

**METIS STUDENT HOUSING RESEARCH PROJECT:  
HOUSING THAT SUPPORTS METIS STUDENTS'  
SCHOOL SUCCESS**

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## **Executive Summary**

This project examined Metis student housing issues in Saskatoon within the context of the needs and challenges that Metis students face. Most importantly, the project provided suggestions on how to increase the effectiveness of housing development and strategies. Metis students were the eyes and voices of this project and the students described their perceptions, realities and hopes.

Recently, in Saskatoon, Aboriginal student housing has received some attention. However, little information is available on Metis student housing needs and issues, in particular with regard to housing relevant to Metis nationhood and their practices, customs and traditions. To address this gap, this project grew out of a proposal by Broxbourne International to the Bridges and Foundations Project on Urban Aboriginal Housing, to establish research focusing, specifically, on housing issues affecting the Metis student population, and research which would take into account the unique and constitutionally protected Metis traditions, practices and customs. It was proposed the research project relating to Metis students' housing would be grounded within the context of Metis practices, customs and traditions. Accordingly, Broxbourne International undertook this challenge with educational institutions and scholars that have been involved in local, national and international education and Metis initiatives and as such, have a strong network and relationships with the Metis community as a whole, its members, students and Metis educational institutions and other education institutions that deliver services to Metis students. The primary student target groups were those attending the Saskatchewan Urban Teacher Education Program (SUNTEP), Gabriel Dumont Institute (GDI), Dumont Technical Institute (DTI) and Saskatchewan Institute of Applied Science and Technology – Kelsey Campus (SIAST) in Saskatoon, Saskatchewan.

Overall, the goal for the research project was to ensure the targeted Metis students' voices were heard in reference to their experiences with housing in Saskatoon. In an effort to competently grasp Metis student voices and show appropriate respect to

stakeholders, an Indigenous methodology was a critical component of the research development, gathering and analysis.

The resulting report, *Metis Student Housing Research Project: Housing that Supports Metis Student' School Success*, clearly demonstrates that the needs of Metis students are not being fully or even adequately met. The challenges of achieving an inclusive, respectful approach in housing policies, development and strategies requires the recognition that Metis students are not a homogeneous group. The research shows a clear need for a variety of housing options for Saskatoon's Metis students seeking to attain accessible, affordable and adequate housing options. There are strong themes that emerge from the research; namely, Metis students overwhelmingly want to be a part of specific Metis housing strategies and development throughout every step of the process. Inclusion of Metis students' input includes reviews and amendments to existing policies and rules of housing authorities to assist in addressing housing barriers for those students who are in need of finding adequate, affordable and appropriate housing. We were told that all levels of housing authorities must be flexible, inclusive and adaptable to accommodate students and their school terms. It was strongly suggested that housing authorities take the initiative and provide not only information on housing availability but also attend at Metis educational institutions to help Metis students with the application process. Students told the research team of their strong support for a "Metis Village" as a way of providing housing or community for Metis people who are trying to change their life experiences.

The research also showed there is a lack of Metis-specific student housing models in existence. The vast majority of the Metis student target group was not within an Aboriginal housing agency umbrella. They were not in low-income housing and for those targeted post-secondary students, they were not in student residence. The vast majority of the respondent students were in apartments that were in need of repair, were in locations that were not conducive to studies and/or had safety and security issues. For those few that were located within an Aboriginal housing delivery agency or low-income agency, they were not given priority in assignment of accommodations. For Saskatoon Metis students, housing

is more than a mere shelter. It is a place to study and raise children. It is a place to practice and share their culture. The research shows that Metis student housing should be the kind of space that supports their family, culture and educational needs.

The Final Report is to be shared with the targeted Metis student respondents, educational institutions, the Metis community, Metis housing delivery agencies and other housing, government and non-government interested parties. Through this innovative project, it is hoped the gathered knowledge will be directly transferable, creating successful, meaningful, housing options for Metis students in the City of Saskatoon.

## **Acknowledgements**

The research team would like to acknowledge the invaluable assistance provided to them by the Metis student respondents who took the time to provide candid, insightful and honest feedback. In addition, the research team would like to thank the numerous Metis educational leaders and those who deliver educational services to Metis students for their discussion of the issues and guidance provided to the research team. In particular, the research team would like to thank Mr. Murray Hamilton, SUNTEP Saskatoon Coordinator, Mr. Geordy McCaffrey, Executive Director GDI/DTI, Ms. Lisa Wilson, Program Coordinator DTI, Ms. Jacqueline Hunchak, Program Coordinator DTI, Ms. Cindy Olexson LPN Faculty and the numerous Professors who allowed, welcomed and provided time in their classes for us to meet and talk to the students. Thanks to Mr. Brian Gallagher and Ms. Myrna Yuzacapi, Aboriginal Student Activity Centre (SIASST) who not only provided ongoing dialogue and support for the gathering of SIASST students but also their invaluable guidance in data collection instrument development. We also wish to acknowledge the work of Ms. Brenda Maire and Ms. Allison Lachance, Aboriginal Student Housing Research Project interns who organized, attended, led talking circles and provided data entry services. As young students themselves, the research interns were an important part of ensuring the voices of the students were garnered. Without the participation and cooperation of all the parties, this research could not have been successfully completed.

Special acknowledgement is made to SaskNative Rentals Inc. Board and Staff and to Ms. Jacinthe Taylor, Project Coordinator of Bridges and Foundations, who provided ongoing support to the research team. In addition, the research team would like to thank the Bridges and Foundations Project on Urban Aboriginal Housing under the leadership of Dr. Alan Anderson, Ms. Priscilla Settee and Mr. Keith Hanson, who recognized the importance to gain better understanding of the gap between available Metis student housing options and what is needed to meet the needs and expectations of this important segment of our community in Saskatoon.

## **1.0 Research Problem**

### **1.1 Introduction**

This project examined Metis student housing issues in Saskatoon with a view to the needs, challenges and gaps that Metis students face. Most importantly, the project provided suggestions on how to increase the effectiveness of housing development and strategies. The project was undertaken through the eyes and voices of Metis students, who described their perceptions, realities and hopes.

Although housing authorities, agencies and developers have made efforts to implement an inclusive approach to the study of Aboriginal student housing issues, the reality is that Metis students have not been involved in the process in a way which examined housing issues based on their own Nationhood with constitutionally protected traditions, practices or customs. The research showed there is a crisis for Metis students when looking for housing options and a strong need to offer them respectful meaningful spaces anchored within their traditions.

This project supported the goal of respectful housing options through capacity development between Metis and non-Metis peoples. The research showed that when Metis people are involved in the process, they become involved in the solutions. This study shows what strategies help to achieve these goals. It begins by examining the reality of the living conditions of Metis students. It provides substance from which to make conclusions and recommendations that seek to meet the real needs of real Metis students. The research project concludes with recommendations for strategies that are relevant, manageable and empowering for Metis students' school success through respectful housing development.

## 1.2 Research Objectives

While the research team was well aware and cognizant of research objective overlaps, particularly, given the holistic methodological approach undertaken in garnering Metis student views and voices. Nevertheless, the project categorized and sought to specifically:

### *a) develop formal vision and objectives:*

The research team identified and developed a contact list of Metis education institutions, Metis counselors working with Metis adult learners, housing providers and Metis student representatives. These individuals were involved in the process throughout. To undertake this portion of the project, the research team relied on existing relationships the research team had from years working in the field of education and used the networks of relationships within the Metis educational community. These relationships have been established over years of collaboration and interaction. These previous experiences provided the trust foundation on which the current research was built.

Initial discussions were held with the leaders of the Metis institutions and programs about the logistics of the project and with the professors, teachers and counselors working with students to formulate the objectives of the survey and talking circles. Through these preliminary discussions based on the key informant's many years of experience working with Metis students, we identified the most important issues related to housing, which the informants had seen troubling Metis students on a regular basis. As well, key Metis students provided their thoughts and insights on important housing issues. The informants recommended questions about these issues be incorporated into the questionnaires and then, be used to lever more in-depth discusses in the talking circles.

The research team coordinated the stakeholders in development of survey data collection instruments and the procedures necessary to direct research within each of the programs where Metis students were in attendance.

*b) develop population and forecasts:*

It was critical to ascertain the population being served by the Metis specific educational institutions anchored within the realities of student housing in the City of Saskatoon. Determining the population of Metis students in Saskatoon was important for establishing the parameters of the survey. For this, the research team relied on the expertise and experience of educators and housing providers of the present population in Metis-specific educational programs. In addition, knowing that the Metis population was high in SIAST, although not a Metis-specific institution, Metis-specific data was garnered from there as well.

Forecasting the future housing needs of Metis students required that we make every effort to obtain statistics on the population of Metis people who might be future students and require student housing. The demographics generated in the present research will offer a starting place for housing authorities in understanding the extent and characteristics of the Metis student population in Saskatoon. Further it provides insight into the Metis-specific characteristics of the Metis student population. The research conducted by the research team ensured that the framework and parameters of the dialogue informed this research.

*c) collect Metis student needs and expectations information:*

The research team gathered quantitative and qualitative demographic information including data collection by questionnaires, talking circles and small group techniques as well as through a literature review.

*d) reflection of culture, linkages and identification:*

The research team identified Metis traditions, practices and customs as highlighted explicitly by Metis students and key informers. The research team reviewed housing development and structures currently undertaken in Saskatoon for Metis students against the identified cultural needs.

The research team analyzed and correlated data received and provided commentary on the gaps and potential partnerships available. Relationship-building and identification of potential partnerships was a critical component of this section of the research and is highlighted in the Conclusions and Recommendations section of the report.

*e) Host stakeholder meetings with focus on strengthening relations, and mechanisms:*

The research team hosted stakeholder meetings with focus on relationship building, capacity, and models viable for sustainable respectful development. The research team's approaches and findings were driven by the voices of the leaders in Metis educational institutions. Guidance from educational institutions came primarily from educators who are, themselves, members of the Metis community.

*f) Exploring housing models to meet the needs of the Metis student population in Saskatoon:*

The research team explored housing models to meet the needs of the Metis student population in Saskatoon. The literature review proved not to be very helpful because the majority of the research on student housing, and there is a lot of it, focuses on student residences for students who are not Metis and do not have the characteristics of Metis adult learners. However, using the expertise of the Metis students themselves and the knowledge of the Metis educational institutions and counselors of Metis students, appropriate models for Metis student housing in Saskatoon began to emerge. The

research approach emphasized the inclusion and amalgamation of all levels of data received from students, stakeholders, delivery agents and literature. Developing recommendations for future housing initiatives soon became the focus. The recommendations and successful models, as well as potential private and public sector partnerships, are identified in the Conclusions and Recommendations.

### **1.3 Background**

As constitutionally recognized in Section 35(1), *The Constitution Act, 1982*,<sup>1</sup> Aboriginal peoples of Canada are comprised of the Indians, Metis and Inuit. The Metis are Aboriginal peoples separate and distinct from other Aboriginal peoples with their own customs, practices and traditions. The Metis remain the only Aboriginal nations currently not recognized as being within federal jurisdiction, which raises unique challenges and impacts on Metis-specific research. One challenge is that a central registry of Metis Nation peoples across Turtle Island (Canada or within each of the provinces, cities, towns, or municipalities) does not exist as it does for other Aboriginal people. As a result, “official” numbers of Metis Nation homeland people that non-Metis people rely upon is generated and determined by Statistics Canada. These official numbers, however, do not constitute an accurate enumeration of the Metis people. For many reasons, the Metis community does not see itself reflected in the “official” numbers. Therefore, determining Metis-specific forecasts for planning purposes is often inaccurate when done strictly through Statistics Canada’s predictions of the Metis population. The only sure way to determine Metis statistics is to work within the Metis community.

Part of the difficulty, in outsiders developing statistics and/or deciding who the Metis are, lies in the fact that Metis identity is a complicated cultural, political, social and historical entity. To survive, at times, Metis people have denied their identity particularly in the Metis homeland after the Riel Resistance when many Metis children were taught that it was dangerous to be Metis. Metis people were pushed to the fringes of society, living on road allowances, and moving from place to place, following available employment.

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<sup>1</sup> *Constitution Act, 1982*, Schedule B to the *Canada Act, 1982*, (U.K.), 1982, c. 11.

For many, survival as a nation of people depended on not becoming known to government officials, as Metis. Regardless of the collusion to avoid “official” detection, Metis nationalism was kept alive by private and hidden gatherings.

In the 1930s, about the time that some of the present Metis Elders were born, Metis nationalism re-flourished in an overt fashion and people once again began to openly celebrate their nationhood. It became somewhat more safe or accepted to state publicly that you were Metis. In some communities though, the hidden or “selective forgetting” was maintained thereby keeping the younger generations from acknowledging or knowing their communal connections. In some communities, the older generations that were well aware of historical discriminatory actions taken against the Metis attempted to make sure Metis community ties remained hidden. To say that you are Metis is a political act, and it is not easy for some, even to this day. To mark on a Census Canada form that they are “Metis” thereby declaring to non-Metis government officials their identity, requires a confrontation of racism and systemic discrimination. Metis identity can be and is further challenged by those who wrongly view Metis identity as a mixing of particular strains of blood. As stated in the Royal Commission on Aboriginal Peoples<sup>2</sup>, merely having Aboriginal blood does not make a person Metis, indeed it does not even make you Aboriginal. In a recent Supreme Court of Canada watershed case regarding hunting rights of the Metis, the issue of identity was discussed.<sup>3</sup>

The true number of Metis people remains an issue to be grappled with, although people in the Metis communities have always asserted they know who is or should be recognized as Metis within the meaning of s. 35 of the Constitution of Canada. For years Metis political organizations, fighting to meet the needs of Metis individuals and communities, have had to contend with the demand of non-Aboriginal organizations and governments to provide statistics to justify nationhood developments. However, information based upon Metis’ own knowledge is disputed and rejected as it does not conform with non-Aboriginal “official” counts. By rejecting Metis knowledge of their own community

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<sup>2</sup>Royal Commission on Aboriginal Peoples, 1996, Vol. 4.

<sup>3</sup>*R. v. Powley*, [2003] 2 S.C.R. 207. See also *R. v. Blais* [2003] 2 S.C.R. 236.

members, services and projects have been based on “pan-Aboriginal” assumptions that effectively wipe out, erase or at best ignore, specific Metis traditions, practices and customs.<sup>4</sup>

Understanding the above background is critical to qualifying the “official” statistical findings provided below in the report and is offered as a context to the perpetuated misconceptions and myths about Metis communities that blur, even today, the understanding of Metis people’s realities by non-Aboriginal policy-makers in all areas of services, including housing development options.

## **1.4 Metis Education**

Research literature has shown lack of support as a critical barrier to Aboriginal post-secondary education although the underlying factors have not been analyzed in any great depth. The research is even more scarce for specific Metis post-secondary and adult learners. When discussing education, it is seen as our buffalo that provides an opportunity to gain independence and improve future circumstances for the current generation and generations to come. However, Metis educational attainment continues to be lower than that of Indian people living off-reserve and markedly below that of Canadians generally.

From early contact, education for Metis people emphasized religious studies, with some basic arithmetic and writing. Metis people in some areas attended residential schools, and in the northwest, the sons of affluent Metis received the formal education of the privileged, often being sent to Eastern Canada or England for higher education. Missionaries provided limited instruction to the children of Metis people who followed the migration of the buffalo. However, most Metis in rural and northern

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<sup>4</sup>It is beyond the scope or role of this paper to enumerate the Metis located within Saskatchewan or Saskatoon. Instead, the Research Team decided to highlight the conservative estimates and statistics provided within “official” data bases to ensure the said findings are not dismissed or rejected by non-Metis.

areas had little or no access to more than primary school until the 1950s. According to the report of Alberta's Ewing Commission in 1936, 80 per cent of Metis children in the province had no schooling at all.<sup>5</sup>

Historically, the signing of treaties separated Aboriginal peoples into those with a direct treaty relationship to the federal government of Canada and those without such a relationship. After legal distinctions were drawn, the federal government withdrew support for services from all but legally defined "Indians". By an agreement between the government in Ottawa and the various churches in 1910, the federal government stipulated that only children belonging to Indian bands could attend federally-sponsored schools. This effectively denied Saskatchewan Metis children schooling in federally funded schools except in cases where the churches were prepared to provide schooling, at their expense, to these children. In reality, few Metis in Saskatchewan received schooling from the provincial school system. At best, the education of Saskatchewan's Metis people was sporadic.

In 1938, Mr. Joe Ross, a Metis organizer for Lestock and Punnichy, questioned the provincial Department of Education officials as to why Metis children were not in school. The provincial government position was that 'half-breed' children fell within federal responsibility and:

*So long as the Dominion Government maintains Indian reserves in the midst of white settlements there will be half-breed children.*<sup>6</sup>

As a result of the continuation of "Indian reserves", the provincial government maintained that education of Metis children was the responsibility of the federal government. Provincial education officials held the position that the federal government should reimburse the provincial government for the schooling of any Metis children

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<sup>5</sup>RCAP, 1996, vol. 3, Ch. 5 quoting Alberta, *Report of the Royal Commission Appointed to Investigate the Conditions of the Half-Breed Population of Alberta* (Edmonton: Provincial Museum and Archives of Alberta, 1936), p. 7.

<sup>6</sup>Memorandum for Dr. McKechnie from Dr. Stillwell re "Education of the Half-breed Children of Saskatchewan", October 12, 1938 (Regina: Saskatchewan Archives Board, Department of Education Papers).

where grants from the provincial government were used to ensure their education. While the governments debated who had responsibility for the schooling of Metis children in Saskatchewan, Metis children remained outside the traditional school/education system offered to all other Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal children.

It was not until 1954 that Metis children located in Saskatchewan had open access to public schools. This was made possible by an aggressive program by the CCF government to provide schooling to all children in the province under the banner of equal educational opportunity. Despite the access of Metis children to elementary schools after this time, no high schools were built. In fact, in 1960, in northern Saskatchewan, Metis children generally left school at Grade 5. Ninety-seven per cent of all northern Metis students dropped out before reaching high school.<sup>7</sup> Researchers of the day labeled the education in northern Saskatchewan Metis communities as “schooling for failure”.<sup>8</sup> Contrasted to other Canadians who had universal schooling in the 1860s, the Metis of Saskatchewan did not receive universal schooling until the 1960s and then it was in the words of Knill and Davis, “bleak”...*more students are getting into school and no doubt the illiteracy rate in the north is dropping but the amount of education that the student receives is still far too little to equip him for living in this day and age. The quality of his education is open to serious question at the present time.*<sup>9</sup> In the north in 1960, one quarter of the school population was in grade one and two – thirds in grades one to four.<sup>10</sup> This is the legacy of Metis education in Saskatchewan.

The historically created educational deficit in Metis communities still exists today although a concerted effort by the provincial government in the 1970s resulted in programs geared towards developing the educational level of Metis individuals. Programs

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<sup>7</sup> Helen Buckley, J.E.M. Kew, and John B. Hawley, eds. *The Indians and Metis of Northern Saskatchewan* (Saskatoon: Centre for Community Studies, 1963, p. 91.

<sup>8</sup> Wm. Knill and Arthur Davis, “Provincial Education in Northern Saskatchewan: Progress and Bog-Down, 1944-1962”, *A Northern Dilemma: Reference Papers*, Vol.1, ed. A.K. Davis (Bellingham, Washington: Western Washington State College, 1967, p. 238.

<sup>9</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>10</sup> *Ibid.* p. 230.

such as “Training in Government”, and the Non-registered Indian and Metis Program (NRIM), resulted in a cadre of a select few Metis people being able to receive a university education without an onerous debt.

The Metis, although an Aboriginal people, continue to be denied funding for postsecondary education that is available to other Aboriginal nations. At the post-secondary education level, funding for Metis individuals is primarily from student loans. A Gabriel Dumont Institute study in 1990 found that it would take Metis teacher education graduates eleven years to reach the level of financial solvency of a First Nation graduate in their first year after graduation. Not only did the Metis teachers have a debt load from students loans but if the Metis graduate was one of the fortunate few that received rent and/or daycare subsidies while attaining an education, this was promptly withdrawn upon attainment of employment.

The legacy of Metis education is provided to contextualize the findings below and to assist those reading this report to understand the historical and current unique perspectives and experiences of Metis students.

## 2. Indigenous Methodology

The research project was undertaken and anchored within an Indigenous methodological framework in development of the design, data collection, talking circles, analysis and dissemination of the project final report. The goal was to ensure proper respect was provided to the kiskinohamâkan (learner) to capture their views on the wâskahikan (house). Through relationship building and knowledge sharing with the kiskinohamâkan (teacher), kanawihcikêw (resource officer), wecihik awasisak (housing board office), and other stakeholders, the project sought to identify key issues with a view to providing recommendations for the future. Dialogue was firstly undertaken with Metis education institutions and principle players in education delivery to ensure they saw a need for the project. After receiving unanimous support, the research team developed strategies and work plans to undertake the project. A website was established that described the research project and invited Metis students to complete an on-line survey for those who were not able to personally attend our gatherings. In addition, a fluent Cree speaker was available for those participants who wished to communicate in the Cree language.

While not an exhaustive study of Metis student perceptions regarding housing issues in the City of Saskatoon, the project undertook various research methodologies. As such, the researchers took a mixed method approach to the project. Both primary and secondary research was conducted. Selected literature research was also conducted to gather information on Aboriginal student housing initiatives including both educational and non-educational delivery agents, and policies specific to Metis student housing recruitment and support. Documents were supplemented with relevant statistical data.

In terms of primary research, the research team conducted survey questionnaires, talking circles and interviews. Surveys were submitted to Metis educational stakeholders including non-educational professional associations. Our education stakeholders were

provided with support to deliver survey questionnaires and conduct talking circles where numbers warranted.

Stakeholders were selected based upon their innovative strategies and initiatives related to Metis students. All stakeholders were recognized as having long-term commitments to Metis students and were known to conduct themselves within the parameters of responsible and ethical guidelines. The individuals selected to be the primary contacts at the institutional level had extensive experience working within the Metis education community.

## **2.1 Procedures**

With an official start date of March 22, 2004, the research team undertook development of data collection instruments, including research of student housing initiatives and processes, dialoguing with Metis students and vetting documents through key Metis students, educators and Aboriginal housing community members.

Upon completion of this phase of the project, the research team was faced with the task of administering the questionnaire in an ethical, respectful manner beginning in September 2004. Given the number of students in each of the target groups, combined with the timeline constraints, the research team hoped to garner fifty participant responses. Despite having the tight timeline and correspondingly tight turnaround time, the Research Team was pleased to garner fifty-six Metis student survey questionnaire responses. In addition, approximately seventy-five students attended talking circles and of that, fifty-six had previously undertaken the survey. The gathering of data used three formats: individual interviews, survey questionnaires and talking circles. Students had the option of participating in the survey with further in-depth dialogue through individual interviews or talking circles. The individual interview responses were small and as such, only five students opted for this choice. For many of the Metis students at DTI, the professors and students opted to set aside a portion of their class day(s) to undertake a talking circle and proceed directly to the questionnaire thereafter. Other students (many from SUNTEP, LPN and SIAST programs) chose to undertake the survey questionnaire and attend a talking circle at a later date.

### **2.1.1 Metis Student Informing**

As discussed below, individual Metis students were approached for their input in the development of the data collection instruments. Their views informed the researchers and appropriate amendments were made based on their input. Thereafter, five students opted for individual interviews outside of the education institution, survey questionnaire or talking circle formats.

### **2.1.2 Metis Survey Questionnaires**

All of the participants in the survey questionnaire were interviewed with the same data collection instrument that was developed in a two-phase process. First, each research team member developed a series of questions independently of each other. Then the research team resource member, who was well versed in Cree/Metis protocol, examined the questions for appropriateness.

The main focus of the questionnaire was to obtain a portrait of Metis student housing needs at the Metis post-secondary and adult education level. Particular questions were crafted to elicit information to assist in determining policies currently available or needed to support Metis students in housing options. In conjunction with this series, a set of questions was developed to provide a picture of their demographics including issues of dependents, education levels, and the education institution the students were currently attending. The next section of the questionnaire gathered information on cultural components, affordability, suitability, and current housing. Further questions were developed to obtain factors in finding housing, family and community issues, income levels, and future development needs.

When the interviews were completed, the research team proceeded to analyze the data. After responses to each question were analyzed and frequency distributions calculated, it was determined that certain cross-tabulations should be completed to examine the comparison of responses across different groups within the sample. Since the purpose of the research was to determine direction for housing policy-makers, comparisons were made on the lives of Metis students in different household compositions. In some instances, the research team captured differences in the experiences of men and women.

The survey questionnaire format is attached as Appendix A.

### **2.1.3 Metis Talking Circles**

Through this traditional method of dialogue, Metis students were invited to participate in talking circles to gather an understanding of the barriers and incentives for Metis students in housing challenges. This buttresses the qualitative information garnered through the survey questionnaires and is a critical component to the success and effectiveness of the research project.

When designing the talking circle format, the research team was advised that it was imperative it be delivered in a flexible, fluid and accommodating manner. Accordingly, an outline of discussion topics was prepared by the research team, however, the talking circle facilitators allowed the discussion to develop in a non-structured manner. This allowed free-flowing, thoughtful and insightful commentary on the issues important to the Metis students as it pertained to not only housing issues but also to how housing impacts their success in school.

There were eight talking circles held in Metis and other educational institutions in Saskatoon. At the dialogues, food was served that assisted in ensuring the students were made comfortable and proper protocol was followed, as sharing of food is an important part of Metis cultural traditions. Accordingly, Metis students talked with us and shared intimate details about their lives and housing experiences. In these gatherings, the

students were introduced to the project and the importance of their participation was explained. The researchers answered questions about who was responsible for the project and the reasonable expectations of new developments in housing. When a level of trust was established, the Metis students opened their lives to the researchers and provided insight into their lives and visions for the future.

The talking circle format is attached as Appendix B.

## **2.2 Dissemination of Results**

After dissemination approval is received, the final report will be shared with the Metis community, Metis housing institutions including stakeholders, potential public and private sector partners and the Metis student respondents who indicated an interest in receiving the final report. Upon approval of release of the research report, a special presentation of gifts will be undertaken by the research team to key Metis education institutions to recognize and highlight their invaluable assistance in the project. In addition, draws will be undertaken to give free gifts to Metis student project participants. A web version of the final report will be made available to all interested parties.

## **2.3 Research Design**

An initial draft of the Metis Student Housing survey questionnaire was created after undertaking extensive research of past student housing research questionnaires undertaken in Canada and beyond. The collection instrument was then organized and reworked to be inclusive, with a focus on Metis students in the City of Saskatoon, Saskatchewan. As mentioned, the research team met with key educational stakeholders working with Metis students and as a result of those discussions, further adapted the instrument. As well, selected Metis students, provided invaluable assistance in the developments. The research team's literature searches and discussions indicated that it was critical to determine not only affordability, suitability and income issues, but most importantly to be inclusive and respectful of traditions, practices and customs.

## **2.4 Data Collection Instruments**

In recognition of the variety of skills and abilities of the adult learners to be surveyed, the data collection instruments were designed to be delivered in a variety of ways. For those who were computer-literate, the survey was offered on-line. As well, for those who were more comfortable with an in-hand survey, the survey was designed for self-administering. At the same time, it was understood that some of the adult learners were not confident enough of their reading ability or literacy to undertake to answer the questionnaire on their own. For these, the researchers used the instrument as a group interview schedule.

## **2.5 Storage of Data**

All Metis respondents were assured that their responses would be kept strictly confidential. Moreover, responses would be used only to offer a portrait of Metis student housing options, the development of community capacity and sustainable affordable housing models. Respondents were told that individuals would not be identifiable. Case studies created from the data provided are presented with assumed names. All information concerning the identity of the Metis student participants will be destroyed after dissemination of the final report. Responses will be summarized, referenced and retained for a determinate period.

## **2.6 Data Analysis and Evaluation**

As indicated previously, in both the qualitative and quantitative research, this project examined Metis student housing options in Saskatoon, including issues specific to physical and cultural needs, but also looked at how to develop and enhance established relationships and capacities to address the gaps. Most importantly, it provided suggestions on how housing stakeholders can increase effectiveness in serving the Metis student community of Saskatoon. The project described the lives, perceptions and beliefs of Metis students through their eyes and words.

Metis students are not a homogeneous group and not surprisingly, the findings indicated a variance amongst them, on the issues. There are four basic divisions: those who live alone; those who live with their children; those who live with their partners; and those who live with others. Using a case study approach, the differences among the lives of Metis students in various households were described.

There were also common themes threaded throughout the research, particularly in relation to cultural practices, customs, and traditional needs and expectations. Thus, the research team provided a comprehensive overview of all responses collected and a more in-depth subset analysis of the data. As such, each of the main categories will be subdivided according to the various factors.

### **3. Results**

*The home is where people are trying to raise families, the water they drink daily, a quiet place for study—these things are vital to health and happiness.<sup>11</sup>*

#### **3.1 Formal Vision and Objectives**

The research team identified and developed a contact list of Metis education institutions, housing providers and student liaisons for collection development. To undertake this portion of the project, the research team relied on relationship building and community capacity enhancement.

Initial discussions were held with the leaders of the Metis institutions and programs about the logistics of the project and with the teachers and counselors working with students to formulate the objectives of the survey and talking circles. Through these preliminary discussions based on the key informants' many years of experience working with Metis students, we identified the most important issues related to housing that the informants had seen troubling Metis students on a regular basis. The informants recommended that these questions about these issues be incorporated into the questionnaires and then be used to lever more in-depth discusses in the talking circles.

The research team coordinated the stakeholders in development of survey data collection instruments and the procedures necessary to direct research within each of the programs where Metis students were in attendance.

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<sup>11</sup> The Royal Commission on Aboriginal Peoples, 1996a: 371.

### 3.2 Population and Forecasts

To assist in the ascertainment of the percentage of population being served by Metis specific education institutions, the research team gathered data from Statistics Canada, City of Saskatoon, Aboriginal population growth forecast information and other available similar statistical sources.<sup>12</sup>

As context, it is important to note that from a provincial starting point, there are said to be 80,290 non-Aboriginal households (not population) off-reserve in Saskatchewan. With that starting point, there are 19,040 Aboriginal households that comprise 19 percent of the total provincial proportion of Saskatchewan households. Of the 19,040 provincial Aboriginal households, Metis comprise 7,945 households.

As indicated in the following chart, the Aboriginal population in Saskatoon is comprised of approximately 9.1 percent of the total Saskatoon population of 222,630<sup>13</sup>. Of the Aboriginal population, Metis are “officially” viewed as comprising 8,305 people of the total city population.<sup>14</sup>

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<sup>12</sup> While the Research Team relied upon these sources of information, absolute values are limited given the inherent difficulties of calculations as explained in the report.

<sup>13</sup> Calculations gathered by National Aboriginal Housing Association in preparation for “A New Beginning: the National Non-reserve Aboriginal Housing Strategy” paper presented March 2004. The data used in the National Aboriginal Housing Association report was drawn from a special request to Statistics Canada to generate a series of tables specifically on non-reserve Aboriginal households that was augmented with data from the Aboriginal Peoples Survey as part of the 2001 census.

<sup>14</sup> Calculations are made on basis of rank on absolute Aboriginal Population and Relative Incidence of Aboriginal population.

## Summary of Saskatoon Aboriginal Population<sup>15</sup>

### Aboriginal Identity Population

City	Total Population	Aboriginal Population	First Nations	Metis	Inuit	Non Aboriginal	Aboriginal As % of Total Population
Saskatoon	222,630	20,280	11,290	8,305	125	202,355	9.1%

In a comparison of Saskatoon Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal youth:

### Saskatoon 2001 Youth & Aboriginal Youth Population<sup>16</sup> Total Populations

City	Total Youth Population	Non-Aboriginal Youth Population	Aboriginal Youth Population
Saskatoon	47,135	41,560	5,575

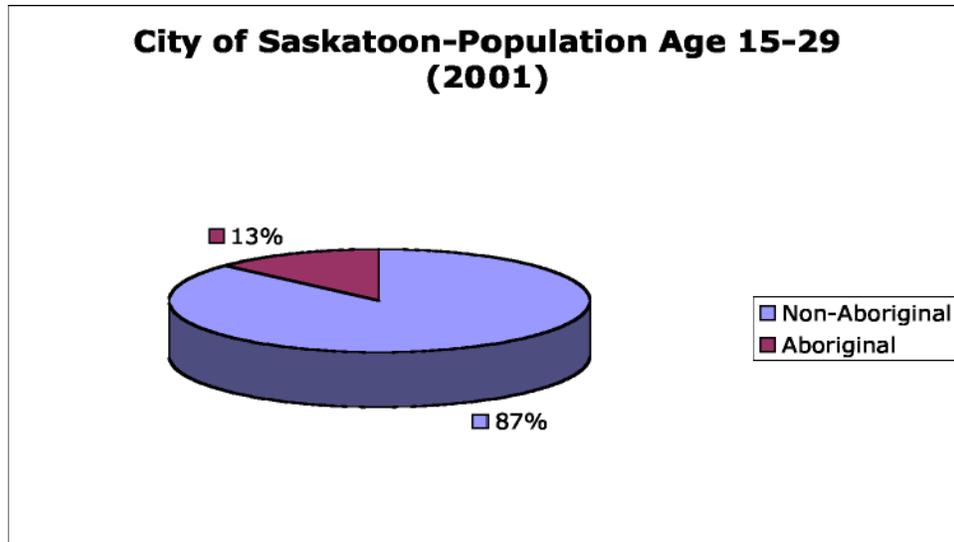
### Saskatoon Aboriginal Youth Population by Age Bracket<sup>17</sup>

Age Bracket	All Youth Population	Aboriginal Youth Population	Non-Ab. Youth Population
15-19	14,680	1,835	12,845
20-24	17,850	1,915	15,935
25-29	14,605	1,825	12,780
Total	47,135	5,575	41,560

<sup>15</sup> Source: Aboriginal Identity Population, 2001 Counts, for Census Metropolitan Areas and Census Agglomerations (Statistics Canada data series 97F0024XIE2001007). Aboriginal Peoples of Canada: Highlight Tables 2001 Census. This represents population counts and reflects both owner and rental tenure.

<sup>16</sup> Statistics Canada, Saskatoon Population Profile and Aboriginal Population Profile, 2001.

<sup>17</sup> *Ibid.*



As previously indicated, when relying upon “official” data, calculating Metis statistics is a rough science at best. Metis organizations across the country have been disputing Metis populations with officials of Statistics Canada since the preparation for the 1986 census. With each census announcement of Aboriginal population statistics, we have been informed that this time the official numbers are accurate. The recent 2001 census announcement was no different except that the statisticians found that they had to explain a seemingly unexpected jump of 43% in Canada’s Metis population in five years, since the last census.

Andy Siggner, the Senior Advisor on Aboriginal Statistics for Statistics Canada, addressed the perplexing result in a paper, “A Demographic and Socio-Economic Profile of the Metis in Canada”<sup>18</sup> paper. He looked for a rational explanation for the increase. He first looked at the fertility rate and found that for the Metis, instead of increasing in the years in question, had declined. Although still higher than the fertility rate of non-Aboriginal people, it was lower than the North American Indians or Inuit. Therefore, it could not explain why the Metis population spiked and the other Aboriginal group’s population did not. Siggner then stated that the increase in the Metis population statistics could not all be attributed to demographic factors.

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<sup>18</sup> Delivered at “Metis People in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century” Conference in Saskatoon, June, 2003.

Siggner suggested that the increased awareness of Metis issues coming from court cases related to Metis rights, constitutional discussions in the early 1990s, as well as better enumeration of Metis communities have all contributed to the increase in the population identifying as Metis.

Siggner looked further at the situation. The overall annual growth rates of the Metis population as a whole could not be accounted for by natural increase. According to Statistics Canada, there were only about 80,000 Metis women of childbearing age from 15-49, and the overall Metis population growth over the 1996-2001 period was just about 90,000. Demographers use the theoretical growth of a population due to natural increase as 5.5% a year. However, the Metis identity population's average annual growth was about 7.4% per year from 1996-2001. Statistics Canada admits that the increase cannot be due to immigration and still Statistics Canada searches for an answer that does not involve them saying that they have underrepresented the Metis in previous censuses, as suggested by the Metis leaders.

Siggner determined what part of the Metis population is, by Statistics Canada data, growing. He found that instead of the age cohorts declining with age due to mortality, Metis age cohorts are growing at a very high rate. This means that the population already born, instead of declining, is increasing, according to Statistics Canada data.

Siggner suggested "ethnic drift" or "ethnic mobility" as possible explanations for these confusing data. These terms are used by academics to describe people changing their ethnic affiliations from one census to the next. According to Siggner, the shift to Metis identity in certain age cohorts can be explained by: a growing pride in being Metis; court cases such as the *Powley* and *Blais* cases<sup>19</sup>; the recognition of Metis leader Louis Riel as a father of Confederation; and possible Metis enumeration processes, etc. Siggner has attempted to make intellectual sense out of what had appeared to Statistics Canada as an anomaly.

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<sup>19</sup>*R. v. Powley*, [2003] 2 S.C.R. 207, *R. v. Blais*, [2003] 2 S.C.R. 236.

This does not diminish the fact that Statistics Canada is reporting a 43% increase in the Metis. Regional data show increased Metis populations in areas that have not been regarded as part of the Metis homeland, such as New Brunswick, Nova Scotia and Ontario. However, the fact that the Saskatchewan Metis population increased by 22% in the last five years, cannot be explained by new people outside of the Metis homeland.<sup>20</sup> The statistical forecast of total population of Metis in Saskatoon for the 2001 year is 8,305<sup>21</sup>. Using this as a starting point and applying the expected growth rate of 5.5% per year, by the year 2011, the total Metis population is officially forecasted to increase to 14,187 people. As such, the yearly breakdown of forecasted population of Metis in the City of Saskatoon for the ten years after the 2001 survey would be:

2002: 8762;	2007: 11451;
2003: 9244;	2008: 12081;
2004: 9752;	2009: 12746;
2005: 10288;	2010: 13447;
2006: 10854;	2011: 14187;

Signner also looked at education attainment among the Aboriginal population in Canada and found that attainment has increased somewhat over the past few years.<sup>22</sup> However, in 2001, 48% of the Aboriginal population aged 20 to 24 living in non-reserve areas had not completed secondary school. In comparison, only 26% of the general population aged 20

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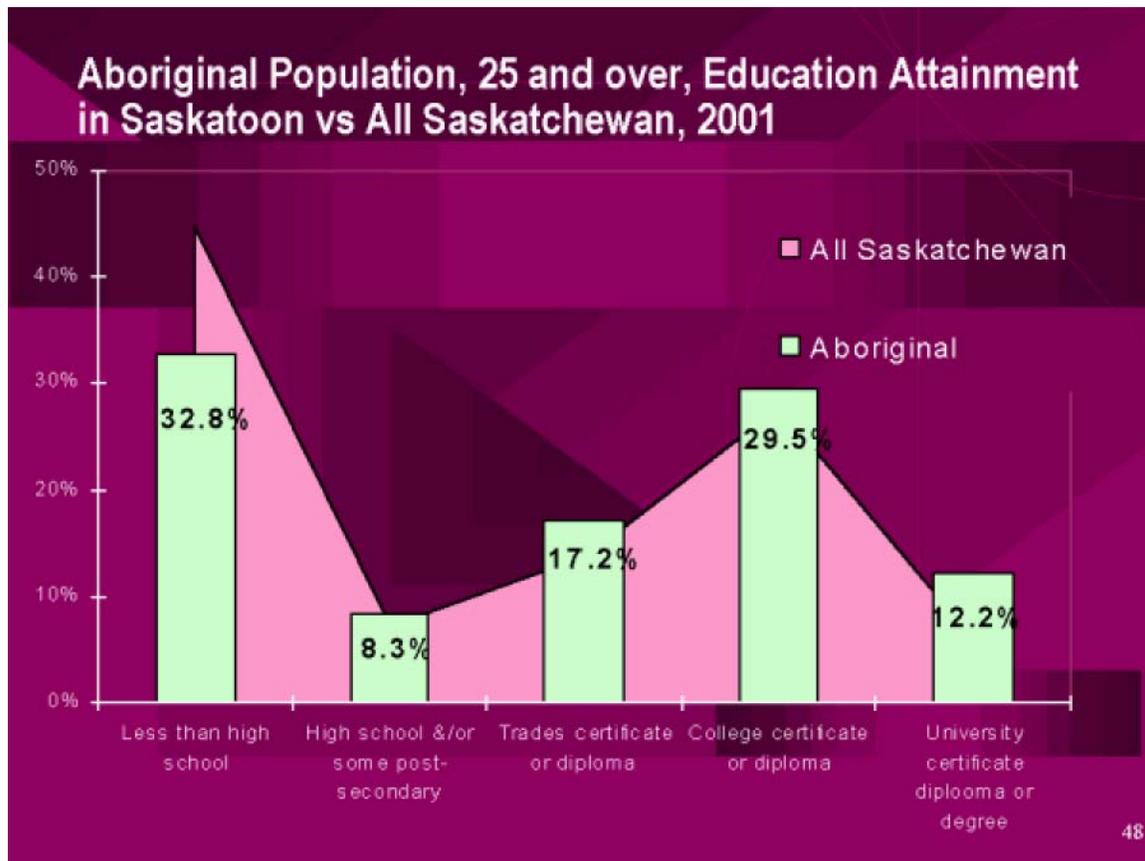
<sup>20</sup> The analysis of the Metis statistics of 2001 show that even the experts in demography and enumeration, Statistics Canada, have not been able to enumerate the Metis people of Canada with accuracy and consistency. While the government agency has over the years discredited the statistics provided by the Metis organizations, it has not been able to show that its scientific methods give an accurate picture of the Metis population in a particular community or region.

<sup>21</sup> National Aboriginal Housing Association in preparation for “A New Beginning: the National Non-reserve Aboriginal Housing Strategy” paper presented March 2004. The data used in the National Aboriginal Housing Association report was drawn from a special request to Statistics Canada to generate a series of tables specifically on nonreserve Aboriginal households that was augmented with data from the Aboriginal Peoples Survey as part of the 2001 census.

<sup>22</sup> Siggner, 2003; Statistics Canada, 2003.

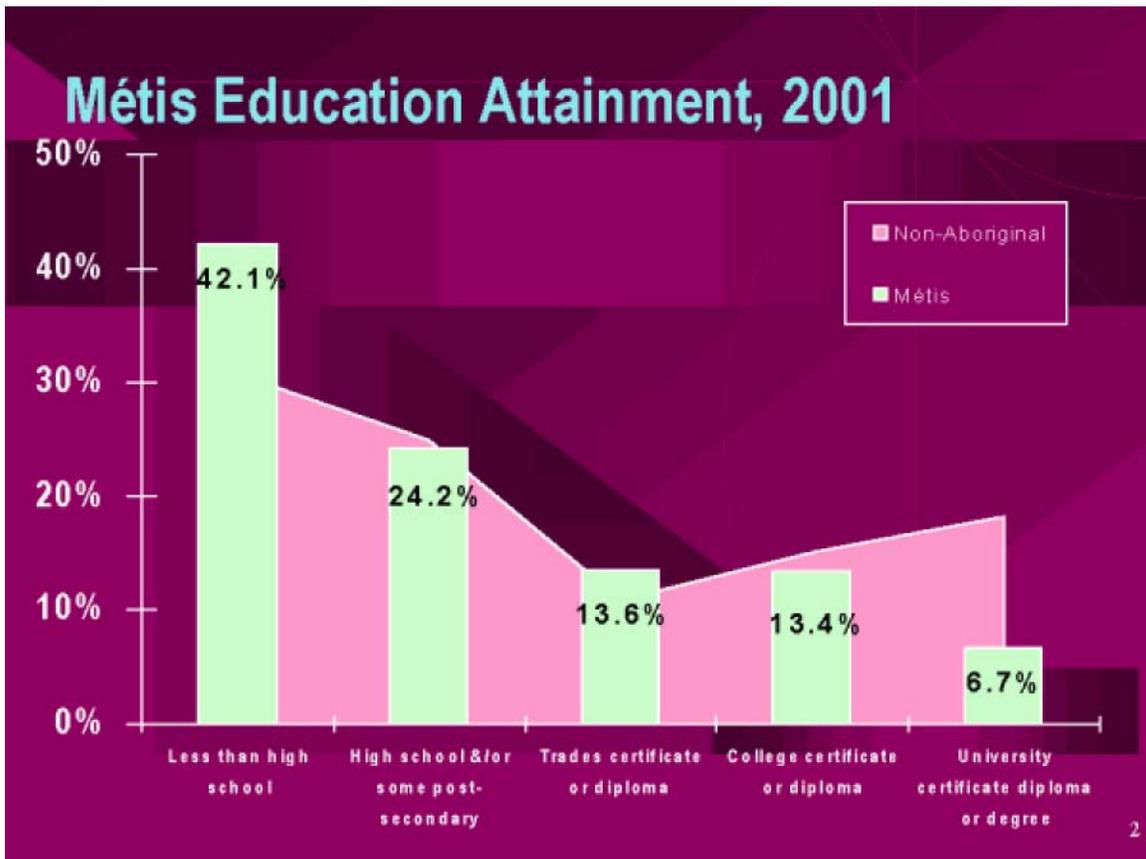
to 24 had not completed secondary school. Clearly, there remains a huge gap for Aboriginal people in comparison with the Canadian population as a whole.

When Aboriginal people aged 25 and over are compared in Saskatoon and in Saskatchewan, the likelihood of attaining education is higher.



When looking specifically at Metis education attainment in Saskatchewan the number of Metis people attending and attaining a higher education remains dismal at best. For Metis in Saskatchewan, they remain more likely than the non-Aboriginal population to have less than high school education, and have less likelihood in attaining high school or some post-secondary, college certificate or diploma or university degree. The only category the Metis seem to be on par with non-Aboriginal population is in the category of those seeking a trade certificate or diploma. Clearly, the Metis, if they fall within the

small group that does go to school beyond Grade 12, they are more successful in a trade certificate or diploma education.



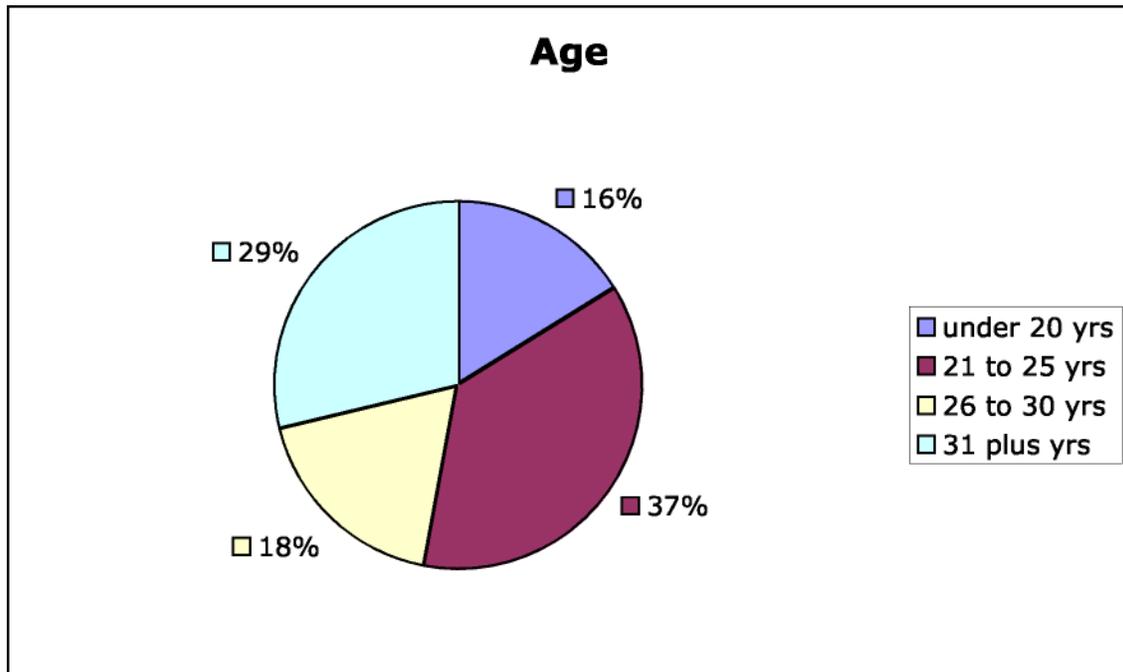
Clearly, the education data reflect the historical continuation of a wide gap between Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal education levels, and in particular, Metis and non-Aboriginal education levels.

### 3.3 Metis Student Needs and Expectations

*Tuition and books are often not the barrier. The barrier is expenses for daycare, transportation, housing, food and family expenses.*<sup>23</sup>

#### Age

The respondents to the Metis Student Housing survey were older than the age of typical students, which is consistent with findings of an education study of Aboriginal students.<sup>24</sup> The research team's quantitative and qualitative demographic information on the specific Metis student population and housing needs in Saskatoon found that almost half of the sample (47%) were over 25 years of age. Those over 30 years of age comprised 29% of the sample. The largest group (37%) were between 21 and 25 years of age. Only 16% were under 20 years of age.



<sup>23</sup> Aboriginal Peoples and Post-Secondary Education: What Educators Have Learned, Canada Millennium Scholarship Foundation, January, 2004. <sup>24</sup> *Ibid.*

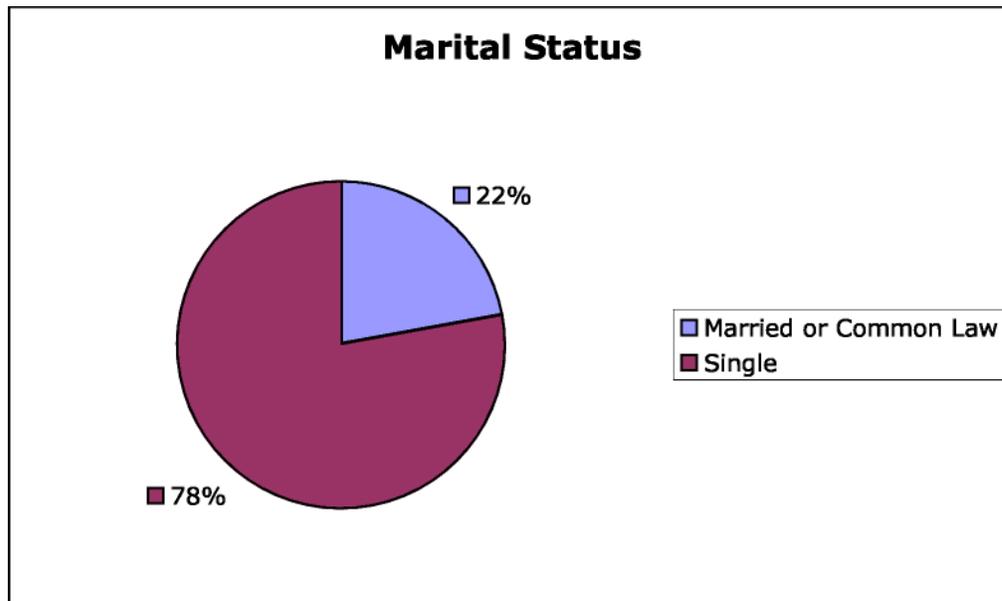
The above findings are fairly consistent with a recent survey of Aboriginal students at Saskatoon post-secondary institutions that captured data on 22 Metis post-secondary students. Of the students in that sample, 41% were 18 to 22 years of age. Over half (55%) were 23 to 40 years of age and 5% stated that they were over 40.<sup>25</sup>

## Gender

Of the respondents that shared their views with us, 59% were female and 41% male.

## Marital Status

Of those responding, 22% were married or in a common law relationship. Seventy-eight per cent of the students were single. Of these, 2% were separated and 4% were divorced.



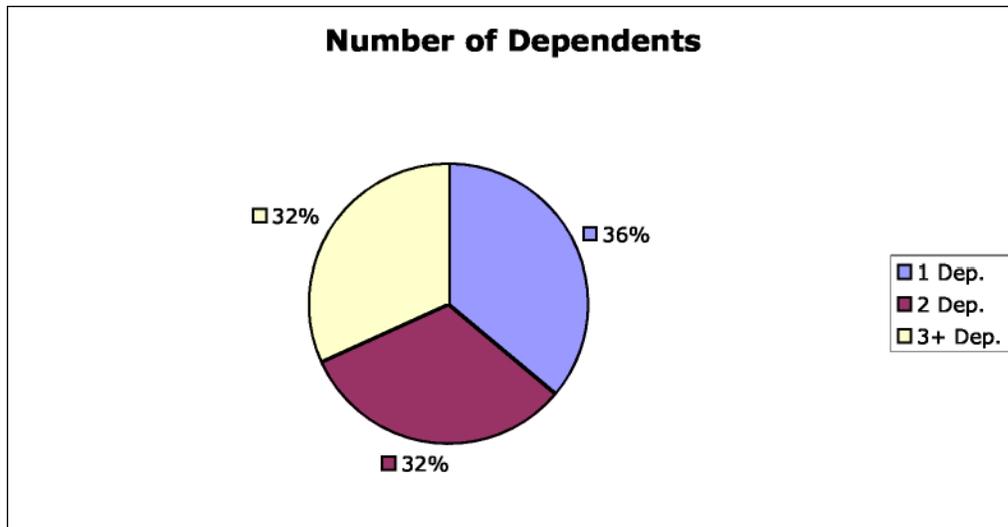
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<sup>25</sup> Saskatoon Housing Initiatives Partnership (SHIP), November 2004 Research Project Metis specific data & Conference Presentation.

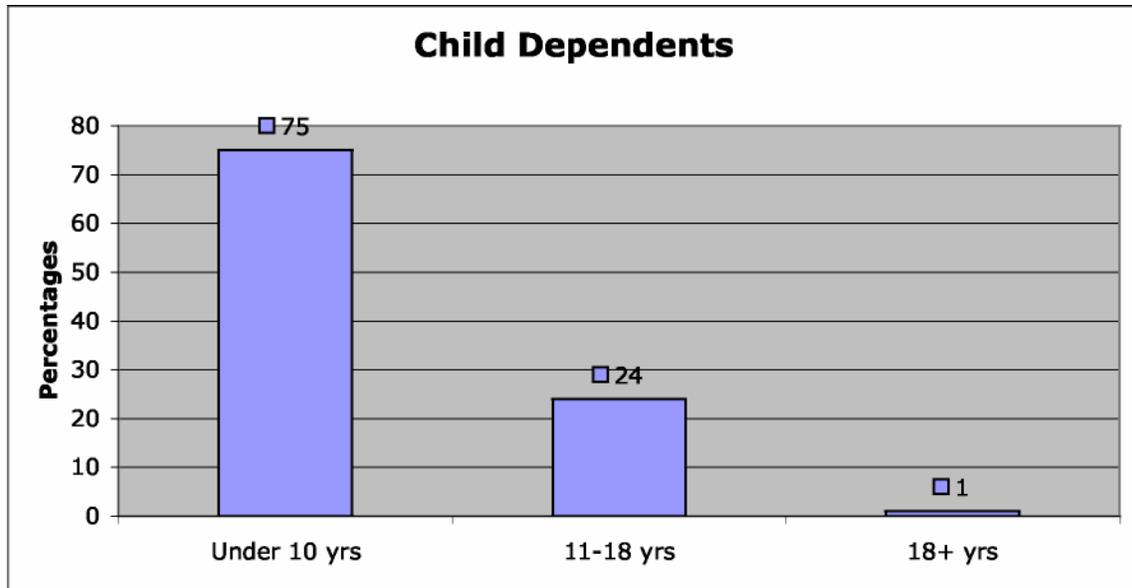
## Dependents

Seven percent of the respondents were living alone. Of those responding to the question of whether they had any dependents for whom they were responsible, almost half (44%) said that they were responsible for dependents.

Of those with dependents, 32% had over three dependents, 32% reported two dependents, 36% had one. One respondent had over six dependents while two others had four.



Seventy-five per cent of the sample reporting children had children less than ten years of age. Twenty-four per cent of children were between 11 and 18 with 1% over 18 years of age.



In addition, 12% of respondents listed their spouses as dependents and 8% had other relatives dependent on them.

### **Sources and Monthly Income**

Finance and support were found to be the most important factors for the Metis students in succeeding in academics. A lot of time and energy is spent in looking for housing which means that time is taken away from studies. As students, most Metis live on a fixed income. In relation to post-secondary education, an important finding from an analysis of SaskNative Rentals clients<sup>26</sup> showed the poorest Metis were post-secondary students living entirely on student loans. Those Metis supported by educational allowances through the Metis Employment and Training of Saskatchewan Inc. were somewhat more generous than the student loan funding available to Metis university students. Twenty-two per cent (22%) of the total sample had additional income coming from such things as child support, maternity benefits, and Saskatchewan Employment

<sup>26</sup> Analysis undertaken by the Bridges and Foundation Project in 2001-02.

Supplement. Some women at the post-secondary level were able to go to school only because they were receiving child support as well as the student loan. Two households survived on \$531 per month, one on \$695, and four other households received less than \$1000 per month. One of the students living on \$531 per month was enrolled in a Master of Social Work degree. Since all of these individuals had children, these student allowances supported families.

For a large number of our project participants, however, their income sources were from the Provincial Training Allowance and ranged from \$ 159.60 per month for singles to approximately \$ 243.60 per month for a single parent.<sup>27</sup>

### **Availability, Affordability & Adequacy**

Availability is a problem for Aboriginal students trying to get into Aboriginal housing because of the long waiting lists. The research team was advised that for one Aboriginal housing agency in the City of Saskatoon, the waiting list varies from 500 to 1000 in any given year. Availability is also a problem in university housing because there is no priority given to Aboriginal students. Although some single Aboriginal students have tried university housing, they are not happy there as they are often older than the average university student in residence, have different needs such as a place to practice Aboriginal spirituality and do not fit into the social life of campus. The issue of securing housing is a serious problem for many of our talking circle participants. Many told us anecdotal stories of being refused rental housing once they met the housing owners or rental managers of the buildings. The students spoke to the research team about discrimination and racism as factors in being unable to secure appropriate housing. Questions of family size and concerns on who would be living with the students were factors raised by some potential landlords. This means the search for appropriate housing could be a more difficult challenge for Aboriginal people than non-Aboriginal.

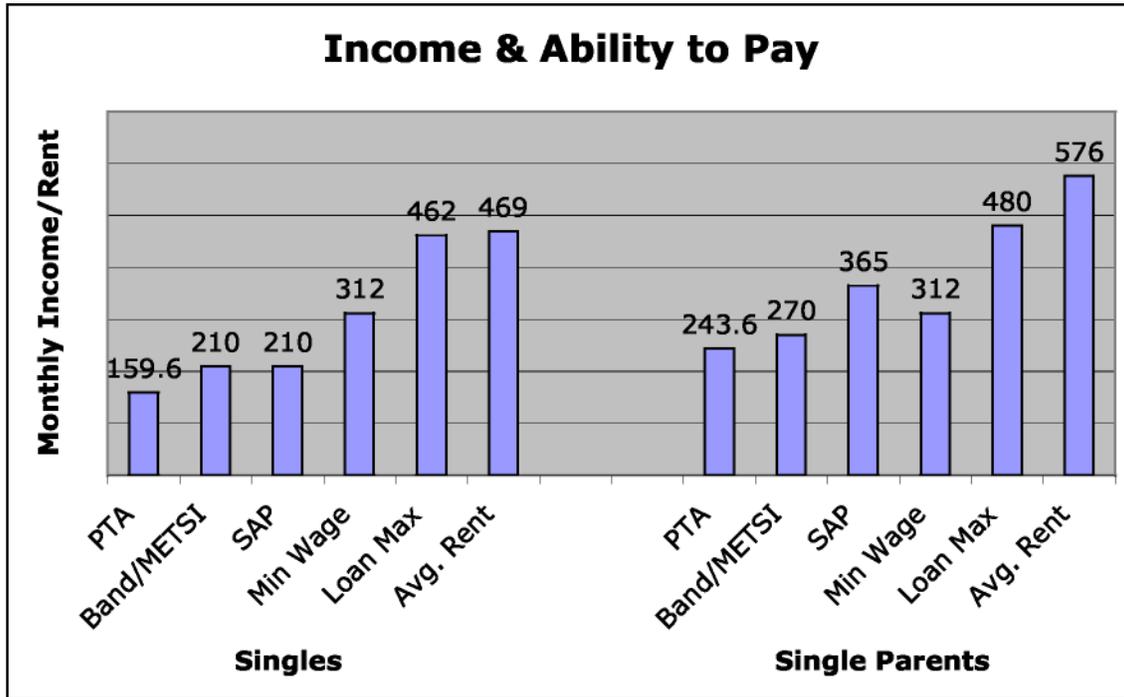
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<sup>27</sup>SHIP, November 2004 Research Project Metis specific data & Conference Presentation.

Affordability is another important component in housing. What a student can afford is dependent on his/her sources of income. Past SUNTEP researchers found that, between 1984 and 1996, at the time of enrolling in the Saskatoon SUNTEP program, 58% of prospective students were employed, 29% were unemployed, 6% were receiving social assistance and 5% were students. However, despite the high level of employment, 62% of all Saskatoon SUNTEP students were living below the poverty line when they enrolled.

For women in the program, the situation was even worse. Of them, 78% were living under the poverty line when they entered the program. Between 1997 and 2001, 25% of prospective students were employed, 11% unemployed, 8% receiving social assistance and 56% were students. In this time period, the overwhelming majority (82%) of all the students were living below the poverty line at the time of entering SUNTEP. Therefore, over the years, the trend among the students entering the SUNTEP in Saskatoon is that 20% more of the students come to the program living below the poverty line now than 20 years ago.

These dismal findings become even starker when reviewing affordability gaps for the large number of our project participants that rely upon funding from the Provincial Training Allowance. When compared to other Aboriginal students, including Metis at the post-secondary level, with different sources of income, many of our Metis respondents had the largest gap between income and average rent.<sup>28</sup>



## Cultural Appropriateness

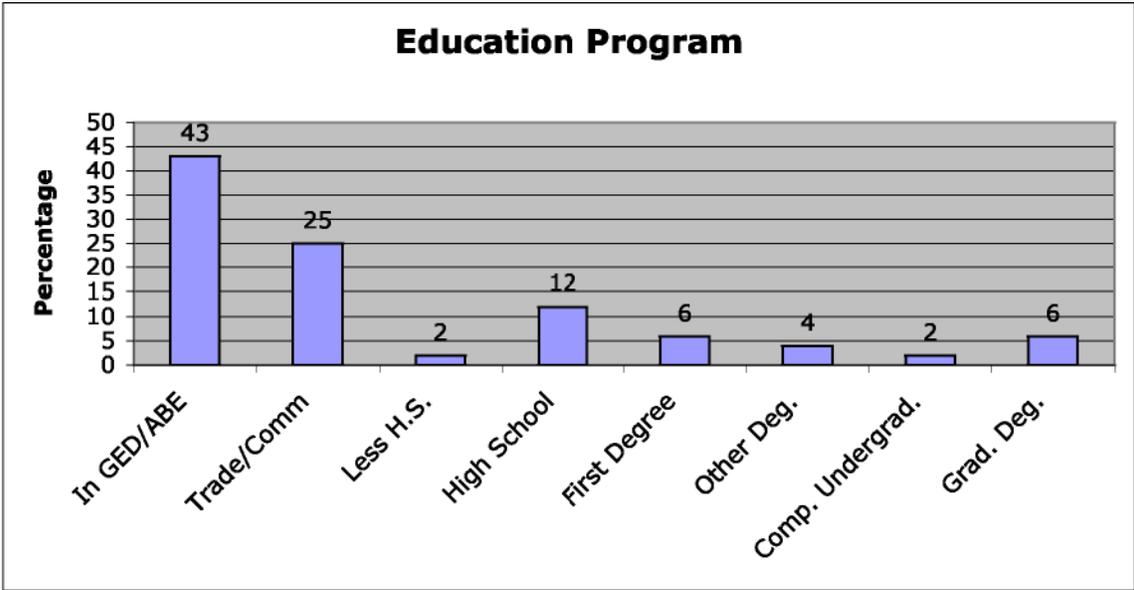
Literature research has shown that Aboriginal traditions, practices and customs are often ignored in post-secondary institutions to the detriment of the learning development of the students. In conjunction, the research respondents clearly stated they, as Metis students, want a community of housing that will support their learning in the education system. The cultural aspect of being Metis is seen as something to draw strength from when undergoing stressful situations such as an education program. The vast majority of our respondents, as discussed in further detail below, felt that as Metis, there must and should

<sup>28</sup> SHIP, November 2004 Research Project Metis specific data & Conference Presentation.

be designated housing space and priority for Metis students. Metis student space and priority was viewed as being an opportunity to have community, remain or connect to their culture to assist in being successful in school. As shown later in more detail, the issues of priority, culture and community are critical components for cultural appropriateness in housing initiatives.

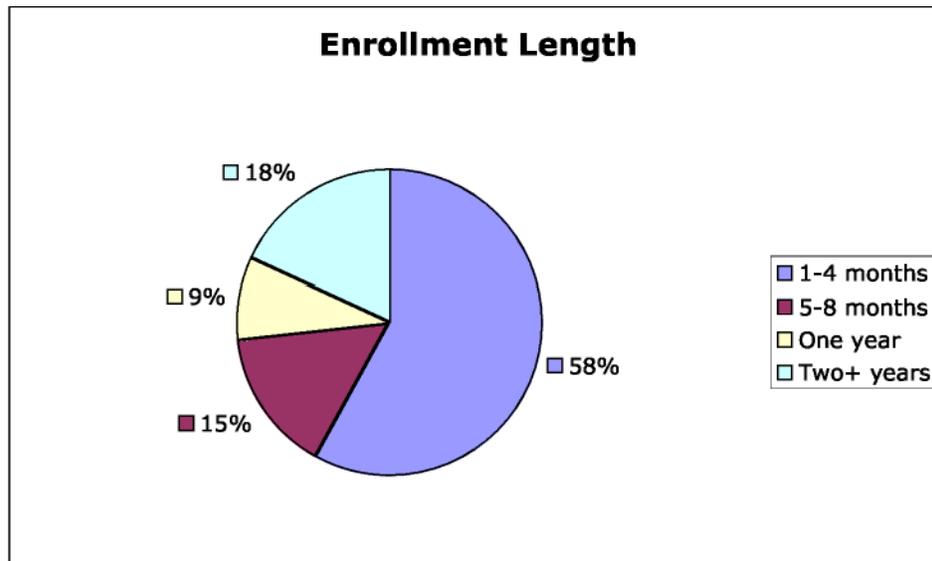
### Education Level

Of the respondents, the vast majority were within adult learning education programs. Of the respondents 43% were in a GED or ABE program. One of every four was in or had completed a trade or community college program. Two per cent had less than high school. Twelve per cent had obtained a high school diploma. Six per cent were in the process of completing a first degree and another 6% were pursuing a graduate degree. Four percent had “other” education. Two per cent had already completed an undergraduate degree.



Many of the respondents were new to the program in which they were enrolled. Fifty-eight per cent had only been a student in their present institution for one to four months. Another 15% had been in their institution for five to eight months. Almost one in ten

(9%) had been enrolled for one year and 18% had been students in their current program for two years.



### Education Level – Snapshot of SUNTEP Students

The faculty and staff of the Saskatchewan Urban Teacher Education Program (SUNTEP), a program of the Gabriel Dumont Institute, in an effort to provide the support and services that fit the needs of the students of a particular year, have been diligent in studying the characteristics of SUNTEP students. As a result, profiles of SUNTEP (Saskatoon) students are available from 1984-2002. These profiles provide a snapshot of the largest group of Metis students at the University of Saskatchewan over two decades. These snapshots, which were completed in 1996 and 2002, form the foundation from which the questions of this survey were formulated.

During the period, 1984-1996, 74% of SUNTEP Saskatoon students were female, and 26% were male. Of the total student body, 26% were single, 29% in relationships and 45% were single parents. Although no Saskatoon-specific information was available, 43.5% of all the women in the SUNTEP program province-wide, were single mothers. Between 1997 and 2001, more men entered the SUNTEP Saskatoon program, with 62% of students female, and 38% male in 2001. During this later period, 26% were single, 28% were either married or in a common-law relationship, and 10% of students were single parents.<sup>29</sup>

<sup>29</sup> GDI Update, 2002 and GDI Update, 1996.

## Education Level – Snapshot of Post-Secondary

A recent survey of Aboriginal students at post-secondary institutions in Saskatoon<sup>30</sup> reported data on 22 Metis post-secondary students. The results showed that 55% of these students indicated that they had or are currently having issues related to housing. The overwhelming majority of those with issues (92%) said that the rent was too expensive. Fifty-eight per cent of Metis students with issues stated that heat and/or electricity were too expensive. One out of every three Metis students responding to the question said that the landlord was uncooperative. Half of the Metis students claimed the neighbourhood was undesirable. Transportation was an issue for 33% of Metis student respondents. Twenty-five per cent reported housing that doesn't suit their needs and 17% responded that they were experiencing overcrowding.

Of the sample, 45% lived in apartments; 18% lived in "Other" types of accommodation. These included trailers, low rental housing and dormitories. Nine per cent live in suites in houses. Nine per cent live as boarders in a home with shared facilities but meals provided. Nine per cent owned their own homes/condominium/townhouses.

The Metis students reported on the location of their residence. Fourteen per cent lived in Area 1; 32% in Area 2; 18% in Area 3; 23% in Area 4; and, 14% in Area 5. This means that in this survey, the Metis students were fairly widely spread throughout the city. Almost half of the Metis students lived on either side of the river (46% on the east side, 54% on the west side). More Metis students lived on the east side than for the total Aboriginal student population in the survey that had 37% residency on the east side of the river<sup>31</sup>

When asked why they chose their current housing, the Metis student sample showed a wide variety of reasons. Affordability was mentioned by half of the students. Being close to a good bus route was the next most frequently cited reason. The proximity to school was given as a reason by 36%. Slightly over one quarter stated that they were unfamiliar to the city and chose the first available housing. Another 18% wanted to be close to shopping and the final 14% chose their housing to be close to services for children or dependents. Fully 32% said that all of the reasons listed were part of their process of choosing a residence.

Half of the respondents paid less than \$500 per month for their housing. Eighteen per cent spent between \$500 and \$600 per month. Another 18% paid between \$600 and 650 while 9% paid more than \$700 per month for housing. The majority (73%) of this sample of Metis students had two or more bedrooms in their home. Eighteen per cent had one

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<sup>30</sup> SHIP, November 2004 Research Project Metis specific data & Conference Presentation.

<sup>31</sup> *Ibid.*

bedroom and 9% lived in bachelor suites.

Of the students in the sample, 41 % were 18 to 22 years of age. Over half (55%) were 23 to 40 years of age and 5% stated that they were over 40. Thirty-six per cent of the sample had children or other dependents. The remaining 64% had no dependents.

### **Clan/Household Composition**

Ninety-three percent of the total respondents of our research project were living with others. Only 7% of the total sample lived alone. All of these were female. One quarter (25%) of the total sample were single parents living with their child(ren). Of these 79% were female headed households and 21 % were male single parents. Two parent families constituted one in every eight (12.75%) respondents' households. Fourteen per cent of respondents lived with their parents. The majority of these were male. Couples without children made up 7% of the households. One percent of the sample lived with their parents and their spouse. Seven per cent lived with people from "back home". Another 25% of those who responded lived with other people. Sixty per cent lived with family members, for example, a younger brother or sister, cousin, aunt, or uncle. Others lived with roommates.

One third of student households had four or more residents; 4% six or more; 9% five in residence; and 20% 4. One third of residences had three people and 27% had two residents. Only seven percent had one person.

### **Personal Space**

Health experts maintain that inadequate housing can be associated with a host of health problems. For example, crowded living conditions can lead to the transmission of infectious diseases such as tuberculosis and hepatitis A, and can also increase risk for injuries, mental health problems, family tensions and violence.<sup>32</sup>

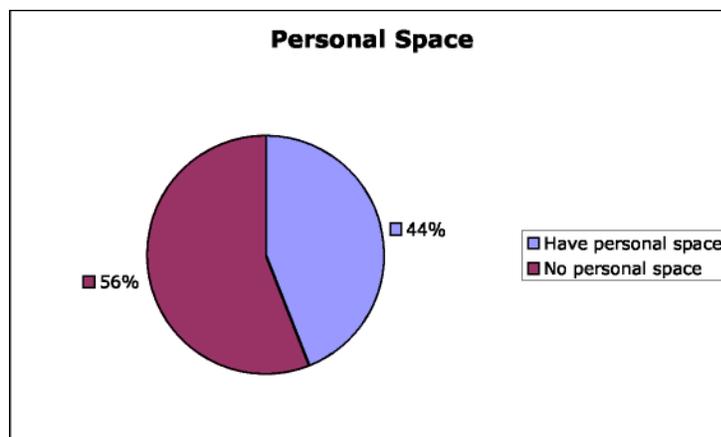
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<sup>32</sup>Health Canada 1999: 14.

In all regions of the country, the homes of Aboriginal people living in non-reserve areas were more crowded than those of all Canadians (crowding is defined as 1.0 or more people per room.). According to the 2001 Census, 7% of the total Canadian non-reserve population lived in crowded conditions, however, among Aboriginal people in nonreserve areas, the proportion was 17% in 2001.

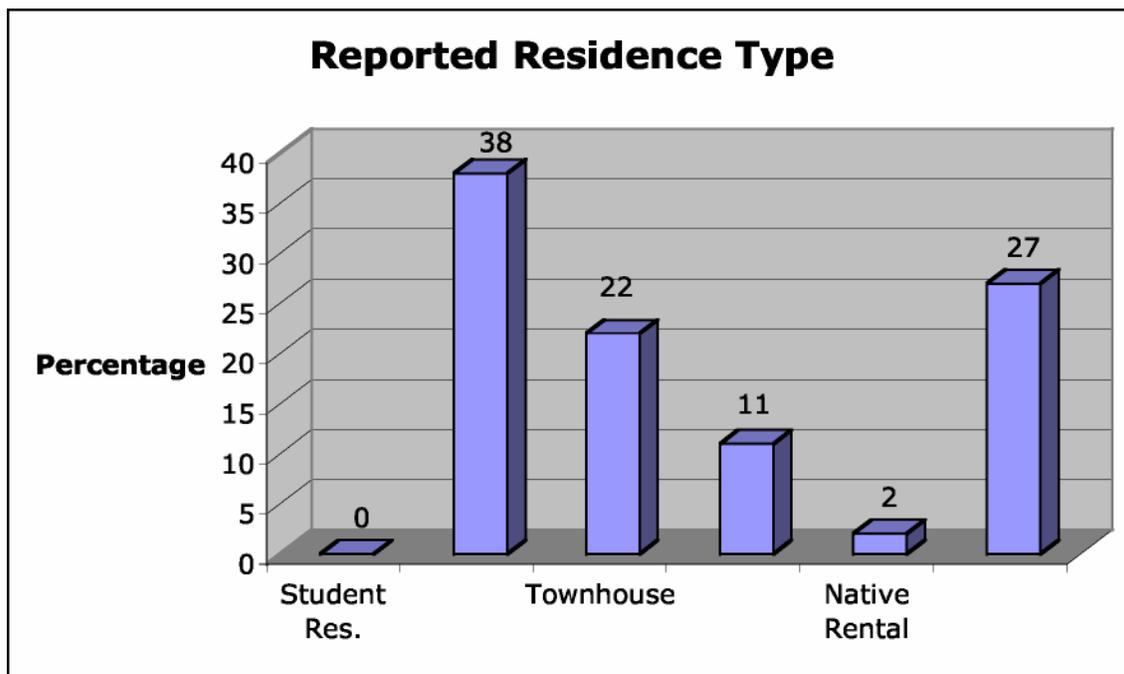
Census data also show that Aboriginal children aged 14 and under were nearly twice as likely as all Canadian children to live in crowded conditions. While 25% of Aboriginal children in non-reserve areas lived in crowded conditions in 2001, the comparable figure for all Canadian children in non-reserve areas was 13%. The statistics are even more stark when analyzing the City of Saskatoon. 2001 Census information shows that 18% of Aboriginal people of all ages living in Saskatoon live in crowded households, more than three times the proportion of 5% for the total population.

These statistics are supported by the research project findings although our Metis specific participants reported an even higher rate of crowding. Just under one half of the research project's total respondents (44%) had a room of their own. In other words, 56% of all the Metis students surveyed did not have their own room. One in five (19%) students had the living room to themselves after the family had gone to bed. Fifteen per cent said that they share the room with someone else while 6 % stated that they share with a child. Six per cent had a spot in the basement to themselves while 4% reported, "I don't have anywhere to call my own." Another 7% said they had other space.



## Type of Residence

A large percentage (31 %) of respondents indicated that their residence was something other than those listed but did not elaborate. None reported living in student housing. Thirty-eight percent lived in rented apartments. Another 22% denoted that they lived in a rented townhouse. Eleven per cent stated that they lived in a rented room in someone's home and 2% resided in Native housing rental accommodation in a family unit. Twenty-seven percent of the respondents said that they lived in a basement.



## Mobility

A large majority (79%) of the students intended to stay where they were until they finish their course. However, there was a high level of mobility among the respondents. Forty-four per cent had moved since becoming a student. Sixteen per cent of the sample had moved three times or more; 5% twice; and, 22% once. Fifty-six per cent had never moved. When household composition was considered, those who had partners, or who had partners with children, were the most likely to be planning to stay in their current residence. Those living with their parents or for those living with “people from back home” were the most likely to be thinking about moving. Sixty per cent of those living

with “people from back home” were there only temporarily. Half of those living with their parents were going to move. These are individuals who do not have a space of their own but were living in the basement, sleeping in the living room when the family go to bed or were sharing a room with a child.

## **Maintenance**

In general, the homes of Aboriginal people in Canada are more likely in need of major repairs than are the homes of others. Major repairs include such items as defective plumbing or electrical wiring, structural repairs to walls, floors or ceilings and so on. Among Aboriginal people living in non-reserve areas, 18% live in homes requiring major repairs compared with 8% for the total Canadian non-reserve population. Many Aboriginal people living in Canada’s largest cities live in homes in need of major repairs.<sup>33</sup>

### **Analysis of Saskatchewan Housing Conditions Need for Repair<sup>34</sup>**

<u>Non-Aboriginal Households</u>			<u>Aboriginal Households</u>		
Total in Need of Repair	In Need of Minor Repairs	In Need of Major Repairs	Total in Need of Repair	In Need of Minor Repairs	In Need of Major Repairs
33%	25%	8%	48%	32%	16%

### **Analysis of Saskatchewan Metis Housing Need for Repair<sup>35</sup>**

#### METIS

Need Repairs	Minor Repairs	Major Repairs
45%	31%	14%

<sup>33</sup> *Aboriginal People Survey 2001* (Statistics Canada, 2003)

<sup>34</sup> Calculations gathered by National Aboriginal Housing Association in preparation for “A New Beginning: the National Non-reserve Aboriginal Housing Strategy” paper presented March 2004.

<sup>35</sup> *Ibid.*

Our participants in talking circles highlighted the need for proper maintenance in rental houses including regular furnace checks, window repairs and a number of safety items described in the following sections. Major repairs highlighted by the respondents identified plumbing, wiring, structural problems, floors, ceilings and lights.

## **Reasons For Moving**

For those who have moved, the participants were asked to indicate the reasons why they moved. The respondents could opt for more than one factor in deciding to move. The respondents' most frequent reason given for moving was "rent too expensive". This was reported by 39% of all respondents. This was followed by "I needed a bigger place" which was stated by 32% of all respondents. "Too far from my school" was the reason for moving for 25% of respondents. "I found a better place" and "I didn't feel safe there" were cited by 21 % of respondents. For over one in five of the respondents (21 %) the reasons for moving were related to the accommodation. These reasons included: "Utility costs too high."; "Bad management/landlord"; and, "The place was a dump." Twenty per cent of respondents moved because it was too noisy with parties near by all the time. Eleven per cent of respondents said that they moved because there was no place to study or "I needed better bus service" or the pet policy. Nine per cent of the respondents left their accommodation either because the residence was too far for children to go to school or they had moved in with relatives or friends or "I needed appliances." For another 4%, they moved as a result of the smoking policy or they wore out their welcome. In the case of 2%, moving was necessitated because of not getting along with the other people in the house. Other reasons for moves, cited by 9% included: 1) the combination of utilities, the distance from the school and rent too expensive; 2) "Cops won't help".; 3) "Crime, murders, B and E's and fear."; 4) "To get away from parents."; 5) "Too many people in one house."

## **Adequacy**

Twenty-nine per cent reported that their accommodation was not large enough for their needs. Almost half (48%) of respondents did not consider the amount they pay for rent to be reasonable. A majority of the students said that the location of their housing was suitable for their needs but 30% said that their location was not suitable.

When asked to describe the distance from their residence in relation to their usual mode of transportation, 38% reported a short drive while 4% stated it was a long drive (over one hour). Fifteen per cent said that they had a short bus ride while 11% had a long bus ride (over one hour). Another 15% stated that for them it was a short walk and 11% noted that they had a walk of one hour or more. Six per cent cited a short bike ride. Over one quarter of the respondents (26%) commuted for over one hour both before and after school to get home.

In response to the question, “Do you feel safe where you live?” 19% reported that they did not feel safe. Moreover, twenty-eight per cent reported that their place was not fixed up so that they were comfortable.

## **Location**

Ninety-three per cent of respondents said that they felt it was very important, important or somewhat important that they live near their educational institution. Sixty-four per cent reported that it was very important, important or somewhat important to live near other Metis people. Eighty-one per cent stated that it was very important, important or somewhat important to live near friends. Sixty-two per cent believe that it was very important, important or somewhat important to be near people from “back home.”

The majority (73%) of Metis students with children lived as close as they would like to their children’s school. When asked how close they considered to be close enough, 29% said one block, 29% said 2 blocks, 18%, three blocks and 24%, a short bus ride.

Almost half of Metis students with young children stated that they did not live close enough to their child's daycare. When asked how close was close enough, 77% said close enough meant either in the same building or in the same block as their residence. One person felt that three blocks was close enough while another person said that it would be good to have a daycare at the educational institution, and another stated that he/she had someone at home to look after the young children.

Sixty-three per cent of daycare used by the students is provincially registered. However, 71 % of the parents said that they worried about their children while in school.

### **Income and Financial Situation**

Students were asked for financial information from all sources. Therefore, many reported more than one source of income. Over half of the student respondents (55%) reported receiving a Provincial Training Allowance (PTA). Eighteen per cent received funding through Metis Employment and Training Saskatchewan Inc. Another 11 % reported Family Allowance support. Personal savings, Employment Insurance and scholarships were sources of income for 6% of the respondents. Four per cent of the respondents received either Child Support or Child Benefits. Five per cent were employed while going to school. Parents were helping 4% with the costs of education. Four per cent had obtained scholarships from the National Aboriginal Achievement Foundation.

Seventy-two per cent of the respondents received \$1000 or less per month. In fact, 16% of Metis students in the survey received less than \$500 per month. Of the 28% with incomes over \$1000 per month, 16% lived on \$1001 to \$1500 per month; 7% lived on between \$1501 and \$2000 per month; and 4% on between \$2001 and \$3000.

Of all respondents, 96% did not receive a rent subsidy. For those who received a rent subsidy, these subsidies were either \$280 from METSI or \$241 from the Saskatoon Housing Authority.

## **Childcare Subsidy**

Of those with children, only 17% received childcare subsidy. Of these, 67% were male single parents. The amounts of the childcare subsidies varied from \$300-\$500 per month.

## **Partner's Contributions**

For those with partners, 44% said that their partners contributed to the cost of the rent. One half of those contributing to the rent paid 50%; 30% contributed 90% of the rent; 10% provided 20% of the rent and 10% provided 30%. However, 56% of partners made no contribution to the rent.

Some partners (20%) contributed to childcare expenses. Half of those who did contribute covered the total cost of childcare. One partner contributed 80% and another 30%. However, 80% of partners made no contribution to childcare.

Some partners (27%) contributed to the cost of transportation. Sixteen per cent contributed each of the following amounts: 10%, 20%, 30%, 50%, 80% and 90%.

## **Residence in Saskatoon**

Slightly over half (52%) of the Metis students moved to Saskatoon to go to school. For these individuals, slightly less than half, (48%) moved directly from a traditional Metis community in the province. These included: Debden, Green Lake, Cole Bay, La Loche, St. Louis, Duck Lake, and Cumberland House. Forty-five per cent moved from other Saskatchewan communities: Rosthern, Meadow Lake, Prince Albert, Osler, Uranium City, Estevan, Yorkton, Dalmeny, Hoey, Buffalo Narrows and North Battleford. The remaining 8% who moved to Saskatoon, moved from out of province.

For 48% who called Saskatoon home, many of them listed inner city or core neighbourhoods as their home community. These included Pleasant Hill, Meadow Green, Riversdale, and St. Mary's.

The following responses were cited when the question was asked, “How did you find your place?” The largest number (29%) found their place through the newspaper. One quarter found their residence through friends and another 23% through family. A small number (4%) found their home through a realtor or through an ad in the window of the place. Only 2% found their residence through the school program or through a Housing Authority advertisement. The final 12% found their places through other unspecified means.

### **Damage Deposits**

Eighty-four per cent of Metis students knew that they had to pay a damage deposit. However, 16% did not.

### **Utility Costs**

Almost half of the Metis students in the sample (45%) did not know what to expect to pay for utility bills.

### **Challenges/Problems**

As highlighted previously, almost half (46%) reported having problems finding a place. A large number of Metis students chose to offer their experiences. The following are their comments:

*“I had a low income which made it hard to find a decent place in a nice area. Landlords are difficult to deal with. ”*

*“I wasn’t sure if I could find school when I moved. It took me 4 1/2 months. ”*

The Metis students were asked to rank the top three problems/issues that Metis students face in finding a place to live in Saskatoon. When their responses were weighted, the top three issues were: affordability, location, and policies related to rental accommodations in Saskatoon.

Affordability was expressed in many ways by the respondents. Some of the responses were: “rent too high”, “cost”, “not enough income to suit needs”, “money”, “lower rent”, “damage deposit too high”, “too high utilities,” and “affordable housing.”

Location and affordability are linked in the minds of the respondents. One said, “Low income housing is in poor areas.” Location was also associated with safety and security. Location also included the distance to travel to their school or their children’s school or child care. Location was also tied to transportation. Many students could not afford the cost of a city bus pass. Therefore, they looked for a place close enough to walk to the school. This limited the communities in which they could look for a place and for students at DTI, the neighbourhoods around the Institute are in the “hood”.

The policies related to rental accommodations in Saskatoon were expressed in a number of ways. Out of town Metis students had trouble providing references from former landlords because either they had never rented before or their contacts were all in their home community and access to the references was limited after they leave the community. Local students often moved because of problems created by the landlord and then were not able to ask for references. Sometimes the fact that the student moved out of a slum landlord’s building is a greater testament that that student will be a good tenant than is a reference from that landlord. Bad landlord relations were mentioned in many cases as reasons for moves. Students reported that they had suffered discrimination and prejudice. The need to pay the damage deposit and the first month’s rent was a problem faced by a number of students. The fact that no matter how well you treated the accommodation, you never got the damage deposit back convinced the students that damage deposits were in fact just more money paid out for your place. They didn’t expect to get it back.

### **3.4 Solutions**

The research project aimed at taking the issues of Metis student housing from a strictly problems approach to a dialogue that offered Metis students the opportunity to be involved in providing solutions for the problems they face in finding and keeping housing while they are in their studies. The following responses represent the students' ideas for better housing for Metis students.

#### **Metis Residences**

Ninety-two per cent of respondents thought that there should be accommodation specifically set aside for Metis students and their families.

#### **Criteria for Selecting Tenants for Metis-Specific Residences**

In allocating such units, one quarter of respondents thought that income levels should be a determiner. Nineteen per cent thought that education path should be considered and 13% felt that the number of dependents should be taken into account. Forty-three per cent thought that other criteria should be used. These included a combination of a number of criteria. Nine per cent felt that the number of dependents, the education path and the income level of the applicants all needed to be considered. Others felt that debts and income should be taken into account. One respondent said that commitment should be evaluated along with the number of dependents, income and education of the applicant. It was suggested by one person that all Metis should be eligible. Another stated that only those who do not drink or do drugs should be allowed to live in the Metis residences. One felt that there should be room for all.

Seventy per cent of those responding stated that they would like to be in a Metis specific residence. Thirteen per cent would like to live in accommodations specifically designated and designed as a single person Metis student residence/building. Twenty-six per cent would prefer to live in accommodation specifically designated and designed as a Metis students and family residence/building. Thirty-one per cent would prefer to live in

accommodation that is available to all Metis people (including Elders, working people, students, etc.)

Of the other respondents, 4% would prefer to live in accommodation that is specifically designated and designed as an Aboriginal student and family residence/building. Another 9% would prefer to live in a general student residence/building available to all students. Thirteen per cent would prefer to live in accommodation that is a residence for all people. Another 4% would prefer an adult only environment.

#### Specific Comments about Metis Residences:

*“a regular neighborhood. ”*  
*“Like a decent place to live. ”*  
*“A big Soddie. ”*  
*“Clean, nice, cultural. ”*  
*“Clean, friendly. ”*  
*“Townhouses. ”*  
*“Regular house. ”*  
*“Open space, like a garage with utilities. ”*  
*“A one bedroom, bachelor suite. ”*  
*“Village. ”*  
*“Well kept, not run down. ”*  
*“Two bedroom apartment. ”*  
*“Like a Split Duplex. ”*  
*“Safe, nice. ”*  
*“Clean, big yard. ”*  
*“Just a good place to live. ”*  
*“Perfect, quiet. ”*  
*“Complex. ”*  
*“A small village type with common area. ”*  
*“Complexes. ”*  
*“A nice big house in a good area. ”*  
*“Two and three bedroom units, utilities included in a safe area.”*

In the talking circles, participants elaborated on their vision of a Metis residence.

- Type of residence – house, townhouse, duplex, dorms, apartments, co-op model
- Would like it to lead to ownership like habitat homes, or rent to own
- Alcohol and drug free – for some but need choice for those who don’t abuse it- two areas – drinkers and not
- More duplexes and housing for families
- Bigger houses for larger families

- Dorm like housing for single students
- Accessible – Boardwalk model
- Would like something made especially for larger families, a room for each kid
- house, townhouse, duplex, dorms, apartments, co-op model
- Apartments
- Just to rent not buy
- The idea of a Metis village segregates, want to be a part of the community, not stigmatized
- Should have some ownership or responsibility to the building
- On site manager
- house, townhouse, duplex, dorms, apartments, co-op model
- Apartment for single students – all just rent
- Two types one for families and one for singles
- Apartments with common area
- No dorms, unless they are on campus
- Like the idea of a Metis village
- house, townhouse, duplex, dorms, apartments, co-op model
- Like the idea of eventual ownership, rent to own would not work because I would want to resell it if I moved out before paying it off
- Want to buy a family home
- Buying a home is a great way to make money
- Need to have different size units, some houses, some apartments
- Don't just cater to families, single students are often left out of housing
- Don't want dorm style housing
- Scattered housing around the city is a good idea
- Like the idea of scattered housing rather than one area, don't want to promote segregation, but still all connected
- Like how low income housing is set up
- Have parking
- If it was on campus would live in dorm style housing
- Houses not just for families
- house, townhouse, duplex, dorms, apartments, co-op model
- House or duplex because most have kids and need a backyard to play in
- Townhouse
- Like townhouses in Erindale
- No condo fees
- Scattered housing around city
- I like the idea of a village but it would be good to have a choice of the area you can live in
- Some rent to own
- house, townhouse, duplex, dorms, apartments, co-op model
- Apartments
- Four-plexes
- Town houses shaped in a horseshoe so you can get to know your neighbours but still

- have your own place
- Have a yard
- Duplexes for families – larger homes for families
- Town houses
- Work towards ownership – rent to own, it gives people equity
- Big backyard
- A Metis community or village, some family units and some single unit

### **Inside the unit**

Eighty-two percent of respondents offered suggestions for the interior features of the units. The suggestions included: laundry en suite, fridge, stove, microwave, deep freeze, shower, fences, a bedroom for each person, lots of cupboards, closets, pantry, lots of space, huge living room, huge kitchen, basement, linen closet, private entrance, new appliances, no holes in the walls, decent rooms.

Specific comments:

*“A well taken care of house and yard, fenced and with everything working.”*

*“A Longhouse with six bedrooms, 3 full bathrooms, one kitchen, one dining room, one T.V. and Rec. Room.”*

*“Three to four bedrooms, two bathrooms, 8 closets for a family of 3 total.”*

*“Enough for everyone to stay and not be crowded. ”*

*“Three bedrooms—one for myself and each of my girls.”*

*“One to five bedroom houses or apartments. ” “Bachelor pad.”*

### **Inside the building**

Half of the respondents made suggestions for building features. Many ideas emerged: computer centre, fun room, spiritual centre, cultural room, gathering place, common room, an area to study, weight room, pool, resource centre, recreation centre, live-in caretaker, day care, meeting area, gym, library, laundry, and conference room. The participants of the talking circles suggested:

- Pets allowed
- Computer access
- Daycare on premises
- Wheel chair accessible
- Multipurpose room
- Game room
- Day-care
- Rec room

- On site day-care
- Computers
- Common room/Cultural room
- Common area for parties, kids parties
- Multipurpose room
- Laundry facilities, in duplexes for family, or in central area for dorm/apartment housing
- Gym
- Game room
- Weight room
- Computer study room
- Would like access to computer
- Meditation room
- Community room only if treated right and kept clean.
- Game room
- Would like a gym
- Community kitchen
- No community kitchen, you could just use your own kitchen
- Computer study room
- Put computers in common room
- Meditation room
- Day-care
- Have a day-care close, perhaps in a central building
- No furnishing
- Basic appliances
- Parking – more than 1 spot
- Day-care on site
- Playground
- Night time security guard
- Multipurpose room
- Computer hook-ups
- Daycare
- Counseling optional
- Gym
- Games room
- Common room/Cultural room; Multipurpose room
- Courses
- Community activities to get to know the neighbors
- Library
- Access to tutors
- Lounge
- Monitored
- Computers
- Study area

- Doctors and nurses once in awhile
- Employment listings Need a grocery store close by
- Grocery delivery
- Phone
- Electricity
- Day care in walking distance
- Transportation
- Bus stops close
- Shuttle bus would be awesome, bus passes are too expensive
- Plumbing
- Maintenance
- Corner store
- Parks
- Fenced park
- Alcohol and drug free – the ones they did on 22<sup>nd</sup> are pretty good, they interview renters
- Security at night – make it feel safe, if it's safe everyone will want to move in
- Near schools
- Residential manager not just a landlord
- Co-op gardens in the summer

#### **a) Counseling**

- No counseling, except perhaps someone coming occasionally but not someone set up in residence
- Have counselors available
- Community facilitator rather than counselor, someone who could direct them to the help they need
- No counseling
- No counseling, it's available at school
- Information for Metis specific
- Available for adults and children
- Life skills classes

#### **b) Management**

- Have yearly tenant meetings
- Make sure management is accountable
- To ensure the housing remains safe and well-kept
- No alcohol or drugs allowed
- Have rules in contract when move in: quiet times, act responsibly
- Landlord should be a neutral person, not owner
- Should be a community watch dog
- Neighbourhood watch
- Yearly meetings
- Have a community board to deal with problems, loud neighbours, junk in the front yard, specific job outline

### c) Guest Room

- Guest rooms, like in elderly housing, have to rent it but it would cost less than a hotel
- Would be a good idea because single room apartments aren't that big
- Would be nice for families

Specific comments included:

*"It makes no difference to me as long as it is well kept and clean. "*  
*"All around home. "*

### Cultural Aspects

Ninety per cent of respondents felt that Metis culture, customs and practices should be considered in the design, development and implementation of Metis student housing.

Considering the cultural aspects that they would like to see in the Metis residence, 66% of Metis students would like Metis architecture and symbols such as Red River carts and Sashes in the patterns. A circle format was favored by 7%, and 2% would like the capacity built in for music and jigging. Twenty-two per cent had other suggestions. These included: sweats, Elders, traditional teachings, murals, culture room for smudges, art-full of colors, education on culture, *"Things that will allow our culture to live"* and any empowerment tool.

Participants at the talking circles were asked: *"If you could incorporate Metis culture into the ideal residence, how would you imagine it?"* They responded:

- Metis architecture
- Cultural room
- Have a common room
- Programs in centre for youth
- Cultural programming: how to speak Metis language, making sashes, fiddle and jigging lessons, story telling times
- Start a business/company that specialises in Metis products
- Metis history of area
- Fire pit for bannock bake out
- Have a large Metis village or zone
- Metis symbol
- Make the building, or Metis village in the shape of the infinity symbol
- Have a huge flag in centre
- Metis murals

- Metis artist to do murals
- Metis portraits of heroes
- Metis sashes - yes
- Metis symbol - yes
- Metis murals - yes
- Cultural room
- Room for talking circles, language classes, where you can make soup and bannock
- Alternate activities, i.e. jigging, fiddling
- Metis sashes
- Metis symbol
- Metis murals
- Red River Cart in playground
- Metis symbol
- Have Metis flag
- Metis murals
- Cultural room
- Rooms for jigging, fiddle music, celebration
- Room for potluck, get togethers
- Hall you could rent for stuff like weddings and graduations
- Metis language used
- No – no one can speak it
- Language classes
- Metis sashes
- Metis symbol
- Front walk have the flower bed designed like the infinity symbol
- Metis murals
- Would like Metis murals
- Rooms for jigging, fiddle music, celebration
- Cultural room
- Colours
- Metis language used
- Have Metis names for buildings
- Have bilingual signs
- Common room/Cultural room
- Classes on Metis language and jigging
- Reflect pride to be Metis not just there for the \$ (cheap rent)
- Metis flag
- Have posters of historical events and influential Metis throughout buildings
- Jigging in main area
- Classes teaching youth about Metis culture
- Have it so you are required to attend things each month
- Have community activities promoted
- Smudges
- Traditional beliefs
- Sweats

- Craft shop
- Flags
- Murals
- Metis artists
- Like in Duck lake where they painted huge picture
- Metis Language classes for recognition and pride, Cree and French are available but not Michif
- Access to Elders

Specific Comments:

*“I feel culture should be a huge part in planning. There should be jigging and fiddling and language. ”*

### **In the neighborhood**

Sixty-two per cent of the sample gave descriptions of the kind of neighborhood in which they would be comfortable. Of primary concern is the proximity of schools, day care, grocery shopping, transportation, and the educational institution the student is attending. Other services which were considered important were a library, parks, playgrounds, bus routes, parking and a bank. Some mentioned the characteristics of the neighborhood. There is a desire for a safe, clean, quiet environment. One respondent said, *“Good, safe neighborhood, close to amenities. ”* The talking circle participants gave the following responses:

- Located in nice neighborhoods
- Close to the U of S
- Safe neighborhood, not *“located in a neighborhood filled with junkies, drug dealers and hookers, one little fence will not keep them out”*
- *“Confederation is okay. ”*
- Close to bus, schools, parks, mall
- All over city so have choices
- Not near freeway
- Close
- Shuttle buses to school
- Near grocery store, and parks
- Important, wouldn't live in core neighborhoods.
- Close to University would be great
- *“I would like to live on the east side of the city, because there is a large Aboriginal population there, too. ”*
- Briarwood is nice to visit but there is a concern that racism would be more prevalent on the west side of the city

- *“I would live in Erindale, no problem. ”*
- *“It doesn’t matter if you are visibly Metis or not you would still want to live near other Aboriginal people. ”*
- Middle income areas
- Want an ethnically diverse community
- CUMFI apartments are too far from the University
- Walking distance from University would be great
- Must be located in a safe neighborhood
- Would have to be in a central location if housing is scattered around Saskatoon, so all can access it easily.
- Sutherland
- Erindale
- Exhibition
- Lawson
- *“I like the west side personally. ”*
- Dundonald
- City part – a central area
- City Park, end of the West Side
- Safe area
- In a nice area
- Not Pleasant Hill
- Confederation, Sutherland
- With a view
- 33<sup>rd</sup> by Deifenbaker
- Housing needs to be located near bus stops
- Location shouldn’t be too far from school, less than a 45 minute bus ride

### **Criteria to Get into Metis Specific Residence**

The talking circles gave the following recommendations for entrance requirements:

- Low income
- Students
- Working people too, as long as you are Metis
- Have it open to all Metis with rent adjustments for students and low income
- Have some parts of the village/units rent to own or option to buy, Habitat for Humanity for Metis
- When paid for building use money to buy more and continue to expand and build community rather than keeping it limited to rent only and forcing people to move out to make room for new people each year, ongoing process
- Have a section always left to rent, i.e. dorms for students with a large community centre, parks, fire pit in the middle away from roads

- Metis
- Integrate Elderly Metis with daycare
- Concern regarding housing being built was that when you finished school, i.e. a 1 year program, you would have to move out and find another place
- Solely for Metis not treaty, as treaty housing does not allow Metis
- Income level
- Students
- Metis only – although anyone can say they are Metis, need a Metis card or affiliation with a Metis group
- The process is often too difficult at other subsidized housing
- Must be Metis
- Have a screen in test for drugs and alcohol
- Single students and people with only one child should not be excluded, it is difficult for these people to get into subsidized housing
- Must be a student
- Have some spots available for non-Metis so its not so segregated
- Students
- Not just for parents
- Its not hard to get a Metis card
- Have to be a student
- Working or a student
- Based on academic proficiency
- Open to all students not just single moms
- Low income families
- Anyone bettering themselves not just people with problems
- Working parents
- % of each (working and students) to even out
- Have to prove why they should live there
- Entrance interview
- Mixed not just Metis
- % allocated for students
- not for people on welfare
- “You have to get out when school is over i.e. if you drop out of school you are out of there.”
- No alcohol or drugs
- Metis
- Student
- Working
- No drinking or drugs
- Handicapped or disabled a priority

## Affordability

The following are what the students believe would constitute affordability in Metis residences for students:

- St Paul's Place good rent, 4 bedroom \$450, but outrageous utility bill
- Rent free
- 4 bedroom should cost \$800
- 2 bedroom \$400
- 1 bedroom \$250
- Rent should be based on income
- Amount of funding students get from provincial training allowance varies
- Month to month rent no leases
- Affordable damage deposits, don't have to pay all in 1<sup>st</sup> month
- Take income into account, how much you get from student loans
- 1 bedroom should cost \$150 - \$200
- \$200 - \$250 for a one bedroom would be beautiful
- Like townhouses rent including utilities
- 1 bedroom \$400 including utilities, 3 bedroom \$500
- 25-30% of income, includes daycare

Concluding Comments about the Metis residences were:

- *"Where is this dream place? "*
- *"Put my name on the list right away. No I'm first. "*
- *"It's too good. It will take ten years to build. "*
- *"Hand up not hand out. "*

A large number of the respondents (37.5%) had additional information to tell regarding Metis student housing in Saskatoon. The following are their exact words.

*"I would like this housing to be very affordable so we could live in a comfortable, less stressing situation. "*

*"We should be recognized. "*

*"It is greatly needed as there is limited accommodation for Metis people. "*

*"I am bettering myself as a Metis woman and desperately need support. "*

*"There should be available help for students to apply without missing school. "*

*"It's hard to find a Metis house. "*

*"Safety is a big concern for me. "*

*"It's too late—long overdue. "*

*"They [low cost houses] are always located in a bad area! "*

*"Drug Free and Alcohol Free Housing! "*

*"Great Idea! "*

*"We need more and soon. "*

*“To get into a house or duplex quickly. ”*

*“Good, affordable housing. ”*

*“Please find us some affordable housing, so we don’t quit school. ”*

*“I would love to be part of your housing program. ”*

*“Make it so friendly and safe conditions are given to get a good response”*

## **Metis student housing project developments**

Ninety-eight per cent of Metis student respondents felt that Metis students should be involved in all stages of the planning of Metis student accommodation development.

## **Clan/Household Composition Summary**

Our research found that Metis students lived in a variety of household types. Descriptions of each of the household types appear below constructed precisely from the students’ responses. The names of the students have been changed to protect their privacy. However, the facts presented represent individual students.

### **Living Alone**

Only 7% lived alone and all of these were women. These women elaborated on their lives.

Mary is a Metis woman in her early 30's. She is single with no dependents. She is in the ABE program. She lives by herself in a basement. She intends to stay there until her course is complete. She would move though because the rent is too high; the management is bad; she needs a bigger place, and she needs better bus service. She doesn’t feel safe in her home. She is lonesome. She needs appliances. It is too noisy with parties all the time. Summing up her location, she wrote, “Crime, murders, assaults, B & E, FEAR”.

For her it is only somewhat important that she live near the educational institution but she needs good bus service. It is very important to her to live near other Metis people and somewhat important to be near people “from back home.” Her income is less than \$500 per month on a Provincial Training Allowance (PTA). Out of that she pays \$40 for utilities, \$400 for rent, and \$34.00 for the telephone. Of her situation, she writes *“I don’t make enough to pay rent and eat. I live where I am not safe. So I lower my standards just*

*to have a home. I am bettering myself as a Metis woman and desperately need support. ”*

Susan is in her early 20's. She lives with her cat in a bachelor suite. She intends to stay where she is until her course is finished because it is too expensive to move, what with disconnecting and reconnecting, and the damage deposit for the new place, because you never get the damage deposit back from the old place. She would like to be able to move because the place is too small; the rent is too expensive, and she has no place to study. She doesn't feel safe. The pet policy says her cat can't go outside. It's too noisy and she would like better security. It is hard to get groceries near where she lives. She has concluded that *“housing for Metis people is always in bad areas. ”*

## **Living With Others**

### **Single Parents**

One quarter (25%) of the total sample were single parents living with their child(ren). Of these 79% were female headed households and 21 % were male single parents. Their lives differed from single students in many ways. Below are examples of two households, both with a lone parent.

Sarah is single in her late 20s. She and her three children, under ten years of age, live together. She doesn't have any space for herself. She shares her bedroom with one of the children. She has a unit from Saskatoon Housing Authority but she does not intend to stay. The utilities costs are too high. It is too far from her school. She needs a bigger space and better bus service. She doesn't feel safe there. It's too noisy and parties all the time. She walks for over one hour to and from her classes.

Sarah doesn't live as close as she would like to her child's school. She doesn't live as close as she would like to her child's babysitter. She worries about her children when she is at school.

She receives PTA for less than \$1000. Her utilities are \$300 per month. The rent is \$200. Day care is \$650.00 and transportation, \$60. She was not prepared for the high cost of

utilities. She had problems finding a place and since she had rented from Saskatoon Housing Authority before, she went back again. She would like to be part of a Metis-specific housing project.

John, in his late 30s is divorced and living with his three children under ten years of age. Two are school aged and one is a pre-schooler. He lives in a rented house but has no space of his own. He has moved once since becoming a student because the rent was too expensive and the utility costs were too high. He is close enough to his children's schools and daycare but worries about the children when he is at school. His monthly income is between \$1001-\$1500 including Family Allowance and Child Benefits. He pays \$150 for utilities, \$700 for rent and \$600 for daycare per month.

### **Living With Partners**

Jerry is a man in his late 20's living with a partner. They have no children yet. They live in a basement suite. Jerry has moved once since becoming a student because he didn't feel safe and didn't have confidence that the police would help him if he ran into trouble. His accommodation is not big enough but it is only a short bike ride from his school. He feels safe now but he describes his new place as a dump but he considers it very important to live near where he is going to school.

He is on the Provincial Training Allowance and receives less than \$1000 per month. His rent is \$210. His partner contributes the rest of the rent. He found his present residence through a sign in the window of the house. He had had problems finding a place. He had no idea how expensive utilities could be and didn't know about paying a damage deposit.

For Jerry, the most critical problem for Metis youth finding housing in Saskatoon is that the rent is too expensive. He has also had problems with neighbours.

### **Married with Children**

Linda is in her early 20's, married with one pre-schooler. Linda's study place is the living room after the family has gone to bed. She lives in a rented house and intends to stay there until her course is over. She has never moved since becoming a student. However, the reasons that she should move are there. The utility costs are high. The house is too far from her school. The rent is too expensive. She has found a better place. This place is a dump. It is a long way from her child's pre-school. She doesn't feel safe. She needs appliances and it is in an area where noisy parties are all around. The house is not big enough. The location is not suitable. It is a bus ride of over one hour to school. She doesn't feel safe and the house is not comfortable. The family lives on less than \$1000 per month. Their utilities cost \$200, rent \$410 and transportation, \$100.

Her partner does not contribute to the rent and she was not comfortable talking about his contribution to transportation or child care. Her summary is "Bad people make it bad for everyone." "Poor judgment of rental authorities." This couple cannot afford to move even though the housing is inadequate."

### **Living With Parents**

Eleven per cent of the sample was living with their parents. These were primarily male (83%). None of the males had a room of their own. The men lived either in the basement, shared with children, or had the living room after the family went to bed. The 17% who were female had private rooms. This group of students was not stable. All of the males stated that they did not intend to stay until their course was over. One of the men lived with his parents and his spouse.

Housing advocates maintain that the three criteria for judging houses are: affordability, adequacy and appropriateness. In this discussion we will examine Metis student housing on these three measures.

## Adequacy

It is a well-known fact that *“By comparison with the general Canadian population, a disproportional number of on-reserve and off-reserve Aboriginal peoples live in very poor housing conditions.”*<sup>36</sup>

Crowding has resulted from housing shortages in conjunction with large family sizes and families “doubling up” to reduce overhead costs or because there is no where else to live.<sup>37</sup> Nationally, 27% to 34% per cent of all Aboriginal peoples are in “core housing need” which as defined by CMHC, refers to *“households that are unable to afford shelter that meets adequacy, suitability and affordability norms.”* It is further stated that *“the health and social ramifications of such poor living conditions are enormous.”*<sup>38</sup>

*“It is well established that the health of Canada’s Aboriginal peoples is poorer than that of Canadians generally; life expectancy is lower and rates of infectious diseases, infant mortality, suicide, injury, substance abuse and family and interpersonal violence are dramatically higher. Each of these factors is associated with inadequate housing although it is far more difficult to establish firm causal connections for some of the variables than for others.*

*“Crowding conditions can lead to transmission of infectious diseases such as hepatitis A and tuberculosis and higher incidence of respiratory illness, particularly, when there are smokers in the home. Other studies suggest that overcrowding and poor housing are associated with emotional and mental health problems. For example, “excessive noise, sleep deprivation and lack of private space have various negative psychological effects, including irritability, aggression, depression and inability to concentrate and may contribute to family*

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<sup>36</sup> CHRA, p. 13.

<sup>37</sup> *Ibid.* at p. 13.

<sup>38</sup> *Ibid.* at p. 14.

*tensions and violence. And of course, if there is no alternate housing available, it may be impossible to escape an abusive home situation.”*<sup>39</sup>

*“Further research is not required to establish need; the primary problems of poor quality, crowded housing on reserve and the lack of housing of reserve are well documented.”*<sup>40</sup>

There is sufficient evidence to conclude that adequate, affordable and appropriate housing is a prerequisite for good health.<sup>41</sup>

### **Affordability**

*“Please help us find affordable housing so we don’t have to quit school. ”*

“Affordable” should mean that rent is geared to benefit levels, and that tenants have some flexibility with respect to issues such as damage deposits.<sup>42</sup>

Almost half (43%) of Metis students are surviving on a Provincial Training Allowance. Rate for single students is less than half of the amount needed to pay the average price for a one-bedroom apartment in Saskatoon. From this amount the students are intended to pay their rent, provide themselves with food, cover the costs of transportation and utilities. As one student put is, *“I don’t make enough money to pay rent and eat. Where I live I am not safe. So I lower my standards just to have a home. ”*

For single women who try to live on their own with the allowance that they receive, they find themselves in unsafe, unfit places in locations that they consider unsuitable, locations that are dangerous, and unsanitary. Since they cannot afford housing, food and bus fare, these students are walking through areas of the city that most citizens would not walk through by themselves, just to get back and forth to their school.

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<sup>39</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>40</sup> *Ibid.* at p. 15.

<sup>41</sup> *Ibid.* at p. 16.

<sup>42</sup> *Ibid.*

For many students who cannot afford the price of an average one bedroom apartment, they end up living with their parents or “others” in a transitory state at the whim of those with whom they live. This is a state where we find most of the single men in our sample.

## **Appropriate**

*“Appropriate housing means housing that is designed and supported as per the specifications of those who will live in it. ”*

A wide range of supported housing options is required to address the varied needs of Metis students. There is no “*one-size-fits-all* ” solution as our research shows. Although the students were all Metis, their circumstances dictated different housing options. The following case studies demonstrate this:

### **Case Study A**

She is between 21-25 years of age and lives alone. She is presently living in accommodation where she does not feel safe. She is not comfortable and has a long walk to school. Neither the size of the place nor the location is suitable. She is receiving Provincial Training Allowance which provides between \$501 and \$1000 per month. She pays \$200 for utilities and \$300 for rent. She has already moved three times since being a student and she would like to move from her present place into housing that is more appropriate.

### **Case Study B**

She is a single mother between 26 and 30 years of age, with a school aged child. She lives in a place which is too far from the school. There is no place to study and she doesn't feel safe. She wants to move. She says her place is not suitable and the landlord is bad. She receives between \$501 and \$1000, pays \$425 in rent, \$75 for utilities and \$80 for transportation.

Metis student housing must support the students' efforts at making social change. Appropriate housing for students must be housing which promotes academic success. Such housing requires space for students to "be students" separate from the other roles that they perform. Our research shows that very few of the Metis students have a place to call their own in their residences.

Research on success factors for Aboriginal students in education has over the years moved from seeing Aboriginal traditions, practices and customs as a detriment to success to seeing Aboriginal culture as an element that fosters academic success. A plethora of research supports the premise that "culturally secure" individuals are more successful in school than those who are partially assimilated. Dhyle (1992), Dehyle and Margonis (1995) Bowker (1993), Chan and Osthimer (1983) Dehyle (1992) and Schwartz (1985) were among the first researchers to challenge the assumption that knowledge of Aboriginal languages and /or cultures were reasons for school failure. In fact they demonstrated that knowledge of Aboriginal languages and living in Aboriginal cultures correlated to school success.<sup>43</sup>

It follows that for Metis students to be successful, they should live where their culture is practiced and evident. Since many of the Metis students attend DTI or GDI programs which strive to build Metis consciousness, a Metis student residence which reflects Metis culture would support goals of SUNTEP and GDI and promote the academic success of the Metis students.

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<sup>43</sup> Donna Deyle and Karen Swisher, "Research in American Indian and Alaska Native Education: From Assimilation to Self-Determination" in M.W. Apple (Ed.) Research in Education, 22, Washington DC, American Educational Research Association, 1997, p. 136.

## **Cultural Conflict**

Transition is a dynamic process. Traditional people have more initial problems but get better. The more assimilated individuals are less successful in adjustment.<sup>44</sup> The nature and stages of transition need to be studied. There is a complex relationship between community background and the experience of higher education. Tinto's (1988) basic assumption that community background directly influences the manner in which an individual experiences and perceives the college setting is undoubtedly true. The reservation and non-reservation students in this study experienced fundamental differences in the way that they assessed their college experiences. There is a complex and dynamic relationship between community background and the experience of higher education.<sup>45</sup>

## **Language**

The majority of Aboriginal people recognized the importance of Aboriginal languages. 59% of non-reserve adults stated that keeping, learning or relearning an Aboriginal language was very or somewhat important. The same proportion of people responding on behalf of children reported that it was very or somewhat important to them that the child speak and understand an Aboriginal language.<sup>46</sup>

### **3.5 Recommendations of Successful Model**

Metis students are the ones who best understand the issues of Metis student housing. They live every day in the midst of other people's decisions about how they should live. Metis students shared their lives with us. They provided a wealth of important

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<sup>44</sup> Terry Huffman, "A Comparison of Personal Assessments of the College Experience Among Reservation and Non-Reservation Indian Students" Journal of American Indian Education, Vol. 45, 2, 2003, p. 11.

<sup>45</sup> "Well-being of the non-reserve Aboriginal population," by Vivian O'Donnell and Heather Tait, Canadian Social Trends Spring 2004, no. 72, 19-23.

<sup>46</sup> *Ibid.* p. 23.

information which needs to inform builders, realtors and housing authorities about what is appropriate, affordable and adequate for their needs. They need to be heard.

The Metis students who spoke to us are people who are struggling to change their lives. Many have lived in Saskatoon's "hood" area most of their lives. Others have come to the city from small rural communities, with the hope of bettering life for themselves, their families and children. For those who are long time residents of "the hood", getting increased education is an opportunity to move or even advance themselves within the "hood" and offer something different for their children. For those from the rural communities, life in the city often begins in a house that is worse than anything they left behind. Their hopes and optimism for a better life in the city are crushed by the horrifying realities of life in the inner city. These are all proud people struggling to fulfill their dreams. As one student put it, "*We want a hand up not a hand out.*"

The Metis students were excited by the concept of a "Metis Village", where they could live surrounded by other Metis people who were working towards a good, "decent" life for themselves and their families. They did not see this as ghettoization or segregation, but rather, they saw such a concept as a positive force towards stability in their lives. They envisioned this "ideal residence" as a place of safety, security and cultural nurturing and support. They expressed the desire for the inclusion, not only of students like themselves, but also, of working people and Elders.

For those students who are taking SUNTEP or a DTI class, such a Metis-specific residence would reinforce the cultural consciousness which the classes at GDI and DTI foster. As research on successful programs for Aboriginal higher education shows, those who are strongest in their cultural knowledge and identity are most successful. This would mean that students in all academic programs would benefit from an environment which develops a stronger Metis identity. Therefore, it follows that, with the Metis Village model, Metis students can be housed in appropriate, affordable and adequate housing and, at the same time, be provided with the opportunity to strengthen their cultural identity and support their academic success.

In purely economic terms, studies have shown that investment in Metis students offers enormous payoffs. A 2002 study of the SUNTEP program documented the financial position of SUNTEP students from pre-enrolment to post-graduation. The conclusion was that *“the SUNTEP program should be considered an investment in the province’s long term future because it is an effective tool for breaking the cycle of poverty and dependence, but also because the income tax revenue generated by its graduates more than pays for the program on an annual basis.”*<sup>47</sup>

Housing for Metis students must be seen in the light of creating school success which in turn will be an investment in long term future of the province and country. Increased economic independence is not only the goal of the students themselves, but, must be supported by all people with an interest in our economic future.

In Canada’s Urban Strategy, A Blueprint for Action, released by the federal government in November 2002, one of the recommendations from the Interim Report was:

*“Partner with other orders of government and community Aboriginal groups to find ways to lower poverty levels, provide employment opportunities and expand the affordable housing for urban Aboriginal population, especially among youth.*

It is obvious, from this research, that, these goals can be attained simultaneously by governments investing in Metis student housing in conjunction with Metis educational institutions and Metis housing authorities.

*“Housing should be designed by Aboriginal peoples so that it meets their unique physical and social needs and serves as a lever for other social change, in addition to providing adequate and affordable shelter. This will require provision of various supports including education about home ownership and maintenance*

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<sup>47</sup>GDI SUNTEP Update, 2001 at p. 27.

*responsibilities which in turn requires collaboration among policy-makers and Aboriginal service providers.”<sup>48</sup>*

This research shows that Metis students, attempting to change their lives are not getting the support they need to ensure that the major adjustments they are personally making, will be successful. There is no agency or government program which offer or supports student housing for Metis students. There is no student residence per se for Metis students. The majority of Metis students do not get a rent subsidy. The Metis students in this study were victims of the existing housing market. Metis students sacrifice adequacy and appropriateness of housing because of the limited income.

Review and consideration of the observations of Saskatoon Metis adult and post-secondary students confirms a need and desire for a Metis-distinct student residence in Saskatoon. A start-up residence, designed to accommodate expansion, serving Metis adult and post-secondary students in Saskatoon should be constructed in one of the neighbourhoods identified as student preferences. Besides accommodation for student individuals and families, such a facility should provide space for child care, health care, dining, a cultural centre, recreational and common space, as well as low-cost guest accommodation for visiting families.

## **Policy Models for Success**

1. Metis students must be part of the planning processes in Metis student housing initiatives.
2. Housing authorities and realtors should provide listings of available housing to Metis educational institutions.
3. An intern should be hired to set up a data system to make housing opportunities known to Metis students now.
4. Issues such as bus service for DTI students also need to taken up by people who are providing housing.

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<sup>48</sup>CHRA

5. Metis Housing authorities need to be open for business, during hours that accommodate students. In the beginning of school terms, a person from the housing authorities could come to the Metis educational institutions to help Metis students with the application process.
6. Metis housing agencies could provide traditional Metis community and northern community municipal offices with housing applications on line so that students could get references from their home communities and they would know if they had a home upon arriving in the city.
7. Metis housing authorities should begin planning for Metis student residences.
8. The strong support for a “Metis Village” concept by Metis students should encourage housing authorities to implement a plan which develops such a Metis Village as a way of providing housing for Metis people who are trying to change their life experiences.
9. Housing authorities which provide housing for Metis students, as part of their clientele, should invite Metis students to become members of their management boards.

## **4. Final Conclusions & Recommendations**

The research indicates that Metis student housing options are not just about shelter but must also support Metis students in their quest for education. When Metis students are approached following proper protocol they have a lot to say about their lives and their living conditions. It is essential stakeholders respect the contribution and voices of the Metis students by taking the knowledge shared and translating it into respectful Metis student housing options.

Accordingly, the research team is recommending an agenda for action for all stakeholders to include:

1. The research team recommends that stakeholders implement a housing strategy that is culturally appropriate and representative of Metis students. Government housing agencies should involve Metis students in the creation and implementation of the strategy and the process should be collaborative and respectful of the diversity in the Metis student community.
2. The research team recommends that at every stage of housing development from planning to completion phases, there must be Metis students in all levels of development.
3. The housing stakeholders should refine current student housing strategies to better meet the housing needs of Metis students. This may include reviewing current strategies and, where appropriate, engaging government, Aboriginal housing authorities, students and partner stakeholders in an advisory capacity.
4. The research team recommends that government stakeholders establish a communications strategy for partnerships amongst Metis and non-Aboriginal housing stakeholders.
5. The research team recommends the development of a set of protocols to be engaged around housing initiatives targeting Metis students.
6. Establishing personal relationships and human contacts between education institutions, agencies and governments delivering housing services to Metis is one

means of overcoming the gaps and barriers to achieve meaningful delivery to students. The need for a Metis housing initiative officer attending and assisting Metis students at the education institutions cannot be underscored enough.

The challenges faced by Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal housing stakeholders in developing respectful sustainable affordable housing are not unique to the industry. One of the main themes found throughout the research project and Metis student participants' responses is that no student housing initiative will be effective unless it takes a holistic culturally appropriate approach in the initiatives.

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## **Appendix A**

# Métis Student Housing Research Survey

## Survey Background Information

Thank you for taking the time to complete this survey. The information gathered from the completed surveys will be kept strictly confidential and will be destroyed once all the data has been analyzed and interpreted. Bridges and Foundations: CURA (Community University Research Alliances) agreed to support the Broxbourne International Inc. proposal to examine the housing issues of Métis students in the City of Saskatoon, Saskatchewan. The opinions of Métis students are greatly appreciated and will be respected and taken very seriously.

The main focus for the research project is to “obtain a portrait of Métis student housing needs at the post-secondary and adult education level and most importantly, provide suggestions to housing institutions and agencies on housing development issues important to Métis students”. Through this project, the Research Team will attempt to capture Métis students’ voices and concerns to assist in the creation of successful respectful housing options. The Final Report will be made available to the community and participating Métis students. It is hoped the results of the Final Report will assist in housing development targeting the needs of Métis students.

Please note that at the end of the survey, there is an opportunity for participants to enter into a draw and/or participate in further dialogue with the Research Interns, Ms. Allison Lachance and Ms. Brenda Maire. Following is our contact information; please do not hesitate to contact us if you have any questions or comments.

Thank you again for taking the time to participate in this worthy project that we hope will assist in Métis student voices and opinions being heard in future housing developments.

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# Métis Student Housing Research Survey

## Part A - Please tell us about yourself

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**Q1A: Gender:** Please tick **only one** of the following:

- Female
  - Male
- 

**Q1B: Nationhood** Please tick **only one** of the following:

- Métis
  - First Nation
  - Inuit
- 

**Q2: Age:** Please tick **only one** of the following:

- Under the age of 20
  - Between the ages of 21-25
  - Between the ages of 26-30
  - Between the ages of 31-35
  - Between the ages of 36-40
  - Over the age of 40
- 

**Q3: Marital Status:** Please tick **only one** of the following:

- Single
  - Married
  - Separated
  - Divorced
  - Common Law
- 

**Q4: Do you have any children or Dependents that you are responsible for (including those that may not be living with you)?** Please tick **only one** of the following:

- Yes
  - No
-

**Q5: If you answered "yes" to the above question, how many Dependents do you have? (Including those that may not be living with you) Please tick only one of the following:**

- 1
- 2
- 3
- 4
- 5
- 6+

---

**Q6A: If you answered "yes" to question 4, please indicate the categories of dependant(s) you have. (Including those that may not be living with you) Please tick any that apply**

- Children (between the age of newborn to age 10)
- Children (between age of 11 to under 18)
- Children (over 18)
- Spouse/Partner
- Relative(s)

Other:

---

**Q6B: If applicable, please indicate the ages of all dependents that are currently living with you. (Please separate with comma's) Please write your answer here:**

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**Q7: What educational level have you received? Choose only one of the following: Please tick only one of the following:**

- Less than high school and not enrolled in an education program
  - In a GED or ABE program
  - Have obtained high school diploma
  - In or completed a trade or community college program
  - In the process of completing undergraduate degree
  - Completed undergraduate degree
  - In a graduate degree program
  - Completed a graduate degree program
  - In or have completed a Ph.D. program
-

**Q8: Where are you enrolled as a student? Please tick only one of the following:**

- GDI
  - DTI
  - SUNTEP
  - University of Saskatchewan
  - SIAST
- 

**Q9: How long have you been a student in your present institution? Please tick only one of the following:**

- 1-4 months
  - 5-8 months
  - 1 year
  - 2 years
  - 3 years
  - 4 years
  - 5 years or more
- 

### **Part B - Household Composition and Space**

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**Q10: Who lives with you? Choose one of the following: Please tick only one of the following:**

- No one else
  - Only with children
  - Only with partner
  - My partner and children
  - My parents
  - My parents and my spouse
  - My parents, my spouse and my children
  - People from "back home"
-

**Q11: How many people live in your home? Including yourself, roommates, dependents, child(ren), etc. Please tick only one of the following:**

- 1
  - 2
  - 3
  - 4
  - 5
  - 6+
- 

**Q12: What kind of space do you have for yourself? Please tick only one of the following:**

- I don't have anywhere to call my own
  - The living room after the family goes to bed
  - A spot in the basement
  - A room of my own
  - I share with one of the children
  - I share with another person
- 

**Q13: Please indicate what kind of housing you currently live in: Please tick only one of the following:**

- Rental apartment
  - Rental townhouse/home
  - Rental bachelor apartment
  - Rental room in someone's home
  - Student housing
  - Native housing rental accommodation - Single Unit
  - Native housing rental accommodation - Family Unit
- 

**Q14: Do you live in a basement? Please tick only one of the following:**

- Yes
  - No
- 

**Q15: Do you intend to stay where you are living now until you finish your course? Please tick only one of the following:**

- Yes
  - No
-

**Part C - Factors Related to Housing**

**Q16: Since becoming a student, how many times have you moved?** Please tick only one of the following:

- Never
- Once
- Twice
- Three times
- More than three times

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**Q17: If have you moved or are planning to move, what were (are) the reasons for moving?** Please tick any that apply

- Utility costs too high
- Too far from my school
- Rent too expensive
- No place to study
- I wore out my welcome
- I found a better place
- Bad management/landlord
- I didn't get along with the people I was living with
- I needed a bigger place
- I needed better bus service
- Too far for my children to go to school
- Too far for my child(ren) to go to Daycare
- I moved in with relatives/friends
- The place was a dump
- I didn't feel safe there
- I was lonesome
- I needed appliances
- Smoking Policy
- The pet policy
- Too noisy/parties near by all the time
- There was better security at the new place

Other: \_\_\_\_\_

---

**Q18: Is your accommodation large enough for your needs? Please tick only one of the following:**

- Yes
  - No
- 

**Q19: If you rent, do you consider the amount of rent you pay to be reasonable? Please tick only one of the following:**

- Yes
  - No
- 

**Q20A: Is the location of your housing suitable to your needs? Please tick only one of the following:**

- Yes
  - No
- 

**Q20B: How far away is your educational institution from where you live? Check your usual transportation) Please tick only one of the following:**

- Short bus ride
- Long bus ride (1 hour and over)
- Short drive
- Long drive (1 hour and over)
- Short bike ride
- Long bike ride (1 hour and over)
- Short walk
- Long walk (1 hour and over)

**Q21: Do you feel safe where you live? Please tick only one of the following:**

- Yes
  - No
- 

**Q22: Is your place fixed up for you to be comfortable? Please tick only one of the following:**

- Yes
  - No
-

**Part D- Family and Community**

---

**Q23: How important is it for you to live near your educational institution?**

Please tick **only one** of the following:

- Very Important
  - Important
  - Somewhat Important
  - Not Important
- 

**Q24: How important is it to you to live near other Métis people?** Please tick

**only one** of the following:

- Very Important
  - Important
  - Somewhat Important
  - Not Important
- 

**Q25: How important is it to you to live near friends?** Please tick only one of the following:

- Very Important
  - Important
  - Somewhat Important
  - Not Important
- 

**Q26: How important is it to be near people from "back home"?** Please tick only one of the following:

- Very Important
  - Important
  - Somewhat Important
  - Not Important
- 

**Q27A: If applicable, do you live as close as you would like to your children's school?** Please tick only one of the following:

- Yes
  - No
-

**Q27A2: If you answered no to the above question, how close do you consider close enough? Please tick only one of the following:**

- 1 block
  - 2 blocks
  - 3 blocks
  - A short bus ride
- 

**Q27B: if applicable, do you live close enough to your child's day care or babysitter? Please tick only one of the following:**

- Yes
  - No
- 

**Q27B2: If you answered no to the above question, how close would you like to live to the day care? Please tick only one of the following:**

- In my building
  - On the same block
  - In my school
  - 2 blocks from home
  - 3 blocks from home
  - A short bus ride
  - I have someone in my home that cares for my child(ren)
- 

**Q27C: If you use a child care facility/home, is it a provincially registered facility? Please tick only one of the following:**

- Yes
  - No
- 

**Q27D: Do you worry about your children when you are at school? Please tick only one of the following:**

- Yes
  - No
-

**Part E – Income: Researchers would like an idea of student financial challenges**

---

**Q28: What are your sources of income? Check all that apply. Please tick any that apply**

- Student loan
- METSI
- DSS
- Personal savings
- Disability benefits
- Family allowance
- Alimony
- Child support
- Child benefits
- Employment Insurance
- Scholarship or bursary (Please indicate source) \_\_\_\_\_

Other: \_\_\_\_\_

---

**Q29: What is your monthly income? Please tick only one of the following:**

- \$0 - \$500
  - \$501 - \$1000
  - \$1001 - \$1500
  - \$1501 - \$2000
  - \$2001 - \$3000
  - Over \$3000
- 

**Q30A: Do you receive a rent subsidy? Please tick only one of the following:**

- Yes
  - No
- 

**Q30B: If you answered yes to the above question, how much of a rent subsidy do you receive? Please write your answer here:**

\_\_\_\_\_

---

**Q30C: Please indicate the rent subsidy agency: Please write your answer here:**

\_\_\_\_\_

---

**Q31A: What is your monthly costs for the following:** Please write your answer(s) here:

Utilities: \_\_\_\_\_

Rent: \_\_\_\_\_

Day care: \_\_\_\_\_

Transportation: \_\_\_\_\_

---

**Q31B: If applicable, enter the amount of Day Care Subsidy:** Please write your answer here:

\_\_\_\_\_

---

**Q32A: if applicable, does your partner contribute to paying for the costs of your rent?** Please tick **only one** of the following:

- Yes
- No

---

**Q32B: If yes, how much?** Please tick **only one** of the following:

- 10%
- 20%
- 30%
- 40%
- 50%
- 60%
- 70%
- 80%
- 90%
- 100%

---

**Q33A: if applicable, does your partner contribute to the costs of child care?** Please tick **only one** of the following:

- Yes
- No
-

**Q33B: If yes, how much? Please tick only one of the following:**

- 10%
  - 20%
  - 30%
  - 40%
  - 50%
  - 60%
  - 70%
  - 80%
  - 90%
  - 100%
- 

**Q34A: if applicable, does your partner contribute to the cost of transportation? Please tick only one of the following:**

- Yes
  - No
- 

**Q34B: If yes, how much? Please tick only one of the following:**

- 10%
  - 20%
  - 30%
  - 40%
  - 50%
  - 60%
  - 70%
  - 80%
  - 90%
  - 100%
-

**Part F - Residence in Saskatoon**

---

**Q35A: Did you move to Saskatoon to go to school?** Please tick **only one** of the following:

- Yes
  - No
- 

**Q35B: How long have you lived in Saskatoon? (To the nearest year)** Please write your answer here:

---

**Q35C: What community do you call home?** Please write your answer here:

---

**Q36: How did you find your place?** Please tick **only one** of the following:

- Through the School Program / information
  - Through the newspaper
  - Through friends
  - Through Housing Authority advertisement
  - Through family
  - Through a realtor
  - Through an ad in the window of the place
  - Bulletin board
- 

**Q37: Did you know you would have to pay damage deposits?** Please tick **only one** of the following:

- Yes
  - No
- 

**Q38: Did you know what to expect in utility costs?** Please tick **only one** of the following:

- Yes
  - No
- 

**Q39A: Did you have problems finding a place?** Please tick **only one** of the following:

- Yes
  - No
-

**Q39B: If you had problems finding a place to live to attend school, please tell us some of your experiences: Please write your answer in the box below:**

---

**Q40: If ranked, what would be the top three problems/issues that Métis students face in finding a place to live in Saskatoon? Please write your answer(s) here:**

- #1.:
- #2.:
- #3.:

---

**Q41A: Do you think there should be accommodation specifically set aside for Métis students and their families? Please tick only one of the following:**

- Yes
- No

---

**Q41B: If you answered "yes" to the above question, what criteria should be used in the allocation of the Métis student units? (i.e. dependents, education path, etc.) Please tick only one of the following:**

- Number of dependents
- Education path
- Income level

---

**Q42: I would prefer to live in accommodations that is: Please tick only one of the following:**

- Specifically designated and designed as a single person Métis student residence/building
- Specifically designated and designed as a Métis student & family residence/building
- A residence available to all Métis people (including Elders, working people, students, etc.)
- Specifically designated and designed as an Aboriginal student & family residence/building
- A general student residence/building available to all students
- A residence available to all people

**Q43: If you could design an ideal residence that would meet your needs as a Métis student, what would it look like:**

---

**Q43A: Inside the unit? (number of bedrooms, bathrooms, closets, etc.)**

**Please describe:** Please write your answer in the box below:

**Q43B: Inside the building? (common room and its design – i.e. computer outlets, spiritual centre, resource centre, etc.)** **Please describe:** Please write your answer in the box below:

**Q43C: In the neighborhood? (near education institution, transportation, daycare, etc.)** **Please describe:** Please write your answer in the box below:

**Q44: Do you feel Métis culture, customs, and practices should be considered in the design, development and implementation of Métis student housing?**

Please tick **only one** of the following:

Yes

No

---

**Q45: If you answered "yes" to the above question, what cultural aspects would you like to see? Please tick only one of the following:**

- Métis Architecture (Sashes, Red River Symbols, etc.)
- Circle format
- Music capacities
- Jigging capacities

---

**Q46: Do you feel that Métis students should be involved in the planning of Aboriginal student accommodation development? Please tick only one of the following:**

- Yes
- No

---

**Q47: Is there anything else you would like to tell us regarding Métis student housing in Saskatoon? Please write your answer in the box below:**

---

**Thank you for your time. Please fill out the following optional questions.**

**Q48: Are you interested in:** Please tick **any** that apply

- Interested in participating in a more in-depth discussion
- Interested in entering a draw for great free prizes
- Interested in receiving access to results of the survey

---

**Q49: If you checked any of the above, please fill in your contact information below:** Please write your answer(s) here:

Name:

Mailing address:

Email address:

Telephone number:

---

**Submit your survey!**

Thank you for completing this survey. Please fax your completed survey to  
306-966-6207.

## **Appendix B**

## **PARTICIPANT TALKING CIRCLES**

### **METIS YOUTH PERCEPTIONS RE: HOUSING ISSUES**

Talking Circle discussions:

**1. What types of barriers stop students from getting adequate housing?**

**Some possible topics:**

- Income/costs
- References
- Location to school, daycare, other
- Waiting lists
- Capacity (size)
- Landlord Relations

**2. What kinds of experiences have you, as students, had with housing?**

**Some possible topics:**

- Landlords
- Neighbors/Neighborhood
- Maintenance of the property
- Payment
- Space
- Transportation
- Daycare

**3. If there could be an ideal residence created specifically for Metis students, how would you, as students, imagine it?**

**Some possible topics:**

- Cultural
- Type of residence
- Community kitchen
- Computer/study room
- Meditation
- Daycare
- Counseling
- Affordability
- Rooms
- Multipurpose

- 4. If you could incorporate Metis culture into the ideal residence, how would you imagine it?**

**Some possible topics:**

- Metis architecture
- Sashes/Symbols
- Cultural Rooms
- Colors
- Metis Language

**Is there anything else you would like to share with us?**