

# The Bulletin

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## Moving to a RURAL COMMUNITY?

### Ten Tips for Career Practitioners

— by Geoff S. Peruniak

Rural areas provide a lifestyle option, a recreation destination and a source of inspiration. The countryside is a source of raw materials, labour, capital and international exchange.

However, rural Canada is also often the recipient of urban and industrial waste, the object of destructive extraction practices and the casualty of indifferent global markets. Rural citizens have high stakes in creating solutions to these significant challenges. Rural career practitioners play a significant role in supporting their clients and their communities in such efforts.

*continued >>*

### SERVING RURAL COMMUNITIES



Although the population declines, a significant number of Canadians still live in rural and remote communities. Rural Canadians are essential to the country's economy, primarily through agriculture and the natural resources industries.

Contributors to this issue of The Bulletin describe the career and employment challenges faced by all rural workers and specific client groups: people with disabilities, women and youth. But contributors also describe successful initiatives and transferrable strategies that overcome the challenges.

Joshua Flemming explores three thriving projects in Labrador and Sharon Ferriss reports on the impressive growth of Aboriginal-owned businesses in Canada, many of which are located in rural or

remote communities. Thinking of moving to a small town? Geoff Peruniak lists ways a career practitioner coming from an urban setting will need to adapt. How about working remotely? The benefits of and requirements for working from home are explained in Paul Smith's article.

The use of Internet technology for training is key to improving economic success in low population regions. Whether they are on the west coast, the east or somewhere in between, rural workers across the country are building their skills through distance learning, as many of these articles detail.

Indeed, career development practitioners in rural areas may find it challenging to upgrade their own expertise. The solution for that is [contactpoint.ca](http://contactpoint.ca). Visit our event listing for extensive web-based training options and participate in our Career Developer email list or CERIC's LinkedIn network to keep abreast of employment trends and issues.

THIS ISSUE



January 23–25, 2012

## Cannexus12

National Career Development Conference  
Ottawa, Ontario

CERIC, the Canadian Education and Research Institute for Counselling, presents Cannexus12 — a bilingual National Career Development Conference designed to promote the exchange of information and explore innovative approaches in the areas of career counselling and career development.

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- Employment Programs
- Ethics for Career Development Practitioners
- Mentorship & Entrepreneurship
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- Aboriginal Career Issues
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- Effective Counselling & Facilitation Techniques
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Cannexus is presented by CERIC and supported by The Counselling Foundation of Canada with a broad network of Supporting Organizations.



### KEYNOTE SPEAKERS

#### MARK SAVICKAS

Mark Savickas Ph.D. is professor of Behavioral Sciences at the Northeastern Ohio Universities College of Medicine, Adjunct Professor of Counselor Education at Kent State University and Professor Extraordinaire at the University of Pretoria in South Africa. His 80 articles, 40 book chapters and 500 presentations to professional groups have dealt with vocational behaviour and career counselling. He is President of the Counseling Psychology Division in the International Association of Applied Psychology and has just completed 12 years as a member of the Board of Directors for the International Association for Educational and Vocational Guidance.

#### TREY ANTHONY

Award-winning Canadian playwright, executive producer, actor, creator and stand-up comedian, Trey Anthony has been in the entertainment industry for more than 15 years. Her play 'da Kink in my Hair, which debuted at the Toronto Fringe Festival, has won four NAACP Awards and was named one of the top 10 plays in Canada's theatrical history! Anthony also founded the Trey Anthony@One Centre in Toronto, a women-focused, creative wellness facility and regularly visits schools to inspire youth. She has recently been named a featured contributor/writer for the Toronto Star.

#### MICHAEL ADAMS

Michael Adams is a noted commentator on social values and social change in North America. The founding president of the Environics group of research and communications consulting companies, Michael's bestselling book *Fire and Ice: The United States, Canada, and the Myth of Converging Values* won the Donner Prize for the best book on Canadian public policy in 2003. In his most recent book, *Stayin' Alive: How Canadian Baby Boomers Will Work, Play, and Find Meaning in the Second Half of Their Adult Lives* (Penguin, November 2010), Michael reflects on the changes Baby Boomers have brought about in Canadian society.

## Moving to a RURAL COMMUNITY?

<< continued from cover

### Life as a Rural Career Practitioner

Only about 20% of the Canadian population is described as “rural” by Statistics Canada<sup>1</sup>, which defines rural as areas with population centres that are less than 10,000 and where at least half the workforce is employed locally<sup>2</sup> (i.e. not a bedroom community of an urban centre).

As a career practitioner, suppose you move from an urban centre to a small rural town. What might you discover that would differ from your urban experience? Here are ten items to consider as you make the transition:

1. Perhaps you would have one of those rare “cushy government jobs” with a steady income and insurance benefits. If not, good luck in trying to get one. Unless you have exceptional qualifications, there is a long waiting list of “townies” (a.k.a. local residents with similar training and skills).
2. Perhaps you thought that locating your employment office on the campus of the local college would give you credibility. Instead you are dismayed to find that most of your clients
3. You might be frustrated to learn that many of your clients cannot reach your services. They have limited access to a vehicle, distances are considerable and they may have infants at home but no childcare.
4. Even if your clients can come into town, they worry that if seen by neighbours they’ll be considered failures for going into your office for help.
5. It may take a while for you to get used to constantly running into your clients in the grocery store, in the hardware store and at the local garage. At some point you realize that the grocery store is really a community centre.
6. You are astounded when the grocery cashier asks if you will look over her résumé for an oil field job because she has more bookkeeping experience than her sister, who was your client yesterday. “Is everyone related?” you may well ask.
7. It will take your breath away to see local civic pride galvanized in the

service of families who have lost their homes in a wildfire, or in the preservation of a riverfront, or in the building of a performing arts centre.

8. It is almost axiomatic that people speculate on how long you will be staying. Not every urbanite makes the transition.
9. You begin to realize that the labour market here is very limited, that building your credibility with local employers is critical to placing clients and you’d better not waste their time with ill-prepared candidates.
10. Finally, you recognize that your own aspirations for professional development must be done from the inside-out beginning with yourself and expanding to local, like-minded human service providers. Travel to the city costs time and money both of which are in short supply.

At the end of a long day, you go outside and breathe in the sweet scent of aspen on a northern breeze. You feel peace in the bright, bubbly sound of an American Goldfinch and in his sunbeam flight. You are home.

“

It may take a while for you to get used to constantly running into your clients

in the grocery store, in  
the hardware store and  
at the local garage.

”

### REFERENCES

<sup>1</sup> “2006 Census: Portrait of the Canadian Population in 2006, by Age and Sex”, *2006 Census analysis series*, Statistics Canada, <http://www12.statcan.ca/census-recensement/2006/as-sa/97-551/p17-eng.cfm>

<sup>2</sup> “Definitions of Rural”, *Rural and Small Town Canada Analysis Bulletin*, Statistics Canada, Vol. 3, No.3, November 2001.

Geoff Peruniak is Professor of Psychology at Athabasca University and Coordinator of the Athabasca’s Certificate in Career Development. He has worked and lived in small towns most of his life.

# Training is THE KEY TO PROSPERITY

— by Louise Gaudrault

One of the most significant issues facing businesses today is access to skilled labour. Skilled labour — not just skilled trades — is essential for the growth and development of Canadian communities. In rural and remote areas of Ontario, and indeed in other parts of the country, finding skilled personnel, or at least training and development opportunities, can be a struggle.

## Essential Skills

The Government of Canada through extensive research has identified nine essential skills.<sup>1</sup> These are needed in most occupations, as well as in daily life, in varying degrees of complexity. They are:

1. Reading text
2. Document use
3. Numeracy
4. Writing
5. Oral communications
6. Working with others
7. Continuous learning
8. Thinking skills
9. Computer use

Identifying the skills needed is only the first step. To ensure competency and improvement of this knowledge base, training and continued education are key.

## Enhancing Skills

Many employers encourage and pay for their workers to add to their skills. One employee, Ken Stewart, was able to complete the Ontario Management and Development program with the support of his employer, Hemlo, in Marathon, Ontario (population 3,860). He enrolled in the program that was offered jointly by Canadore and Confederation Colleges and delivered via the Contact North|elearnnetwork.ca network.

Using distance education technology, Ken was able to enhance his skills.

“I was a little bit concerned, having been out of school for 30 years,” stated Ken, whose only previous post-secondary experience was two years of language studies at Laurentian University.

On top of work and home life, he had a few other responsibilities to juggle as well. He coaches at a junior curling rink, is the treasurer for a local girls’ hockey team and sits on the board of an area credit union. He says, however, that he always found time to take his classes.

“I’m 50 and you kind of know what you want. You’ve made that commitment, you see it through,” noted Ken. He says Contact North|elearnnetwork.ca was very accommodating, allowing him to tune into classes while he was away on business trips.

## Training Options from Contact North

Working with Ontario’s colleges, universities, high schools and literacy organizations, Contact North|elearnnetwork.ca is able to provide access to over 10,000 courses in a wide variety of fields. For employers or individuals that need a lot of flexibility in their training options, the online 24/7 course delivery method is probably best. For those who prefer live classes with set times and dates, the technologies offered by Contact North|elearnnetwork.ca include a blend of e-learning, audio and video.

Last year, over 8000 individuals took ‘at a distance’ courses through Contact North|elearnnetwork.ca, many of which were people looking for retraining in the wake of economic upheaval.

Attracting skilled personnel to rural and remote communities is not always possible,

but training and upgrading local staff members may fill the knowledge gap and maintain the local economy. With access centres in 112 small communities in Ontario, Contact North|elearnnetwork.ca is ensuring that education and training opportunities are available to all who need them.

## REFERENCES

<sup>1</sup> “Essential Skills: Definitions”, Human Resources Skills Development Canada, <http://www.hrsdc.gc.ca/eng/workplaceskills/LES/definitions/definitions.shtml>

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Louise Gaudrault is the Marketing and Communications Coordinator for Contact North (elearnnetwork.ca). Her varied career path within the fields of education, museums and Francophone rights has provided her with twenty years experience in public relations and project management. Louise is a graduate of the University of Montreal and Wilfrid Laurier University. You can reach her at [louise@contactnorth.ca](mailto:louise@contactnorth.ca).

# Distance Learning Connects CANADIANS WITH DISABILITIES

— by Jason Olson

Distance Learning (DL) tools are helping Canadians in remote communities connect to programs and services that would otherwise be beyond reach. With the help of DL, some of the most marginalized people with disabilities in Canada are able to take part in programs designed to improve their skills and get them into the workforce.

## **Employ-Ability: Overcoming Mobility Issues and Geography**

The Employ-Ability program offered by the Neil Squire Society is one such program. This program is free and is provided via DL. Its focus is on career development and wellness for work, assisting people with disabilities in developing an action plan to return to work, education or volunteerism. It is directed at individuals who are marginalized due to their physical disabilities and are unable to attend other programs because of mobility or geography.

Students of this fully accessible program can participate either from the Society's dedicated learning centers across Canada or directly from their homes, using online resources like Elluminate Live and the

Moodle Learning Management System. Elluminate Live functions as a virtual classroom, allowing students and their facilitators to meet in real-time, regardless of their physical location.

The Moodle system, on the other hand, can be considered a virtual textbook. The distance Employ-Ability Moodle course includes notes, videos, discussion forums and assignments for participants to complete as they progress through the Employ-Ability program.

## **Creating Connection**

Because of these resources, the Society is able to deliver the program anytime, anywhere, to any Canadian with a physical disability as long as they have Internet access, according to e-Learning Manager Chad Leaman.

Chad tells the story of Jaycee, a distance Employ-Ability client and amputee, who lives several kilometers outside the small community of Lytton, BC. He says that Jaycee's life just prior to joining the program "was a little bit like a country song.... She lost her leg, her dog had just

died and she was depressed and alone. So to be connected to a group of people everyday, to be engaged and to have something to do was reinvigorating for her."

Before joining the program, Jaycee had only left her home twice in nine months. Through the program Jaycee was able to gain some very valuable employment skills, but according to Chad the most enriching part of the program was the fact that it eliminated the sense of isolation that she had been feeling. Jaycee so enjoyed the interactions with her classmates that, when the course ended, she drove all the way to Burnaby to meet them and take part in the graduation. She even invited each of them to camp out at her place that summer.

The distance portion of the Employ-Ability program has been highly successful. Since its introduction in 2008, over 30% of its 291 participants have gone on to find employment. An additional 10% of them have gone on to further their education.

These statistics are wonderful. However, the ability to connect people who otherwise would face isolation may be the best thing about distance learning.

“

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in nine months.

”

Jason Olson is a creative writer from Vancouver, BC. He studied English and Political Science at Grant MacEwan College in Edmonton, Alberta and currently works as an Administrative Assistant for the Neil Squire Society in Burnaby, BC. His work can be found in Rehab Matters Magazine.

# Impact of the Recession on RURAL YOUTH ACROSS CANADA

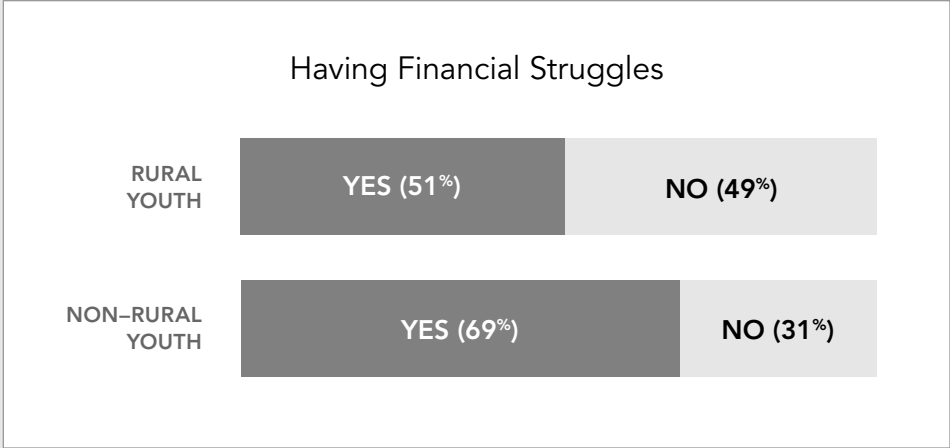
— by Ryan Stanga

The recession beginning in 2008 affected nearly all Canadian youth and continues to be felt to this day. First Work set out to understand this impact through Cross Canada Dialogues, a research initiative involving 70 organizations providing youth employment services. More than 2,000 youth across Canada participated in the survey. What has been the recession’s impact on rural youth?

### Youth are Younger in Rural Areas

A major factor when considering rural youth is their continual migration to more urban areas. We found 70% of rural youth were 18 or younger compared to only 35% of non-rural youth. Rural youth tended to live in their parents’ home and were less likely to have graduated high school when surveyed.

The research indicates that rural youth have different perceptions of the economy and have felt the recession differently than their urban counterparts. When we re-analyzed our data to control for age, we found that the differences between rural and non-rural youth are not just based on age.



### Rural Youth are Less Likely to Say They are Struggling Financially

When asked whether they were having financial struggles, rural youth were evenly split between “yes” and “no”, while non-rural youth were more likely to respond “yes” than “no”.

This held true across all ages. Rural youth under 18 claimed to have financial struggles only 39% of the time versus 50% of non-rural youth. For those over 18, the number of rural youth jumps up to 73% compared to 81% of non-rural youth.

### Concerns of Rural Youth

Across Canada, youth were most likely to express concern about finding a job and earning enough money to support themselves. Rural youth were consistently less likely to indicate having those concerns.

The only concern rural youth were more likely to have than their non-rural counterparts was finishing high school (42% vs. 29%).

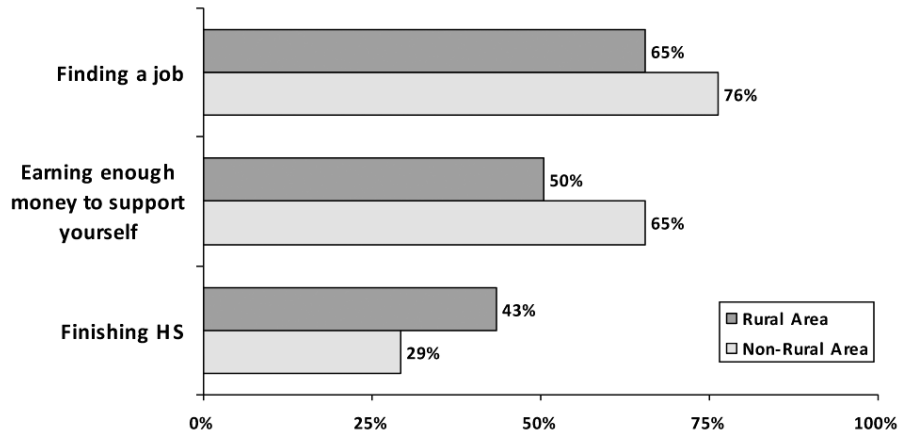
### Implications for Employment Service Providers

The absence of public transportation remains a key barrier to youth employment in rural areas. Also important to consider is why rural youth express fewer concerns than their more urban counterparts. Perhaps rural youth do not feel as much pressure as urban youth or rural parents do not put the same kinds of pressure on their children as non-rural parents do. Either of these possibilities could lead rural youth to express fewer concerns.

Maybe moving to the city is seen by rural youth as a way to improve their situation, giving them hope that their urban

	Rural Youth	Non-Rural Youth
18 years of age or less	70%	35%
19 – 27 years of age	30%	65%
Rent-free with parents	65%	41%
Pay rent to parents	10%	14%
Out of parents’ home	25%	46%
Some high school	70%	50%
High school plus	30%	50%

## Rural vs. Non-Rural Youth Concerns



counterparts lack. Perhaps the nature of the agricultural labour market distinguishes youth experience from non-rural areas.

Employment service providers should keep these possibilities in mind when working with rural youth.

### About First Work

Since 1988, First Work and our network of over 70 youth employment agencies has been committed to delivering accessible, high-quality, outcomes-based employment services to youth to assist them in reaching

their goals. Join our LinkedIn conversation to offer your opinion on these issues. Simply go to: <http://goo.gl/P9g09> and join in.

Ryan Stanga is a Researcher with Evidence Research, a unit of First Work. His background is in organizational research and development. He achieved his Master's degree in Organizational Psychology and has over 13 years experience consulting with diverse for profit and not-for-profit organizations across the Greater Toronto Area and south-western Ontario.



Cannexus.ca

## Elizabeth McTavish Bursary

**Apply by September 30 for a bursary to Cannexus12!**

In recognition of Elizabeth McTavish's invaluable contribution to the field of career counselling, The Counselling Foundation of Canada is providing a select number of bursaries for a full registration at the Cannexus conference (\$500 value) plus \$150 for expenses.

Applications must be from non-profit, non-legislated, community-based organizations. Bursaries will be awarded based on regional equity.

“During a year of economic uncertainty among not-for-profits, the Elizabeth McTavish Bursary allowed me an experience that would not have been otherwise available. As a young professional, I truly value Cannexus. At the conference, I was able to learn many new techniques along with hearing many inspirational speakers. The bursary goes a long way in promoting the professional development of counsellors coast-to-coast.”

Ben McNamara  
Employment Counsellor  
Multicultural Association of Fredericton  
Elizabeth McTavish Bursary recipient, Cannexus11

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For a bursary application, please visit [cannexus.ca](http://cannexus.ca). Contact us with any questions at **416.929.2510** or [cannexus@ceric.ca](mailto:cannexus@ceric.ca).



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# Employment Challenges for RURAL YOUTH

— by David Driver

In a country as vast as Canada, one of the challenges for an employment counsellor is to not only meet a client's personal needs, but to also address the environment that they live in. And while it's true that most of Canada's population lives in urban centers, there are still a significant number of Canadians living in rural communities.

As an employment counsellor in Manitoba serving a rural city of 10,000, I have witnessed first-hand the unique barriers facing youth of rural regions that might not otherwise be a problem for their urban counterparts. Here are some of the major issues:

**1. Lack of Transportation.** With little-to-no public transportation available in most rural centers, youth of rural communities have limited options when finding ways

to get to work. Since most youth are without a driver's license and/or car, sometimes a walk of several kilometres to work is the only option for transportation, and the situation only worsens during the winter.

**2. Lack of Training Opportunities.** If a rural student fresh out of high school wishes to further their education by either attending college or university, they almost have no choice but to move away to an urban center. This can be discouraging for those who want to stay in their community, or can create problems for those who don't have the means to travel back-and-forth from their rural home to school during the week.

**3. Issues with Confidentiality.** It's harder to stay anonymous within smaller

communities, and as a result sometimes a client's "bad" work reputation will make their job search more difficult. Information about employees with poor work experiences is more likely to be spread around in rural communities than urban ones, thus impeding some individual's chances of finding work in smaller towns.

**4. Lack of Job Options.** Rural communities have limited year-round employment options for youth. Most communities have an abundance of seasonal work, in particular in summer (e.g. construction, farming, landscaping, fishing, etc.) but a considerable lack of winter work. Given that labour jobs dominate the rural landscape, youth can sometimes find themselves unemployed for stretches at a time while they wait for the snow to melt.

Canada is filled with thousands of different rural communities and while it's hard to generalize, it's safe to say that the country's rural labour market is vastly different from the country's urban labour market. As difficult as it can be for inexperienced youth to find and keep work in the city, there are even more challenges for rural youth to conquer. It's up to employment counsellors to help clients identify and stride towards overcoming those unique barriers.

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It's harder to stay anonymous within smaller communities, and as a result

sometimes a client's "bad" work reputation will make their job search more difficult.

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David Driver is an Employment Counsellor at Options Employment Services for Youth in Selkirk, Manitoba. He has a B.A. from the University of Manitoba and is a Career/Employment Coach.



# Listening to RURAL WOMEN

— by Blythe Shepard

Did you know?

- > One in five Canadian women live in rural areas; only 2% of rural women live on farms.
- > Rural women tend to be self-employed and to work part-time and seasonally compared to their urban counterparts and are therefore less likely to be eligible for EI and EI funded training.
- > Employment agencies serving rural clients report a lack of jobs paying above minimum wage.
- > Childcare and travel costs are significant barriers to obtaining employment.<sup>1</sup>

## Concerns of Rural Women

In 2010, women between the ages of 35 and 55 living in rural communities in the Kootenay region of British Columbia took part in a research study conducted by the author. Through focus groups and individual interviews these women expressed their concerns and hopes for a better future. The following words of research participants exemplify the concerns of working women in rural communities.

- > **The Pink-Collar Ghetto.** “And there just isn’t the choice in a rural community — like in a city there’s a place for everybody, there’s all different areas, from technological to physical and you don’t think twice about seeing a female carpenter or computer expert... And here, in a small town like ours, you can be a teacher, you can be a nurse, you can be a waitress, you can run your flower business. It’s same-old, same-old pink ghetto.” — Lynette
- > **Need for Community Support Systems.** “Without women in the community? Well, I wouldn’t know

it. It wouldn’t be a community at all. There’d be no relationships.” — Martha

- > **Fears for the Future.** “The loss of the MD because everybody needs their health issues addressed at one time or the other...the driving for everything that you need to be taken care of...then the closing down of the mill...so loss of jobs, a very jittery kind of situation within the logging community... fear that we might be on the verge of becoming a ghost town.” — Susan

## Hopes for the Future

In a brainstorming session with participants, women identified hope as situated in two areas.

People:

- > Individuals must have a strong sense of determination.
- > People must have hope about the future of their community.
- > A spirit of support and cooperation needs to be nourished.
- > Community members must be strongly attached to their community.

Resource:

- > Ownership of businesses needs to be kept local and independent.
- > Diversity of employment opportunities is essential.
- > Community needs to be open to finding resources such as skills and financial aid from outside.
- > Focus more on alternative ways of earning a living — think outside the box.

## How Can Career Practitioners Assist?

Communities need support in the areas of:

- > entrepreneur support services
- > self-employment strategies
- > entrepreneurial network facilitation

Communities need support in carrying out needs assessments and feasibility studies in the following areas:

- > community-owned venture development
- > co-operative employment partnership
- > non-profit enterprise development
- > outside entrepreneurial recruitment
- > worker-ownership

Women are often overlooked contributors to local economies and sometimes find it difficult to sustain their efforts. With our support they can play a key role in the revitalization of rural areas.

## REFERENCES

<sup>1</sup> “Rural Women: Employment Facts from ACTEW and Rural Women Making Change Research Alliance”, A Commitment to Training and Employment for Women (ACTEW), 2008. [http://www.rwmc.uoguelph.ca/cms/documents/184/Rural\\_Women\\_ACTEW\\_Feb08.pdf](http://www.rwmc.uoguelph.ca/cms/documents/184/Rural_Women_ACTEW_Feb08.pdf)

Blythe Shepard is a Counsellor Educator at the University of Lethbridge. Until 15 years ago, she lived in rural communities working as an organic farmer, a milker of cows, an elementary teacher in a rural school, and later as a mental health worker. For more on her research, see [www.PathstotheFuture.com](http://www.PathstotheFuture.com).

# Regional Economic Development Boards in SOUTHERN LABRADOR

— by Joshua Fleming

Labrador is approximately 294,000 square kilometres with a population of 26,364. As hydroelectric and mineral resource extraction initiatives are underway in this sparsely populated region, firms are identifying challenges pertaining to recruitment and skills development. Regional Economic Development Boards play a key role in building and strengthening the local workforce.

## A Website to Attract Newcomers

With the cooperation of the provincial government, the Labrador Straits Development Corporation (LSDC) and the Southeastern Aurora Development Corporation are attracting newcomers to southern Labrador and aiding them in their transition. The Southern Labrador website, [southernlabrador.ca](http://southernlabrador.ca), is a pilot project that provides newcomers with the information they need to aid them in their settlement.

The website is also helping businesses in Southern Labrador by providing them with

the information they need to complement their recruiting efforts. Stelman Flynn, owner of Seaview Restaurant and Cabins in Forteau, Labrador, says the website is a great tool for local business owners who face challenges associated with attracting and retaining qualified workers.

“I think this really presents us an opportunity to bring people to these rural communities and to re-generate some of our communities,” says Flynn. “When we approach this on a co-operative basis, it is a great benefit to the business community.”

## Distance Education Makes Training an Option

The southern Labrador economic development boards are also helping to train workers to meet increasing job demands. Although no training facilities are situated in Southern Labrador, the Regional Economic Development Boards have worked to make online training available to both newcomers and established residents.

In cooperation with Memorial University, the LSDC has facilitated two lifelong learning courses towards a certificate in human resources. The initial stages of the partnership have been deemed successful with the enrolment of ten participants from the region engaged in the distance education initiative. Due to the absence of a training facility in the region, the development corporation was able to provide the training through the Internet and WebEx conferencing solutions.

## A Cultural Project for Older Workers

The LSDC is also engaged in the Coastal Heritage Experience Project with SmartLabrador, which collected and digitized folklore assets in the region, such as stories and songs. The project became a targeted initiative for older workers and technical training sessions were offered to train the workers in digital recording, database management, media management software and video camera use.

Through initiatives that engage older workers, attract newcomers, and train workers, the Labrador Straits Development Corporation is building a healthy workforce that will support the increasing demands of local industry. The LSDC is working with Labradoreans to create and generate employment and secure a future for workers and their families.

“

When we approach this on a co-operative basis,

it is a great benefit to the business community.

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Joshua Fleming holds a Master's in Public Administration from the University of Regina and is currently working for the Newfoundland and Labrador Regional Economic Development Association (NLREDA) as a policy analyst. NLREDA represents Newfoundland and Labrador's 19 Regional Economic Development boards on issues of common interest.

# Working in MY PYJAMAS

— by Paul D. Smith

There is revelation in the small comments people make when they encounter behaviour outside of their experience. They reveal their pre-conceptions about the activity in question and their opinions based on those pre-conceptions.

In my case, I work from home as Executive Director of the Canadian Association of Career Educators and Employers (CACEE). When I tell people about my situation the first comment people make has to do with working in my pyjamas. Perhaps I seem like the kind of person who would like to work in pyjamas, but I've not had it come up when I worked in an office so I think it may be something else. People who make these comments are revealing just a little about their private wishes to trade in the workplace for the comforts of home.

And who can blame them? The notion conjures images of leisurely enjoying home life while still making money. The fantasy recedes quickly for most people, though, as the dreamy promise is displaced by anxiety about working in isolation. Right after the pyjamas comment I normally hear something like, "I don't know if I could do it. I think I'd go crazy or I wouldn't get any work done." These bookends of leisure and loneliness mark the range of peoples' expectations of what working from home might be.

The reality, of course, lies somewhere in between as those who work remotely will tell you. Maurice Gillingham and Jennifer Hamilton are among those who work from home. Maurice is a technology worker in the Ottawa area whose employer proposed he work from home and he was eager to try it. Jennifer is the Executive Director of a professional association based in Toronto. Her organization is growing and having her position work from home represents cost savings for the organization.

Maurice and Jennifer were kind enough to share their experiences with me and I was surprised how much their observations match with each other's and my own. Here is a summary of our experiences.

Benefits of working from home:

- > Flexible hours, which is especially important when you work for a global company and your colleagues are not in the same time zone
- > More time to be efficient at work
- > No wasted time commuting
- > Fewer personal expenses related to commuting, clothing and eating out
- > Much greater contact with family, especially young children

Challenges of working from home:

- > Participating in peer-to-peer knowledge transfer and training
- > Managing colleagues' and family members' expectations of availability
- > Lack of typical office supports such as IT, administration and supplies
- > Absence of a friendly face to bounce ideas off
- > Some days you feel like you spend the whole day in front of the computer

What are the traits and needs of those who work from home successfully?

- > Self-discipline and motivation
- > Focus and the ability to set your own goals
- > A dedicated work area that can be closed off
- > Communication technology to keep you engaged and in the loop, such as email, web conferencing, a

dedicated office telephone line, Skype or Google Talk, and social media networks like Twitter and Facebook

- > Opportunities to meet face-to-face with colleagues
- > Understanding from your family about your work schedule

Questions to ask:

- > What stage are you at in your life? Do you have close contacts to draw on professionally?
- > Can you afford a dedicated office space?
- > Are you highly motivated by the work you do and committed to the organization?
- > Can you work from home on a trial basis first to see if it's right for you?

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Paul D. Smith is the Executive Director of the Canadian Association of Career Educators and Employers (CACEE). He dresses every day.

# New Research: Success and Growth in ABORIGINAL-OWNED BUSINESSES

— by Sharon Ferriss

The first in-depth research in a decade shows that Aboriginal small business owners across Canada are growing in numbers and experiencing widespread success in terms of profitability and growth, but also in ways that go beyond the bottom line. And, despite the challenges of business ownership, 70% of Aboriginal business owners are clearly optimistic about future revenue growth, finds a new report from the Canadian Council for Aboriginal Business (CCAB).

“The survey results paint a powerful picture of the many entrepreneurship and employment opportunities within the Aboriginal small business community,” says Nancy Schaefer, President of the CERIC Board. “For us, the research provides career counsellors and others in the career development field with new information on a valuable source of jobs and training for both Aboriginals and non-Aboriginals.”

The number of Aboriginal business owners and entrepreneurs is growing at five times the rate of self-employed Canadians overall, according to CCAB’s research, titled *Promise and Prosperity: The Aboriginal Business Survey*. Aboriginal businesses are diverse, and are not limited to any one region, industry sector or market.

With the last comprehensive study of Aboriginal businesses conducted by Statistics Canada and Aboriginal Business Canada in 2002, CCAB embarked upon the 2011 Aboriginal Business Survey (ABS) to close this knowledge gap, and contribute to the understanding of the opportunities and challenges faced by Aboriginal businesses. The report is a timely exploration — based on telephone interviews with 1,095 First Nations, Métis and Inuit small business owners (defined as those with 100 employees or less) — of their goals and strategies, and the key factors that contribute to their growth. CERIC provided support for this research.

## Key Findings

- > The number of Aboriginal business owners and entrepreneurs is growing at a rate that far exceeds that of self-employed Canadians overall.
- > Aboriginal businesses are diverse, and are not limited to any one region, industry sector or market.
- > Aboriginal small business owners are succeeding, in terms of profitability and growth but also in ways that go beyond the bottom line.
- > Successful Aboriginal small businesses are distinguished by their use of annual business plans and innovation.
- > Aboriginal small businesses create jobs for Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal people alike.
- > Aboriginal entrepreneurs rely primarily on their own resources for both start-up and ongoing financing, and access to financing is considered one obstacle to growth.
- > Despite the challenges of small business ownership, there is widespread confidence about the future.

## Report Recommendations

The report contains broad recommendations for the consideration of financial institutions, government, Aboriginal entrepreneurs and organizations with the interest and capacity to work with Aboriginal businesses in order for more Aboriginal businesses to achieve success.

- > Improve access to capital for Aboriginal businesses
- > The creation of provincial and municipal Aboriginal procurement strategies
- > Business planning by Aboriginal business owners is a critical success factor
- > Building stronger networks will lead to sharing of expertise and knowledge among and between Aboriginal businesses

“The results of the Aboriginal Business Survey shatter the myth that Aboriginal people are a drain on Canadian taxpayers,” says Clint Davis, CEO of the CCAB. “The majority of Aboriginal businesses are profitable and are experiencing stability or growth. Many Aboriginal businesses are hiring and training other Aboriginal people. Overall Aboriginal business owners see themselves as successful and are positive about the future.”

The Aboriginal Business Survey was made possible through the support of Indian and Northern Affairs Canada, IBM Canada Ltd., RBC Royal Bank and CERIC. CCAB also recognizes the support of First Air.



The full report is available  
on the CERIC website.  
Go to [www.ceric.ca](http://www.ceric.ca)  
and click on Projects.

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Bringing an extensive background in non-profit marketing and communications from HR and purchasing associations, Sharon Ferriss is CERIC’s new Director of Marketing, Web and New Media.

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### The Learning Edge: Workplace Issues

[www.thewcl.ca/edge](http://www.thewcl.ca/edge)

Wellington County Learning Centre provides online talking "newspapers" that look at job search and workplace issues

## Research on Entry-level Green Jobs Begins

The Green Skills Network Research Project will provide career practitioners with information regarding entry-level employment opportunities in the renewable energy and energy conservation sectors of Canada's emerging green economy. The new project is a partnership between CERIC and the Green Skills Network.

Renewable energy and energy conservation sector jobs, which can include manufacturing, installation, distribution, and sales of energy generation and conservation methods, have experienced and will continue to experience significant job growth. The Green Skills Network Research project will advance career practitioners' knowledge of these employment opportunities and the educational requirements and training opportunities available within this promising sector.

The project will also see the development of an evaluation framework, which will be applied to five green jobs programs. The findings of these evaluations will determine and align practices for career practitioners and centres in the design and implementation of renewable energy and conservation jobs programs.

The Green Skills Network Research Project will disseminate its findings through multiple workshops, and will distribute its research and findings to over 200 career practitioners across Canada.

For more information on all Green Skills Network projects, including the Research Project, please see [www.greenskillsnetwork.ca](http://www.greenskillsnetwork.ca).

SPECIAL REPORT:

## Using Career COUNSELLING SERVICES

The "Good" and "Not-So-Good" News

*The Canadian Education and Research Institute for Counselling (CERIC) has released findings of a survey conducted by Environics Research Group asking Canadians about their job satisfaction, their perceptions about their workplaces and performance management, and the tools and resources they turn to when looking for a job or building a career. This project is a follow-up to a benchmark initiative completed in 2007 that asked similar questions. This article is an excerpt from the 2011 survey report.*

A majority of Canadians see the value of a professional career counselling program, but fewer are certain they would use one.

Canadians were asked to reflect back on their careers and determine how valuable it would be for workers to have access to a professional career counselling program. Additionally, the 2010 CERIC survey asked Canadians how likely they would be to use such a program, if available.

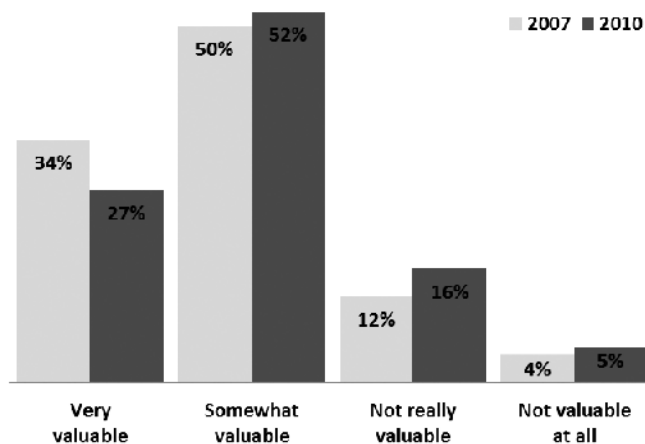
Most Canadians see the value in professional career development programs, possibly due to the assistance they could provide to those who often have trouble finding fulfilling and satisfying work. Eight in ten believe these programs would be valuable, with about three in ten (27%) who say these programs would be very valuable and one-half who think these programs would be somewhat valuable (52%). Only five percent report

that professional career counselling programs would not be valuable at all. The perceived value of professional career development programs has softened slightly since 2007, with fewer Canadians who now think that such a program would be very important (27%, down 7 points from 2007).

While professional career counselling programs are perceived to be at least somewhat valuable by many Canadians, this perception is strongest among women, Canadians with children, those with an activity-limiting disability, Canadians who are unemployed or stay-at-home full-time, and those who experience workplace related discomfort all or most of the time. These results send a clear message that key groups in the Canadian population want and need access to career counselling to help them achieve their career goals.

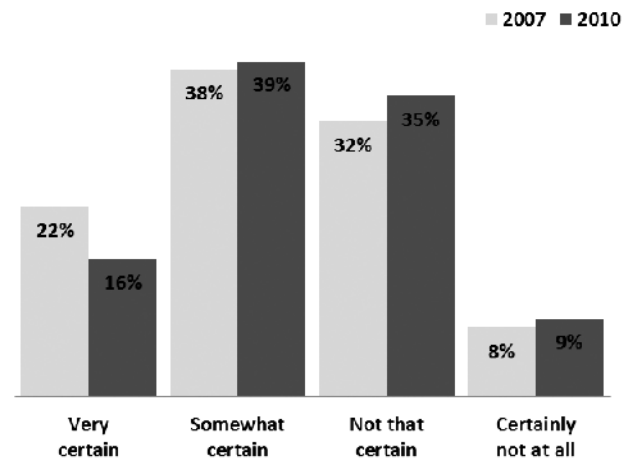
Read the full report, "On-line survey on public perceptions about career development and the workplace," on the CERIC website at [www.ceric.ca](http://www.ceric.ca).

Value of professional career counselling program



Q.15. Thinking back over your career; and based on what you know now, how valuable would you say it would be for a worker to have a professional career counselling program for himself/herself that included one-on-one career counselling or coaching from a career planning and development professional, résumé-building, interview training, etc...?

Certainty of using a professional career counselling program



Q.16. Today, if you could choose a professional career counselling program for yourself that included one-on-one career counselling or coaching from a career planning and development professional, résumé-building, interview training, how certain are you that you would use such a service or even need one...?

As could be expected, estimations of the value of professional career counselling programs are connected to job satisfaction and a desire to move on to a new line of work. Canadians who are dissatisfied with their careers are more likely to perceive them as very valuable, compared to Canadians satisfied with their work (32% versus 21%). Additionally, Canadians who hope to move on to another job are twice as likely as those content with their current role to feel a career counselling program is very valuable.

Despite the relatively high proportion of Canadians who see the value in professional career development programs, far fewer are certain that they would use them. Over half (55%) would use a professional career counselling program (16% very certain

and 39% somewhat certain), while the remainder (44%) are less certain. Consistent with the decline in the proportion who would value a professional career development program, fewer Canadians than before (16%, down 6 points from 2007) are very certain that they would use such a program.

This ambivalence masks the fact that certain — often more disadvantaged — populations are the most likely to turn to a professional career counsellor for one-on-one guidance. These groups include: women, Canadians with the lowest incomes, recent immigrants, those with disabilities, those who stay at home full-time, those who experience discrimination at work and those who identify as a visible minority.

## METHODOLOGY

Findings from the Environics Research Group survey were released in January 2011. A total of 1,202 Canadians aged 18 years or older provided their input to the on-line survey conducted between November 3 and 11, 2010. Age, gender, and regional quotas were placed to ensure that this sample reflects the Canadian population. Data gathered can therefore be extrapolated to the full population with a reasonable degree of confidence, and permitting analysis by important subgroups. Furthermore, this sample size was chosen as it can provide meaningful and statistically reliable results for important segments of the population, whether this is by region, community size, household type or relevant demographic characteristics such as education level and family size.

# BEHAVIORAL INTERVIEWING

## Deader than the Dodo

— by Judith Thomas

Is the behavioral style of interviewing a good method to teach our clients?

Personally, I do not believe that it is. A behavioral interview merely reveals a person's ability to memorize answers to very predictable questions. About as exciting as watching a kettle boil, it does not demonstrate a candidate's ability to be adaptable or a good fit for the position. Non-creative types can ace them.

Most employers have moved on from this type of questioning for two main reasons:

• • •

**Reason 1.** The premise of this type of interview is that a person has behaved a certain way in the past, so they are certain to behave in a similar way in the future.

I would like to challenge that premise with these three questions:

- > How many of you have made mistakes in the past?
- > Did you learn from them?
- > Would you behave differently in the future in a similar situation?

People are evolving beings. We constantly learn and grow through our life experiences. Because we may have behaved a certain way in the past does not guarantee that we will act similarly in the future.

• • •

**Reason 2.** Employment specialists, like ourselves, can train almost anyone how to ace this type of interview.

Most people know the set formula for these sort of answers. Many employment specialists have clients who can ace a behavioral interview, but have trouble maintaining employment.

Organizations want someone who is an excellent communicator with honed computer skills; adaptable, multi-functioning, self-directed, innovative, collaborative, and a quick thinker. Behavioral interviewing does not identify those skill sets.

• • •

On a more positive note, let's look at some alternative interview styles.

What types of interview questions look forward? Here are some examples from my workshop participants, at the Cannexus Conference held January 2011:

### Situational

- > How do you keep up-to-date with the most current trends?
- > What would you do with an unlimited budget?
- > How will you contribute to making others feel they belong here?
- > How would you blend intergenerational teams?

### Conversational

- > What do you think makes for good customer service  
A) In person? B) Globally?
- > What do you want to be recognized for?
- > When you leave, what do you hope to be able to say about your career with us?
- > What is the place of social networking within a workplace?

### Demonstration of skills

- > Give us two new ideas for workshops in the coming year.

- > In the following scenario, I am going to demonstrate being an aggressive customer. I would like you to attempt to calm me down in less than three minutes.
- > Please deliver a five-minute speech on why you value diversity in the workplace.

### Psychological

Psychological questions prove that a candidate is not fazed when you ask them something unusual, but are adaptable and can think on their feet.

- > If you were on a hockey team, what position would you play?

Note that most of the forward-looking questions, in each category, are open-ended. This leaves the candidate a lot of room for a truthful response, rather than a memorized script.

Check with your employer base. Find out what type of interview formats they are using. Most of my recent clients have had one of the forward-looking types of interviews. If you continue to teach the behavioral style, be sure to train in other styles as well so that your clients are progressively equipped.

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Judith Thomas is a career development practitioner who has her own business entitled Canada Career Coach. She is a writer with three articles published in the Contactpoint Bulletin and two guides for persons with disabilities, currently being edited, ready for publication. Judith is an excellent public speaker who has presented at private businesses on disability issues, schools on the importance of career choices, and at many conferences on employment-based issues.



# ADVANCING CAREERS

## Sociocultural Competencies and Sustainable Employment

— by Michael Yue

When working with a client, a career practitioner may note that the client has competitive occupational knowledge and skills, but still encounters challenges in sustaining or advancing in employment. While there may be many reasons for a person to lose his or her job, a factor that is sometimes identified is the worker's lack of sociocultural competencies. I have had the opportunity of learning a unique model for training clients in acquiring sociocultural competencies. In this model, developed by four professors from Canada and Australia<sup>1</sup>, facilitators use an engaging process to help clients master six key competencies that are “critical for those who are learning to increase social involvement with members of the host culture and who are wishing to pursue their career and personal success in a new cultural context.”<sup>2</sup>

These six competencies have been identified by researchers to be key to success in a new culture.

- > participating in a group or team setting
- > seeking help or information
- > making social contact and social conversation
- > refusing a request
- > expressing disagreement
- > giving feedback

In this model, “culture” is not defined solely by ethnically-based behaviours and values, but refers to a broad spectrum of human communicative actions based on our norms, beliefs, feelings, pre-conceptions, etc.

At the core of the learning process is the development of cultural maps. These maps provide the learners with guidance in using effective and appropriate communicative

tactics — both verbal and non-verbal — to interact with people in specific sociocultural settings such as workplaces, networking events, job interviews and classrooms. Each cultural map is designed to follow a five-phase process of communicative actions:

- A.** Attending: getting ready for the interaction
- B.** Bridging: drawing others' attention
- C.** Commenting: expressing your intended message
- D.** Developing: inviting others for feedback and continuing with the interaction
- E.** Ending: signing others to end the interaction

Here is an example of A-B-C-D-E interaction involving a student who is “seeking help”:

- A.** (Moving close to the Financial Aid Office window.) [Financial Aid Clerk looks up from her desk.]
- B.** Hello, my name is Michael.  
[Clerk: What can I do for you?]
- C.** I would like to apply for financial aid.  
[Clerk: You do not have an instructor signature on the form, so I cannot accept it.]
- D.** Oh, no, I did forget to ask my instructor for his signature on the form. Can I come back tomorrow? Will I miss the deadline?  
[Clerk: Deadline is next Monday, so if you bring it back tomorrow, you are fine.]
- E.** Thank you so much for your assistance. I will bring the signed form tomorrow.

This example looks like a simple interaction, but upon careful analysis, it contains all sorts of sociocultural meanings and behavioural norms often hidden to “cultural newcomers”. In this case, it may be an international student or an immigrant student new to a Canadian educational institution. By breaking down complex interactions into understandable and manageable steps and (micro)skills, the cultural newcomer can master the interactive tasks more easily.

To find out how to become a Facilitator in Sociocultural Competency Training (SCT), please visit <http://socioculturalcompetency.wordpress.com>.

### REFERENCES

<sup>1</sup> The model described in this article is the creation of Dr. Ishu Ishiyama (UBC, Canada), Dr. Marvin Westwood (UBC, Canada), Dr. Anita Mak (University of Canberra, Australia), and Dr. Michelle Barker (Griffith University, Australia)

<sup>2</sup> *The Sociocultural Competencies Training Program: The Learner's Guide*, Ishu Ishiyama and Marvin Westwood, Aurora Pacific, 2010, p.14.

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Michael Yue has over 18 years of experience in education and career development. He encountered the Sociocultural Competency Training model ten years ago at the Vancouver Community College and brings the model to the community. Michael is on the Board of the BC Career Development Association.



# UPCOMING EVENTS

## Vocational Designing and Career Counseling

SEPTEMBER 13 – 14, 2011  
Padova, Italy  
University of Padova  
[larios.psy.unipd.it/conference2011](http://larios.psy.unipd.it/conference2011)

## Diversity 2011: The Power of Inclusion

OCTOBER 2 – 3, 2011  
Rochester, New York  
Workforce Diversity Network  
[www.workforcediversitynetwork.com](http://www.workforcediversitynetwork.com)

## Futures Conference

OCTOBER 19 – 20, 2011  
Collingwood, ON  
First Work  
[www.firstwork.org/futures](http://www.firstwork.org/futures)

## Going the Distance Conference

OCTOBER 20 – 21, 2011  
Moose Jaw, SK  
Saskatchewan Career Work Education Assn.  
[ssc.stf.sk.ca/scwea](http://ssc.stf.sk.ca/scwea)

## Evolve, Survive, Change

NOVEMBER 3 – 4, 2011  
Vancouver, BC  
ASPECT  
[www.aspect.bc.ca](http://www.aspect.bc.ca)

## Making Connections: Striking it Rich in Career Development

NOVEMBER 29 – 30, 2011  
Fredericton, NB  
New Brunswick Career Development Action Grp.  
[www.nbcdag-gadcnb.ca](http://www.nbcdag-gadcnb.ca)

## Aboriginal Procurement Public Workshops

VARIOUS DATES  
Vancouver, Winnipeg and Toronto  
Aboriginal Human Resources Council  
[www.aboriginalhr.ca/en/events](http://www.aboriginalhr.ca/en/events)

## Cannexus 2012 National Career Development Conference

JANUARY 23 – 25, 2012  
Ottawa, ON  
CERIC  
[www.cannexus.ca](http://www.cannexus.ca)



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For an extensive listing of online training opportunities, visit the Event section of [contactpoint.ca](http://contactpoint.ca).

## Changemakers Initiative: First Nations, Métis and Inuit Learning

In September 2011, we are launching a Changemakers Initiative to find and map **innovative projects** and **exciting ideas** to support **First Nations, Métis and Inuit Learning**. The process will provide a collaborative platform to share ideas. We are looking for submissions from **across Canada** that promote learning from early childhood, through K-12, post-secondary and career learning.

We invite you to nominate your idea(s) and/or project(s) and to take this opportunity to gain exposure as well as learn about what others are doing; entries will gain access to resources and to a community of innovators from various sectors and fields across Canada.

Top entries selected by a panel of expert judges and a community vote will receive an award (ranging from \$500 to \$5,000) and have the opportunity to attend a Summit to share their work with leading philanthropists, experts, and practitioners dedicated to improving First Nations, Métis and Inuit learning outcomes and advancing innovation in education.

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## INITIATIVES • LES PROJETS

### Project Partnerships Partenariats de projets

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Le CERIC finance à la fois des projets de recherche et des projets pédagogiques et de développement professionnel qui promeuvent l'ensemble des connaissances dans le domaine d'orientation professionnelle et de la formation continue au Canada. Pour de plus amples renseignements sur nos priorités de financement et nos partenariats de projets, visitez le site [ceric.ca](http://ceric.ca).



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Canada's bilingual National Career Development Conference promoting the exchange of information and innovative approaches for career development and counselling. Ottawa, January 23- 25, 2012.

Cannexus est un congrès national bilingue favorisant l'échange d'informations et d'initiatives novatrices dans le domaine d'orientation et de développement de carrière. Ottawa, du 23 au 25 janvier 2012.



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The CJCD is a peer reviewed publication of career-related academic research and best practices. [ceric.ca/cjcd](http://ceric.ca/cjcd).

La RCDC est une publication qui porte sur la recherche universitaire et les meilleures pratiques évaluées par des spécialistes du secteur. [ceric.ca/cjcd](http://ceric.ca/cjcd).

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## NEW RESEARCH NOUVELLE ÉTUDE



**Online Survey on Public Perceptions About Career Development and the Workplace**

Download full report at [ceric.ca](http://ceric.ca)

# WHAT'S NEW

## CERIC Welcomes New Marketing, Web Team

Three new employees have joined CERIC to lead marketing of the organization's programs and projects, including Cannexus, ContactPoint/OrientAction and The Canadian Journal of Career Development.

Bringing an extensive background in non-profit marketing and communications from HR and purchasing associations, Sharon Ferriss is the new Director of Marketing, Web and New Media. Gilles Paquette, an experienced communications and public relations professional, is the Senior Manager, Marketing and Communications and comes most recently from a rubber industry association. A part-time instructor at both the University of Toronto and Sheridan College in communications and design, Norman Valdez is the IT and New Media Specialist and has expertise in managing web content and social media.

Expect to hear more from the new team as they increase outreach to the career development community, raise awareness of the career development field and enhance CERIC's web presence.

## Register Now for Cannexus12

Cannexus12 marks the sixth anniversary of the National Career Development Conference. Cannexus continues to offer delegates robust programming and relevant professional development at competitive rates. Networking opportunities abound! Conference delegates can choose from over 70 workshops and hear from three renowned keynote speakers: Mark Savickas, Trey Anthony and Michael Adams.

Take advantage of an excellent business opportunity and become one of our conference sponsors or exhibitors. This nationally recognized conference reaches a 600+ delegate audience and receives nationwide media attention. Showcase your organization or business and at the same time support CERIC.



### Cannexus12

Visit [www.cannexus.ca](http://www.cannexus.ca) to register and sign up for conference updates.

## Graduate Student Engagement Program

Are you a full-time graduate student at a Canadian university whose academic focus is career development/counselling? Or, do you know someone who is a full-time graduate student working in the area of career development?

If so, please visit [www.ceric.ca](http://www.ceric.ca) and go to the CERIC Graduate Student Engagement Program page. You might be eligible for the GSEP Award, to be on a CERIC Committee or even to have your thesis published. It is worth a look!



## Assessment Guide for Career and Guidance Counselling

Through a partnership project with CERIC, Ordre des conseillers et conseillères d'orientation du Québec has developed a publication on assessment practices. The Guide provides career and guidance counsellors with a general frame of reference to help delineate all aspects of the assessment and evaluation process and associated issues. The Guide is available in French and English and can be downloaded from the CERIC site: [www.ceric.ca](http://www.ceric.ca).

# contactpoint.ca



## contactpoint.ca

ContactPoint is a multi-sector online community for professionals in the career development field dedicated to providing interactive dialogue, networking, resources and learning to advance the profession.

We'd like to hear from you!  
Submit an article, or send your comments and suggestions to: [contactpoint@ceric.ca](mailto:contactpoint@ceric.ca).

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ContactPoint is a program of CERIC funded through a grant by the Counselling Foundation of Canada.



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