Now and Tomorrow **Excellence in Everything We Do** 



# **SKILLS AND PARTNERSHIP FUND (SPF)**

**GUIDE FOR THE COMPLETION OF THE FINAL PROJECT EVALUATION REPORT** 

**June 2013** 

#### **Purpose**

The Final Project Evaluation Report (Report) is a cumulative evaluation report that builds from the Semi-Annual Reports that have been completed and that seeks to cover the life of the project; from start to end. This Report is an opportunity to highlight your achievements, as well as to explain the challenges that were encountered while implementing your project. It also fulfills the requirement of Schedule D, Section 29 of your Contribution Agreement wherein it states that this Report is due no later than 120 days following the completion of the project.

The Report is structured in five (5) key areas and is intended to gather information that will assist in reporting on the implementation of the SPF program from a project or recipient perspective and may be used to inform the design of future Aboriginal labour market programming.

- Report on Expected Results: Please report on what results were achieved compared to your expected results at the beginning of the project. Please refer to Section 2 for the required table to be completed.
- <u>Partnerships</u>: Please provide details of your experience with the partner(s) or partnership component of the project and how they contributed to your project's outcome. Please refer to Section 3 for questions developed to assist in completing this section.
- <u>Innovations</u>: Section 4 is intended to describe existing and new innovative aspects of your project.
- Promising Practices and/or Lessons Learned: Section 5 seeks to highlight your project's successes and challenges and to be completed in a way that it may be shared with other Aboriginal organizations that deliver labour market programs. Please note that if your lesson learned or promising practice has been selected to be shared with other Aboriginal organizations, your consent will be attained before doing so.

How you approach this Report is up to your organization; however, it is encouraged that you undertake a systematic process so that both you and others will benefit from its findings and which can be used in supporting the intended purpose identified above. The Report should, at a minimum include information on all five sections included in this template and supporting data used in arriving at the observations and conclusions provided.

# GABRIEL DUMONT INSTITUTE TRAINING AND EMPLOYMENT

## **GDI** Aboriginal Apprenticeship Initiative

### **FINAL PROJECT EVALUATION REPORT**

APRIL 1, 2011 - MARCH 31, 2014

For the Skills and Partnership Fund

#### **Section 1: Organization and Project Information**

Contact Person: James Oloo

Address: 917 22<sup>nd</sup> Street West, Saskatoon SK S7M 0R9

Telephone: (306) 242-6070 Fax: (306) 683-3508

E-mail: james.oloo@gdite.gdins.org

Project Title: GDI Aboriginal Apprenticeship Initiative

#### **Section 2: Report on Expected Results**

Please complete the table below by including the expected results as described in Schedule A of your SPF agreement (column A – EXPECTED RESULTS / IMPACTS OF PROJECT). In column B (PROJECT RESULTS ACHIEVED), please include the results you actually achieved.

	EXPECTED RESULTS / IMPACTS OF PROJECT	PROJECT RESULTS ACHIEVED	RESULTS ACHIEVED AS PERCENTAGE OF EXPECTED RESULTS
Clients placed with employers		220	
Indentured clients	140	157	112%
Clients registered at Year II apprenticeship or higher	60	81	135%
Employer contracts signed	60	264 (135 unique employers who employed 220 clients; and 53 employers who did not employ but plan to do so in the future)	438%
Industries employing project clients	17	17	100%

#### 1. To what extent did you fulfill your objectives and meet your expected results?

The initial goals of the GDI Aboriginal Apprenticeship Initiative were having 120 Aboriginal apprentices indentured with the Saskatchewan Apprenticeship and Trades Certification Commission with at least 60 being level II apprentices; and partnerships with at least 60 individual companies in 17 different industries by January 31, 2014.

GDI Aboriginal Apprenticeship Initiative met and /or exceeded all the targets before January 2014. Partly because of this success, the SPF agreement between Employment and Social Development Canada and the Gabriel Dumont Institute Training and Employment was amended in October 2013. Under the new agreement, the targets were changed to at least 140 indentured apprentices and partnerships with at least 60 individual companies in 17 different industries by March 31, 2014.

By March 31, 2014, Gabriel Dumont Institute Training and Employment had placed a total of 220 Aboriginal clients (92 percent male and eight percent female; 51 percent Métis, 42 percent First Nations and seven percent non-specified Aboriginal identity) with employers and had met and /or exceeded all its new targets as follows. It had entered into 264 partnerships with employers<sup>1</sup> in 17 different industries; and 157 Aboriginal apprentices had been indentured with the Saskatchewan Apprenticeship and Trades Certification Commission (SATCC) with 81 apprentices registered at level II or higher.

In 2010, there were 8,924 apprentices in Saskatchewan who were registered with SATCC. Of these, 13 percent or 1,160 were of Aboriginal ancestry. Based on the 2010 numbers, the 157 Aboriginal apprentices that have been indentured through the GDI Aboriginal Apprenticeship Initiative has resulted in over 13 percent increase in Aboriginal apprentices in the province; and about two percent increase in the total number of apprentices in Saskatchewan. Many employers, especially small businesses, have expressed interest in continuing the partnership beyond the life of SPF.

More than just a positive story, the GDI Aboriginal Apprenticeship Initiative has numerous individual success stories of lives that have been changed; Aboriginal males and females who are on track to becoming certified journeypersons, as well as hopes and dreams for a better future. For personal stories about how the Skills and Partnership Fund apprenticeship project is changing lives of Aboriginal people please visit http://gdins.org/programs-and-courses/success-stories/

\_

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>1</sup> Note that 264 includes 135 unique employers who employed 220 clients, and 53 employers who entered into partnership with Gabriel Dumont Institute but did not offer employment to the clients – rather, they plan to do so in the future.

2. What factors contributed to your success or, if applicable, any shortfalls?

The success of the GDI Aboriginal Apprenticeship Initiative can be attributed to a number of factors. These include the Gabriel Dumont Institute Training and Employment system of regional service delivery centres with employment counsellors providing coherent and consistent approaches to working with clients. The initiative enabled GDI to build its internal capacity (for example through relevant in-service and professional development) regarding the apprenticeship program, labour market needs, employer and client recruitment, and partnership development. The increased capacity of GDI employment counsellors enabled an effective front-end process of employer and trainee selection and referral.

Further, Employment and Social Development Canada provided flexible funding agreement to enable support for this capacity development, as well as employer wage subsidy including MERCS, client assistance with tools and equipment, technical school tuition, books and living away allowance based on the circumstance of each client, and job coaching support.

GDI had a team of experienced and dedicated staff that included employment counsellors and job coaches. The Institute also enjoyed strong support of key stakeholders in the province such as community organizations, training and employment centres, employers, Government of Saskatchewan, and its project partners.

Based on the feedback we received from employer partners, a quick turnaround of about five days on partnership approvals was an important factor in the success of the project, particularly when dealing with smaller employers. In comparison, ASETS-funded project approvals took relatively longer periods.

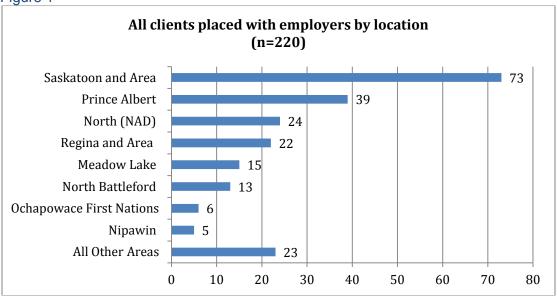
Compared to other Gabriel Dumont Institute federally funded programs, the SPF projects had more flexibility and scope in its funding guidelines. The funding envelope gave Gabriel Dumont Institute Training and Employment flexibility in how they were utilized across capacity building and employer and client supports. This allowed Gabriel Dumont Institute Training and Employment to build their counsellors' knowledge of apprenticeship, negotiate wage subsidy levels with employers and provide client assistance (in the form of books, tools, apprenticeship fees, etc.) based on individual employer and client needs.

3. If you could replicate this project, what would you do differently in order to better achieve or exceed expected results, reduce overall costs, improve efficiencies or better serve your clients?

Gabriel Dumont Institute Training and Employment placed 220 Aboriginal clients with employers across Saskatchewan. Of these, one half (51 percent) went to work in Saskatoon metropolitan area and Prince Albert (see Figure 1). In future, a similar

project would endeavour to place clients with employers at more (diverse) locations in the province.

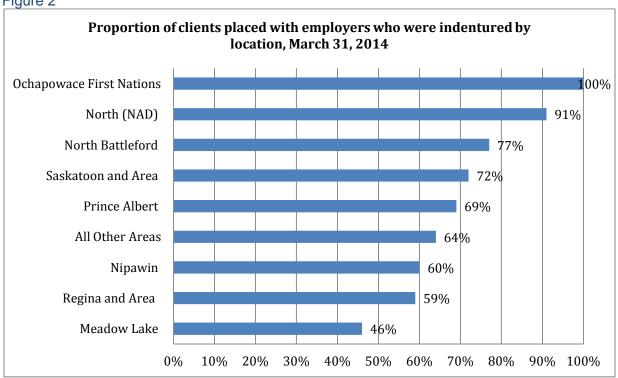




One of the most important variables during the SPF was the number of indentured clients. In the end, 157 of the 220 clients who were placed with employers were indentured – an 'indenture rate' of 71 percent.

The indenture rate was highest at the Ochapowace First Nations Reserve (100 percent) and at locations within the Northern Administrative District (NAD) (92 percent). It was also above average in North Battleford (77 percent) but significantly lower in the Regina metropolitan area (59 percent) and Meadow Lake (46 percent) as shown in Figure 2 below.

Figure 2



Any future apprenticeship program will need to investigate why some locations have higher client indenture rates (e.g., 100 percent at Ochapowace First Nations Reserve) while others have below average rates (e.g., 46 percent in Meadow Lake). This would lead to formulation of concrete steps to help bridge the gap in indenture rates between locations.

A great majority (92 percent) of the 220 clients who were placed with employers were male with only a small minority (eight percent) being female. Similarly, 92 percent of all indentured apprentices were male while eight percent were female (Figure 3). The indenture rate was similar for both male and female at 92 percent and eight percent respectively as shown in Figure 4. Put differently, male and female clients were equally likely to become indentured. If we could replicate the project, we would put more effort in recruiting Aboriginal females in to the apprenticeship program.

Figure 3

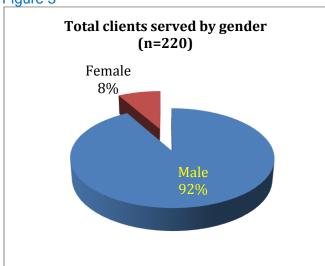
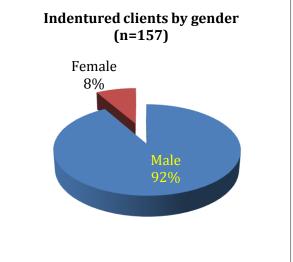


Figure 4



Of the 221 clients who were placed with employers, 63 had not been indentured as at March 31, 2014 when the SPF program ended. These include 47 individuals who had been laid off, fired or quit. If we could replicate this project, we could make effort to speak with and/or survey clients who leave apprenticeship program before they finish. Knowing their reasons for non-completion would enable us to better serve the clients and perhaps increase completion rates.

We would also pursue a closer working relationship with such organization as the Saskatoon Trades and Skills Centre and the Regina Trades and Skills Centre. Both these organizations often serve a relatively large proportion of Aboriginal trainees in their short pre-apprenticeship programs. The trainees at these centres receive essential skills orientation, practical hands-on trades training, SATCC recognition for training time, and connections with potential employers. They also tend to have a high rate of employment success. Partnering with these organizations is likely to further mutual goal of increasing the number of Aboriginal skilled employees and apprentices in the province.

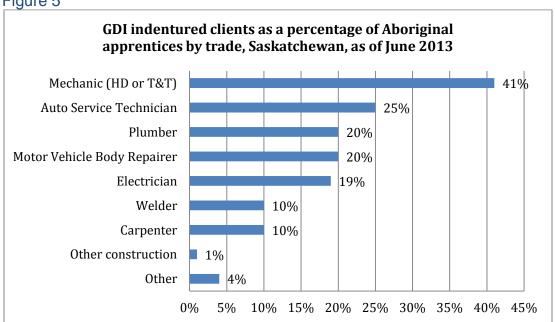
Gabriel Dumont Institute Training and Employment conducted monthly and semi-annual client and employer surveys. The surveys were designed to support relevant internally generated improvements to the apprenticeship project. They were also an essential part of the accountability requirement. However, a number of employers and clients raised issue with the amount of time and paperwork that was involved. Efforts could be undertaken to explore possible reductions of the amount and/or frequency of client and employer surveys in any future apprenticeship programs.

4. How did your project respond to labour market employment opportunities in your region? For example, what employment opportunities did your project respond to and what sector or industry did those opportunities exist in? Why was this an important sector to target in your community?

GDI Aboriginal Apprenticeship Initiative responds to labour market employment opportunities by working with our employer partners to better understand where their needs are and advising potential clients on the skills that are marketable in the labour market. Apprenticeship is primarily driven by employer demand, hence mismatch between skills taught and supplied and skills demanded in the labour market is less likely to occur.

The 157 clients who were indentured through the GDI Aboriginal Apprenticeship Initiative represent 13 percent of the total registered Aboriginal apprentices in Saskatchewan – taking 2010 as the base year. The proportion of GDI Aboriginal Apprenticeship Initiative indentured clients to the total number of apprentices in Saskatchewan registered by the SATCC is much higher for several trades including heavy-duty or truck-trailer mechanics (four in ten), auto service technicians (one in four), and motor vehicle body repairers (one in five) (see Figure 5). There are relatively few indentured GDI clients outside of the construction and mechanic trades.





#### **Section 3: Partnerships**

1. Describe the partners involved in this project and their contributions to the project using the table below. Please use the partnership letters you submitted with your project application as a basis for the *planned* columns. Please use the actual contributions in the *actual* columns.

Name of Partner Organization:	Partnership Contribution (in-kind);		
	Contribution Description	Planned:	Actual:
Dumont Technical Institute	Participation at partnership meetings	\$5,598	\$5,598
	Participation at information sessions	\$1,866	\$1,866
	Office space	\$54,500	\$54,500
	Furniture & Equipment	\$5,000	\$5,000

Name of Partner Organization:	Partnership Contribution (financial):		
	Contribution Description	Planned:	Actual:
Dumont Technical Institute	Heavy Equipment Truck and Transport Mechanic Program (HETT)	\$570,120	\$570,120

Name of Partner Organization:	Partnership Contribution (in-kind);		
	Contribution Description	Planned:	Actual:
Saskatchewan Ministry of Highways and Infrastructure	Participation at partnership meetings	\$5,598	\$5,598
	Participation at information sessions	\$1,866	\$1,866
	Participation at orientation sessions	\$1,500	\$1,500

Name of Partner Organization:	Partnership Contribution (in-kind);		
	Contribution Description	Planned:	Actual:
Saskatchewan Apprenticeship and Trades Certification	Participation at partnership meetings	\$5,598	\$5,598
Commission	Participation at information sessions	\$1,866	\$1,866

Name of Partner Organization:	Partnership Contribution (financial):		
	Contribution Description	Planned:	Actual:
Saskatchewan Apprenticeship and Trades Certification Commission	Tuition costs for each apprentice; course purchases	\$408,800 (based on 140 apprentices)	\$458,440

Other than the three project partners, the Gabriel Dumont Institute Training and Employment also partnered with employers to offer employment placements for the Aboriginal clients. Employer partners' key role in the partnership included offering employment and training opportunity to the clients, keeping tab on training hours, releasing clients to attend in-class technical training, and paying their wages.

2. How did the partners involved in your project contribute to the implementation and overall results of your project?

To effectively deliver the apprenticeship program, Gabriel Dumont Institute Training and Employment partnered with a number of stakeholders that can be grouped into two broad categories: employer partners who employed our Aboriginal apprenticeship clients, and project partners. Employers offer a key link to the industry and hands on training to the clients as they progress through apprenticeship levels to journeyperson certification. The project partners - Dumont Technical Institute, Saskatchewan Ministry of Highways and Infrastructure, and Saskatchewan Apprenticeship and Trades Certification Commission (SATCC) – have a history of partnership with Gabriel Dumont Institute. They share a commitment to the goal of increasing Aboriginal participation in apprenticeship/trades, and supported the Gabriel Dumont Institute Training and Employment quest to be an SPF holder from the beginning of the project when the Institute was preparing funding proposal. Further, all the three attended project partners' meetings and made in-kind contributions towards the project.

Dumont Technical Institute, like Gabriel Dumont Institute Training and Employment, is a branch of the Gabriel Dumont Institute. Dumont Technical Institute brought unique, culturally-relevant, and experience in offering community-based programming that is tied to labour market demands to the partnership. Its experience in delivering Adult Basic Education, Métis-specific technical skills training, as well as previous partnerships with Gabriel Dumont Institute Training and Employment made its contributions to the success of the GDI Aboriginal Apprenticeship Initiative very effective. A number of

Dumont Technical Institute graduates (especially those from Adult Basic Education and pre-employment programs) joined the GDI Aboriginal Apprenticeship Initiative. Dumont Technical Institute also offered furniture, equipment and office space and helped publicize the project at its training and career fairs.

Saskatchewan Ministry of Highways and Infrastructure has a long history of partnering with the Gabriel Dumont Institute Training and Employment. One example is their partnership in the Ministry's Aboriginal Apprenticeship Program. The Ministry supported Gabriel Dumont Institute Training and Employment's application for the Skills and Partnership Fund and has offered financial support, advice, and connection with prospective employers. The Ministry also offered employment placements to six of our clients.

Saskatchewan Apprenticeship and Trades Certification Commission (SATCC) and the Gabriel Dumont Institute Training and Employment have worked together previously to augment Aboriginal participation in apprenticeship and trades in the province. The Commission has been very supportive and continues to provide crucial help, both financial and otherwise, as well as insights that contributed towards the success of the GDI Aboriginal Apprenticeship Initiative. For example, SATCC not only paid for apprentices' in-class technical training, but it also informed us whenever a client had been indentured as an apprentice in the province.

All the project partners had unique strengths that they contributed towards the success of the Apprenticeship Initiative, and have also provided financial support to the program. Project partners met twice a year and their role included providing direction to the program, they discussed evaluation outcomes throughout the project, such as employer and client surveys, and recommended improvements and adaptation processes. The project partners also acted as goodwill ambassadors for the initiative and brought their expertise, information, resources and efforts to the partnership to help enhance the success of the project.

3. What proved to be challenging in working with the partner(s) to the project? What worked well in working with these same partner(s)?

We did not experience any significant challenges in our work with the project partners.

Since 2011 when GDI Aboriginal Apprenticeship Initiative was started, representatives of Gabriel Dumont Institute Training and Employment, SATCC, Saskatchewan Ministry of Highways and Infrastructure, and Dumont Technical, together with Ms. Marie Bannister from Service Canada in Saskatoon met seven times. The meetings were held on May 11, 2011; November 23, 2011; May 24, 2012; December 7, 2012; May 16, 2013; November 28, 2013, and June 27, 2014 at the Gabriel Dumont Institute Central Office in Saskatoon. Most of the same individuals represented the project partners at the meetings. These individuals get along well and have a healthy professional relationship with deep interest in the success of the GDI Aboriginal Apprenticeship Initiative.

At the end of each meeting participants completed surveys that were used to prepare Project Partners Partnership Value Reports as well us to improve our internal operations.

All the responses were positive and reaffirmed the crucial role played by each of the project partners. The project partners view the GDI Aboriginal Apprenticeship Initiative as being important in the quest to enhance Aboriginal participation in apprenticeship, and that their partnership with Gabriel Dumont Institute Training and Employment has been an effective way to achieve that goal.

Other than the seven meetings, Gabriel Dumont Institute Training and Employment often communicated with the partners by email, phone, and in-person. The open, robust and frequent communication led to a very good relationship between Gabriel Dumont Institute Training and Employment and the project partners.

Working with employer partners had its challenges. These can be grouped into two main categories: communication and finances. Both were mainly experienced during the earlier part of the project. A number of employers informed Gabriel Dumont Institute Training and Employment that they found the reporting requirements "challenging," "time-consuming," and "involving a lot of paper work." Employers and clients were expected to complete monthly and semi-annual surveys; and some employers noted that this was too much reporting.

Also, a few employers mentioned financial concerns. The concerns were due to the fact that the project allowed a limited number of clients per business for the full wage subsidy whereas some employers wanted more clients with higher or full wage subsidies. As well, the amount of financial assistance to employers in the form of wage subsidies decreased with year of apprenticeship. Thus, for example, the subsidy was higher for a level one apprentice and was reduced for subsequent levels. Some employers suggested that wage subsidy should be the same for all levels of apprentices. We told them that we did not think this was the best approach.

#### **Section 4: Innovations**

For the purposes of SPF, "innovation" is defined as

"new" systems, supports, practices or clients that an organization (i.e., project holder) has not previously had the opportunity to "test", combine or use in its unique organizational environment.

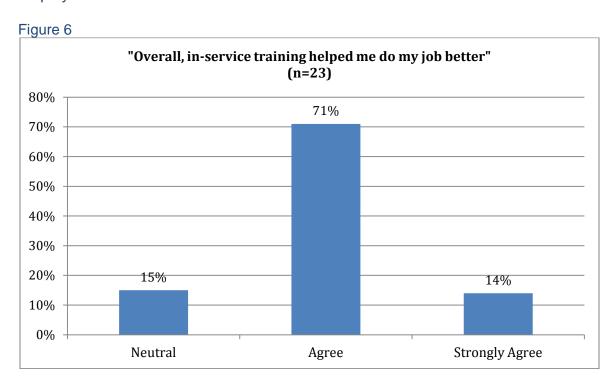
This could mean replicating the same or a similar set of interventions previously utilized but targeting a new type of client or sector. Or, it could mean developing a new management system or set of internal practices that has created efficiencies that improved service delivery or assisted in achieving greater value for money for clients.

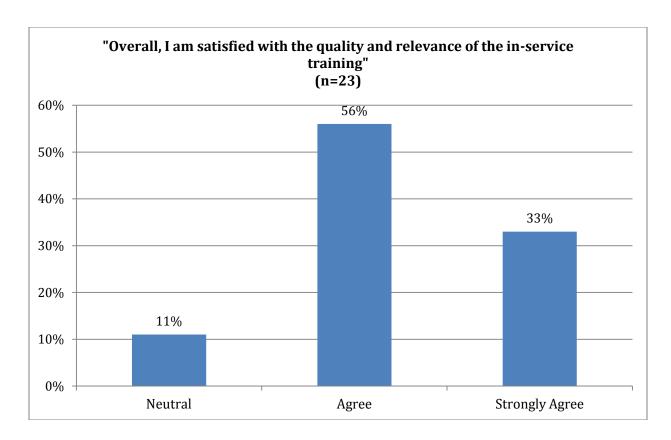
1. Based on the definition above, describe how your project was innovative.

Capacity building in the form of in-service training of our staff who were working directly with the clients and with employers with respect to such areas as effective ways to recruit clients and employers, communication strategies, and job coaching. In a survey of the Institute's employment counsellors, 85 percent of respondents indicated that the in-service training sessions helped them do their work better and 89 percent agreed or strongly agreed that overall, they were satisfied the quality and relevance of the inservice training (Figure 6 and Figure 7). When asked for additional comments, employment counsellors' comments included:

- "Program was a great success. Knowledge of apprenticeship has increased within GDI system."
- "The program has increase Aboriginal apprenticeship awareness among GDI staff."
- "This is just the 'beginning' of apprenticeship for GDI."

Clients and employer partners were also consistently satisfied with the help they received from the Gabriel Dumont Institute Training and Employment as indicated in the surveys. That satisfaction was likely heightened by the in-service training by the employment counsellors.





Requirement by Service Canada that we prepare reports (including semi-annual reports, quarterly reports, partnership value reports, etc) proved very innovative. The process involved conducting interviews and surveys with various stakeholders including clients, employers, and project partners. The surveys and interviews proved very useful as a means of internal evaluation which enable us to make relevant adjustments throughout the tenure of the program. Also, Gabriel Dumont Institute Training and Employment had a full time research position for the SPF project. As a result, we were able to access latest research and follow current debates on Aboriginal apprenticeship programs, experiences of similar organizations and best practices they had adopted. This helped us stay more current and adopt innovative approaches to achieving the goals of the project.

#### **Section 5: Promising Practices and/or Lessons Learned**

- 1. What would you describe as your two greatest accomplishments in implementing this project?
- Providing job matching and placement for 220 Aboriginal clients.
- Building internal capacity to enhance the success of current (and future) project(s).

 What led to these accomplishments? What can you attribute as contributing in achieving success?

Placing 220 Aboriginal clients with employers was one of the project's main accomplishments. Many of the clients either did not have jobs or were doing unskilled/minimum pay jobs that are vulnerable to economic down turn. The project thus enabled 220 people to get on their paths to journeyperson certification in their chosen areas as full time employees who are training in designated trades while at the same time earning wages. Employment placements provided opportunities for the clients to gain insights into apprenticeship, work with journeypersons in their chosen trades, and build their confidence.

A number of Gabriel Dumont Institute Training and Employment employees in the project were hired specifically for the SPF initiative. The project was started from the scratch so to speak. We had a rather slow beginning recruiting Aboriginal clients and having employers buy in to the project. In the end, almost 300 clients expressed interest in the project of which we placed 220 clients with employers and were able to provide intervention or advice to those who did not meet the requirements to join the project.

While there is cost attributable to apprenticeship non-completion such as direct costs to the Gabriel Dumont Institute Training and Employment and its partners and indirect costs in the form of forgone earnings, it is possible that even the clients who left the project before completing their training are better off than when they started.

Gabriel Dumont Institute Training and Employment has been able to build and/ or improve capacity among its employees as a result of this project. We offered at least four in-service training at each GDI service delivery centre across the province. The training covered areas such as client recruitment and establishing employer partnerships. Unlike in other skills programs offered by the Institute, the SPF project prepared and administered client and employer surveys, conducted self evaluation and prepared reports and was open to ongoing improvement. We prepared a directions/best practices document that will help apprenticeship programming in post-SPF era. Further, the project benefitted from expertise of the three project partners – Dumont Technical Institute, Saskatchewan Ministry of Highways and Infrastructure, and the Saskatchewan Apprenticeship and Trades Certification Commission.

- 2. What would you describe as your two greatest challenges in implementing this project?
- Recruiting qualified clients, and
- Relatively fewer job placement opportunities in some parts of the province.

O Why were these challenges?

We experienced the challenge of recruiting qualified clients to meet employer demands for workers. Many employers showed preference for clients who had some skills or prior experience in the trade. A requirement for acceptance in the apprenticeship initiative as a client was high school diploma. Many potential clients who expressed interest in the project had not completed Grade 12. There was also a challenge in partnering with companies with employee unions that have stipulations on hiring.

Further, there was a significant disparity in employment placements across various locations in Saskatchewan. Just over one half (51 percent) of the clients who were placed with employers were in Saskatoon metropolitan area and Prince Albert. However, there were relatively limited job placement opportunities in some location of the province and challenges of mobility/relocation by potential clients due to such factors as family and transportation. Most of our clients are in their 20s and 30s. Many of them have young families and financial responsibilities and so if work is not secured within a reasonable amount of time, some of the clients often abandon the apprenticeship initiative.

How did you adjust to these changing circumstances?

Initially, we turned away those who did not meet the requirements. But as their number increased, we worked with Saskatchewan Apprenticeship and Trades Certification Commission and Dumont Technical Institute to enable the clients without qualifications meet the requirements for the program. Eleven of such clients earned their high school diploma through the Dumont Technical Institute then joined the apprenticeship program. A few clients who had Adult Basic Education Level III with 'modified' or 'general' classes in minimum required subjects took pre-employment training and /or qualifying examination prescribed by the SATCC.

To increase our client recruitment, more work was done to create awareness of the Apprenticeship Initiative and to enable potential clients learn more about apprenticeship as a career pathway. Thus, we organized open houses, career fairs, and dedicated more effort to social media and online employment forums such as saskjobs.ca and Indeed.ca. We also reached out to high school students and other Gabriel Dumont Institute clients/students.

3. What specific "promising practices" and or "lessons learned" would you like to share with other Aboriginal organizations?

A "promising practice" is an approach or action that has produced successful outcomes for your organization. Internal

assessment by the organization has indicated that the practice holds potential value for other organizations.

A "lesson learned" identifies and documents opportunities, risks, and issues of projects and activities in order to encourage or avoid the practice in the future. Lessons learned can highlight strengths or weaknesses in preparation, design, and implementation that affect performance, outcomes, and impact.

Promising practices included conducting evaluation using such tools as surveys and interviews with clients and other stakeholders. The evaluations and on-going research into apprenticeship programming, as well as highlighting the successes of individual clients who are excelling in the project enabled us get frequent feedback and articulate ways to provide timely correction and improvement.

A key lesson learned was with respect to client and employer partner recruitment. In both cases, our earlier approach involved placing advertisements in newspapers, industry magazines, and radio; as well as participating in job fairs and apprenticeship/trades forums. We started seeing significant growth after we changed our approach to include social media (especially Facebook, kijiji.ca, and online job sites such as Saskjobs.ca), and walking into organizations and talking to potential employers and answering their questions. This was effective method especially with employers who had few or no Aboriginal apprentices. Liaising with Aboriginal communities and giving presentations at the community centres was also helpful.