Aki Energy:
A Case Study of Aboriginal Social Enterprise

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CASE STUDY

This case study is an exploration of AKI ENERGY, an Aboriginal social enterprise based in Winnipeg, Manitoba. Aki Energy's vision includes a future for Canada's Aboriginal people built on community economic development and renewable energy. A discussion of Aki Energy's activities requires that confronting a number of issues, including: archaic regulatory models, development's historic relationship with assimilation, the often misunderstood niche that social enterprise occupies, and the necessity for development to alleviate some of the economic issues facing Canada's Aboriginal peoples. To understand Aki Energy's perspective, Mr. Shaun Loney, Aki Energy's director of development, was interviewed.

Social Enterprise, Aboriginal Enterprise, and Development

Aki Energy's role as an Aboriginal social enterprise necessitates a brief discussion of social enterprises & Aboriginal enterprises. Social enterprises have a long historical background, having existed in various forms throughout history, but at the turn of the century there was a surge of interest from various sectors of society looking for innovative solutions to social issues. So what is a social enterprise? There are many definitions, but a common, simple definition is any organization that is "directly involved in the sale of goods and services to a market, but that also has specific social objectives that serve as its primary purpose" ("Social Enterprise", n.d.). They operate under a dual bottom line, both social & economic, making them a hybrid organization, unlike traditional concepts of enterprise that emphasize economic goals. Social enterprises have been closely tied to Aboriginal enter-

prises, with some scholars going so far as to argue that Aboriginal enterprises are inherently social enterprises (Anderson, Dana, & Dana, 2006). Aboriginal enterprises have also been closely tied in Canada to economic development through financing, creation of business relationships, entrepreneurial activities, and job & training opportunities ("Aboriginal Economic Development Fund", n.d.; Madahbee, 2015).

Unfortunately development is not without its criticisms. Emerging in the post World War II era, early development models focused on a modernization paradigm (Peredo, Anderson, Galbraith, Honig, & Dana, 2004). These early development efforts regarded traditional cultures as a hindrance to development, and, based on concepts of social evolution, followed a myopic development trajectory that has become associated with assimilation (Tucker, 1999). In response, dependency theories began to emerge in the 1970s. Though they shifted the focus to localized activities, dependency doctrines continued to emphasize economic and, to a lesser extent, political goals (Fagan, 1999). This has led to anti-development movements, which reject Western development agendas, and post-development movements (including alternative development/alt-development), which seek to modify these agendas by the inclusion of cultural analysis & cultural politics, and the deconstruction of hegemonic development mythology (Fagan, 1999). Many post-development models attempt to offer communities opportunities to incorporate goals that have not traditionally been reflected in development paradigms.

Canada's Aboriginal Peoples & Development

Canada's 2011 National Household Survey (NHS) provides the most recent government data regarding Canada's Aboriginal peoples ("Fact Sheet", 2013). According to the NHS's fact sheet, as of 2011, there were more than 1,400,000 Aboriginal people in Canada, roughly 4% of the population. Registered Indians account for 50% of the Aboriginal population, 15% are Non-Status Indians, 30% Métis, and 4% Inuit; with more than 79% of Aboriginal peoples living in Ontario and the Western provinces. Aboriginal peoples are becoming increasingly urban, 56% of them residing in urban areas, with Winnipeg having the highest per capita population at approximately 11% (though other estimates are even higher). The Aboriginal population is, on average, younger than their non-Aboriginal counterparts, almost half (46%) being under the age of 25, as compared to 29% of Canada's non-Aboriginal population.

Aboriginal peoples in Canada face a number of distinct challenges, not the least of which are education and unemployment. Approximately 10% of Aboriginals of working age have a university degree, falling short of Canada's non-Aboriginal population, at 26%; while 29% of Canada's Aboriginal people of working age have less than a high school degree ("Fact Sheet", 2013). The rate of employment for Aboriginal peoples of working age is at 63%, compared to 76% for non-Aboriginal's; and the unemployment rates are 13% and 6%, respectively.

Employment and education challenges play at least some role in the high levels of poverty seen in Canada's Aboriginal communities; according to a study by Willows, Veugelers, Raine, and Kuhle (2008) 33% of Aboriginal households were food insecure, compared to 9% of non-Aboriginal household, 52% did not have homeownership (non-Aboriginals 31%), and 33% fall into the lowest income adequacy category (non-Aboriginals 12%). In a country like Canada, one of the wealthiest nations in the world, it can be surprising to some that poverty is still an issue, and that Aboriginal people are four times as likely to experience

hunger caused by poverty (McIntyre, Connor, & Warren, 1998). Manitoba Aboriginal communities face some of the greatest challenges, with quality of life on Manitoba First Nations, as measured by the UN Human Development Index, being ranked as the lowest in Canada (Puxley, 2015). Manitoba's First Nations more have more than double the national average for child poverty among First Nations (62%), and they are the least likely to complete high school (28%). Faced with these realities, it is unsurprising that development is a focus of the Canadian government, Aboriginal communities, and organizations working to resolve these issues.

Peguis First Nation

> Promoting, planning, and developing Peguis First Nation with a sound economic development strategy
>
> Peguis Development Corporation mission statement
> ("Peguis Development Corporation — Peguis First Nation", 2015)

Peguis First Nation is an Ojibway and Cree community ("About Peguis First Nation", n.d.) located roughly 190 km north of Winnipeg, situated between Lake Winnipeg and Lake Manitoba. As of 2013, the total registered population was 8835, with an on reserve population of 3685 ("Peguis — Connectivity Profile", 2013). The community is a signatory of Treaty 1, signed by Mis-Koo-Kinew (Henry Prince) on behalf of the St. Peter's Band (Peguis First Nation) August 3, 1871 ("Review: Negotiation of a Settlement", 2006). In 2008, Peguis signed the Peguis Treaty Land Entitlement agreement which Chief Glenn Hudson described as "the fulfillment of the treaty promise to land" ("Archived — Canada, Peguis", 2008). The community is somewhat isolated and must cope with higher costs due to transportation issues ("Peguis — Connectivity Profile", 2013). Peguis has access to a variety of services within the community including a fire-hall, emergency operation centre, and health centre ("Departments — Peguis First Nation", 2015). The community's government consists of a Chief and Council, currently (as of 2016) headed by Chief Cindy Spence ("Chief and Council — Peguis First Nation", 2015). In 2013, Peguis, along with Fisher River Cree Nation, working in partnership with Aki Energy, began the process of retrofitting their community to incorporate geothermal heating, making them the first First Nations in the world to do so (Wood, Loney, & Taylor, 2015).

Fisher River Cree Nation (Ochekwi-Sipi)

> The Fisher River Economic Development Corporation (F.R.E.D.), on behalf of the Fisher River Cree Nation members, will identify, develop, and undertake activities that will expand employment, stimulate economic activity, and contribute to overall community investment..
>
> Fisher River Cree Economic Development Corporation mission statement
> ("Fisher River Cree Economic Development Corporation
> — Fisher River Cree Nation", 2016)

The Fisher River Cree Nation is a neighbour to the Peguis First Nation, lying just northwest of Peguis, roughly 200 km north of Winnipeg. Fisher River, as of 2013, had a total registered population of 3318 people, with 1783 people living on reserve ("Fisher River — Connectivity Profile", 2013). The community is between 50–350 km away from service centres, but they do have year-round road access. As a community, Fisher River Cree Nation

traces its history back to the 1840s, when Norway House became a fur trade hub for the Hudson's Bay Company (HBC), which offered employment opportunities for First Nations peoples ("About Us — Fisher River Cree Nation", 2016). The introduction of steamboats on Lake Winnipeg and the decline of the fur trade in the 1870s put many of these people out of work, motivating them to move further inland. In 1875, these people became signatories to Treaty 5, which provided the present reserve at Fisher River. More people joined throughout the 1880s, and in 1908 the band signed adhesions to Treaty 5, bringing even more people into the community ("About Us — Fisher River Cree Nation", 2016). Their government consists of a Chief and Council, currently (as of 2016) led by Chief David Crate ("Chief & Council — Fisher River Cree Nation", 2016). In 2013, they became leaders in renewable energy by partnering with Aki Energy and Peguis First Nation to retrofit their community with geothermal heat pumps.

Aki Energy

> Aki Energy works with First Nations to start green businesses in their communities, creating local jobs and growing strong local economies
>
> Aki Energy
> ("Home — Aki Energy", n.d.)

Aki Energy's sense of purpose comes from its executives and its Board of Directors. Aki's Executive Director, Darcy Wood, is a member of the Garden Hills First Nation, where he served as chief. Mr. Wood has been active as both a political advisor to the Manitoba Keewatinowi Okimakanak Grand Chief, and as a senior policy analyst for the assembly of Manitoba Chiefs. Shaun Loney is Aki's director of development, Mr. Loney has extensive experience working with social enterprises, having founded BUILD Inc., a social enterprise whose mission is summed up as "BUILD seeks a Winnipeg where bills in low-income housing are affordable and where the residents who live in this housing have gainful, family-supporting employment" ("About Us — BUILD", 2016). He is an Ashoka Fellow, and in 2014, received the Ernst and Young Prairie Entrepreneur of the Year award. Aki Energy's Board of Directors consists of community members from Aki's partners, this helps ensure a plurality of Aboriginal voices are involved in guiding Aki, and helps Aki maintain its relationships with the communities, even after they have completed their installations and training projects. Aki's Board of Directors provides direction through quarterly meetings where they plan a path to the future and create company bylaws.

Aki Energy's vision mandates a triple bottom line of people, planet, profit; put another way, their mission includes social, environmental, and economic goals. A report prepared by Aki Energy (in conjunction with the assembly of Manitoba Chiefs and the Canadian CED network), titled Social Enterprise and the Solutions Economy: a Toolkit for Manitoba First Nations (2015), offers an inclusive definition of social enterprise, believing social enterprises should be defined by their missions, rather than their legal structure, and that social enterprises are "any business with social and/or environmental goals, whether they are a non-profit, a co-op or a for-profit company" (Wood et al., 2015, p.12). Essential to this definition is that a social enterprise benefits both the owners of an enterprise and the communities that they serve. In this view social entrepreneurs operate not only in the social economy, but in the solutions economy (Wood et al., 2015), as social entrepreneurs must often engage in innovative problem-solving to accomplish their goals.

The goal of Aki Energy is one of transformation, it is their hope to fundamentally reshape the leaky bucket economies of many First Nations communities into strong local economies. Leaky bucket economies can be described as "a place where money that comes into the community flows right back out again — creating no local jobs or economic benefit" (Wood et al., 2015: 10). This transformation requires developing local businesses and infrastructure that will support endeavours that bring resources into the community, rather than funnelling resources out. Aki Energy emphasizes the positives that exist within difficult situations, what they refer to as the upside of down (Wood et al., 2015). This requires seeing beyond the deficit that, so often, is the focus when discussing First Nations communities, in lieu of seeing a problem, Aki suggests you look for the opportunity. As an example, instead of focusing on the expense of high utility bills, Aki Energy

Image: Wood et al. (2015, p.10-11)

suggests looking at the cost effectiveness of green energy options, and the potential benefits that accompany them. Aki Energy sees social enterprise as a pillar in this transformative process, combining the best qualities of business with a sense of social responsibility.
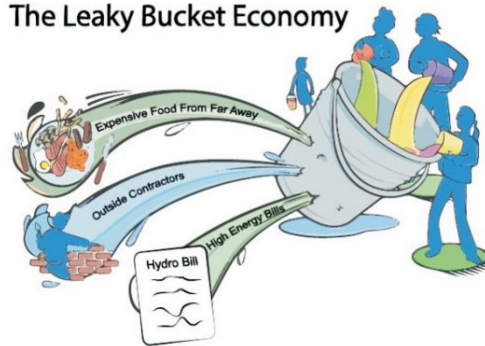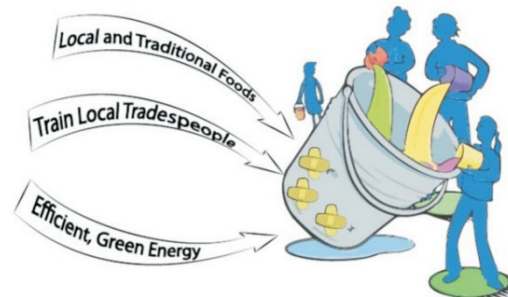
Capacity Building

Aki's first partnerships were with Peguis First Nation and Fisher River Cree Nation in 2013. Aki trained 15 people from each community to be geothermal heating installers, with participants obtaining certification through the International Geothermal Source Heat Pump Association (IGSHPA). Capability development is about more than just training skills, it is about teaching people how to utilize those skills in a multitude of contexts, and helping them find the confidence to apply those skills. Aki recognizes this, and its goals go beyond simple economic development, as Darcy Wood says "it [Aki's training] builds pride in communities" ("Aki Energy — Aboriginal Social Enterprise", 2015). In addition to capacity building Aki Energy provides financing development and project management to help ensure a project's success ("Sustainable Energy — Aki Energy", n.d.). This allows Aki to help build capacity in all phases of the project, providing community members experience that can later be applied in other contexts.

Geothermal Heating, Demand-Side Energy, and Supply-Side Energy

Energy projects fall under two general categories, either demand-side energy projects, or supply-side energy projects. Supply-side energy projects (supply-side management projects) are efforts to ensure the creation and transmission of energy (United Nations Industrial
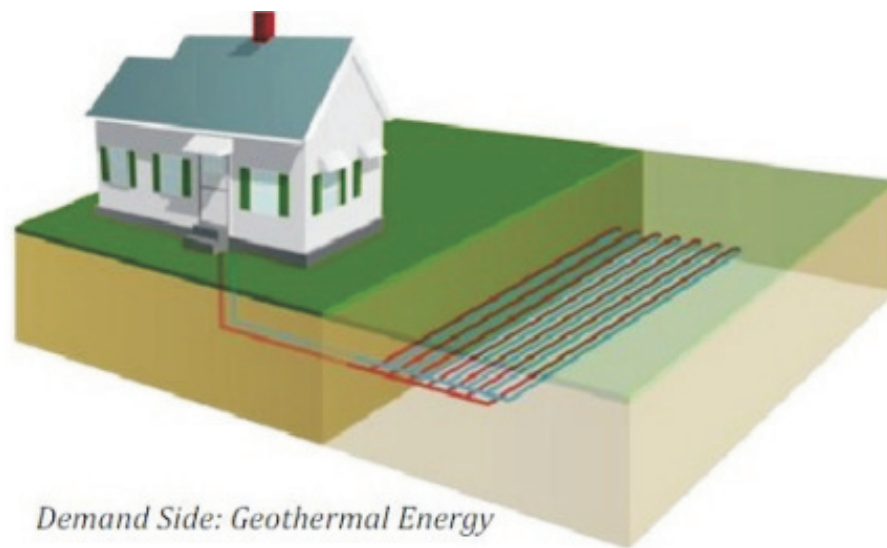
Demand Side: Geothermal Energy

Image: Wood et al. (2015, p.21)

Development Organization (UNIDO), n.d.). Supply-side renewable energy projects require utility providers as clients to purchase the energy they produce. In Manitoba, Manitoba Hydro is the only such utility provider, and at this time they are unable to purchase power and prices that would make green supply-side projects viable, making supply side renewable energy projects infeasible.

Demand-side energy projects (demand-side management projects) don't actually create energy they simply reduce or eliminate the need for it. Geothermal heating and cooling is one of many green technologies being used to reduce our impact on the environment. In Manitoba, the most common geothermal heat pump being used is a horizontal, closed loop heat pump (Wood et al., 2015). This requires that a geothermal loop be installed beneath the frost line, allowing the natural temperature of the Earth to heat and cool a home ("Aki Energy — Aboriginal Social Enterprise", 2015). By allowing the Earth's temperature to cool/heat a home, energy costs will be reduced. This has the added, but not inconsequential, benefit of reducing pollution related to the production of energy. In 2013, Peguis First Nation and Fisher River Cree Nation installed 110 geothermal units in households, in 2014 the number rose to 150, which Aki Energy estimates will save those communities approximately $50,000 a year (Wood et al., 2015).

Manitoba Hydro, Pay As You Save (PAYS), and Social Assistance

Manitoba Hydro offers numerous incentive programs for consumers to save energy and natural gas under their PowerSmart programs ("Be Power Smart", n.d.). Manitoba Hydro has created a number of PowerSmart programs targeted directly at First Nations community, including their Community Geothermal Program ("Power Smart and First Nations", n.d.). This program is designed at making first Nations "active participants in reducing their

energy consumption" ("Power Smart and First Nations", n.d.). First Nations communities are able to work with local businesses, such as Aki Energy, to train community members in the installation and maintenance of geothermal heat pump systems, with homeowners then being able to use the Pay As You Save program to help finance the installation costs.

The Pay As You Save financing program allows homeowners a way to invest in energy efficient technologies that may be beyond their financial reach. Manitoba Hydro will pay the upfront costs for the installation of the green technology, and then charge the homeowner monthly instalments to repay those costs. This program is being used to allow first Nations communities to install geothermal technology without having to pay the upfront costs ("Aki Energy — Aboriginal Social Enterprise", 2015), as installation of geothermal heating can cost approximately $18,000, well beyond the means of many mid & low income families. Over time, the energy savings will pay for the installation costs, with the savings only increasing as the cost of energy rises.

Aki Energy's methods have met with resistance from government bureaucracy and how that bureaucracy sets parameters on its own mission. The Pay As You Save program was a vital step in achieving Aki's goals, as it allows people who couldn't afford it to install geothermal heating/cooling. Regrettably, the payments do not qualify for social assistance, failing to meet the bureaucratic description of basic assistance, creating a tension between programs intended to assist First Nations peoples (Pay As You Save/PowerSmart) and older programs of dependency.

In Closing

It is difficult to evaluate Aki Energy's performance, simply due to short existence. In spite of this, a look at what has been accomplished in a short time gives a sense of the potential benefits Manitoba's First Nations, and Canada as a whole, may receive Aki's activities. Aki Energy, through its partnerships with Manitoba First Nations, has installed more than $3 million in renewable energy technology ("Sustainable Energy — Aki Energy", n.d.), reducing costs for the communities, and helping our environment. Through the training they have provided, Peguis Construction and Fisher River Builders have been able to offer their services far beyond their community, while providing sustainable employment to their community members. Chief Peguis Construction and Fisher River Builders have become the two largest residential thermal insulation companies in Western Canada (Wood et al., 2015).

Aki Energy is part of an organic community of social enterprises, continuing to grow and expand as it recognizes new opportunities to achieve its driving mission of creating strong First Nations economies. Aki has broadened its scope to include other forms of sustainable energy, including solar energy & biomass ("Aki Energy — Aboriginal Social Enterprise", 2015). Going beyond energy, Aki has also established Meechim Farms, a collaboration with Garden Hills First Nation meant to address the high cost of healthy food in northern First Nations communities ("Local Food — Aki Energy", n.d.).

Aki Energy still faces a number of challenges in their mission to assist First Nations communities. Unfortunately, some of their greatest challenges may come from their successes in finding innovative solutions, an example of first mover disadvantage, as it were. Canada is a modern country with a sophisticated bureaucracy and this bureaucracy can be a hindrance at times, often unable to keep up, or better yet predict, the regulatory needs of innovative social enterprises.

STUDY QUESTIONS

1. Are there cognitive differences, such as patterns of opportunity recognition, start-up motives, etc., between Aboriginal social entrepreneurs and other types of entrepreneurs? What effect does Aboriginal culture, and the modern realities of Aboriginal life within Canada, have in creating these differences?

2. Does Canada's social assistance policy perpetuate a paradigm of dependency through its refusal to pay the fees involved in the Pay As You Save program? If so, what opportunities, if any, does this offer for Aboriginal social entrepreneurs?

3. How has Aki Energy addressed capacity building within Aboriginal communities?

4. Is Aki Energy's process of capacity building sustainable in the long term? Can the market support labourers with the skills that Aki teaches? Are there less direct benefits?

5. How does Aki Energy fulfil the requirements of a social enterprise?

6. Hypothetical scenario: Assume regulation is passed restricting social enterprise to enterprise models (i.e., excluding NPO's etc.), what benefits/disadvantages would there be for Aki as a social enterprise? As an NPO?

7. Aki Energy operates in an environment where there is tension between the old paradigms of the government & enterprise and the new paradigms of social enterprise. How should social enterprises navigate this tension? Is it realistic for them to expect to transform the old paradigms? How can they operate in the interim?

8. What potential linkages do you see benefiting Aboriginal communities from Aki Energy's activities?

9. Can development approaches avoid being an assimilatory process? What role do the communities of the underdeveloped play in this process?

10. As an Aboriginal social enterprise, how can Aboriginal culture be incorporated into Aki Energy's daily operations?

11. How does Aki's concept of the upside of down affect the ways in which they operate and plan for the future?

12. Hypothetical scenario: To date, Aki Energy has focused its geothermal installation activities on Aboriginal communities. The following questions ask you to consider the repercussions of shifting that specific focus, their service market, to primarily non-Aboriginal communities, in an effort to exploit a wider market (their other missions, such as capacity building, would remain unchanged, and continue to focus on Aboriginal communities).
    (a) What marketing strategies could best benefit Aki Energy? What would be the unique obstacles & advantages for an Aboriginal social enterprise such as Aki Energy?
    (b) How would this change in their service mission affect Aki Energy's status as an Aboriginal social enterprise, if at all? Would it be viable, or would it conflict with their primary missions?

TEACHERS GUIDE

Note to the Teachers

This teachers guide is intended to elaborate on topics that were far too briefly touched on within the case study. Each section of the teacher's guide will, by necessity, also be brief, but will provide an enhanced understanding for teachers in discussing these subjects. Due to the brevity with which these complicated and important issues are addressed, at the end of each section there will be a suggested reading list. This is intended to supplement those materials listed in the reference section at the end of this case study package. These readings are suggested to not only to elaborate on a given topic, and explore underlying concepts, but, when possible, to provide contrasting views with which educators may encourage debate and discussion. These materials can be further supplemented by any that the educator has found to be informative and applicable.

Aboriginal Enterprise and Social Enterprise

As with any emerging scholarly field there are isomorphic forces attempting to dominate and shape definitions of social enterprise (Nicholls, 2010). It has been nearly two decades since J.G. Dees (1998) provided an early definition of social entrepreneurship based on the qualities and characteristics of a social entrepreneur. Since that time, there has been considerable debate in an attempt to shape a more comprehensive definition. J.A. Sharpe (2014) engaged in a study using content analysis of high impact journals to uncover definitions of social enterprise, social entrepreneurship, social innovation, and social entrepreneurs that have emerged since Dees seminal paper. Contrary to much of the literature, Sharpe found that there was considerable consensus as to how to define these terms, and that each was commonly being used within distinctive parameters, though they were at times being used interchangeably, further confusing an already complicated debate (Sharpe, 2014). Sharpe's findings can provide clarity for students by simplifying them to four intuitive categorizations:

1. **Social enterprises** are organizations engaged in social missions.
2. **Social entrepreneurs** are the individuals and communities engaged in social entrepreneurship.
3. **Social entrepreneurship** is the process used by social enterprises to achieve their goals.
4. **Social innovation** is a creative process commonly found within the process of social entrepreneurship.

Sharpe's definitions reflect an academic consensus of largely Western scholars and he noted the absence of opinions of other cultures, especially marginalized peoples. As such these definitions should not be taken as reflective of all views of social enterprise.

Much like social enterprise, there are competing visions as to how to define Aboriginal enterprise. Due to the relatively recent emergence of Aboriginal enterprise theory crafting by academics, it is best to utilize a flexible definition of Aboriginal enterprise at this time, this more easily allows for narrower interpretations to be used in the future, once the variations that an inclusive definition allows have been explored more thoroughly. In that spirit,

Sengupta and Vieta (2015, p.108) offer an open definition of Aboriginal social enterprise in Canada, providing for five basic typologies:

1. Social enterprise led by Indigenous individuals exclusively serving Indigenous clients.
2. Social enterprise led by Indigenous individuals serving Indigenous and non-Indigenous clients.
3. Social enterprise led by non-Indigenous individuals exclusively serving Indigenous clients.
4. Social enterprise led by non-Indigenous individuals serving Indigenous and non-Indigenous clients.
5. Social enterprise led by non-Indigenous individuals exclusively serving non-Indigenous clients.

Though it is unclear how Sengupta and Vieta conceive of the fifth typology fitting into an Aboriginal social enterprise framework, it has been included to prevent misrepresentation. As with social enterprise, Aboriginal social enterprise is linked to a multiple bottom line agenda, Sengupta & Vieta (2015) suggest that Aboriginal social enterprises incorporate a quadruple bottom line of social, economic, environmental, and cultural missions. The argument for the cultural mission as distinct from the social mission is not currently well developed (as of 2016), so this can be an interesting topic of discussion.

Caution should be used when discussing social enterprise/Aboriginal social enterprise and development, and clarity should be a priority when linking the two concepts. A distinction should be made between the development of social enterprises, and social enterprises as a method of development. The first is the discussion of fostering social enterprises, while the second is social enterprise as a mechanism for developing communities, each has economic and political implications, but development as transformation of a society carries with it the burden of an assimilatory past and concepts of colonization (see the section Development & Post-development Theory for a brief discussion as to issues regarding development). While SE/ASE goals are often intertwined with those of development, development's traditional emphasis on economic and political agendas may be limiting.

> **Suggested Reading:** P. Dacin, M. Dacin, & M. Matear (2010), *Social Entrepreneurship: Why We Don't Need a New Theory and How We Move Forward From Here*; J. Mair & I. Martí (2006), *Social Entrepreneurship Research: A Source of Explanation, Prediction, and Delight*; W. Wuttunee (2009), *Aboriginal Perspectives on the Social Economy*; W. Wuttunee (2004), *Living Rhythms*

Development and Post-Development Theory

Indigenous peoples are often presented as opposed to development, but people are not against their own development. Issues arise from people defining development in different ways and the conflicts that can come from our eagerness to solve the problems of the world, which can make it easy to overlook more esoteric concerns for the sake of glaring practicalities. This is particularly true of Western ideas of development that are often unchallenged by the public, academics, and development practitioners who are confronting the challenges of poverty and underdevelopment. The introduction of development into a com-

munity, or a classroom, may be problematic as for some just the word development carries tones of colonialism and assimilation. Keeping this in mind, a critical review of historical paradigms in development and comparison with post-development theories may mitigate some of these concerns. This section will attempt to evaluate some key issues in development and post-development theory, their history, and their consequences.

Development arose in the post World War II era as many colonial powers were surrendering their colonies, voluntarily or otherwise. Development approaches were seen as a means of combating many of the problems of the 20th century, including the poverty and underdevelopment in many of the recently freed nations. Theories of modernization laid the initial groundwork for the development paradigm, which emphasized economic and political goals (Kuznets, 1973), and these theories were based on an evolutionary view of culture and progress (Tucker, 1999). Modernization theory was based on the Eurocentric view of economic rational self-interest that rejected other understandings of rational thought. Modernization discourses were based in theories of cultural evolution, conceptualized as a model of linear progress, where traditional cultures were seen as an impediment to modernity, development, and progress. Modernization approached development through the economic and political lens of the West, and viewed success as incorporating underdeveloped nations into those systems, a process some view as continuing colonization models.

In the 1960s and 1970s, the failures of modernization theory in resolving the issues it was meant to address, and its assimilatory nature, were confronted by the rise of dependency theories (Peredo et al., 2004). Dependency theories argued that investment and aid from Western, industrialized nations actually harm underdeveloped countries, increasing income equality, and impairing attempts at development (Cardoso & Faletto, 1979). In response, they encouraged underdeveloped nations to focus on localized activities, rather than operating as an export platform for developed nations, reducing their interaction and reliance on developed nations (Frank, 2008). While dependency paradigms rejected many of the fundamental beliefs of modernization theories, they continued to define success in much the same way, focusing on Western economic and political standards rather than standards based in the traditions of the communities being helped.

As a response to the singular vision that development has offered, the 1990s saw the rise of anti-development and post-development theories, though some scholars equate the two (Pieterse, 2000). Anti-development models are difficult to defend, as they often don't address the realities faced by many of the peoples of the world. While it may be easy for an academic, living in conditions where food sovereignty and clean water are not a concern, to criticize development, and search for utopian ideal, those living without these luxuries haven't the time to wait for theoretical arguments to be resolved (Fagan, 1999). For them, post-development models offer an alternative to abandoning development, and potential alternatives to traditional forms of development. Post-development theory has taken earlier efforts at decolonization and applied them to development. Through this process, the works of Said, Foucault, and others, have influenced the creation of a post-development theory of cultural analysis that attempts to deconstruct hegemonic discourses in development (Tucker, 1999). These discourses have created a conceptualization of the other through the creation of binary opposite terms such as developed (Western cultures) that are contrasted to the undeveloped/ underdeveloped (the other). Thus, cultural analysis has allowed for new forms of resistance against the colonial practices that have been embedded within development processes. Unfortunately, theory does not rectify the problems that development was meant to address. In keeping with this, many post-development practitioners encourage some form of practical

post-development process, such as Fagan's (Fagan, 1999) cultural politics, which encourages local initiatives, based on the culture of the region, as the source of solutions to local issues. Within this paradigm, post-development theory envisages a plurality of voices, shifting development from a monologue by the West to a dialogue with the world.

> **Suggested Reading:** F. Fanon (1969), *The Wretched of the Earth; I. Kapoor (2008) the Post-Colonial Politics of Development*; A. Maslow (1943), *A Theory of Human Motivation*; D. Newhouse (2004), *The Challenges of Aboriginal Economic Development in the Shadow of the Borg*; K. Polanyi (1944), *The Great Transformation*; E. Said (1978), *Orientalism*

Aki Energy and the Social Enterprise Toolkit

Aki Energy's Social Enterprise and the Solutions Economy provides a brief roadmap for the development of social enterprise (Wood et al., 2015), and this may be useful for students to explore. Aki provides five basic steps to starting a social enterprise: (1) decide on a legal structure, (2) create a business plan, (3) create bylaws and governance structures, (4) start-up capital, (5) get started. Potential social entrepreneurs begin by deciding between three basic legal structures: a non-profit corporation, a cooperative, or a for-profit corporation. They should then consider their business plan, including their mission statement, product/service, customer base, potential competitors, and expenses/revenue flow. Once they've completed their business plan they need to consider the creation of bylaws and a board of directors. Each of these is an important aspect in developing their corporate culture, and can lay the foundations for an enterprise's vision and goals. The final stage is obtaining your start-up capital, which can come from a number of sources, such as: government grants, private grants, or through loans and financing. For more information we refer teachers to Social Enterprise and the Solutions Economy: a Toolkit for Manitoba First Nations (Wood et al., 2015), available online (http://www.gov.mb.ca/ana/major-initiatives/pubs/social%20enterprise%20and%20the%20solutions%20economy%20(email).pdf). Teachers May use this tool kit to have students develop a plan for a social enterprise of their own.

Canada's Aboriginal People and Development

A snapshot statistical view of Canada's Aboriginal people does not do justice to their current realities. While the current numbers show that many challenges remain, they don't convey how far Canada's Aboriginal peoples have come. Aboriginal peoples in Canada do have lower rates of high school graduation, university education, and employment compared to non-Aboriginal Canadians, but these trends have been changing for the better. Between 2006 and 2011, the number of Aboriginal peoples of working age with a university degree increased 2%, from 8 to 10% ("Fact Sheet", 2013).

Aboriginal peoples have invested in themselves and are increasingly creating their own business opportunities. The Canadian Council for Aboriginal Business Report (2011), Promise and Prosperity — the Aboriginal Business Survey, provides a wealth of information about the growth of Aboriginal entrepreneurship. From 2001 two 2006 Aboriginal self-employment increased by 38%, from 27,000 people to 37,000, compared to 7% for Canadians overall. Ontario and British Columbia have the highest rates of Aboriginal self-employment at 23% and 22%, with Manitoba at 10%. Aboriginal businesses focus on their local
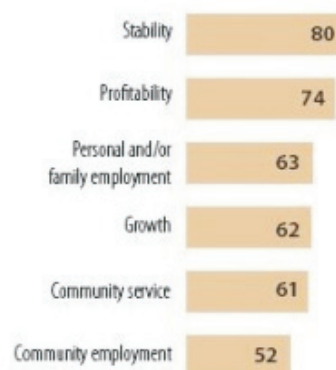
Region	Aboriginal self-employed population (15+)		Total Aboriginal population (15+)	
	N	%	N	%
Atlantic Provinces	1,940	5	50,260	6
Quebec	3,790	10	80,910	10
Ontario	8,750	23	178,170	22
Manitoba	3,925	10	117,205	14
Saskatchewan	2,880	8	91,290	11
Alberta	6,835	18	129,745	16
British Columbia	8,245	22	140,820	17
Territories	1,165	3	35,485	4
Canada	37,445	100	823,885	100

Image: The Canadian Council for Aboriginal Business Report (2011) p.1

community (85%) or their province/territory (73%), with half of Aboriginal businesses having clients outside of their home regions, and many operating internationally (26% in the US, 18% outside of North America). A telling fact is that 49% of Aboriginal small business owners consider themselves successes not simply for the profits they make, but because they find their work rewarding, and 61% rank community service as a priority for their businesses.

> **Suggested Reading:** D. MacDonald and D. Wilson (2010), *The Income Gap Between Aboriginal Peoples and the Rest of Canada*; D. MacDonald and D. Wilson (2013), *Poverty or Prosperity: Indigenous Children in Canada*; Make First Nations Poverty History Expert Advisory Committee (2009), *The State of the First Nation Economy and the Struggle to Make Poverty History*; J. Richards (2014), *Are We Making Progress? New Evidence on Aboriginal Education Outcomes in Provincial and Reserve Schools*

Importance of objectives for your business
Top 2 box

Stability	80
Profitability	74
Personal and/or family employment	63
Growth	62
Community service	61
Community employment	52

Q.11 – Please rate the importance of each of the following objectives for your business over the coming year. Please use a scale from 1 to 5, where 1 means not important at all and 5 means very important.

Image: The Canadian Council for Aboriginal Business Report (2011) p.21

Capacity Building

Being competent and capable are not the same thing, though there are similarities. Competencies are what people often think of when they consider professional and personal development, and competency development emphasizes refining & improving skills and the acquisition of knowledge (Stephenson & Weil, 1992). These qualities are often easily demonstrated through a simple display of proficiency, or some means of testing. Capability is a less tangible quality, one that is more difficult to define, but that people often feel they can recognize. Capable people exhibit the ability to learn, they show confidence in applying their skills, they have a high degree of self efficacy, and they're able to adapt when working with others or in unfamiliar situations (Stephenson & Weil, 1992). Building competency is an important part of building capability, as it often instills traits that encourage capabilities, such as confidence, to grow.

Competency development utilizes strategies and activities to help individuals and communities achieve a goal, prepare for future challenges, or develop capacities required for change. A simple example of this is the SMART criteria model created by George T. Doran (Doran, 1981). A modified version of Doran's smart goals exists that would allow each person/student to set a goal that produces an observable effect, this version of SMART stands for: specific (S), measurable (M), achievable (A), realistic (R), and time related (T) (see SMART Goals — Quick Overview https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=1-SvuFIQjK8 [runtime 3m58s] for a more detailed explanation). The simplicity of this model, and its flexibility, allows students to create a goal that can be achieved over the course of a semester. While each individual goal may only be the development of a competency, over time, the development and refinement of competencies can lead to increased capability, as students become more confident, and better able to handle life's challenges.

As difficult as capability development in individuals can be, applying it on a larger, community scale amplifies those challenges. One possible framework for use with communities was developed by the economist Amartya Sen in the 1980s, the capability approach (CA). Sen's capability approach focuses on building competency by assessing people's functions, freedom, and capabilities, and by helping them achieve goals they value (Gigler, 2005). This methodology views people as the goal, not as a means to another goal. A key element is freedom, not to choose between multiple bad options, but freedom that includes effective opportunities to live a good life (Robeyns, 2003). CA doesn't dictate a predetermined list of abilities that need to be developed, instead it suggests that communities should determine how they want to develop. This allows for a methodological flexibility appropriate to the different contexts that Aboriginal peoples live in. Bjorn-Soren Gigler (2005) believes this method is appropriate for indigenous communities because both share a holistic view and CA focuses on well-being, encouraging communities to set their own priorities, and stresses the process of over outcomes.

Suggested Reading: D.A. Clark & M. Qizilbash (2005), *Core Poverty, Basic Capabilities and Vagueness: An Application to the South African Context*; D. Dubois & W. Rothwell (2004), *Competency-Based Human Resource Management*; D. Gasper (2002), *Is Sen's Capability Approach an Adequate Basis for Considering Human Development?*; M. Nussbaum (2011), *Creating Capabilities the Human Development Approach*; I. Robeyns (2003), *The Capability Approach? An Interdisciplinary Introduction*; B. Williams (1987), *The Standard of Living: Interests and Capabilities*

Geothermal Heating, Demand-Side Energy, and Supply-Side Energy

To avoid confusion for students, this paper refers to Aki Energy's services as geothermal heating, or geothermal heating/cooling. This is intended to prevent confusion students may have with other forms of geothermal energy, such as that from geothermal power plants.

Supply-side energy projects are often able to sell energy to utility provider, such as Manitoba Hydro (Wood et al., 2015). Many of the green energy projects that people think of fall into this category, like solar panels, wind farms, etc.; unfortunately for Manitobans, Manitoba Hydro is the only possible buyer within the province, and they do not currently purchase green power at an economically viable price (Wood et al., 2015). The lack of support in Manitoba for supply-side renewable energy projects makes them a poor choice for social enterprises at this time.

Geothermal heating/cooling is a renewable demand-side energy project (demand-side management project), meaning that the project doesn't produce energy, but instead reduces or eliminates the need for energy (Gillingham, Newell, & Palmer, 2004). Geothermal heat pumps have been around since the 1940s and there are two broad categories: closed-loop and open-loop ("Geothermal Heat Pumps," n.d.). Closed-loop systems require a complete loop of plastic tubing be buried, and most circulate a solution of antifreeze through this tubing. Closed-loop systems come in three configurations: horizontal (usually used for residential buildings), vertical (used for larger buildings), and lake/pond (maybe the most cost-effective, but requires access to a body of water). Open-loop systems on the other hand do not require a complete loop, using water from a nearby water source as a heat exchange fluid. There are also a number of hybrid systems that can be created using various combinations of technology.

Another demand side renewable energy choice is solar energy which is often used as a way to heat water for use in the home. Solar thermal systems require a solar collector outside of the house, facing the sun, and a storage tank, which can be the existing hot water tank in the house (Wood et al., 2015). The solar collectors heat a fluid, often an antifreeze solution, and this fluid heats the hot water, which can then be used by the occupants. Additionally biomass systems offer ways to generate heat and/or electricity through the use of technology to efficiently burn wood, brush, or agricultural waste (Wood et al., 2015).

Manitoba Hydro, *The Energy Savings Act* (2012), Pay As You Save (PAYS), and Social Assistance

The Energy Savings Act has a number of provisions related to social enterprise, and specifically missions such Aki's green energy programs. Below are some of the key sections, but teachers are encouraged to refer to the entire document.

> *The Energy Savings Act* of Manitoba
>
> Purposes of the fund
>
> 5(1) The purposes of the funder to provide support for
>   a) programs, services and projects
>   i. that encourage and realize efficiency improvements in conservation and the
>   use of power, natural gas, other home heating fuels and, subject to subsec-
>   tion (3), water,

      ii. that encourage and realize the use of renewable energy sources, including Earth energy, and

     iii. that are designed to reduce greenhouse gas emissions that result from the use of home heating fuels other than natural gas in Manitoba;

  b) research and development of renewable energy sources and innovative energy technologies; and

  c) social enterprises, community organizations and other business who assist people or neighbourhoods to realize efficiency improvements and conservation in the use of power, natural gas, other home heating fuels and, subject to subsection (3), water.

Eligibility of social enterprises, etc.

5(2) To be eligible to receive support from the fund, the corporation must be satisfied that a social enterprise, community organization or other business would use the support to train and employ persons facing barriers to employment in order that they may acquire the skills needed to be employed in activities that realize efficiency improvements in conservation in the use of power, natural gas, other home heating fuels and, subject to subsection (3), water.

Collection of monthly charge

11(2) the corporation may collect the monthly charge in the same manner, and with the same priority, as it collects charges for power supplied by it under *The Manitoba Hydro Act*, and for that purpose, the provisions of *The Manitoba Hydro Act* that apply to the collection of accounts apply with necessary changes to the collection of a monthly charge.

These provisions empower and assist social enterprise in developing renewable technologies, and to train individuals in their installation and maintenance. *The Energy Savings Act* also enables Manitoba Hydro to assist in funding the installation of green technologies by allowing Manitoba Hydro to bear the upfront costs for clients, and to then receive monthly payments from those clients, resulting in Manitoba Hydro's Pay As You Save program. This empowers people, or communities, who are unable to pay the entire cost of installing agreed technology, to pay smaller monthly allotments over an extended period. Pay As You Save financing's monthly payments are less than estimated annual energy payments, ensuring savings, with the annual interest rate fixed at 3.9% (O.A.C.) for the first five years ("Power Smart PAYS Financing," n.d.). Manitoba Hydro has made sure that the financing is transferable, allowing homeowners to sell their homes without carrying the costs with them. Manitoba Hydro's restrictions include: a minimum financing of $500, maximum financing variable based on the number of upgrades, and the upgrades must be equal to levels recommended by Manitoba Hydro.

Canada's *Social Assistance Statistical Report: 2008* (Federal–Provincial–Territorial (FPT) Directors of Income Support, 2010), describes basic assistance on page 7 of the report:

> **Basic Assistance** — Basic assistance is generally intended to help with the cost of food, shelter, clothing, personal and household items, and may cover regularly recurring special needs ... Variables affecting the amount of shelter allowance payable include the number of beneficiaries in any given household, the type of living arrangement and the cost of fuel and utilities [emphasis added]. In some jurisdictions, the shelter amount varies depending on the season, location and relative remoteness of the area in question.

Though this description allows for some flexibility, social assistance programs in Manitoba have chosen to interpret fuel costs in a restrictive manner. They are willing to pay increased monthly costs for less efficient heating/cooling methods, as long as it qualifies as fuel/utilities, rather than installation costs for green technologies that reduce fuel consumption. This process is detrimental to both the environment and the communities they are meant to serve. By having such a narrow interpretation of their mandate they are increasing our reliance on more traditional forms of energy, with all that that entails. Yet the harm they do to Aboriginal communities is just as relevant. Rather than supporting technologies that reduce Aboriginal peoples reliance on social assistance they perpetuate the old paradigm of dependency, in which the government supplies enough for survival, but little more.

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