

CANADIAN FIRST NATIONS CONTRIBUTIONS TO INTERNATIONAL DEVELOPMENT

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The link between First Nations and development co-operation overseas is not obvious. To some First Nations' leaders, development efforts have ignored their concerns while favouring distant countries. To some in the international development community, First Nations appear to show little interest in developing countries, and the cultural dynamics seem perplexing. Nonetheless, the Cree of Quebec were major per capita contributors during the Ethiopian famine. The political impact of internationalism is evident. In 1989, Amazonian Indians protested in front of Canada's embassy in Washington regarding low-level military flights over the Innu hunting territories in Labrador.

First Nations provide a unique pool of experience to be used by international development organizations. The 630 First Nations communities in Canada are an untapped resource that combines to offer a unique pool of experience. They share many of the challenges faced by developing countries: rural life, urbanism, health, education, women's participation, private sector involvement, infrastructure, good governance, poverty reduction, and the environment.

It must be noted that Canadian society is not uniformly open to First Nations issues. We experienced the Oka crisis. There are those who share the following views from a letter to the editor of *Time* (1992) magazine:

I really do not like what is happening these days with the Indians. They seem to have forgotten that we conquered this land centuries ago. The fight was not easy, but they lost and we won. Period. I do not see why we should give them what they are asking for. We civilized this place and they are enjoying the comforts of that civilization. The Canadian government should firmly stop all their claims and cancel all their tax advantages. These people should be punished in a court of law for any unlawful actions they undertake, just like any regular citizen.

Historically, Canada's approach to First Nations has been one of paternalism and assimilation. It has compromised their autonomy and reduced them to poverty (Mercredi, 1999). Before contact, between 500,000 and 2 million people lived here; after contact their numbers fell to 200,000. One nation, the Beothuk of New-

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foundland was brutally extinguished; several other nations across Canada and the U. S. were also lost (Dickason, 1993; Larsen, 2000). In the 18th century, First Nations became the first recorded victims of what was in effect germ warfare when they were given smallpox-infected blankets.

Of the 56 Native languages that were spoken in Canada at first contact, seven have died and another 44 will likely vanish (York, 1992). Language is key to the application of indigenous knowledge, links to the land and thus survival.

The wealth of Canada, the U. S. and much of Europe stemmed from the knowledge provided to early explorers by the Indigenous People of North America. Without the help of the First Nations of Canada, the vast wealth that was created through timber and furs would not have been possible.

Relevant Historical Precedents of First Nations

History

It is impossible here to summarize a history that is covered by five hundred page books (e.g., Dickason, 1993). However, a brief account of one group, the Métis of Manitoba, may help in seeing international development from a Native perspective.

Until recently, mainstream Euro-Canadian school textbooks presented a clearly biased image of First Nations history. The Métis uprising of 1869 and the North West Rebellion of 1885 were described as follows. The Métis of Manitoba resisted the legitimate colonization efforts of the newly formed Canada. They were an unsophisticated people who were taken in by a charismatic, insane Louis Riel. In 1869 the French-speaking Riel executed an innocent English-speaking settler. Troops were sent in to restore order and Riel fled to the United States. He returned to lead the North West Rebellion of 1885. He lost to superior British troops and was hanged for treason.

The Métis viewpoint is very different (Sealey & Lussier, 1975). The Métis lived a yearly cycle where they would plant crops in Manitoba and then move west to hunt buffalo and to dry meat for sale to fur traders. This pattern was destroyed when Canada decided to open the area to settlers. The Canadians disregarded land ownership and issued title. When the Métis returned to spend the winter and harvest their

crops, they discovered that the new settlers who had deeds to the Métis land had destroyed them.

In 1969, the Métis established the First Provisional Government. They later tried and convicted a violent, racist immigrant and finally had to hang him. Riel, their elected leader, tried to persuade the court not to execute the settler. The (English) Canadian government sent in troops to occupy the legitimate Métis nation. Riel fled Montana.

In 1885, after the Canadians had destroyed the buffalo as an intentional act of genocide, Métis leaders went to Montana and asked Riel to return. The Canadian government refused to recognize duly elected Métis members of parliament in Ottawa. When the Natives, Métis and others resisted, the government sent an Army. The Métis under the military leadership of Gabriel Dumont lost to the Canadians only because of the acts of clemency of Riel and the Cree chiefs, in refusing to massacre defeated enemy troops. Riel was later arrested, wrongfully accused, and hanged as a traitor in 1885.

According to Dickason (1993), "The Red River crisis and the subsequent question of amnesty were the first serious racial controversies to be faced by Canada. Although the English-French confrontation took centre stage, the underlying Amerindian — Métis — White division had been the major factor" (p. 272).

Thus, experience with Europeans may cause First Nations to take a dim view of development programs that exploit natural resources unsustainably or involve colonialization, assimilation or exploitation. Because of the long history on their ancestral territories, First Nations could be expected to have a profound level of identification with the land and legitimate interest in private sector development.

Residential Schools

The British, French and Canadian educational systems have not been kind to First Nations. Indian residential schools began in 1620 and ended in 1976, a 350 year history of violence, hunger, loneliness and abuse. The objectives were at first to Christianize and educate the students, and by the 19th century, elders actively tried obtain schools for their children. By the 1950s a malicious sense of driving out their Indianness had set in. The children were beaten, underfed, and forced to work more than they studied to maintain the underfunded institutions (Miller, 1996).

Chrisjohn and Young (1997) maintain the results of the system can still be found in contemporary education. For example, they recommend a moratorium on intelligence testing with First Nations students. They are equally sceptical about treating the victims of abuse in the residential schools, claiming that there has developed a residential-school syndrome treatment industry. In general, these authors are very sceptical of any schools run by non-Natives for the education of Natives.

It can be expected that with such a negative 350-year experience with education, First Nations may not be the first people to get on board classical European educational programs in developing countries. However, they may be more interested in indigenous education movements, particularly in higher education.

Women in Development

Women have a special importance in international development. For example, raising education of women by 5% raises the GIP by 0.5%. It is thus important to mention their place in First Nations culture. In general we could state that the First Nations were historically more egalitarian across gender than were European cultures, and that the status of women varied according to culture. In Iroquoian cultures for example, women had a level of control of their lives that would have been unheard of in Europe (Viau, 2000). According to Clarkson, Morrissette and Regallet (1992), "The status of Indigenous women has been dramatically altered as a result of assimilating education, government policies, introduction of production for exchange and loss of traditional lands, and as a result of the marginalization of Indigenous communities and men. Their knowledge, political influence, role of producer and caretaker have been systematically devaluated, with the consequence that they have nowadays to fight against both the wider society, and the male-dominated political structures for their survival.... Colonialism, the early integration into the global economic system, and the ongoing application of inappropriate development strategies have eroded the strength of traditional societies and radically transformed the indigenous way of life. (p vii)." Several historical documents cite the role of women in community decision making, a fact found curious by first contact White explorers and missionaries (Dickason, 1993).

Today, the most contentious issue around gender issues concerns *An Act to Amend the Indian Act*, Bill C-31 (1985). As a result, 105,000 people regained their status, including their fair share of First Nations assets (Forest & Rodon, 1995; INAC, 2000). The result is on one hand, some hostility to newly "statused" women, but on the other hand an important enriching of human capital, particularly in the areas of educational resources. In terms of international development, First Nations women have important skills to share on the political scene, but communities may hesitate to carry their struggles from Canada to foreign countries.

First Nations Reticence about International Development Assistance

An international presence for First Nations began perhaps in 1974 when George Manuel had the National Indian Brotherhood recognized as an official non-governmental organization at the UN. Today, international activities are grouped in four categories: (1) participation in classical organizations like the UN, (2) participation in international indigenous organizations, (3) relations between First Nations and foreign governments, and (4) relations with foreign indigenous communities. Some of these activities, such as the Inuit circumpolar relations, put into doubt the very logic of territorial integrity.

The *Constitution Act of 1982* and the *Constitutional Amendment Proclamation of 1983* dealing with Aboriginal rights, better protected the rights of First Nations, but the essential distribution of power was left unchanged from the time of confederation. Despite such activities as the Mohawk gaining recognition of their own passports in 17 countries, based on the *1664 Two-row Wampum Treaty*, the various First Nations remain sceptical about protection of their rights by constitutional powers.

From the observations that First Nations have a history of exploitation and colonization, that they have strong sense of identity based on their own lands, and that they would accept development only to the degree that it is sustainable, it may be expected that Canadian Native people would show limited interest in international development. Exceptions to this statement would be when the work is with other Indigenous Peoples, when it is in a mutually helpful situation, or when it is an expression of solidarity to people that are experiencing problems they

themselves have survived. In fact, Forest and Rodon (1995) make the argument that, although Canada's First Nations have developed a distinct international image and have consistently reached out to the international community, they may have little sympathy for various international development activities

There are however benefits to international engagement. From their experience of over a century, First Nations can give help to others seeking various administrative powers. They can work mutually for territorial rights and environmental protection. There is international work for political identity and recognition. There are more radical and ideological movements towards a return to traditional forms of government. Band economic development has led to some businesses tapping international markets. In all, through international contact, First Nations look toward resolving various international problems that touch them all the closest.

There are several examples of First Nations engaged in international development activities. But from the above, it becomes clear how they chose areas, in which to act that will be described below.

Indigenous Peoples and International Development

Around the world, Indigenous Peoples of course are deeply involved in development. In Costa Rica and Belize indigenous groups provide interpretative tours of their culture (Pleumarom, 1999). In Guyana, the Macusi Amerindian communities benefit from a nature reserve and eco-tourism on their traditional lands (Shackley, 1998). Indigenous communities are working toward regional autonomy in and self-government in eastern Nicaragua despite intentionally restrictive laws. The Kuna and the Miskitu fought for and attained a higher degree of autonomy (Sherrer, 1994). The Wichi, Toba and Chorote or northern Argentina have successfully made agreements in the areas of environmental restoration and control over natural resources (Hanson, 1996).

There are also many problems for Indigenous People regarding development of the countries in which they live. The Masai were evicted from their traditional lands in the 1950s to encourage ecotourism (de Chavez, 1999). Even today, their pastoral life style is discouraged. Resource development can produce inequality in

otherwise egalitarian societies (O'Faircheallaigh, 1998). In Madagascar, eco-tourism has marginalized Indigenous Peoples from their tribal lands by way of the concept of private property (Mulligan, 1999). It has been a source of ethnic conflict in Central America as indigenous groups see their land bases dwindle (Van Cott, 1996).

First Nations Principles of Development

In Panama, in 1984, the World Council of Indigenous Peoples ratified a *Declaration of Principles* as an acknowledgement of their rights (Anderson, 1999). The principles include:

1. All human rights of Indigenous People must be respected.
2. All Indigenous Peoples have the right to self-determination.
3. Every nation-state within which Indigenous Peoples live shall recognize the population, territory and institutions belonging to said people.
4. The culture of Indigenous Peoples is part of mankind's cultural patrimony.
5. The customs of the Indigenous Peoples must be respected as legitimate sources of rights.
- ...
7. All Indigenous Peoples have the right to determine the form, structure and jurisdictions of their own institutions.
- ...
10. Indigenous Peoples have inalienable rights over their traditional lands and resources.
- ...
15. All Indigenous Peoples have the right to be educated in their own language and to establish their own education institutions.

These principles concur with various expressions of First Nations' ideas of development; they could come into conflict with certain development activities. The Canadian International Development Agency's mandate concentrates on six priorities: basic human needs, women in development, infrastructure services, good governance, private sector development and the environment. The Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development supports three major goals: economic well-being, social development (including education, infant mortality and health services), and environmental sustainability.

If the customs alluded to in principle 5 are a strict but benevolent patriarchy, these could

conflict with the demands of women in development. Some of these principles even seem to be written to protect the Indigenous Peoples from certain aspects of (indigenously poorly conceived) development. It is evident that exploiting forest resources will conflict with principle 10, regarding traditional lands, unless the Indigenous Peoples living there are deeply involved in developing the forest management plan and its implementation. Even the declaration of national parks intended to protect the environment can run foul of the principles, such as principle 7 which states that Indigenous Peoples have the right to determine jurisdictions.

But they are saying that there must be respect for the cultural values behind their knowledge and that their rights to maintain these values must be acknowledged and protected in the development process.

Indigenous Peoples also recognize that western and indigenous knowledge systems may compliment each other with respect to providing goods and services that a community has defined as appropriate for itself.

Economists see indigenous knowledge as social capital because it represents generations of learning about how to organize productivity. It is one of the most valuable forms of capital any people possess with which they can form their development goals. The key problem for indigenous peoples has been their lack of control of how the knowledge is accessed and used outside their communities. It is ironic that the poorest and often dispossessed peoples on the planet are suddenly being recognized as holders of knowledge that is critically important to global human well-being, sustainable development and environmental conservation.

In North America, the Four Worlds International Institute for Human and Community Development (2000) has built its foundation on a consultation with elders from forty different North American First Nations. The Institute was born out of the intense deliberations and prayers at a gathering of native elders and community leaders held on the Sitsika First Nation on the high plains of Alberta in December 1982. Distinguished representatives of the tribes involved met to search for a solution to the social devastation brought on by alcohol, poverty and an increasing sense of powerlessness sweeping across tribal communities. The Institute is involved in training, health issues, and funding international

humanitarian work. Its four strategic foundation principles are:

1. Development comes from within: others may help and assist, but the driving force for change, healing, learning, growth and progress must come from within the communities themselves.
2. No vision, no development: the people need to be able to visualize health and well being for themselves in order to be able to create it in their world.
3. Individual and community transformations must go hand in hand: the healing, learning and growth of individuals, and the transformations of community relationships and conditions are mutually interdependent.
4. Holistic learning is the key to deep and lasting change: ... Learning is at the heart of sustainable change processes. Human beings are multi-dimensional learning beings, physically, emotionally, intellectually, spiritually and volitionally.

The elders in their worldview believe that:

1. The spiritual and material aspects of life are inseparable and interdependent.
2. That indeed everything is related to everything in this universe.
3. That healing ourselves, our communities, our nations and mother earth depends on our capacity to understand our own selves.
4. That human beings have within them as a gift of the Creator, the power to transform and heal the world.

These principles reflect themes such as a global conception of creation, a search for vision, generosity and a preference for introspection. Clarkson, Morrisette and Regallet (1992) point out several further aspects of First Nations thoughts about development. In Algonkian thought, all actions must take into account consequences for seven generations, an excellent base for sustainability. They state that there is a sacred aspect to their relationship with the earth: "We are placed on the earth, our mother, to be caretakers of all that is here" (p. 4). Their key principles for development include:

1. Respect for the earth and all creation,
2. To relearn history from an Indigenous Peoples' perspective. "Western people must realize that by defending Indigenous Peoples

and their lands, they are working to secure their own future as well" (p. 65),

3. The expansionist/materialist western society will eventually collapse under its own weight.
4. Traditional forms of social, economic and political organization have a great deal to contribute to understanding the requirement of socially sustainable societies,
5. First Nations societies are built on the foundations of true democracy. The American constitution only incompletely replicated the true democracy of the Iroquois Confederacy.

The Meadow Lake Tribal Council in Saskatchewan is an example of the new approach to economic development emerging among First Nations, where they create profitable businesses competing in the world market. Development activities include, forestry and transportation. These very successful economic development activities of the Meadow Lake Tribal Council are based on the following principles (Anderson & Bone, 1999):

1. A collective approach serving three purposes:
 - improvement of socio-economic circumstances,
 - attainment of economic self-sufficiency, and
 - preservation and strengthening of traditional culture, values and languages.
2. An assertively pragmatic approach encompassing the following principles from the Tahltan Tribal Council:
 - assurance that development will not pose a threat of irreparable environmental damage,
 - assurance that development will not jeopardize outstanding land claims,
 - assurance that a project will have more positive than negative social impacts on the First Nations people,
 - provision for the widest possible opportunity for education and training,
 - provision for the widest possible employment opportunities for the people,
 - provision for substantial equity participation,
 - provision for the widest possible development of First Nations business opportunities.

Experience in the North West Territories has resulted in the following advice (Myers, 1999):

1. Earlier approaches tried to assimilate northerners into the mainstream Canadian economy,
2. Evidence proves the viability of modern development based on traditional resources, skills and values,
3. Earlier approaches were short lived and drew people away from traditional land-based livelihoods leaving them unemployed and unskilled when projects closed down,
4. The traditional, land-based Native economy is not viable. Harvesters in the NWT earned on average \$10–15,000 in food and fuel in 1988 (by comparison, the family income of the James Bay Crees included the equivalent of \$40,000 per year from hunting, Darou, 1989).
5. Out of 473 projects that developed locally based commercial enterprises, the success rate in terms of two-year survival was 73%, comparable to southern businesses.
6. Success factors included use of traditional resources and skills, use of traditional and innovative approaches together, management structures that suit Indigenous culture, use of small and seasonal projects, focus on local markets, and including all resource users in the resource management.

Regarding development, Billy Diamond, the first Grand Council Chief of the Crees has taken the vision issue as central (Diamond, 2000). He argues that the priority of all Aboriginal leaders should be to ensure that the human, physical, and financial resources available to their people are used wisely. There must be continued benefit to future generations. He believes that Canadian society has failed the people by assuring a welfare culture and frowning on indigenous economic activities. "The situation was compounded by the pervasive problems of racism, remoteness, lack of adequate infrastructure to support business and generate jobs, and the serious lack of adequate training and relevant education" (p. 4). Diamond believes that politicians should be kept away from economic development projects, and suggests that young people receive culturally relevant business education, in the face of the "flourishing business of aboriginal training" (p. 6)

First Nations International Involvement

Realizing that they were not listened to by their nation-states Indigenous Peoples have sought to make their voices heard at the international level for hundreds of years. For example, in the past, Canadian First Nations made representations to the Queen who sent them back to their respective colonial governments. To regain basic economic and political rights they founded associations. They explored the possibility of League of Nations support for their grievances. Deskaheh, a representative of the Iroquois Confederacy travelled to Geneva in 1923, where he succeeded in having a resolution introduced in the forum, but failed to have it debated and submitted for voting.

In the late 1960s, the National Indian Brotherhood was established. During the next decade the association took shape and began to be seen as an organization that could exercise pressure on the federal government for early settlement of land titles and treaty issues. The Chairman of the Indian Brotherhood, Chief George Manuel, travelled extensively. He visited New Zealand and Australia in 1971. In 1972, he was an advisor with the Canadian delegation to the United Nations Conference in Stockholm. Following the Stockholm conference, he visited the International Labour Organization's International Working Group for Indigenous Affairs in Copenhagen. There, he announced his plan for a world conference of indigenous peoples (Guy Breault, personal communication, Nov. 2000). He was committed to the principle that Indigenous Peoples must organize and control the conference themselves. The international conference was held in Port Alberni, British Columbia in 1975. Two hundred sixty persons participated. The programme included drafting a charter for the creation of a World Indigenous Council. Chief Manuel achieved his goal when the World Council of Indigenous Peoples came into existence. The Council became a registered non-governmental organization and has received a total of \$4.9 million in funding from Canadian International Development Agency since 1976. Its development activities are concentrated in Central and South America where it co-ordinates and supports projects of local indigenous organizations and communities (Forest & Rodon, 1995; Guy Breault, personal communication, September 2000).

The Saskatchewan Indian Federated College has provided development education resources to the Saskatoon community through a resource centre and bookstore. Apikan Indigenous Network engaged in networking and advocacy activities.

The experience of First Nations people of outside-imposed development and domination make them active partners to peoples elsewhere suffering from similar imposed programmes as they have aroused sympathy for their protests borne of bitter personal events.

The Assembly of First Nations undertook a demarcation project in Venezuela to establish the boundaries of the ancestral territory of the Ye'kuana people. It works in partnership with Otro Futuro, a Venezuelan NGO which provides technical support and legal counsel to indigenous communities of Venezuela. Mamo Atoskewin Atikamokw Association, which promotes the use of traditional aboriginal knowledge, works in collaboration with Resources Kitaskino XXI Inc. — an aboriginal company specializing in geomatics and environment. These two organizations undertook a technical assistance project in partnership with indigenous communities in Northern Thailand.

In 1998, the 86-year-old William Commanda, an elder from Kitigan-Zipi First Nation near Maniwaki in Quebec, also organized *Elders without Borders*, a gathering of elders and spiritual leaders from North and South America and Thailand. The organization brings together elders to share information and strategies with the ultimate objective of "saving the earth."

The Turtle Island Earth Stewards, a Canadian Indigenous Peoples group, held an international youth camp entitled *Listening to the Voice of the Elders*, bringing together indigenous youth from around the world.

The Meadow Lake Tribal Council, through its company MLDC Investment Company has a joint venture project with Corporacion Indigena Para El Desarrollo Economica S.A. (CIDESA), a Miskito Indian company, for a small-scale logging operation. They have recently moved ahead to health and education activities. Seaku Fisheries, a Canadian indigenous company responsible for the development and management of commercial fishing in the Nunavik region of northern Quebec, also has a joint venture project with CIDESA for the creation of a company which will produce commercial fishing products.

The Centre canadien d'étude et de coopération internationale (CECI) [Canadian Centre for International Studies and Co-operation] has organized several exchanges between the Innu of Maniuténam in Northern Quebec and the Quéchua and Aymara of Bolivia beginning in 1992. One of the outcomes of this project was an agreement for exchanges with the Société de Communication Attikamech-Montagnais [The Attikamech-Montagnais Communications Corporation]. It also involved youth exchanges and discussion of hunting and wild life management issues. The Innu report that the greatest mutual benefits were contact with a different group facing the same challenges and exchanges of information between the elders on issues of cultural values and well-being. They have established a Committee for Quebec-Bolivian Solidarity.

The Anishinabek Educational Institute (AEI), part of the Union of Ontario Indians, is involved in several international activities. For example, the AEI has connections with indigenous peoples of Panama. They are involved in the delivery of accredited educational programmes with the Kuna, which involve training courses in aboriginal small business, early childhood education, and English as a second language. In addition, they are helping the Kuna with curriculum development for other courses, and are supporting the transfer of skills so that the Kuna can ultimately do the work themselves. The advantage of this programme for the Anishinabek is that it helps them build capacity and supports international relationships. The Kuna have chosen to co-operate with the Anishinabek because they felt they would be sensitive to their legitimate concerns about being exploited. Through several visits, both parties gradually developed a relationship based on trust and mutual sympathy.

What First Nations Have to Contribute to Majority Culture Development: The Other View

Today, even hard-nosed business is recognizing the importance of and responding to indigenous approaches. Take for example the comment of Voisey's Bay Nickel Company President, Dr. Stewart Gendron: "In today's mining industry having access to traditional knowledge is so important because it allows companies to put in place more successful mitigation strategies to

address the environmental and socio-economic impacts of mining operations.

The use of indigenous knowledge by Europeans in North America has a history of hundreds of years. The first medical prescription from Canada involved Vitamin C from spruce needles given to European explorers as treatment for scurvy. There is also Aspirin, the canoe, lacrosse and several agricultural practices, to name a few of the one thousand named by Côté, Tardivel, and Vaugeois (1992). The U.S. system of government is even based on the Iroquois system of confederacy.

Douglas Cardinal, the architect who designed the award-winning Canadian Museum of Civilization in Hull, Quebec, has written about what First Nations can offer White society. In the development of First Nations' culture, he foresees a salvation of all peoples, not just First Nations. Cardinal (1990) refers to the individualistic Euro-American culture as *ego society* and maintains that it cannot teach balance because it is based on an obsession with power. Cultural balance comes from efforts of Indigenous Peoples to retain their identities. European knowledge must be communicated in the Indigenous way so that Indigenous People can assimilate it as appropriate to their own cultural tradition. After his global vision, Cardinal urges that First Nations not to restrict themselves to being Canadian or American citizens.

Alternative collective wisdom is needed for a number of reasons:

- some green revolution technology is associated with ecological degradation and poorer diets,
- some development concepts have not proven appropriate or sustainable,
- rapid growth of the life industries such as medical research and biotechnology.
- local people tend to abandon technical interventions that have come from the outside,
- top down planning fails to promote effective natural resource management at the local level,
- communities that receive much aid may become less able to handle their own affairs.

Dr. Thomas Alcoze, a Navajo biologist from Arizona, USA, puts it this way: "The environmental crisis must be addressed at the practical, functional and scientific level. However, a major aspect of the new environmental relationships between human society and the earth must incorporate ethics. That is one of the most fun-

damental and important aspects of what Native traditions and values can provide our global society. Credibility needs to be given to those teachings” And he adds, “Science is not just a White man’s thing” (Greer, 1992).

Compared with many modern technologies, traditional techniques have been tried and tested, are effective, inexpensive, and locally available and in many cases based on preserving and building on the patterns and processes of nature. Traditional approaches usually examine problems in their entirety, as opposed to the western way of looking for individual solutions to discrete problems. For example, in Canada, the health industry is just now starting to realize that good health is a mix of physical, spiritual and psychological well-being, and not just good blood chemistry. Indigenous healers have known this for countless years. Sometimes there is a practical reason for favouring traditional knowledge. In the north of Canada dog teams are becoming popular again, because if you are lost, they know the way home, unlike a snowmobile.

What First Nations Might Find Interesting in International Development

It is clear that Canadian First Nations people report conflicting feelings about development. On one hand, they are suspicious of development because they see themselves as its victims, as marginalized by it even today. In addition, they may see themselves as being in no position to help others because they are too needy themselves. On the other hand, when they have the resources, involvement in development gives First Nations an opportunity to share the experiences of their own struggles, affording them an opportunity to build their own and others capacity. It may also offer First Nations invaluable international political links. Many times, as we have seen, their motivation is altruistic; when First Nations become aware of a problem, they generally wish to help.

It is clear why First Nations may be suspicious of, or disinterested in international development activities. But, some projects exist, indicating there is interest in some aspects. Those wishing to involve First Nations in international development might consider the following possible directions:

- social exchanges that allow First Nations to share a common cause such as threats to territorial integrity,
- an opportunity to help others who are facing problems First Nations have dealt with,
- opportunities to share surplus resources with other Indigenous People in need, and thereby expressing the *give away* ethic, and devise poverty reduction strategies (e.g., the Crees of Quebec do not use a welfare system),
- sharing of collective knowledge that may be poorly understood by the majority Canadian culture,
- businesses built on other cultural foundations,
- ecotourism, teaching respect for nature and sharing of indigenous knowledge about the land or resources,
- ecological interventions meant to “heal the earth”,
- indigenous education, and
- activities resisting assimilation or colonialization.

We need a long-term approach to build capacity. It is important to focus on respectful partnerships and not just on development activity or on factual indigenous knowledge. Participatory approaches have been shown to be more effective than the old donor/recipient mentality. Many Native leaders seem to look at development in the way a hunter kills prey with compassion, and yet fears offending the animal’s spiritual essence. Six elements of such a partnership might be:

1. Indigenous Peoples, Canadian and otherwise, identify what is important and why.
2. reach a consensus to identify objectives of development.
3. developers and Indigenous Peoples work together to respect each others needs.
4. Indigenous Peoples have a key role in project monitoring and follow-up.
5. allow scope in project planning to use indigenous knowledge to specify aims and benefits of projects.
6. allow Indigenous Peoples to practice their indigenous knowledge rather than simply talk about it. The richness of indigenous knowledge is in the doing and not the telling.

We close with two questions:

1. How can First Nations, who hold the indigenous knowledge and experience, communicate effectively with governments and

industry who are seldom properly trained to conceptualize human development the way Indigenous People do?

2. How can Indigenous Peoples be effective in international development if the process itself in Canada is managed and controlled by Non-Native North Americans?

In conclusion, the development community can benefit from First Nations involvement in several ways. First Nations have a wealth of experience of successful (and less successful) development activities, often analysed in detail and published in professional journals such as the present one. Also, because of common experiences discussed here, First Nations have been able to develop trust relationships with aid recipients that would be difficult for other development workers to achieve. The North American aid community could exploit this resource more effectively, and with the full involvement of the First Nations. Finally, such a strategy would allow institutions to conduct very effective double-edged development. The resulting projects could generate highly effective multi-faceted development, increasing capacity of First Nations, while at the same time helping international development organizations, NGO's, and international indigenous people build capacity — in concrete, achievable ways.

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