

Editors' Comments

This special issue includes the select proceedings of a conference — Value(s) Added: Sharing Voices on Aboriginal Community Economic Development — held in May 2002 at the College of Commerce, University of Saskatchewan, and supported by the Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council of Canada. An important first for the University, the conference marked the beginning of a process of sharing voices and visions and adding values to current debate on Aboriginal community economic development. By learning from practitioners as well as academics, from traditional voices as well as postcolonial and postmodern perspectives, from the success stories as well as the challenges, the conference aimed to forge new networks and re-imagine CED for the 21st century.

In a world where inequity and poverty kill, we all have a stake in the future of Aboriginal CED in Canada: CED practitioners and researchers; Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal peoples; Elders, educators, and students; people in the resources, cultural, business, legal, and government sectors. In addressing issues of Aboriginal and treaty rights and community economic development in the context of globalization and resource depletion, the program was designed to promote possibilities rather than problems and to nourish alternative models of development and communities dependent on reciprocity rather than inequality.

To encourage mutual education and public understanding and to enrich the current discourses on Aboriginal CED, the conference program presented a sampling of current research and practice from British Columbia to Cape Breton and featured keynote speakers and panel presenters whose work animated talking circles. The talking circles allowed delegates to share knowledge and experience in a traditional way, to create new networks and celebrate Aboriginal economies. By offering such networking opportunities, the conference aimed to break down some of the unproductive barriers that impede major innovation and more effective building on tradition. Presentations and discussions worked to unpack the costs of colonial

practices, to learn from best practices and the latest research, to learn new ways of thinking and acting that might help us remap and rethink the challenges and opportunities of Aboriginal CED in the 21st century.

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