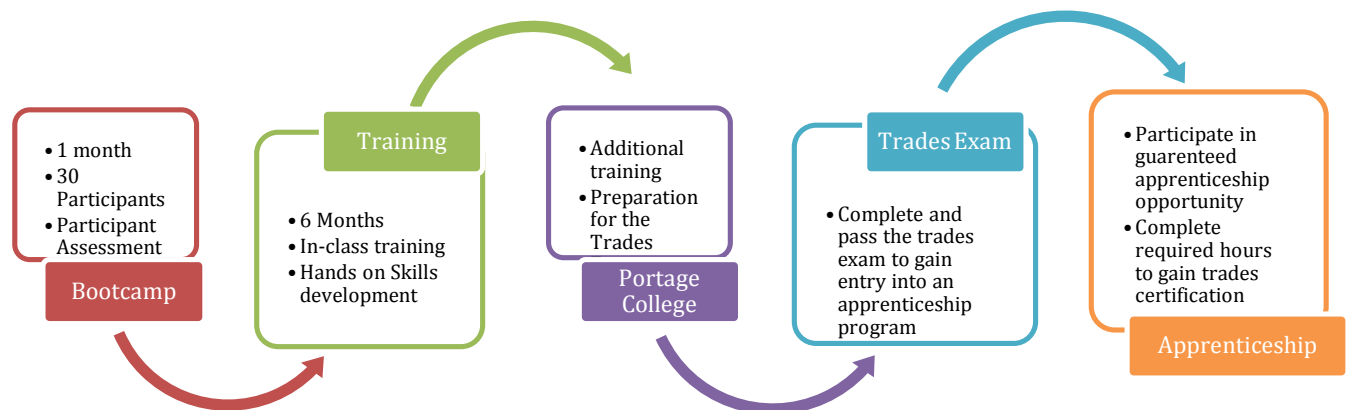
⁷⁸ Ibid: 4-5.

⁷⁹ Ibid: 4-5.

⁸⁰ Susan Patrick, Kathryn Kennedy, and Allison Powell, “Mean What You Say: Defining and Integrating Personalized, Blended and Competency Education,” *The International Association for K-12 Online Learning*, (2013), 24 <http://www.inacol.org/wp-content/uploads/2015/02/mean-what-you-say.pdf>.

stage of their education.⁸¹ Some required skills for Change It Up Programs are technical reading, math skills, shop training, the use of hand tools, study skills, and the completion of required safety tickets.⁸² If a student does not possess the skills required they are provided with the support they need to fulfill the skills and knowledge requirements such as increased class time and one-on-one training.⁸³ Within this learning model, students receive constructive feedback and personalized support based on their individual needs.⁸⁴

Figure 1: Change It Up Training Model



Change It Up has a one-month “bootcamp” that allows participants to demonstrate they are ready for an apprenticeship program, this includes understanding workplace etiquette, technical reading, and math skills; a six-month program to provide the necessary skills to become successful in both Welding college and throughout their careers, this includes hands-on

⁸¹Ibid. 22.

⁸² Southern Alberta Institute of Technology Polytechnic. *Apprentice Success Services*. <http://www.sait.ca/programs-and-courses/apprenticeships-and-trades/apprenticeships/additional-information/apprentice-success-services.php>, Accessed September 3, 2015.

⁸³ Ibid: 22.

⁸⁴ Ibid: 22.

training, math and English courses, and completion of safety tickets; and finally there is a four-month introduction to trades program at Portage College that helps prepare participants for the Trades Entrance Exam.⁸⁵ Portage College helps students with the achievement of the Trades Entrance Exam and provides the required eight weeks of technical training required per year throughout the welding apprenticeship. While CIU only takes participants one year, trades often have multi-year requirements for the completion of an apprenticeship. Depending on the trade selected, the time required for participants to complete their ticket will vary.⁸⁶ Through CIU students are able to access the help they need to continue to be successful throughout the duration of the three-year welding apprenticeship program. Finally, once students complete their course work CIU ensures they secure an apprenticeship that will allow them to complete the 1,500 hours required to gain their welding ticket.⁸⁷ Throughout the three-year start-up phase of the program, it is expected that 90 community members will move from social assistance to employment, out of a labour force of 975 people.⁸⁸ Throughout this time, students will either be receiving a scholarship or stipend from Change It Up or will be gaining employment income as an apprentice. This program has been successful in Samson Cree Nation, where it was piloted, and an implementation plan will be needed in order to replicate the program elsewhere in Canada.

⁸⁵ Classroom Connections. "The Change It Up Trades Enterprise: Permanent On-Reserve Trades Training via Social Enterprise. A Funding Proposal." May 2015. Corporate Brochure in author's possession.

⁸⁶ Government of Alberta. *Apprenticeship and Industry Trades, Creating Standards*.
<http://tradesecrets.alberta.ca/trades-occupations/creating-standards/>

⁸⁷ Government of Alberta. *Apprenticeship and Industry Training, Welder Profile*.
<http://tradesecrets.alberta.ca/trades-occupations/profiles/012/>

⁸⁸ Classroom Connections, *The Change It Up Trades Enterprise*.
Statistics Canada. *Census Community Profile – Samson Cree 146*. <http://www12.statcan.gc.ca/census-recensement/2011/dp-prof/details/page.cfm?Lang=E&Geo1=CSD&Code1=4808811&Geo2=PR&Code2=48&Data=Count&SearchText=Samson%20137&SearchType=Begins&SearchPR=01&B1=All&Custom=>

Classroom Connections is currently looking to purchase ABC, an existing steel grain and gravel-box manufacturing business that can be relocated to Samson Cree Nation.⁸⁹ This will contribute to the increased success of the program and will help to address both the educational barriers as well as the social and individual barriers to employment. This will also create a social enterprise on the reserve, where a portion of the profits from the company will be re-invested into the training program to decrease the need for on-going external funding.⁹⁰ The current CEO of the company has agreed to continue to run the business from the reserve in order to address geographic barriers and the potential inability to travel to and from the reserve.⁹¹ This addition to the program will slightly alter the timelines and processes of the program.

The estimated cost of purchasing ABC is \$600,000, a \$200,000 down payment would be required, with \$100,000 as an operating budget.⁹² The training centre infrastructure would require a one-time investment of \$50,000, this would cover computers, office equipment, and classroom furniture.⁹³ The community assessment phase and the strategic planning phase will cost \$750,000 annually for the first three years.⁹⁴ This will amount to \$2,900,000 dollars in implementation costs for the first three years. After the start-up costs and the purchase of the training centre, business, and initial infrastructure costs, there will be on-going annual costs. There will be cost for programming facilitators, wages during work experience, student safety clothing and equipment, and in-class training materials, these would cost approximately \$550,000.⁹⁵ Samson Cree Nation is providing CIU rent in kind worth \$125,000 per year. There will be barrier reduction initiatives including, cultural enhancement, barrier removal, and

⁸⁹ Government of Alberta. *Apprenticeship and Industry Trades, Creating Standards*.

⁹⁰ Ibid.

⁹¹ Ibid.

⁹² Classroom Connections, The Change It Up Trades Enterprise.

⁹³ Ibid.

⁹⁴ Ibid.

⁹⁵ Ibid.

additions services, at a cost of \$100,000 per year.⁹⁶ Change It Up will also cover the costs of the Trades Entrance Exam Preparation at Portage College, which will cost \$4,000 for each of the 30 participants anticipated to need this preparation, for a totally cost of \$80,000 annually.⁹⁷ This will amount to \$830,000 in annual operating costs. In 2013, ABC had approximately \$2,000,000 in sales, and the company's gross profit, the revenues minus the costs of goods sold, was \$700,000.⁹⁸ According to CIU, \$100,000 will be used to maintain the operations of ABC and a portion of the profits will need to be reinvested in order to grow the business. The remainder of the profits, approximately \$500,000, could be used to finance a large proportion of the costs of operating the CIU program.

The CIU program will select 30 students to attend the two week participant assessment stage of the training, at this stage students will have their basic employment readiness, reading, and math skills assessed for their potential for program completion. The top 15 students who are assessed as ready will then enter the training program, where they will begin welding specific training, and the remaining 15 students will work with training staff and program developers to increase their employment readiness, reading, and math skills to a level where they too can complete the subsequent stages of the program.⁹⁹ The 15 student who are selected to continue on in the program will attend an eight week in-class training program, an eight week work experience program with additional classroom support, and a 16 week full-time work experience program.¹⁰⁰ Once participants have finished the 34 week training period, they will be assessed to see if they are ready to write the Trades Entrance Exam. Those participant that are ready to write the exam will complete the exam and become apprentice trades

⁹⁶ Classroom Connections, The Change It Up Trades Enterprise.

⁹⁷ Ibid.

⁹⁸ Ibid.

⁹⁹ Ibid.

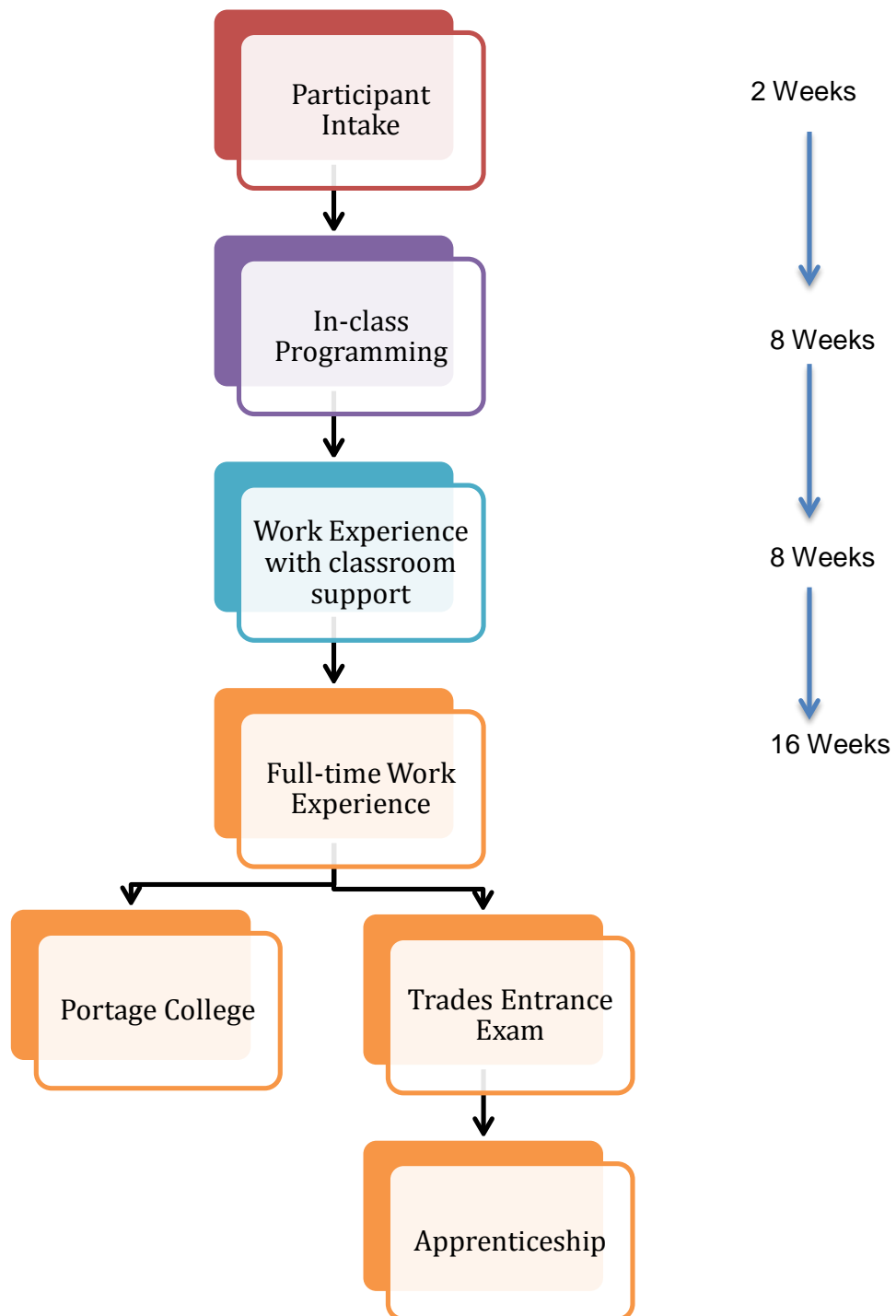
¹⁰⁰ Classroom Connections, The Change It Up Trades Enterprise.

employees while those who need extra support prior to the trades exam will spend two months attending classes at Portage College preparing for the exam.¹⁰¹ There will be ongoing participant assessments throughout the program and participants will be able to repeat any stages of the training in order to become successful and move on to the subsequent stage. This multi-cycle strategy is used in order to ensure that participants have the support, and time necessary to complete the program.¹⁰² Other retention strategies could include multiple chances to complete the program, tutoring throughout the program, and program team members available for any participants who may need additional help.

¹⁰¹ Ibid.

¹⁰² Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration. "U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, and National Registry of Evidence-based Programs and Practices," *A Road Map to Implementing Evidence-Based Programs*, 2012, 24
http://www.nrepp.samhsa.gov/courses/Implementations/resources/imp_course.pdf

Figure 2: Re-Modeled Change It Up Training Program



In order for this program to be replicated elsewhere it will need to be scaled both horizontally and vertically; vertically to include different apprenticeable trades and horizontally to encompass more First Nations communities throughout the prairies. There are 221,529 unemployed First Nations people in the three Prairie Provinces and each individual program will have approximately 30 graduates per year.¹⁰³ Assuming communities are assessed for fit with the type of trade for the program and individuals within the community wish to work in the particular trade, this program would need to be replicated multiple times in each region to see substantive results. If 10 institutions were set up throughout the Prairie Provinces, each specializing in a trade or apprenticeable occupation and each having 30 graduate per year, 900 First Nations people would complete the program in the first three years, prior to the program becoming self-sustainable. The estimated per program cost for the initial three years of programming is approximately \$4,000,000, assuming similar costs for each individual program, the additional 9 programs will increase the total cost to \$40,000,000.¹⁰⁴ Assuming each program has similar profit margins to ABC and is willing to invest the same proportion of their profits into the program, there would be no further funding requirements after the initial three years and additional participants would continue to be trained.¹⁰⁵ If the program is replicated 10 times there may be cost saving in centralizing some of the administrative tasks such as processing of funding requests, and liaising with partner education institutions. The program could potentially reach more communities if each business purchased were located in regions

¹⁰³ Statistics Canada. *Table 3: Distribution of First Nations people, First Nations people with and without registered Indian status, and First Nations people with registered Indian status living on or off reserve, Canada, provinces and territories*, 2011, <http://www12.statcan.gc.ca/nhs-enm/2011/as-sa/99-011-x/2011001/tbl/tbl03-eng.cfm>

$[(AB \text{ pop} \times \text{unemployment rate}) + (SK \text{ pop} \times \text{unemployment rate}) + (MB \text{ pop} \times \text{unemployment rate})]$
 $(116670 \times 61.4\%) + (103210 \times 69.2\%) + (114225 \times 68.7\%)$

¹⁰⁴ Classroom Connections, *The Change It Up Trades Enterprise: Permanent On-reserve Trades Training and Social Enterprise. February Progress Report Background and Idea Recap*, 2015, Corporate Brochure is Author's Possession.

¹⁰⁵ Ibid.

with high concentrations of First Nations communities who could all easily access the same training facilities. This would also decrease the costs of acquiring multiple businesses.

Challenges and Opportunities of Scaling Up the Change It Up Pilot Program

Program implementation requires a specific set of activities or processes be applied in a systematic way to implement an activity or program.¹⁰⁶ An effective implementation process will allow the pilot program's results to be replicated and applied to different circumstances.¹⁰⁷ In order for implementation to be successful, the core components of a program must be clearly identified.¹⁰⁸ Once the core competencies are identified the program must utilize these competencies in order to implement the program with fidelity, ensuring an outcome similar to the pilot project.¹⁰⁹ Fidelity will require that the core competencies are implemented as designed, and the length and frequency of the training program, the manner in which the program is delivered, and the engagement of the participants remain the same.¹¹⁰ The replication of the program will require support from the CIU program Director to provide advice, training, and details on the program delivery and necessary resources of the pilot project.¹¹¹

Change It Up has three core competencies: a partnership with an educational institution willing to accept competency-based training in lieu of traditional entrance requirements; a training centre located on or near a community to decrease access issues; and a partner business where participants can fulfill their apprenticeship requirements. In order to successfully

¹⁰⁶ Julie Savignac, *Guide on the Implementation of Evidence-Based Programs: What Do We Know so Far?* (Ottawa, ON, 2014), 2-4. <http://www.publicsafety.gc.ca/cnt/rsrscs/pblctns/gd-mplmnttn-vdnc-prgrms/index-eng.aspx>

¹⁰⁷ Ibid. 2.

¹⁰⁸ Ibid. 2.

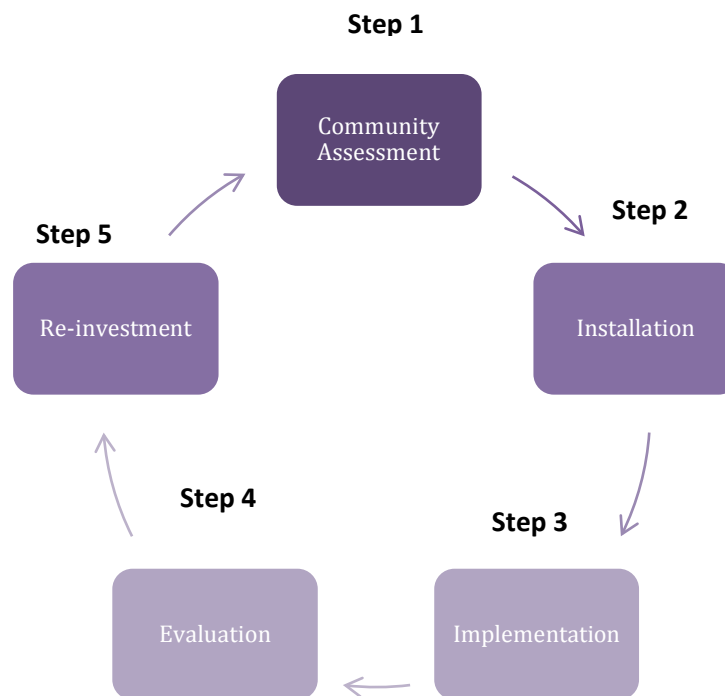
¹⁰⁹ Ibid. 21.

¹¹⁰ Ibid. 21.

¹¹¹ Ibid. 30.

replicate this program, these core competencies must remain intact.¹¹² There will be five main stages of implementation in order to create and replicate the program; these include the community assessment stage, the installation stage, the implementation stage, the evaluation stage, and the re-investment stage.¹¹³ It will take approximately three years from the installation stage for the program to become self-sustaining, allowing for re-investment into the program. Each of these five stages will be discussed in detail in relation to the pilot program.¹¹⁴

Figure 3: Five Stages of Program Implementation



The community assessment stage requires that the community be assessed for program fit, this means that community needs and the organizational capacity must be addressed.¹¹⁵

¹¹² Savignac, *Guide on the Implementation of Evidence-Based Programs*, 5-6.

¹¹³ Ibid. 7.

¹¹⁴ Ibid. 7.

¹¹⁵ Savignac, *Guide on the Implementation of Evidence-Based Programs*, 8.

There must be recognition within the community that a technical skills program like CIU is needed and that it will appropriately respond to an existing skills shortage within the community or region.¹¹⁶ The assessment will require input from community members as well as the Chief and Council as these individuals will be knowledgeable about both the community's needs and the potential of the program to be a solution.¹¹⁷ When the community is involved in the program implementation and development process, the program will be more culturally appropriate for the individual community.¹¹⁸ If the program is to be horizontally scaled and replicated in different regions there will need to be a program champion, or regional director, available to address the needs and concerns of each individual community.¹¹⁹ The program champion will be responsible for facilitating communication amongst team members as well as with community members.¹²⁰

It is important to remember that different communities may be at different levels of development and some may not have the capacity to implement CIU in an effective way.¹²¹ A gap analysis will need to be conducted in order to identify any areas where the community will require further development prior to being able to successfully implement a program such as CIU. The number of available professionals in the band council office and within the surrounding community may be a challenge as it could be difficult to entice professionals from outside of the region to relocate, and it would provide increased benefits to the community if there was an ability to hire from within the community. There also may be changing priorities when new governments are elected within communities and new governments may not be supportive of

R. W. Edwards et al., "Community readiness: Research to practice," *Journal of Community Psychology* 28, no. 3 (2000): 302, doi:10.1002/(SICI)1520-6629(200005)28:3<291::AID-JCOP5>3.0.CO;2-9.

¹¹⁷ Edwards et al., *Community readiness: Research to practice*, 302.

¹¹⁸ Ibid. 292.

¹¹⁹ Savignac. *Guide on the Implementation of Evidence-Based Programs*, 11.

¹²⁰ Ibid. 11.

¹²¹ Edwards et al., *Community readiness: Research to practice*, 302.

¹²¹ Ibid. 292-293.

skills training, which could change community attitudes towards the program or decrease funding if the community is a funding partner or providing a lease to the program.¹²²

Each community will be different with their own unique challenges and assets and the assessment will be essential in tailoring the program to the specific community, giving it the best chances of success.¹²³ While engaging the community, it will be important to identify potential partners such as funding partners, and partner institutions and businesses. Financial partners will be required to provide initial funding for the program, and cooperation and coordination with other organizations with similar objectives will be required to increase the likelihood of a positive outcome.¹²⁴ Companies that already have an impact on or that are operating within the communities' regions and may be willing to contribute to the CIU program and should be approached as potential funding partners. It will also be important to identify a trades-based business that is committed to operating on or near the reserve in order to provide training and apprenticeship opportunities to program participants, as well as a College that will agree to accept competence based training in lieu of traditional entrance requirements. The College and the business must have opportunities that align with the trade selected for the training program and be able to relocate to a geographically accessible location. Prior to selecting the community and implementing the program, all of these partnerships must be secured.

In order to maintain program integrity only apprenticeable trades should be considered for this particular training program. This will allow students to continue their training under a

¹²² Edwards et al., *Community readiness: Research to practice*, 302.

¹²² Ibid. 292.

¹²³ Savignac. *Guide on the Implementation of Evidence-Based Programs*, 8.

Lauren H. Supplee and Allison Metz, "Opportunities and Challenges in Evidence-based Social Policy," *Society for Research in Child Development*, 2015, 4.

http://srcd.org/sites/default/files/documents/spr_28_4.pdf

¹²⁴ Sharon Shake, "Building Strong and Effective Community Partnerships: A Manual for Family Literacy Workers," *The Family Literacy Action Group of Alberta*, 1996,

<http://www.nald.ca/library/learning/partner/partner.pdf>

journeyman and apprentice at the Change It Up business where they will continue to have access to training support through the program. Employment and Social Development Canada creates projections for future labour market trends where they have made projections for the trades, transport, and, equipment operator and maintenance occupations, many of which will be apprenticeable. Their projections state that 310,101 new jobs will be created through economic growth in trades, transport, and, equipment operator and maintenance occupations between 2012 and 2020, accounting for five percent of all jobs created in that time frame.¹²⁵ In 2011, 3,825 First Nations were participating in trades, transport, and equipment operator occupations in Saskatchewan; in Manitoba, 3,845 First Nations were participating in trades, transport, and equipment operator occupations; and in Alberta 4,735 First Nations were participating in trades, transport, and equipment operator occupations.¹²⁶ Each community will have different trade requirements based on the economy of the region, this will have to be analysed and considered during the community assessment stage.

Once the community has been assessed for fit and selected as a good match for the program, the program can move on to the installation stage of implementation.¹²⁷ The capacity of CIU will have to be assessed including financial resources, organizational commitment, and staffing considerations.¹²⁸ In order to effectively replicate the program, the organization will need to have an available site, staffing and volunteer support, training requirements, financial resources, and community buy-in.¹²⁹ Change It Up will require the purchase of a business in order to create a self-sustaining social enterprise, this will likely require a bank loan and funding

¹²⁵ Employment and Social Development Canada. *Search Occupation Data / Canadian Occupational Projection System (COPS)*, (Ottawa, Canada, 2013), <http://occupations.esdc.gc.ca/sppc-cops/.4cc.5p.1t.3ondatas.2arch@-eng.jsp>.

¹²⁶ Ibid.

¹²⁷ Savignac, *Guide on the Implementation of Evidence-Based Programs*, 13.

¹²⁸ Ibid. 8.

¹²⁹ Ibid. 30

for a down payment on the business, for the Alberta Box Company the down payment will be approximately \$200,000.¹³⁰ It will also require initial operating costs and hiring and relocating of staff to run and work at the business.¹³¹ The training centre will also require infrastructure and staffing costs be covered by startup funding until the revenues from the business can offset these costs. Classroom Connections estimate these costs will be approximately \$1,000,000 per year for the first three years, after which all costs will be covered by The Alberta First Nations Training to Employment Program allowances, which will be discussed later, and the revenues generated from ABC.¹³² The implementation team should work with community members and the individual who assessed the community to make changes to adapt the program to suit the community needs while also ensuring to maintain program fidelity.

The implementation team should include individuals with knowledge of the program as well as individuals with community specific knowledge.¹³³ The program will require experienced staff that are culturally sensitive and understand the need for the program.¹³⁴ In addition to administrative staff, this team should include an individual who worked on the pilot project who can ensure the fidelity of the program is maintained, a community representative with substantial knowledge of the barriers and assets of the community, and an individual with specific knowledge of the local economy and the opportunities for apprenticeable work within the area. This team will also be required to work with the partner institutions including the selected College and local business to ensure they are fully committed to the program and will be able to address any of the challenges that may occur throughout the program. The business will have to be assessed for its capacity as a training and apprenticeship institution. There may

¹³⁰ Classroom Connections. 2015. *The Change It Up Trades Enterprise: February Progress Report*.

¹³¹ Ibid.

¹³² Ibid.

¹³³ Savignac, *Guide on the Implementation of Evidence-Based Programs*, 11.

¹³⁴ Ibid.: 11

need to be multiple teachers and certified trade Journeymen, as well as a Master Tradesman to ensure that both the training and apprenticeship opportunities will be meaningful and recognized by the provincial regulating authority.¹³⁵ The program will have to maintain the outlined journeyman to apprentice worker ratios set out by the provinces and record books will have to be completed by the journeyman in order to submit the progress of apprentice hours to the provincial government.¹³⁶

Meeting the funding requirements of scaling up the CIU concept will require multiple funding bodies including the participating communities, private companies, and various government bodies.¹³⁷ The Canadian federal government has recognized the need to increase the economic participation rates of Aboriginal people: in the 2006 “Advantage Canada: Building a Strong Economy for Canadians”, the Canadian government acknowledged that increasing Aboriginal participation in the economy would be the most effective way to close the socio-economic gap between Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal peoples.¹³⁸ The government committed to supporting labour market programming that increases skills development and employability for Aboriginal people; foster linkages across initiatives supporting labour market participation, apprenticeship and training; and collaborate with industry, educators and the voluntary sector to better match learning and training with job opportunities.¹³⁹ This may increase the funding options for CIU across various departments throughout the Federal government. The program will need to continue to leverage funds from the HRSDC, Aboriginal Affairs and Northern Development Canada as well as industry partners until the program can become self-sustaining through the manufacturing of steel grain boxes, something I shall address further later in this

¹³⁵ Government of Alberta. *Apprenticeship and Industry Trades*.

¹³⁶ Government of Alberta. *Apprenticeship and Industry Trades*.

¹³⁷ Savignac. *Guide on the Implementation of Evidence-Based Programs*, 14.

¹³⁸ Ibid. 6.

¹³⁹ Ibid. 6.

Capstone. Companies that have impacts in the region may be willing to contribute funds or scholarships for students to participate in the program. This could lead to a more positive public image for the company, and could also benefit the companies in the region by increasing the availability of skilled labour. It may also be helpful for the community to make a contribution to the program, potentially through the leasing of land on-reserve to decrease costs for building or acquiring training space. The three years of startup funding will need to be acquired from multiple sources prior to the program becoming operational.

Once the capacity of CIU and initial funding have been established the staff and program trainers will need to be apprised of the program objectives and sensitivities on an ongoing basis.¹⁴⁰ At this stage, participants will have to be identified and recruited for the program. Identifying people who are most likely to benefit from the program will be a difficult task; an assessment of potential employability and likelihood of success within the program will be required.¹⁴¹ Currently, Samson Cree is a participating nation in the Federal Enhanced Service Delivery (ESD) pilot project, which requires all unemployed youth within the community to undergo an assessment and participate in active measures programs.¹⁴² Case workers will identify the personal barriers and abilities of individuals and will then refer them to a skills training program that suits their needs. This will help CIU identify people who may successfully complete the program.¹⁴³ ESD is only focused on youth and therefore CIU will have to assess the readiness of adult participants who may wish to attend the program.¹⁴⁴ In other areas where ESD does not operate, assessment criteria could be developed to help select participants who will benefit from the program and be successful in the program. Participants will be able to

¹⁴⁰ Savignac. *Guide on the Implementation of Evidence-Based Programs*, 15.

¹⁴¹ Ibid.: 23

¹⁴² Aboriginal Affairs and Northern Development Canada. *Backgrounder – Income Assistance Reform: Enhanced Service Delivery*. 2013. <https://www.aadnc-aandc.gc.ca/eng/1371048267592/1371048310299>

¹⁴³ Ibid.

¹⁴⁴ Aboriginal Affairs and Northern Development Canada. *Backgrounder – Income Assistance Reform*.

actively seek to join the program, may be referred by members of the community or former participants, or may be referred by partner organizations.¹⁴⁵ Some criteria that may be necessary for participants will be the person must be a self-identified Aboriginal person, have barriers to employment, currently be collecting Income Assistance and must not be eligible for Employment Insurance, and must be willing to commit to an intensive skills training program with the goal of gaining employment in a skilled trade.

Once the staff and participants have been selected, the program will move into the evaluation stage, where on-going discussion and modifications can be made.¹⁴⁶ Communication with organizational partners and participants is important at this stage as they are more likely to persevere with implementation when early successes and challenges have been communicated effectively.¹⁴⁷ When a participant has successfully completed each stage of the program their accomplishments should be acknowledged and their individualized learning plans can be reviewed based on their new experiences. The evaluation stage of program implementation is the program sustainability stage where the program will be evaluated and modified after the initial program implementation. Data should be regularly collected in order to measure the performance of the new programs, this can help to monitor the quality of the program and its ability to replicate the initial outcomes of the pilot program.¹⁴⁸ Frequent evaluation will allow for modifications and improvements to be made to the program and will allow it to remain flexible to meet the needs of the community.¹⁴⁹

¹⁴⁵ Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration, *A Road Map to Implementing Evidence-Based Programs*, 23.

¹⁴⁶ Supplee and Metz, *Opportunities And Challenges In Evidence-Based Social Policy*, 6.

¹⁴⁷ Ibid. 6.

¹⁴⁸ Supplee and Metz, *Opportunities And Challenges In Evidence-Based Social Policy*, 6.

¹⁴⁹ Ibid. 6.

Once CIU has been fully implemented, participants will graduate from the program and find employment, and the social enterprise will be generating revenue that will be reinvested in the training centre within the community, the program will no longer require large external funding partners. For this reason, CIU is a program that will only require short term funding and not an annual budget allowance from partner institutions. Basic funding, such as the funding provided through Alberta First Nations Training to Employment Program allowances, and small scholarships will still be required in order to provide participants with living allowances, this funding can be granted other government bodies or corporate partners who wish to provide scholarships to First Nations undergoing technical skills training programs.¹⁵⁰ The idea of an income-generating business that will re-invest funds into skills training for First Nations participants ensures that the program will be sustainable with limited funding from government.

Policy Implications

In order for this replication plan to be successful CIU will have to begin identifying businesses that are both profitable, able to relocate to on or near a reserve, and willing to become a social enterprise by re-investing in a skills training program, while also reaping the benefits of an increased pool of skilled labour from which to hire. The company needs to be aware that of the amount of training participants will need before they can be employed and that the more training an employee has, the more productive they will be.¹⁵¹ Social enterprises are businesses that are looking to hire employment-ready individuals, from disadvantaged populations, who need someone to give them an opportunity to prove him or herself.¹⁵² The business must not be overly complex and to have the business capacity to succeed, it must

¹⁵⁰ Classroom Connections. *The Change It Up Trades Enterprise*.

¹⁵¹ Social Capital Partners, *The five Critical Factors of Social Enterprise Profitability*, 2009, <http://socialcapitalpartners.ca/ideas-learning>.

¹⁵² Ibid.

have management that possesses the skills to successfully run the business and be fully aware of its financial situation.¹⁵³ The business must already be regionally located or able and willing to relocate to the communities and regions identified by CIU.

Change It Up will also need to identify Aboriginal communities throughout Alberta, Saskatchewan, and Manitoba who are willing to partner with CIU in order to implement the program. It would be ideal for CIU to select Aboriginal communities in areas of the provinces with high concentration of Aboriginal peoples, one pilot in the South, Central, and Northern regions of each province would be distributed widely enough to ensure a number of communities would be able to access the facilities.¹⁵⁴ The large, red, 55,000 population indicator bubbles on the 2006 Census Map shown in Figure 4 show regions where there are high numbers of Aboriginal peoples, these areas would be ideal regions for CIU to engage communities and build facilities.

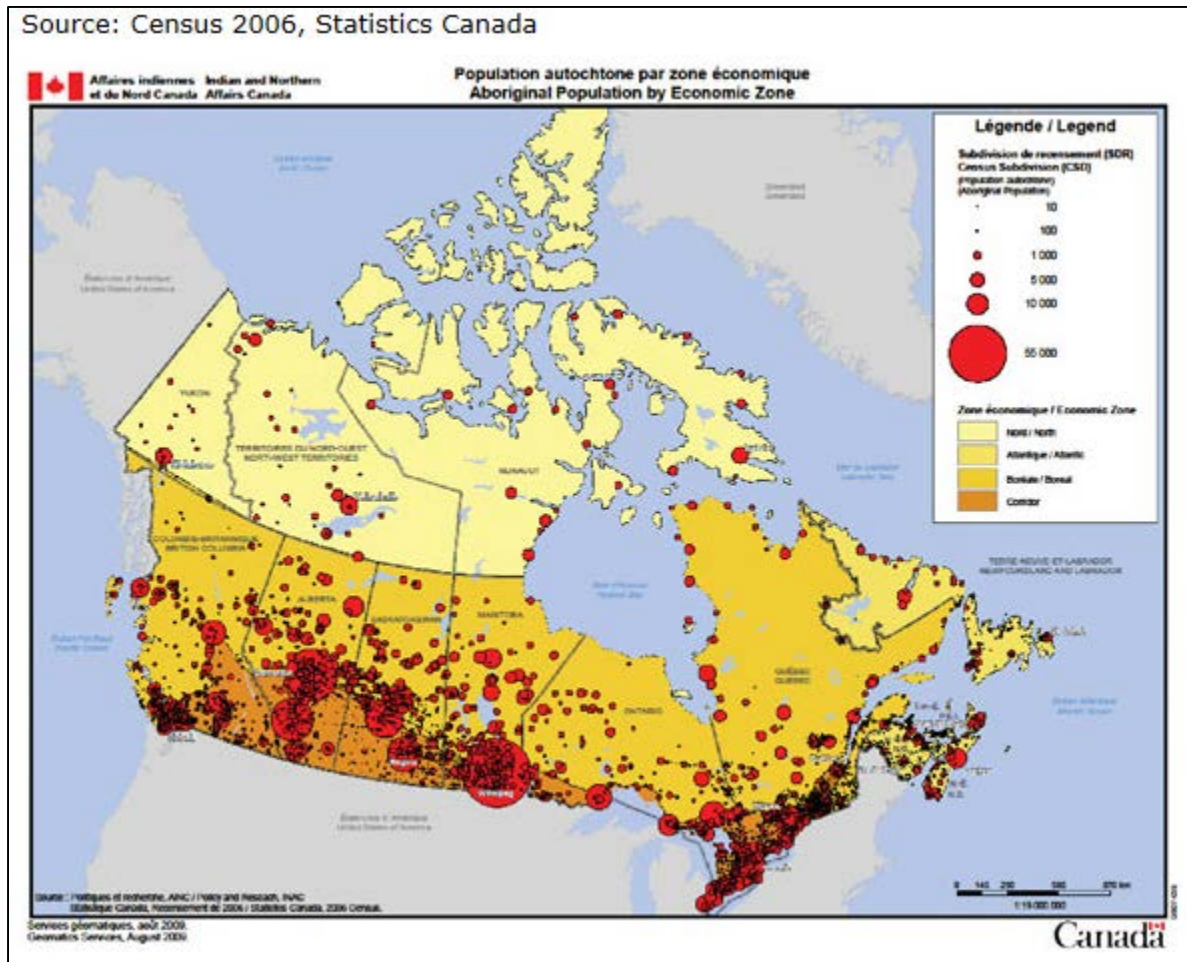
Once businesses and communities are identified CIU will need to secure funding, the program can do this through creating business proposals and approaching potential partners for funding. Typically the federal government is responsible for the needs of Aboriginal peoples within Canada, however, the provinces are responsible for the administration of programs for non-Aboriginal Canadians including skills training and education.¹⁵⁵ This means that for a skills program specifically tailored for Aboriginal people, CIU will be able to leverage both federal and provincial funding. There will also be opportunities to leverage funds from private sector partners who may be looking to have a positive impact on Canadian society.

¹⁵³ Ibid.

¹⁵⁴ Aboriginal Affairs and Northern Development Canada, *Renovating Programs in Support of Lands and Economic Development: Census 2006, Statistics Canada Map*. <https://www.aadnc-aandc.gc.ca/eng/1100100033527/1100100033559> Accessed September 3, 2015.

¹⁵⁵ Canadian Constitution Act, 1982, Section 35. Canadian Constitution Act, 1867, Section 92. <http://laws-lois.justice.gc.ca/eng/const/>

Figure 4: Census 2006, Statistics Canada Map



Employment and Social Development Canada (ESDC) has three funding programs that would be a good fit for CIU: the Canadian Skills and Partnership Fund, the Aboriginal Skills and Employment Training Strategy, and Skills Link within the departments Youth Employment Strategy. The Canadian Skills and Partnership Fund supports short-term skills development projects by Aboriginal organizations, and their private sector and government partners through funding. The 2015-2016 Report on Plans and Priorities stated that the planned spending for the

Skills and Partnership Fund is an estimated \$45,600,000.¹⁵⁶ The Aboriginal Skills and Employment Training Strategy is a federal program intended to increase Aboriginal participation in the Canadian economy, in a sustainable meaningful way.¹⁵⁷ Funding from the program supports organizations that deliver employment and training services to Aboriginal people.¹⁵⁸ The 2015-2016 Report on Plans and Priorities states that the planned spending for the Aboriginal Skills and Employment Training Strategy is \$249,643,000.¹⁵⁹ Skills Link provides funding for employers and organizations that provide work experience and employment skills to youth facing barriers to employment.¹⁶⁰ The 2015-2016 Report on Plans and Priorities states that the planned spending for the Youth Employment Strategy is \$237,354,000, this funding is granted in \$25,000 allotments per participant between the ages of 15 and 30.¹⁶¹ Change It Up would be an ideal candidate for funding from these programs as they focus on developing the skills of Aboriginal peoples to meet the needs of high-demand sectors of the economy, which is included in the mandate of all of these programs.

Other federal government partners may be Western Economic Diversification and Aboriginal Affairs and Northern Development Canada. Through Western Economic Diversification, CIU could leverage a portion of the planned \$30,571,590 in 2015-16 spending set aside for the Community Futures Subprogram.¹⁶² This subprogram focuses on helping rural communities increase economic participation through training, counseling, and providing

¹⁵⁶ Enhanced Skills and Development Canada, *Report on Plans and Priorities: Skills and Partnership Fund*, 2015-16, <http://www.esdc.gc.ca/eng/publications/dpr/index.shtml>

¹⁵⁷ Enhanced Skills and Development Canada, *Report on Plans and Priorities: Aboriginal Skills and Employment Training Strategy*, 2015-16, <http://www.esdc.gc.ca/eng/publications/dpr/index.shtml>

¹⁵⁸ Ibid.

¹⁵⁹ Ibid.

¹⁶⁰ Enhanced Skills and Development Canada, *Report on Plans and Priorities: Youth Employment Strategy*, 2015-16, <http://www.esdc.gc.ca/eng/publications/dpr/index.shtml>

¹⁶¹ Service Canada, *Youth Employment Strategy Skills Link*, 2015, http://www.servicecanada.gc.ca/eng/epb/yi/yep/newprog/sl_application-guide.shtml

¹⁶² Western Diversification Canada, *Report on Plans and Priorities, 2015-16: The Communities Futures*, <http://www.wd.gc.ca/eng/18791.asp#sec2i>

information on the economy.¹⁶³ Aboriginal Affairs and Northern Development Canada provides funding to Band Councils and regional First Nations to help eligible students to pay for costs associated with attending post-secondary education including tuition and living expenses.¹⁶⁴ This program also provides financial support to programs helping to prepare First Nations and Inuit students for entrance into post-secondary education.¹⁶⁵ The 2015-2016 Report on Plans and Priorities states that there will be \$346,809,159 dollars available for this program. These federal funding programs could provide the funding required to implement CIU across the Prairie Provinces, however, there are also provincial funding programs that could also be leveraged in order to ensure that funding requirements are met.

Within Alberta, there is the Workplace Essential Skills Training Program, which provides up to \$5,000 in funding per participant to help employed Albertans upgrade their skills in order to increase productivity within the Alberta economy while also increasing the employment skills of program participants.¹⁶⁶ The Aboriginal Training to Employment Program in Alberta supports organizations looking to increase the employment skills of Aboriginal peoples within Alberta.¹⁶⁷ The Manitoba government has funded the Workplace Essential Skills Training Initiative to provide essential skills and workplace training.¹⁶⁸ While there are many federal and provincial funding options for a program like CIU, private companies should also be approached as they may also be willing to make contributions to the program. In Saskatchewan, there is an Aboriginal Apprenticeship Initiatives program that provides funding to programs looking assist

¹⁶³ Western Diversification Canada, *Report on Plans and Priorities, 2015-16: The Communities Futures*.

¹⁶⁴ Aboriginal Affairs and Northern Development Canada, *Report on Plans and Priorities, 2015-2016: Post-Secondary Education*, https://www.aadnc-aandc.gc.ca/eng/1420651340132/1420653980474#SP2_1_2

¹⁶⁵ Ibid.

¹⁶⁶ Human Services Alberta, *Employment and Training Programs, 2011*, <http://humanservices.alberta.ca/AWonline/ETS/4328.html>

¹⁶⁷ Human Services Alberta, *Aboriginal Training to Employment Program, 2014*, <http://humanservices.alberta.ca/AWonline/ETS/4376.html#guide>

¹⁶⁸ Council of Ministers of Education, Canada, *Manitoba Literacy Initiatives: 2008-09*, <http://www.cmec.ca/224/Programs-and-Initiatives/Literacy/Manitoba/index.html>

Aboriginal peoples in securing and completing Apprenticeship opportunities within Saskatchewan.¹⁶⁹ This program looks at the ability of the program to align with the regional employment opportunities and its ability to address the barriers faced by Aboriginal peoples.¹⁷⁰ The Skills Training Grant in Saskatchewan provides funding to public training institutions to provide training to unemployed or under-employed people within Saskatchewan.¹⁷¹ This program could be leveraged to help cover the costs of students attending training institutions in Saskatchewan.

Private companies and organizations may also be willing to contribute to a program like CIU. Marks Work Wearhouse and other companies that sell merchandise specific to the trade selected by CIU, such as coveralls, welding gloves, and welding helmets, may be willing to donate this merchandise to the program to decrease per participant costs. Also companies that work in or around the communities may be looking to invest in socially conscious projects, like CIU, in order to bolster their public image, for this reason companies within the oil and gas, forestry, mining, and potash industries should be approached for their support and donations. Finally, there may be foundations looking to provide funding to not-for-profit organizations that are trying to increase the quality of life for underprivileged Canadians. In 2014, the Counseling Foundation of Canada provided \$3,107,322 in funding to not-for-profits that provided career development and training to under-employed Canadians.¹⁷²

Once CIU has identified partner businesses, communities, and funding opportunities, the organization must then secure the funding. The above listed funding are grants, which are an

¹⁶⁹ Saskatchewan Apprenticeship and Trade Certification Commissions, *Aboriginal Apprenticeship Initiatives Pamphlet*, 2012, http://www.saskapprenticeship.ca/wp-content/uploads/2012/04/AAI_brochure_2013_web.pdf.

¹⁷⁰ Ibid.

¹⁷¹ Saskatchewan Ministry of Economy, *Labour Market Development Programs: Skills Training*, 2015, <http://www.economy.gov.sk.ca/skills-training>

¹⁷² The Counselling Foundation of Canada, *2014 Activity Report*, <http://counselling.net/jnew/pdfs/Foundation%20Activity%20Report%202014.pdf>

unconditional transfer made based on a set of eligibility requirements that will ensure the funding objectives are met.¹⁷³ This means that once an organization like CIU is selected for funding, and the funding is released, there are no further conditions or audits on the spending of the money.¹⁷⁴ The role of government is limited in this project, decreasing the cost to tax payers. For implementation to occur the governments must review the funding proposals and assess the program's ability to increase the employment outcomes of Aboriginal people, and if this assessment is positive, ensure the initial funding of the program is approved. As CIU will continue to provide training to Aboriginal peoples after the initial three years of funding, this program is a cost effective means to continuously increase skills development among Aboriginal peoples.

Once funding grants are established the selected Aboriginal communities and businesses should be notified that CIU has been successful at attaining funding and will be operating within the Aboriginal community and with the selected business. At this point the business will be purchased and relocated to an area that is easily accessible for participants. Educational facilities will also have to be approached and selected based on their provision of apprentice training programs and their proximity to the Aboriginal community. Frequent communication between the community, business and CIU will be required to successfully follow the implementation plan outlined above. Once these programs have been implemented and are operational, it will be important to conduct frequent evaluations to ensure that the program outcomes remain as positive as the outcomes from the initial pilot project.

¹⁷³ Library of Parliament, Parliamentary Information and Research Service: Grants and Contributions, (Ottawa, ON, 2006), <http://www.parl.gc.ca/Content/LOP/ResearchPublications/prb0549-e.htm>

¹⁷⁴ Ibid.

Conclusions

Given the under-employment among Aboriginal peoples, an increase in their employment rate and productivity would decrease the impact of the trend of decreased labour participation and productivity on the Canadian economy. The labour participation rate can be improved through an increase in education levels and through aligning training with the needs of the economy. Currently there are many barriers to education faced by Aboriginal peoples, these barrier to education have a direct impact on the ability of Aboriginal peoples to participate in the economy. Change It Up seeks to address these barriers while also ensuring the skills participants learn are responding to labour market demands within their region. Using a competency based training program, with multiple chances for success, CIU has the potential to prepare First Nations people throughout the prairies to meet this demand for skilled labour. The program will provide Aboriginal peoples with the necessary skills to be successful at both a skilled trade apprentice program and throughout their careers as a skilled trades worker.

Change It Up will require economic analysis of regions, community assessments, socially conscious businesses and colleges, and funding partners willing to work with Aboriginal communities and program directors to increase the employment rate of First Nations people. Each community and region will require a slightly different implementation of the program, depending on the labour market requirements, specific barriers within the community, and the available partners. Increasing the educational and economic outcomes of Aboriginal peoples is a federal priority, which means that there are funding opportunities available for CIU. This program uses a social enterprise model, meaning it will only require three years of funding, at which point it will become self-sustaining. Change It Up has the potential to train many Aboriginal people, increase their individual standard of living and improve the economic outputs of the communities' as a whole, without requiring long term funding.

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