

Dane_Wajich Report

'People telling their story'



Executive Summary and 2009 Report

**Nenan Dane_Zaa Deh Zona
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The International Institute for
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specifically Dr. Philip Cook and
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Dane_Wajich Report

Acknowledgements

Nenan Dane_Zaa Deh Zona Children & Family Services would like to acknowledge the thoughts, ideas and contributions of the children, youth, families, Elders, Chiefs and Councillors, agencies and organizations who have contributed to the ongoing development of our work. It is a profound honour to work with the First Nations, Métis and Aboriginal peoples and organizations of the north east in this historic endeavour. Your hope and courage to build a new service delivery model that addresses your needs and builds on your diverse cultures and traditions is a constant source of inspiration.

We extend an invitation to all of those new to this process and to those who have stood with us along the way to continue to work together to create a new way of supporting our children and families, grounded in the knowledge and wisdom of the past, with a vision for a brighter future.

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Young girl,
Halfway River First Nation

Nenan gkapami sonan
‘We will take care of our own’
-*Katherine Dokkie, West Moberly Elder,*
Cree Speaker

Nenan Dane_Zaa Deh Zona Children & Family Services

Executive Summary

The Dane Wajich Report provides a comprehensive overview of the history and formation of Nenan Dane_Zaa Deh Zona Children & Family Services (hereafter “Nenan”). The report outlines the River of Unity: Community Empowerment process that is taking place in each of our communities. The work-plan for assuming full jurisdiction for the care and support of First Nations, Métis and Aboriginal children and families in north east British Columbia is also outlined.

Nenan is presently an organization in accordance with the *BC Societies Act*, with a mandate from the Treaty 8 First Nations’ leadership, Métis and urban Aboriginal peoples and organizations of the north east to develop a new model of child welfare jurisdiction and governance, services and quality assurance. This historic endeavour will enable First Nations, Métis and Aboriginal peoples to reclaim responsibility and authority for services and resources that are presently the jurisdiction of the Ministry of Children and Family Development (MCFD).

Nenan’s present governance consists of a 14 member Board of Directors from Treaty 8 Nations, and Aboriginal peoples and organizations from urban and rural communities in north-east British Columbia. Our name evidences our historic unification for the best interests of our children and is inclusive of the Dunne_Zaa (Beaver), Slavey, Cree and English dialects, translating to, “All of us people working together for our children and families.”

In order to gather insight into each community’s local context including strengths, needs, culture and traditional practices, Nenan is engaged in the River of Unity: Community Empowerment Process. Utilizing a participatory methodology, young people, parents, leadership, community members, Elders and service providers are engaged in an assessment of their own strengths and challenges in supporting their children and families.

Over seventy sessions have already been conducted in communities, gathering invaluable information and teachings to guide the development of a new community-based and culturally grounded service delivery model. Next, communities will be engaged in analysing the information and developing action plans and solutions to the issues that emerged. Thus, communities direct the development of services and, through their involvement, their capacity to support their families is enhanced.

The Dane Wajich Report includes important themes that emerged during the assessment phase, indicating the current situation in our respective communities. These are: Diversity in Community Context; the need for Meaningful Relationships in Child Welfare; Shift the Focus to Early Intervention & Prevention Support; Increase Attention to Early Childhood Development Services; Elders’ and Youth’s Interest in Transmission of Culture, Traditional Practices & Language; and the importance of Meaningful Participation of Children & Youth. These themes are further detailed in the report, along with Nenan’s strategies to address them.

Importantly, Nenan’s community-based governance structure, including Community Councils and regional Youth and Elders Councils is presented. This structure is emerging through community-based dialogue and planning. The Dane Wajich Report includes an overview of the work-plan including jurisdiction and governance development; administration and operations infrastructure development; a holistic Service Delivery Plan; and a community development, monitoring and evaluation framework firmly rooted in and accountable to communities.

In the spirit of Wa’ko’taw’in (respect for all our Relations) we would like to thank you for participating in our journey with us, and look forward to opportunities to work together to ensure the holistic well-being of our children and families.



Boys playing, Fort Nelson First Nation

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Tools, Chalo School, Fort Nelson First Nation

INTRODUCTION

The following report provides a comprehensive overview of the ongoing work of Nenan Dane_Zaa Deh Zona Children & Family Services (hereafter “Nenan”) and outlines the work plan for the coming two years. We endeavour to provide background information regarding the history of Nenan for new audiences to gain understanding and become involved in our planning efforts.

Our name evidences our historic unification for the best interests of our children and is inclusive of the Dane_Zaa, Slavey, Cree and English dialects, translating to, “All of us people working together for our families.”

Nenan is presently an organization in accordance with the *BC Societies Act* with a mandate from the Treaty 8 First Nations leadership, Métis and urban Aboriginal peoples and organizations of north eastern British Columbia to develop a new model of jurisdiction and governance, services and quality assurance for our children and families. This historic endeavour will enable First Nations, Métis and Aboriginal peoples to reclaim responsibility and authority for services and resources that are presently the jurisdiction of the Ministry of Children and Family Development (MCFD).

Nenan is presently focused on completing a comprehensive community engagement process gathering in-depth knowledge about each community to create a new community-based and culturally grounded vision in support of the healthy development and protection of children and families. In the fall of 2008, Nenan representatives commenced the River Of Unity: Triple “A” Community Empowerment Process. The Triple “A” is a three step process (i.e. Assessment, Analysis, Action) of engaging and learning - through a bottom-up grass-roots approach - from all segments of community including: Elders, leadership, mothers and fathers, children and youth, service organizations and those with valuable knowledge about children’s well-being (e.g. First Nation and Aboriginal staff; school teachers and principals).

This holistic community engagement process is yielding profound information regarding each community's local context and respective strengths, assets, issues, needs, as well as deeply important information regarding culture, traditional practices and ceremonies. This information and the invaluable understanding and teachings shared will serve the critical function of informing and guiding the development of a Nenan service delivery model (circa summer-fall 2009).

More than seventy Triple "A" assessment engagements have been completed to date involving 11 (of 14) Nenan affiliated communities. Information will be presented in a community-by-community manner in a follow-up report, upon completion of the assessment and analysis phase in all communities. Information presented in this report includes our initial observations and lessons learned during the assessment phase, reflecting the valuable contributions made by participants in the community assessment activities. The River Of Unity: Triple "A" Community Empowerment process will be presented and explained in greater detail in Section II of this report.

Herein, Nenan will present its plan for the development of a community-based governance structure and a new model of jurisdiction emerging from an intensive community engagement process, including the formation of Community Councils and regional Youth and Elders Councils. Nenan has secured the authority to move forward in the development of a new model of jurisdiction, rooted in community-based governance structures. This report includes an overview of our work-plan including administration and operations infrastructure development; a holistic Service Delivery Plan; and a community development, monitoring and evaluation framework firmly rooted in and accountable to community structure. The work plan and rationale for moving forward with jurisdiction is presented in further detail in Section IV of this report.

It is Nenan's intent to provide effective communications, ensuring openness and transparency in all aspects of the work we have the honour and privilege of advancing, on behalf of First Nations, Metis and Aboriginal peoples of north east British Columbia. It is our sincere hope that this report, and all of our future work, evidences this resolute commitment to the First Nation, Métis, and Aboriginal peoples of the north east.

WITHOUT PREJUDICE

The Nenan Dane_Zaa Deh Zona Children & Family Services will not jeopardize, prejudice or affect any treaty negotiations, or the result of any such negotiations, or any constitutional process or litigation, or abrogate or derogate from any existing Aboriginal or treaty rights enjoyed by the seven First Nations who have signed Treaty No. 8 (1899) in north east British Columbia.

The establishment of Nenan is not intended in any way to be a treaty for the purposes of sections 25 and 35 of the *Constitution Act*, 1982.

SECTION I

HISTORY & BACKGROUND



Naahtane Yow Dat'sa Tl'uuih
'He Uses Rainbow to Snare/Catch the Rain'
West Moberly First Nation Dane_Zaa

Historical Overview

First Nation peoples have occupied and successfully raised families in north east British Columbia in excess of 10,500 years. Archaeological remains located at a site adjacent to Charlie Lake (outside Fort St John) in 1983 confirm this.

Charlie Lake Cave Archaeological site report HbRf-39 states:

...the importance of this site lies in its exceptionally long and continuous cultural, sedimentary and faunal sequence, which seems to have accumulated steadily without erosional episodes for at least 11,000 years. With an average age of about 10,500, component 1 at Charlie Lake cave is the oldest dated evidence of man in the province, and one of the oldest in Canada.¹ (Fladmark and Knute, 1983)

First face-to-face contact between the First Nation peoples of the north east and western explorers occurred in 1793 when Alexander Mackenzie travelled and camped through the area with First Nation guides en route to the Pacific Ocean (Bella Coola area), only 215 years ago.

Treaty No. 8 was signed in 1899 between the Government of Canada and the Treaty 8 First Nations of north east British Columbia. Treaty No. 8 was ratified by Order in Council by the Government of Canada for the purpose of making a Treaty intended to “open for settlement, immigration, trade, travel, mining, lumbering, and such other purposes as to Her Majesty may seem meet” (1899, Treaty No. 8). However, the First Nations consider the Treaty to be a sacred and solemn agreement between sovereign nations intended to allow for peace, sharing and co-existence. The Treaty First Nations maintain that the spirit and provisions of the agreement are not adequately reflected and honoured in the existing treaty.

First Nation peoples have raised healthy families for thousands of years on this traditional territory. It is in the spirit of these traditions and the Ancestors that we move forward today.

¹Note: An archaeological site has since been located on Haida Gwaii that has been confirmed as the oldest known site in British Columbia.



Painting Easter eggs, Halfway River First Nation

ABORIGINAL CHILDREN & YOUTH IN THE NORTH EAST

The following statistical information gives an indication of the current situation for children and families in the north east. Please note children and youth are considered to be those between birth and age 18.

Population Demographics

- Total number of children & youth in the north east ²	18,262
- Total number of Aboriginal children & youth in the north east	4,139
- Total number of Treaty 8 First Nations children & youth living on-reserve ³	483
- Percentage of children & youth who are Aboriginal (on and off reserve)	22 %

MCFD Involvement

- Approx. number of children & youth living in <i>out-of-home</i> placements ⁴	177
- Approx. number of Aboriginal children & youth living in <i>out-of-home</i> placements ⁵	118
- Percentage of children & youth living in <i>out-of-home</i> placements who are Aboriginal ⁶	67%
- Non-Aboriginal <i>out-of-home</i> placement rates per 1,000	4.2
- Aboriginal <i>out-of-home</i> placement rates per 1,000	28.5
- Times more likely an Aboriginal child is removed and placed in an <i>out-of-home</i> placement than a non-Aboriginal child	6.8

These statistics paint a clear picture of the large number of our children who are not living with their families and/or their communities. It is Nenan's objective to work closely with families, communities and service providers to ensure that our children are able to remain within their familial and cultural environment whenever possible or, will have familial connections maintained when the former is not possible.

²Source: BC Stats most recent 2008 estimates: People 32

³Source: INAC September 26, 2008

⁴Source: MCFD 12 month average between April 2007 – March 2008; "out-of-home" placements include: children in care, kith & kin, ICO and ICN (Interim Order Custody of Other S 35.2d & 60), and SOC and SOT (Supervision Order – Custody of Other S 41.1b & 60)

⁵This does not include data for Aboriginal *Child-In-Home-of-Relative*. This information has been requested.

⁶Out-of-home placements include: Kith & Kin, ICO and ICN (Interim Order Custody of Other S. 35.2d & 60) and SOC and SOT (Supervision Order - Custody of Other S. 41.1b & 60).

WHO IS NENAN DANE_ZAA DEH ZONA CHILDREN & FAMILY SERVICES?

Nenan was incorporated under the BC Society Act in March 2007 as the “Nenan Dane_Zaa Deh Zona Children & Family Services.” The members of the Nenan planning committee agreed upon this name as it is inclusive of the three main Indigenous dialects and cultures of the north east including: Dane_Zaa, Slavey and Cree.

Nenan’s present governance consists of a 14 member Board of Directors from seven Treaty 8 Nation’s, and Aboriginal peoples and organizations from seven urban and rural communities in north east British Columbia. The nations and communities represented on the Nenan Board of Directors are:

Treaty 8 First Nations

Blueberry River First Nation
Doig River First Nation
Fort Nelson First Nation
Halfway River First Nation
Prophet River First Nation
Saulteau First Nation
West Moberly First Nations

Urban & Rural Aboriginal Communities

Chetwynd
Dawson Creek
Fort Nelson
Fort St John
Hudson Hope
Kelly Lake
Tumbler Ridge



Nenan Board Training

Please note a governance working committee is currently reevaluating the existing membership to ensure inclusive representation from the First Nations, Métis and Aboriginal peoples in the north east, in consultation with participating communities.

Nenan presently has two full-time staff based in Fort St John :

- Allen Cummings, Planner
- Brandi Scott, Executive Coordinator

The Board is presently working closely with the International Institute for Child Rights and Development (IICRD), including:

- Dr. Philip Cook, Executive Director
- William White (Xelimuxw), Traditional Specialist
- Vanessa Currie, Child Protection Manager

HOW WAS NENAN CREATED?

Two Separate Planning Committees Working to Create Delegated Agencies

Nenan has its roots in what were originally two separate planning committees created in 2000 for the purpose of creating their-own respective delegated agencies. A delegated agency, described in a general context, is an organization that is created by a First Nation(s) or Aboriginal community to assume responsibility for the provision of delegated services in accordance with the Child, Family and Community Services Act (R.S.B.C., 1996)⁷. These services generally include: Child Protection Services, Guardianship Services (i.e. child's legal guardian), and Resources Services (i.e. foster homes).

The following provides a brief overview of the two former committees:

1. North East First Nations Child and Family Services Society (NEFNCFSS)

A planning committee called, "North East First Nation Child and Family Services Society (NEFNCFSS)," was formed to represent all seven of the Treaty 8 First Nations in creating an on-reserve delegated agency. The leadership provided a Band Council Resolution that appointed their designated representative to the planning committee to represent the Nation's interests. Indian and Northern Affairs Canada (INAC) provided funding to support planning as they have responsibility through the "First Nations Child and Family Services Program", for annualized operational resourcing for on-reserve delegated agencies.

NEFNCFSS completed requirements for becoming a legally incorporated organization per the BC Societies Act. They developed and submitted an organization and service model, and delegation enabling agreement to the Province and INAC in 2003 for review and approval⁸.

2. South Peace Aboriginal Child and Family Services Society (SPACFSS)

A planning committee called, "South Peace Aboriginal Child and Family Services Society" (SPACFSS) was established to plan the creation of an urban and rural-based delegated agency. Funding was received from the Ministry of Child and Family Development (MCFD) to support planning. SPACFSS included representatives from the following organizations and communities in the planning phase:

- Dawson Creek - Aboriginal Family Resources
- Nawican Friendship Centre
- Mile Zero Métis Society
- Chetwynd – Tansi Friendship Centre
- Kelly Lake Cree Nation
- Kelly Lake First Nation
- Pouce Coupe Métis

SPACFSS progressed in planning to proposing an organization and service model, and became a legal entity in accordance with the BC Societies Act requirements.

⁷Section 92 (1) of "the Act" enables the Director to delegate any or all of the Director's powers, duties or functions under "the Act" to the staff of a delegated agency.

⁸'Delegation enabling agreement' is the vehicle that enables the transfer of funding and delegated authority responsibilities per "the Act".

Why Did These Two Proposed Delegated Agencies Not Proceed?

In the development of a delegated agency, MCFD plays a lead role in the approval process as the provincial Minister and Director have the authority and jurisdiction for child protection services in accordance with “the Act.” This legal responsibility requires MCFD to carefully analyze and assess whether a proposed delegated agency has met readiness criteria requirements including an evaluation whether the proposed organization and service plan are capable, with appropriate confidence, to protect and support children.

1. NEFNCFSS (Treaty 8)

In 2003, MCFD determined that the proposed delegated agency could not be supported following their evaluation of the proposed service plan and annualized funding. NEFNCFSS had made every effort possible to create a viable service delivery model with the available resources, however, a determination was made that too great a risk would exist for children based on the service model and approval to proceed to the start-up implementation phase was withheld.

The proposed on-reserve delegated agency was to receive annualized funding through INAC Program Directive 20-1, which is an administrative and funding policy that includes a resource formula heavily weighted towards the number of 0 – 18 year-old children and youth living on-reserve¹⁰. There were 545 children and youth living on-reserve¹¹ when INAC’s resource formula was applied (i.e. August 2004) to all seven Treaty 8 First Nations which resulted in a total annualized (year-four) operational budget of \$ 567,131¹².

To provide some context, the present annualized Provincial budget for the Fort Nelson, MCFD operations is \$1,763,689¹³. This includes an operations budget of \$1,002,225 that resources: salaries and benefits for 10 full-time-equivalent staff, travel, building occupancy lease, office supplies, and vehicles. This also includes a budget of \$761,464 that supports a range of contracted services with community organizations for services including: family support, early assessment and development, supported child care, and school-based therapy¹⁴. (Note: this does not include resource support received from Sub-Region, Regional, or Provincial MCFD operations.)

2. SPACFSS

A similar decision regarding non-viability was made by MCFD in 2003 following analysis of the extent of the Aboriginal delegated services workload in the SPACFSS represented communities, and the requisite service plan and resources that would be required. SPACFSS was to be resourced by the Province as it was to be urban and rural (i.e. off-reserve) based.

The MCFD methodology for determining operational and administrative resources for devolution to an urban and rural (off-reserve) based delegated agency involved identifying:

⁹The Provincial Director is designated by the Minister of MCFD, with responsibilities in accordance with the *Child, Family and Community Services Act* (“the Act”), including the protection of children.

¹⁰INAC BC Region is presently working in a joint initiative with MCFD, Caring for First Nations Children’s Society, and the Agencies Directors Forum, in the development of a new funding “Enhanced Prevention Services Model and Accountability Framework,” that will replace INAC Program Directive 20-1. There are significant expectations that this will result in an increase in resources for Delegated Agencies

¹¹According to current data the number of Treaty 8 children and youth 0 – 18 years of age living on-reserve has decreased to a present total of 483 (Source: INAC Sept 25, 2008)

¹²Source: INAC

¹³Source: MCFD 2007-03-05

¹⁴IDIB

The total extent of Aboriginal (not including Treaty 8 and non-Aboriginal) delegated services workload in accordance with “the Act” (e.g. child protection & family services, guardianship, resources and administration). The commensurate resources required to support the operations and administration for this confirmed Aboriginal delegated services workload (e.g. staff salary and benefits, building occupancy/leases, utilities, travel, and training). An assessment of the Aboriginal delegated services workload per each SPACFSS affiliated community, and overall, was deemed by MCFD to be too small to have a commensurate operational budget that could sustain viable operations for all communities. Support to proceed with implementation of the proposed SPACFSS Aboriginal Delegated Agency was withheld by the Province.



Children and Nenan Representative, Sauleau First Nation



Drummers, Doig River First Nation

TWO PLANNING COMMITTEES COME TOGETHER WITH TREATY 8 LEADERSHIP MANDATE

Discussions Between the Planning Committees (Spring & Summer 2004)

Both groups remained resolute in their determination and wholly unwilling to relinquish their respective goals for creating a delegated agency enabling them to assume delegated service responsibilities for First Nations, Métis and Aboriginal peoples. This led to formal discussions in early 2004 between representatives from both planning committees regarding the potential to work together to explore the creation of a joint delegated agency that could serve all of the First Nations, Métis and Aboriginal peoples of the north east, both on and off-reserve. Both parties recognized that by joining together they could secure the combined resources (Federal & Provincial) that would enable the creation of a viable delegated agency.

Initial discussions engendered cautious optimism with representatives from both groups expressing their desire to continue further in exploratory planning. Representatives from the NEFNCFSS (Treaty 8) planning committee informed that despite their interest in continued planning, they required a new mandate from the Treaty 8 leadership before they could proceed in further discussions.

Treaty 8 Leadership Provide a Mandate to Explore Planning (December 2004)

A 3-person delegation from the NEFNCFSS planning committee met with the Treaty 8 Tribal Association leadership to discuss and seek a mandate to formally enter into exploratory discussions with SPACFSS committee members to work towards identifying potential options for developing a joint delegated agency. Following in-depth discussions, the Treaty 8 leadership provided a mandate supporting the NEFNCFSS committee entering into planning with the SPACFSS committee. A condition of this approval included the requirement that all options identified for the potential creation of a joint delegated agency must be presented back to leadership for consideration and approval, prior to any continued planning¹⁵.

Joint Planning Meetings, Confirmed Interest to Create a Joint Delegated Agency (Spring & Summer 2005)

Two separate two-day meetings were held between representatives from the NEFNCFSS and SPACFSS planning committees in the spring and summer of 2005. MCFD provided resources which enabled the contracting of a child welfare consultant to facilitate discussions and the identification of options, and to draft a proposed work-plan identifying the readiness planning requirements for the potential creation of a joint delegated agency.

A wide range of issues were discussed including one critical requirement for creating a delegated agency, that being the issue of governance. By the end of the second meeting which included sometimes challenging discussions, representatives from both parties reached the same overwhelming conclusion that their desire for jurisdiction for delegated services for their children and families greatly outweighed all other issues, concerns and challenges.

Following exploration of multiple options for governance, the parties reached agreement for an equal-representation 14 member board governance structure (i.e. 7 Treaty 8 First Nation designated seats and 7 urban and rural Aboriginal designated seats). Other delegated agency readiness planning requirements were discussed and the consultant completed a work-plan with associated timelines¹⁶. A meeting to present the outcomes of this joint planning was confirmed with the Treaty 8 leadership.

¹⁵ Nenan has a stringent practice of providing detailed updates at all Treaty 8 Tribal Association Chiefs meetings regarding Nenan's work and planning, enabling informed discussion and securing input, guidance, and direction from leadership. A process will be established with the leadership of the Blueberry River First Nation

¹⁶ Planning requirements of the federal and provincial government for creating a delegated agency include completing the following: service delivery plan, financial administration plan, human resources plan, communications, information sharing & records management, facilities plan, and finalizing of a 'delegation enabling agreement'

Treaty 8 Leadership Provide a Mandate to Create a Joint Delegated Agency (Fall 2005)

A meeting to present and discuss the results and recommendations of the joint planning meeting was held in the fall of 2005 with the First Nation leadership of the Treaty 8 Tribal Association. After thorough questioning and myriad discussions, the Treaty 8 leadership provided their support for the work to proceed for the creation of a combined delegated agency.

Planning Commences for a North east First Nation & Aboriginal Delegated Agency (2006)

In early-2006, resources were provided by MCFD to support full-time planning towards the creation of a new combined, on and off-reserve delegated agency. This enabled the hiring of an experienced full-time planner and part-time assistant. The planner commenced work with the representatives from the two planning committees, starting with a transformation into one united planning committee.

The planner and planning committee completed the requirements for becoming legally incorporated per the BC Societies Act in the spring 2006, including the creation of a Constitution and By-Laws (Nenan presently operates within). These once separate planning committees that had come together out of necessity due to their unwavering commitment for their children, families and communities, became an official board of directors. The name, “Nenan Dane_Zaa Deh Zona Family Services,” was selected by the board because of its representation and inclusivity of all of First Nation and Aboriginal interests of the north east.

Other readiness requirements for establishing a delegated agency were completed over the course of 2006–2007, however Nenan’s board members and staff had come to recognize that another option had emerged that provided a better opportunity for supporting their children, families, and communities. The opportunity for the creation of Aboriginal Authorities will be presented next as a prerequisite for explaining Nenan’s shift from a delegated agency to Authority endeavor.



HISTORY & BACKGROUND OF ABORIGINAL AUTHORITIES

In order to effectively explain Nenan's shift in direction in 2007 from working towards the creation of a *delegated agency* to the creation of an Authority, the emergence and history of the Authority option will be outlined.

MCFD Plans to Create 5 Regional Authorities for Children and Families (2002)

In 2002, the Province, through *then* Minister for MCFD, announced its intent to create five Regional Authorities for Children and Families which would be transferred jurisdiction and resources from MCFD for all services. However, the authorities would continue to operate under the existing *Act*. These proposed Authorities would follow the Crown Corporation model (e.g. Northern Health Authority) and reflect the geographical boundaries that had been used in establishing the 5 Regional Health Authorities.

Following this announcement, First Nations and Aboriginal leadership from across the province widely questioned, challenged and condemned this plan. A gathering was organized and held in Tsawwassen, BC (June 10 & 11, 2002) with participation by First Nation and Aboriginal leadership representatives from many parts of the province¹⁷.

The Tsawwassen Accord

The Tsawwassen gathering of First Nation and Aboriginal leadership was convened in response to government's proposed "five Regional Authorities" plan. Key components at the crux of opposition to this plan included: the lack of prior and meaningful consultation; the failure to recognize the inherent right and self-determination of Aboriginal peoples in all matters regarding children and families; and the intent for the "superimposition of a proposed blended Regional Authority (i.e. Authorities composed of a blend of non-Aboriginal and Aboriginal board of directors)."¹⁸

The leaders in attendance resoundingly rejected this plan for Regional Authorities and advanced their self-determined interest for the establishment of separate and distinct Regional Aboriginal Authorities. The leadership and participants expressed that the Province and Ministry had historically failed Aboriginal children and families and cited as evidence that approximately 46 % of children-in-care are of Aboriginal ancestry, when the overall provincial Aboriginal children and youth (0 – 18 years) population is approximately 8 %.¹⁹

An impromptu working group commenced the drafting of a resolution that unequivocally demanded the creation of five Regional Aboriginal Authorities. This gathering and the historic resolution that was created by the First Nation and Aboriginal peoples in attendance would come to be known as the *Tsawwassen Accord*. The Province, through MCFD, soon after agreed to the opportunity for the creation of five distinct Aboriginal Authorities.

Regional Aboriginal Authorities – What Happened Next? (Winter 2003)

Following the agreement by the Province for the opportunity to create Regional Aboriginal Authorities, gatherings were held in each of the proposed five Regions that included attendance and participation by: First Nation and Aboriginal leadership, Aboriginal service organizations, and other First Nation and Aboriginal stakeholders. In the proposed North Region, the initial two-day gathering resulted in establishing a six person interim Aboriginal Authority planning committee. This evolved at subsequent North Region gatherings to become a fifteen member planning committee with four representatives from the north east. In 2003, this planning committee established the name Northern Aboriginal Authority for Families (NAAFF).

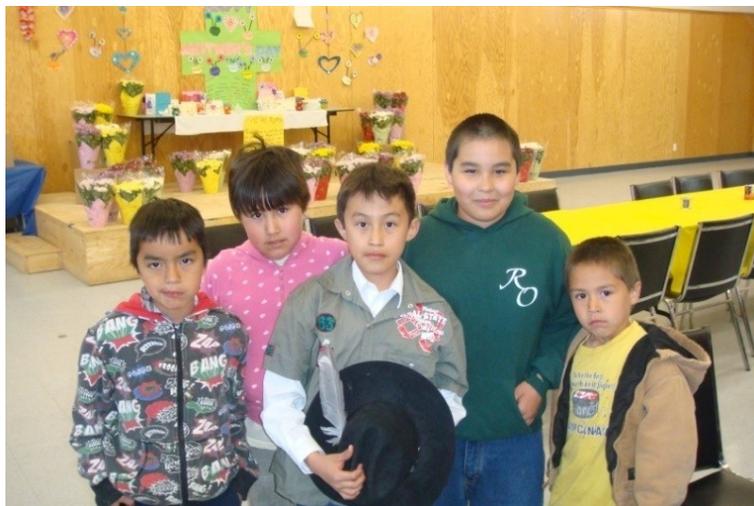
¹⁷ To the best of Nenan's knowledge there were no leadership representatives in attendance from any of the Treaty 8 Nations of north east British Columbia

¹⁸ Tsawwassen Accord

¹⁹ This is approximately 67 % in the north east, according to MCFD statistics

Representatives from the five Aboriginal Authority planning committees and MCFD collaborated in the creation of the “Joint Multi Year Plan” (2004). This plan was developed to provide a framework to guide planning for establishing five Aboriginal Authorities. “The joint multi-year plan encompasses all resources and services currently provided by MCFD...it is by guiding the resources contained in this full range of services that Aboriginal communities see the greatest potential for change.”²⁰

During this period, the north east Aboriginal Authority interests were subsumed within NAAFF. It is important to note that the Aboriginal Authority opportunity arose three-years after the two planning committees that became Nenana had commenced their respective delegated agency endeavors.



Children, Halfway River First Nation

²⁰Joint Multi Year Plan, 2004, p 6-7



Treaty 8 Leadership with Nenan Representative

MOVING TOWARD AUTHORITY LEGISLATION

Nenan board members and then staff held discussions between fall 2006 – spring 2007 regarding the Authority opportunity which galvanized Nenan representatives to shift endeavors from creating a delegated agency to creating an authority. An Authority was determined to be a far better option for supporting First Nations, Métis and Aboriginal peoples, as it would enable Nenan to assume decision-making responsibilities for both delegated services, and the full range of contracted support services under the jurisdiction of MCFD.²¹

Nenan representatives recognized that having jurisdiction over the full range of services and resources would enable greater opportunity for the development of a holistic continuum of services based on their values, perspectives, and interests. Lesley Du Toit, Deputy Minister, identified the significance of contracted services in a discussion with the Select Standing Committee on Child Welfare who she informed, “...approximately 49 % of the ministry’s funding supports contracts with community-based service delivery organizations. This is a piece that people sometimes are not aware of. In fact, a lot of our business is actually outsourced to contracted agencies.” (Sept. 4, 2007)²². (Please see Appendix I: Community Contracted Services Information.)

Of the greatest importance in the decision to shift to the creation of an Authority was the fact that Nenan board members are selected directly by their respective First Nation leadership, or urban or rural Aboriginal community stakeholders, for the specific purpose of advancing the interests regarding the children and families of their community. All Nenan representatives are residents of their communities and have informed knowledge and expertise, relationships and, of critical importance, they are directly accountable to the communities they have the privilege and honour to represent. Due to these considerations, the Nenan board concluded that they were/are the wholly appropriate representatives to advance the Aboriginal Authority endeavor on behalf of, and with the First Nation, Aboriginal and Métis peoples of north east British Columbia.

²¹ Services the Ministry is responsible for include: early childhood development, services for children and youth with special needs, supported child development, child and youth mental health, family development, child protection, residential and foster care, adoption, programs for at-risk or sexually exploited youth, and youth justice. (MCFD Request for Proposal Number: NR026)

²² The Select Standing Committee is an all-party committee of the legislature which has a mandate to, “...foster greater awareness and understanding among legislators and the public of the BC child welfare system...” (Terms of Reference)

Mandate to Create an Authority from Treaty 8 Leadership (Winter-Spring 2007)

The Treaty 8 leadership of the Treaty 8 Tribal Association were approached by Nenan representatives regarding the desire to shift to creating an Authority. All of the aforementioned reasons and rationale were discussed thoroughly and resulted in the leadership providing a mandate that confirmed their support for Nenan's desired shift to an Authority endeavour. (Please see Appendix II: Treaty 8 Tribal Association mandate for Nenan letter.)

Aboriginal Authorities Act Is Not Passed

In the spring of 2008, the Aboriginal Authorities Act Legislation was scheduled for introduction to the legislature, but due to opposition from some esteemed First Nations and Aboriginal groups, this legislation was not introduced. Nenan, like many First Nations and Aboriginal groups, was forced to reconsider the path forward to reclaim jurisdiction for supporting our children and families. Uncertainly around the future of the legislation led Nenan to continue to pursue Authority status.



Nenan Representative and Children,
Halfway River First Nation

Meeting with Lesley Du Toit, Deputy Minister, MCFD - April 12, 2007

In April 2007, the former Nenan chairperson, planner and assistant met in Victoria with the Deputy Minister and other Ministry officials, to discuss the history and background of Nenan, and the results of the work that had been completed towards establishing a new joint delegated agency. Inclusive in these discussions was Nenan's interests in the creation of an Authority in the north east. A key component of these discussions included the fact that all of the communities – on and off-reserve, urban and rural - had committed to working together in the Nenan endeavor, which presented unique and profound new opportunities for child welfare services across the north east.

Supportive and affirming discussions ensued, however the Deputy Minister asked Nenan representatives to take a **new approach in the development of child welfare services** that involved undertaking a more comprehensive and structured community consultation process with peoples from each community. The Deputy proposed that learning the “community identified service needs” from the people who the services are intended for would ensure the development of appropriate services. Moreover, the Deputy challenged the Nenan representatives to look outside the box of traditional child welfare services, and “think more broadly.” She articulated that taking this community engagement approach would yield the identification and development of services that had never before been contemplated or created, and that this community based approach could lead to the development of “a new child welfare system.”

To help Nenana achieve an unprecedented and holistic community engagement process, the Deputy Minister offered the services and support of Dr. Philip Cook, Executive Director, International Institute of Child Rights and Development (IICRD). MCFD had secured Dr. Cook's support and expertise for its Transformation initiative. Dr. Cook and the Deputy Minister had worked together previously in community engagement and development processes in other parts of the world, notably South Africa.

Internal Nenana deliberations ensued and a meeting was held with Dr. Cook which resulted in unanimous agreement to welcome the opportunity for his expertise and support. MCFD also engaged in the development of a budget with Nenana which resulted in approximately \$ 775,000, to support Nenana board and staff related expenses, and resourcing this unprecedented and historic community engagement process. An additional \$300,000 was provided by the North Region, MCFD for support of the community-based action plans. This process (the Triple "A") will be presented and discussed in-depth in Section II of this report.

Nenana Update Meeting with the Deputy Minister and MCFD officials (September 2008)

The Nenana Board of Directors and staff met with the Deputy Minister to provide an update on the Triple "A" Community Empowerment process as well as to discuss other issues of common concern. Initial discussions focused on a progress report to provide insights regarding the learning and experiences gained through the completed community assessment engagements. This discussion was assisted by Dr. Philip Cook and the Nenana board representatives presented their own experiences of utilizing the Triple "A" tool in their respective communities.

At this meeting the Deputy Minister confirmed the Province's support for Nenana evolving in a self-determined manner to become an Authority or, if so desired, some other form of Governance. Nenana representatives expressed openness to exploring all options. As Nenana staff member, and former West Moberly First Nation Band Councillor, Brandi Scott stated, "we are interested in pursuing whatever option is most advantageous to our interests," in other words- the interests of the children and families for whom we work.

Additional discussion focused on Nenana's desire to formalize the relationship with the Province for the purpose of providing certainty. Nenana's staff and board representatives introduced the intent to develop and sign a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) with the Province that would confirm a multi-year commitment including such provisions as: multi-year funding commitment, communications process, information sharing, and defining working relationships.



Deputy Minister, Nenana Board and Elders

This request was supported by the Deputy Minister who pronounced that Nenan should proceed and “act with confidence.”

Lastly, discussion focused on the development of a new budget and associated process. Nenan staff identified that the development of a new budget would commence shortly and would be subject to an internal vetting and ratification process that would include review and guidance from the Treaty 8 First Nation leadership of the Treaty 8 Tribal Association, and the Blueberry River First Nation. Nenan representatives identified their expectation that the draft of their new proposed budget would be completed in September, and that following the aforementioned approval process it would be submitted to Lesley Du Toit, Deputy Minister.



November 3 Meeting with MCFD, Treaty 8 and Nenan

Nenan Board & Treaty 8 Leadership of the Treaty 8 Tribal Association Meet with the Honourable Minister Tom Christensen & MCFD (November 2008)

The Nenan board of directors, staff and Treaty 8 Nation leadership of the Treaty 8 Tribal Association met with the Honourable Minister Tom Christensen and North Region, MCFD representatives to provide an update and further relationship development and discussion. The Treaty 8 leadership of the Treaty 8 Tribal Association who were present expressed their unequivocal support for Nenan to act solely in advancing their interests for our children and families.

Nenan re-introduced the intent and desire for the confirmation of an MOU. Minister Christensen expressed understanding for the need for certainty, and provided support for the development of a multi-year MOU. Treaty 8 Leadership present also expressed their support for an MOU, and articulated potential interest for inclusion as a signatory to this agreement with the province. The potential nature for this inclusion – including legal review - will be explored as development of the MOU commences (ETA spring 2009).

A NEW DIRECTION: COMMUNITY BASED GOVERNANCE LEADING TO JURISDICTION

Nenan reached a historic agreement with the Deputy Minister in January 2009 enabling the formation of a new jurisdiction and governance model, including services and quality assurance based upon self-determination and inherent rights. This new jurisdiction and governance development replaces the earlier notion of the Crown Corporation Authority model, enabling the creation of new child welfare legislation based upon the values, culture and perspectives of our people. Nenan is firmly committed to building a new model of jurisdiction and services that is informed by and developed from outcomes and accountabilities at the community level.

The Deputy Minister has offered the following confirmation of this approach:

“You have full support for developing a model of jurisdiction which includes governance and quality assurance. Therefore a working group should be struck to develop the governance model that would work best for North East/Treaty Eight and which builds on and draws from the Triple A community mobilization and development approach.” (January 2009)

The collective support provided from the Deputy Minister, Honourable Minister, and Regional Executive Director for enabling the First Nation, Aboriginal and Métis peoples of the north east to reclaim jurisdiction and governance over services has been, and continues to be, tremendously appreciated.

Nenan’s board members and staff overwhelmingly agree with the Deputy Minister’s statement, “Our role is to support, more than anything else, aboriginal peoples to achieve their vision and goals with regard to jurisdiction and delivery of services to their children, youth, families and communities.” (Sept. 4, 2007)



Deputy Minister reviews draft governance framework example

SECTION II

THE RIVER OF UNITY: TRIPLE “A” COMMUNITY EMPOWERMENT PROCESS



WHAT IS THE RIVER OF UNITY: COMMUNITY EMPOWERMENT PROCESS?

Nenan firmly believes that the answers to the issues facing our communities lie in the imaginations of our youth, the knowledge of our families and community members and the experience and traditions of our Elders and Ancestors. In order to build a new service delivery model that is grounded in the knowledge and wisdom within each distinct community, Nenana selected to use a participatory development model grounded in children's rights- the Triple 'A' Community Empowerment Process.

The Nenana Board of Directors decided on the name 'River of Unity' to describe the process, drawing inspiration from the natural landscape of the north east to symbolize the unity of Nations and Peoples in support of children and families. The Triple "A" Community Empowerment Process (Triple "A") is a participatory community development tool that actively engages young people and community members, through conversations and activities. This approach facilitates deep exploration and learning around children and families' daily lives, including the challenges they face and the resources available to support their healthy development and well-being.

The Triple "A" uses a set of tools rooted in IICRD's *Developmental Child Rights Approach* - a "bottom up" - "top down" systems change strategy to create positive, sustainable change in children's lives. This approach focuses on "mapping" assets, opportunities and capacities for dignity, belonging and justice within a child's social and natural environment, as well as identifying gaps in accountability to these determinants of children's life, survival and development. Using the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child as a framework, the *Developmental Child Rights Approach* builds on the strengths and capacities of children, their communities, and culture to help contextualize the reality of children, and create sustainable interventions that bridge the gap between children's lived experiences and systemic structures and government policies. (Please see Appendix III for more information on the methodology of this approach.)

Through the application of the Triple "A" process Nenana is making its best effort to meaningfully engage the following people from our communities: parents, grandparents, Elders, children and youth, leadership, service organization representatives, as well as community members with valuable knowledge and insights about children's day to day lives. The Triple "A" process is helping Nenana representatives gather information and learn what supports are available and what challenges exist for children and families in each respective community. At the same time, communities are focusing attention and resources on these issues, and quite naturally, ideas for improvements are emerging.

Nenana is starting by asking 'How can we support children's well-being and healthy families?' The work is guided by a commitment to a balanced holistic upbringing for children that supports their emotional, spiritual, physical, cognitive, social, and cultural growth. This can only be done through a connection to the traditions, to the old people and their ways that is firmly rooted in the context of children's lives today. It is our hope that the metaphor of the flowing, healing river will guide our personal and collective journeys of healing, recovery, and growth.

The cultural values and practices that have supported children for generations in the north east are a guiding framework for the Triple "A" process. Extensive work is being conducted with Elders and traditionally trained specialists to identify cultural terms and practices around supporting the well-being of children and families, ensuring supports for traditional childcare and protection continue to thrive in each community. The Triple "A" also engages children and youth in "activities" (e.g. photo framing, walking tours, community map-making exercise, peer group discussions) intended to provide a platform for them to safely and critically explore their lives and contribute to creating positive change in their communities. Parents and community members, as the foundation for supporting children's healthy development and well-being, are deeply involved in the process. Other key knowledgeable people (e.g. school principals, school teachers, Aboriginal Head Start program staff, Aboriginal Service Organization staff) are also engaged in interviews, discussions and/or community activity exercises.

Facilitator: “How do you build trust with children and families?”

Katherine Dokkie, Elder, West Moberly First Nation: “It is in your tone of voice. It is in your gestures and your eyes. You need to look people in the eyes when they are speaking to you. Don’t ask questions. Listen. Don’t talk about why you are there. And if you don’t get anything out of that first meeting go again and speak with them and they will begin to trust you. Even if it takes you meeting with them many times. You don’t rush it. They will begin to tell you, you don’t ask. Then they will begin to open up. Encourage them in what they are doing. Joke with them.”

The Triple “A” Process is unique in:

Offering a child centered approach that brings communities together in creating a vision for children and families and tangible “Action” plans to breathe life into that vision;

Building on a holistic community participation process that identifies local risks for children and strengthens local child and family supports;

- Engaging and calling upon Elders and traditional specialists in their traditional roles;
- Engaging Elders in ensuring children’s safety, health and development;
- Placing children’s participation and the participation of family and key community supports at the centre of “bottom up” models of community governance that leverage child rights systems accountability from “top down” legislation and policy; and
- Engaging key individuals including parents, Elders, children and youth in designing programs and services that reduce risk and strengthen protection through community development.



Children, West Moberly First Nation

TRIPLE “A” PROCESS: ASSESSMENT, ANALYSIS, AND ACTION

Triple “A” stands for the following sequential phases: Assessment, Analysis, and Action. Each of these phases and the activities and methods utilized for engaging the different segments of each community is described in greater detail below:

Step 1: Assessment

The first step of the Triple “A” process is an assessment, by community members themselves, of the community’s strengths and capacity to support the safety and healthy development of children and youth. Young people, parents, Elders, leadership, community members and service organization staff are engaged to identify the strengths and weaknesses that exist in community support for young people. Nenan is engaging communities in this in-depth and holistic process for the purpose of learning the respective local community contexts and ensuring that the community has the opportunity to be meaningfully engaged and develop a sense of ownership over the development of services for their young people. The information gathered from young people and various groups within the community is shared with the larger community to spur discussions, verify information and rally support.

Specific Tools used in the Assessment stage

The following assessment tools were specifically selected to effectively engage community members in identifying their community’s key strengths and challenges.



Children's Walking Tour, West Moberly



Youth Photo Framing, Chetwynd

1. Children’s Walking Tours

A walking tour is a visit or walk-around of a community led by children (age 7-12), and possibly accompanied by mothers and/or an Elder. The walking tour provides an opportunity to understand how children “see” their community, the people who live there and the natural and human resources around them. The information gathered is an important foundation for the Triple “A” process, enabling adults to see a community through the eyes of a child. Children are encouraged to show adults some of their favourite aspects of their community (important, people, places, things, and natural spaces) as well as aspects of their community they think could be improved.

2. Youth Photo Framing Activity

The Photo-Frame activity allows young people to visually report on their community by physically walking through it and taking photos of both positive and negative aspects of what makes up their lives. The frame that surrounds their pictures is a reminder that it is through their ‘lens’ that the photo was taken. This is a fun way to show the community how young people see it and gather information on young people’s perceptions and attitudes towards their community.



Focus Group with Parents,
Fort Nelson First Nation



Elders Gathering, Fort Nelson



Knowledgeable Person interview,
Doig River First Nation

3. Children and Youth Community Map Building

A social map is a drawing about children's lives in their town or city. Children are asked to draw a picture of places and people that are important to them. The social mapping activity helps us understand the people, places, spaces that are important to children and make up their 'community'. It allows us to see some of the people and places that support children, and some that do not.

4. Focus Group Discussions with Parents

A focus group is a facilitated discussion with a selected group of parents focused on the key supports that exist for their families and the key challenges they face. Focus group discussions give parents an opportunity to dialogue about the resources available to them (including important people in the community, cultural traditions, and available services) as well as some of the gaps they face in supporting their children's development.

5. Gathering Teachings from Our Elders

Gathering Teachings from our Elders is an entry point to a deeper conversation with community Elders to gather important traditional and cultural information about supports for children, youth and families. Elders are met either individually or as a group in an effort to learn traditional terms or practices that supported or continue to support children and families in their culture. (Please see Appendix IV: Rainbows and Dreamers)

6. Individual Interviews with Key Knowledgeable People

These are one-on-one meetings with individuals who can provide useful information about key issues for children and families in the community, key support systems or other important and relevant information about the community.



Children, Halfway River First Nation

“We use the term ‘Mio Mumtoneeta’ for good thinking. You think better. There is a healing part in that.”

Katherine Dokkie, Elder, West Moberly First Nation, Cree Speaker

Step 2: Analysis

The second step, analysis, engages children, youth, families, Elders, leadership, and the broader community in a collective re-engagement to critically analyze the information collected during the assessment phase (i.e. community-centered child-focused strengths, challenges and needs).

This re-engagement is intended to ensure that the information and data collected is an accurate and thorough description of the community. As various groups within the community will have presented their thoughts, for example children and youth, the analysis phase is also an opportunity for the community to learn about the various perspectives that exist within it.

A second interest of re-engaging the community is to continue to deepen the dialogue and relationship that has been established between Nenan and the people so that they will continue to feel empowered in the design and development of services. It is crucial for our collective success that community members play a lead role in the identification and development of services that will work for their communities.

Step 3: Action

In the third step, action, children and youth, parents, Elders, leadership, and community based service providers develop action plans that utilize and build on local strengths to address their primary areas of concern. As a result, young people, their families, and the community determine the results of the process and benefit from participating in the design, development and implementation of actions to meet their specific needs.

The “Actions” are bottom-up grass-roots developed projects or programs that are culturally grounded and participatory. Generally, actions fall into one of the four categories below:

- Capacity Building: e.g. Elders work together to plan a cross-cultural training session for Ministry staff, providing opportunities for relationship building and deeper understanding of one another.
- Response Delivery: e.g. young people work with Elders to develop a language training course that is fun and informative.
- Advocacy: e.g. children speak out for children’s rights.
- Monitoring: e.g. young people work with organizations to provide feedback on how programming can benefit their day-to-day lives.

For Nenan, actions will develop in three levels reflecting the gradual development of contextualized knowledge and community engagement, preparing for the eventual delivery of a holistic system of services.

- **Youth, Parent or Community Responses**

These community-led initiatives will fall into the categories described above, and offer young people and community members the opportunity to design their own responses to the issues facing young people and families. Nenan will support community members in the design, development and implementation of their responses, and these will work to inform Nenan’s service delivery model, building from the grassroots up.

- **Innovative Service Strategy**

Nenan will commence with a national and international research and literature review to explore services strategies and models employed in various settings that could work to inform our practice. Innovative pilot programs will be initiated making use of good practices learned through research that correspond well with information gathered from our communities, for example, prevention and early intervention mechanisms, early childhood development, and youth and Elder engagement. At the same time, methods for a monitoring and evaluation structure will be developed to better measure the impact of services on the daily lives of children and their families, to ensure that we are better able to respond to the needs of our people. These “good practices” will be reviewed and reflected back against the local community engagement strategies to ensure future service delivery is grounded in community needs and strengths.

- **Service Delivery Model**

The Service Delivery Model will be informed and build upon the community-owned initiatives and the innovative service strategies implemented in level 1 and 2. This stage will provide the platform for the development of the service delivery plan and ensure that it both builds upon the strengths and needs in our communities as well as good practices being implemented nationally and internationally.

Facilitator: “Did you have times when you’d sit around and the Elders would tell stories?”

Maisie Metecheah, Elder, Halfway River First Nation: “Yes, I had a lot of experience with that. They want us to continue teaching our children today to get to know our languages, how to survive in the bush, that’s why last year we had 4 camps teaching them, our generations, how to survive in the bush. Teaching them how to snare rabbits and put up snares, and some of them caught rabbits and they were really excited and proud of it. And we teach them how to skin it.”



Working Hard, Blueberry River First Nation

Nenan Receives Triple “A” Training from IICRD

Nenan board members and staff received training in the assessment phase of the Triple “A” process on November 27 – 30, 2007, and January 21 – 23, 2008, from Dr. Philip Cook, Bill White, and Vanessa Currie of the International Institute of Child Rights and Development (IICRD). Additional support in the implementation of the “Assessment” phase community engagements has been provided by Philip, Bill and Vanessa via telephone and e-mail correspondence, and in-person through 5 visits to the north east. Analysis and action training was provided June 26-27, 2008 and August 27-28, 2008. Their support has been invaluable in engendering the development of community engagement skills in Nenan designates and staff, and thus, contributing to a profound new level of comprehensive understanding.

Outcomes

The participatory nature of the process engenders an empowerment for community members who see tangible outcomes and results from their participation and efforts. Young people are benefitting from participating in the identification, design, development and implementation of initiatives and services that meet their specific needs. Opportunities for young people to experience renewed engagement with Elders and traditional specialists is another positive outcome of this process. Community members benefit as they are empowered through their meaningful participation and contributions to the development of a vision for the safety, health and well-being of children and families in their communities. It is still early in the process to have a full spectrum of outcomes to report, but these will be published in the near future.

SECTION III

OBSERVATIONS & LEARNING



Elders Fleshing Moose Hide, Halfway River First Nation

EMERGING THEMES

Key observations, insights and lessons learned from the more than 70 River of Unity: Triple "A" Community Empowerment Assessment engagements completed will be shared in this section. To date, certain themes have emerged that have greatly contributed to our learning and understanding as they provide overwhelming indicators of the current situation in our respective communities. We have endeavored to create thematic categories in order to facilitate information sharing and understanding in this report. As previously mentioned, a second report focusing on in-depth community-by-community findings is scheduled to commence development in April 2009. (ETA: May 2009).

The themes emerging from the community empowerment process include:

1. Diversity in Community Context
2. Meaningful Relationships in Child Welfare
3. Shift the Focus to Early Intervention & Prevention Support
4. Increase Attention to Early Childhood Development Services
5. Transmission of Culture, Traditional Practices & Language
6. Meaningful Participation of Children & Youth

The above thematic categories will be discussed in more detail below. We will also provide initial ideas and strategies presented as potential solutions for issues that have emerged.

Diversity in Community Context

Communities engaged, whether on or off-reserve, urban or rural, have an extremely unique context and diversity, including: demographics; culture, language and traditional practices; needs and issues; values and beliefs; human resources and administrative capacity; and, strengths and assets. Differences are also pronounced in areas such as, availability and access to a continuum of services, and frequency and types of involvement with MCFD.

Significant differences exist between urban and First Nation communities in areas of: capacity and infrastructure, including human resources and facilities; availability and access to a continuum of services; resource support for self-provision of services; and, opportunities to learn and participate in culture and traditional practices, and indigenous first language.

The diversity of the First Nations and Aboriginal peoples of the north east is evidenced in the number of first languages, including two dialects of the Athapaskan language family- Dunne_Wezaa (Dane_Zaa), and Slavey as well as Cree, a member of the Algonquian family group. We have observed that languages and language groups reflect the difference in regards to culture and beliefs.

Ideas & Strategies

- Develop community focused Service Plans. Each community will participate in the design of a service delivery plan to meet their specific needs, building upon the resources and capacities that exist, and identifying those that are needed, to address and support their unique challenges.
- The Service Delivery Plan for Nenan will be a sum of the individualized plans developed with each respective community and will include the collaborative development of measurable indicators and determinants developed for well-being and quality assurance purposes.
- Look for ways to create structured opportunities for Aboriginal children and youth in urban centres to learn and practice their culture, language and traditional activities; this includes experiential outdoors activities and "teachings" opportunities.
- Locate more services on reserve, organized through appropriate designates and leadership, organized through community and family members. Includes capacity development resourcing, training and support.

“Come for a visit and have coffee with us. We did that with the RCMP and it’s worked well in developing a better relationship, if anything, they might be coming around too much now (laughs jokingly).”

Chief Ed Whitford, Halfway River First Nation

Meaningful Relationships in Child Welfare

Many of the First Nation and Aboriginal peoples identified their experiences with the child welfare system as disempowering with palpable levels of suspicion and resentment. Negative historical experiences were identified as compounding the mistrust and negative perceptions of Aboriginal peoples that persist in society. This is due, in part, to the majority of interactions between MCFD and communities being child protection oriented, where these challenging circumstances are the only foundation for relationships between Ministry staff and families.

Community members in many First Nation communities have expressed fear of contacting the Ministry when they are experiencing challenges for fear of their children being apprehended. This is supported by Ministry data that identifies that only approximately 10% of all calls received from First Nations are classified as “request for support” calls, the vast majority being protection focused²³. This has led to missed opportunities to engage families in prevention and early intervention, with plans in place at earlier junctures before issues become a crisis.

Present practice orientation (i.e. interactions based largely on child protection interventions) appears to compromise the development of collaborative, supportive and trustful relationships. In limited engagements with Ministry staff, staff expressed a strong desire to establish and maintain positive supportive relationships with families. They identified structural challenges, such as chronic shortages of staff that negate their ability to engage communities in relationship building. Key knowledgeable people in many communities have confirmed this situation, surmising that better relationships, based on mutual respect and understanding, would lead to better outcomes for children and families.

Ideas & Strategies

- Foster relationship development through existing opportunities such as: collaborative planning to support children in care, and participation in cultural event gatherings and ceremonies, as well as creating new opportunities, such as: support Elders and community designates in the development of cross-cultural learning opportunities that are both class-room and experiential-participatory in nature and scope; and plan for participation in cultural and community events that are held annually (e.g. Chowadee Elders and Youth Camp, Doig River Days and Dane_Zaa Camp, Saulteau Pemmican Days, West Moberly Days).
- In those communities in which relationship challenges are deeply ingrained, explore opportunities for reconciliation events; working with community designates and Elders, for the purpose of trying to clear away negativity and open up opportunities for a new relationship.
- Utilize informal opportunities for developing positive relationships and engendering local community understanding. Continue to develop strategies that build on and reinforce local networks in reinforcing healthy relationships through Triple “A”.
- Develop relationship based practice standards that require staff to engage Community Councils and designates for the purpose of effecting and maintaining positive working relationships and mutual understanding; this relationship practice investment will benefit interactions and outcomes if/when child protection interventions occur. (Please refer to Section IV for more information on Community Councils).
- Establish community drafted Protocols to articulate mutually beneficial relationships between community members and child welfare staff. (see Appendix V: Protocol Agreement, for a draft Protocol between Halfway River First Nation and MCFD).

²³ Source: MCFD 12 month average between April 2007 – March 2008; “out-of-home” placements include: children in care, kith & kin, ICO and ICN (Interim Order Custody of Other S 35.2d & 60), and SOC and SOT (Supervision Order – Custody of Other S 41.1b & 60)



Minister Reid, at Nenas

Shift the Focus to Early Intervention & Prevention Support

As mentioned, communities reflected the heavy focus on child protection services and other crisis oriented services. There is a clear lack of early intervention and prevention activities that build on existing resources at the community level. The heavy focus on dealing with crisis situations through child protection has reduced the amount of resources investing in preventing these crises from occurring. There is a need to strengthen the focus on preventing and intervening early in potential problem areas in order to avoid situations which negatively impact children's well-being.

Ideas & Strategies

From the onset, significantly more resources need to be allocated to prevention and early intervention services. Community Councils will be established comprising Elders, leadership, youth, family members and other adults with specific interest in children's well-being- such as traditional specialists, child care workers, and other key knowledgeable people. Councils will be formed in each community to develop community empowerment/early intervention and prevention activities, so that positive activities can be managed locally, with key supports from Nenan board and staff. Develop strategies (e.g. first language curriculum, experiential cultural and traditional activities and associated ceremony) to increase the integration of Elder involvement as "Teachers" of language, culture, and traditional practices. Increase Attention to Early Childhood Development Services

The very first Triple "A" community engagement drew attention to the concerning gaps in the availability and access to early childhood development program services for many families. Not all First Nations and Aboriginal children of the north east have comparable levels of early development support prior to their entrance in the school system. Parents who are involved have spoken very favourably about the support they have received from the Aboriginal Early Childhood Development (ECD) and Aboriginal Head Start (AHS) programs in their communities.

Elder involvement at early childhood programs, in their traditional roles as "Teachers" of culture, language and traditions is modest, or in some cases, non-existent. Individuals who are able to speak their first language have stressed the importance of early exposure and practice with speakers. The vast majority of children and youth are not learning to

capably speak their first language at home, and the number of speakers is dwindling. Thus, the lack of Elder involvement as teachers in early childhood programs seems like a profoundly missed opportunity.

Additionally, parental involvement in early childhood programs has not reached sufficient levels, in some communities. This is also a bit perplexing as Triple "A" Assessments with Parents and Key Knowledgeable People have consistently resulted in the identification of "Parenting Skill Development and Education," as a top-priority need in many communities and this seems like a natural fit opportunity. Positive outcomes have been attributed to those programs with parental participation.

Ideas & Strategies

- Develop a distinct, focused and comprehensive Early Childhood Program area within the Nenani Service Delivery Model, with specific focus placed on bringing early childhood services to all young children in the north east.
- Engage Elders in language and cultural transmission through early years programming.
- Integrate Parenting Skill Development as a program component of Early Years programs (where it does not presently exist).
- Hold an Aboriginal Early Childhood Symposium that brings together representatives from our communities with decision-makers and key technical support persons from: intergovernmental ministries (i.e. Health Canada: First Nations Inuit Health, Public Health Agency of Canada, and MCFD), academic institutions (e.g. Human Early Learning Project), and Aboriginal childcare organizations (Aboriginal IDP, BC Aboriginal Child Care Society, Aboriginal Head Start) to discuss and identify ways to maximize the synergy and efficacy of existing services; create a relationship network to enable the sharing of best practices, training and skill sharing, and enable continuous best practice learning opportunities; and collectively strategize to address the gaps that presently exist in ECD services.
- Support the development of resource materials (e.g. story books, videos) based upon the specific culture, traditional practices, and first language of the First Nation or Aboriginal peoples where the early childhood program is located in.
- Explore the potential with other partners (e.g. AHRDA) for employment skills training and education synergy with early childhood programs to alleviate child-minding pressures on parents; could include exploration of e.g. micro-loan opportunities
- Develop and confirm relationships through Memorandums of Understanding with Academic Institutions focusing on Early Childhood Developmental science to engender continuous education update and training opportunities for Early Childhood Educators.

Transmission of Culture, Traditional Practices & Language

Opportunities for young people to participate in their culture, traditional activities and indigenous language vary significantly between communities. Examples of some of the opportunities include: annual cultural activity "day's" and "camp's"; traditional cultural activities and language in school curriculum and child care programs; modern technologies (internet website). Chalo School in the Fort Nelson First Nation was notable for its strong language and cultural programs as foundations of the core curriculum.

In some communities however, opportunities for participation and learning do not exist on an annualized, consistent and structured basis. In many cases, opportunities for cultural learning and development are limited to a smaller number of young people who have opportunities to participate in traditional cultural practices and language with knowledgeable family members. Learning opportunities are not equally accessible for all of the children and youth in each community.

The majority of youth reflected their desire for increased and consistent opportunities to participate in cultural activities, to learn their language and traditions through experiential activities on their traditional territory. Many youth expressed concern that they are not learning their culture and first language sufficiently and they fear that these abilities and knowledge could be lost for future generations of their peoples as a result.

“I think it would be cool for all the young girls to learn how to bead and to, like, work on moose hides and all that too with all the older ladies cuz, like, in the long run, all of our Elders aren’t gonna be with us forever. So us youth may as well step up and learn all the culture now while we can, because, like, later on in the future, we’re all gonna regret it, if we never did.”

Youth, Halfway River First Nation



Elder and Youth, Halfway River First Nation

The majority of Elders spoke about how they learned their language and cultural practices from their parents, grandparents, aunts and uncles, and the Elders in their community and that this learning began as early as they could remember in their home environment, and while out in the bush hunting, trapping, preparing hides, making dry meat, picking berries and camping.

Elders often spoke with great reverence for their parents, family members and Elders who played important roles in teaching them their culture, language and practices. Elders in all communities also spoke of the importance of values and beliefs that were intrinsically learned through cultural practices and language such as, hard work, respect for people (especially Elders) and the land, pride in their culture, and honesty.

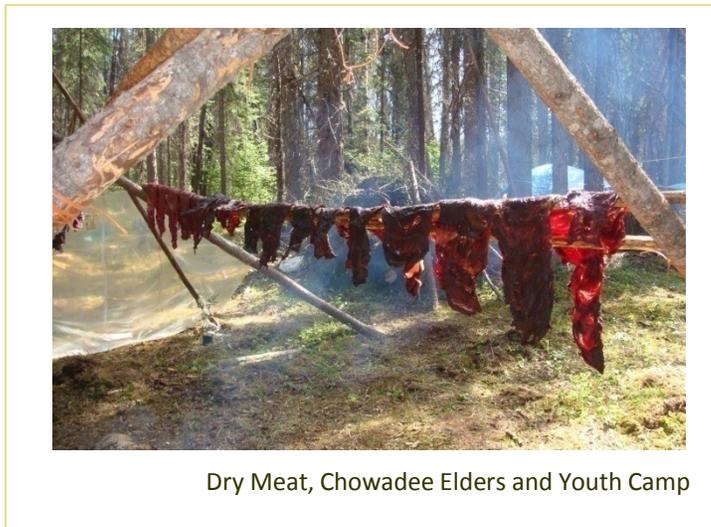
Many Elders and adults spoke of cultural gatherings – often involving neighbouring First Nation communities – occurring with much greater frequency when they were growing up. These events would last for days and would feature Drummers and Dancers performing, and Elders sharing stories with children around the campfire. When asked, many Elders have identified that these traditions do not occur often enough for today’s youth and children, and they express similar concerns and lament about the potential future loss of their cultural ways and language. Some Elders have expressed this as an acute concern, pointing to the fact that Elders are passing away and taking their knowledge and wisdom with them, without it being passed on to the children and youth.

In many communities, culture, traditional activities and first language are identified as vastly underutilized strengths for helping to engender in children and youth a sense of identity and belonging, self-esteem and pride, and mastery and resiliency.

Ideas & Strategies

- Work with communities to provide consistent and accessible opportunities for children and youth to participate in and learn their culture and language. Finding creative ways to meaningfully engage youth, Elders and traditional knowledge specialists in experiential outdoors cultural learning and developmental opportunities

- Support communities in the development of culture and language educational learning materials (e.g. books, videos, websites) for utilization in schools, and early childhood programs, providing an opportunity for Elder and Youth participation in their development
- Empower Elders and traditional specialists to perform their sacred responsibility of sharing the “teachings” received from their Ancestors. Opportunities to share learning through the development of cross-cultural curriculum and materials for individuals working in their communities
- Develop Practice Standard requirements that are linked to Article 30 of the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child, and relevant sections of the UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples that confirm and enable all children to have a right and opportunity to learn and practice their distinct culture and language
- Work with other parties (e.g. Education) in supporting the development of a comprehensive language strategy
- Establish a Regional Elders Council comprised of an Elder representative from each community, selected from amongst their peers to represent the Elder perspective and interests of that community in all Nenan planning (e.g. policy and practice development, services and programs, events and gatherings) in a consistent and ongoing manner
- Support “Action Plans” that engender connections between Elders and young people and empower Elders in their historical role as teachers of culture, traditional practices and language.



Dry Meat, Chowadee Elders and Youth Camp

“My grampa, Charlie Yahey, and gramma Anachuan Yahey, and them too on my dad’s side, that’s where I gotta learn a lot of things from them...they taught me in my culture to tan hides, and making dry meat because we don’t have a freezer or fridge, so we made lots of dry meat to save for winter, so we stored everything like that for winter, and that’s how they taught us, and pick berries. My grampa was a Dreamer, and all the people would come and sit down and gather around him. My mom used to prepare lunch and they’d talk, and say, ‘we gotta do this for our people, our community; these young people gotta learn how we survive, and our traditions.’

They’d say, ‘respect your land, everything around, whatever you got is out there. You don’t kill anything over, if you don’t eat it don’t kill it,’ they say that, that’s what I learned from my Elders. So I learn a lot of things and that’s how I say to my grandkids, please, respect your people and whatever you do, you do the right thing and speak the right word, and do not lie.”

– Elder, Blueberry River First Nation



Youth, Dawson Creek

Meaningful Participation of Children & Youth

Youth in many communities have identified that their perspectives and voices have received limited and inconsistent opportunities for expression. Many youth identified that the assessment engagements (i.e. focus group discussions and photo-framing) were the first opportunity they had to be engaged in a structured manner, with adults learning from their perspectives, and securing their involvement in community development.

Young people's clear understanding of their community environment and the key issues that exist were surprising to some adult observers in the sessions. Young people's awareness of the supports and risks around them was profound and was a clear indication of how important it is to understanding the daily lives of the young people in our communities, from their own perspective. The development of programming to support the strengths and assets that exist for young people and to help them navigate through the risks is crucial for their full and healthy development. Young people's energy and enthusiasm for positive change and the healthy development of their families and communities must be leveraged. The need to find meaningful ways to engage young people in community development is further supported by young people's expressions of boredom and lack of purpose. In some communities, the lack of consistent, interesting and fun opportunities for recreation and sports, and cultural and traditional practices, contributes to young people's experimentation with drugs and alcohol, according to many youth. We need only to be creative and engage young people in thinking, planning as well as intervention.

Ideas & Strategies

- Establish a Regional Youth Council comprised of a youth representative from each community selected by their peers to represent the youth perspective from their community in Nenan planning (e.g. policy and practice development, services and programs, events and gathering, and development of a Communications strategy)
- Support Youth gatherings in each community, creating a forum where youth can safely discuss, explore and identify their interests and then advance and integrate their interests in Community Councils and community development planning
- Support Leadership Development with youth engaging them in experiential outdoor activities that integrate culture, language and traditional practices, with problem solving and leadership developmental activities
- Where it doesn't presently exist, work with inter-governmental parties (FNESC, Ministry of Education, INAC), for the greater integration of history, culture and indigenous language into the curriculum at all levels

SECTION IV

MOVING FORWARD: WORK-PLANS & TIMELINES



Young boy, Fort Nelson First Nation



Children and Facilitators, Saulteau First Nation

PRIORITY ACTIVITIES

This section provides an update of Nenan’s present work and main priorities for the period of January 2009 – January 2010.

Three work-plans will be presented, highlighting the key workload priorities:

1. Triple “A” Phase One & Two Work-plan
2. Administration Work-plan
3. Jurisdiction, Governance and Service Delivery Work-plan

1. Triple “A” Work-Plan Phase One & Two

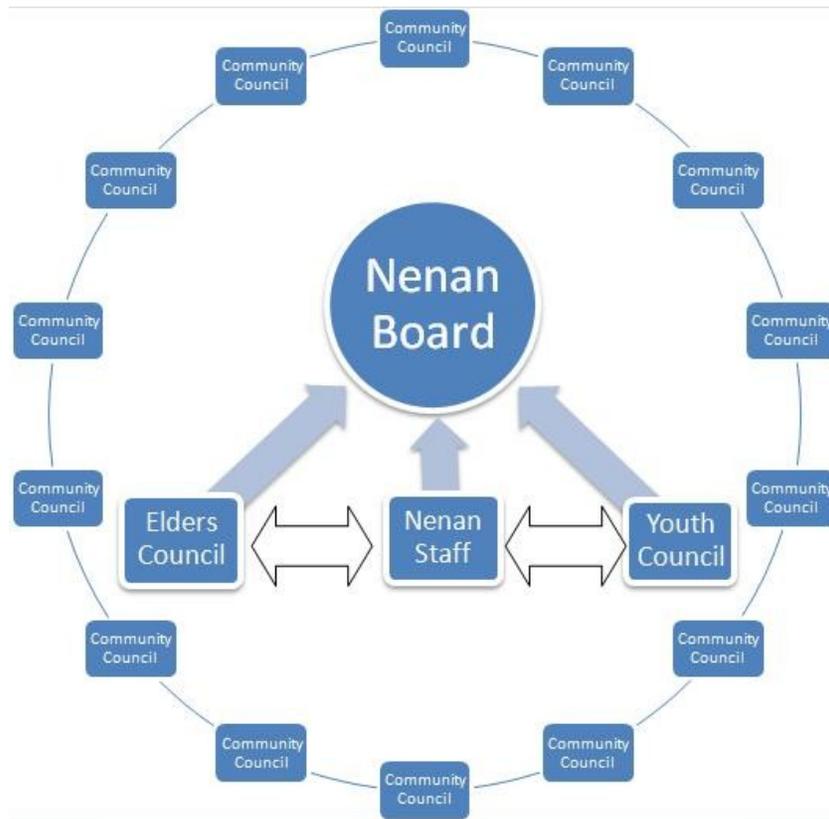
Nenan is nearing the completion of the Triple “A” Community Empowerment Process assessment phase and will be commencing analysis and action planning with communities, in order to develop innovative programs and services at the community level. As Actions begin to take place at the community level, the second phase of the Triple A will commence as a feedback and capacity building mechanism for communities, through the Community Council Partnership Building and Accountability Process. Community Councils made up of youth, Elders, family members, leadership and other adults with specific interest in children’s well-being- such as traditional specialists, child care workers, Council members and other key knowledgeable people will be formed in each community. Triple “A” tools will be further refined to enable Community Councils to work with Nenan to reclaim care, support, and protection for children by building from local strengths and reinforcing community well being. The Nenan representative from the community will act as the chair of the Community Council, ensuring that information at the community level is transferred directly to the Board, and decisions at the Board are quickly fed to the communities. Youth and Elder Community Council representatives from each community will also sit on regional Nenan Youth and Elder Councils representing their communities.

Upon confirmation of the members of the Community Councils, efforts will be spent to build the capacity of the councils by facilitating knowledge sharing amongst council members. Training will be provided on key areas including:

building local support for vulnerable children and families; children’s cross-cultural development, children’s rights, monitoring and evaluation and other key areas identified for further training by the Nenan Board and Community Councils. Training for Community Councils will also include the Triple “A” Child Rights and Community Development process, as councils will facilitate an ongoing feedback loop between communities and Nenan, ensuring accountability, open and ongoing dialogue and community development.

Community Councils will provide a forum for engaging community members on a regular basis, enabling a relationship built upon open dialogue and communication. Tools in the Triple “A” process will be used to engage members of the community, including children, youth, families, Elders and other adults. Not only will community-specific information be passed on to the board, but it will also form the foundation of cross-cultural training for Nenan’s growing staff. It is our intention to launch community empowerment/early intervention and prevention activities through the Councils, so that positive activities can be managed locally, with key supports from Nenan board and staff. In addition, community and cultural specific indicators of children’s well-being will be developed - to which Nenan’s programs and services will be held accountable at the community level - as a measure for quality assurance.

The following graph provides an example of a starting place for discussion purposes regarding the potential development of a governance and accountability framework for Nenan. The Nenan Board is advised by a regional Elders Council and Youth Council. The Elders and Youth Councils are made up of youth and elders from the respective Community Councils. The Community Councils are made up of youth, elders, family members, leadership and others with specific interest in children’s well-being - including traditional specialists, child care workers, and other key knowledgeable people. At the community level, young people’s committees and Elders’s committees will elect their representatives to sit on the Youth Council and the Elders Council.



Nenan Dane_Zaa Deh Zona Children & Family Services
Triple 'A' WORK-PLAN

Timeline
2009-2010

Triple 'A' Community Empowerment Process
Phase One and Two

Completion
Date

1. Complete Triple 'A' Assessments

April 2009

Community-based assessments are conducted to understand, from the communities' perspective, the strengths and resources available to provide for children's full and healthy development and the risks and threats to achieving this success

- 76 assessments currently completed in 11 communities
- Remaining 4 communities to complete assessment will begin in Phase Two
- 3-day distillation of Community Assessment Data
- Final Copy of Assessment Report completed.

2. Analysis and Action (Phase One)

May 2009

The Analysis and Action Phase enables communities to analyze the information gathered during the assessment and come together to develop 'Action Plans' to address some of the key issues facing their children and families.

- Presentation of Analysis Phase Two to the Board
- Analysis workshops conducted in each community, verifying accuracy of information from the assessment and obtaining approval to publish in report (without names)
- Action workshops conducted in each community, compiling ideas for the Action Phase

3. Action Plan Grants

May 2009

Funding will be provided, administered through Community Council, chaired by a Nenan Board member, for Action Plans the emerged from assessments in each community to meet their self-identified needs and contribute to the evolution of Nenan's service delivery model.

- Community outreach and development of Action Plans to coincide with Action Phase.
- Granting process already approved by Board and to be implemented
- Insurance to be researched and secured
- Coordinating staff person to be hired
- Community Councils to manage Action Plan Grants, upon completion of their training
- Some Actions will take place earlier than others, though equal funding will be provided to communities

4. Community Council Establishment and Training (Phase Two)

May 2009

Community Councils, the local governing body of Nenan in each community, will be responsible for engaging community members in an ongoing dialogue securing strong relationships, local ownership and leading community-based prevention and early intervention initiatives.

- Minimum standards and terms for operation and output of Community Councils to be set.
- Councils to set locally specific terms and outputs on first meeting.
- Seats reserved on each Community Council for a youth, Elder, family member and chaired by the Nenan Board representative.
- Community-based selection process for Council seats, from members committed to children and families' well-being.
- Councils trained in revised Triple A process, focused on ensuring ongoing feedback from community and development of local prevention initiatives.
- Develop community and cultural specific indicators of children's well-being- to which Nenan's programs and services will be held accountable at the community level- as a measure for quality assurance, creating a feedback loop between communities and the Nenan Board.
- Work with communities to go deeper on emerging themes and areas of innovation, through the Councils, possibly through training and learning sites

5. Completion of Triple A Phase One

May 2009

The first phase of the Triple A will be completed, although through the Community Councils, the Triple A will be used on an ongoing basis to monitor the impact of services on children and families lived experiences and make important contributions to health and well-being.

- Completion of Final report on Triple A Phase One
- Oversight of ongoing Triple A activities in Phase Two

6. Emerging Initiatives

August 2009

Oversee a number of emerging initiatives that build upon community identified objectives and interests through gatherings that enable relationship and networking development, and create processes that ground Nenan's growth in an informed community based and manner.

- Regional Elders & Youth Gathering -Elders, youth, youth & recreation workers and Nenan board reps from the 14 communities gather for inaugural elder & youth committee meeting to establish and develop: relationship networks, terms of reference, and processes for creating a feedback information loop with Nenan, strengthening and supporting relationships between the Elders and youth, and enabling their direct input, guidance and direction in Nenan Service Delivery Plan development. Supporting the development of a strong link between youth and Elders, to bridge the current disconnect and support the transmission of culture and knowledge is an important aspect here.
- Early Childhood Services Symposium- intergovernmental, academic, Nenan community representatives to: develop an inter- governmental, education and organizations relationship network that enables development of a vision and action-plan for Early Years Services, including development of a strategy that addresses gaps in four Nenan communities; also, will enable commencement of processes and plan development for best practices sharing and continuous services enhancement.

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May 2009

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3. Jurisdiction, Governance, and Service Delivery Work-Plan

The shift to the creation of a new jurisdictional model is an unprecedented opportunity to create a governance structure that respects and empowers the values, beliefs and cultural traditions of the peoples of the north east.

The Treaty 8 First Nations' established institutions and processes will be respected and honoured in the development of Nenan's new governance model. Nenan will work with designates determined by the Treaty 8 First Nations' leadership, to ensure that their respective Treaty rights and interests are protected. This will include confirming a vetting and approval process, that includes opportunities for legal counsel selected by the Treaty 8 First Nations to advise in the development of Nenan's potential governance model as it pertains to all Treaty 8 First Nations.

The Service Delivery Plan is the framework of all services to be delivered for Aboriginal children and families in the north east. Importantly, the current analysis of the needs and strengths of each community will ground the development of this service delivery plan. A deep analysis of the current MCFD service delivery plan will commence in 2009 however, it is recognized by Nenan and confirmed in the findings of the Auditor General of BC's report of March 2008 that:

*"...the Ministry has not been able to reasonably determine staff resources required specific to Aboriginal children and their families." These findings went further and identified, "...the ministry has been unable to determine the cost to deliver culturally appropriate child welfare services. As a result, it has been unable to develop a persuasive business case to negotiate for both provincial and federal funding. Thus, the ministry faces funding gaps of these critical labour and resource-intensive services."*²⁴

Given these findings and the tremendous learning and relationship development that has occurred through the Triple 'A' process, Nenan will incorporate the needs, strengths, and priorities of each community in the development of our service delivery plan to meet the needs identified by our communities. As previously stated, the service delivery plan will incorporate an ongoing, evolved Triple "A" process that places children, their families and Elders at the centre of local decision making, design, and monitoring of child and family services.

The service delivery plan will not be designed to reflect the present jurisdictional issues that effectively serve to create a two-tier system (i.e. services do not exist on-reserve in many First Nation communities). Rather, the comprehensive service delivery plan will be designed to meet the needs and interests of each respective community absent and regardless of the on and off-reserve jurisdictional issues. The Auditor General of Canada released a report identifying that the present INAC management of the on-reserve First Nations Child and Family Services program:

*"...has little information on the outcomes of its funding on the safety, protection, or well-being of on-reserve children. It does not know whether its program makes a positive and/or significant difference in the lives of children it funds."*²⁵

As part of the MCFD Transformation initiative, reflected in the Strong, Safe and Supported Action Plan, Nenan is encouraged by the views expressed by Lesley Du Toit, Deputy Minister that MCFD has a belief and expectation that services will change once jurisdiction and service provision is assumed by First Nation and Aboriginal peoples. "We also believe that service delivery to aboriginal communities does not necessarily have to look exactly the same as what we offer presently in the ministry. It is important for aboriginal people and communities to have their own say in what services might look like and how we can best protect children in those communities." (Sept. 4, 2007). It is precisely this that we aim to achieve.

²⁴Source: MCFD 12 month average between April 2007 – March 2008; "out-of-home" placements include: children in care, kith & kin, ICO and ICN (Interim Order Custody of Other S 35.2d & 60), and SOC and SOT (Supervision Order – Custody of Other S 41.1b & 60)

²⁵ Auditor General of Canada, Opening Statement to the Select Senate Committee on Aboriginal Peoples

Nenan Dane_zaa Deh Zona Children & Family Services
Jurisdiction, Governance and Service Delivery Work-Plan

Timeline
2009-2010

Nenan Capacity Development & Jurisdiction Model Development

**Completion
Date**

1. Governance and Jurisdiction Model

**September
2009**

Develop a governance and jurisdiction model to guide and direct the development, implementation and service delivery of Nenan.

Form a Working Group to develop the governance model, building on the Triple A community empowerment approach

Research and confirm understanding of respective Treaty 8 First Nations institutions and processes

- Confirm governance vetting and approval process with respective Treaty 8 First Nations and Nenan Board of Directors
- Research Aboriginal good governance, as a base for the urban governance development
- Legal Counsel selected by Treaty 8 First Nations to ensure Treaty rights and interests are protected
- Draft Governance Model

2. Memorandum Of Understanding Development

Develop MOUs with MCFD, INAC & Interim Chiefs Child and Family Wellness Council to confirm the existing relationship.

- Confirm multi-year commitment with Province that will clarify relationship & responsibilities including: communications (incl. media relations process), reporting relationship, information-sharing, multi-year resourcing, and evaluation process
- Confirm MOU Agreement with INAC for resource support for capacity/infrastructure development (i.e. human resources: managers, social workers, early childhood educators, administrative support, other TBD including community based workers)
- Explore relationship opportunities with the Interim Chiefs Child & Family Wellness Council that includes processes for mutual support in the areas of information-sharing, planning, and communications

3. Service Delivery Planning

September
2009

Building on the community actions and the innovative service research and jurisdiction development in Phase Two of the Triple 'A', a service delivery plan will be developed.

Nenan Working Committee (including support from SME's) draft Nenan Service Delivery Work-Plan for continuum of services in community-by-community approach (i.e. Nenan Service Delivery Plan will be a sum-of-its-parts approach) informed by Triple 'A' knowledge acquisition of local contexts, analysis of existing Ministry workload data and new jurisdiction.

- Develop associated Human Resources Plan
- Develop a communications plan to connect with community members, service organizations and Ministry and other government services
- Develop linkage and vetting plan for Community Councils, and regional Youth and Elder Council's including roles and responsibilities and resource support in Service Delivery Plan development & community health, safety and well-being outcome measures
- Develop process and Work-Plan for service readiness evaluation process
- Confirm vetting process with Treaty 8 First Nations and Nenan Board of Directors.
- Legal analysis plan of liabilities associated with Service Delivery Plan

4. Transition Plan Development

November
2009

Develop a Transition Plan for services and resources presently administered within jurisdiction of MCFD to Nenan.

- Confirm Nenan Transition Working Group (incl. SME's) and establish board vetting process
- Develop process and Work-Plan with appropriate (TBD) Ministry and Caring for First Nations Society representatives for transition readiness evaluation process
- Develop Work-Plans for negotiations process for devolution and transfer of resources from Province & INAC to support Nenan Service Delivery Plan
- Draft Transition Plan.

In the spirit of Wa'ko'taw'in (respect for all our Relations) we would like to thank you for participating in our journey with us, by reading the report Dane Wajich (People telling their story).

We look forward to ongoing opportunities to work together with you to ensure the holistic well-being of our children and families, moving with the spirit of the Ancestors.



Community Celebration, Fort Nelson

Article 30- United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child

‘In those States in which ethnic, religious or linguistic minorities or persons of indigenous origin exist, a child belonging to such a minority or who is indigenous shall not be denied the right, in community with other members of his or her group, to enjoy his or her own culture, to profess and practice his or her own religion, or to use his or her own language.’

