

# ABORIGINAL VOICES: *Making Connections* *Grade 8*



### **Cover Art**

*Traditional Inuvialuit whaling camp protected by driftwood on the shores of the Arctic Ocean 20 miles from Tuktoyaktuk, NWT, Canada*

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**Note:** *The accompanying assignments/activities have been created for the purpose of sharing ideas for classroom & school implementation; however, teachers & administrators should preview and adapt them to fit student & school needs.*

Note: This DVD was designed for grades 8-12 and therefore not all speakers address the expectations of the grade 8 curriculum.

# **I. OVERVIEW**

## **I. Overview**

- A.** This DVD and accompanying e-manual have been created to address the misconceptions that many people hold concerning Aboriginal peoples. Some of these misconceptions are general in nature such as the belief that all Aboriginal people are the same and that they have always had the same rights as other Canadians. Other misconceptions focus on specific areas such as education, taxes, housing, and economic development. We have invited members of the Aboriginal community and those who work closely with them to provide us with information on each of these areas. It is also hoped that both educators and students will continue their own investigations into these misconceptions or myths.

The sharing community includes the following:

- a.** Terry Audla, President of ITK (Inuit Tapiriit Kanatami)
- b.** Tony Belcourt, Past President of the Métis Nation of Ontario
- c.** Derek Burleton, Vice-President and Deputy Chief Economist, TD Bank Group
- d.** Lynda Brown, Inuit Family Literacy Program Coordinator
- e.** Betty Ann Lavallée, National Chief of the Congress of Aboriginal Peoples
- f.** Gary Lipinski, President and CEO of the Métis Nation of Ontario
- g.** Marc Maracle, Executive Director of Gignul Housing
- h.** Jennifer St. Germain, Director of Education and Training, the Métis Nation of Ontario

- B.** This DVD also brings to our attention ideas from the Aboriginal community on how to make our schools and classrooms more invitational to Aboriginal students and parents. Parents, students, business and organization leaders share their thoughts based on their personal experiences and those of their children. It is through this sharing that we hear of ways to help all children to be proud of who they are.













## **II. CONNECTIONS TO COURSES AND EXPECTATIONS**






*The connections that follow link the video clips to History, and Geography; however, these video segments can be used to increase student awareness as students apply expectations from other program areas such as English.*

## Ontario Catholic School Graduate Expectations







### A Discerning Believer Formed in the Catholic Faith Community

-  CGE1a Illustrates a basic understanding of the saving story of our Christian faith.
-  CGE1b Participates in the sacramental life of the church and demonstrates an understanding of the centrality of the Eucharist to our Catholic story.
-  CGE1c Actively reflects on God's Word as communicated through the Hebrew and Christian scriptures.
-  CGE1d Develops attitudes and values founded on Catholic social teaching and acts to promote social responsibility, human solidarity and the common good.
-  CGE1e Speaks the language of life... "recognizing that life is an unearned gift and that a person entrusted with life does not own it but that one is called to protect and cherish it." (Witnesses to Faith)
-  CGE1f Seeks intimacy with God and celebrates communion with God, others and creation through prayer and worship.
-  CGE1g Understands that one's purpose or call in life comes from God and strives to discern and live out this call throughout life's journey.
-  CGE1h Respects the faith traditions, world religions and the life-journeys of all people of good will.
-  CGE1i Integrates faith with life.
-  CGE1j Recognizes that "sin, human weakness, conflict and forgiveness are part of the human journey" and that the cross, the ultimate sign of forgiveness is at the heart of redemption. (Witnesses to Faith)









### An Effective Communicator

-  CGE2a Listens actively and critically to understand and learn in light of gospel values.
-  CGE2b Reads, understands and uses written materials effectively.
-  CGE2c Presents information and ideas clearly and honestly and with sensitivity to others.
-  CGE2d Writes and speaks fluently one or both of Canada's official languages.
-  CGE2e Uses and integrates the Catholic faith tradition, in the critical analysis of the arts, media, technology and information systems to enhance the quality of life.

### A Reflective and Creative Thinker

-  CGE3a Recognizes there is more grace in our world than sin and that hope is essential in facing all challenges.
-  CGE3b Creates, adapts, evaluates new ideas in light of the common good.
-  CGE3c Thinks reflectively and creatively to evaluate situations and solve problems.
-  CGE3d Makes decisions in light of gospel values with an informed moral conscience.
-  CGE3e Adopts a holistic approach to life by integrating learning from various subject areas and experience.
-  CGE3f Examines, evaluates and applies knowledge of interdependent systems (physical, political, ethical, socio-economic and ecological) for the development of a just and compassionate society.

### A Self-Directed, Responsible, Lifelong Learner

-  CGE4a Demonstrates a confident and positive sense of self and respect for the dignity and welfare of others.
-  CGE4b Demonstrates flexibility and adaptability.
-  CGE4c Takes initiative and demonstrates Christian leadership.
-  CGE4d Responds to, manages and constructively influences change in a discerning manner.
-  CGE4e Sets appropriate goals and priorities in school, work and personal life.
-  CGE4f Applies effective communication, decision-making, problem-solving, time and resource management skills.
-  CGE4g Examines and reflects on one's personal values, abilities and aspirations influencing life's choices and opportunities.
-  CGE4h Participates in leisure and fitness activities for a balanced and healthy lifestyle.

## A Collaborative Contributor

- ✚ CGE5a Works effectively as an interdependent team member.
- ✚ CGE5b Thinks critically about the meaning and purpose of work.
- ✚ CGE5c Develops one's God-given potential and makes a meaningful contribution to society.
- ✚ CGE5d Finds meaning, dignity, fulfillment and vocation in work which contributes to the common good.
- ✚ CGE5e Respects the rights, responsibilities and contributions of self and others.
- ✚ CGE5f Exercises Christian leadership in the achievement of individual and group goals.
- ✚ CGE5g Achieves excellence, originality, and integrity in one's own work and supports these qualities in the work of others.
- ✚ CGE5h Applies skills for employability, self-employment and entrepreneurship relative to Christian vocation.

## A Caring Family Member

- ✚ CGE6a Relates to family members in a loving, compassionate and respectful manner.
- ✚ CGE6b Recognizes human intimacy and sexuality as God given gifts, to be used as the creator intended.
- ✚ CGE6c Values and honours the important role of the family in society.
- ✚ CGE6d Values and nurtures opportunities for family prayer.

## A Responsible Citizen

- ✚ CGE7a Acts morally and legally as a person formed in Catholic traditions.
- ✚ CGE7b Accepts accountability for one's own actions.
- ✚ CGE7c Seeks and grants forgiveness.
- ✚ CGE7d Promotes the sacredness of life.
- ✚ CGE7e Witnesses Catholic social teaching by promoting equality, democracy, and solidarity for a just, peaceful and compassionate society.
- ✚ CGE7f Respects and affirms the diversity and interdependence of the world's peoples and cultures.
- ✚ CGE7g Respects and understands the history, cultural heritage and pluralism of today's contemporary society.
- ✚ CGE7h Exercises the rights and responsibilities of Canadian citizenship.
- ✚ CGE7i Respects the environment and uses resources wisely.
- ✚ CGE7j Contributes to the common good.

## II. Connections to Courses and Expectations

Course	Catholic GE's	Overall Expectations	Specific Expectations	Video Links
Gr. 8 - History	2c 3c 5e	<b>B1 Application:</b> <b>Analyze</b> key similarities and differences between Canada in 1890-1914 and in the present day, with reference to the experiences of, and major challenges facing different groups and/or individuals, and to some of the actions Canadians have taken to improve their lives.	<b>B1.2</b> - analyze some of the challenges facing different individual, groups, and/or communities in Canada between 1890 and 1914 and compare some of these challenges with those facing present-day Canadians <b>B2.2</b> - gather and organize information and evidence about perspectives of different groups on some significant events, developments, and/or issues that affected Canada and/or Canadians during this period, using a variety of primary sources...and secondary sources <b>B2.5</b> - evaluate evidence and draw conclusions about perspectives of different groups of some significant events, developments, and/or issues that affected Canada or Canadians during this period	Betty Ann Lavallée  Marc Maracle
Gr. 8 - Geography	2b 2c 3c 7d 7e 7f	<b>B1 Application: Analyze</b> some interrelationships among factors that contribute to global inequalities, with a focus on inequalities in quality of life, and assess various responses to these inequalities.	<b>B1.1</b> - analyze some interrelationships among factors that can contribute to the quality of life <b>B1.3</b> - assess the effectiveness of various programs and policies aimed at improving the quality of life in various countries	All video segments  Gary Lipinski Marc Maracle Jennifer St. Germain
	2c 3c 3f 5a	<b>B3 Understanding Geographic Context:</b> <b>Demonstrate</b> an understanding of significant patterns in, and factors affecting economic development and quality of life in different regions of the world.	<b>B3.2</b> - compare findings with respect to selected quality of life indicators in some developing and more developed countries <b>B3.8</b> - identify and describe various factors that can contribute to economic development	Terry Audla Marc Maracle

### **III. MYTHS SURROUNDING CANADA'S ABORIGINAL PEOPLES**

### **III. Myths Surrounding Canada's Aboriginal Peoples**

#### **General Information**

##### **The Negative Impact of Misconceptions**

Misconceptions can lead to a lack of understanding about Aboriginal communities.

Non-Aboriginals may think of the Aboriginal community as one homogeneous group. Many have their own unique culture, history and traditions.

These myths can distort non-Aboriginal thinking about the effectiveness of government programs that target the Aboriginal communities.

Aboriginal people are important contributors to our history, culture, values and the national economic picture.

##### **General Misconceptions**

###### **One myth is that all Aboriginal people are the same:**

The Aboriginal population is very diverse.

It is composed of First Nations, Métis and Inuit peoples. Each has its own history, culture and traditions.

There are over 50 Aboriginal languages spoken in Canada.

Aboriginal people live across Canada in urban, rural and remote locations.

###### **Aboriginal peoples have always had the same rights as others in Canada:**

It is only recently that Aboriginal peoples have received the same rights as other people in Canada.

Registered First Nations people obtained the right to vote in 1960.

In 1880 an amendment to the Indian Act provided for the loss of status of any Indian who earned a university degree or any Indian woman who married a non-Indian. This amendment was repealed in 1985.

In 1884 an amendment to the Indian Act instituted prison sentences for anyone participating in potlatch and other traditional Aboriginal ceremonies.

##### **Other Misconceptions as cited in “*Debunking Myths Surrounding Canada's Aboriginal Population*” June 18, 2012 (Appendix I, page 59):**

- 1) Aboriginal people do not pay taxes.
- 2) Aboriginal people do not have to pay for post-secondary education.
- 3) Almost all Aboriginal people live on reserve and in rural areas.
- 4) Aboriginal people are falling further behind in the job market.
- 5) Very few Aboriginal people start their own business.
- 6) Even if there are Aboriginal businesses, they're not very successful
- 7) Aboriginal businesses are simply riding the coattails of the resource sector.

## **IV. Featured Speakers and Misconceptions**

### **Pre-Viewing Assignments/Activities**

## Various Misconceptions

**Related Video(s):** This activity can be done prior to viewing any of the video segments or specific segments/issues can be selected by the teacher to be viewed in conjunction with the activity.

ISSUE	SPEAKERS
Taxes	Betty, Lynda, Tony
Housing	Marc, Betty
Education	Terry, Lynda, Jennifer, Tony
Business/Employment	Tony, Derek, Jennifer
Food/Hunting	Terry, Gary
Media Portrayal	Betty, Marc
Aboriginal Rights	Tony, Gary, Betty

Related Video: Various Speakers		
Overview:	This assignment will allow students the opportunity to explore various misconceptions of Aboriginal peoples.	
Expectations (expectations may vary dependent on the media resources used)		
Overall Expectations:	Grade 8 – Geography	- Analyze some interrelationships among factors that contribute to global inequalities with a focus on inequalities in the quality of life and assess
Specific Expectations	Grade 8 – Geography	- Analyze some interrelationships among factors that contribute to quality of life
CGEs:	CGE7f – A Responsible Citizen who respects and affirms the diversity and interdependence of the world’s peoples and cultures  CGE7g – A Responsible Citizen who respects and understands the history, cultural heritage and pluralism of today’s contemporary society	
Focus Issue:	Variety of misconceptions	
Materials:	Students will require access to the Internet.	
Procedure/ Assignment:	1. Have all students log onto the following website: <a href="http://www.oneagleswings.org">http://www.oneagleswings.org</a> 2. Click on “The North” on the left hand side of the page and then click on “Misconceptions” on the right side of the page. 3. Ask the students to read through the eleven myths presented along with the facts! Then ask each to student to summarize five myths and their corresponding facts. Once they have completed the summary, give them an opportunity to explain why learning facts are important. It is also a time to explore the topic of accuracy and the internet.	
Assessment:	Use the accompanying rubric to assess the student summaries.	



# RUBRIC

Category	Level 1	Level 2	Level 3	Level 4
<b>Thinking</b> - quality of ideas, insight and explanation reflecting on misconceptions <b>(Worth 10 marks)</b>	- a few good ideas, insight and somewhat explained	- some good ideas, insight and explanation	- good ideas, insight and explanation	- excellent ideas, insight and explanation
<b>Communication</b> - language conventions: format, spelling, neatness, etc. and linking of ideas <b>(Worth 5 marks)</b>	- unsatisfactory presentation and use of language conventions and linking of ideas	- satisfactory presentation and use of language and conventions and linking of ideas	- good presentation and use of language and conventions and linking of ideas	- excellent presentation and use of language and conventions and linking of ideas

## Checking What We Know

**Overview:** This quiz can be used in a classroom setting or as a professional development exercise. Prior to starting work on the topic of misconceptions with students, they will take this quiz based on factual information on Aboriginal people in Canada. The purpose is to gain an understanding of our current level of knowledge and therefore what aspects to concentrate on.

**Materials:** Quiz from Calgary University on the following page (18).

**Activity and Assessment:** Distribute the quiz (page 18) on the following page to the students for their completion and self-assessment/peer or teacher assessment.

## **Aboriginal People in Canada**

***(This Quiz was created by Calgary University)***

Answer True or False for the following questions.

1. Aboriginal people in Canada do not pay taxes.
2. The terms 'Aboriginal,' 'Native,' 'First Nations', and 'Indigenous', are interchangeable.
3. Aboriginal people don't have to pay anything for housing, education, or medical care.
4. More than 80 per cent of Aboriginal people in Canada live below the poverty line.
5. More than 100 Aboriginal communities in Canada don't have sanitary drinking water.
6. Most Aboriginal people in Canada want to separate from Canada.
7. Aboriginal people are opposed to economic development and/or participation in the mainstream economy.
8. Aboriginal people comprise about 5 per cent of Canada's population and this percentage is expected to double in 20 years.
9. It is estimated that there were about 25 First Nations living in what is now Canada at the time of European colonization.
10. The term "Métis" refers to people of French and Aboriginal ancestry who lived around the Red River Valley in what is now Manitoba.
11. Because their community was created 'after' colonization, the Métis people don't have any land claims or hunting or fishing rights.
12. Aboriginal men make up more than 75% of the male prison population across Canada.
13. Aboriginal women in Canada were granted the vote at the same time as white women were granted the vote.
14. The Indian Act is the only piece of current Canadian legislation that defines a group of people according to categories of race and ancestry.
15. The number of Aboriginal youth that graduate from high school is about half that of the mainstream population.
16. The Conservative Federal Government under Stephen Harper supports the Kelowna Accord.

## **IV. Featured Speakers and Misconceptions**

**Assignments/Activities**

**to**

**Accompany Videos**

## IV a. Terry Audla

National Inuit Leader  
President of ITK (Inuit Tapiriit Kanatami)

### Misconceptions & the Inuit



#### Backgrounder:

ITK (Inuit Tapiriit Kanatami) is the voice of 55,000 Inuit living in 55 communities across Inuvialuit Settlement Region (Northwest Territories), Nunavut, Nunavik (Northern Quebec) and Nunatsiavut (**Northern Labrador**).

Terry Audla was born in Frobisher Bay, NWT and raised in Resolute Bay.

In 1993 Inuit signed the Nunavut Land Claims Agreement (NLCA) and became owners of 300,000 square kilometers of their own land. Terry was a participant, a lands claims officer with the Regional Inuit Associations and NTI Land Management regime.

In 1995 he worked as the Implementation Coordinator of the NLCA (Nunavut Land Claims Agreement).

In 1999 – 2001 he became Director of Lands for the Qikiqtani Inuit Association.

In 2011 he became the Chief Executive Officer of Nunavut Tunngavik Incorporated.

In 2012 Terry was sworn in as President of Inuit Tapiriit Kanatami (ITK).

For additional information see

<http://www.itk.ca/terry-audla-itk-presidential-ca>

## Video Overview

Many believe that Canada is longer east to west than north to south. This is incorrect.

Inuit do not live in igloos but in 55 communities in the North. Only 2 of these communities will soon be connected to highways.

The polar bear is not being negatively affected by climate change; in fact, its population is on the rise.

The seal, narwhal, fish etc. are part of the traditional diet, while other food is being shipped in and having an impact on health.

These health challenges include obesity and diabetes.

Inuit have been stewards of the Arctic. Seal is part of their diet and the hunting of seals particularly baby seals has been the subject of discussion and cruelty to animals. The question posed by Terry Audla is *“Is the act of killing seal for food more cruel than the killing of other animals for food?”*

In the area of education, more than 2/3's of the students drop out before grade 12 graduation. Currently, there is an examination of the quality of education that is being offered.

In order to receive post-secondary education, Inuit students must travel to the universities and colleges in the South and many experience culture shock.

Inuit do pay taxes.

There are distinct Aboriginal groups in Canada and we need to become familiar with them and where they live.

Dangers of misconceptions – These misconceptions are global. There is currently a push from the South to save the Arctic. This does not come about by changing the ways of the Inuit but rather looking at practices globally. The greenhouse gases and industrial pollution are causing global changes, and these changes are being experienced first by the Inuit.

Inuit want a quality of life equal to that of the rest of Canada.

## Inuit Hunting and Animal Use

Related Video: Terry Audla		
Overview:	Students will reflect on the hunting habits of the Inuit and whether these are truly considered ‘cruel’.	
Expectations (expectations may vary dependent on the media resources used)		
Overall Expectations:	Grade 8 - Geography	B3 - demonstrate an understanding of significant patterns in and factors affecting economic development and quality of life from a geographic perspective
Specific Expectations:	Grade 8 - Geography	B3.8 - identify and describe various factors that can contribute to economic Development
CGEs:	CGE3f – A Reflective and Creative Thinker who examines, evaluates and applies knowledge of interdependent systems for the development of a just and compassionate society  CGE5a – A Collaborative Contributor who works effectively as an interdependent	
Focus Issue:	Inuit and hunting	
Materials:	Information sheet for hunting of seal and polar bear (page 23)	
Procedure/ Assignment:	1. Stop the clip at 3:56. 2. Put students into pairs for discussion. 3. Give each pair the information sheet about how seals and polar bears are used by Inuit (page 23). 4. Have students review the sheet and discuss whether they agree or disagree with Terry about the hunting habits not being ‘cruel’. 5. After 5 minutes, conduct a large group discussion to see what the consensus of the group is regarding the cruelty of Inuit hunting habits.	
Assessment:	Teacher assesses the students on their participation and engagement in the discussion.	

## **Inuit Hunting & Use of Animals**

**Basic Inuit hunting principles were to hunt only what was needed, and to use every part of the animal that could be used.**

### **SEALS:**

Meat... was a staple winter food, providing nourishment for both the people and their dogs. Even the fat, blood and eyes were eaten.

Fat... was rendered into oil for the kudlik, a crescent-shaped stone lamp, providing both light and heat.

Skin...was used to make clothing. Sealskin is particularly good for watertight boots, or an "annuraaq" - a cover worn to keep water from getting into a kayak. The water-resistant nature of the skin also made it good for making boats, tents, and harpoon lines.

Bladders were used to make floats to attach to harpoon lines.

Bones, once the meat has been removed, provided material for tools and utensils.

### **POLAR BEAR:**

Pelts... A bear's fur consists of two types of hair; the underfur and the outer guard hairs. The underfur which is soft and dense, serves primarily as an insulator. The outer guard hairs are much thicker, longer and coarser, and while they also insulate, they primarily serve to protect the body from dirt, debris and insects, as well as to repel water.

Fur...The Inuit of Greenland use polar bear fur for clothing in areas where caribou and seals are scarce. Polar bear hide is wiry and bulky making it difficult to turn into comfortable winter garments.

Meat... Polar bears are a primary source of food. Polar bear meat is usually baked or boiled in a soup or stew. It is never eaten raw.

Fat... Bear fat can be used as lamp fuel, with 40-50 grams being sufficient to last up to an hour. Some tribes used bear fat as a form of medicine.

#### **IV b. Betty Ann Lavallée**

**National Chief of the Congress of Aboriginal Peoples**

**Taxes & Aboriginal Peoples, Demographics, Housing, Media, Aboriginal Rights**



#### **Backgrounder:**

Chief Lavallée is a status off-reserve Mi'kmaq woman from New Brunswick.

For approximately 17 years she served in the Canadian Armed Forces.

She served as the Chief of New Brunswick Aboriginal Peoples Council for thirteen years.

She has served on numerous Boards and committees on issues such as fisheries, housing, employment and training, economic development and health.

Chief Lavallée has a keen interest in Aboriginal issues as well as domestic and international politics.

She is a staunch advocate for employment of women in non-traditional roles.

Chief Lavallée is currently in her second term as National Chief for the Congress of Aboriginal Peoples.



## **Misconception - Almost All Aboriginal People Live on Reserve and in Rural Areas**

This is incorrect.

Aboriginal peoples reside in every province and territory.

The highest number live in British Columbia, the Prairies and Central Canada.

The territories have the highest concentration of Aboriginal residents.

Nearly one in five Saskatchewan and Manitoba residents identifies as Aboriginal.

In 2011, one in five Aboriginal Canadians lived on reserve.

Re: off reserve Aboriginal people - the majority, 54%, live in an urban setting.

### **Misconceptions Surrounding Aboriginal Demographics**

The Congress of Aboriginal Peoples advocates on behalf of the off-reserve, non-status and status Indians, Métis and Inuit Aboriginal peoples living in rural, urban and isolated areas throughout Canada.

In 1996 Harry Daniels and the Congress of Aboriginal Peoples filed an action to challenge the federal government's denial that Métis and non-status Indians are Indians under subsection 91(24) of the Constitution Act, 1867.

"The crown owes to Métis and non-status Indians a fiduciary duty as Aboriginal peoples; and Aboriginal peoples have a right to be negotiated with, on a collective basis, in good faith with the Crown." Betty Ann Lavallée

On Jan. 8, 2013 Michael L. Phelan affirmed the position that Métis and Non-Status are Indians under sub-section 91(24) of the Constitution Act, 1867. This decision gave recognition and equality to more than 600,000 of Canada's "forgotten" Aboriginal peoples.

On February 6, 2013 the federal government appealed the decision.

## Misconception - Aboriginal People Do Not Pay Taxes

The answer is some Aboriginal people pay taxes and others do not.

According to the Canada Revenue Agency, Aboriginal people pay the same taxes and are subject to the same tax rules as non-Aboriginal people. *"Aboriginal Peoples", Canada Revenue Agency.* <http://www.cra-arc.gc.ca/brqnl/menu-eng.html>

One of the exemptions is Status Indians, which is stated in Section 87 of the Indian Act.

*A Status Indian is generally a member of an Indian band or community with rights under the Indian Act to live on reserve, vote for band council and chief, share in band monies and have an interest in property on reserve.*

Approximately one-half of the one million people who identify themselves as Aboriginal are classified as Status Indian." *TD Economics, p. 2*

Inuit or Métis pay the same taxes as everyone else in Canada.

The personal property of an Indian or band situated on a reserve is exempt from taxation.

Employment income while working on a reserve can be tax exempt.

The location of work and residence of employees are 2 examples of criteria used to assess whether one pays taxes.

GST is not levied for purchases by Status Indians; however to qualify the purchase must be made on a reserve or delivered to a reserve by a vendor or vendor's agent.

Only registered Indians who earn income on a reserve for a company or organization that is located on the reserve are exempt from paying federal and provincial income tax. This is part of their treaty rights in exchange for the land that was given up.

Registered Indians who earn income off reserve must pay tax.

In Ontario a Status Indian with the correct accreditation can receive a rebate on the provincial portion of the harmonized sales tax. *"Ontario Point of Sale Exemption for Ontario Status Indians", Ontario Ministry of Revenue, June 23, 2010.*

<http://news.ontario.ca/rev/en/2010/06/ontario-point-of-sale-exemption-for-ontario-stats-indians.html>

Gas and tobacco products purchased at reserve stores are not taxed.

The majority of spending is done in urban centres and is therefore subject to taxes.

For every dollar spent in Aboriginal communities, nine dollars are spent elsewhere. In addition, most capital dollars are spent off reserve to purchase construction, vehicles, appliances etc.

Aboriginal peoples also do banking at the major banks.

## Video Overview

One of the common misconceptions is that all Aboriginal people live on reserve.

75% of the Aboriginal population does not live on reserve. Some of them have never lived on a reserve.

The media conveys negative images of Aboriginal peoples.

Another stereotype is that all Aboriginal people have dark skin, brown eyes and dark hair. This, too, is false.

Housing is a great challenge for Aboriginal people.

The reality is unless one has safe, affordable housing one cannot access special services because one needs to have an address.

The federal government believes that they don't have to help Aboriginal peoples off reserve. They maintain that they only have a constitutional responsibility to help those on reserve.

The Daniels Case, currently before the courts, seeks to force the government to live up to its jurisdictional responsibilities to off reserve Aboriginal peoples.

Betty Ann believes that both provincial and federal governments have a responsibility to the Aboriginal peoples.

The general public can help by educating themselves, and when others make stereotypical remarks, correct them.

In terms of taxes, only those who live on reserve and earn their income on reserve are exempt from paying income taxes.

A lot of the reserves are taxing their people on reserve in order to pay for their community's infrastructure.

## Educating Yourself on Misconceptions

Related Video: Betty Ann Lavallée		
Overview:	Students will have the opportunity to get an overview of the misconceptions from a fact sheet (page 32) and discuss/reflect upon those in light of their own experience.	
Expectations (expectations may vary dependent on the media resources used)		
Overall Expectations:	Grade 8 – History	B1 - analyze key similarities and differences between Canada in 1890-1914 and in the present day, with reference to the experiences of, and major challenges facing different groups and/or individuals, and to some of the actions Canadians have taken to improve their lives
Specific Expectations:	Grade 8 – History	B1.2 - analyze some of the challenges facing different individual, groups, and/or communities in Canada between 1890 and 1914 and compare some of these challenges with those facing present-day Canadians  B2.2 - gather and organize information and evidence about perspectives of different groups on some significant events, developments, and/or issues that affected Canada and/or Canadians during this period, using a variety of primary sources...and secondary sources  B2.5 - evaluate evidence and draw conclusions about perspectives of different groups of some significant events, developments, and/or issues that affected Canada or Canadians during this period
CGEs:	CGE3c – A Reflective and Creative Thinker who examines, evaluates and applies knowledge of interdependent systems for the development of a just and compassionate society  CGE5e – A Collaborative Contributor who respects the rights, responsibilities and contributions of self and others	
Focus Issue:	Misconceptions as a whole	
Materials:	Fact Sheet (page 32)	
Procedure/ Assignment:	1. After viewing the entire clip, put students into groups of 2-3.  2. Give students the misconception fact sheet (page 32), and choose 2-3 major misconceptions to review together.  3. Have each group choose 1 misconception and discuss whether, in their experience, they have ever believed that myth or knew the real facts.  4. As a whole group, discuss whether any of the myths/facts surprised them, and determine ways to educate everyone about the myths/facts of Aboriginal people.	
Assessment:	Teacher observation of participation and group engagement in the discussion.	



May 2002

## TOP MISCONCEPTIONS ABOUT ABORIGINAL PEOPLES

### MISCONCEPTION 1: HISTORY

*The history of North America began with the arrival of Europeans to the shores of this continent.*

#### FACTS

Long before the first explorers landed on the shores of the "New World", there were many different Indigenous nations living in various regions of what we now know as "Canada". Each nation had its own tribal customs, political organization, language, and spiritual beliefs, and had developed vast trade and economic systems. In fact, the advanced medical knowledge of the Iroquois people helped save the lives of many newcomers to North America.

There is a long history of this country prior to European arrival, and First Nations recorded it orally. The newcomers, however, set down their version of history in writing. It is only in recent years that mainstream Canadians are learning of the true history of First Nations and their contributions in building this country.

### MISCONCEPTION 2: TERMINOLOGY

*The terms "Aboriginal" and "Native" are used to define one homogenous group of people in Canada.*

#### FACTS

The terms "Aboriginal", "Native" and "Indigenous" are used as general terms to collectively describe three distinct cultural groups known as the "Inuit", the "Metis" and "First Nations".

Each of the three groups has its own unique historical background, culture and political goals.

Within the group known as "First Nations" or "Indians", there are 633 First Nations bands, representing 52 nations or cultural groups and more than 50 languages. Each nation has its own spirituality, traditional political structure, and history. As a general rule, most individuals prefer to be referred to by the specific nation to which they belong (Blackfoot, Cree, Dene, etc.).

The term "Aboriginal" should be used only as an adjective to describe individuals or mixed groups of First Nations or Indians, Metis or Inuit people. It has been wrongly used by the news media as a noun, as in: "The Aboriginals are..." The proper usage is: "the Aboriginal peoples are..."

### MISCONCEPTION 3: RIGHTS AND BENEFITS

*First Nations are the only peoples to have special rights and benefits above other Canadians.*

#### FACTS

First Nations people enjoy the same fundamental benefits as all other Canadians, including Child Tax Benefit, Old Age Security and Employment Insurance.

Where Constitutionally-protected Aboriginal rights exist, First Nations people do have priority over others (for example, the right to hunt and fish for subsistence), but even these rights are subject to regulation.

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Some registered Treaty Indians and Aboriginal people enrolled under comprehensive claim settlements also enjoy certain rights or benefits, including reserve lands, hunting and fishing rights, and payment of annuities (depending on the terms and conditions of their treaty agreement).

The government provides housing and post-secondary assistance to First Nations so that they may achieve the same standard of living as other Canadians.

Because of the division of powers in the Constitution, many services provided by provinces to other Canadians are provided to Indians living on-reserve by the federal government. Provincial standards are generally adopted, but there may be some local differences.

In Canada, the government also provides assistance to those people who cannot afford housing, medical aid and social assistance. As well, a tax rebate is given to low income families.

Foreign diplomats to Canada are able to take advantage of the provincial sales tax exemption, and other benefits as a special group of people living within Canada's borders.

#### **MISCONCEPTION 4: CONDITIONS IN ABORIGINAL COMMUNITIES**

*First Nations peoples are better off than most Canadians.*

##### **FACTS**

Although each year the United Nations ranks Canada among the best places in the world to live, the fact remains that many First Nations people in Canada still live in conditions that fall far short of the basic standards most Canadians have come to expect.

Statistics from the Royal Commission on Aboriginal Peoples final report revealed:

- participation rate by Aboriginal peoples in labour force (57%) was below that of all Canadians (68%).
- earned income per employed Aboriginal person in 1991 was \$14,561 compared to \$24,001 for all Canadians, and declined by 1,000 over the decade 1981 to 1991.
- 19% of inmates in federal penal institutions are Aboriginal people (rising to 49% in Manitoba and 72% in Saskatchewan provincial institutions).
- tuberculosis and diabetes are respectively 17 times and 3 times higher among Aboriginal peoples.

While no database dealing specifically with suicide rates among Aboriginal people and First Nations is currently available in Canada, according to the Royal Commission on Aboriginal Peoples, suicide rate within First Nations and Inuit communities is much higher than in the Canadian population. It could be from two to seven times more frequent<sup>1</sup>.

In 1996, the general infant mortality rate was 6.1 deaths for 1000 births within the Canadian population, compared to 11.6 for First Nations<sup>2</sup>.

That same year, 1.7% of all housing units in Canada were occupied by more than one person per room, compared to 18.6% in First Nations communities<sup>3</sup>.

According to a study conducted by Health Canada in 1997 on drinking water safety in First Nations communities, at least 171 water systems out of 863, that is 20%, could be a threat to human health<sup>4</sup>.

<sup>1</sup> FEDERAL, PROVINCIAL AND TERRITORIAL ADVISORY COMMITTEE ON POPULATION HEALTH. *Towards a Health Future: Second Report on the Health of Canadians*, p. 24, online at [http://www.hc-sc.gc.ca/hppb/phdd/report/toward/pdf/english/toward\\_a\\_healthy\\_english.PDF](http://www.hc-sc.gc.ca/hppb/phdd/report/toward/pdf/english/toward_a_healthy_english.PDF).

<sup>2</sup> STATISTIQUE CANADA. 1996 Census.

<sup>3</sup> *Ibidem*.

<sup>4</sup> HEALTH CANADA. *Health and Environment - Partners for Life*, 1997.



### **MISCONCEPTION 5: TAXATION**

*All Aboriginal peoples are tax exempt.*

#### **FACTS**

Inuit, Metis, and non-status Indians are required to pay tax.

The origin of tax exemption for registered Indians is found under sections 87 and 90 of the *Indian Act*.

Income earned by registered Indians working on-reserve for a company which is located on-reserve are exempted from federal and provincial income taxes.

Generally, First Nation individuals must pay income tax if they work off-reserve or for a company located off reserve whose business is not specifically geared toward Aboriginal people.

Depending on the province, some registered Indians do not pay provincial sales tax. Even within a province, there is often uneven application of this right.

Registered Indians do not have to pay the GST on goods delivered to the reserve. If the goods are purchased off-reserve and not delivered to the reserve, the GST must be paid.

### **MISCONCEPTION 6: FINANCIAL ACCOUNTABILITY**

*First Nations are incapable of administering their own finances.*

#### **FACTS**

Every First Nation in Canada is required to submit an annual audit to the federal government before receiving next year's funding. Significant improvements in financial management systems have been made:

- 83% of First Nations have fully met federal audit requirements (61% submit their audits within 120 days).
- 15% of First Nations with federally approved audits require remedial management in some problem areas.
- 2% of First Nations who have received qualified audits are considered to be experiencing severe financial problems.

First Nations are improving their financial administration capabilities through a number of local and national initiatives. Some of the national initiatives include:

- Signing a Memorandum of Understanding on March 30, 1998 between the Assembly of First Nations and the Certified General Accountants' Association of Canada (CGA -Canada).
- The development of the First Nation Financial Management Board (FMB). One of four fiscal institutions being developed by First Nations, the FMB is a First Nation led response to concerns about First Nation financial management systems and accountability. It is intended to be a long term solution to First Nation capacity development and not a quick legislative fix.
- The FMB will act as a financial management service institution for First Nation governments and institutions. It will work with First Nations to develop a financial management policy framework, develop best practices and certify First Nation financial management systems as requested.

## **MISCONCEPTION 7: ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT**

*Because of the remote location of many First Nations communities, economic development is non-existent on reserves and there are few Aboriginal businesses.*

### **FACTS**

Recent statistics from Industry Canada revealed that there are over 20,000 Aboriginal businesses in Canada active in every sector of the economy.

The Aboriginal Business Survey of 723 Aboriginal businesses conducted by Aboriginal Business Canada and Statistics Canada in 1996, found that:

- Over 20,000 Aboriginal people have been identified as owning a business.
- The majority of Aboriginal businesses are owned solely; are owned by North American Indians; and are twice as likely to be owned by men than women.
- Only 3.9% of all Aboriginal adults (over 15 years) own a business versus the Canadian average of 7.9%.
- 70% of Aboriginal businesses surveyed were full-time operations, while the remainder were seasonal.
- 57% of Aboriginal businesses are located on-reserve.

Many are located in First Nations communities and have brought increased employment as a result of joint business ventures with non-Aboriginal companies.

The Assembly of First Nations, through its Economic Development Secretariat is working in partnership with the federal government to increase economic development opportunities in all First Nations communities.

Economic development on remote reserves is not based on location – as many First Nations communities have witnessed large non-Native companies removing the natural resources from their areas for many years. Businesses are needed to create economies, and start-up capital is needed in order to create a business.

Under ordinary circumstances a businessperson could go to a local bank and get a loan to purchase the necessary equipment and assets. Not so for First Nations people living on-reserve.

Section 89 of the *Indian Act*, which was supposed to protect First Nations land from seizure, paradoxically prohibits First Nations land from being mortgaged. It prevents First Nations people living on-reserve from using their land as collateral.

## **MISCONCEPTION 8: LIVING CONDITIONS**

*All First Nations communities face living conditions similar to those of third world countries.*

### **FACTS**

No two communities are the same. There are many factors that determine the standard of living and level of economic development in First Nations communities.

Work with First Nations leaders to improve living conditions on-reserve continues to bring the standard of living up to par with the rest of Canadians. First Nations are working to increase their land-base and are seeking fair and equitable access to resources. The total accumulated size of all Indian reserve land south of 60 in Canada (2,676,469.9 hectares) would fit into the great Navajo reservation (6,477,732.8 hectares) in the United States.



### **MISCONCEPTION 9: SELF-GOVERNMENT**

*First Nations are not ready for self-government.*

#### **FACTS**

The Haudenosaunee (Six Nations Confederacy) existed since the beginning of time as distinct people with their own laws and customs, territories, political organization and economy. Benjamin Franklin and Thomas Jefferson, the fathers of the US confederation, were so impressed with the Great Law of Peace which the Six Nations Confederacy followed that they used it as a model for the United States Constitution.

Some First Nations were operating under various systems of self-government before the Inherent Right of Self-Government policy was announced in 1995 (including, the Sechelt Band's *Self-Government Act* in BC, Cree-Naskapi [of Quebec] and the Yukon Self-Government Act).

### **MISCONCEPTION 10: HOUSING AND EDUCATION**

*All Aboriginal people receive free housing and post-secondary education.*

#### **FACTS**

Métis and non-Status Indians do not receive free housing or education assistance.

Housing and education are important legal benefits of some treaties for Treaty First Nations.

Under DIAND's on-reserve housing policy, Status Indians living on-reserve obtain funds through their band councils to build or renovate their homes. In many cases they repay these loans over a number of years.

Low income non-Aboriginal families in various regions of Canada seeking housing assistance from governments may also receive assistance through various programs offered by the federal and provincial governments.

DIAND provides elementary education assistance for on-reserve status Indians, and post-secondary education assistance to Inuit and Status Indians to help improve their standard of living.

While Status Indian students receive post-secondary assistance through their band councils, they can also receive provincial financial assistance in the form of grants or loans that must be repaid.

Federal funding for post-secondary education has remained the same since 1987, except for the 2 to 3% increase per year approved by the Treasury Board. At the same time, the number of Inuit and Status Indians applying is up and tuition fees keep rising, so fewer and fewer students access education funding.

### **MISCONCEPTION 11: LAND CLAIMS**

*Aboriginal land claims are settled by government based on political guilt over past injustices committed against the original inhabitants in Canada.*

#### **FACTS**

Land claims are based on outstanding legal obligations to the original inhabitants of this land, and on the basic principle of British common law that there can be no confiscation of land without compensation.

In some areas of Canada, the question of Aboriginal land title has not been addressed.

Land claims are well researched and subject to validation by the federal government and Department of Justice before any negotiations towards settlement can begin.

Treaties and other agreements provided that land would be set aside for First Nations communities. Over the years, land was improperly confiscated from First Nations. First Nations were forcibly relocated from their original location to other areas, and were subject to various other improper and illegal treatment by the Crown.

## **IV c. Gary Lipinski**

**President and CEO of the Métis Nation of Ontario**

### **Misconceptions and the Métis People**



#### **Backgrounder:**

Gary Lipinski was born and raised in Fort Frances, Ontario.

He comes from a long line of Métis commercial fishermen and traditional resource users in north-western Ontario.

He is a teacher by trade for over a decade.

Mr. Lipinski became MNO President in 2008.

He was an instrumental part of the leadership team that advanced P.V. Powley – the ground breaking Métis rights litigation that affirmed in the Supreme Court of Canada that Métis are a full-fledged rights-bearing people and that Métis communities have constitutionally-protected rights.

See <http://www.metisnation.org/media/163500/garybio-updated.pdf> for MNO achievements under President Lipinski's leadership.

## Video Overview

Aboriginal people are made of three distinct groups: First Nations, Inuit and the Métis.

1/3 of Ontario's Aboriginal people are Métis.

One of the misconceptions is that Métis students have their post-secondary schooling paid.

Métis students even in secondary school have many obstacles to success.

Until recently the Métis people could not hunt and fish for food like the First Nations people.

The *Powley Case* was the case that challenged this inequity and the Métis people were successful in winning the right to harvest.

Also the Métis people are one of the only Aboriginal people without their own land base.

One of the promises of Canada was that there would be land set aside for the Métis children, but the government failed to live up to its promise.

Few realize that Métis children also resided in residential schools.

There was an apology from the Prime Minister of Canada for the actions of the government in respect to residential schools; however what was missing from the apology is that some schools were not included.

The danger of holding misconceptions is that one develops opinions based on them.

Education enables one to see both sides of an issue.

## Looking at All Aboriginal Peoples

Related Video: Gary Lipinski		
Overview:	Students will have the opportunity to review the characteristics of First Nations, Inuit and Métis people and cite similarities and differences between them.	
Expectations (expectations may vary dependent on the media resources used)		
Overall Expectations:	Grade 8 - Geography	B1 - analyze some interrelationships among factors that contribute to global inequalities, with a focus on inequalities in quality of life, and assess various responses to these inequalities
Specific Expectations:	Grade 8 – Geography	B1.1 - analyze some interrelationships among factors that can contribute to the quality of life
CGEs:	CGE2b – An Effective Communicator who reads, understands and uses materials effectively  CGE7f – A Responsible Citizen who respects and affirms the diversity and interdependence of the world’s peoples and cultures	
Focus Issue:	Misconceptions	
Materials:	Activity hand-out	
Procedure/ Assignment:	1. After watching the whole clip, give students the activity sheet and review with the class.  2. In groups of 2-3, students will review the definitions of the First Nations peoples, the Inuit and the Métis.  3. Each group will complete the similarities and differences sheet by discussing the definitions and comparing them. If necessary, conduct this process together with the class.  4. Have a follow-up discussion on whether the students were surprised by the similarities and differences.	
Assessment:	Teacher assesses the students’ participation and engagement in the process; completion of hand-out.	

## **Fact Sheet: First Nations, Inuit and Métis People**

**The First Nations, Inuit, and Métis are all considered Aboriginal.**

**All three terms refer to the Indigenous People of Canada.**

**First Nations** peoples refers to the Indian people in Canada, both status and non-status. Many Indian people have also adopted the term “First Nation” to replace the word “band.” (Most First Nations are offended by the term “Indian.”) The First Nations were those who lived below the territories, from BC to the Maritimes. The Cree, Algonquin, Mohawk and others are all considered First Nation peoples. They also traditionally believe that this continent originated from the Turtle's Back (*look up Turtle Island story if you haven't heard of this before*), although there are slight variations among the different peoples.

**The Inuit** are a group of culturally-similar Indigenous Peoples inhabiting the Arctic regions of Greenland, Canada, and the United States. Inuit is a plural noun; the singular is Inuk. The Inuit languages are classified in the Eskimo-Aleut family. The Inuit are those who originally inhabited the Arctic or more northern regions of Canada. They were the ones who traditionally had igloos, dog-run sleds, parkas, and other inventions. Inuit are culturally-similar Indigenous People inhabiting the Arctic regions of Canada. They are also found in Greenland, Russia (Siberia), and the US (Alaska).

**The Métis** are one of the recognized Aboriginal peoples in Canada. They trace their descent to mixed First Nations and European heritage. The Métis are a mixed people, mixed with First Nations peoples (mostly Ojibway) and with the Europeans (usually French). The word Métis has the same meaning as mestizo in Spanish (which is used for people of mixed Native and European heritage). Because of the Métis' dual heritage and knowledge of both cultures and languages, they often served as a bridge, facilitated trade between Natives and Europeans, among other activities. They have a unique identity to this day. Métis is one of the Aboriginal peoples of Canada made up of various Indian tribes, Cree, Ojibway, Algonquin, Salteaux, Menominee, Mi'kmaq, or Maliset. They also inhabit the northern United States. They are found mostly in the east part of Canada. There used to be 2 branches, French Canadian and Scottish Canadian, but now there is just one.

## Aboriginal People of Canada —Similarities and Differences

NAMES: \_\_\_\_\_

Similarities:

Differences:

#### **IV d. Marc Maracle**

**Executive Director of Gignul Housing**

#### **Housing and Aboriginal Peoples, Media Portrayal**



#### **Backgrounder:**

Marc is a Mohawk from the Tyendinaga Mohawk Territory.

His initial background was in architectural design and the preparation of construction designs, as well as project management.

His background also includes: community development, economic development, program/project design, coordination and management, program/project evaluation, negotiations for federal transfers of program management, communications, facilitation, conflict resolution and strategic planning.

He has worked as a consultant and Senior Policy Advisor with the National Aboriginal Management Board at Human Resources Development Canada, and as the Executive Director of the National Association of Friendship Centres.

Currently, Marc is the Executive Director of Gignul Housing, a non-profit housing corporation committed to a holistic and comprehensive approach to housing.

## **Myth - Aboriginal Peoples Get Free Housing**

Most of the housing comes under Canada Mortgage and Housing.

On reserve individuals do pay rent – some of which goes toward the Band's housing maintenance program.

The federal government provides some housing to Aboriginal people. The federal funding does not meet the needs of Aboriginal people.

Most Aboriginal people living on reserves and in urban centres live in substandard and crowded housing.

According to Stats Canada, 54% of houses on reserves are in sub-standard condition.

## **Video Overview**

We need to have a good understanding of how we came together as peoples, so that we can have a better understanding of where we can go.

Many think that Aboriginal people reside on reserves while the majority reside in urban areas.

The Urban Aboriginal Strategy puts together 3 levels of government (federal, provincial and municipal) to talk about local priorities and doing things together.

50% of the Aboriginal population is under the age of 25 and of that part, 40% is under the age of 15; therefore, there are huge implications for education attainment and for the labour market.

One of the challenges on reserve is the ability to have access to labour markets.

Not all reserves have good housing. It varies with the reserve.

Housing situations in urban settings mirrors that on reserves. There is crowding and inadequate housing. Sometimes it is a case of affordability. Can the individual afford the housing available? Sometimes there is local opposition to the construction of required affordable housing.

The media tends to focus on the negative images of Aboriginal people. We need to focus on Aboriginal accomplishments and the energy of the youth.



## Aboriginal Peoples and the Government

Related Video: Marc Maracle		
Overview:	After watching the video clip by Marc Maracle, students will look at the Proclamation of 1763 and the inception of the Indian Act starting in 1820.	
Expectations (expectations may vary dependent on the media resources used)		
Overall Expectations:	Grade 8 –History	B1 Application - analyze key similarities and differences between Canada in 1890-1914 and in the present day, with reference to the experiences of and major challenges facing different groups and/or individuals, and to some of the actions Canadians have taken to improve their lives
Specific Expectations:	Grade 8 – History	B1.2 - analyze some of the challenges facing different individual, groups, and/or communities in Canada between 1890 and 1914 and compare some of these challenges with those facing present- day Canadians  B2.2 - gather and organize information and evidence about perspectives of different groups on some significant events, developments, and/or issues that affected Canada and/or Canadians during this period, using a variety of primary sources...and secondary sources
CGEs:	CCGE2c – An Effective Communicator who presents information and ideas clearly and honestly and with sensitivity to others  CGE3c – A Reflective and Creative Thinker who thinks reflectively and creatively to evaluate situations and solve problems	
Focus Issue:	Why is it perceived that Aboriginal people are in an adversarial role with the people of Canada?	
Materials:	Internet access – Royal Proclamation of 1763 and the Indian Act, 1820	
Procedure/ Assignment:	1. The students view the Marc Maracle video clip. 2. Have the students give feedback on what they heard and discuss their feeling as to what is happening today. e.g. <u>Idle No More</u> 3. As a class read and discuss parts of the Royal Proclamation of 1763. 4. Discuss how this affects First Nations people. 5. Have students do research on the Indian Act starting in 1820. 6. Analyze similarities and/or differences of the two documents. 7. Report their findings.	

<b>Assessment:</b>	<p>Teacher assessment of one of the following:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Possible debate on pros and cons of the adversarial role First Nations peoples find themselves in today.</li> <li>2. A personal response on the following question: What was the intention of the Royal Proclamation and what has happened to First Nations people in Canada?</li> <li>3. How has the Indian Act impacted First Nations people with regards to traditional lands and political rights?</li> </ol>
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## Aboriginal Living Conditions

Related Video: Marc Maracle		
Overview:	Students will have the opportunity to review a CTV News story and accompanying written version and compare the issues presented in the story to what is said by Jennifer in the clip.	
Expectations (expectations may vary dependent on the media resources used)		
Overall Expectations:	Grade 8 - Geography	<b>B1</b> - analyze some interrelationships among factors that contribute to global inequalities, with a focus on inequalities in quality of life, and assess various responses to these inequalities  <b>B3</b> - demonstrate an understanding of significant patterns, in and factors affecting economic development and quality of life in different regions of the world
Specific Expectations:	Grade 8 - Geography	<b>B1.1</b> - analyze some interrelationships among factors that can contribute to the quality of life  <b>B1.3</b> - assess the effectiveness of various programs and policies aimed at improving the quality of life in various countries  <b>B3.2</b> - compare findings with respect to selected quality of life indicators in some developing and more developed countries
CGEs:	<b>CGE3b</b> – A Reflective and Creative Thinker who creates, adapts, evaluates new ideas in light of the common good  <b>CGE7d</b> – A Responsible Citizen who promotes the sacredness of life	
Focus Issue:	Varying perspectives of Aboriginal living conditions	
Materials:	Computer with internet access, hand-out	
Procedure/ Assignment:	<ol style="list-style-type: none"><li>1. After viewing the clip(s), review the main points of the clip(s) re: the living conditions of Aboriginal People. You may wish to use chart paper or the white board to display.</li><li>2. Watch the news piece from CTV News as a group, stopping to clarify issues where appropriate: <a href="http://www.ctvnews.ca/canada/canada-faces-a-crisis-on-aboriginal-reserves-un-investigator-1.1497612#ixzz2puqsGJhw">http://www.ctvnews.ca/canada/canada-faces-a-crisis-on-aboriginal-reserves-un-investigator-1.1497612#ixzz2puqsGJhw</a></li><li>3. Put students in groups of 3-4.</li><li>4. Hand out the written overview of the news story.</li><li>5. Identify visually, the key points of the news story on chart paper or white board.</li><li>6. Have the students discuss whether the news story aligns with the comments that Jennifer St. Germain and Marc Maracle (and other speakers they have heard) make about the conditions facing Aboriginal people.</li><li>7. Optionally, you may wish to have students write a paragraph describing their opinions about the story and what it tells us about Aboriginal living conditions in some areas.</li></ol>	
Assessment:	Teacher observation of participation and engagement in small and large groups	

## **IV e. Jennifer St. Germain**

**Director of Education and Training, the Métis Nation of Ontario**

### **Economic Development**



#### **Backgrounder**

Jennifer St. Germain has been working within Ontario's Métis public service for more than fourteen years.

As the Director of Education and Training for the Métis Nation of Ontario, she oversees responsibility for leadership development, partnership engagement and the implementation of innovative employment and education policy and program priorities.

She represents the MNO on numerous government tables and is a frequent speaker on Métis issues.

## **Misconceptions - Economic Development**

### **Myths**

Aboriginal People are Falling Further Behind in the Job Market

Very Few Aboriginal People Start Their Own Business

Even if There are Aboriginal Businesses They're not Very Successful

### **Aboriginal People are Falling Further Behind in the Job Market**

From 2001 to 2008 a commodity price boom prevailed and as a result, there was a major shift in employment and economic growth towards the natural resource sector for Aboriginal peoples and their communities.

Construction projects surged.

In 2008, 36% of all employed Aboriginal people worked in the goods producing sector and construction.

The unemployment rate dropped from 17.4% in 2001 to 9.3% in 2008.

Labour force participation rates increased 4% from 2001 – 2008. Aboriginal peoples are increasingly participating in the market economy.

Both the labour market participation rate and unemployment rate are better than they were in 2001.

### **Very Few Aboriginal People Start Their Own Business**

This is false – Roughly 2% of all small and medium-sized enterprises are operated by Aboriginal entrepreneurs. This is 32,000 businesses both on and off the reserve.

Women play an important role in Aboriginal owned businesses. 51% of the businesses belong entirely or partly to women.

This count of small and medium-sized business is modest because it does not include firms who are incorporated under provincial and territorial charter. Also it does not capture the number of economic development corporations or community-owned enterprises.

### **Even If there are Aboriginal Businesses, They're not Very Successful**

This is false.

The majority of firms are profitable. Six (6) in ten reported a profit in 2010 and a third managed to boost annual revenues despite the global downturn in 2010.

Roughly half of respondents surveyed (TD Economics) viewed their business as a success. The criteria used to determine success was not just based on dollars, but also on personal satisfaction.

7 in 10 respondents (TD Economics) anticipated revenue growth over the next two years.

## Video Overview

There are certain misconceptions about Aboriginal peoples not doing well.

There are gaps that exist between Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal people around employment and education levels.

There are a significant number of Aboriginal people doing very well.

With targeted skills training and key educational initiatives, Aboriginal people are able to integrate into the labour market and contribute to the economy.

It is not true that Aboriginal people are not doing well and not aspiring to do better.

The idea that Aboriginal businesses are not doing well is strange to Jennifer.

There are a significant number of Aboriginals who run successful businesses and hire other Aboriginals.

Generation Innovation focuses on youth and the starting of their own businesses.

A currently successful skills training program called, *Skills and Training Strategies*, stemmed from the Royal Commission on Aboriginal Peoples. It recognized the importance of Aboriginal people designing and delivering their own training programs based on the unique needs of Aboriginal people.

The Métis Nation of Ontario can develop and implement programs across Ontario.

Successful programs include the Employment and Energy Program with Georgian College. This program includes Aboriginal candidates who, following educational training, are placed with employers.

The danger of holding misconceptions can result in imposing of limits on oneself.

The message to Aboriginal peoples is that there are no limits; the door is open.

They are capable of holding good jobs, supporting their families and contributing to their communities.

## Quality of Life and Economic Development

Related Video: Betty Ann Lavallée, Gary Lipinski, Jennifer St. Germain, Marc Maracle		
Overview:	Students investigate quality of life for FNMI people by looking at: location of reserves, education, employment and the reasons for inequalities.	
Expectations (expectations may vary dependent on the media resources used)		
Overall Expectations:	Grade 8 - Geography	B1 Application - analyze some interrelationships among factors that contribute to global inequalities, with a focus on inequalities in quality of life, and assess various responses to these inequalities
Specific Expectations:	Grade 8 - Geography	B1.1 – analyze some interrelationships among factors that can contribute to the quality of life
CGEs:	CGE7d – A Responsible Citizen who promotes the sacredness of life  CGE7e – A Responsible Citizen who witnesses Catholic social teaching by promoting equality, democracy, and solidarity for a just, peaceful and compassionate society	
Focus Issue:	Quality of Life	
Materials:	map of reserves for Ontario, copies of Myth 7 & 8 from “ <i>Debunking Myths Surrounding Canada’s Aboriginal Population</i> ”: Special Report TD Economics 2012 – (See Appendix I, page 60)	
Procedure/ Assignment:	<ol style="list-style-type: none"><li>1. Ask students what makes their quality of life good e.g. housing, education, proximity to job etc.</li><li>2. Ask if all people in Canada have the same quality of life. If so, why and if not, why not?</li><li>3. Talk about where First Nations people live: urban centres and reserves.</li><li>4. Look at a Map of Reserves in Ontario from INAC 2010. Website - <a href="http://www.ainc-inac.gc.ca/ai/mr/is/info125-eng.asp">http://www.ainc-inac.gc.ca/ai/mr/is/info125-eng.asp</a></li><li>5. Discuss where these are located and how close they are to urban centres or job employment.</li><li>6. Talk about the First Nations, Métis and Inuit people that live in urban centres and where they might live.</li><li>7. Discuss education on and off reserve and the differences. Schools on reserve get less funding. Schools off reserve get indirect provincial funding, but the board is paid by Tuition Agreements.</li><li>8. Discuss why employment might be lower for FNMI due to these circumstances.</li><li>9. View the Derek Burleton video clip.</li><li>10. Have the students read Myth 7 &amp; 8 of “<i>Debunking Myths Surrounding Canada’s Aboriginal Population</i>” (page 60), Special Report TD Economics 2012 and discuss it in relation to what they have previously discussed.</li></ol>	

<b>Assessment:</b>	<p>The teacher may assign for assessment the following two questions:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"><li>1. What is the relationship between land/resources and wealth/power?</li><li>2. How has the forced removal of Indigenous populations from land with many resources contributed to an inequality of wealth?</li></ol>
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#### IV f. Culminating Activity

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

From all the clips you have seen and heard, there have been many opinions expressed about the misconceptions regarding the Aboriginal people in Canada. Choose one area of misconception below; and for at least 2 of the related speakers, outline the message each has given in their clip about that misconception. Where appropriate, cite similarities and/or differences in their opinions. You may wish to use point-form, a chart, or a paragraph for your answer. Use extra pages if necessary.

ISSUE	SPEAKERS
Housing	Marc, Betty
Education	Terry, Jennifer
Food/Hunting	Terry, Gary
Media Portrayal	Betty, Marc
Aboriginal Rights	Betty, Gary

ANSWER:

## **V. Creating an Invitational School Environment**

## V. Creating an Invitational School Environment

After viewing the *Making Schools More Welcoming to Aboriginal Students and Opening Doors to Aboriginal Parents*, select one or more of the following activities to do with your staff.

1. Assess what you are currently doing to increase awareness of Aboriginal culture.
2. What is the demographic profile of your school so that one can meet the potential needs of the student?
3. Be welcoming to all cultures particularly FNMI since they are the first peoples.
4. Be aware of cultural differences such as handshake for Inuit. This awareness can be developed through workshops or study sessions on the different cultures.
5. Can you find one key Aboriginal person who is willing to participate in the school life or school council? They might be willing to create committees to contribute to the knowledge of students and staff.
6. Host an Aboriginal activity night for students, parents and teachers.
7. Bring in a panel of knowledgeable Aboriginal people to speak the staff.
8. Invite Board personnel to assist in the implementation of cultural awareness sessions.
9. Survey the community in terms of their expectations for their children.
10. Individually conference with a member or members of the Aboriginal community.
11. Know the specific culture that the FN is from – Algonquin, Mohawk etc.
12. A principal or teacher needs to know that many children including Aboriginal students learn best through a hands-on approach.
13. Many First Nations children are self-directed at home and therefore taking direction at school might be challenging.

## **VI. Resources**

## VI. Resources

### A. Internet Sites

Aboriginal Business Directory

<http://www.aboriginalbusinessdirectory.com/>

Aboriginal Business Guide Canada

[http://v1.canadabusiness.mb.ca/home\\_page/guides/aboriginal\\_business\\_infoguide/](http://v1.canadabusiness.mb.ca/home_page/guides/aboriginal_business_infoguide/)

Aboriginal Myths

<http://www.lethbridge.ca/living-here/Our-Community/Documents/CMARD-Aboriginal-Myths-1pdf>

Aboriginal Myths

<http://www.cbc.ca/news/canada/north/story/2012/06/21/business-national-aboriginal-day-myths.html>

*"Aboriginal Peoples"*, Canada Revenue Agency.

<http://www.cra-arc.gc.ca/brqnl/menu-eng.html>

Aboriginal Peoples and Poverty in Canada: Can Provincial Governments make a Difference? By Alain Noele and Florence LaRocque

[http://www.cccg.umontreal.ca/RC19/PDF/Noel-A\\_Rc192009.pdf](http://www.cccg.umontreal.ca/RC19/PDF/Noel-A_Rc192009.pdf)

Canadian Council for Aboriginal Business

<http://www.ccab.com/>

Congress of Aboriginal Peoples (CAP):

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=uaubXDSgAyg&feature=related>

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=pY8BpMf1nIA&feature=related>

The Free Housing for Natives Myth

<http://apihtawikosisan.com/2012/08/07/the-free-housing-for-natives-myth/>

"Frequently Asked Questions About Aboriginal Peoples" Indian and Northern Affairs

Canada <http://www.ainc-inac.gc.ca/ai/mr/is/info125-eng.asp>

Global News – A Growing Number of Aboriginals Living in Urban Areas

<http://globalnews.ca/news/649755/a-growing-number-of-aboriginals-living-in-urban-areas-td-bank/>

INAC: National Aboriginal History Month

<http://www.ainc-inac.gc.ca/ach/nahm-eng.asp>

*"In-depth: Aboriginal Canadians, FAQs"*, CBC News Online

<http://www.cbc.ca/news/background/aboriginals/faqs.html>

Making Aboriginal Poverty History by the Public Service Alliance of Canada <http://psac.com/what/humanrights/june21factsheet1-e.shtml>

Most Canadians Harbour Myths About Aboriginal People [http://www.thestar.com/opinion/editorialopinion/2012/06/21/most\\_canadians\\_harbour\\_myths\\_about\\_aboriginal\\_people.html](http://www.thestar.com/opinion/editorialopinion/2012/06/21/most_canadians_harbour_myths_about_aboriginal_people.html)

Myths & Realities  
[http://www.autochtones.gouv.gc.ca/publications\\_documentation/publications/mythes-realites-autochtones-en.pdf](http://www.autochtones.gouv.gc.ca/publications_documentation/publications/mythes-realites-autochtones-en.pdf)

*“Ontario Point of Sale Exemption for Ontario Status Indians”, Ontario Ministry of Revenue, June 23, 2010.*  
<http://news.ontario.ca/rev/en/2010/06/ontario-point-of-sale-exemption-for-ontario-status-indians.html>

*Post-secondary Student Support Program (PSSSP)”, Aboriginal Affairs and Northern Development Canada.*  
<http://www.aadnc-aande.gc.ca/eng/1100100033682#elc>

*“Some Popular Misconceptions about Native People”*  
<http://www.cariboolinks.com/ctc/misconceptions.html>

Statistics Canada  
[http://www41.statcan.gc.ca/2007/10000/ceb10000\\_003-eng.htm](http://www41.statcan.gc.ca/2007/10000/ceb10000_003-eng.htm)

Top Misconceptions about Aboriginal Peoples  
<http://cwy-jcm.com/logbook-kenyawinnipeg/files/2012/08/Top-Misconceptions-About-Aboriginal-Peoples.pdf>

Working Effectively with Aboriginal Peoples  
<http://workingeffectivelywithaboriginalpeoples.com/myth-status-indians-exempt-from-federal-or-provincial-taxes-2>

## **B. Publications**

Assembly of First Nations, Fact Sheet (May 2002). *“Top Misconceptions About Aboriginal Peoples”*

Canadian Union of Public Employees (2004) *“Debunking the Myths About Aboriginal Peoples:...”*

Congress of Aboriginal Peoples (2012). *“The Forgotten People”*

Congress of Aboriginal Peoples (Jan. 10, 2013). News Release – *“Landmark Federal Court Ruling Grants Recognition to Métis, Non-Status Indians in Canada.”*

Congress of Aboriginal Peoples (Feb. 6, 2013). News Release – *“Congress of Aboriginal Peoples Disappointed with Federal Government’s Decision to Appeal Landmark Federal Court Ruling Granting Recognition to Métis, Non-Status Indians in Canada”*

TD Economics (June 18, 2012). Special Report – *“Debunking Myths Surrounding Canada’s Aboriginal Population.”*

## **VII. APPENDICES**



# SPECIAL REPORT

TD Economics



June 18, 2012

## DEBUNKING MYTHS SURROUNDING CANADA'S ABORIGINAL POPULATION

*We thank the Canadian Council for Aboriginal Business (CCAB), whose research and insights were instrumental in the preparation of this report.*

### Highlights

- In recognition and celebration of National Aboriginal Day on June 21<sup>st</sup>, TD Economics continues its tradition of carrying out Aboriginal-related economic research, raising awareness about Aboriginal peoples, businesses and communities. This report represents our third in the series of articles on Aboriginal social and economic issues.
- In this report we attempt to put to bed ten myths surrounding Canada's Aboriginal population. The myths were chosen on the basis of misconceptions we encountered while carrying out the research on our previous reports. We also sought insight from organizations like the Canadian Council for Aboriginal Business (CCAB) which have community and business reach.
- The misperceptions put to rest are broad-based, including: access to free post-secondary education, taxation exemption rules, and the prevalence and success of Aboriginal-owned small businesses and economic development corporations.

In celebration of National Aboriginal Day on June 21<sup>st</sup>, TD Economics continues its tradition of carrying out Aboriginal-related economic research, raising broader awareness about issues confronting Aboriginal peoples, businesses and communities. This report represents our third in the series of articles. The first concluded that the tide had shifted in the right direction for Aboriginal peoples and there was a renewed spirit of entrepreneurship in the air. In our second article, we noted that Aboriginal people and businesses were increasingly leaving their mark on the national economic scene. We attached a \$32 billion figure to the size of the Aboriginal market by 2016, higher than the level of nominal GDP of two Atlantic provinces combined.

These two reports explored the economic footprint for Aboriginal peoples and how the future might unfold. To carry out this work, we needed to research the existing body of literature and craft our own stories with analysis and data in hand. In doing so, we have come across a number of myths about Aboriginal peoples which simply do not fit reality. These beliefs could influence the way in which the non-Aboriginal population looks at Aboriginal peoples. In order to set the record straight, we have compiled a list of ten myths to debunk.

### Myth 1: Aboriginal people do not pay taxes.

*Some don't, some do.* According to the Canada Revenue Agency, Aboriginal people pay the same taxes and are subject to the same tax rules as non-Aboriginals.<sup>1</sup> There are a few limited exemptions for Status Indians which are stated in Section 87 of the *Indian Act*.<sup>2</sup> A Status Indian is generally the member

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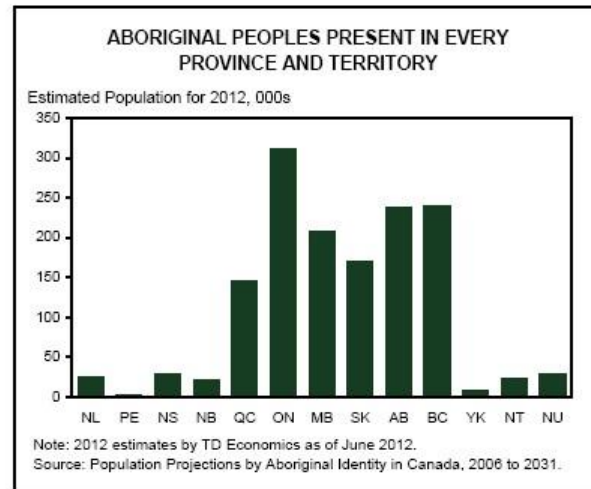
of an Indian band or community with rights under the *Indian Act* to live on reserve, vote for band council and chief, share in band monies, and have an interest in property on reserve. Approximately half of the one million people who identify themselves as Aboriginal are classified as Status Indian. Those Aboriginal people who are Inuit or Métis pay the same taxes as anyone else in Canada.

According to legislation, the personal property of an Indian or a band situated on a reserve is exempt from taxation. In court rulings, this provision has historical roots and is intended to preserve entitlement to the land.<sup>3</sup> Employment income while working on a reserve also can be tax exempt. However, location of work and residence of employees are two examples of criteria used to assess whether the individual must pay taxes. The federal Goods and Services Tax (GST) is not levied for purchases by Status Indians, but in order to qualify, the purchase must be made on reserve or delivered to a reserve by a vendor or the vendor's agent.

Each province has set up policies with regard to tax exemptions for areas under their own jurisdiction. In some provinces, like Ontario and Québec, a Status Indian with the appropriate accreditation can receive a rebate on the provincial portion of the Harmonized Sales Tax (HST) for eligible purchases.<sup>4,5</sup>

#### Myth 2: Aboriginal people do not have to pay for post-secondary education.

*Some don't, some do.* The federal government does provide money to First Nation and Inuit governments for students to attend a post-secondary institution. Programs have been set up to defray tuition costs, travel costs and living expenses associated with the pursuit of post second-

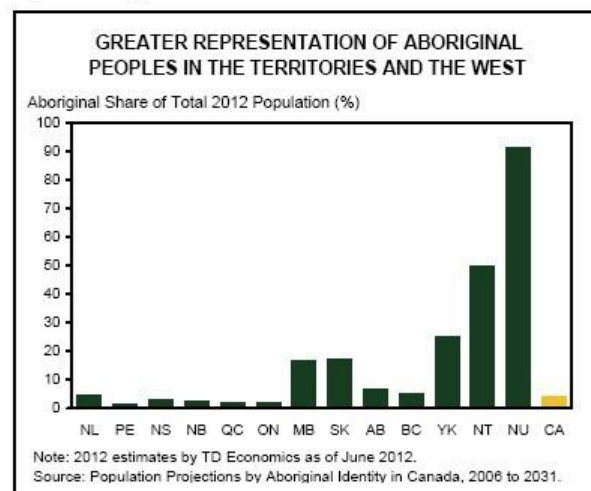
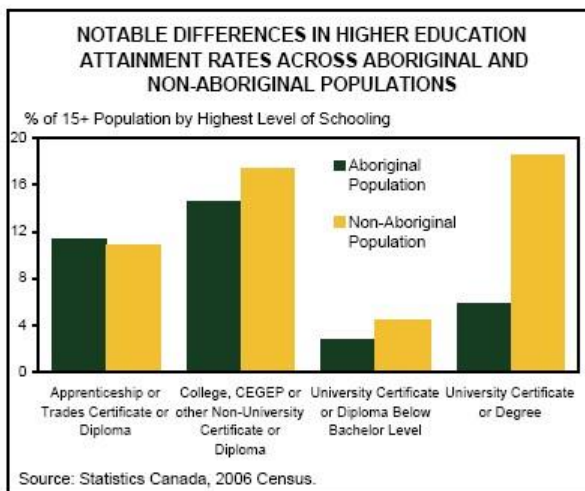


ary education.<sup>6</sup> At present, there are no similar programs for students who identify as Non-Status Indian and Métis.

While post-secondary education support is available to some Aboriginal students, not everyone who is eligible receives it. With more demand than funds, some communities have resorted to limiting applications to only those students who are pursuing their first post-secondary certification.<sup>7</sup> In other cases, they limit eligibility to include those students who live on reserve while they undertake their studies.<sup>7</sup>

#### Myth 3: Almost all Aboriginal people live on reserve and in rural areas.

*False.* Statistics Canada is not scheduled to release updated data on Aboriginal peoples until mid-2013. However, if we use their most recent population projections, we can dispel this myth.



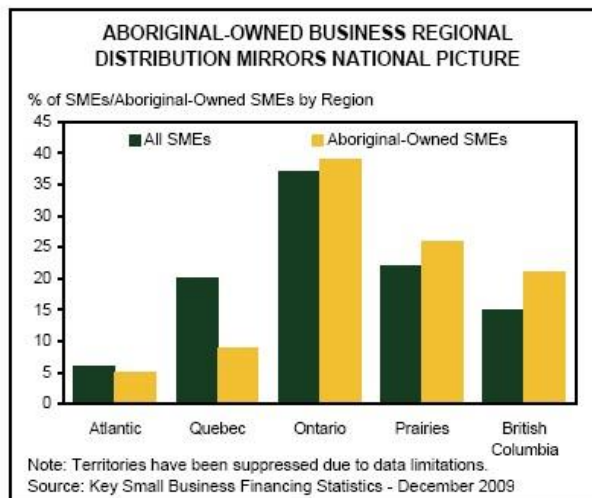
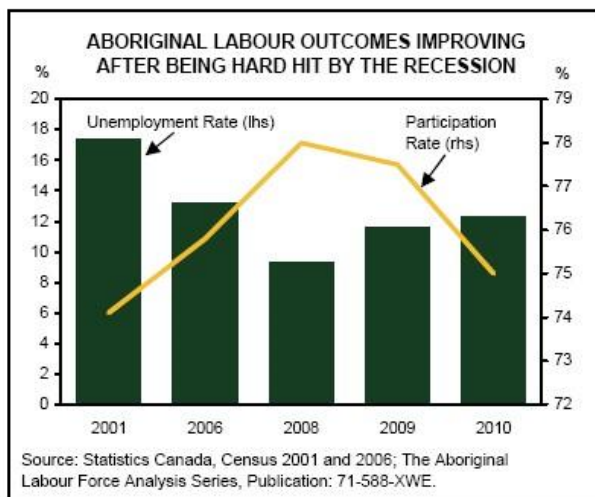


Aboriginal peoples currently reside in every province and territory. In terms of scale, British Columbia, the Prairies, and Central Canada are home to the highest number of Aboriginal people. This outcome is not very surprising as these provinces have the most number of Canadians. When the Aboriginal population is expressed as a share of total provincial or territorial population, we see that the territories indeed have the highest concentration of Aboriginal residents. Still, nearly one-in-five Saskatchewan and Manitoba residents identifies as Aboriginal, which is more than four times the national average.

In terms of the on- and off-reserve breakdown, one-in-five Aboriginal Canadians lived on reserve in 2011. In addition to most living off-reserve, the majority of all Aboriginals (54% in 2011) live in an urban setting. Both of these shares have been relatively constant over the past decade, cementing the fact that most Aboriginals are urban and off-reserve dwellers and have been for some time.

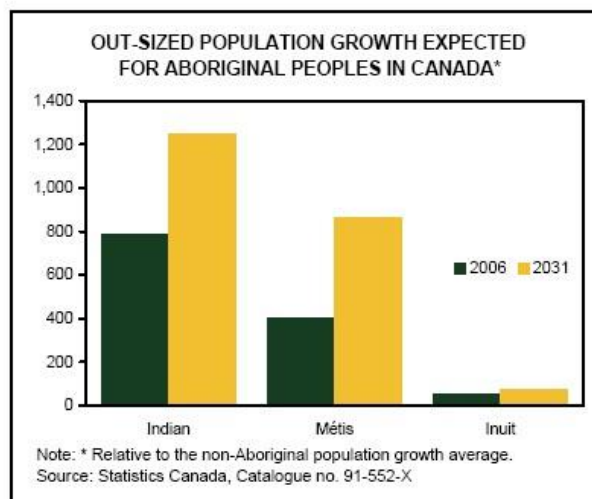
#### Myth 4: Aboriginal people are falling further behind in the job market.

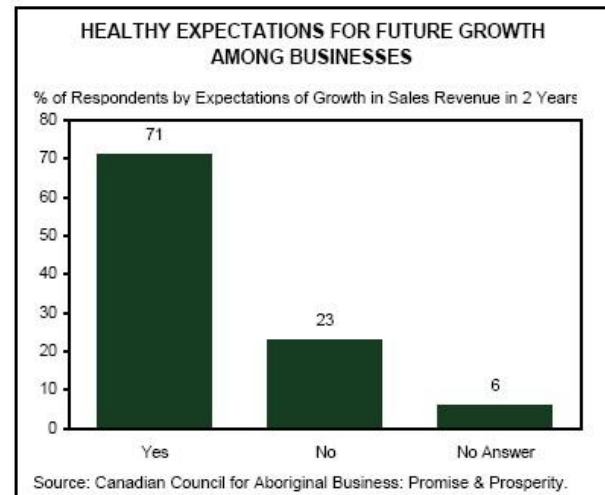
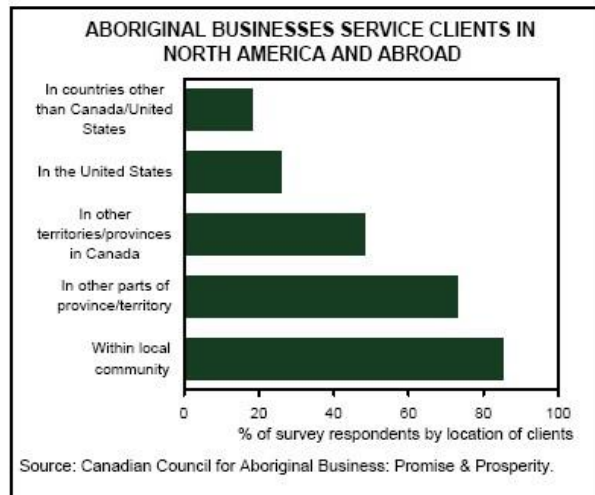
**False.** To debunk this myth, we must piece together data from the Census and a new publication that reports employment outcomes for Aboriginal people from 2008 to 2010.<sup>8</sup> While these recent data are helpful, the Labour Force Survey does not sample Aboriginal people living off-reserve or in the territories. In spite of the underlying data limitations, information leading up to, and immediately after, the recession allows us to analyze employment trends with the global economic downturn in mind. Unfortunately, Statistics Canada has not yet published Aboriginal labour force data beyond 2010.



From 2001 to 2008, a commodity price boom prevailed and, as a result, there was a major shift in employment and economic growth towards the natural resource sector for Aboriginal people and communities. Construction projects also surged, as heightened activity in this sector often goes along with natural resource development. In 2008, for example, 36% of all employed Aboriginal people worked in the goods-producing sector and construction. The unemployment rate made significant progress during these years – it dropped from 17.4% in 2001 to 9.3% in 2008. Labour force participation rates also increased four percentage points over this timeframe. As we argued in our previous report, enhanced job opportunities allowed Aboriginal people to grow their economic footprint and improve their income prospects.<sup>9</sup>

Some of the employment and income gains seen during





the early part of the decade were given back with the onset of the global financial crisis. Aboriginal communities were hit particularly hard given their out-sized exposure to the primary sector: the Aboriginal jobless rate hit 11.6% in 2009 and the labour market participation rate fell by a half percentage point. The data show that this deterioration was temporary, with 2010 numbers bouncing back with some vigour. If we were to forecast out these measures to the present, both should be close to 2008 levels.

The past decade cements the idea that Aboriginal people are increasingly participating in the market economy. Both the labour market participation rate and unemployment rate are better today than where they stood in 2001. These trends demonstrate real progress in a relatively short period of time.

**Myth 5: Very few Aboriginal people start their own business.**

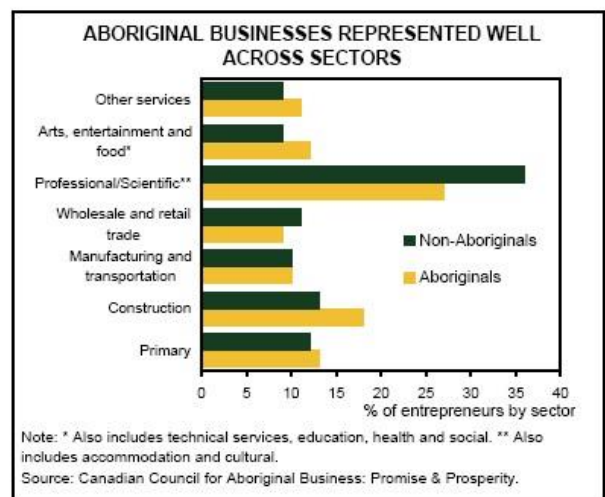
**False.** Roughly 2% of all small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) are operated by Aboriginal entrepreneurs, slightly lower than the 3.8% share of Aboriginals in the population.<sup>10</sup> Even so, this translates into approximately 32,000 businesses, both on- and off-reserve. The data also suggest that women play an important role in Aboriginal-owned businesses – 51% of these firms belonged entirely or partly to women, while the Canadian average was 47%.

The count of Aboriginal SMEs is conservative, as it does not include firms who are incorporated under provincial and territorial charter. It also does not capture the number of economic development corporations (EDCs) or community-owned enterprises which have become a more popular business model over the past decade.<sup>10</sup> According

to the Canadian Council of Aboriginal Business, there were approximately 262 active EDCs in Canada in 2010.<sup>9</sup> We do not have more recent data than 2010, but we suspect that there are roughly 275 of these firms up and running today.

**Myth 6: Even if there are Aboriginal businesses, they're not very successful.**

**False.** The Aboriginal Business Survey provides some insight on the success of Aboriginal-owned businesses.<sup>11</sup> Most have only a handful of employees and operate in an environment which they define as highly competitive. Even with these headwinds, the majority of firms are profitable – six in ten reported a profit in 2010 and a third managed to boost annual revenues in 2010 despite the global downturn. Last but not least, roughly half of survey respondents labeled





their business a success. Interestingly, the criteria used to make this assessment were not just based on dollars and cents, but other factors like personal satisfaction with their line of profession and having a steady client base.

The future for Aboriginal entrepreneurs also looks bright as seven in ten survey respondents anticipated revenue growth over the next two years. This same proportion also thinks they will be at the helm of their business in five years. In addition, the growth rate of Aboriginals in self-employed positions is exceeding that of non-Aboriginals. This trend, combined with the rapid growth and success of the economic development corporation business model, suggests that the number of Aboriginal-owned SMEs should continue to increase. While barriers to competitiveness remain for this group of entrepreneurs, many are finding ways to overcome these challenges. An example of an innovative solution is the urban reserve near Saskatoon which is home to many Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal businesses.<sup>12</sup>

**Myth 7: Aboriginal businesses are simply riding the coattails of the resource sector.**

**False.** Roughly 13% of all Aboriginal-owned small and medium-sized businesses in 2010 were directly linked with the primary sector, which includes agriculture, forestry, mining, and oil and gas extraction.<sup>11</sup> Given a period of relatively strong commodity prices and an increase in resource exploration, many First Nation, Inuit and Métis communities have reaped the economic benefits.

Despite the emphasis on natural resources, Aboriginal entrepreneurs are operating successful businesses across all industries. In fact, the majority of Aboriginal-owned establishments are linked to service-producing sectors like construction and business services.

In addition to being diversified in terms of area of focus, business owners are filling niches in the marketplace which were victim to gaps or previously viewed as uncompetitive. For example, Inuit Air is a regional airline company which began in the mid-1970s shortly after the first modern land claims' agreement was signed.<sup>13</sup> The company now employs roughly 500 people and services Northern Québec – a region which lies at the heart of the Québec government's Plan Nord initiative.

There are many other examples of innovation in Aboriginal-owned businesses outside the resource sector. A case in point is access to credit for businesses on reserve which was once an issue. This is because real and personal property on a reserve cannot be used as collateral for a loan

as stipulated by the *Indian Act*. Aboriginal Financial Institutions (AFIs) across the country sprung up to fill the gap and provided access to loans where needed. The National Aboriginal Capital Corporations Association estimates that since the late 1980s, AFIs have provided over \$1.3 billion in financing and 30,000 loans to Aboriginal small businesses.<sup>14</sup>

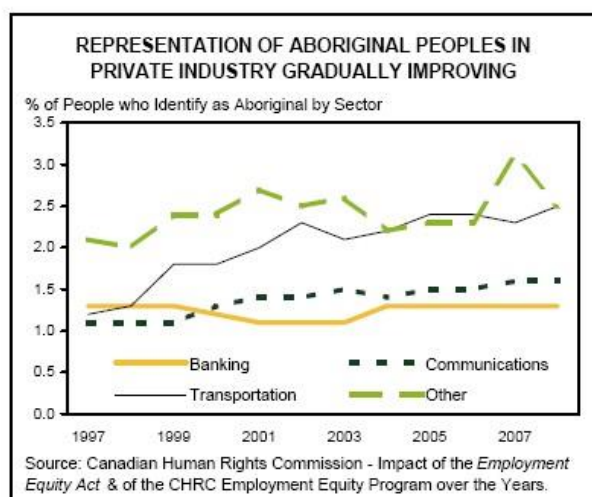
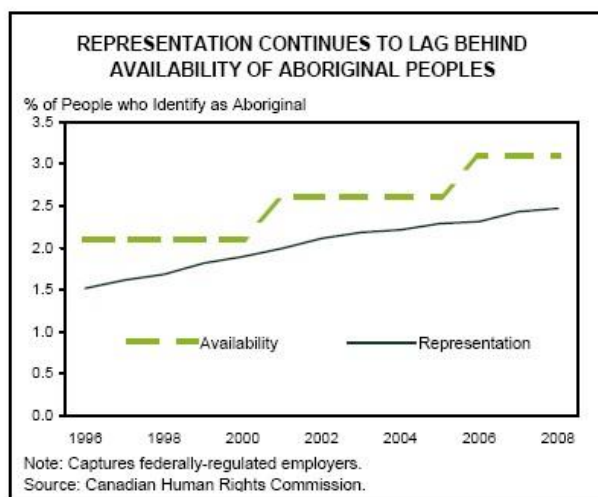
**Myth 8: Aboriginal communities are protected by government Treaties – which pretty much guarantee their economic and political rights.**

**Yes and no.** A treaty is a negotiated, written agreement which defines the rights and responsibilities for all parties involved. Issues resolved in treaties include land ownership, governance structures, wildlife and environment management, financial benefits and taxation rights.<sup>15</sup> More generally, agreements can sometimes capture the spiritual, philosophical and cultural views of those Aboriginal communities involved. Eleven historical treaties were signed from 1871-1921 covering much of Canada, except British Columbia, Québec and Newfoundland and Labrador.<sup>16</sup> There are twenty comprehensive land claims settled since 1973, involving 96 communities and over 70,000 Aboriginal people. These claims have involved 4,106,958 square kilometres in settlement land and \$2 billion in settlement dollars.

Recent court decisions highly recommend that treaties be negotiated with government and Aboriginal communities to bring greater certainty to land use and to ensure a clear definition of rights and responsibilities has been agreed upon. At present, not all Aboriginal communities have either historical or modern-day agreements in place – most are situated in British Columbia. For instance, 60% of all First Nations (or 116 communities) in the province are not governed by a treaty. Negotiations with senior Aboriginal leaders and Crown representatives are ongoing. It can often take years for one agreement to be signed. The British Columbia government estimates that the total benefits from signed treaties, including increased investment, could reach \$50 billion, or \$1-2 billion per year for the next 20-25 years.<sup>17</sup>

**Myth 9: Aboriginal people receive a huge, immediate boost to their income when they settle a claim.**

**Not always.** In settling a land claim, governments often use different payment methods: cash and other considerations such as economic development initiatives.<sup>18</sup> With land claim settlements, many Aboriginal communities are able to seek out opportunities for economic prosperity while offering their community members a more stable and certain future. It has been estimated that yet-to-be-settled compre-



hensive and specific land claims could yield \$9-\$13 billion.<sup>19</sup>

The financial portion of a comprehensive claim is usually handed over to the community over 12-15 years, while specific land claims are paid as a lump sum. However, this money is rarely a flow through transfer from the federal government to an individual Aboriginal person. Instead, the Aboriginal government often directs these funds be placed in a Trust.

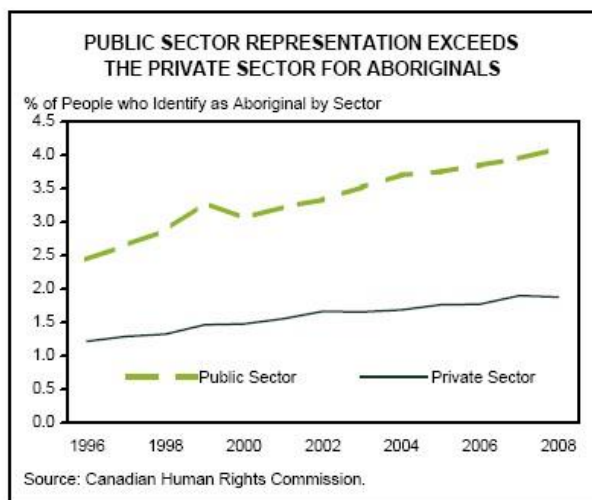
Although settlement funds are paid to the Aboriginal government (and placed in a Trust), there is often a per capita distribution payment made to all registered community members at the time of the settlement then living, both on- and off-reserve. Adults receive their payment immediately, while payments to Minors are deferred (held in trust) until the person reaches the age of majority. The decision to distribute per capita payments is made throughout the settlement process. Any per capita money must be stated in the agreement itself and the decision must be ratified by a community vote. The reason for these up-front payments is that it usually takes many years to settle a claim. In addition, given that the Trust is meant to be a long term benefit to all current and future generations of members, the Aboriginal government usually recommends a one time immediate payment to share in the celebration of the settlement with all its members.

**Myth 10: There is a quota system for how many Aboriginal people must be hired by Canadian employers.**

**False.** At the end of 2010, the employment rate of Aboriginal people (the per cent of the adult population

employed) was 66%. This share is fifteen percentage points lower than the comparable statistic posted by non-Aboriginal people. Noticeable differences between the two groups of individuals is also seen when we review the unemployment rate measure: for Aboriginals it stood at 12.3%, almost double the number recorded for non-Aboriginals.<sup>8</sup>

The different labour outcomes among Aboriginals and non-Aboriginals suggest that the former are under-represented in the labour market. To achieve better equality in the workplace, the *Employment Equity Act* was enacted in the late 1980s to help increase the representation of four designated groups: women, Aboriginal peoples, persons with disabilities, and members of a visible minority. Federally-regulated private sector firms,<sup>20</sup> Crown corporations, and much of the federal public service are just some of the employers governed by this legislation.<sup>21</sup> Each firm must





adhere to reporting requirements and is responsible for showing “reasonable progress” on increasing representation of these groups.<sup>22</sup>

Since the implementation of the legislation, progress has indeed been made – representation of Aboriginal people in the federally-regulated workforce has increased steadily from 1.5% in 1996 and 2.5% in 2008.<sup>23</sup> In the public sector, Aboriginal peoples were well represented overall in 2008 compared to the private sector.<sup>23</sup> Certain industries like transportation and communication have made important strides over the past decade. It is important to stress that takeaways from these statistics should be made with caution as the definition surrounding Aboriginal ancestry and identity changed in different Census iterations.

Representation and availability of Aboriginal workers should converge so that their full employment potential can be secured. However, federally-regulated employers adhere to the equal opportunity principle, such that candidates for a position must be judged without discrimination and/or bias. This means for a certain hire, managers must choose the best candidate for the position, based on the job description, regardless of race, gender, sexuality and many other criteria. With this in mind, and even with employment equity legislation in place, there is no quota system for employers on how many Aboriginal people must be hired.

### Myths equal misperceptions

There are many myths surrounding Canada’s Aboriginal population and they encompass a wide range of areas. In this report, we have assembled the necessary facts and figures to debunk just ten – many more exist. Misperceptions like these can lead to a lack of understanding about Aboriginal communities or underlying Aboriginal socio-economic conditions. In addition, non-Aboriginals may think of the Aboriginal community as one homogenous group, forgetting that many have their own unique history, culture and traditions. Myths could also distort non-Aboriginal thinking about the effectiveness of government programs targeted to the Aboriginal community or the appropriate policy to improve certain indicators such as labour market participation. This is unfortunate as there are more than a million people who identify as Aboriginal in Canada. In addition, Aboriginal people are important contributors to our history, culture and values, and the national economic picture.

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*Sonya Gulati,  
Senior Economist  
416-982-8063*

## Notes and References

1. "Aboriginal Peoples", Canada Revenue Agency. < <http://www.cra-arc.gc.ca/brnls/menu-eng.html> >
2. Status Indians have their names on the Indian Register (maintained by the federal government) and as such, are recognized as Indians under the *Indian Act* and entitled to certain rights and benefits under the law. Roughly half of the people who identify as Aboriginal are Status Indians and included on the Indian Register.
3. Christmas, Bernd. (2010) "Aboriginal Taxation Exemption", Atlantic Business Magazine, January 6, 2010. < <http://www.atlanticbusinessmagazine.ca/blogs/aboriginal-taxation-exemption/> >
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