



World Café Discussions
Métis Women BC Annual General Meeting
September 14, 2018

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Introduction

The Métis Women BC (MWBC) Annual General Meeting was held on Friday, September 14th, 2018 in Richmond, BC. Forty-eight women were in attendance, from 29 of the 38 chartered Métis Nation BC (MNBC) communities. The MWBC Provincial Chair was in attendance, as were six of the seven Regional Métis Women's Representatives and the new Director of Women. As part of the AGM, a World Café was completed to gather feedback from women about eight topics - Education, Economic Development and Employment; Health and Wellness; Housing, Food Security and Poverty; Culture, Language, Heritage; Children and Families; Metis Rights, Land Use and Harvesting; MWBC & MNBC; Women's Safety. The main themes gathered during the café are contained in this document.



Education, Economic Development and Employment

Main Themes

Education

1. More supports to attend post-secondary schooling – funding for cost of school and living expenses (e.g. childcare) the most common concern, especially for mature students and those with families
2. More Métis influence in the K-12 Education system – Métis curriculum (e.g. Métis languages), Métis education workers/liasons, Métis teachers, resources (Métis 101) for staff, acknowledgement of Métis at major events (e.g. sashing at graduation)

Economic Development

1. Entrepreneurial showcases
2. More opportunities than just careers in the Trades
3. Assistance/support for Métis people with businesses, or wanting to start a business

Employment

1. There is confusion about ASETS training, access and eligibility – navigators to help applicants through system were suggested
2. Career Fairs (with more than just trades) and an employment website
3. Training of skills for women to increase their chances of employment, such as interview skills, confidence skills, career counseling, resume writing – could done as webinars or online info and include a discussions area for women about finding employment

Health and Wellness

Main Themes

1. Access to and funding for traditional medicines and holistic healing – learning workshops, lists of knowledge keepers, preventative health
2. Government funded health benefits – medical, dental
3. Access to health practitioner concerns – more doctors, need other options such as tele health or online
4. Gathering and safe spaces for women, with resources on health (sexual and reproductive health, mental health, grief and loss, trauma, addictions, etc.) – places and spaces for discussion, information, access to health
5. Nutritional health and access to funding for workshops (e.g. canning, community gardens)



Housing, Food Security and Poverty

Main Themes

Housing

1. Subsidies for rental housing, especially for single parents and elders
2. Low cost loans for renovations, first time buyers
3. Sustainable housing, such as solar power, to reduce costs in old and new houses
4. New housing developments
 - a. mixed age
 - b. community-minded, include community areas such as kitchen and garden, supports in the housing development (e.g. mentorship between elders and single parents, cultural events)
 - c. Housing could make money by including commercial areas below, like rental spaces or community services
 - d. Use Habitat for Humanity model or make co-ops so housing is cared for and there is pride of ownership

Food Security

1. Opportunities for community gatherings, such as canning and community gardens

2. Relearning traditional food harvesting and gathering (medicines, hunting, food storage processes)
3. Accessing food concerns – shame associated with food banks, can't get food without an address

Poverty

1. Child care and daycares
 - a. Affordable and reliable
 - b. culturally informed care – knowledge of Métis concerns and offer Métis culture activities
 - c. funding for communities to start day cares or for family to offer care
 - d. northern BC areas seem to have the most need
 - e. flexible time schedules
2. supports and resources for those struggling financially, especially for highly mobile families (counseling, assistance when moving between provinces)



Culture, Language and Heritage

Main Themes

1. accessing Métis people who are knowledgeable about Métis traditional skills, culture, language is difficult (especially in the north). There is a need for Métis cultural knowledge keepers list.
2. Métis languages mentorship and having resources online and as webinars, so communities can teach themselves as smaller groups or individually. A list of Michif speakers who would do workshops would be useful. There needs to be funding for this and it needs to be long term funding
3. Opportunities for communities to share ideas and resources about Métis project, workshops, funding opportunities
4. Funding on a regular basis to run more culture workshops in communities. There is a very large demand for Métis knowledge and skills. See Appendix 1 for the list created of cultural activities.
5. Funding for activities other than traditional Métis knowledge and skills, such as leadership workshops for communities, lessons around Elders and protocol, ending lateral violence training

Children and Families

Main Themes

1. More supports for Métis students in the K-12 education system, such as support workers, and more knowledge about Métis in general in schools
2. Children removed from their homes should stay in their communities, with family if possible, as much as possible.
3. Resources and supports for parents and guardians, such as mentorship, subsidies,
4. Affordable childcare
5. Supports for caregivers who are extended family, such as grandparents, aunts, uncles
6. Opportunities for families to participate in Métis cultural events
7. MNBC advocating for funding, Métis specific guidelines, and learn from the mistakes MCFD has made.



Métis Rights, Land Use and Harvesting

Main Themes

1. Women want traditional knowledge about hunting, trapping, medicinal plants from elders and knowledge keepers through workshops and mentorship
2. Advocating for environmental stewardship, protection of land, sustainability in resource use, designated use areas in common lands to minimize destruction through recreation
3. Community garden funding and land areas in communities to grow medicinal plants, to learn about traditional harvesting and healing skills

MWBC and MNBC

Main Themes

1. There is a call for transparency and accountability in how money is allocated and spent, at both the MNBC provincial level and at the chartered community level
2. More money for chartered communities is requested that is not tied to a complicated or time consuming grants/application. Moneys need to be simple to access from MNBC – just use clear outlines for how money should be spent (e.g. \$300 towards rent) and require end reports
3. All communities need funds for an designated Métis place/gathering space
4. Grant writing sessions or help by either workshops or online resources are needed
5. Lateral Violence workshops and resources (PowerPoint or lesson plans created by MWBC that can be distributed via Regional Women’s Reps) are requested as soon as possible. Women would like to see this happen in this fiscal year, and for the lateral violence awareness to become a provincial awareness campaign and be a long term initiative for MNBC/MWBC to work on, so that this complex work has the length of time needed to make real change happen.



Women’s Safety

Main Themes

1. Concerns around women’s allegations of harassment and assault not being taken seriously
2. Resources, human supports (support workers or counselors) and workshops with a Métis cultural lens for violence prevention needed for women, families and men, including on sexual, lateral and domestic violence
3. MNBC and MWBC need to partner in programming with other organizations (RCMP, school districts) and coordinate ending violence initiatives
4. Concerns around transportation in general, but especially around Greyhound Bus Company ending services
5. Housing, Transition House and shelter availability for women and children
6. Safety for women in the sex trade and those struggling with addiction
7. Internet safety

Overlapping Themes

These are points that transcended the topics and are mentioned in all discussion circles.

1. Transportation cost and access are a major concern in all areas
2. Child care cost and access are a major concern in all areas
3. Women want more Métis culture workshops and sessions for themselves and their communities; there is a real cry out for relearning culture and connecting people
4. Women want themselves and their communities to be able to speak Métis languages
5. Single parents and LGBTQ2+ community members need more supports in all areas
6. Women are feeling burnt out from the amount of time volunteered for their communities, and need MNBC to assist them by providing more simple funding and Métis focused resources and workshops



Appendix 1

Métis Cultural Activities Requested

- Métis languages lessons
- Traditional medicine knowledge, using medicinal plants
- Growing traditional use plants
- Harvesting traditional use plants
- Plant identification
- Canning and preserving
- Cooking traditional methods and recipes, especially bannock and pemmican
- Hunting skills
- Fishing
- Moccasin making
- Medicine Wheel
- Beading
- Jigging
- Fiddle, guitar and spoons lessons
- Weaving (finger and loom), especially sash weaving
- Birch bark biting
- Baskets making
- Capote making
- Drum and other instrument making
- Red River cart building
- Traditional hide tanning, especially using brains
- Black powder shooting
- Archery
- Canoeing
- Campfire building and other outdoor/frontier type skills
- Making traditional style clothing, especially ribbons shirts/skirts
- Caribou hair tufting
- Porcupine quill crafting
- History and background information to go with different activities list above