

Winnipeg Poverty Reduction Council (WPRC) Update to the Community – September 2017

Where we left things

In the last WPRC Update to the Community in January 2017, we told you about the consultations and research we had undertaken which resulted in a plan of action called **TRC92: Youth Employment**. This plan is grounded in and named after the 92nd Call to Action in the *2015 National Truth and Reconciliation Commission Report*.

Truth and Reconciliation Commission

Call to Action #92 calls upon the corporate sector to:

“...ensure that Aboriginal peoples have equitable access to jobs, training, and education opportunities in the corporate sector and....provide education for management and staff on the history of Aboriginal peoples, including the history and legacy of residential schools, the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples, Treaties and Aboriginal rights, Indigenous law, and Aboriginal-Crown relations... (and conduct) skills based training in intercultural competency, conflict resolution, human rights, and anti-racism.”

This Call to Action reinforces the importance of Indigenous employment and for the WPRC, it is a touch point and guide for the work going forward.

TRC92: Youth Employment focuses on employer and workplace learning about issues related to Indigenous employment, and creating linkages with community-based groups who are training youth for employment opportunities.

The **three major strategies** which encompass *TRC92: Youth Employment* are:

1. Build awareness among employers about Indigenous history and current realities in relation to Indigenous youth employment
2. Support workplace education about Indigenous history, and intercultural safety
3. Facilitate new connections for work experience and employment by linking employers with youth from community-based training partners

In January, we reported that WPRC had met with eight community-based organizations who train Indigenous youth, who were interested in working with employers to help connect their youth to work experience and/or jobs.

Since then

Since last January, the focus of attention has been on engaging employers for *TRC92: Youth Employment*. Dave Angus (WPRC co-chair and former CEO of the Winnipeg Chamber of Commerce) helped to pave the way with his current workplace - Johnston Group - coming to the table, and inviting others to join. Then, with the help of Chartered Professionals in Human Resources of Manitoba (CPHR Manitoba), the Business Council of Manitoba



and the Winnipeg Chamber of Commerce, nine private sector employers were invited to an initial meeting in June of 2017. Since then, two more have come to the table.

This 'Employer Consortium' provides opportunity for a business-to-business learning as the employers embark on the *TRC92: Youth Employment* journey together. They are at different points of readiness, but all agree that learning, as articulated in TRC Call to Action #92, is the first priority.

In June many of the employers took part in a 'Blanket Exercise' hosted by the WPRC and led by Jessica Dumas. A Blanket Exercise is an experiential exercise which takes participants through Indigenous history in Canada. The employers requested additional learning about the Truth and Reconciliation Commission. So at the next meeting in August, Ry Moran - Director of the National Centre for Truth and Reconciliation - spoke about the Truth and Reconciliation Commission Report and Calls to Action. Both of these opportunities were informative and powerful and left everyone inspired to proceed.

Next steps

In coming months, the WPRC will focus on supporting the Employer Consortium for continued learning opportunities, and moving toward Strategy #3 'New Connections for Employment' by connecting with community partners who are already working hard at preparing Indigenous youth for work experience and jobs.

The WPRC also continues to: seek out any related resources; consult with stakeholders on an on-going basis; continuously involve and consult with Indigenous leaders and youth; build cross-sectoral relationships; and, develop processes for evaluation and communication.

A series of public learning sessions is in the planning stages. This is an additional strategy aimed at building awareness broadly across Winnipeg about issues related to the Truth and Reconciliation Commission and Call to Action #92.

We look forward to reporting on further progress in future.

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