

ASETS REGIONAL ENGAGEMENT – DISCUSSION GUIDE – OCTOBER 2013
As submitted by Aboriginal Labour Force Development Circle

DEMAND DRIVEN PROGRAMMING:

ASETS shifted from client based training and skills development to training base on labour demand. A move to demand-driven skills development requires different tools and information, such as information about the current labour market, partnerships with employers and links to employment. A key aspect of providing training based on labour demand is access to good quality and updated labour market information. Demand-driven skills development should be balanced with servicing clients' needs for those who are low-skilled and require upgrading prior to being ready for local jobs in demand, and for those who choose a career that may not be in demand in their community.

<p>1. How difficult is it to promote demand-driven training if/when there are few opportunities in or close to communities? How do you identify “in-demand” jobs in those circumstances?</p>	<p>It is very difficult due to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Determining the demand is difficult as there are no tools to determine the demand available for First Nations people.• Cannot focus in on the demand as it is sporadic.• Demand Driven training is very dependent on the economy and as a vulnerable component of the Canadian Society, First Nation are the most susceptible therefore Demand Driven opportunities are not prevalent on First Nation territories.• Difficult to identify Demand Driven training as “what does it mean”-as largest employer on a majority of First Nations is the Chief and Council and their “demand” for jobs is limited.• In larger concentration such as Toronto, Demand Driven Training can be identified easier due to such large initiatives as PAN AM Games or construction.• Health Care appears to be “Demand Driven Training” however pay scale varies from one region to the next. Aboriginal Pharmacist are also required.• Truck Driving and Heavy Equipment may be Demand Driven Training, but often times, jobs are not there. This type of training is very expensive for a possibility of no employment.• Mining may help with Demand driven training but that may be years down the road and transportation for our people is always an issue.• Lots of opportunities in larger areas but employment does not
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go to the Aboriginal people. Demand Driven training has a vast array of choices in the larger areas unlike First Nation Territories.

- Demand changes with the economy and the real difficulty is to identify these in the Annual Operating Plans (AOP) and the changes may not be reflected in the AOPs, as one cannot foresee the future. More flexibility is required within the AOPs.
- Transportation issues are always an issue with training of our people.
- Challenges exist in market positions and training for larger projects that exists in mining, pipeline and oil sands camps. Culture shock often occurs with these positions. Possibility of improving marketing component with potential of large salaries and could entail short term employment (5-10 years) but long term positive financial implications.
- Demand Driven training at Institutions is often very expensive and credits are not transferrable. ASETAs do not have a large enough budget to always accommodate these requests due to the expense.
- Expensive College Private training institutions are often more applicable as it gets clients trained faster and working faster but utilizes budget more and faster as well.
- Huge market for service industry in larger areas, like Toronto, due to tourism and population. Examples: common core mining training, chef's training, AZ and DZ training and Heavy Equipment Training – these are expensive but provide a straighter line to employment.
- We are also concerned over the issue of the numbers and concerns over the trades' shortage and are these numbers being over inflated?
- Who or what is driving the demand and are those numbers real? Every sector is driving its own information.
- Individual interests need to be brought to forefront for hard to serve clients as they may not be interested in demand driven training.

	<p>It is therefore almost impossible to identify “in-demand” jobs when very little “in-demand” employment exists on First Nation Territories. First Nation people have been identified as being more ready to relocate for employment than the average Canadian citizen but with lack of financial assistance, relocation often becomes difficult. An incentive to assist First Nation to relocate and exist until first pay cheque would greatly assist in this area.</p>
<p>2. How much emphasis should ASETS plan on essential skills/pre-employment training when trying to ensure that clients can move on successfully to demand-driven skills training? What percentage (estimated) of your clients need essential skills-pre-employment training?</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Essential/ Literacy skills is a major issue but clients do not have prerequisite to obtain employment. • More emphasis on accessibility and tools and resources for the clients (TOWES, etc.). • Pre-employment training should have a “job trial” component. • Industries to loosen up on entry levels for clients and accept and develop acceptable literacy/essential working skills for clients. • Provide tax incentives for industries/employers to accept and embrace literacy/skills workplace testing and qualifications. • Incentives for hiring Aboriginal people – make employment equity enforceable. • 50% - 80% clients require essential/literacy skills training and in order to address the needs, the Provinces need to form a partnership with Aboriginal training components (ASETA). • Provide abilities for ASETA to address, deliver and develop culturally appropriate essential/literacy skills training. Ensure length of training conforms with the client’s needs; if client has multi barriers.
<p>3. How well does demand-driven training work in improving labour market participation of various harder-to-reach target groups (ie. Women, youth, and clients with multiple barriers)? What works well? What does not work?</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Takes a lot of time and energy to ensure client is prepared and ready. You may start out with literacy/work skills and work through the entire process from start to finish getting them employed. • Job mentoring should be encouraged and implemented; may be time consuming but it helps with hard to serve clients.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Individual interests need to be brought to forefront for hard to serve clients as they may not be interested in demand driven training. • Hard to serve clients need stability; in terms of housing, daycare, etc. • Identifying their occupation may not evolve until two or three years down the road. • Mandatory participation, such as OW forced employment, does not work. • Demand Driven training does not work well with improving the labour market participation for the harder to reach target groups as they tend to be more individualized. Some know they want to work but barriers need to be addressed first ; women with children need to have issue of Daycare addressed and ensuring the health and safety of their children comes first; with the youth it is often transportation issues and lack of financial resources to relocate for employment and with clients that have multiple barriers that area is often unknown until you have worked with client for a while. • The main thing that has worked well with these target groups is time and often times a lot of counseling sessions and working through the aspects of addressing their issues before all else. • Taking a client such as a youth and forcing them to be trained and ready in less than a year is difficult and intimidating to the youth.
<p>4. What types of supports help/would help you to identify local/regional labour market information when determining the right demand-driven programming?</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Dependable, consistent information is required. Every Region uses a different format and it should be standardized. • Ability to obtain good and reliable contacts. • Creditable and unbiased Labour market information. • Need ability and resources to train people to do labour market information on our First Nations and applicable areas that service large numbers of Aboriginal people such as Toronto. • Must be realized that there is an entirely different demand and need for Aboriginal Labour Market information.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Labour market is determined by the Aboriginal Employers and unfortunately very little Aboriginal employers exists on First Nation Territories as economic development ventures have not favoured Aboriginal people and the programs in the past have been sporadic and lacked financial ability to develop economic ventures. First Nations need an economy. • 90% of clients want to work with an Aboriginal Agency as they want help from their own people and clients feel more comfortable in dealing with their own people. • Supports: a deck on the aboriginal labour market bulletin? (what does this mean)
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FOLLOW UP QUESTIONS:

<p>5. What is the success rate associated with clients who receive training for jobs that are in-demand outside of their communities? Are they able to retain employment over the longer term?</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • There is a better success rate when the client leaves the community as it usually in the field they want and have selected. Yes the client retains employment over the longer term as it usually in the field they want and they have not been “forced” into it as that is the only job around. • It is a high success rate, but it’s not a high number of Aboriginal clients that fit into this category. • Sometimes, our people do not want to relocate for to relocate for extended periods of time especially for employment that they do not want or like. If they return home, they need additional help; such as retraining. • It would be great to train our people for an “in-demand” type job as employment would be inevitable but this does not occur often as “Demand Driven” training may be non-existent in area due to lack of employment. • Client-driven training! And hopefully we match that with the Demand occupations?
<p>6. How can we better support clients with multi-barriers?</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • We have been providing increased client assessments and multiple interventions with our clients but do not receive credit for the extra work that is being done.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • ASETA holders for decades have worked above and beyond the call of duty to help clients succeed. • However more assistance in terms of human resources would be great as offices for ASETAs are often times only managed by one individual and lack the time to fully address “specific” needs of some clients. ASETA offices should mirror “one stop” shopping concept that many Employment Ontario offices have, however, we often have to direct our clients elsewhere and some clients do not like being redirected. • Daycare needs are paramount and has to be enhanced and numbers increased due to lack of spaces for Daycare.
<p>7. If you were to design ASETS, would you maintain the focus on demand-driven training to achieve the best results? If not, what other model of training would you use?</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • No, would not maintain focus on demand driven training as that often does not exist in First Nation Territories. • It is recommended however to maintain the existing programs as they are successful. Excellent transition from unemployed to employed, ie. Training purchase, wage subsidy, Direct Course Purchase, Self-Employment, Mobility, Job Creation Partnerships, Skills Development Employment Benefit, Employment Assistance Service Support, Labour Market Partnerships Support Measure, Research and Innovation Support Measures, Stay in School, Youth Employment Services, Group base Employability Skills, Employability Skills through Work Experience, Employability Skills through Entrepreneurship, Work Experience and Individual Skills Enhancement, Career Focus and summer employment opportunities for the youth. • Current process with the ASETA’s, with the enhancement of outside \$\$ to enhance our existing programs. Ie. SPF program. But, something accessible. • Client driven which matches the Demand driven skills required. A combination of the two would be ideal.

PARTNERSHIPS:

Partnerships help connect Aboriginal people with sustainable and meaningful employment. While partnerships have long been a cornerstone of ESCD’s Aboriginal labour market programming, ASETS seeks to use partnerships in a more integrated, strategic way that leads to increased employment and possible contributions from partners. ASETS agreement holders are encouraged to engage in partnerships in order to fulfill their goals and objectives. Partnerships are also intended to extend program reach, enhance organizational capacity, and create a diversified funding base. Given the demand-driven nature of ASETS, particular focus is placed on establishing partnerships with private industry and employers.

<p>1. What kinds of partnerships (e.g. formal, informal, cash, in-kind, expertise) have worked best for you? What is the right balance of partners?</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • All forms of partnerships have worked and all forms are valued. • For each example of partnership they are all balanced equally. • Union partnerships have worked better than private employers. • Difficult to get “cash” partners; Canada Job Grants may not work for Aboriginal people (most vulnerable) and small businesses won’t have funds to contribute and larger companies and conglomerates are not prone to employ Aboriginal people unless funding comes with it. • Labour Market Planning Board worked well; Colleges also worked well as partners. • Other Aboriginal organizations worked well as partners as well.
<p>2. What are the greatest impediments to partnership building?</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • ASETAs that applied for SPF funding had the partners lined up and then the ASETA did not receive funding so it was difficult to maintain faith with partnerships due to failed SPF venture. • Finding new partners is difficult due to competing against others. • No real incentives to keep employer (partner) and no incentive to hire Aboriginal unless something there; ie. Tax credit.
<p>3. Have partnerships (formal or informal) helped to successfully leverage funding and/or improve client outcomes? How?</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Yes partnerships have helped to successfully leverage funding and it also improved clients’ outcomes; for example, carpentry program with George Brown College. Accredited programming.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Yes, it provides additional funding which leads to paid work experience, and leads to transferrable skills and jobs; for example, St. Lawrence college. (Skills Link.) • The ILC (Independent Learning Centre) was also a successful partner. • Building in a cultural component, leads to greater success in all areas. • First Nations partnerships worked very well – SATF assisted – subsidies assisted as well in job training, Targeted wage Subsidy, etc. • Funding is flexible enough to assist with many individuals. • Second Career does not do very well for target groups. Tough criteria.
<p>4. How do partnerships assist in providing or directing training to jobs that in-demand?</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Partnerships help in cost sharing and meeting the needs of employers and clients. • ASETA and clients can utilize the expertise from partners, training boards, etc. and unfortunately employers often times will not sign in as employer unless clients have post secondary education (need diploma, degree).

FOLLOW UP QUESTIONS:

<p>5. What is your expectation of the federal government in supporting partnerships (i.e. helping to build linkages and various industries/businesses/provincial and territorial governments)?</p>	<p>Tripartite process needs to be respected and instilled (Prov, Fed and Aboriginal); this relationship should be fostered; legislate positive changes that will encourage partnership building for in demand jobs; ensure the continued existence and financial support for ASETA; set aside financial allocation for LMDA/LMA specifically for Aboriginal people before any transfer to the Province; for examples: ASETA Agreements, Daycares, Homelessness – Pathways to Success is also a great example of this.</p> <p>To enable capacity building to formulate the partnerships. Funding levels, administration dollars should be at par with others in relation to Aboriginal employment and training.</p> <p>This is also relevant with municipalities; Municipal Ontario Works is just another example where the Feds need to be involved in working with us.</p> <p>Aboriginal people should have been and should be involved with the development of projects relevant to us; ie. First Nation Job Fund. (age category is different).</p>
<p>6. What is the most important factor in sustaining partnerships to ultimately improving client outcomes? What are some examples?</p>	<p>Work with partners that support results and costs sharing in real world job experiences.</p> <p>Meaningful employment. Very crucial component – trained in other areas rather than labourers, flag persons, etc.</p> <p>Being able to build a partnership with someone who have a labour pool – continued inventory – job ready clients.</p>

REGIONAL PERSPECTIVES:

Regional perspectives of ASETS vary from province to territory. It is important that Aboriginal labour market programming compliments regional labour market needs and the needs of the clients.

<p>1. By examining the current ASETS structure, what has worked or not worked in your province/territory?</p>	<p>What has worked:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Programs that work; Targeted wage Subsidy, Direct Course Purchase, Self-Employment Assistance, Upgrading, Literacy and Essential Skills(list all of them).• FNICCI helped.• Cost sharing definitely works.• Long term planning and funding.• Flexibility.• Continued access to CRF and EI funding.• Aboriginal control and First Nation managed and administered has worked.• Aboriginal controlled programs worked: Brighter Futures, Canadian Ministers of Education Council report, AHRDA Evaluation Reports clearly identified success of programs and success due to Aboriginal control and developed programs and the implementation by Aboriginal people.• Success stories were useful and it may be more prudent to change the reporting requirement to half way through the year as well. <p>What has not worked:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Five Year Strategic Plan due to fact that it was not the First Nation(ASETS) plan but rather Service Canada's plan and no continued support to revise, upgrade or alter the Five Year Plan.• Not enough support for students.
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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Inflexibility of AOP and the fact that it was too rigid. • Measuring number of individuals served instead of the number of interventions required. • Lack of capacity building. • Reporting on the Annual Report and non-affiliated clients and listing of soft service clients was useless information. • Putting capacity building and communications/marketing as part of Administration did not work as Administration should be separate allocation (above and beyond program funding). • Lack of total overall funding (should be increased yearly).
<p>2. What factors in your region are affecting – positively or negatively – training-to-employment (e.g. seasonal work, large economic projects, changes to EI)? Are there any local labour market issues that are affecting ASETS programming?</p>	<p>Factors that are affecting training to employment:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lack of jobs. Promises, but not realized. • Seasonal work is the other option available at times. • Not enough tangible incentives for large employers, to encourage them to hire Aboriginal clients. • Pan Am games for example is not a great example of a “good partnership”. • Disparity between our clients and the “good” jobs. • Easier for the LDM’s to approach viable employers rather than the clients, at times. Racism, etc. (Bridge building) • Difficult for our clients to access JOBS, because we don’t have strong traditional “old school” networks. • Therefore, the LDM’s play a significant role, in bridging this disparity. And, building stronger, better networks. • This was originally a TOOL to assist the Aboriginal people to catch up to Mainstream and was on the right track but somehow it has gotten off track maybe due to lack of involvement of Aboriginal people as process has become one sided. • Information in local FN’s, doesn’t reach mainstream LMI. So, the in-demand jobs may be different. ie. Second careers, not a good match.
<p>3. Are there specific challenges in serving the urban/rural Aboriginal population? If so, what are the greatest challenges?</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Hindered by too much competition with mainstream, programming for immigrants, etc.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Employment Ontario offices competing for funds. • Does not encourage positive partnerships between funders. • Socio-economic conditions, housing, child care, transportation, etc. • Sense of entitlement offered to immigrants and not FN peoples over getting a JOB. • Location of training institutions, not easily accessible, for the rural area clients.
<p>4. For those communities with seasonal employment or for clients obtaining short-term employment contracts, how can we appropriately capture these results (e.g. where clients may obtain employment more than once during one fiscal year?)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Changes or modifications to their systems to track all interventions separately. • Each client may need multiple interventions leading to employment. • Data capture issue. • FEDS need to look at their own hiring practices, no Aboriginal people on staff.
<p>5. Other than employment, are there other measures of success that we should consider (e.g. attainment of essential skills, readiness for training to employment)?</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Self-Employment/Entrepreneurship and small businesses are a success. • There are multiple measures of success and it cannot be measured in terms of employment or results. • Duration between training and employment, may lead to re-training. • Clients Path. Identifying that, and they decide to enter post-secondary, and ultimately have an excellent career. HUGE Success! • Assisting clients with multiple barriers is a success. • Some clients just look at the job board, and never complete an information sheet, yet are successful in finding employment.
<p>6. Is there any duplication of services that could be addressed prior to engaging in a new strategy?</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Competition discussion. • The federal government and the provinces/territories need to look at themselves, META, youth link, employment Ontario, etc. specific immigration service agencies. • Our offices need to be recognized as an ASETA delivery office(s), and utilize our services. • FEDS, Provinces, and municipalities have too many overlaps.

	<p>All with their own independent targets. Thus the competition for clients!</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Aboriginal Human Resources of Canada, not helpful, not useful!
<p>7. What are some challenges to training and employment for our clients that are specific to your region (e.g. more restrictive regulations or EI eligibility)? How have you been dealing with these challenges?</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• LMDA client access system is not easily used. Sometimes not the most useful info. Sometimes separated by Provinces, it's not National.• Saying 1 client is not eligible, when the EC knows they are.• Homeless clients, transportation issues.• Verification of EI eligible clients.• Software support for LMDA's, not great!• Second careers, not helpful.

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