

2007/2008



**Regroupement des centres  
d'amitié autochtones du Québec**

**[ANNUAL ACTIVITY REPORT]**

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2007/2008

# Annual Activity Report



Regroupement des centres  
d'amitié autochtones du Québec





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Regroupement des centres  
d'amitié autochtones du Québec

## WORD FROM THE PRESIDENT 2007/2008

Kwe, Bonjour, Greetings;

As president, it is with great pride that I speak on behalf of the Regroupement des centres d'amitié autochtones du Québec (RCAAQ), in this privileged moment of gathering. What a pleasure it is to meet in this enchanting site, in the heart of the beautiful Lanaudière region, that is the region of our colleagues and friends from the Lanaudière Friendship Centre. I take this opportunity to thank them for their friendly and warm greeting.

Our general assembly is, somewhat, our yearly evaluation. It is you, dear members, who decide if the work accomplished during the year, has lived up to your expectations and your needs. Our annual general assembly is a democratic space that permits to the Friendship Centre representatives, to express, share and transmit their preoccupations, opinions and ideas. This yearly meeting is always stimulating and enriching, and is also a time to reflect.

Our 2007-2008 activity report reflects the efforts of the RCAAQ's team. The main motivation for this collective effort is the belief that our actions contribute in *making a difference*. *Making a difference* means that constant efforts must be made so that things will change and evolve. It is fighting on a daily basis, poverty and social exclusion. It is also promoting equity and social justice for all. *Making a difference*, means mobilizing the community around a societal ideal. But above all, it means spreading Aboriginal pride – Anishinabe, Eeyou, Inuit, Innu or Atikamekw in Val-d'Or, Senneterre, Montreal, La Tuque, Chibougamau, Joliette, Sept-Iles and Quebec; towns enriched by the presence of First Nations.

After nearly 40 years of existence in Quebec, the Friendship Centres have become places that reduce the gap between cities and communities, between urbanity and the land. In response to Aboriginal peoples increasingly expressed will to assert themselves and to exercise power over their lives, the Friendship Centres have evolved into a place for expressing Aboriginal identity and the pride of First Nations, Inuit and Metis people living in cities. Together, Aboriginal people form diversified communities that battle in total solidarity with their sisters and brothers issued from the First Nations of Quebec. The RCAAQ has given a new pulse to our movement, with its active presence, its continuous action and a devoted and dedicated team.

This new urban dynamic is timidly recognized but is continuing its path. Admittedly, the growing presence of Aboriginals in cities creates a long desired debate on the issue. As community leaders, the Friendship Centres now have a stronger presence in the discussions addressing the challenge of coexistence and the organisation of services for off-reserve Aboriginal citizens. These are significant but surmountable challenges. In the course of the past year, the RCAAQ was there to support the Friendship Centres in their mission and to better position our organization, both with the Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal spheres of the province of Quebec.

In daily activities, our actions might seem trivial but, when looking at our annual activity report and adding up all our team's accomplishments, we realise that these actions carry a message of friendship and mutual aid. It is through communication and sharing that the motivation to go on stems, together, *to make a difference*.

I wish us a long continuity in our common efforts to improve the quality of life of urban Aboriginal peoples, to promote our culture and for the bringing people together efforts. I take this opportunity to thank all of you, dear members, for your trust. I would also like to express to all of the RCAAQ's team, my gratitude and appreciation for the work accomplished. Thank you to Josée Goulet, Amélie Lainé, Patricia Auclair, Julie Courtois-Girard, Claudine Gros-Louis and Danielle Larose. We are privileged to be able to rely on you!

Kitci meegwetc,

A good summer to everyone!

Respectfully submitted,



Edith Cloutier

Présidente

## WORD FROM THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR 2007/2008

Dear members and partners,

I am very pleased to present you with our 2007-2008 activities report. The RCAAQ is continuing to carry out the strategic positioning that it began more than four years ago for developing a collective entrepreneurial culture. As you know, the Quebec Native Friendship Centre Movement puts the human being at the heart of its decision-making, and it is within this spirit that the social economy corresponds to our type of entrepreneurship.

This activities report is presented according to our different components – Programs, Youth, Partnerships and Local Development – all in terms of the objective to meet our mission, which is:

***“Promote the rights and interest of Aboriginal people in the urban setting, by supporting the Native Friendship Centres in their actions to improve the quality of life of Aboriginal people, promote culture, and build bridges between peoples.”***

Our mission is given shape at two levels. The RCAAQ assists the Quebec Native Friendship Centres by supporting, among other things, the development and implementation of province-wide projects and programs. The RCAAQ also supports its members in carrying out their mission by providing them with technical advice, support and resources, by conducting representation activities on behalf of the Centres and by establishing partnerships at the provincial and national levels. It encourages joint action and exchanges between the members of the Quebec First Nations and the various government authorities. Finally, the RCAAQ ensures communication services for its members in Canada’s two official languages.

In short, the RCAAQ wants more than ever before to be a structure for joint action, reflection and support for the Quebec Native Friendship Centres. It is also the privileged interlocutor with governments (federal, provincial, First Nations) and Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal institutions concerning urban Aboriginal issues in Quebec.

### ***Innovation and development: Bringing creativity to the forefront***

In a context where the urban Aboriginal populations are increasing, along with their needs and level of complexity, it has become essential to innovate in the delivery of services, not just to adequately meet the needs of our communities but also to plan for meeting future needs.

Focused on developing the movement and ensuring its sustainability, the RCAAQ carried out numerous activities during the year and successfully tackled the major challenges as set out in our overall strategic direction:

***“Improving the quality of life of urban Aboriginal people is conditional upon the deployment of efforts to combat poverty and social exclusion.”***

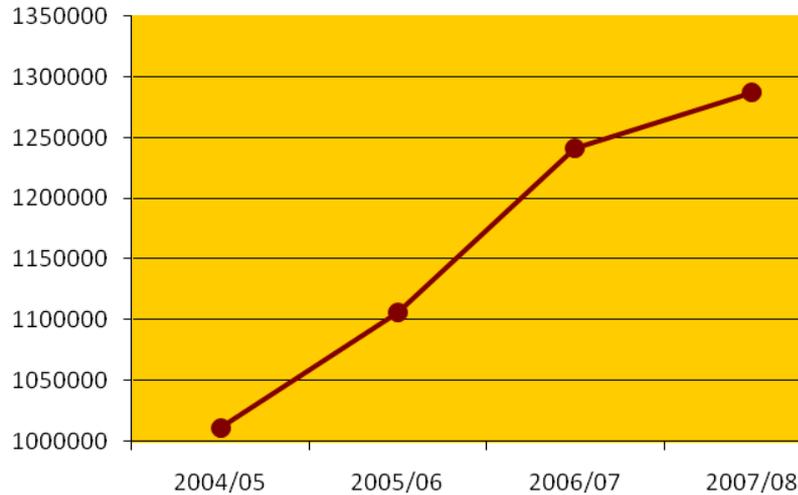
On one hand, we are doing so by ensuring the implementation of joint commitments reached with the Quebec and Canadian governments at the First Nations Socio-Economic Forum, and of alliances formed with civil society. On the other hand, we are doing so by supporting the Quebec Native Friendship Centres according to their realities.

In this sense, the social economy represents an exceptional economic development tool for the Native Friendship Centres. It generates wealth, in both economic and social terms. It contributes to the enhancement of collective wealth by creating sustainable and rewarding jobs, increasing people’s employability levels, developing and delivering culturally-adapted services, and assisting in the fight against poverty and social exclusion. Finally, the values inherent to the social economy match those of the First Nations.

We must add another challenge to the above ones, namely that of having to navigate our way through a rapidly-evolving environment. To benefit from effective strategies, we must plan for and manage changes rather than undergo them. To do so, we must show strong creativity and innovation, at the same time trusting in one another; trust is a key element in change management.

***Determining where we stand: Evaluating the results of our efforts***

To continue moving forward, and especially to meet the needs and expectations of the Native Friendship Centres, we must assess the results of our work and analyze the impact of our actions. From there, we can define our strategies. Every community movement has moments of struggle and moments of reflection. After four (4) years of sustained efforts, it is important that we carry out a qualitative evaluation of the work accomplished by the Regroupement.

**RCAAQ income: Increase of more than \$275 000**

The table **RCAAQ income: Increase of more than \$275,000** shows that the income of the RCAAQ has grown during the past three years:

<b>RCAAQ income: Increase of more than \$275,000</b>	
Fiscal year	Income
2004/2005	1 011 000 \$
2005/2006	1 106 000 \$
2006/2007	1 241 000 \$
2007/2008	1 287 000 \$

In this context, we must mention the reorganization of our human resources, which led to the revision, improvement and/or creation of work positions. Our work team now has five (5) internal resources and one (1) external resource.

The Quebec Native Friendship Centre Movement also welcomed two new Centres, which have been recognized by the National Association of Friendship Centres (NAFC).

Furthermore, in recent years, the RCAAQ participated in certain consultations held by the Quebec government and published its own documents such as the following: *Needs Assessment of the Aboriginal People in Sept-Iles*, *Needs Assessment of the Aboriginal People in Montreal*, and *Needs Assessment of Urban Aboriginal People concerning Psychosocial Services*. We also published a document on work in literacy being done at the Native Friendship Centres. These publications have allowed us to better identify the needs according to the realities at each Centre, and their promotion and distribution have allowed us to build stronger awareness concerning the mission of the Native Friendship Centres.

Throughout the year, we used various means to succeed in the above actions, e.g., sharing of information, training and knowledge transfer made possible thanks to our partnership with the *Chantier de l'économie sociale* and CSMO ÉS. We are thus now ready to evaluate the social and financial impacts of the Quebec Native Friendship Centre Movement.

### ***Planning our actions for greater effectiveness and efficiency***

#### **2008-2009 Action Plan**

To ensure that we achieve our objectives, the RCAAQ team developed a 24-month action plan for each component in the work of the RCAAQ. I wish here to mention here the commitment and dedication of our team, which again this year devoted its energies to the task of meeting our mission. My congratulations go to our exceptional work team!

It is essential that we renew our practices in order to promote healthy governance and effective management, all guided by clear decision-making. In this regard, it is the role of the RCAAQ to properly equip the Native Friendship Centre network and to encourage good governance and management practices.

Our network should also benefit from the support of social economy initiatives in the work to achieve its mission, strengthen its capacities and ensure its development and sustainability.

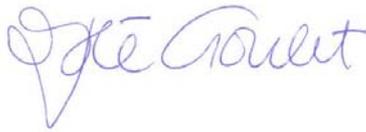
### Consolidating our gains

2008-2009 promises to be a year devoted to consolidating our Movement, both internally and externally.

- Our work team: Increase our expertise and make it available to the Native Friendship Centres;
- Our network: Renew our associative life and governance;
- Our partnerships: Update the implementation of our agreements at the provincial level and facilitate decentralization at the local level.

In closing, I wish to thank you for the trust you have shown me.

*Your Executive Director*



Josée Goulet

## 2007/2008: A YEAR OF INNOVATION AND ACTION

### A LOOK BACK AT OUR PROGRAMS THIS PAST YEAR

The Native Friendship Centres possess recognized expertise in the delivery of programs and services; as such, they form part of the social, economic and cultural infrastructure not only of urban Aboriginal communities, but also of Quebec municipalities. They deploy daily efforts to meet the needs of Aboriginal people who live in or go to the urban centres. Indeed, through their work, the Native Friendship Centres offer programs and services that are culturally adapted to a growing population with diverse needs. It is all the more necessary to make sure we can maintain and develop these programs and services, and consolidate the network, seeing that the urban Aboriginal population is the fastest growing segment of the overall population in Canada, according to the 2006 census of Statistics Canada (NAFC press release of January 15)

The Regroupement des centres d'amitié autochtones (RCAAQ) has the role to support the Native Friendship Centre network in Quebec by ensuring, among other things, the development and implementation of province-wide projects and programs and by providing consulting, support and technical resources. Furthermore, as a provincial association, the RCAAQ administers the *Aboriginal Friendship Centre Program* (AFCP) and its *Official Languages* component, as well as the *Urban Multi-Purpose Aboriginal Youth Centre* (UMAYC) program. In general, the RCAAQ supports the Native Friendship Centres in their delivery of programs, services and activities.

It is within this context that the RCAAQ and the Native Friendship Centre of Montreal (NFCM) signed, during 2007-2008, a final special bilateral agreement and jointly determined the conditions for implementing the agreement. An interim management committee was created in accordance with the final special bilateral agreement and the conditions for its implementation. This committee is co-chaired by the President of the NFCM and the Executive Director of the RCAAQ. They are being assisted by various expert resources for purposes of guiding and supporting the activities of the NFCM throughout the recovery process.

Indeed, the RCAAQ deployed its efforts and expertise on behalf of the NFCM throughout the year to support the Centre in its recovery. This close collaboration has allowed the RCAAQ to further enhance its support tools for administrative and financial management and governance, as well as broaden its expertise to assist Native Friendship Centres experiencing difficulties. The AFCP ensures core funding for almost all the Native Friendship Centres in Quebec. However, the Centre d'amitié autochtone de Lanaudière (CAAL), which is a new Centre, and the Native Friendship Centre of Sept-Îles (NFCSI), which is a Centre under development, cannot count on financial support from the AFCP and must turn to other funding sponsors to expand their range of programs and services and ensure their development. The RCAAQ therefore also has the role to accompany and support these Centres according to their needs. In this regard, the RCAAQ and the NFCSI signed a services agreement to support the Centre's development, ensure the implementation of best financial practices at the NFCSI, and

allow the Centre to benefit from the support of the professional human resources of the RCAAQ.

As part of its support, accompaniment and consulting work, the RCAAQ developed its *Guide to best practices in management and governance*. The RCAAQ intervenes in a variety of situations, e.g., to assist Centres in difficulty, those under development, and those that want to improve their management and governance. The guide is a tool that will evolve over time to help strengthen the capacities of the Native Friendship Centres.

The RCAAQ recommended AFCP funding in fiscal year 2008-2009 for the CAAL as well as for the NFCSI. In this way, it is demonstrating, to the National Association of Friendship Centres (NAFC) and Canadian Heritage, Quebec's needs with regard to the core funding which is necessary for developing our network. The RCAAQ also approved the NAFC membership request by the NFCSI, which will be welcomed as a member of the Native Friendship Centre Movement this coming summer at the annual general meeting in Quebec City.

### Urban Multi-Purpose Aboriginal Youth Centres (UMAYC)

The UMAC program allows the Native Friendship Centres in Quebec to offer Aboriginal youths a wide range of social, cultural and recreational activities. The UMAC projects provide various training and awareness-building activities to Aboriginal youths, and organize workshops to foster their leadership skills and community engagement.



Once again this year, the seven UMAC projects sponsored by the Native Friendship Centres provided urban Aboriginal youths with a meeting place and allowed them to maintain contact with their Aboriginal culture, values and traditions. By promoting intergenerational links and the personal development of urban Aboriginal youths, the UMAC projects are preparing our leaders of tomorrow.

However, given the limited funding and the increasing needs of youths, the Native Friendship Centres must show creativity and take advantage of the different opportunities that come their way.

In addition, as part of the management of the AFCP and the UMAC program, the RCAAQ programs coordinator and accountant made their annual visits to the UMAC projects and the Native Friendship Centres. This annual series of visits allows the RCAAQ to stay informed about the latest developments within our Movement and to offer its support and consulting to the Centres.

## Official Languages component of the Aboriginal Friendship Centre Program

Through its management of the *Official Languages* component of the AFCP, the RCAAQ provides the network with communications in the two official languages. In so doing, it manages the flow of requests for translation and revision of documents, and oversees the distribution of these documents to members and partners. The RCAAQ also organizes simultaneous interpretation services for the various meetings of the RCAAQ and the NAFC.

For the different national meetings held during the year, the RCAAQ ensured that simultaneous interpretation services were offered, in order to promote the participation of Francophone delegates and also to make the network more aware of the linguistic reality in Quebec. The RCAAQ also ensured that all studies and researches that it published, as the provincial association in Quebec, were available in French and English.

The RCAAQ takes care to ensure rigorous management of the *Official Languages* component. Despite its limited funding, the RCAAQ has demonstrated efficiency in managing this component. Indeed, the RCAAQ possesses the expertise and the knowledge necessary for managing linguistic services in ways that maximize the available funding.

Finally, the RCAAQ will be continuing its collaboration with and support of the Native Friendship Centres in Quebec in order to effectively meet their various needs. Similarly, the RCAAQ will continue its representation efforts at the national level to defend Quebec's interests within the Movement.

## An improved UMAC

Aware of the lack of funding available for the UMAC projects, the RCAAQ is always on the lookout for funding to improve the services offered to youths. Therefore, the RCAAQ has been working to implement the commitments concluded with a number of provincial government departments at the First Nations Socio-Economic Forum held in 2006. The RCAAQ and the Ministère de l'Éducation, du Loisir et du Sport (MELS) are collaborating on a commitment made concerning the homework assistance services of the Native Friendship Centre network.



In this regard, the RCAAQ and the MELS reached an agreement for developing a program framework to standardize and evaluate the homework assistance services offered to the Native Friendship Centre movement. The RCAAQ and the Native Friendship Centre of Val-d'Or are collaborating in the work to develop this tool. The program framework will establish evaluation measures for identifying the strengths and weaknesses of the homework assistance services, with the results used to structure and standardize the services in ways that will promote learning, self-esteem and feelings of pride among Aboriginal youths.

This process is essential for demonstrating the social impacts of homework assistance services on children, their families and our communities, and for negotiating the renewal of an agreement with the MELS to continue offering these services.

### Youth in Action initiative

Follow-up was conducted on other commitments made at the First Nations Socio-Economic Forum, including one on the socio-occupational integration of urban Aboriginal youths. The Ministère de l'Emploi et de la Solidarité sociale (MESS) made the commitment to study the possibility of signing collaboration and partnership agreements with the Native Friendship Centres. In the fall of 2007, the RCAAQ presented the MESS with two pilot projects concerning the needs of the off-reserve clientele aged 18 to 24. These projects were developed by the Native Friendship Centres of Val-d'Or and La Tuque under the *Youth in Action* initiative. This initiative has also led to a provincial project coordinated by the RCAAQ.

These three projects involve the implementation of a program for culturally adapted services to promote the social integration of urban Aboriginal youths. By 2010, the RCAAQ estimates that all the Native Friendship Centres will be able to support Aboriginal youths aged 18 to 24 in returning to school, joining the labour market or starting up their own businesses.



On the basis of the preliminary analyses by the MESS and the improvements made by the Centres and the RCAAQ, the three projects which were submitted fully meet the program's requirements and should begin in May 2008. The Native Friendship Centre of Val-d'Or, the Centre d'amitié autochtone de La Tuque and the RCAAQ will be able to take advantage of this initiative, which directly meets the needs of urban youths, and will be able to do so in direct collaboration with the youth job centres and local employment centres in their respective regions!

### The Youths in the Movement

From the perspective of training our youths for future leadership and giving them the tools they need for that role, the RCAAQ held a strategic planning session with youth representatives from eight Native Friendship Centres. More than 20 youths came together to speak about the concerns and aspirations of urban Aboriginal youths.

This joint reflection allowed the youths in the Native Friendship Centre Movement to revise the vision and mission of the Urban Aboriginal Youth Council of Quebec and to redefine their common values of respect and solidarity. The first joint reflection of this kind took place in 2001 at Senneterre.

In addition, the youths defined two major strategic directions, one socio-political and the other socio-cultural. Thanks to this strategic planning, the RCAAQ was able to develop a youth action plan for addressing the priorities of urban Aboriginal youths and for continuing its efforts to consolidate the Urban Aboriginal Youth Council of Quebec.

## STRATEGIC PLANNING OF THE URBAN ABORIGINAL YOUTH COUNCIL OF QUEBEC

**VISION:** The urban youths in the Native Friendship Centre Movement are proud of their identity. They are mobilized and have the means to bring about improvements in their quality of life by influencing the social, economic and political decisions that affect them.

**MISSION:** The mission of the Urban Aboriginal Youth Council of Quebec is to mobilize urban Aboriginal youths and to advocate on behalf of their collective interests.

### VALUES OF THE RCAAQ

RESPECT	Respect of oneself and others through understanding and inclusion, regardless of culture and language, free from any form of prejudice and in a spirit of harmony and accessibility.
SOLIDARITY	Links joining together the members of the Youth Council and urban Aboriginal youths who, through awareness of their collective interests, have developed a sense of reciprocal obligations, sharing, listening, mutual support, engagement and the feeling of being part of a family.

### STRATEGIC DIRECTIONS

**Socio-political direction:** Communication and recognition

The Urban Aboriginal Youth Council of Quebec will be recognized as the spokesperson for urban Aboriginal youths by local authorities, government entities (Aboriginal, Canada, Quebec) and youth organizations.

**Socio-cultural direction:** Capacity building

The Urban Aboriginal Youth Council of Quebec will improve its competencies and capacities, strengthen its membership, and share its cultural, social and political knowledge with youths, all in order to influence the decisions affecting us and to ensure the Council's sustainability.

## 2007-2008, A YEAR FOR CONSOLIDATING NEW PARTNERSHIPS

2007-2008 saw the RCAAQ build new partnerships as part of the work to accomplish its mission.



First of all, our collaboration with the *Union des Municipalités du Québec* (UMQ) will allow us to set the foundations for innovative common projects and to make a positive contribution to the social transformation of the municipalities that are benefiting from the dynamic work of the Native Friendship Centres. Ratified on September 21, 2007, this partnership agreement<sup>1</sup> also invites the municipalities in which there is an Aboriginal presence and the Native Friendship Centres to become partners for projects that will promote harmonious cohabitation of citizens.

Urban Aboriginal youths are also essential partners who are adding energy to the Native Friendship Centre Movement in Quebec. Following the participation of the Movements' youths in the fifth edition of the Summer School of the *Institut du Nouveau Monde*, the RCAAQ naturally wanted to become associated with this organization in order to promote the civic participation of urban Aboriginal youths. The *Institut du Nouveau Monde* and the RCAAQ are planning to join forces to provide urban Aboriginal youths in Quebec with the tools that will allow them to take part in the debates and changes surrounding our society.



In addition, the natural and longstanding collaboration with *Quebec Native Women* will be consolidated in the near future by means of a relationship framework agreement intended to give concrete form to our common actions for improving the well-being of Aboriginal people.



FEMMES AUTOCHTONES DU QUÉBEC INC.  
QUEBEC NATIVE WOMEN INC.

### Common actions with our partners

Further to establishing these new collaborations, the RCAAQ has maintained close relations with its existing partners.

The *Dialog Network* and the RCAAQ are working together on various projects which involve reflecting on the situation of urban Aboriginal people in Quebec. Poverty, identity and the current issues affecting urban Aboriginal people in Quebec are among the topics that Dialog studied during the year in collaboration with the Native Friendship Centres and the RCAAQ, as their provincial association.



<sup>1</sup> See Appendix 1 for a signed copy of the partnership agreement.

In 2006, the RCAAQ signed a *Declaration of Friendship* with the *Confédération des syndicats nationaux* (CSN) for the purpose of promoting links among the Native Friendship Centres and the central councils of the CSN, as part of the work to combat racism and poverty. With three **Declarations of Friendship** signed by the Native Friendship Centres of Val-d'Or, Senneterre and Sept-Îles) and the CSN central councils in the Côte-Nord and Abitibi-Témiscamingue-Nord-du-Québec regions, we may affirm that the different cultures in Quebec are working positively towards better mutual understanding and cohabitation.



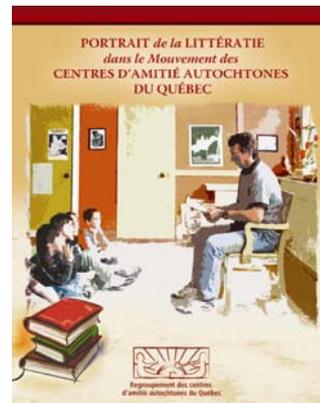
For each of the mutual commitments reached at the First Nations Socio-Economic Forum in 2006, partnerships were formed at the level of civil society and at the federal and provincial government levels. Close follow-up during the year made it possible to give concrete form to common projects with the Ministère de la Santé et des Services sociaux, Health Canada, the Ministère de l'Emploi et de la Solidarité sociale, the Ministère de l'Éducation, du Loisir et du Sport, the Secrétariat aux affaires autochtones, the Office of the Federal Interlocutor for Métis and Non-Status Indians, and the Secrétariat à la jeunesse.

Funding partners have also contributed to various RCAAQ initiatives aimed at improving the quality of life of urban Aboriginal people in Quebec. For example, the Public Health Agency of Canada is a partner for *Mobilizing our Support!*, a project which has the objective of ensuring better knowledge of the needs for psychosocial services at the Native Friendship Centres, while the New Horizons for Elder program and the Réseau de l'action bénévole du Québec are partners for the *Memories of the Native Friendship Centre Movement in Quebec* project.

### Promoting better knowledge of the urban Aboriginal reality in Quebec

We cannot conclude this section on partnerships without mentioning the work being done by the RCAAQ in research and other efforts to position itself with regard to the important issues in Quebec.

Further to working in close collaboration with the *Dialog Network*, the RCAAQ produced its *Portrait of Literacy in the Quebec Native Friendship Centre Movement*. This document provides a survey of literacy initiatives for urban Aboriginal people at all of the Native Friendship Centres in Quebec. The transmission of Aboriginal culture and languages forms the heart of several approaches used by the Centres. Youths are often designated a priority clientele, but intergenerational links are also equally often stressed. The *Portrait of Literacy in the Quebec Native Friendship Centre Movement* has also demonstrated that empowering people according to their strengths, inscribed within a holistic approach based on the individual, aptly characterizes the literacy learning activities at the Quebec Native Friendship Centres. Several practices used for this learning are culturally adapted and based on the needs of the local Aboriginal populations.





## SOCIAL ECONOMY AND CAPACITY BUILDING

### Background

For purposes of continuing its actions in combating poverty and social exclusion, the RCAAQ made the shift a number of years ago to the social economy. The addition of the economic dimension to the community and psychosocial dimensions is intended to ensure the sustainability of the Native Friendship Centres in the delivery of their services. Since the First Nations Socio-Economic Forum, the RCAAQ has initiated actions that will allow the Movement and the individual centres to take steps to promote their economic development.

### Representation

Since last June, the RCAAQ has met with several partners, including the Chantier de l'économie sociale, the Comité sectoriel de la main d'œuvre Économie sociale et action communautaire, and several government departments at the provincial and federal levels. At these meetings, the RCAAQ presented the Quebec Native Friendship Centre Movement and held discussions regarding opportunities for beginning a full-fledged shift to the social economy for our entire Movement.

We also used these meetings to promote greater knowledge about the reality of Aboriginal people in the urban setting and about the missions and services of the Native Friendship Centres. We noted that the concept of the social economy was not very well known; several questions were raised in that regard. These meetings gave us the opportunity to explain our approach as based on the social economy and to demonstrate its relevance in the current context of increasing growth of the urban Aboriginal population.

We are participating in the Task Force on Aboriginal Training, Learning and Hiring in order to share our expertise concerning the Aboriginal social economy.

### Funding search

An inventory was made of funding programs that may assist Aboriginal businesses and people that are involved or interested in the social economy. An analysis must now be conducted with respect to the more relevant programs.

### Secrétariat aux affaires autochtones:

#### Aboriginal Initiatives Fund – Economic Component

The RCAAQ has elaborated a project entitled *Development of a project for encouraging the development of Aboriginal businesses and initiatives in the social economy*. The project is being submitted in two steps. The first step involves getting the project ready for implementation and the second step will involve mobilizing efforts for carrying out the project.

Developing the project calls for joint action by the stakeholders and partners to define the specific features of the social economy as applied to Aboriginal society. Then, tools will be elaborated to facilitate the development of social economy initiatives. This will be done in particular by adapting existing tools.

### Other programs

The RCAAQ held several meetings with the representatives of various government departments to identify existing programs that could meet its objectives. A joint meeting was also organized by Canada Economic Development (CED) this past June. It was an opportunity for the RCAAQ to present its objective in its shift to the social economy and for all the partners to talk about how their services could eventually participate in that shift, by means of technical support or funding.

The main identified partners are the following: CED, Ministère du Développement économique, de l'Innovation et de l'Exportation (MDEIE), Emploi-Québec, Service Canada, CDI, Développement des régions, and Emploi et Solidarité sociale.

### Partnership agreement with the Chantier de l'économie sociale

The partnership agreement with the Chantier de l'économie sociale was signed at the First Nations Socio-Economic Forum. Since then, several actions have been taken to give the agreement concrete form. The RCAAQ attended the Social Economy Summit in 2006, while at the Aboriginal Employment Forum, it collaborated with the Comité sectoriel de main d'œuvre Économie sociale et Action communautaire (CSMO ÉS) to give a presentation on the social economy as a solution for the development of Aboriginal employment. The RCAAQ also accompanied the CSMO ÉS at a meeting with the First Nations of Quebec and Labrador Health and Social Services Commission (FNQLHSSC). The RCAAQ and the Chantier have met a number of times to discuss the implementation of their agreement, thereby putting into place the foundations for genuine collaboration.



The RCAAQ and the Chantier decided on the following actions:

- Participate in the meetings of the regional poles;
- Become a member of CSMO ÉS;
- Develop the Aboriginal Pole (mandate, membership);
- Ensure links between the Native Friendship Centres and their regional poles;
- Support the RCAAQ in the search for funding and organizing social economy projects (special projects in regional development);
- Hold regular team meetings (twice a year);
- Participate in the development of social impact indicators for the Native Friendship Centres and offer training to the members of the Movement;
- Collaborate in the diagnosis carried out on the training needs of employees at the Native Friendship Centres.
- Keep one another informed about issues of common interest regarding the social economy and Aboriginal people's role in it.

In addition, thanks to the joint actions it has undertaken with the *Chantier de l'économie sociale*, the RCAAQ hopes to ensure the sustainability of the Native Friendship Centre Movement in Quebec. In this regard, the RCAAQ now sits on the board of directors of the Chantier and is working to develop socio-economic development tools that are culturally adapted to the Aboriginal reality in Quebec.

### **Support for the development of social economy initiatives**

The RCAAQ is assessing the relevance of developing social economy initiatives that will help to improve people's quality of life and will assist in the economic development of the Native Friendship Centres. The target sectors to date include the following: early childhood services, food and local services, homecare services, fair trade (arts and crafts), event management, and housing.

In November, a presentation on Aboriginal housing was made at the First Nations Housing Conference. In this presentation, the RCAAQ demonstrated its expertise in the development of Aboriginal co-ops, in collaboration with the *Chantier de l'économie sociale*.

## **Capacity building**

### **Support for the Native Friendship Centres**

The main support activities of the RCAAQ have been the following:

- Support and accompaniment of the Native Friendship Centre of Sept-Îles in its development as preparation for its opening in the fall and in the implementation of its activities;
- Support and accompaniment of the Native Friendship Centre of Montreal in its recovery process;
- Revision of the general bylaws;
- Holding of a workshop on democratic and participatory governance;
- Revision of the human resources policy of the RCAAQ;
- Development of an administrator's guide;
- Development of a best practices guide;
- Consolidation of networking among the Centres.

## BOARD OF DIRECTORS 2007/2008

During Fiscal Year 2007/2008, the Board of Directors of Regroupement des centres d'amitié autochtones du Québec consisted of following members:

Member	Position	Native Friendship Centre
Mrs Edith Cloutier	President	Native Friendship Centre of Val d'Or
Mr. Louis Bordeleau	Vice-president	Native Friendship Centre of Senneterre
Mrs Jo-Ann Toulouse	Secretary-treasurer	Cree Indian Centre of Chibougamau
Mr. Dianne Ottereyes Reid	Member	Native Friendship Centre of Montreal
Mrs Christine Jean	Member	Centre d'amitié autochtone de La Tuque
Mr. Yannick Dubé	Member	Centre d'amitié autochtone de Lanaudière
Mr. Gervais Malec	Member	Centre d'amitié autochtone de Sept-îles
Mrs. Martha Petiquay	Youth Member	Centre d'amitié autochtone de Lanaudière

## TEAM WORK 2007/2008

The employees of the Regroupement des Centres d'amitié autochtones du Québec form a dynamic team :

Employee	Position
Mrs Josée Goulet	Executive Director
Mrs Amélie Lainé	Program Coordinator
Mrs Julie Courtois Girard	Partnership Coordinator
Mrs Patricia Auclair	Communication and Special Projects Coordinator
Mrs Claudine Gros-Louis	Accountant
Mrs Danielle Larose	Councillor

## REPRESENTATION'S MANDATE

Here are the mandates of representation of Regroupement des centres d'amitié autochtones du Québec for fiscal year 2007-2008

Organisation	Representative(s)
Board of Directors of Chantier de l'économie sociale	Édith Cloutier
<i>Table de concertation pour le mieux être des Nations (Quebec Native Women)</i>	Josée Goulet
<i>Réseau de communication en développement de l'emploi autochtone (MAINC)</i>	Yannick Dubé
<i>Table sur l'emploi autochtone</i>	Danielle Larose
Native Para-Judicial Services of Quebec (NPJSQ)	Jo-Ann Toulouse
First Nations Human Resources Development Commission of Quebec (FNHRDCQ)	Edith Cloutier and Yannick Dubé
Conseil des Jeunes des Premières Nations du Québec et du Labrador (CJPNQL)	UMAYC of RCAAQ
Assembly of the First Nations of Quebec and Labrador (AFNQL)	Edith Cloutier
Board of Directors of National Association of Friendship Centres (NAFC)	Josée Goulet
First Nations of Quebec and Labrador Health and Social Services Commission (FNQLHSSC)	Louis Bordeleau
Quebec First Nations and Inuit HIV/AIDS Permanent Committee	Josée Goulet

**APPENDIX 1****Mutual Agreement****Regroupement des centres d'amitié autochtones du Québec and  
Union des municipalités du Québec**

**Regroupement des centres  
d'amitié autochtones du Québec**

Regroupement des centres d'amitié autochtones du Québec  
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