



kéni- pimahatōwang owéti izi nígān

"Pathways to the Future"



Second Saskatchewan Aboriginal Literacy Gathering 2006

FINAL REPORT

Submitted By:

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Project Summary

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"Pathways to the Future"
Second Saskatchewan Aboriginal Literacy Gathering 2006

Host Organization: Saskatchewan Aboriginal Literacy Network Inc. (SALN)

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Dr. Danny Musqua, Kelsey SIAST
Don Pinay, Yorkton Tribal Council
Tara Sutherland, Learner Representative
Claudette Moran, Dumont Technical Institute

Other Committee Members: Winston Walkingbear, Thunderchild First Nation

Event Coordinators: Tammy Forrester & Allison Gray
RSVP Event Design

Introduction

The *Second Saskatchewan Aboriginal Literacy Gathering, kényi- pimahatówang owéti izi nígán "Pathways to the Future"*, took place in Saskatoon, Saskatchewan from May 9 – 11, 2006. It was a great success!

The Gathering is part of the Saskatchewan Aboriginal Literacy Network Inc.'s comprehensive strategy to support and promote Aboriginal literacy within the province of Saskatchewan. This event brought together participants from all regions of Saskatchewan, other provinces, as well as international guests. Among the participants attending were Elders, adult learners, youth, literacy practitioners, Aboriginal program developers, government officials, and other stakeholders in the area of Aboriginal literacy.

The Gathering provided all participants with an enriching, positive, and informative cultural experience, as well as increasing their knowledge of Aboriginal literacy in many aspects. 30 learners from across Saskatchewan, both youth and adult, shared their experiences of growth as a result of their participation in literacy programs.

1. Objectives & Outcomes

The objectives of the *Second Saskatchewan Aboriginal Literacy Gathering 2006* were as follows:

- To share best practices in Aboriginal literacy and to learn from one another.
- To provide opportunities for Elders, learners, literacy practitioners, youth, community members, and political leaders to gather and create a strong network for Aboriginal literacy in Saskatchewan.
- To enhance awareness of the connection between Aboriginal literacy, language, culture, and healing.
- To encourage First Nations, Métis, and Non-Aboriginal communities to commit to working together to enhance Aboriginal literacy.
- To assist individuals and organizations to find and claim their place in realizing the shared vision for Aboriginal literacy in Saskatchewan.
- To develop a networking tool that will assist and support participants in their current and future contributions toward Aboriginal literacy.
- To acknowledge an Elder, a learner and a literacy practitioner for their contributions towards the advancements of Aboriginal literacy.

- To compile a "Pathways to the Future" Resource Collection. This resource collection, which will be available upon request, will contain workshop summaries, materials, information and resources to further support and carry forward into the future the learnings and objectives of the Gathering.

The outcomes of the Gathering 2006 were as follows:

1. Increased awareness of Saskatchewan Aboriginal Literacy Network (SALN)'s role within the province and with other agencies providing literacy services.
2. Increased awareness of SALN's Aboriginal literacy approaches and programs.
3. Increased interest toward long-term funding considerations from both the Federal and Provincial governments for the operation of Saskatchewan Aboriginal Literacy Network Inc., and for existing literacy programs.
4. Increased community interest and involvement in Aboriginal literacy.
5. Stronger connections with other National and Provincial Aboriginal literacy groups or organizations.
6. Increased knowledge and support to literacy practitioners and learners.
7. Better access to new approaches, programs, and resources.
8. Enhanced skills in applying best practices.
9. Increased awareness of Aboriginal Elders, artists, writers, authors, singers, and dancers.
10. Enhanced appreciation for Aboriginal cultures and a greater understanding of the importance of culture in the development of effective literacy programs.
11. Decrease in duplication of services among organizations serving Aboriginal population.
12. More sharing and less time spent "re-inventing the wheel" among literacy practitioners.
13. Better attitudes toward lifelong learning.
14. Healing.

2. Successes, Activities, & Evaluation

Overall the event was a success. All the activities that were planned were implemented completely. There was general feedback incorporated into this report from the two committees created by the SALN for this event, the Planning Committee and the Cultural Committee. Their members, roles, and duties are listed in Appendix A. These two committees, along with the Executive Director and the Event Coordinators (contracted to carry out the event) worked together to ensure that all activities were accomplished. The Executive Coordinator met with members of both committees and event coordinators on a regular basis before and after the Gathering 2006. In meeting with the event Coordinators after the Gathering we discussed at length the successes and the challenges, making notes for the next Gathering.

The following table describes the successes, activities, evaluation, and outcomes that were met of each objective:

Objective	Success	Activity	Evaluation	Outcomes & Impact
*To share best practices in Aboriginal literacy and to learn from one another.	*This objective was achieved through various speakers and workshops listed in the program enclosed.	*There were 2 keynote speakers who spoke eloquently of the connection between literacy and their lives. Maria Campbell spoke from her experience as a writer and Gordon Tootosis spoke of his experience as an actor. *There were 13 workshops offered at the Gathering. Individuals or	*The keynote speakers were highly regarded in the overall event evaluation report (See Appendix B). *Immediately following the workshops, participants handed in their evaluations. This feedback has been compiled in a Workshop Evaluation Report plus an additional participant	*This aspect of the Gathering met outcomes 1,2, and 4 – 10. *The impact of this objective is to continue to provide the opportunity for people to meet and to share their work and passion for literacy amongst Aboriginal people. Some people could not attend with the main reason

		<p>teams of presenters gave workshops between 1 - 4 times over the course of the two days.</p>	<p>report (see Appendix B). *In general, the workshops and the overall event were rated good to excellent with criticisms predominantly related to logistical matters. *The facility offered fantastic prairie views and several people took advantage of the trails for a walk during breaks. However, there was a call for more structured walking tours next time.</p>	<p>being personal or family matters. *The timing of the Gathering was good. Even though there was a Regional Colleges Conference overlapping ours there were still college staff who participated in our event. *The weather was sunny but with a cool wind. People were able to take walks but we were unable to hold any sessions outdoors. This worked out fine as the facility had ample room.</p>
<p>*To provide opportunities for Elders, learners, literacy practitioners, youth, community members, and political leaders to gather and create a strong network for Aboriginal literacy in Saskatchewan.</p>	<p>*This objective was achieved through giving learners and Elders the opportunity to come to the Gathering and create networks with others literacy practitioners, community members, and leaders.</p>	<p>*30 learners were funded to attend the Gathering. They came from Cypress Hills, Ille-a-la-Crosse, La Loche, Maple Creek, Prince Albert, Regina, and Saskatoon. They represented a cross-section of Métis and First Nations people, men and</p>	<p>*The learners and Elders participated fully in the whole Gathering. There were specific sessions for Elders to share about literacy experiences and issues. *Feedback has been by personal communication and has been very positive. By having more</p>	<p>*This objective met the outcomes 4,6,7-10, 13, & 14. *Some of the learners could not attend due to changes in transportation plans. Other learners from Saskatoon were invited to come in their place. *At mealtimes learners</p>

		women, youth and adults. *8 Elders attended and they were from Buffalo Narrows, Standing Buffalo FN, Thunderchild FN, Saskatoon, Prince Albert, Regina, and Kamsask.	Elder sessions, more Elders were able to share. *Although not scheduled the learners requested a meeting and there was some time set aside for them to meet.	were asked to share their literacy stories. They did a fantastic job of relating the rewards and challenges of continuing to learn in their adult lives.
*To enhance awareness of the connection between Aboriginal literacy, language, culture, and healing.	*This objective was successfully achieved through numerous ceremonies, cultural shows, and sharing about teachings	*Several ceremonies were held in preparation for this event as well as during the event. Although not a "scheduled" part of the event – participants were made aware of their occurrence and significance to the event. *Also, there were 8 performances throughout the Gathering by Métis and First Nations individuals or groups (see Photo Gallery at our website for some examples).	*The participants viewed these ceremonies as important and significant to the advancement of literacy within Aboriginal culture. The lead Elder helper received very positive feedback. *There was excellent feedback about the Métis and First Nations cultural evening performances. However, Wednesday was a long day and the evening might have worked better if there were more optional less-structured opportunities planned.	*This objective met the outcomes 4, 6, 8, 9, 10, & 12 – 14. *The cultural performances were not just entertainment but opportunities to share and teach about specific cultural ways, values, and stories.

<p>*To encourage First Nations, Métis, and Non-Aboriginal communities to commit to working together to enhance Aboriginal literacy.</p>	<p>*This objective was successfully achieved through a wide and far-ranging diversity of participants, sponsors, as well as coverage in local media.</p>	<p>*There was large participation from many First Nations, Métis, and non-Aboriginal people. *There were political representatives from federal, provincial, and municipal governments as well as First Nations and Métis governments and educational institutions that either participated, gave greetings, or wrote letters of support (see Program in Appendix E or website link).</p>	<p>*This was observed to be very successful. The only challenge being the desire to have more time to connect with more people. There will be on going feedback as notes and consultations from participants will continue to inform the goals of the SALN. *There was coverage in local media, Shaw TV, Radio stations in P.A., Saskatoon, & Regina., and newspapers (see Appendix F).</p>	<p>*This objective met the outcomes 1-5, 7, & 11 – 13. *This event was given some coverage by media. Media personnel need to be informed as to how to approach literacy, for example, talking about low literacy not illiteracy. As a result of this Gathering other literacy & literacy related organizations across Canada are more aware of the work of the SALN.</p>
<p>*To assist individuals and organizations to find and claim their place in realizing the shared vision for Aboriginal literacy in Saskatchewan.</p>	<p>*This objective was successfully achieved through the broad and diverse participation of The total number of people attending was 154 people.</p>	<p>*There was excellent involvement of many sectors of literacy including other NGOs, libraries, educational institutions and government agencies, schools, workplace programs, as well as other provincial, territorial, and national</p>	<p>*This number of paid participants was 76, exceeding the proposed projected number of 50 registrants. *As well the amount of sponsorship was beyond the projected amount. Their support of Gathering helped to make it a success (see</p>	<p>*This objective met outcomes 2, 4, 5, 7, 8, 9, 10, 12, & 14. *The choice of Wanuskewin Heritage Park was an excellent choice of facility. Located just outside Saskatoon beside a natural prairie ravine this location offered a setting</p>

		<p>representation. *Amongst those involved with the Gathering were particularly committed individuals who volunteered for the event. Their assistance was superb. They assisted the event coordinators, took notes of the workshops, and drove people to the airport and bus, amongst many other tasks.</p>	<p>Appendix D for a list). *The Board of Directors and the Executive Director were very pleased with the variety and range of people attending the conference. They observed a lot of networking and exchanges happening throughout the conference.</p>	<p>where people commented on how it helped them feel more comfortable to express themselves, their culture, and their spirituality. *The Hilton Garden Inn, although a good space for the Awards Gala on Tues. evening, did not treat some of our guests with appropriate respect.</p>
<p>*To develop a networking tool that will assist and support participants in their current and future contributions toward Aboriginal literacy.</p>	<p>*This objective was met through the increase in membership.</p>	<p>*Everyone involved with the Gathering had an opportunity to become members through a complimentary membership drive that was included in their Gathering fee/funding and application process.</p>	<p>*This opportunity was widely accepted and the SALN now has a list of over 200 members.</p>	<p>*This objective met outcomes 1 – 5. *The SALN Board of Directors will decide how to utilize their expanded membership base to further the SALN mission through more concrete and accessible feedback.</p>
<p>*To acknowledge an Elder, a learner and a literacy practitioner for their contributions towards the advancements of</p>	<p>*This objective was met through a new and specific event within the Gathering to honour people committed to working in literacy.</p>	<p>*6 people/organizations were awarded the first Saskatchewan Aboriginal Literacy Awards 2006. Also, two members of SALN were recipients of</p>	<p>*The winners were very excited to receive these awards. The feedback was tremendous from other participants, guests, and media. The</p>	<p>*This objective met outcomes 1, 2, 4, 5, 6, 9, 10, 13, & 14. *This is a new and important event that will be continued hopefully</p>

Aboriginal literacy.		the Saskatchewan Centennial Leadership Awards (see Appendix C for a list).	winners were mentioned in the Saskatchewan Legislature and the recipients received letters of congratulations from the Premier of Saskatchewan and other agencies.	on a yearly basis or as part of future Gatherings.
*To compile a "Pathways to the Future" Resource Collection. This resource collection, which will be available upon request, will contain workshop summaries, materials, information and resources to further support and carry forward into the future the learnings and objectives of the Gathering.	*This objective was successfully met and will continue to be developed.	*Through a specific and anonymous donation we were able to purchase \$5000 worth of books, programs, and resources related to Aboriginal literacy. These books will be catalogued and the information disseminated for people to have access to this collection.	*The Board and staff of the SALN see this as a significant development in reaching one of our organizational goals – to support the advancement of Aboriginal literacy resources.	*This objective met outcomes 8, and 11 – 13. *The development of an Aboriginal literacy Resource Collection is significant to the ability of our organization to meet the needs specific to Aboriginal people in Saskatchewan.

3. Changes in Plans

The following objective was added to the original list:

- √ Share results of the *International Adult Literacy and Skills Survey* (IALSS Survey 2003), which presents important and current statistics gathered from provincial, national, and international people about literacy and especially Aboriginal literacy.

The original list of objectives was created for the Gathering that was supposed to have been held in May 2005. This list of objectives was adopted for the Gathering 2006. However, in the meantime the International Adult Literacy and Skills Survey (IALSS 2003) results were released with information and data specific to Saskatchewan Aboriginal people. For this reason another objective was created specific to our mandate to assist with the analysis and dissemination of these results.

This objective was achieved through two workshops given by the SALN Executive Director giving the specifics of the data that related to Saskatchewan. The evaluation of these workshops is in the Workshop Event Report.

The impact of this information has been an increase in the level of urgency and importance of literacy issues and strategies amongst many people and organizations. The dissemination of the IALSS results continues to be an important strategy for the SALN overall.

4. Impacts of the Gathering 2006

The impact of this project has been very good for literacy in general in Saskatchewan. There was representation from other Saskatchewan literacy organizations as well as practitioners and learners from many different literacy programs across Saskatchewan.

This project was very good for Aboriginal Literacy specifically as the presence of many people from various related sectors attended, including people from libraries, colleges (North, South, East and West), schools (both First Nations and non-Aboriginal, rural & urban, Catholic and Public school systems), Tribal Councils, Métis institutions, and other provincial institutions.

Finally this event was very good for the Saskatchewan Aboriginal Literacy Network Inc. Participants observed that our organization is becoming more

established as they were witness to and participated in our Annual General Meeting and election of 2 new Board of Directors (see our website for a complete list of the SALN Board of Directors).

5. Highlights

There were many highlights of the Gathering 2006. Most significant are the Saskatchewan Aboriginal Literacy Award 2006 Winners. The list of winners (also available on our website) is located in Appendix B.

Also, the list of keynote speakers, workshop presenters, Elders, learners, and entertainers would be highly recommended to anyone wanting more input on Aboriginal literacy.

6. Recommendations

1. It is very important to have people, who are involved at all levels of planning, coordinating, sponsoring, and business, be aware of and sensitive to Aboriginal cultures and ways of knowing.
2. Although there was attention to menus chosen, food choices need to be very carefully weighed with known health issues such as diabetes.
3. The person and role of the Elder "helper" is crucial to the success of the proper protocol for ceremonies and cultural events. It is very important to have a knowledgeable person in charge of these events and people. In today's world this person must not only be knowledgeable of his or her own tribe or language group, they must be aware of the many different requirements of other cultural groups.
4. The Gathering in 2002 had a specific process for developing strategies for the SALN. This Gathering was more about networking and affirmed that these strategies are still relevant and need to be continued. However, it may be important to have a specific strategic planning process as part of a next Gathering.
5. To continue to research, network, and share ways of integrating culture, language, and literacy for stronger people and communities.

7. Appendix List

- A. Committees
 - Gathering Planning Committee
 - Gathering Cultural Committee
- B. Awards 2006
 - Award Winners
 - Letters of congratulations
- C. Sponsors
- D. Promotional Materials (see other links)
 - Brochure
 - Program
 - Banquet Programs
 - Conference Kit (some funders)
- E. Media Coverage and Clippings (available upon request)

APPENDIX A

Gathering Planning Committee

Members: Carol Vandale, Tammy Forrester/Allison Gray, Lisa Wilson, & Tara Sutherland.

The role of the Planning Committee is to assist the event coordinator and the Executive Director with planning the Gathering. This committee is in effect until the end of the Gathering.

In this spirit the members will:

1. Attend regular meetings.
2. Assist in giving historical perspectives on various details of planning the Gathering.
3. Advise on appropriateness of new plans.
4. Assist, where possible, in taking action for the Gathering.

Gathering Cultural Committee

Members: Carol Vandale, Tammy Forrester/Allison Gray, Winston Walkingbear, Don Pinay, Danny Musqua, Irene Jacques, Maynard Quewezance, & Claudette Moran.

The role of the Cultural Committee is to assist the event coordinator and the Executive Director with the cultural aspects of the Gathering. This committee is in effect until the end of the Gathering.

In this spirit the members will:

1. Attend regular meetings.
2. Assist in giving historical perspective from past Gatherings of the protocols and best practices around including elders, ceremonies, and other activities.
3. Advise on appropriateness of new plans.
4. Assist in the implementation of plans.

APPENDIX B

Saskatchewan Aboriginal Literacy Awards 2006

Winners

Category	Winner
Learner	Lisa Marie Bird (Montreal Lake FN) Prince Albert
Literacy Practitioner	Mrs. Bertha McKay (Cumberland House) Charlebois Community School, Cumberland House
Elder	Irene Jacques (Standing Buffalo FN) Fort Qu'Appelle
Business/Organization	Battlefords Family Health Centre - Circle of Learning Kids First Home Visiting Program Rose Favel
Special Honour	Donna Woloshyn Saskatchewan Literacy Commission Regina
Honourary Award	Geordy McCaffery Gabriel Dumont Institute / Dumont Technical Institute Saskatoon

Saskatchewan Centennial Leadership Award Government of Saskatchewan

Recipients

Irene Jacques & Tara Sutherland

APPENDIX C

Gold Sponsor:

[National Literacy Secretariat](#)

[First Nations and Métis Relations,
Government of Saskatchewan](#)

[Saskatchewan Learning](#)

[SGI](#)

[Raise A Reader](#)

[Prince Albert Grand Council \(PAGC\)](#)



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CreeWay Gas

Saskatoon, SK

In-Kind Sponsors:

Yorkton Tribal Council



Dumont Technical Institute

