



## Building Relationships through Intercultural Dialogue and Growing Engagement in Saskatchewan

The Multicultural Council of Saskatchewan (MCoS), the Aboriginal Friendship Centers of Saskatchewan (AFCS), and the Saskatchewan Association of Immigrant Settlement and Integration Agencies (SAISIA) created a provincial partnership to lead research and support on intercultural relationships. BRIDGES (Building Relationships Interculturally through Dialogue and Growing Engagement Saskatchewan): Connecting Aboriginal and Newcomer Communities is motivated by the growing importance placed on demographic changes in the province and the desire to explore activities in the province and possible best practice models of collaboration elsewhere that might be relevant here.

The project has completed Phase 1: Blueprints for BRIDGES to research through literature review, interviews and consultations; and Phase 2: Common Ground, a demonstration project in Prince Albert with support from three primary local partners and Dr. Joe Garcea of the University of Saskatchewan. Information obtained from these phases will enable the partners to articulate criteria for successful initiatives aimed at building relationships between indigenous and newcomer individuals and communities in order to improve quality of life for all. SaskCulture's Multicultural Initiatives Fund (MIF) provided funding in 2014-15 and 2015-16.

**BRIDGES is important to the future of our province** and we are planning to create opportunities for local projects. We recognize our shared history and treaty relationships, as well as the importance for ongoing relationship building, cultural reclamation and continuity and social justice work with Indigenous people and communities. This reconciliation includes ensuring that newcomers learn about the history, treaties, historic and current contributions of Indigenous peoples and have opportunities for interaction. We begin with a focus on these two growing, but often marginalized, populations, with an intention to actively cultivate relationships between all members of communities.

MCoS now has an Education and BRIDGES Coordinator and we have secured funding for local projects from Affinity Credit Union, artsVest, and AFCS. We will work with local groups to support BRIDGES projects. To begin, these will be targeted to communities with local members of the provincial partners and Affinity CU branches. In 2017, MCoS will offer **training for local facilitators**. With support from the Coordinator, this will eventually lead to projects throughout Saskatchewan. See contact information below to apply.

### **Desired Outcomes of BRIDGES projects:**

- Foster improved working relationships between local Aboriginal and Newcomer organizations and community members.
- Foster improved cross-cultural understanding and relations.
- Promote and facilitate collective community-based action to foster improved relations and social cohesion.
- Create welcoming and inclusive communities for all members with a focus on the needs, interests and contributions of newcomers and Indigenous people.
- Apply measures to assess the nature and strength of these relationships.

These connections build a foundation that allows us to see each other as allies, plan for a shared and inclusive future, and solve problems together.

## BRIDGES Pilot Project: Common Ground in Prince Albert



### **Tapestrama**

This is an annual event in Prince Albert that is a celebration of cultural diversity. Participants joined the Prince Albert Multicultural Council to attend this event and experience the cultural diversity of Prince Albert.



### **Round Dance**

This event took place at the Prince Albert Indian Métis Friendship Centre. It included a Potluck Supper and Information Sharing to foster bonding among attendees.



### **Talking Tables**

This event mixed speed dating with the Human Library. Two people per table: one FN, one immigrant. They had 5 minutes to discuss a given subject before the switch. It was the most popular and effective gathering. Very powerful.



### **Storytelling**

This event featured storytelling from Nigeria, China, Ukraine, pow wow dancers with a full description of the drums and regalia, and Wesakechak Tales.



### **Intercultural Shindig**

This event brought people together for a potluck. It featured performers, art, and games focused on different cultures.

For more information, please contact:

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